

**T** Transportation Committee  
Meeting date: November 22, 2009  
Metropolitan Council Meeting: December 8, 2010

**ADVISORY INFORMATION**

**Date:** November 15, 2010  
**Subject:** Approval of Highway Bus Rapid Transit Station-to-Station Fare Collection Method  
**District(s), Member(s):** Dist 5–Bowles, Dist 6–Leppik, Dist 7–Meeks, Dist 8–Wittsack, Dist 15–Wolter, Dist 16–Wulff  
**Policy/Legal Reference:** None  
**Staff Prepared/Presented:** Brian Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit (612-349-7510)  
Arlene McCarthy, Director, MTS (651-602-1754)  
Ed Petrie, Director of Finance –Metro Transit (612-349-7624)  
Tom Randall, Senior Manager Revenue Operations, Metro Transit (612-349-7364)  
Mary Karlsson, Senior Planner, MTS (651-602-1819)  
**Division/Department:** Transportation Division

**Proposed Action**

That the Metropolitan Council approve the Highway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Station-to-Station transitway service fare collection method recommendation of multiple door boarding with on-board fare collection via GoTo readers at all doors, a farebox at the front of the bus and supplemental on-board fare inspection.

**Background**

As part of the Regional Transitway Guidelines process, the Fare Collection Systems Technical Committee has been working to develop guidance that will assist in answering questions about how regional transitway system fares should be collected. The transit fare collection is presently seamlessly transferrable between modes and providers in the region. But to date, decisions on transitway fare collection methods have been made on a corridor-by-corridor basis. The I-35W BRT and Cedar Avenue BRT corridors are being developed by separate organizations (Metro Transit leading I-35W, Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority leading Cedar Avenue), with station-to-station services scheduled to begin in both corridors in 2012. With the region positioning to brand light rail transit and highway BRT station-to-station service as one system, the region is faced with challenges and opportunities to implement fare collection methods that continue to be convenient for customers but demonstrate the unity and unique identity of the transitway system.

Separate, but resulting from Transitway Guidelines development discussions, Council staff are proposing a fare collection method recommendation that establishes the operational approach for Highway BRT station-to-station service in the region. The approval of this recommendation will allow Metro Transit and Dakota County Regional Railroad Authority to move forward with vehicle and fare collection system procurements for I-35W and Cedar Avenue in advance of the scheduled 2012 openings. The approval will also allow the guidelines effort to continue developing guidelines that apply to fare collection systems as well as vehicles and stations.

## **Rationale**

- Council action is needed because this is a regional transit operating decision of system-wide importance, separate from the Transitway Guidelines process. Fare collection has significant capital and operating cost implications that impact future year budgets for both the Metropolitan Council and the Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB). The Highway BRT fare collection method recommendation will provide seamless, flexible, and effective fare collection on the region's transitway system. This recommendation will allow the region to realize potential travel time benefits and efficiently target enforcement efforts.
- This action will unite Highway bus rapid transit (BRT) station-to-station services in the region even though Metro Transit is leading development of I-35W BRT and Dakota County is leading development of Cedar Avenue BRT.
- This action will contribute to the transit customer's ability to clearly distinguish BRT from existing local or express bus service. This recommendation does not apply to express bus or local, connecting public transit services in light rail transit (LRT) or BRT corridors.
- This action will contribute to the transit customer's ability to recognize LRT and Highway BRT station-to-station services as premium services that will operate similarly. This recognition is important because the roles of these services should be defined and clearly communicated to the public prior to implementing BRT and expanding LRT beyond one corridor.

## **Funding**

There is no direct funding required for this action. It is anticipated that operating funding, net of passenger revenues collected, for Highway BRT station-to-station services will be shared equally by the Metropolitan Council and CTIB. Staff estimates that the incremental annual operating cost (above regular bus fare collection methods) for the recommended station-to-station system maybe between \$200,000 and \$250,000 per BRT corridor, primarily for the supplemental fare inspection.

## **Known Support / Opposition**

The Transitway Guidelines Advisory Committee includes representation from CTIB, Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), Suburban Transit Association (STA), and Metropolitan Council. The Advisory Committee was briefed on the recommendation at their October 25, 2010 meeting and will comment on the recommendations at their November 22, 2010 meeting. At the October 25 meeting, the STA representative was not supportive of the recommendation because it is not the fastest fare collection alternative possible and does not mirror LRT operations.

The recommendation was presented to CTIB on November 17, 2010. Dakota County representatives strongly disagreed with the recommendation noting the Cedar Avenue project budget included TVM costs and it was unacceptable to require exact change or a GoTo card of the occasional customers, specifically special event customers. MVTA technical staff representatives had previously noted that MVTA would not support this recommendation; however, no rationale or alternative suggestions were provided.