

T Transportation Committee
For the Metropolitan Council meeting of September 24, 2008

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: September 23, 2008

Subject: Northstar Commuter Rail Fares Public Review

Proposed Action: That the Metropolitan Council authorize proposed Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth below for public comment at public hearings October 15th and 23rd.

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.

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions: Adam Harrington presented an overview peer system fares, revenue and ridership impacts and staff recommendation. Some Committee members were concerned that proposed fares would not leverage enough revenue, and that given fuel pricing there may be a higher market value than the proposed fares.

In August 2008, Metropolitan Council authorized an additional regional fare increase up to \$.50 in 2009 that could be applied.

Proposed action was approved with one dissenting vote.

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 15th and 23rd.

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

- Downtown Minneapolis Library: Oct 15 noon-1:00pm
- Anoka County Government Center Board Room: Oct 15 6:30-7:30pm
- 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.

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.