

T Transportation Committee

Business Item

Item: 2009-178

AMENDED August 10, 2009

Meeting date: August 10, 2009

For Metropolitan Council: August 26, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: July 29, 2009

Subject: Northstar Commuter Rail Fare Approval

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

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Division/Department: Northstar Project Office, Metro Transit

Proposed Action/Motion

That the Metropolitan Council approves the recommended temporary and permanent Northstar Commuter Rail Fares for (1) Saturday and Sunday/Holiday Adult Fares; (2) Saturday and Sunday/Holiday Senior, Youth and Medicare Social Fares and (3) Fares for Persons with Disabilities as set forth below.

Background

After a detailed discussion at the July 13 Transportation Committee meeting, the Committee approved the weekday adult fares as recommended. These weekday adult fares are presented in Table 4 below.

The committee requested staff to return to a subsequent Transportation Committee with a new weekend fare that would reflect a similar "non-peak" rate discount to all customers as is applied to bus and light rail fares. The committee also requested clarification on Senior, Youth, Medicare and Persons with Disabilities Social fares. The fares developed for Senior, Youth, Medicare and persons with Disabilities were developed with similar discount percentages as the current bus system Peak and Offpeak fares.

Discussion at the June 24 Metropolitan Council meeting and July 13 Transportation Committee meeting include the desire to adjust Transit Fare Policy to match Federal Transit Administration (FTA) policy by removing the requirement to hold a public hearing when transit fares are adjusted lower. Transit Fare Policy 3-2-6, and 3-2-6a adjustments will be brought before the Transportation Committee and Metropolitan Council in a separate business item.

Recommendation

This amended business item recommends Introductory (temporary) and Permanent Commuter Rail Fares for Saturday, Sunday/Holiday Adult Fares (Table 1), and Saturday, Sunday/Holiday Senior, Youth, Medicare Social Fares (Table 2) and Fares for Persons with Disabilities (Table 3). An Introductory (temporary) Fare will be effective the first day of Northstar Commuter Rail Revenue Operations (up to a 12 month demonstration) in late 2009. The permanent fare will be effective 12 months after the first of Northstar Commuter Rail Revenue Operations. This permanent fare could be implemented earlier if approved by the Metropolitan Council.

The Introductory and Permanent Fare in Table 1 for Saturday, Sunday/Holiday service approximates the 25% discount fare for adult "non-peak" weekend express bus service as compared to the weekday peak rush rate. April 2009 Public Hearings stated the weekend fares would be within weekday fare rates. Bus issued transfers will apply a \$1.00 value towards all Northstar Fares.

Table 1: Saturday, Sunday/Holiday One-Way Adult Cash Fares

Saturday, Sunday/Holiday one-way adult cash fare to/from downtown Minneapolis

	Introductory (temporary up to 12 months)	Permanent (at or within 12 months)
Big Lake	\$5.25	\$6.00
Elk River	\$4.00	\$4.50
Anoka	\$3.00	\$3.00
Coon Rapids	\$3.00	\$3.00
Fridley	\$2.50	\$2.50
Non-downtown station-station	\$2.50	\$2.50

The Introductory and Permanent Fare in Table 2 for Senior, Youth and Medicare Social Fare customers approximates the up to 75% discount fare for "non-peak" weekend express bus service as compared to the weekday peak rush rate. These rates would apply to weekend/holiday: Seniors (65+), Youth (6-12), and Medicare Card Holders. These discounted fares are in compliance with Federal Reduced Fare Guidelines. Children ages 5 and under ride free when accompanied by a paid fare.

Table 2: Saturday, Sunday/Holiday Senior, Youth, Medicare Cash Social Fares

Senior, Youth, Medicare one-way cash social fare to/from downtown Minneapolis

	Introductory (temporary up to 12 months)	Permanent (at or within 12 months)
Big Lake	\$1.75	\$2.00
Elk River	\$1.25	\$1.50
Anoka	\$1.00	\$1.00
Coon Rapids	\$1.00	\$1.00
Fridley	\$0.75	\$0.75
Non-downtown station-station	\$0.75	\$0.75

The Introductory and Permanent Fare in Table 3 for Persons with Disabilities is for Weekday and Saturday, Sunday/Holiday Fares. These discounted fares are in compliance with Federal Reduced Fare Guidelines.

Table 3: Persons with Disabilities Weekday and Saturday, Sunday/Holiday Cash Fares

Persons with Disabilities Weekday and Saturday, Sunday/Holiday one-way cash social fare to/from downtown Minneapolis

	Introductory (temporary up to 12 months)	Permanent (at or within 12 months)
Big Lake	\$1.75	\$2.00
Elk River	\$1.25	\$1.50
Anoka	\$1.00	\$1.00
Coon Rapids	\$1.00	\$1.00
Fridley	\$0.75	\$0.75
Non-downtown station-station	\$0.75	\$0.75

APPROVED AT THE JULY 13, 2009 TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE:

Table 4: Weekday Adult Rates Approved at the July 13, 2009 Transportation Committee

The weekday adult rates approved at the July 13 Transportation Committee, which reflect the Metropolitan Council discussion at the June 24 meeting apply to all weekday trips regardless of the time of day.

Weekday Adult one-way cash fare to/from downtown Minneapolis

	Introductory (temporary up to 12 months)	Permanent (at or within 12 months)
Big Lake	\$7.00	\$8.00
Elk River	\$5.50	\$6.00
Anoka	\$4.00	\$4.00
Coon Rapids	\$4.00	\$4.00
Fridley	\$3.25	\$3.25
Non-downtown station-station	\$3.25	\$3.25

Rationale

The recommended fare pricing reflects current travel market conditions for commuter's value of long distance and high quality service, while balancing ridership impacts and fare revenue generation. It programs pricing flexibility in a volatile economy, and time for the weekend market to be established over the next twelve months. Staff will routinely update the Council with Northstar ridership and revenue reports during the first twelve months of revenue service.

Family/Group pass: Over the next several months staff will develop a family or group discount program with a goal of implementation prior to April 2010 when the Minnesota Twins will begin their first season at the new Target Field ballpark. The objective is to make fares more affordable for those customers traveling as a family or group such as those who may ride Northstar Commuter Rail on weekends/holidays.

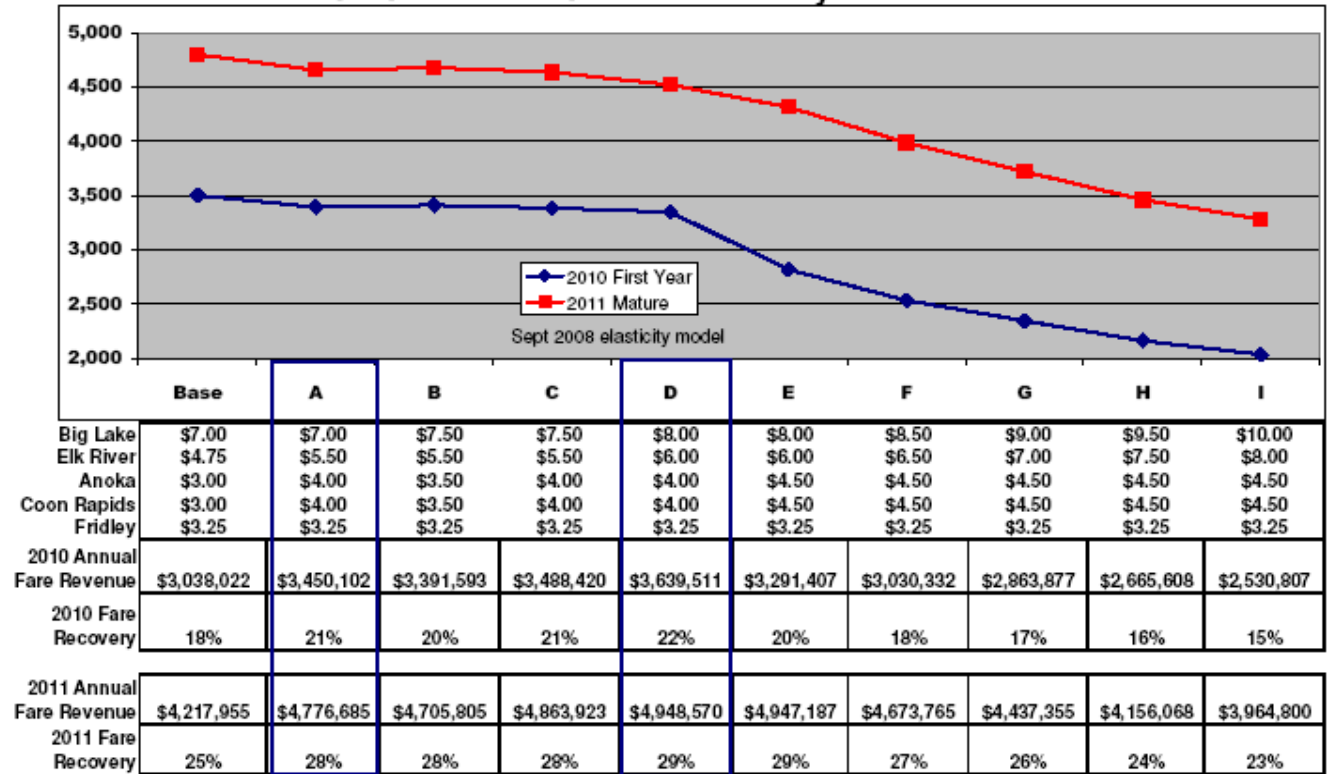
Funding

Setting fares is essential for managing the operating budget fare, software, media, administration procedures, promotion and future operational budget preparation. Fare revenue for the first year of operation is forecasted at 21% and for the second year of operations at 29%. (see table below).

Known Support / Opposition

The NCD Board approved the \$3.25 flat rate for all stations on weekends/holidays.

Northstar Commuter Rail Rides by Fare Price



Prepared by Metro Transit 7/9/2009