

# **Mayor Coleman, Officials Debut Free Parking Shuttle**

## **for Como Park Zoo and Conservatory**

***Como Shuttle to reduce neighborhood traffic, improve parking at popular state attraction***

SAINT PAUL – Calling a new leopard print shuttle van a great addition to one of Minnesota’s most popular attractions, Mayor Chris Coleman along with city councilmembers, parks officials, and supporters unveiled the free Como Shuttle that will begin operating at Como Park Zoo and Conservatory this Memorial Day weekend.

The shuttle service will expand parking options for the nearly 2 million annual visitors to the zoo, conservatory and children’s amusement park. The shuttle will pick families up at parking lots at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds and the Saint Paul Public School District Service Facility both off of Como Avenue and drop them off at the Visitor’s Center at the zoo and conservatory. The buses will run 9:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. every weekend through September with the exception of Independence Day weekend.

The new free service will ease traffic congestion in and around the park, improve neighborhood safety and air quality by reducing vehicle emissions, and reduce the frustration of circling the parking lot in hopes of nabbing one of the rare open parking spots. In the summer of 2008, a survey was conducted and found that out of the 92 percent of visitors who drive to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, 68 percent would likely utilize the shuttle bus service.



“The free Como Shuttle is a great solution for both visitors to Como Park Zoo and Conservatory and neighbors surround the popular attraction. Not only will there be ample parking in nearby lots, but the shuttle will drop visitors off close to the entrance,” Mayor Coleman said. “Como is one of Minnesota’s great attractions for families across the region, and now the shuttle will make the experience more enjoyable by reducing the stress and hassle of finding a parking spot.”

The city and Hoglund Bus Company officials leveraged a \$1.6 million federal grant with the help of some of Minnesota’s Congressional delegation to purchase the three low-emission diesel shuttle buses. Along with support of rented shuttle buses, they will be in continuous operation during the weekends. The buses are wheelchair and stroller accessible.

City Councilmembers Russ Stark and Lee Helgen applauded the efforts of the city, parks staff, and volunteers – including Hoglund Bus – for making the shuttles possible.

“Listening to the needs of residents who sought ways to reduce congestion in their neighborhoods and improve the quality of life where they live, we have created a wonderful solution with the Como Shuttle,” Councilmember Helgen said.

“The Como Shuttle will help reduce the number of cars in neighborhoods around the popular park, and will enhance safety for pedestrians, bicyclists, and residents,” Councilmember Stark said. “The biodiesel shuttle bus will also reduce vehicle emissions, improving air quality for visitors and residents.”

For more information on Como Park Zoo and Conservatory and the free Como Shuttle, including the location of the new parking lots, visit the park’s website at [www.comozooconservatory.org](http://www.comozooconservatory.org).