

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: June 25, 2009
Subject: Northstar Commuter Rail Fares recommendation

The following reflects action from the June 24, 2009 Metropolitan Council Meeting:

2009-178 - Northstar Commuter Rail Fares

It was moved by Scherer and seconded by Pistilli

"That the Metropolitan Council approves the recommended Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth below.

After reviewing public comment and commuter [market factors](#), staff recommended fares to the Joint Policy Group on May 27 representing the NCDCA and the Council. Northstar Commuter Rail Operating revenues for the recommended fare set are estimated to cover 21% of expenses in 2010, and 28% in 2011. This is less than a 1% variance from either previous proposal. By majority, the Group approved the cash fares as recommended below:

<u>One-way Weekday</u>	
Big Lake	\$7.00
Elk River	\$5.50
Anoka	\$4.00
Coon Rapids	\$4.00
Fridley	\$3.25
Non-downtown station-station	\$3.25
<u>One-way Saturday and Sunday/Holiday</u>	
All-station service	\$3.25

Limited promotional fare upon start of service (discount up to \$.50, duration to be determined)."

Amendment to 2009-178

With respect to the weekday fare structure: "It was moved by Bowles and seconded by Leppik

"to amend the original motion to say: accept the one-way weekday fares presented in Option D, with an introductory promotional one-way weekday fare in accordance with Option A, that, within the first year, shall change to the fares listed in Option D."

Motion carried on a show of hands.

Discussion then followed with respect to the weekend/holiday all-station fares, wherein a suggestion was made to return the entire item (as amended) to the Transportation Committee for further consideration.

AMENDED - 2009-178

It was moved by Scherer and seconded by Steffen

"That the Metropolitan Council return the entire item, as amended by the Bowles motion, to the Transportation Committee for further discussion, and encourage the Transportation Committee to

1. take into account the vote on the one-way weekday fare (i.e. accept the one-way weekday fares presented in Option D, with an introductory promotional one-way weekday fare (in accordance with Option A), that, within the first year, shall change to fares listed in Option D); and
2. focus on the One-way Saturday and Sunday/Holiday all-station service fare."

Motion carried on a show of hands.

T Transportation Committee
 For the Metropolitan Council meeting of June 8, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date Prepared: June 17, 2009
Subject: Northstar Commuter Rail Fares recommendation

Proposed Action: That the Metropolitan Council approves the recommended Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth below.

After reviewing public comment and commuter [market factors](#), staff recommended fares to the Joint Policy Group on May 27 representing the NCDCA and the Council. Northstar Commuter Rail Operating revenues for the recommended fare set are estimated to cover 21% of expenses in 2010, and 28% in 2011. This is less than a 1% variance from either previous proposal. By majority, the Group approved the cash fares as recommended below.

<u>One-way Weekday</u>	
Big Lake	\$7.00
Elk River	\$5.50
Anoka	\$4.00
Coon Rapids	\$4.00
Fridley	\$3.25
Non-downtown station-station	\$3.25

<u>One-way Saturday and Sunday/Holiday</u>	
All-station service	\$3.25

Limited promotional fare upon start of service (discount up to \$.50, duration to be determined).

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions: Adam Harrington presented an overview peer system fares, revenue and ridership impacts, local commuter market environment and staff recommendation.

There was extensive Committee discussion about the fare structure, regarding distance and equity, and fare revenue. Councilmember Meeks expressed concern about the weekend rate for all distances and questioned the value of operating commuter rail trains on the weekend. Councilmember Scherer expressed concern about the overall financial/business model of Commuter Rail and the high subsidy taxpayers pay to support the service. Mr. Harrington explained that it is a balance between setting fares, attracting riders when gas prices and congestion levels fluctuate in various segments of the corridor.

Motion to approve made by Councilmember Steffen, seconded by Councilmember Leppik and passed with Councilmember Meeks dissenting.

T Transportation Committee

Business Item

Item: 2009-178

Meeting date: June 8, 2009

For Metropolitan Council: June 24, 2009

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: June 3, 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
Staff Prepared/Presented: Brian J. Lamb, General Manager, Metro Transit 612 349-7510
Mark Fuhrmann, Deputy General Mgr, Metro Transit, 651 602-1942
Edwin D. Petrie, Director, Finance Metro Transit, 612 349-7624
Adam Harrington, Asst. Director Route & System Planning, Metro Transit 612 349-7797
Division/Department: Northstar Project Office, Metro Transit

Proposed Action/Motion

That the Metropolitan Council approves the recommended Northstar Commuter Rail Fares as set forth below.

Background

In September 2008, after commuter market and ridership elasticity modeling for a range of fare prices, the following cash fares were proposed for public review:

One-way Weekday

Big Lake	\$7.50
Elk River	\$5.50
Anoka	\$4.00
Coon Rapids	\$4.00
Fridley	\$3.25
Non-downtown station-station	\$3.25

At the Metropolitan Council's (Council) direction, Metro Transit and Northstar Project staff re-evaluated additional fare pricing scenarios and their modeled impact on ridership and revenue. Fare pricing scenarios evaluated ranged up to \$10.00 for one-way cash fare from Big Lake to Minneapolis.

These results were shared with and a recommendation supported by a Joint Policy Group on January 12, 2009. The Joint Policy Group meeting included Commissioners from Anoka, Hennepin and Sherburne Counties, Council Chair Bell, Council Councilmember Steffen, Council Regional Administrator Weaver, and project staff. All present concurred with presenting the cash fares as shown below to the public for comment.

One-way Weekday

Big Lake	\$8.00
Elk River	\$6.00
Anoka	\$4.00
Coon Rapids	\$4.00
Fridley	\$3.25
Non-downtown station-station	\$3.25

This proposal was presented at three public hearings in the Northstar Corridor:

- o Downtown Minneapolis Library: April 8, 12 noon-1:00 pm
- o Sherburne County Government Center, Elk River: April 8, 7:00-8:00 pm
- o Anoka County Government Center Board Room: April 14, 6:30-7:30 pm

Comments were received by the Data Center via US Mail, email, fax and phone until 5:00 pm April 24. A summary of comments is attached.

After reviewing public comment and commuter market factors (attached), staff recommended fares to the Joint Policy Group on May 27 representing the NCDA and the Council. Northstar Commuter Rail Operating revenues for the recommended fare set are estimated to cover 21% of expenses in 2010, and 28% in 2011. This is less than a 1% variance from either previous proposal. By majority, the Group approved the cash fares as recommended below.

Recommendation

One-way Weekday

Big Lake	\$7.00
Elk River	\$5.50
Anoka	\$4.00
Coon Rapids	\$4.00
Fridley	\$3.25
Non-downtown station-station	\$3.25

One-way Saturday and Sunday/Holiday

All-station service	\$3.25
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Limited promotional fare upon start of service (discount up to \$.50, duration to be determined).

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.

Funding

Setting fares is essential for managing the operating budget fare, software, media, administration procedures, promotion and future operational budget preparation.

Known Support / Opposition

This recommendation is supported by a Joint Policy Group representing NCDA and the Council and reflects the public comments received in April 2009.

**Northstar Commuter Rail
2009 Fare Proposal**

April Public Comment Summary: 122 comments

1. 60 comments received via email and comment line
 - i. Big Lake fare of \$8 is too high – suggested \$5.00-7.00
 - ii. Resolution from City of Big Lake supporting \$7.00 but not \$8.00
 - iii. Elk River fare of \$6 is too high – suggested \$4.75-5.00
 - iv. Car pool alternative is more attractive
 - v. Will drive to next less expensive Northstar park and ride
 - vi. Will drive to bus park and ride with more service and lower fare
 - vii. Commute drive-time is reduced with higher unemployment
 - viii. Suggest having a “group/family pass”
 - ix. Questions regarding MetroPass reimbursement

2. April 8, 2009: Downtown Minneapolis Library; CM Meeks opened
23 attended (Mostly existing bus riders)
 - i. Big Lake fare of \$8 is too high
 - ii. Elk River fare of \$6 is too high
 - iii. Car pool alternative is more attractive
 - iv. Will drive to next less expensive Northstar park and ride
 - v. Will drive to bus park and ride with more service and lower fare
 - vi. Commute drive-time is reduced with higher unemployment
 - vii. Questions regarding MetroPass reimbursement

3. April 8, 2009: Elk River/Sherburne Co Gov Ctr; CM Sanda opened
37 attended (Mostly existing bus riders)
 - i. Big Lake fare of \$8 too high
 - ii. Car pool alternative is more attractive
 - iii. Will drive to next less expensive Northstar park and ride
 - iv. Will drive to bus park and ride with more service and lower fare (Foley or Maple Grove)
 - v. Commute drive-time is reduced with higher unemployment
 - vi. Would like earlier AM train
 - vii. Would like later evening train
 - viii. Twins post game weekday train desired
 - ix. Questions regarding MetroPass reimbursement
 - x. A reporter from <http://www.westshburnetribune.com/> attended

4. April 14, 2009: Anoka Co Gov Ctr; CM Sanda & Steffen attended
2 existing riders attended
 - i. Questions about how the Go-To card “upcharge” works
 - ii. Peter Bodly from <http://www.abcnewspapers.com/> will go to print April 24.