WeDriveU and Northwestern University Celebrate First Anniversary for Hybrid Electric Transit Buses

State-of-the-Art Fleet and Technology Initiative Powers Clean, Quiet, Safe Mobility



WeDriveU operates Northwestern Hybrid Electric Transit Buses for Two Campuses in Chicago Region

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, September 21, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- WeDriveU and Northwestern University's Transportation and Parking Department are celebrating the one-year anniversary of a sustainable transit bus fleet for Northwestern's Evanston and Chicago campuses. September marks NU's first-year milestone for 12 hybrid-electric Gillig buses introduced to create a greener, healthier, and more sustainable future.

The university previously announced that "the new buses are part of a broader initiative to modernize campus transportation while reducing environmental impact." They support sustainNU, a program aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The hybrid electric bus project launched under Northwestern's 2024 extension to WeDriveU's operations and management contract that began in 2019.

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>
> *David Goshen, Regional VP of Operations, WeDriveU*

Modernization Drives Impact

Each hybrid electric bus is equivalent to removing three traditional diesel buses from the road, according to NU's Sustainability team. The project is achieving impressive results in the first year:

- 520,000 passengers served
- Overall reduction of 201 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions
- Nearly 20,000 gallons of diesel saved

“These buses are more than just a new look for our fleet,” said Paul Merkey, associate director of Transportation and Parking. “They’re a reflection of our values: sustainability, innovation and care for the communities we serve.”

“This project is a great example of stakeholders joining together from the public and private sectors to drive value from sustainability projects,” said David Goshen, Regional Vice President of Operations, WeDriveU. “We congratulate Northwestern on cleaner mobility options that are making a positive impact on the campus and community.”

Technology Innovations

Technology has played an important role in modernizing campus transit as the university and WeDriveU harness geofencing, artificial intelligence and analytics.

- Using geofencing and GPS technology, buses automatically switch to battery power in designated battery power zones, reducing noise and emissions in residential neighborhoods.

- AI-powered onboard telematics and video from WeDriveU partner Samsara have been a success across the entire fleet. The platform enables WeDriveU to identify opportunities to enhance operator safety and efficiency through coaching, training and recognition programs.

Riders Praise the Smooth, Quiet Ride

Feedback from the campus community has been extremely positive.

Northwestern student and WeDriveU WINtern program graduate Max Nakano added, "The hybrid shuttles have significantly improved the rider experience across the network and demonstrate NU and WeDriveU's commitment to providing safe, efficient, and clean transportation. I'm glad to have the opportunity to see this fleet in action and work with the team that keeps it running over the past year."

Showcasing Transit’s Evolution

Take a closer look at one of NU’s new buses and meet WeDriveU Sept. 26th at Bus Day at the Illinois Railway Museum. The event celebrates multi-modal advancements and will feature motor and trolley buses, and electric, diesel and steam trains. NU’s display is made possible through a WeDriveU volunteer project at the museum, one of the ways employees give back through WeDriveU Cares initiatives. Details on Bus Day: https://www.irm.org

Learn More at APTA TRANSform & Expo

Heading to APTA Expo in Chicago Oct. 4 - 7? Learn about the project from Northwestern and WeDriveU representatives at WeDriveU's booth #3020 or request a meeting in advance. More on WeDriveU at APTA 2026: https://bit.ly/46C8JQQ

About WeDriveU

WeDriveU is a leader in transportation solutions for communities, campuses, and workplaces, helping public and private sector customers reduce carbon emissions and traffic congestion by designing and operating safe and reliable shared alternatives to driving alone. WeDriveU's solutions encompass fixed-route public transit bus, paratransit, microtransit, commuter shuttles, and other demand-responsive services. WeDriveU is part of Mobico Group, a global mobility leader serving more than one billion annual bus and rail passenger journeys. Explore transit and university solutions at https://wedriveu.com.

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Joanna Rustin
WeDriveU
email us here
Visit us on social media:
LinkedIn

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