



May 9, 2022

Chair Hornstein, Chair Newman and members of the HF 4293 Conference Committee,

In advance of the conference committee convening, I would like to share the Metropolitan Council's perspective on a number of provisions in the House and Senate Transportation articles that relate to the Metropolitan Council.

First, I want to express our appreciation for recognizing the importance of providing matching funds for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) programs for electric buses and infrastructure for our transit system. These investments will help Metro Transit advance our Zero Emission Bus Transition Plan and achieve the environmental benefits that electrifying our system will have for the region. The Governor has recommended \$23.2M for metro area transit between a general fund appropriation and the MnDOT multimodal fund. I ask that you consider investing at this level. While the Senate bill does provide IIJA matching funds, it comes at a long-term cost to our general fund base in FY 23 and beyond. I oppose this strategy and any deviation from our current budget agreement.

The Senate position includes several policy provisions that relate to guideways that are troublesome. I am strongly opposed to any effort to suspend the construction of a line or add a municipal consent provision that would allow a municipality to revoke their previous consent for a project that has already completed the local planning phase. I am also concerned that changing the funding approach to regional guideways would make it difficult to implement the regional transitway vision.

The Senate bill contains another provision that may potentially change the selection of Metropolitan Council members and its overall governance that I oppose. My opposition is based on the absence of any formal committee action on this issue in either the House or Senate committee process. Any decision regarding governance needs comprehensive engagement by regional stakeholders, the legislature, and the administration.

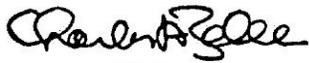
Regarding Northstar, the Senate provision to ask the FTA to discontinue service is premature. We will be looking at the potential termination of the service as one of the options included in a study we are conducting with MnDOT and the counties that have contributed to its construction and operations. I would also add there are other entities that would be impacted in the potential termination of the line that need to be considered beyond the FTA. Our study will include them as well.

I am supportive of the House position that provides statutory authority for the Metropolitan Council to establish an administrative citations program for fare enforcement. This is an initiative that the Metropolitan Council has constructively worked with both of you and many other legislators on over several legislative sessions. I believe authorization and implementation of an administrative citations program will improve our service and customer experience. I also believe there is some common ground between us on this initiative, and I hope we can finally pass it this year.

Lastly, I would also like to take the opportunity to ask you to consider investing the in Blue Line Extension. This project is an essential component of our regional transit and transportation system. The Governor has recommended \$200 million for the project and your strong consideration would be appreciated.

I appreciate your thoughtful consideration of these comments and I look forward to working with all of you over the next few weeks as we negotiate a bill. Please reach out to me or Judd Schetnan with any questions or comments. We are available to meet at your convenience.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Charles A. Zelle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Charles" being the most prominent.

Charles A. Zelle
Chair, Metropolitan Council