

# CREATING A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT PUTS PEOPLE FIRST



**Public transit creates more affordable, connected, and resilient communities where everyone can get around and all of us can thrive. Minnesotans are counting on lawmakers to protect and expand investments in transit this session!**

In Minnesota, we have so much to be proud of. We care for each other and our communities, and have become a north star for the rest of the nation. So it comes as no surprise that Minnesotans want a transportation system that works for everyone.

**Minnesotans recognize that public transit benefits all of us, whether we ride it or not.** High-quality transit strengthens our communities, improves access to jobs and resources, reduces traffic on our streets, and protects our health and our climate. Transit is also one of the most affordable transportation options for many families, students, workers, and seniors—helping Minnesotans make ends meet when budgets are tight.

Thanks to community advocates and legislative champions, Minnesota has made tremendous progress in recent years, passing ground-breaking policies and dedicated funding for high-quality transit. In 2026, Minnesotans are counting on lawmakers to defend and expand investments in transit that are improving daily life for people of all ages, races, incomes, and abilities statewide.

## BOOST COMMUTER BENEFITS FOR WORKERS

In the Twin Cities, the public transit network is expanding, providing service to many workplaces. To boost ridership and promote active transportation, lawmakers should **require that Twin Cities metro employers with 50 or more employees and within one mile of regular route transit service provide commuter benefits to employees taking transit, walking, biking, rolling, or carpooling to work.** We call on lawmakers to require that eligible employers offer their workers: pre-tax purchase of transit passes, the option to swap subsidized or no-cost parking for a cash payout, or a monthly stipend for biking or carpooling for work commutes. **A proven policy in other states, commuter benefits would not only support job retention and economic development but also reduce traffic and improve air quality for everyone in the community.**



## TURN TRANSIT VISIONS INTO ACTION

Right now, one-third of Minnesotans would be more likely to use buses and trains if there were greater access to transit where they live. In the Twin Cities, dedicated funding is helping to build and maintain an equitable and accessible system that meets the needs of all community members. But we need state lawmakers to **ensure the resources we've already invested are used well** to meet people's needs for fast, frequent, convenient service.

Currently, only 200,000 residents have access to transit routes with service every 10 minutes. Lawmakers must pass the Transit for a Resilient Metro bill that mandates that the **Met Council set ambitious transit benchmarks** to expand access—including 15-minute service for at least 1 million people by 2040—and **create an investment framework to meet those goals.**



# UNLEASH NEW AND EXISTING RESOURCES TO IMPROVE PUBLIC TRANSIT

Investments in public transit are investments in the common good: cleaner air, more affordable cities, and better access to jobs, schools, groceries, healthcare, and visits with friends and family. In 2026, Minnesotans are counting on lawmakers to advance the transit system that our communities deserve and that future generations need to prosper in four important ways:

## Champion Bonding for Bus Rapid Transit

Despite the rising costs of owning and maintaining a vehicle, 85% of Twin Cities residents drive because “it’s the fastest option.” Fortunately, bus rapid transit routes provide fast, convenient choices for a growing number of residents across the region. With high-quality bus shelters, quick boarding, and dedicated lanes, the BRT network is getting Minnesotans to work and other essential destinations in less time and with more reliability. To bring this high-quality bus service to more people, we call on lawmakers to **provide \$75 million in general obligation bonds to develop the METRO H Line between downtown Minneapolis and the east side of Saint Paul.**

## Support an Equal Share for Public Transit

Minnesotans want healthy, affordable, and sustainable transportation options—and they support policies that redirect resources to make it happen. Statewide polling shows 66% of Minnesotans support improving transportation options by “using funding from the state and federal government which would otherwise go to highway expansion.”

Today, 60% of revenue from the Motor Vehicle Sales Tax goes to highways, while only 40% goes to public transit. **An equal 50-50 split would mean an extra \$113 million for transit this year and millions more in future years.** Lawmakers should increase transit’s share of MVST funding to 50% and raise the portion of transit dollars set aside for Greater Minnesota from 5.7% to 10%.

As more Minnesotans struggle to afford the growing expense of owning a car, shifting MVST revenues will make daily life more affordable for Minnesota families, workers, and seniors.

## Allow Flexible Dollars for Transit, Biking, Walking, and Rolling

Minnesotans want clean air and connected communities—but unfettered spending on highways has divided our neighborhoods and made driving the largest source of climate pollution. But right now, more than \$2 billion every year of State of Minnesota transportation resources can only be used for highway projects. State and local jurisdictions should be able to flex these dollars to invest in a more sustainable transportation system that will benefit our climate and communities—today and for the next generation. To unleash these resources, **lawmakers must clarify the State’s definition of highway purposes to include infrastructure for walking, biking, rolling, and public transit.**

## Expand Free Fare Pilots to Combat Food Insecurity

Transportation costs and access to safe and healthy foods are significant barriers for many Minnesotans. To reduce these expenses and help support community members who have limited or uncertain food access, **lawmakers must renew Metro Transit’s fare free pilot on at least two new routes where there are the highest estimated proportions of riders considered food-insecure** and significant connections to grocery stores, food shelves, SNAP/WIC eligible locations, and community meal providers.

A new pilot will build on the successes of the Metro Transit free fare pilot program implemented in 2023-2024, which saw a **26% ridership increase on Route 32 and 16.5% increase on Route 62.**



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