

## City Council – Action Request Form

**Date:** August 4, 2025

**To:** Mayor, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Members of the City Council

**From:** Jeff Fansler, Director of Transportation  
Kelly Garvin, Assistant Director of Transportation  
Aaron King, Assistant City Manager

**Council Action Requested:**

Resolution Adopting an Extreme Weather and Special Events Fare Policy Change for the Winston-Salem Transit Authority.

**Strategic Focus Area:** Quality Transportation

**Strategic Objective:** N/A

**Strategic Plan Action Item:** N/A

**Key Work Item:** No



**Summary of Information:**

Rising summer temperatures have raised concerns for the community's most vulnerable population. Access to climate-controlled facilities is a barrier for some community members when seeking relief from extreme temperatures. Staff conducted a review of peer agencies to better understand the industry approach to free or reduced fare during periods of extreme temperatures, both extreme heat and cold.

The Winston-Salem Department of Transportation (WSDOT) found that formal fare policy that waived or reduced fare during extreme heat or cold was not a standard practice amongst peer agencies. In general, transit providers across the state do not have published policies or procedures for reduced fare during climate extremes.

**Committee Action:**

**Committee**

**Action**

**For**

**Against**

**Remarks:**

City Council establishes fare policy for Winston-Salem Transit Authority (WSTA), and staff recommends amending the policy by waiving fares for fixed route transit service when the heat index or wind chill introduces a health risk for community members without places of relief. Staff has reviewed the National Weather Services' published weather criteria for designating hazardous weather conditions and makes the following recommendations for temperature thresholds that would activate fare free transit service with the intent to provide free fixed route service during select hours of extreme weather as determined by the National Weather Service and meeting the following criterion:

### **Extreme Cold Weather**

**Threshold:** Any consecutive 4 hours where the apparent temperature (wind chill) is at or below 20°F

**Criteria:** Forecasted apparent temperature in Winston-Salem as published by the National Weather Service

**Hours of Fare Free Operation:** Any operational hour (minimum of 4 hours) that the apparent temperature remains at or below 20°F

**Fare:** \$0.00

### **Extreme Heat**

**Threshold:** Any part of a service day where the air temperature is at or above 95°F and the heat index is at or above 100°F

**Criteria:** Forecasted temperature and heat index in Winston-Salem as published by the National Weather Service

**Hours of Fare Free Operation:** 10am – 7pm

**Fare:** \$0.00

Approval of this resolution would authorize the City Manager or designee, to temporarily waive transit fares when the extreme temperature thresholds are met. If fares are duly waived, the WSDOT and the WSTA, in partnership with the City of Winston-Salem Marketing and Communications Department, would issue a notice to community agencies, transit riders, media partners, and local press to signify the change in transit fare to combat climate extremes.

WSTA's daily average fare recovery revenue is approximately \$2,300. Periods of fare free transit operation would not significantly impact the financial solvency of WSTA.

Staff further recommends that City Council authorize the City Manager or designee, to temporarily waive or reduce transit fare for select community or special events. In previous years, WSTA has received numerous requests for free or reduced fare for special events such as Election Day. Requests for free or reduced fare must be received 48 hours in advance of the requested service day. Fare changes must comply with all Code of Federal Regulation that govern recipients of Federal Transit Administration funding. Requests for free or reduced fare will be reviewed by WSDOT for compliance before making a recommendation to the City Manager on changes to transit fare.