

# T Transportation Committee

**Business Item**  
**SW** Item: 2008-244

**Meeting date: Sept 22, 2008**  
**For Metropolitan Council: Sept 24, 2008**

## ADVISORY INFORMATION

**Date:** Sept 9, 2008  
**Subject:** Northstar Commuter Rail Fares Public Review  
**District(s), Member(s):** All  
**Policy/Legal Reference:** Public Accountability Policy 2-1, Public Hearings Procedure 2-1b; Transit Fare Policy Changes 3-2-6, Implementing Procedure 3-2-6a  
**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit (612) 349-7510  
Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Manager, Metro Transit, (651) 602-1942  
Edwin D. Petrie, Director, Finance Metro Transit, (612) 349-7624  
Adam Harrington, Senior Mgr Ops Planning, Metro Transit (612) 349-7797  
**Division/Department:** Northstar Project Office, Metro Transit

## Proposed Action/Motion

That the Metropolitan Council authorize proposed Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth below for public comment at public hearings October 15<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

## Background

Passenger fares are an important part of operating revenues and budgeting for Northstar Commuter Rail. Setting the base fares for this service by the end of this year will allow preparation of budgets, fare collection software, communication material, fare media and implementation by late 2009.

This summer, the Northstar Corridor Joint Finance Working Group (representing Anoka, Hennepin and Sherburne County Staff, NCDA and Metro Transit/Project Office staff) has reviewed and analyzed a wide range of potential fare options for Northstar Commuter Rail. The analysis included a review of peer commuter rail systems, impacts on ridership and operating revenue. The Working Group and Northstar Corridor Development Authority recommend the following one-way “cash fare” base rates for public comment:

**Big Lake \$7.50**

**Elk River \$5.50**

**Anoka \$4.00**

**Coon Rapids \$4.00**

**Fridley \$3.25**

**Non-downtown station-station \$3.25**

On a demonstration basis, discounted off-peak, weekend and “Special Event” fares will be developed within or below these fare ranges in consideration of non-commute users, lower parking pricing and congestion levels in downtown Minneapolis during non-peak periods.

These fares will be presented at three public hearings in the Northstar Corridor

- o Downtown Minneapolis Library: Oct 15 noon-1:00pm
- o Anoka County Government Center Board Room: Oct 15 6:30-7:30pm
- o Sherburne County Government Center, Elk River: Oct 23 7:00-8:00pm

After public review and comment, staff will bring final recommendation to the NCDA and Metropolitan Council for approval.

These fares are subject to Council action taken in August to increase regional fares up to \$.50 in 2009.

### **Rationale**

The new fare set will better reflect the customer value of longer distance and higher quality service than express bus, while balancing ridership impacts and fare revenue generation.

### **Funding**

Setting fares in 2008 is essential for developing budgets fare software, media, administration procedures, promotion and future operational budget preparation.

### **Known Support / Opposition**

On September 4, the full NCDA approved the recommended fares for public review. Big Lake NCDA member expressed concern that \$7.50 is too high. Other NCDA members are concerned that revenue needs to be higher.