



# Metropolitan Council

2025 Transportation Budget Recommendations



January 29, 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.



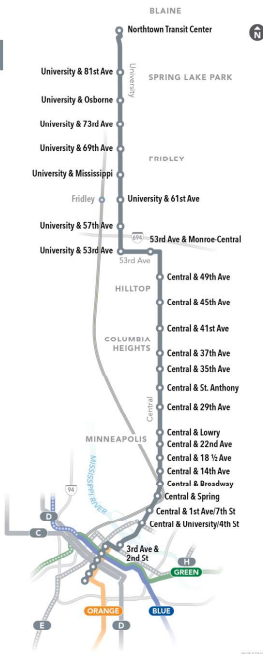
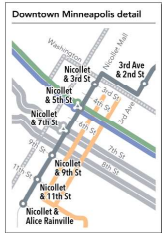
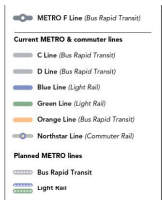
Reduction of \$32.454m annually starting in state FY26 from the general fund for rail operations at the Met Council.

# 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

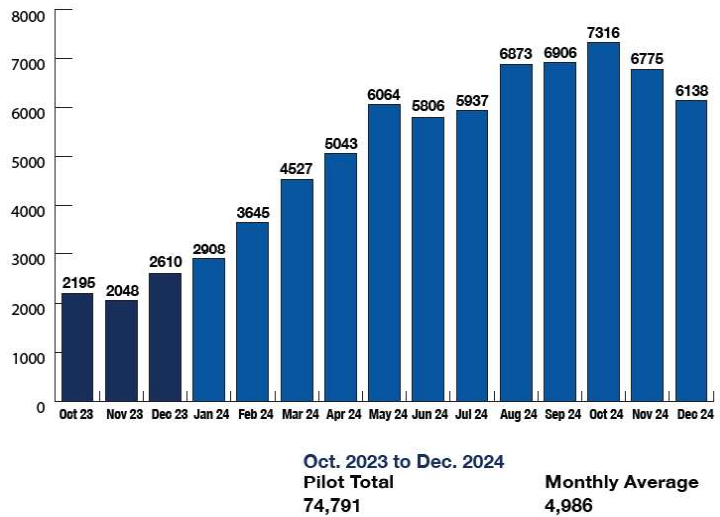
- Allow Metro Mobility certified riders to board any regular route bus or train for free.
  - Free fares would apply on all regular route service provided by regional transit providers.
- Create better access to affordable transportation for people who have a disability.
- Allow greater personal freedom 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



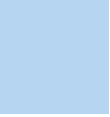
# Reduce general fund for rail operations

## Reduce \$32.454M annually starting in FY26

- This is a 100% reduction in the appropriation of general fund to the Met Council for rail 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 light rail and commuter rail.
- The Council remains strongly financially positioned and service levels will not be impacted.







**Charlie Zelle**

Chair, Metropolitan Council

