

New Light Rail Lines: Seven Minutes Between the Airport and Messe Düsseldorf

New light rail lines now link Düsseldorf Airport directly with the Exhibition Center, the city center and the main train station, cutting travel time between the airport and the North Entrance to just seven minutes. The route marks the first phase of a far-reaching infrastructure construction project, with further expansion stages to follow.

Düsseldorf, September 4, 2026. With today's launch of the new U80 and U81 light rail lines, Messe Düsseldorf becomes easier than ever to reach, especially for international guests: During trade shows, the U81 takes visitors directly from the airport terminal to the North Entrance in seven minutes via the "MERKUR SPIEL-ARENA/Messe Nord" station. The U80 connects the airport at regular intervals with the "Messe Ost/Stockumer Kirchstraße" stop, serving the East Entrance, the city center and the main train station.

"The new U80 and U81 light rail lines are an important step for mobility in Düsseldorf. They connect the airport, the exhibition center, the main train station and the city center more directly, thus enhancing access to the key hubs in our city. For Düsseldorf as a business and trade show city, that's a powerful signal," says Dr. Stephan Keller, Mayor of Düsseldorf and Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Messe Düsseldorf, welcoming the new connection.

An Advantage in International Competition

In 2025, more than one million visitors came to the 26 trade shows held at the Exhibition Center – with up to 74% of them traveling from outside Germany, depending on the event. "The new U80 and U81 light rail lines are good news for our guests and a tangible advantage for Düsseldorf as a trade show location," says Wolfram Diener, President & CEO of Messe Düsseldorf. "The direct connection between the airport, the exhibition center and the main train station noticeably improves travel to and from our Düsseldorf trade shows."

That's why Messe Düsseldorf is also looking ahead to the further stages in the expansion of the U81 line – from the link to the Düsseldorf Airport long-distance train station to the Rhine crossing and the connection to the neighboring city of Ratingen. Dubbed DUSconnect, the Düsseldorf Airport railway station is set to grow into a cutting-edge mobility hub that ties together local and long-distance transit, the autobahn, bike paths, and air travel. Messe Düsseldorf will be directly connected: "Düsseldorf as a trade show location competes with major business

hubs around the globe, and its infrastructure has to keep pace with that ambition," says Diener. "That's why we welcome the expansion plans and every step that helps to get them built soon."

Collaborating With Strong Partners

Numerous partners were involved in the infrastructure project over many years, including the City of Düsseldorf, the German Federal Government and the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, Rheinbahn AG, Düsseldorf Airport and Messe Düsseldorf, as well as numerous planning and engineering firms, construction companies, specialist contractors and other project partners.

The Messe Düsseldorf Group

Messe Düsseldorf is among the most successful trade show organizers worldwide. It hosts around 40 trade shows, including 20 leading international ones, at its 613,000-square-meter exhibition center in Düsseldorf, Germany. Across 18 halls, international market leaders and top decision-makers of various sectors get together every year in order to present and discover innovations, to exchange ideas and to network. Messe Düsseldorf's sectors of expertise include: "Machinery, Plants and Equipment," including metallurgy and foundry technology (inter alia drupa, K, interpack, glasstec, wire & Tube); "Retail, Trades and Services" (EuroShop, EuroCIS, ProWein); "Health and Medical Technology" (MEDICA, COMPAMED, REHACARE, A+A); "Lifestyle and Beauty" (beauty Düsseldorf, hair Düsseldorf, The Art of Beauty & Health); "Leisure" (boot, CARAVAN SALON); and "Mobility" (XPONENTIAL Europe, Flotte!). Completing this lineup are numerous conventions, corporate events, conferences and meetings by subsidiary Düsseldorf Congress. Abroad, Messe Düsseldorf organizes more than 80 events. The corporate group's global network encompasses 77 foreign representatives for 140 countries – including seven international subsidiaries.

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