

Committee Report

Transportation Committee



Committee meeting date: May 12, 2025

For the Metropolitan Council: May 14, 2025

Business Item: 2025-114 SW

Northstar Equipment Lease Agreements with DART and Amtrak, Contract 25M036

District(s), member(s): All

Policy/legal reference: Minn. Stat. Section 473.129, Subd. 7.

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Division/department: Metro Transit – Northstar Operations

Proposed action

That the Metropolitan Council (Council) authorize the Regional Administrator to negotiate and execute lease agreement 25M036 with Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) on behalf of Trinity Railway Express (TRE), and with Amtrak of idle Northstar equipment, subject to FTA concurrence.

Background

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART), on behalf of Trinity Railway Express (TRE), has requested to lease excess rolling stock from Metro Transit to support its commuter rail service in preparation for and during the World Cup soccer events in the summer of 2026. They have requested one locomotive, one cab car, three coach cars and additional equipment, if it becomes available. The duration of this lease will be as early as June 2025 through August 2026.

Amtrak has recently downed its Horizon fleet due to safety concerns. They have reached out to MNDOT and Metro Transit to lease Northstar commuter rail equipment to serve its Hiawatha line between Chicago and Milwaukee. They have requested one locomotive, three coach cars and one cab car.

Based on the current and expected levels of Northstar service during the time requested, this equipment is available for both of these purposes with no expected impact on daily or event commuter rail services.

Rationale

This action will allow the Metropolitan Council and Metro Transit to support events of national significance with under-utilized fleet resources.

Thrive lens analysis

On Feb. 12, 2025, the Council adopted Imagine 2050, which builds on policy direction in Thrive MSP 2040. Under the Thrive lens, this resolution is responsive to external requests to help with 2Metropolitan Council national interests and supports the Thrive outcome of Stewardship by ensuring we balance stakeholder needs and long-term priorities for Metro Transit.

Funding

None required.

Small business inclusion

There are no direct impacts to small business with this action.

