

**12th Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
October 15, 2025 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director
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
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Members Absent:

Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager

Others Present:

Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Heidi Benke, MATBUS
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Brenda Derrig, City of Fargo
Josh Gorgen, Transdev
Luke Grittner, MATBUS
Taaren Haak, MATBUS
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Chelsea Levorsen, City of Fargo
Matt Pinotti, Transdev
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Blue Weber, Bolton & Menk

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Agenda

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

1b. Review and Action on Minutes from September 17, 2025

A motion to approve the minutes for the September 2025 regular meeting was made by Mr. Strand 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. Chair White noted that materials will be presented at next month's meeting regarding the development of a public comment policy.

3a. January to June Billing Adjustment

Mr. Swingen gave an overview of the January to June billing adjustment. He noted that in June 2025, while working on grant applications, it was found that Moorhead and Dilworth's revenue hours and revenue mile data, provided by Via paratransit operating software, were significantly lower than what was provided by the previous operating software. He added that the custom reports that were set up by Via were pulling the wrong data.

Mr. Swingen gave an overview of revenue hours and revenue miles for each city served by the MATBUS system. He noted that the City of Fargo was overbilled, while the cities of West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth were all underbilled. North Dakota State University was also underbilled.

- The City of Fargo was overbilled by \$52,679.70
- The Cities of Moorhead and Dilworth were underbilled by \$32,399.78
- The City of West Fargo was underbilled by \$18,202.09
- North Dakota State University was underbilled by \$2,077.83

Ms. Thompson asked whether other jurisdictions had been notified of the discrepancy. Mr. Swingen reported that the City of West Fargo has been informed of the billing adjustment.

A motion to approve the billing adjustments and allow MATBUS staff to correct billings in October 2025 was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Scott. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

3b. 2026-2030 Transit Development Plan

Ms. Bommelman provided an overview of the approval schedule for the 2026-2030 Transit Development Plan, noting that resolutions of support would be required from each jurisdiction prior to Metro COG Policy Board consideration in December. Following her remarks, Blue Weber of Bolton & Menk presented an overview of the project. He summarized the full document, highlighting its major components, including the existing conditions analysis, identification of future system needs, service recommendations, community feedback, and the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan.

Ms. Thompson expressed concerns regarding language in the plan referencing budgetary constraints specific to the City of Fargo, particularly in relation to on-demand service and Sunday paratransit service. Mr. Mastera agreed, suggesting that the plan should refer more broadly to budget constraints without naming specific jurisdictions. Ms. Thompson further suggested that adding a section explaining the differences in state funding levels could strengthen the case for increased North Dakota transit funding. Ms. Bommelman agreed and emphasized the importance of communicating the system's value to the state. Ms. Thompson added that statistics showing how many people rely on MATBUS to get to work would be useful in conversations with state legislators.

Chair White also suggested that the committee consider advocating for a review of the funding allocation formula on the North Dakota side. She then asked about the next steps for implementing the plan's recommendations. Mr. Swingen responded that many of the recommendations are budget-neutral and could be implemented shortly after the TDP is approved. He proposed providing bi-monthly updates on the implementation process.

Ms. Bommelman noted that the current federal transportation bill expires next year, creating uncertainty around future federal transit funding. Mr. Strand suggested meeting with congressional leaders to discuss transit needs. Mr. Weber added that he could connect the committee with a staff member from Senator Cramer's office who works on public transit issues.

A motion to recommend approval of the 2026-2030 Transit Development Plan to the Fargo City Commission, Moorhead City Council, West Fargo City Commission, Dilworth City Council, and Metro COG's Policy Board was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Ms. Thompson. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4a. Safety and Security Report and Assault Awareness and Prevention for Transit Operators

Mr. Swingen provided an overview of safety and security incidents from the previous month. He noted that the list of incidents was slightly longer than usual and encouraged committee members to review the details of the reported concerns. He also shared that he recently attended an online National Transit Institute webinar on assault awareness and prevention. Using several slides from the training, he reviewed common types of assaults and de-escalation techniques. He explained that driver assaults have increased since COVID and emphasized the importance of helping the committee understand the challenges drivers face daily.

Ms. Bommelman added that MATBUS drivers encounter a wide range of difficult situations, including interactions with individuals experiencing substance abuse or mental health issues. She shared an example of a driver who had been punched by a passenger. Ms. Thompson observed that once MATBUS staff members officially become City of Fargo employees, additional resources may become available to help address these types of incidents.

Mr. Strand inquired about the status of a tripping hazard on a sidewalk near the West Acres transit hub. Mr. Swingen replied that West Acres had been notified and has incorporated the repair into their plans.

Chair White suggested forming a subcommittee dedicated to addressing these concerns, given the increase in safety-related incidents. Mr. Pinotti noted that buses currently display signs instructing passengers not to approach drivers, but enforcement is easier at larger hubs such as the GTC or West Acres compared to smaller stops. Ms. Bommelman agreed that forming a subcommittee would be beneficial.

Chair White then asked whether the committee supported establishing a subcommittee focused on safety issues. Ms. Bommelman clarified that the group would consist of a small number of MATBUS staff tasked with developing recommendations to address safety and incident concerns. A motion to formalize the subcommittee was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Ms. Bommelman. The motion passed unanimously.

4b. Free Rides for Veterans with Military ID's starting Veterans Day 2025

Ms. Bommelman explained that throughout her time with MATBUS, veterans whose identification cards include the "Service Connected" designation have been permitted to ride free of charge. She noted that the MATBUS team would like to expand this benefit to all veterans, regardless of whether their ID includes the specific wording.

Mr. Smith added that a recent driver assault stemmed from an argument over the “Service Connected” language on a rider’s ID, and broadening the policy would help prevent similar conflicts in the future. It was also noted that MATBUS will conduct public outreach to communicate the upcoming policy change.

5. Other Business

Chair White concluded by reminding the committee that the next MCC meeting would be Wednesday, November 19 at 9:00 AM

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 10:09 AM.