METROCOG Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments

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94th Meeting of the Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
March 15, 2023 – 8:00 am
Virtual Meeting

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order and Introductions

2. Action Items:
    a. February 1, 2023, Meeting Minutes
    b. Moorhead Capital Improvement Plan for 2024-2027 – Lori Van Beek
    c. Proposed Moorhead U-Pass Fees for Academic Year 2023-2024 – Lori Van Beek
    d. Annual List of Free, Reduced, Promotional and Pilot Fares to Moorhead City Manager and Future Policy Discussion – Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman

3. Informational Items:
    a. Update on Vehicle Delivery – Jordan Smith
    b. MATBUS On Demand, Powered by TransLoc (Replaces TapRide) – Cole Swingen
    c. 2023 Operations Report for January & February – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek

4. Other Business

93rd Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
February 1, 2023
Virtual Meeting

Members Present:
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Steve Lindaas, Moorhead City Council
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Gabrielle Lommel, Concordia College
Ryan Nelson, Moorhead City Council
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission

Members Absent:
Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
Paul Grindeland, Valley Senior Services
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Teresa Stolfus, M|State
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Annie Wood, MSUM

Others Present:
Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Luke Grittner, City of Fargo
Taaren Haak, City of Moorhead
Jordan Smith, City of Moorhead
Cole Swingen, City of Fargo
Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead

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1. **Call to Order and Introductions**

   Chair Hanson called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

2. **Action Items**

   a. **November 16, 2022 Meeting Minutes**

   A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mr. Olson and seconded by Mr. Lindaas. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3. **Informational Items**

   a. **2022 Achievements – Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman**

   Ms. Van Beek presented some of MATBUS' 2022 achievements. This was broken up into sections which included equipment, fares, route and service changes, shelters and facilities, and studies and plans.

   For equipment, MATBUS participated in procurement for replacement of 1 Moorhead and 8 Fargo buses as part of the Duluth Consortium. Prices are being revised due to cost increases. Pending a new price proposal, the final order will be placed in early 2023. Moorhead was awarded a bid for replacement of two Paratransit buses in 2021 with delivery delayed from

2022 to 2024 or later due to Ford chassis availability. The Metro Transit Garage completed the delivery and installation of a new shop hoist. Dispatchers were also given new handheld language translation device to help with communication at the GTC.

For fares, MATBUS implemented a new account-based "Connect" mobile ticketing and fare capping app in May.

For route and service changes in Fargo, there were some temporary suspensions of bus service due to driver shortages. This included reduced frequency from January on Routes 11,13, 14 and 15. TapRide service to the Industrial Park was suspended on Saturdays. These changes were resumed in May. Evening service was changed to end at 9:45pm rather than 11:15pm. Mr. Swingen added that Fargo City Commission approved some minor route changes to Route 15, Route 18, Route 20, and Route 32 to improve consistency and on-time performance. Ms. Van Beek spoke about a Moorhead route change for Route 3 which no longer takes a detour as of November due to the completion of 20th/21st Street Grade Separation project.

For shelters and facilities, MATBUS distributed an RFQs for architecture and engineering services for Dilworth Walmart Transit hub improvements, Moorhead downtown Center Avenue shelters, and for up to nine replacement shelters with solar lighting in Moorhead.

For studies and plans, MATBUS updated its Safety Plan in July and its Transit Asset Management Plan in October. The FTA Triennial Review, which ended up covering four years due to the pandemic), was completed along with an update to equipment inventory, physical on-site verification and correlation with financial records.

Other achievements included amending the 2022 contract with First Transit to increase driver wages to attract and retain drivers. There were also wage increases for supervisors, payroll clerks, GTC dispatchers and the Operations Supervisor. MATBUS negotiated a one-year option for the First Transit contract for CY2023. RFPs were distributed for shelter cleaning, snow removal and hauling, and custodial services at the MTG and GTC. MATBUS also assisted the State of ND in drafting the RFPs for replacement of auto voice announcement and auto vehicle location systems and paratransit dispatch software. New billing calculations were drafter for the West Fargo Mass Transit Agreement and MATBUS began roundtable discussions for improving paratransit operations, including analysis of the application process, scheduling, driver capacity, vehicles, staffing, and software replacement.

b. 2023 Goals – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek

Ms. Bommelman presented some of the organization's goals for 2023. This included issuing an RFQ and scope of work for a planning study on Phase 2 for the implementation of a transit authority. MATBUS also aims to complete construction of the Dilworth Walmart Transit Hub, replace downtown Moorhead shelters on Center Avenue, purchase up to nine new shelters to replace aging structures, and replace shelter concrete for improved accessibility on up to six locations.

MATBUS is looking to purchase updated technology for paratransit scheduling and for fixed route live tracking. Major improvements to the MTG will continue as well as discussions to replace and relocate the West Acres Transit Hub. Route 15 and Route 18 will be further evaluated to improve on-time performance. In the new year, MATBUS aims to add additional

paratransit dispatching staff to keep up with growing demand and Fargo is looking to replace its existing TapRide software with TransLoc software for on-demand service.

Chair Hanson asked about Phase 2 for the implementation of a transit authority, if there is an anticipated end date and how far along MATBUS is in the process. Ms. Van Beek replied that they are finalizing their draft scope of work for the planning study while the grant application is in process for both Fargo and Moorhead. They hope to get out an RFQ at the end of February/early March and have the study completed by the end of June.

Chair Hanson followed up by asking if there is an end date for when they would like the transit authority to be in place. Ms. Van Beek expressed the earlier, the better. Chair Hanson stated that he was under the impression that there had to be a specific end date due to funding changes that were tied to population increases in the area. Ms. Bommelman added that after Census numbers, the region has exceeded the population threshold which will impact funding as of the next federal fiscal year (October 1, 2023). This upcoming study will look at next steps.

c. Driver Shortage / Temporary Service Hours for 2023 – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek

Ms. Bommelman shared information about the ongoing driver shortage. Unlike paratransit, fixed route drivers are required to have a Commercial Driver License (CDL). This makes it challenging to fill those positions because CDL drivers are in-demand across the country. Full service would require a staff of 91 drivers, both full and part-time. Currently, MATBUS is down approximately 26% of their driving staff. First Transit has put forth extensive recruitment efforts including recruitment bonuses, and increased wages and benefits. However, with unemployment in the area being very low, retention efforts have not yielded the desired results. This is a trend felt by other transit agencies nationwide.

Ms. Bommelman also referenced an APTA article that noted that a person is required to be at least 21 years old in order to apply for a CDL. She added that it has been difficult to recruit drivers in their 20s as the job doesn't seem to appeal to their demographic.

Chair Hanson asked if other transit agencies in the region, such as Rochester, St. Cloud and Duluth, are doing anything differently. Ms. Van Beek mentioned that St. Cloud conducted a wage study which will be released in a couple of weeks and it will be interesting to see if there are any recommendations included. Mr. Smith added that Duluth had a community outreach program that allowed members of the community to drive a bus to see what it was like. Although they felt the event went well, the program failed to attract many new drivers.

d. Vehicle Replacement Updates – Jordan Smith

Mr. Smith explained that they have been working with Duluth and New Flyer to get new pricing. They are expecting to get pricing from New Flyer this week so they hope to get in an order by the end of the month. Currently there is an 18–24-month lead time, so new buses aren't expected until 2024/2025. 4 new paratransit vehicles are expected to be delivered to MATBUS in April/May.

Chair Hanson asked for an update on how vehicle parts and service are faring. Mr. Smith said that they are seeing issues that they don't usually see due to being unable to order new parts or vehicles. Paratransit vehicles are usually replaced after 5 years with 150,000 miles, however

they currently have vehicles that are 8 years old with 230,000 miles. Maintenance costs have dramatically increased as a result.

e. Marketing Strategy for 2023 – Taaren Haak & Luke Grittner

Ms. Haak and Mr. Grittner presented some marketing goals for 2023. This included prioritizing transit education by utilizing videos frequently with a series of videos on educational topics. Mr. Grittner mentioned that they want to do more to promote MATBUS Connect through videos and social media. Ms. Haak spoke about wanting to assess the MATBUS website to focus on ease of use and developing FAQs.

Mr. Grittner talked about the need to maintain digital marketing presence consistently throughout the year. This includes advertising on radio and music streaming services like Spotify. MATBUS is looking to identify strategies to engage younger riders, such as outreach to elementary school, high school and college students. Furthermore, the agency wishes to identify underrepresented demographics as well as exploring potential social media expansion to other platforms such as Instagram or TikTok.

Ms. Kolpack asked if MATBUS will be setting up metrics to analyze outcomes for targeting specific demographics and increasing ridership. Mr. Grittner explained that they will look to have more measurable goals after identifying the high-level strategies to reach those demographics. Ms. Van Beek reiterated that MATBUS does track ridership by customer type. Ms. Haak added that they can also see trends of ridership by school for the colleges that are part of the U-Pass program.

f. Mobility Management Report / Paratransit Service Demand – Shaun Crowell

Mr. Crowell presented the mobility management report for paratransit service demand. There was an increase in paratransit approved riders in 2017 which then started to dip. Starting in 2021, the number of approved applications has started to trend back up. Paratransit ridership overall has also been steadily increasing since 2021, particularly in Dilworth and West Fargo. Moorhead and Fargo have remained more consistent. Increases in paratransit ridership can have an affect on service and can lead to longer trip times, increased revenue hours, wear to vehicles, more fuel usage, and more scheduling challenges.

Mr. Lindaas pointed out that Fargo and Moorhead look like their paratransit ridership is currently down. Mr. Crowell mentioned that this can fluctuate a bit, but that Dilworth and West Fargo are outliers. There doesn't appear to be a clear explanation for this.

Chair Hanson asked if the driver shortage is also impacting paratransit service. Mr. Crowell said it has been a struggle despite First Transit providing an adequate number of drivers. Additional ridership has meant needing to use more vehicles and more time on the road for vehicles that are already past their typical lifespan.

Mr. Lindaas asked if there were any ways to track paratransit by user to find out more information about the numbers and demographic shifts that could explain the increase in Dilworth and West Fargo ridership. Ms. Van Beek said that in Dilworth specifically, there were detours due to road construction that may have prompted people to choose paratransit over the fixed route system. By looking at addresses, they can deduce where riders are coming from and they are actively studying these trends to see if there are any changes that may need to be

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made. Ms. Bommelman added that they are seeing an increase in dialysis patients riding paratransit and transportation requests for other medical reasons.

g. 2022 Operations Report – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek

Mr. Swingen presented the annual operations report for 2022. Many of the routes have been impacted by the driver shortage with a decrease in ridership on Route 11, 13, 14, 15, 20 and 24. Road construction that impacted the on-time performance of Route 15 pushed some riders to use Route 16 instead, which saw a ridership increase. There was a significant drop in riders on LinkFM and a significant increase in TapRide ridership to the industrial park. Paratransit ridership has continued to grow while substantial ridership growth was seen on Routes 31 to 36 and NDSU TapRide service.

Ms. Van Beek presented ridership for Moorhead routes. The college routes 1 and 2 saw steady increases. Route 3 saw decreases in ridership likely due to road construction. Route 4, 5 and 6 also saw decreases in ridership while Route 9 saw an increase. Overall, Fargo ridership is up from the year previous while Moorhead ridership is down. This adds up to a slight increase in transit ridership systemwide.

Mr. Swingen went through the demographic breakdown of ridership. While there was a slight decrease in adult ridership, there was an increase of college, elderly, disabled, youth and child ridership. There was a significant increase in ridership across all colleges except NDSCS. Ms. Van Beek spoke about Metro Senior Ride ridership which has increased in Moorhead and Dilworth, and has started to catch up to pre-COVID levels.

There were decreases in revenue hours and revenue miles on the fixed-route system due to driver shortages. Paratransit saw increases. Despite this, ridership per hour increased on the fixed-route system and decreased for paratransit. Metro Senior Ride vehicle revenue hours, miles, and ridership per hour, all increased.

Mr. Lindaas asked about the trends of college ridership, including whether college ridership is back to pre-pandemic levels and if ridership per capita data is available. Ms. Van Beek mentioned that they are able to figure out this information from the U-Pass program. Mr. Swingen also presented numbers that showed that college ridership is still slightly under half the ridership today as it was pre-COVID.

4. Other Business

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:09 AM.

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Memorandum

To: MAT Coordinating Board

From: Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager

Date: March 10, 2023

Re: ***Proposed 2024-2027 Moorhead Transit Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)***

The attached listing is an excerpt from the10-year Financial Plan of capital equipment and facility improvements needed for the 2024-2027 CIP.

The 2024 projects listed would require a local share match of $72,898. The annual CIP allocation to Mass Transit of $150,000 would be used, with the remaining $77,102 placed in Mass Transit Reserves for future CIP projects.

Recommended Motion: Provide the 2024-2027 CIP to the Moorhead City Manager and recommend the 2024 projects for consideration in the 2024 budget.

Moorhead Mass Transit			2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
Shelters:	**Funding Source**						
Romkey #110	FTA 5339	80%	34,490				34,490
Riverview Heights #	FTA 5307	80%			36,000		36,000
Lakeland #113	FTA 5307	80%			36,000		36,000
Shelter - Replace annually	FTA 5307	80%				50,000	50,000
Paratransit Vehicles:							
	STBGP 80% of $106K;	80%	106,000				106,000
Para - 5 year life - Replace Unit 7191	FTA 5307 85% of $87K	85%	87,000				87,000
On Demand Vehicle - Expansion	FTA 5307	85%	173,000				173,000
Senior Vehicles:							
Senior - 4 year life - Replace Unit 5191 (Unit 5241) - replace in 2028	STBGP 80%	80%		49,000			49,000
Senior - 4 year life - Replace Unit 5192 (Unit 5242) - replace in 2028	FTA 5307	85%		49,000			49,000
Senior - 4 year life - Replace 2019 Expansion Van Unit # 5193 (Unit 5243) - replace in 2028	FTA 5307	85%		49,000			49,000
Senior - 4 year life - Replace Unit 5181 (Unit) - replace in 2022 for 2023 delivery & 2027	FTA 5307	85%				53,000	53,000
Large Buses:							
Bus - 12 year life - Expansion bus - Fixed Route	FTA 5307	85%			714,000		714,000
Bus - 12 year life - Replace Unit # 2151	FTA 5307	85%				736,000	736,000
100% Local:							
Five-year TDP consultant (local share only) (replace 2030	Local	100%		15,333			15,333
Facility Equipment & Improvements:							
Facility Equipment - Replace scrubber/washer, Press & Pressure Washer - 10 year life (100% Mhd, Replaced 1/3 Mhd)	FTA 5339	80%		33,000			33,000
Facility Equipment - A/C Recovery (1/3 Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%				2,200	2,200
Technology:							
Technology - Replace Fare Media Sales Equipment at MTG - 5 year life (100% Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%	29,000				29,000
Technology - cameras, radios, etc (100% Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%			70,000		70,000
TOTAL			**429,490**	**195,333**	**856,000**	**841,200**	**2,322,023**
SUBTOTAL Shelters @ 80%			34,490	-	72,000	50,000	156,490
SUBTOTAL Vehicles @ 80%			106,000	49,000	-	-	155,000
SUBTOTAL Vehicles @ 85%			260,000	98,000	714,000	789,000	1,861,000
SUBTOTAL 100% Local Match			-	15,333	-	-	15,333
SUBTOTAL Facility Equipment, Improve. & Technol. @ 80%			29,000	33,000	70,000	2,200	134,200
TOTAL			**429,490**	**195,333**	**856,000**	**841,200**	**2,322,023**
FUNDING:							
CIP			150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	600,000
Federal Grant @ 85% (FTA 5307)			221,000	83,300	606,900	670,650	1,581,850
Federal Grant @ 80% (FTA 5307, FTA 5339 & STBGP)			135,592	65,600	113,600	41,760	356,552
Mass Transit Reserves			(77,102)	(103,567)	(14,500)	(21,210)	(216,379)
TOTAL			**429,490**	**195,333**	**856,000**	**841,200**	**2,322,023**

Memorandum

To: MAT Coordinating Board

From Taaren Haak, Moorhead Asst. Transit Planner and Marketing Specialist
Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager
Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director

Date: March 9, 2023

RE: ***2023 MATBUS Free, Reduced, Promotional and Pilot Fares***

MATBUS sponsors a variety of free rides and reduced fares for events throughout the year. Some are during MATBUS-organized promotions, and some are created on behalf of a local community event or organization. Attached is a list of MATBUS free, reduced, promotional and pilot fares expected for 2023.

Both Fargo and Moorhead Transit per the MATBUS Joint Powers Agreement honor promotional fares issued by either city.

- The City of Moorhead amended their fee ordinance in 2018 to incorporate a waiver of fees to implement incentive/demand pricing. Under this ordinance, the City Manager has the authority to approve promotional/marketing events for Moorhead MATBUS, intended to attract new ridership, including discounts or limited time free rides targeted to college students, holiday shoppers, persons living near new bus routes, or other potential customers. Previously, the Moorhead Transit Manager established promotional fares for Moorhead.

- The Fargo Transit Director continues to have the authority to approve promotional/marketing fares for City of Fargo Transit (MATBUS). Throughout the year we receive a variety of requests from agencies, individuals and other departments for free or reduced fares/passes. At this time, it would be helpful to receive guidance from the MAT Coordinating Board on developing criteria for responding to these requests to achieve consistency and equity. We could bring a draft policy forward at the next meeting based on input received today

Requested motion: The request is for the MAT Coordinating Board to recommend to the Moorhead City Manager approval of the 2023 Moorhead MATBUS listing of free, reduced, promotional or pilot fares.

2023 MATBUS Free, Reduced and Promotional Fares

FREE FARES		
April 17-22	Earth Week "Get Your 'Can' on the Bus"	Free ride with empty aluminum can
May 20, 2023	Fargo Marathon	Fare-free day on MATBUS due to service disruptions
Summer	Booths at Family Community Events	Youth flyer on 90-day pass includes two free-ride coupons
June-August	Public Library Events	Youth K-12 ride free to/from metro public libraries with library card
June 9, 2023	Midwest Kid Fest	Youth K-12 ride MATBUS free when attending the festival
July 8 - Oct 28	Red River Market	Free ride coupons available online at MATBUS.com; Only valid for market days with one hour travel time on either side of market hours
July 13-15	Street Fair	Fare free on Saturday
August	Red Hawks Baseball Cards	Free ride coupon inside baseball card packs (1,000 given at the door and 500 sold in the shop)
September 29, 2023	NDSU Homecoming Parade	Fare Free from 3-11:15 pm on MATBUS System
October	Try MATBUS Week	Fare free on Saturday
November	Homeless Veterans Stand Down	Free Rides to one-day event at VA Hospital with military ID
Nov-December	Salvation Army Bell Ringers	Free ride pass issued to bell ringing volunteers
As Applicable	General Election Day	Fare-Free Day / Paratransit free to polling sites
Year-Round	K-12th Grade School Field Trips	Free rides on MATBUS when pre-arranged
Year-Round	MSUM Dragon Athletics	Free ride coupon on game ticket stub
Various Dates	LinkFM Events	Fare free service for specific community events
REDUCED FARES		
July 13-15	Street Fair	Reduced fares on Thursday & Friday, Fare free on Saturday
October	Try MATBUS Week	Half-fare Monday through Friday; Fare free Saturday
Nov 25-Dec 31	Quarter Days	Ride for 25 cents on Black Friday, Small Business Saturday and every Saturday in December

MAT Board Informational Items March 15, 2023

(701) 232-7500
matbus.com
650 23rd St N. Fargo, ND 58102

MATBUS On Demand, Powered by TransLoc

(Replaces TapRide)

Ridership

January 1 – February 28, 2023, Fargo Ridership by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2022	6,296	9,199	11,679	29,997	3,678	4,149
2023	5,294	11,549	12,969	34,245	4,598	5,637
Change	-18.93%	20.35%	9.95%	12.40%	20.01%	26.40%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Ind. Park TapRide	Paratransit
2022	4,531	3,634	2,606	0	765	9,261
2023	6,823	4,595	3,004	7	1,018	9,979
Change	33.59%	20.91%	20.04%	-	24.85%	7.20%

Period	Route 31	Route 32	Route 33	Route 34	Route 36	NDSU TapRide
2022	3,063	15,430	33,117	5,102	4,433	1,325
2023	3,851	17,758	33,599	11,762	5,384	1,203
Change	20.46%	13.11%	1.43%	56.62%	17.66%	-10.14%

Ridership

January 1 – February 28, 2023, Moorhead Ridership by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2022	8,938	10,813	6,492	14,471	6,388	1,702	509
2023	11,078	13,129	7,114	17,329	8,103	1,590	919
Change	19.32%	17.64%	8.74%	16.49%	21.17%	-7.04%	44.61%

Period	Moorhead Total
Jan-Feb 2022	49,313
Jan-Feb 2023	59,262
Change	20.18%

Period	Fargo Total
Jan-Feb 2022	136,914
Jan-Feb 2023	161,068
Change	17.64%

Ridership

January 1 – March 1 College Ridership

Period	NDSU	MSUM	Concordia	M State	NDSCS
2022	63,543	2,994	1,689	869	87
2023	77,498	3,560	2,415	2,423	43
Change	18.01%	15.90%	30.06%	64.14%	-50.57%

Ridership

2023 YTD through January Metro Senior Ride (Moorhead/Dilworth)

METRO SENIOR RIDE 2023
MOORHEAD & DILWORTH, MINNESOTA

	MOORHEAD SENIORS			DILWORTH SENIORS			TOTAL PASSENGERS		
Month	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022	% Change
January	638	560	13.93%	85	65	30.77%	723	625	15.68%