

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: March 9, 2026

For the Metropolitan Council: March 25, 2026

Business Item: 2026-43

Authorization to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Fare Policy Changes

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes public hearings to accept comments on the proposed fare policy changes described in Attachment 1 to this item.

Summary of Transportation Committee discussion/questions

Metro Transit Senior Project Manager Tom Randall and Project Manager Dustin Crescini presented this item. Council Members asked clarifying questions about implementation, payment and technology specifics, as well as community outreach and employer involvement.

Motion by Obisakin, seconded by Pacheco. Motion carried.



Business Item

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Authorization to Hold Public Hearings on Proposed Fare Policy Changes

District(s), member(s):	All
Policy/legal reference:	FM12-2 Transit Fare Policy Changes and FM12-2a Transportation Service Fare Policy Changes Procedure, FTA Circular 4702.1B, MN State 473.408
Staff prepared/presented:	Lesley Kandaras, General Manager 612-349-7513 Alyssa Haugen, AGM -Admin & External Affairs 612-349-7502 Charles Carlson, Executive Director, MTS, 651-602-1761 Jillian Linnell, Chief of Staff, 612-349-7510 Thomas Randall, Sr PM, Fare Modernization, 612-349-7624 Dustin Crescini, Project Manager, Revenue Operations 612-349-7718
Division/department:	Transportation, Metro Transit and Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council authorizes public hearings to accept comments on the proposed fare policy changes described in Attachment 1 to this item.

Background

1. Minnesota Statutes section 473.408 establishes the Metropolitan Council's authority to establish and enforce fare policies.
2. On February 28, 2024, The Metropolitan Council approved a major upgrade of the technology and hardware devices of the regional fare collection system. This upgrade provides an opportunity for significant fare simplification of the regional system.
3. In 2024, Metropolitan Council staff, along with regional stakeholders and a fare collection consultant, determined a two-phased fare simplification plan would benefit the regional transit agencies and the transit customers.
4. The first phase of the fare simplification plan approved in 2024 implemented customer-focused changes, including eliminating rush-hour surcharges on local routes and for reduced-fare riders (youth ages 6–12 and seniors 65+), along with other fare product adjustments.
5. Phase 2 of the plan included a comprehensive fare policy review resulting in proposed fare policy changes, some of which are dependent on the completion of hardware and software upgrades. The Phase 2 proposed changes are included as Attachment 1 to this item.
6. Prior to final approval a Title VI Analysis will be completed to determine if any revisions in the proposed policy changes are needed to ensure proposed fare changes will not have a disparate impact on Black Indigenous Persons of Color ("BIPOC") or disproportionate burden on low-income transit customers. FTA Circular 4702.1B states a Title VI fare equity analysis requirement

applies to all fare changes regardless of the amount of increase or decrease. As with the service equity analysis, the Federal Transit Administration (“FTA”) requires transit providers to evaluate the effects of fare changes on low-income populations in addition to Title VI-protected populations.

Rationale

Customer engagement and feedback is an important part of this process. To encourage robust public participation to inform these proposed fare changes there will be three public hearings: two in-person hearings in the west and east metro areas and one virtual hearing. These hearings will be part of a more extensive public engagement process to gather feedback on the entire series of proposed fare policy changes. Following Council approval, public comments will be accepted for a 60-day period, from March 26 through May 26, 2026.

Proposed hearing locations, dates, and times:

Public Hearing for Proposed Fare Policy Changes #1

Tuesday, May 5, 2026

6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Minneapolis Central Library

S-275 RKMC Room

300 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis, MN 55401

Transit service to this location in the evening is provided on the METRO Blue, Green, E and Orange Lines, as well as Routes 4, 14, and 61.

Public Hearing for Proposed Fare Policy Changes #2

Wednesday, May 6, 2026

5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.

George Latimer Central Library

Otto Bremer Community Room (1st Floor)

90 West 4th Street, Saint Paul, MN 55102

Transit service to this location in the evening is provided on the METRO Green, B and Gold Lines, as well as Routes 54, 61, 63, 64, 72, 74, and 94.

Public Hearing for Proposed Fare Policy Changes #3

Thursday, May 14, 2026

11a.m. - 1 p.m.

Microsoft Teams: Virtual Public Hearing: Proposed Fare Policy Changes

In addition to providing comments at the public hearings, the public will be invited to submit comments through an online comment form available on SurveyMonkey or by telephone call. All feedback will be considered regardless of whether it was given at a public hearing or through other engagement opportunities, such as community meetings, pop-up events at transit centers and when staff ride buses and trains to speak with customers.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Transit fare simplification advances *Thrive MSP 2040* regional outcomes by providing riders with transit rides on local routes for the same fares throughout the day without morning and afternoon surcharges. It removes cost barriers for seniors and youth transit customers by eliminating the significant fare increases during the morning and evening peak times. Simplifying fares helps reduce barriers and encourage people to ride transit which helps contribute to regional stewardship, prosperity, livability, equity, and sustainability using a data driven approach to measure the effectiveness of the Council's efforts.

Funding

The Metropolitan Council approved Business Item 2024-305 on November 13, 2024, and implemented the adjusted fares on January 1, 2025. This fare adjustment recommendation proposes fare adjustments for fixed route services operated by all regional transit providers participating in the regional fare structure and Metro Transit Micro services.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small business contracting with the proposed action.

