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Council of Governments

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14th Meeting of the MATBUS Coordination Committee

December 17, 2025 | 9:00 – 10:30 am

Location: Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 890 6859 5689

Passcode: 669108

1. Call to Order and Introductions
 - a. Approve Order and Contents of the Overall Agenda
 - b. Review and Action on Minutes from November 19, 2025
2. Public Comment Opportunity
3. Informational Items
 - a. 2027 Service Plan and Budget Timeline – **Cole Swingen**
 - b. Bus Stop SMS/IVR Usage Update – **Cole Swingen**
 - c. Safety and Security Report and Security Follow Up – **Cole Swingen**
4. Other Business

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A PLANNING ORGANIZATION SERVING

FARGO, WEST FARGO, HORACE, CASS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA AND MOORHEAD, DILWORTH, CLAY COUNTY, MINNESOTA

Agenda Item 1b

**13th Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
November 19, 2025 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Cole Swingen, Assistant Transit Director (proxy)
Susan Thompson, Fargo Finance Director
Sebastian McDougall, Moorhead City Council
Jenica Flanagan, Moorhead Finance Director
Mike Rietz, Moorhead Assistant City Manager
Dustin Scott, West Fargo City Administrator
Peyton Mastera, Dilworth City Administrator
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Members Absent:

Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director
John Strand, Fargo City Commission

Others Present:

Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Heidi Benke, MATBUS
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Brenda Derrig, City of Fargo
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Services
Luke Grittner, MATBUS
Taaren Haak, MATBUS
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Nicole Lipinoga, Metro COG
Wyatt Papenfuss, City of Fargo
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Megan Zahradka, City of Moorhead

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Agenda

A motion to approve the order and contents of the agenda was made by Mr. McDougall and seconded by Ms. Flanagan. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from October 15, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes for the October 2025 regular meeting was made by Mr. Rietz and seconded by Mr. Mastera. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public were present to provide comments during the meeting.

3a. Public Comment Policy Adoption

Mr. Altenburg gave an overview of the proposed Public Comment Policy for the MATBUS Coordination Committee. He noted that the draft policy was largely inspired by the City of West Fargo's policy adopted in August 2025. He explained that recent MATBUS Coordination Committee meetings have seen increased attendance and participation, creating a need for clearer procedures to ensure orderly meetings. Mr. Altenburg noted the proposed policy established: registration requirements and methods, time limits for comments, committee response and limitations, speaker guidelines, written comment guidelines, and ADA accommodations.

Ms. Derrig asked whether the proposed policy aligns with North Dakota's new public comment requirements. Mr. Altenburg stated that he understood the new legislation pertained to elected governing bodies such as jurisdictions, school and park districts, and water resource districts, as well as other public entities such as planning commissions. He said he would follow up on whether the MATBUS Coordination Committee would be subject to the new legislation and whether changes to the policy would be warranted.

Chair White also suggested clarifying the language in registration requirements, expressing concern about the staff time required to verify whether comments relate to the current or previous agenda. She proposed broadening the section so that individuals may speak to either specific agenda items or general MATBUS business.

Mr. Mastera recommended revising the section stating that individuals who do not provide all required information are ineligible to speak, noting the chair should have some discretion.

A motion to approve the MATBUS Coordination Committee Comment Policy, contingent upon compliance with North Dakota law, was made by Mr. Mastera and seconded by Ms. Kolpack. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4a. Free/Discount Rides for Agencies Discussion

Mr. Swingen explained that MATBUS receives many requests to provide either free or discounted passes to various social service agencies and other local organizations. He stated that MATBUS has consistently informed organizational representatives that it cannot offer reduced rates to any organization without an approved policy adopted by governing oversight officials, starting with our MATBUS Coordination Committee.

Mr. Swingen provided an overview of how other transit agencies structure free or discounted ride programs. He noted common elements including: requiring participating organizations to hold 501(c)(3) status, annual renewal of requests, caps on the number or value of passes distributed, limiting eligibility to organizations operating within the service area, requiring documentation of the organization's mission, restricting benefits to agencies serving homeless populations in some cases, and offering bulk-purchase discounts. He also highlighted Moorhead's Opportunities Under Transit (OUT) program, which provides discounted bus passes to low-income residents. The program is funded through Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars, with \$8,058 allocated in 2025.

Ms. Thompson asked whether MATBUS sells discounted passes at the booth or only through organizations. Mr. Swingen explained that MATBUS offers discounted passes both to organizations and at the booth, though booth discounts apply only to individuals who are

disabled, elderly, or youth. Mr. Smith described how organizational vouchers work, noting that individuals receive vouchers from the organization and redeem them for passes.

Chair White expressed surprise that Moorhead is the only city offering discounted passes to individuals at the city level. Ms. Thompson asked whether Moorhead has ever exhausted OUT funds. Ms. Zahradka responded that, during her tenure, the program has never run out of funding.

Mr. Rietz asked what issue the committee is attempting to address. Mr. Smith clarified that the discussion centers on whether MATBUS (City of Fargo) should provide free or discounted passes similar to Moorhead's program.

Ms. Kolpack noted funding disparities between North Dakota and Minnesota and suggested that the committee wait to take action until the North Dakota legislative study is complete, as additional funding might become available later.

4b. Driver Transition Update

Mr. Swingen reported that the transition of drivers to City of Fargo employment is largely complete. Most employment offers have been issued, and the next steps include DOT physicals, background checks, and drug testing. He noted that upon successful completion of those steps, the previously contracted employees will become City of Fargo employees.

4c. Ground Transportation Center Deck Overlay Project Update

Mr. Smith reported that structural issues were identified during the GTC deck overlay project. KLJ Engineering and Vector Construction are conducting a full structural assessment. He noted that even with repairs, the facility may have only 10–15 years of remaining useful life, suggesting this may be an appropriate time for MATBUS to explore future facility options.

Chair White asked whether structural damage occurred during previous repair work. Mr. Smith stated that Vector Construction believes the prior work was completed by two different crews. One is performing well and the other less so, which may explain the difference between the two sides of the garage.

Chair White asked whether any repair work could be covered by the contractor. Mr. Smith responded that KLJ is reviewing that possibility; however, reimbursement or repair by the contractor is unlikely, given that the work was completed nearly four years ago.

4d. Safety and Security Report and Security Follow Up

Mr. Swingen provided an update on safety and security initiatives and follow-up items from the previous MCC meeting. He reported that MATBUS staff are pursuing two measures: vehicle signage, which is relatively easy and cost-effective to implement, and body-worn cameras, which require a larger upfront and ongoing investment but are proven effective enforcement tools. He noted that additional information will be available at the next MCC meeting.

4e. Quarterly Ridership Update

Mr. Swingen gave an update on the quarterly ridership giving a route-by-route overview.

5. Other Business

Chair White reminded the committee that MATBUS operates as a partnership and expressed concern when individual partners make unilateral decisions that impact the overall service. She encouraged partners to bring any concerns to the committee for discussion.

Mr. Swingen reported that MATBUS has begun implementing the *Next Stop* real-time SMS bus tracking system. The pilot includes 20 stops with new signage, and MATBUS will evaluate performance over the next several months and report usage results to the committee.

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 9:47 AM.

Memorandum



To: MATBUS Coordination Committee
From: Cole Swingen, Assistant Transit Director – Operations
Date: December 17, 2025
RE: *2027 MATBUS Budget Timeline*

As we enter into the 2027 budget season, MATBUS staff would like to propose a budgetary timeline to ensure that all Partner's 2027 service needs are met and that open discussion can be had on all budgetary changes. With these goals in mind, we present the following timeline for your consideration:

PROPOSED TIMELINE

December -25

Introduce 2027 Budget Timeline

January-26

MATBUS Staff will meet with Partners Individually to Determine 2027 Service Needs
MATBUS Staff will Draft and Provide Service Proposals to Partners Based on Needs Discussions
MATBUS Staff will Draft a 2027 Capital Cost Allocation Plan for the MATBUS Coordination Committee to Review and Suggest Changes

February-26

MATBUS Staff will Draft a Preliminary Budget to Provide to the MATBUS Coordination Committee. This Budget will Document all Line Item Increases or Decreases from the 2026 Budget and Any New Position Requests
MATBUS Staff will Provide a Final Capital Cost Allocation Plan for Approval
MATBUS Coordination Committee Members will Review the Proposed Budget and Provide Any Comments to MATBUS Staff Before the March MATBUS Coordination Committee Meeting

March-26

MATBUS Staff will Provide a Final Budget that Incorporates all Received Comments. If the Budget is Approved by the MATBUS Coordination Committee, the Budget will be Submitted to the City of Fargo for Adoption during the City's Budget Process. If the Budget is not Approved, Additional Comments will be Taken and a Revised Budget will be Presented at the April MATBUS Coordination Committee Meeting

April-26

MATBUS Staff will Provide a Revised Final Budget for Approval (if needed)

Once a final budget is approved by the MATBUS Coordination Committee, service contracts will be provided to all Partners for approval through their local jurisdictions.

If the above timeline is approved, MATBUS staff will begin reaching out to partners to schedule meetings to discuss 2027 service needs.

Memorandum

To: MATBUS Coordination Committee
From: Cole Swingen, Assistant Transit Director - Operations
Date: December 17, 2025
RE: *Bus Stop SMS and IVR Usage Update*



In mid-November, MATBUS staff launched the bus stop SMS/IVR pilot program. This program allows bus riders to either text or call a number to get real-time information on when the next bus will be arriving at their bus stop. The sign below was added to 20 of the most popular bus stops throughout Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, Dilworth and the NDSU campus. Bus stops were chosen based on ridership, location, and bus stop amenities (stops which have arrival times displayed already were excluded, GTC, NDSU hub, etc.) The 20 stops which were selected account for 33% of daily boardings across the MATBUS system.



Since the program's implementation (11/17/25 – 12/10/25) MATBUS has had:

- **51** subscribers
- **92** messages sent from the user's phone to "MATBUS"
- **198** messages sent from the SMS system to users
- **46** calls totaling 48.90 minutes of IVR usage

Additional marketing efforts and education will be provided to bus riders over the coming months to increase awareness of the new system. These metrics will be evaluated again in a few months to determine if the program should be expanded to additional bus stops.

Memorandum



To: MATBUS Coordination Committee

From: Cole Swingen, Assistant Transit Director - Operations

Date: December 17, 2025

RE: *Safety and Security Report and Security Follow Up*

At the November 19, 2025 MATBUS Coordination Committee meeting, two initiatives to enhance driver safety were discussed, vehicle signage and body-worn cameras. Since that meeting MATBUS staff have further looked into both options:

Vehicle Signage:

This option will cost approximately \$1,000 to have decals printed for all MATBUS fixed route and paratransit vehicles.

Body-Worn Cameras:

MATBUS staff met with the Fargo Police Department to discuss their use of Axon body cameras. While body cameras may be a resource for drivers when they are not on a vehicle, MATBUS staff believe that the cost for the cameras outweighs the situational benefits the cameras would provide.

Fargo PD estimated the initial cost per camera at \$500 each. With 77 bus drivers, the initial purchase cost would be approximately \$38,500. MATBUS staff had a virtual meeting scheduled with an Axon representative, but they didn't attend so we are unsure of the price of the service/data storage fees.

11/1/2025

Signal Security Report: "Security Guard [REDACTED] was radio across the street from the Front entry way of GTC. A bus driver was feeling uncomfortable with 2 gentlemen that were using profanity on the bus. I approached the two gentlemen explaining that they have to respect everybody's space and environment especially with that type of language. The gentleman got upset and started using profanity at the bus driver so I assisted the two gentlemen off the bus."

11/1/2025

Signal Security Report: "Security Guard [REDACTED] was radio to bus 11 in the front entry way of GTC. I had to escort a gentleman who was under the influence and was sleeping on the bus. The individual had some type of item on his lap that is used for doing drugs. I spoke to him, explained to him that this is not tolerated or is an environment to have things like that out."

11/1/2025

Signal Security Report: "Security guard [REDACTED] called dispatch for an officer on scene to take a woman that was intoxicated to detox. Officer [REDACTED] badge number [REDACTED] came to GTC transit picked the woman up and escorted her to detox. Security Guard [REDACTED] called for the woman to be sent to detox to avoid the intoxicated female to freeze outside."

11/3/2025

Signal Security Report: "Bus driver informed Sso [REDACTED] of male, black jacket, black pants who was kicked off the bus for drinking. Male still in the area. Sso watched male leave area until he couldn't see him. He then informed mall security of the male."

11/3/2025

Signal Security Report: "A client was yelling and causing disturbance at the lobby. The signal officer deescalated the situation quickly, and the gentleman left on the next bus."

11/6/2025

Signal Security Report: "I was briefed by [REDACTED] (An employee) that the rider is diabetic and was not feeling well. [REDACTED] at dispatch called the ambulance for the rider to be taken care of."

11/7/2025

Signal Security Report: "On Friday at 610 there's been an individual that kept raising his voice and disrupting the bus stop I called West Acres as a precaution and talked to the individual and explained that he can't be raising his voice in the bus stop as it makes people feel uncomfortable and told him that it's needs to be taken outside. Individual calmed down and was allowed to stay in the hub till his bus comes."

11/8/2025

Signal Security Report: "On Saturday at 335 I noticed an individual who was stumbling I called West Acres security to help me out they ended up talking to him I went out and talked with the bus driver as soon as I got back they started arguing with me after I told them they needed to sit down because the bus was leaving they then sat down. Individual sat down and the bus left."

11/8/2025

Signal Security Report: "At 8:27 there were 2 individuals choking each other I advised them to let go because of them not acting the right way at the bus stop after I talked to them they continued to choke each other again as soon as their bus came they got on and left. Individuals left on bus 23."

11/11/2025

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Signal Security Report: "On Tuesday at 1145 I was approached by a female individual saying that she felt scared by a few individuals that were on the phone and saying that something's going to happen at west acres while looking for her. I alerted west acres to it. West acres security was alerted and is investigating."

11/11/2025

Signal Security Report: "A male individual called [REDACTED] who is on trespass list showed up. [REDACTED], an employee of Matbus called police. And officer [REDACTED] talked to him and asked him to leave the GTC property."

11/12/2025

Signal Security Report: "M bus employee asked me officer [REDACTED] to ask a couple to leave shelter .I proceeded to the shelter with the employee .I stated they need to leave the shelter ,m bus employee asked the couoke where there going ,they stated 18th st s moorhead and asked what bus to take .employee stated bus 2 then it changes tobbys 5 in moorhead .Employee allowed them on bus 2 conditions they get off on 18th st s ."

11/13/2025

[REDACTED] was trespassed from all Matbus property for one year for harassing drivers and threatening dispatch. Officer [REDACTED] was one of the responding officers.

11/17/2025

Signal Security Report: "He refused to leave after staying for more than an hour. The signal officer informed the dispatch about it, and the client was informed that the police would be called if he didn't go away.

"Second Signal Securty Report:"The signal officer informed [REDACTED] and he also called the police to assist in moving the client Police officer's name is [REDACTED]. The client refused to leave and was drunk. He was put on tresspass."

11/17/2025

White male (Blue Jacket, Pink Hat, Blue Jeans) passed out in lobby woken up several time by security and then dispatch. RRRDC was called and dispatched officers.

11/18/2025

Signal Security Report: "Two male individuals fighting. Northside accross the street at bus 4 loading area. Signal officer [REDACTED] resolved the conflict and asked the other individual to leave the terminal."

11/18/2025

Signal Security Report: "On Tuesday evening at 720 I got a call from route 24 stating that there was a male that was put on route 24 by Sanford security, once they arrived to west acres I asked if they could walk they said no I then asked for west acres if they had a wheel chair they brought it out and attempted

to get him on the wheel chair which we could see he was in to much pain and that's when I got on the phone with 911 and then they sent out EMS once EMS got here the individual refused to go. We then had him get on the bus and get on and off the bus without anyone helping him to see if he could stay on the bus he was then allowed to stay on the bus."

11/19/2025

Signal Security Report: "A guy named [REDACTED] was trying get on bus 15 at 1245 .I let [REDACTED] that he is trespassing and he cant ride busses or be on property. [REDACTED] at front window off Gtc confirmed he is from 2017 . [REDACTED] gave guy card who to call and ask questions. Asked to leave premises."

11/19/2025

Driver [REDACTED] radioed dispatch he had a active fight on his bus. Two male passengers were fighting. Dispatch instructed the driver to pull over & open the doors. They also instructed him to tell the passengers to get off the bus. The driver pulled over & addressed the behaviors. The two customers continued to yell at each other but made it to GTC. I arrived to assist route 4. One of the customers who was involved came off the bus first. He was extremely agitated. He asked who was in charge. I told him I was the supervisor. He yelled at me about allowing drunk people on the bus. He said they should not be allowed on the bus. I told him we do allow drunk people on the bus but not if they are causing issues. He then told me the other passenger punched him in the cheek. He asked me if he had a mark on his face. I told him no. I apologized to him for being hit. I shook his hand & instructed him to go into dispatch & give him the information on what happened. I told him so I could deal with the passenger. I asked for security to assist. I told the driver to open the back door as the passenger was in the back with another drunk passenger. I asked them to please get off the bus. The man who was not involved got up & stumbled off the bus. He was carrying a pop bottle with clear booze in it. I told him he would not be riding anymore today. The next passenger who was the one involved in the fight. Was instructed to get off the bus. He took a bit of coaxing to get off the bus. He finally did & I was able to get route 4 back in service. The customer once off the bus was told he was done riding today & leave the property. He was extremely drunk. Barley able to stand. He then tried to walk into the GTC entrance. I stood in the way along with another staff member. He then walked over to the smoking shelter. I told him that is still not off the property. He then walked over & began threatening me. I told the security officer to call FPD. He continued to walk towards me wanting to fight me. I told him I would not fight him. Instructed him to leave again. He said he was not drunk & how did I know he was drunk; I told him i was not talking to him about that. He finally left & went across the street into a parking lot. FPD arrived & went over to talk with him. They asked if we wanted him trespasssed. I told them yes. The police came over later & got a statement from the passenger who was hit by the drunk passenger. The passenger who was struck did not want any medical treatment. This passenger did complain about the driver as he got on another bus. He told me when he got on the bus the driver gunned it before he sat down. He said the driver should have kicked the guy off. I did save the lytx videos 3 of them showing when the passengers got on & when the fight occurred. The driver did not take off before he sat down.

11/19/2025

Passenger Report: I was attacked by an intoxicated passenger and after he struck me I forced him back into his seat. I told him to sit down and shut up. There were small children present. He then approached me and he was aggressive again. I told him to stay away from me and I moved to the front of the bus. He staggered from the back of the bus to the front where I was sitting and approached me again at this

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point the driver scolded ME and let him continue to ride when he clearly should have been removed the drunk man from the bus. Dispatch note: Passenger was visibly upset and came in with the road Supervisor, Jasmine, to report the incident, claiming he was assaulted on the bus. I called RRRDC so he could give a statement. The responding officer informed dispatch the other individual involved, [REDACTED], was trespassed

Signal Security Report: "Two guys on bus 4 causing problems .Bus driver informed gtc dispatch of the two males one guy punched a passenger in the face , [REDACTED] and Security officer [REDACTED] went to meet the bus at arrival . [REDACTED] went into front door i was at second door opening .The guy was escorted off the bus by myself and [REDACTED].He started to argue with [REDACTED] about being kicked off the bus .The guy was intoxicated and verbal arguing with mark out side of the bus . [REDACTED] asked me [REDACTED] to call Fargo PD the guy was warned Fargo police will come and trespass him .I called Fargo dispatch to report the guy wearing brown jacket black pants and shirt he is being unruly arguing with management and was very verbal .Fargo police department arrived at 1520pm .I told the officers that he crossed the street to the parking lot .guy was trespassed from GTC 1 year. Fargo police talked to the guy who was punched in the face .and the other guy trespassed."

11/21/2025

Signal Security Report:" Security Guard [REDACTED] was rotating GTC and found 2 individuals were arguing Infront of GTC transit in eachothers face. Security Guard [REDACTED] stepped in defuse the altercation and separated the 2 individuals from each other to prevent any more arguments or physical altercation."

11/21/2025

Signal Security Report: "Sso [REDACTED] noticed that a white male, 60s, white hair and beard, dark jacket, with no shoes had been at the bus stop for a long time. Sso [REDACTED] checked on the man. Male said he was fine and was waiting for his bus. Bus passed by and male seemed confused. But complained about exhaustion and pain. Eventually male wandered off. Sso [REDACTED] informed mall security of the male and used cameras to locate the male and called EMS. EMS arrived with FPD and the male eventually left with them."

11/25/2025

Signal Security Report: "A male rider was intoxicuated and refused to get off from the bus 2 after several attempts to get off. Si dispatch called PD to take over and get him off."

11/26/2025

Signal Security Report: "Sleeper on bus 4 I got the guy up and off bus .He wanted to get on bus 4382 . [REDACTED] manager Says if he has a destantion he can ride .I [REDACTED] made it clear he needs to get off at a destantion .He said yes at his home and he's tired."

11/26/2025

Signal Security Report: "Security officer [REDACTED] was called to sleeper call on bus one . [REDACTED] responded to the bus and seen a guy heavy sleeping. I security officer [REDACTED] was trying to wake him up shaking, taping him took several minutes to wake up. The guy talked about trying get to his kids at home. I stated that I

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understand but we needed to get off the bus . I said we are Gtc now . [REDACTED] got on the bus and we did get the guy off the bus . and [REDACTED] asked me to call Fargo police .I called 911 dispatch police arrived minutes after the call guy was not trespassing."

11/26/2025

Signal Security Report: "A customer who is African american female. she seemed intoxicated. The female said to security officer [REDACTED] that she lost her ID drivers license .I security officer [REDACTED] told her she would need to report it to farhi police department and the DMV .I stated she may need to get a new ID .she then stated that she didn't want to talk no more so I proceeded to do report ."

11/28/2025

Signal Security Report: "Security guard [REDACTED] was informed 3 individuals 2 males one girl were in the girls bathroom drinking and using substances I approach the girls bathroom and said "Security" and informed them they would have to leave the the GTC facility."

11/29/2025

Signal Security Report: "A Male individual tried to get a free bus ride from one of the driver at GTC. He was denied the ride the individual came across the street to come back to the GTC. A Female GTC worker told the individual if there not waiting for a bus they will be asked to leave. The male individual started getting aggressive Security Guard [REDACTED] stepped in and told the male individual they cannot come to the GTC and will have to leave the property immediately. The individual used curse words and try to get physical but security guard [REDACTED] handle it professionally and escorted the individual off the property."

11/29/2025

Signal Security Report: "I observed a individual who was wobbling and struggling to stand up I asked him if he was alright he said he wasn't feeling good I asked if he needed a ambulance he then said yes and stated that he got poisoned with Freon I then got on the phone with 911 and that's when Fargo pd and ems arrived on scene."