



7. FARE-COLLECTION SYSTEMS GUIDELINES

These guidelines should be considered collectively when making fare collection system decisions for transitways.

7.1. PROVEN AND RELIABLE FARE-COLLECTION SYSTEM METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Transitway fare-collection systems should be modern, be consistent with best practices from comparable transitways in the region, and use proven technologies.

Fare-collection systems are continuously evolving to incorporate new technologies and methods to improve efficiency, reliability, and convenience for the customer while ensuring fares are collected and appropriate information is available for transit provider decision-making. To support these performance characteristics, transitway fare-collection systems should clearly convey efficiency through innovation and incorporate best practices from comparable transitways. To ensure expected benefits are achieved from fare-collection investments, fare-collection system components should be proven reliable with long-term viability.

7.2. FARE-COLLECTION SYSTEM SUPPORTS CUSTOMER CONVENIENCE

Transitway fare-collection systems should support equal accessibility for customers of all ages and abilities, whether frequent or occasional riders, by providing fare products at a variety of prices that are easy to use. Methods for payment should be well communicated, consistent, and predictable and provide a seamless experience for customers using multiple transit modes in the region. While meeting the other fare-collection system guidelines, transitway fare-collection system should do the following:

- **Provide options to customers at the level of their preferred investment in fare payment products (i.e., single ride, multiple ride, or period pass).**
- **Provide consistent and predictable systems that enable customers of all ages and abilities pay their fare and do not require customers to know how to pay their fare before entering a transitway station.**
- **Use images and words to convey key fare-collection information such as cost to ride, fare media accepted, fare-collection location and mechanism, and the fare-validation or enforcement process.**

Transitways are intended to provide service that emphasizes customer accessibility and convenience. To achieve these performance objectives, the transitway fare-collection systems should meet the needs of both frequent and occasional customers. The primary customer needs in terms of fare payment vary according to customer financial resources, transit riding experience, and language, physical, and cognitive abilities.



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According to Guideline 10.2. Coordination of Agencies and Stakeholders, it may be desirable to have a communications and marketing committee while planning, designing, constructing, or operating a transitway corridor. The purpose of this group would be to deliver an effective and comprehensive rider communication/education effort during the start-up of the transitway service. The committee's efforts should include providing information on fare payment.

7.3. FARE-COLLECTION SYSTEM SUPPORTS SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Transitway fare-collection systems should support service requirements by integrating with the region's existing fare-collection system, supporting changes in fare policy, and supporting efficient boarding time, fare validation, and reliable travel times that are competitive with comparable travel modes.

The operation of fare-collection systems is a key consideration. Along with reliability and convenience, transitways are intended to provide service that is fully integrated with the rest of the regional transit system. Regional fare policy will be periodically updated by the Metropolitan Council to address changes in the regional operating environment, transit service levels, or new services. Recent changes included a fare increase, introduction of new fare media, and the creation of fares for new services such as Hiawatha LRT in 2005 and Northstar Commuter Rail in 2009. The fare-collection system should offer flexibility to respond to these types of changes.

7.4. FARE-COLLECTION SYSTEM SUPPORTS ACCURATE AND COMPLETE DATA RECORDING AND PROCESSING

Transitway fare-collection systems should provide accurate, detailed revenue and ridership data commensurate with data provided by other comparable services and existing transit provider expectations. Ridership data collected using fare-collection systems is used along with other ridership data for the analysis of service efficiency and effectiveness, and for federal reporting.

Passenger fares comprise a significant portion of transit funding within the region, so it is critical that fare-collection systems are accurate, complete and secure. The fare-collection and validation systems are also presently the primary ridership data source for transit service development and analysis, as well as annual reporting required by federal funding regulations. While emerging technologies may allow the primary source of ridership data to change in the future, transitway fare-collection systems should continue to be a rich data source to measure, improve, and enhance transitway service and corroborate other ridership data collection techniques into the future. Revenue data should be provided at an expected level of detail comparable to other agency components and existing standards.



7.5. FARE-COLLECTION SYSTEM FITS WELL IN THE REGION

Transitway fare-collection systems should be a good fit for the region. In evaluating fit and making fare-collection system decisions, the Metropolitan Council will work with project partners to identify and evaluate factors including, but not limited to, a system's ability to meet the guidelines listed above, as well as its relationship to existing fare-collection methods in the region, in the corridor, capital and operating costs (including enforcement costs, if any), passenger characteristics, customer convenience, transitway operations performance, system flexibility/adaptability, vehicle and/or station's ability to accommodate fare-collection equipment, estimated travel-time impacts, customer perception, and driver interaction requirements.

Transitway fare-collection systems should build on the strengths of the region's existing transit fare-collection system and it should be acknowledged when selecting any new fare-collection system that the decision sets direction in the region for a considerable timeframe. For these reasons, the region should perform a detailed analysis when preparing to select a fare-collection system for a transitway. The analysis should carefully evaluate a system's ability to meet the guidelines provided above, as well as the following factors:

- Relationship to existing fare-collection methods in the region – a number of fare-collection methods are in use in the region today. The region should identify and evaluate functional similarities and differences between any proposal and existing fare-collection methods.
- Existing fare-collection methods in the corridor – customers will benefit and find transitway service easier to use if fare-collection methods within a transitway corridor are reasonably consistent and well communicated. For example, if all but one station within a corridor warrants installation of ticket vending machines, consider installing ticket vending machines at all stations in the corridor.
- Capital and operating costs – operating costs should include enforcement costs for any scenarios where a vehicle's driver is unable to effectively monitor fare collection for all riders.
- Passenger characteristics – including share of frequent and occasional/special event riders, express and station-to-station riders, Go-To card and cash users, etc. of total riders and new riders.
- Customer convenience – including forms of payment accepted by the proposed fare-collection system (e.g., cash, inexact change, credit card) and availability of nearby transit fare retail outlets (e.g., Cub Foods, CVS, etc).
- Transitway operations performance – the fare-collection method should be considered as one of the factors with potential to enhance operational efficiencies and passenger conveniences on transitways (e.g., boarding and overall transit travel times can be reduced when fare-collection changes are implemented on routes with regularly high volumes of cash paying customers).



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- System flexibility/adaptability – transitway ridership demands vary throughout the day and year. System flexibility is an important consideration in managing costs and meeting customer expectations. The region should identify and evaluate opportunities for flexible use of potential fare-collection methods.
- Vehicle and/or station’s ability to accommodate fare-collection equipment – fare-collection equipment requires space, power, and security on vehicles and/or at transitway stations. The region should identify and evaluate transitway vehicle and/or stations’ ability to meet these requirements for potential fare-collection systems.
- Estimated travel-time impacts – the transitway travel-time impacts of different fare-collection methods vary. Boarding volumes per station per trip are also a travel time factor that may influence fare-collection decisions. The region should identify and evaluate estimated travel-time impacts for potential fare-collection methods.
- Customer perception – the region is working to develop broad understanding of the transit system among the general public. The region should identify and evaluate how transit patrons will perceive potential fare-collection methods as compared to existing fare-collection methods in the region.
- Driver interaction requirements – customer-driver interactions regarding fare collection often increase transit station dwell times and place substantial knowledge demands on the driver. The region should identify and evaluate anticipated driver interaction requirements for potential fare-collection methods.