



January 28, 2025

Members of the Minnesota Senate and Minnesota House of Representatives,

On January 16, Governor Walz proposed cutting transit, walking and biking by \$32 million annually. This proposal would drastically undermine the promised expansion of bus service and Bus Rapid Transit throughout the metro area which was a centerpiece of the historic 2023 Transportation Bill. It will likely also affect walking and biking infrastructure. **We call on the Legislature to defend its 2023 victory and reject the Governor’s proposed roll back of the critical investments in public transit needed for equity and climate.**

The Governor’s proposed \$32 million cut ([page 14 of PDF, 2026-27 Governor’s Biennial Budget Recommendations](#)) is described as “a 100% reduction in the appropriation to the Metropolitan Council for rail operations.” But this is misleading. The actual cut will be felt by bus riders throughout the metro area and every Minnesotan expecting the state to deliver on its promises in the 2023 Transportation Bill.

Both currently operating LRT lines (Green Line and Blue Line) and developing LRT lines (Green Line Extension or “Southwest” and Blue Line Extension or “Bottineau”) were built, or are being built, with federal dollars. The Met Council is therefore obligated to the Federal Transit Administration to build and operate these LRT lines as planned. Consequently, **the Governor’s proposed transit cuts will flow downhill to the bus system and those who depend on it.**

In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature led the nation in passing the 2023 Transportation Bill specifically for an aggressive build out of needed infrastructure for bus transit, walking and biking. As highlighted on [Transit Equity Day in 2023](#), “bus neglect” is a nationwide problem. Minnesota is not immune. Many regions around the county fail to build effective transit systems either through overall lack of investment, or by building a two tiered system in which rail is supported but buses are not.

Minnesota Legislators, learning from the failures of other regions, made a different choice. Minnesota's few existing arterial Bus Rapid Transit projects (A Line, C Line, D Line) have successfully increased ridership, and restored post-pandemic ridership faster than elsewhere. Knowing that our successes with BRT are nationally recognized, former House Transportation Chair Frank Hornstein correctly noted that the investments in the 2023 Transportation Bill would allow Minnesota to become "the Capital of Bus Rapid Transit."

In passing the 2023 Transportation Bill, the legislature was making up for decades of underinvestment. The impacts of state inaction are real. **We have been underinvesting in transit:**

- Compared to the need to address the climate crisis as increases in Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) have far outstripped increases in population.
- Compared to the need for equitable access to jobs and opportunity especially for the many Minnesotans who are too young, too old, physically challenged, or economically distressed for whom driving a car is not an option. Even if everyone could drive, effectively requiring everyone to pay [\\$12,000 a year to own and operate a vehicle](#), shuts out a lot of people from economic opportunity.
- Compared to our peer regions, putting us at a competitive disadvantage, especially when it comes to attracting young workers to our aging state.

The Governor's proposed \$32 million cut claims "the proposed reduction will not result in a change of service level or number of riders served" [page 15 of PDF](#). This would not be true for bus riders. If passed, the Governor's cut would undermine future bus service operations and capital, including the promised expansion of Bus Rapid Transit and electrification of Metro Transit's bus fleet.

Infrastructure for walking and biking will likely also be affected because the Met Council is expected to make up for the loss of state dollars by relying on the regional transportation sales tax enacted during the 2023 legislative session which also funds walking and biking.

Additionally, while the Biden Administration oversaw historical investments in transit and biking, the Trump Administration has already paused disbursements of transportation infrastructure funds from IIJA. This is not the time to cut state investments in transit when federal funding is no longer a guarantee.

The Legislature must defend its historic victory for equity and climate from the Governor's proposed rollback. Please reject the Governor's proposal to reduce investments in public transit.

Sincerely,

100%

The Alliance

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1005

Center for Transportation & Environment

Communications Workers of America Local 7304

Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota

Fresh Energy

Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate

Minnesota Environmental Partnership

MN350

Move Minnesota & Move Minnesota Action

Our Streets

Resilient Cities and Communities

Sierra Club

Sustain Saint Paul

TakeAction Minnesota