



Metropolitan Council

2025 Transportation Budget Recommendations



February 10, 2025 – Chair Charlie Zelle

Metropolitan Council

Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan's budget includes



Authorization to advance funds to MnDOT to coordinate major highway and transitway construction.



Making fares for Metro Mobility riders permanently free on regular route transit.



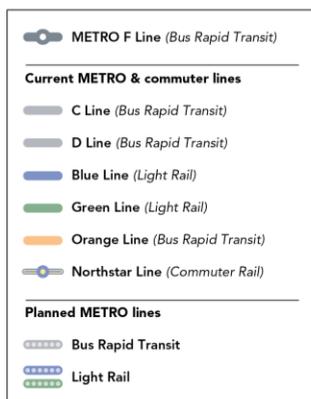
Reduction of \$32.454m annually starting in state FY26 from the general fund for transit operations at the Met Council.

Regional Sales and Use Tax MnDOT lending authority



F Line

July 2023



Authorizes advancing funds to MnDOT to coordinate major highway and transitway construction

- Authorizes Met Council to use regional transportation sales and use tax revenue under **section 297A.9915** for key trunk highway corridors.
- Allows Met Council to fund up-front capital costs to start MnDOT highway projects in coordination with transitway construction.
- Permits MnDOT to repay costs to Met Council over time based on mutually determined repayment terms.
- Allows Met Council to advance up to \$250M to MnDOT to advance one coordinated roadway and transitway construction project.
- Minimizes community and traveling disruption and eliminates duplicate or redundant construction.

Free fares for Metro Mobility riders on regular route transit



Makes permanent a 2023 / 2024 legislative pilot project

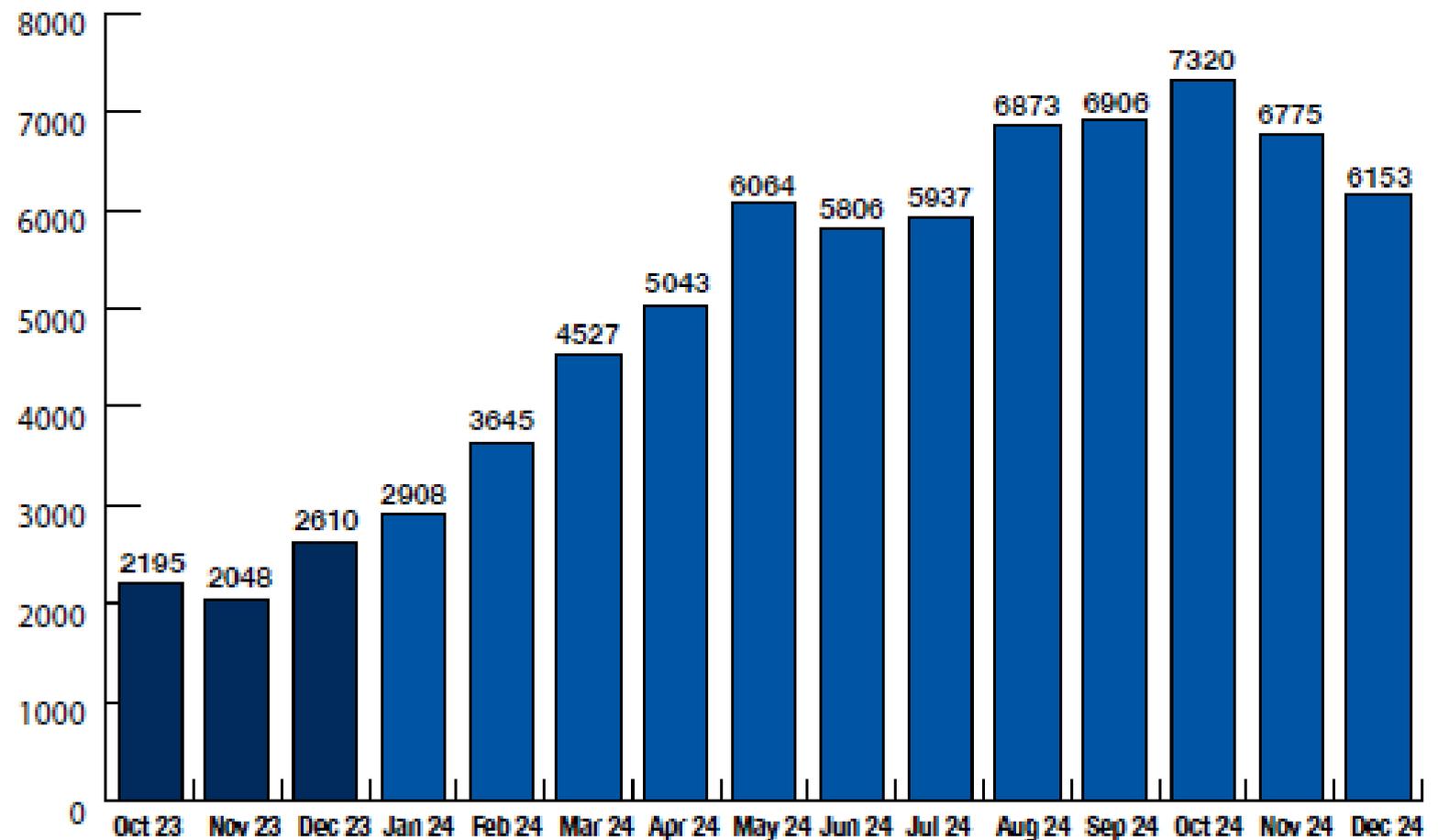
- Allow Metro Mobility certified riders to board any regular route bus or train for free.
 - Free fares would apply on all regular route service provided by regional transit providers.
- Create better access to affordable transportation for people who have a disability.
- Allow greater personal freedom to meet travel needs, especially spontaneous trips.
- Shift appropriate rides from Metro Mobility to the regular route system.
- Absent legislative action, the Council will need to consider restoring the fare for Metro Mobility riders
 - The Council voted for \$0.01 fares from January to June 2025 while the legislature considers this recommendation.

Free fares for Metro Mobility riders on regular route transit (2)

2023 / 2024 pilot program outcomes

- The legislature directed the Met Council to implement a free fare pilot program that began on July 1, 2023 that provided for free rides on regular route transit for Metro Mobility certified riders.
- The Met Council tracked these rides from 10/2023 to 12/2024.
 - Nearly 75,000 free-fare rides by Metro Mobility certified riders on the regular route system, averaging almost 5,000 rides per month.

FREE-FARE TRIPS BY METRO MOBILITY CERTIFIED RIDERS ON REGULAR ROUTE TRANSIT



Oct. 2023 to Dec. 2024
Pilot Total
74,811

Monthly Average
4,987

Reduce general fund for transit operations



Reduce \$32.454M annually starting in FY26

- This is a 100% reduction in the appropriation from the general fund to the Met Council for transit operations. This reduction aligns with broader strategic decisions to minimize general fund impacts across state government.
- The Council would instead rely on other revenue sources for transit operations.
- The Council remains strongly financially positioned and service levels will not be impacted.



Charlie Zelle

Chair, Metropolitan Council

