

**13<sup>th</sup> 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.