

# Public Engagement Plan

MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan

Working Draft – Updated June 11, 2020



Prepared by:



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# INTRODUCTION

This Public Engagement Plan outlines the various methods and approaches to engage key stakeholders and the broader public as part of the MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan (TDP). The consultant team (SRF and AECOM, herein referred to as the SRF Team) will use the engagement plan as an execution guide for management of community engagement activities throughout the project. Community outreach will occur in West Fargo, Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth. This Public Engagement Plan was developed in collaboration between Metro COG, MATBUS, and the SRF Team (herein referred to as the Project Team), with input from project partners.

The Public Engagement Plan is considered a living document and will be updated as needed to reflect input received from project partners, stakeholders, and the public as the project progresses. When updated, the most recent documents will be posted on the project's website and be emailed to project managers staff.

The purpose of this engagement plan is to:

- Describe how public input will be incorporated in the decision-making process
- Identify the communities and stakeholders whose input will be critical to the project's success
- Detail public engagement methods, techniques, timelines

## Approach

Metro COG's Public Participation Plan (PPP), Title VI Plan, and Limited English Proficiency Plan are important policy documents that guide public participation for transportation planning in the Fargo-Moorhead region. The approaches, themes, and strategies from these documents have been incorporated in this Public Engagement Plan for the MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP.

Metro COG believes the public should be an integral part of the planning process; the public should not simply learn about important plans and policies after the fact. **Metro COG strives for a planning process that is transparent, understandable, and allows for two-way communication. Authentic public engagement should occur early and continue through the duration of the project.**

Public participation in the TDP is important for a variety of reasons. The public has the right to participate in transportation decisions that affect their community and way of life, including how they get to and from school, work, medical services, and their ability to participate in community and civic life. Moreover, the public has knowledge and insight into local problems that the SRF Team and staff and decision-makers from Metro COG

and MATBUS need to make informed decisions. Robust community engagement results in better plans that are more likely to be implemented.

For the MATBUS TDP, the goals for effective public engagement include:

1. Inform a diverse public about the TDP and how they can shape the future of MATBUS
2. Collect input from a diverse public about the TDP, including MATBUS users and non-users
3. Use public input to shape the project and enable informed decision-making

## **Engaging Diverse Communities**

Recipients of federal funds are required to promote inclusive public participation and provide meaningful access to racial and ethnic minorities, people with low incomes, and those with limited English proficiency. The SRF Team endeavors to reach out to all communities – including racial and ethnic minorities, people with low incomes, newly-arrived immigrants, people with disabilities, and seniors – to understand their transit needs and potential opportunities for improvement.

## **Ensuring Access**

Metro COG ensures that individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) are able to participate in its programs and planning activities. LEP individuals are those with limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. Metro COG's LEP Plan outlines the policies and procedures used to ensure equitable access for LEP populations.

There is a relatively low percentage of LEP individuals in the Metro COG planning area. Just 2.6 percent (5,486) of the Fargo-Moorhead metropolitan statistical area population speak English "less than very well." Moreover, Metro COG has not received requests for language assistance. However, Metro COG offers interpretation and translation services upon request. Staff use [language identification flashcards](#) at public meetings and other community input events should there be a need to communicate with LEP individuals.

The SRF Team will work with Metro COG to ensure LEP individuals are able to participate fully in the project. The following interpretation and translation services are identified in the LEP Plan, and will be used as needed as part of the TDP project:

- Cultural Diversity Resources
- Language Services – Family Health Care Center
- Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota
- Minnesota Translations
- North Dakota Assistive

- North Dakota State Contracted Services

## **Terminology**

As used throughout this document and project, the public refers to the population as a whole. Engagement activities will be structured to inform project decisions and will be inclusive of all members of the public.

As used throughout this document and project, a community is a group of people defined by a shared background. Communities may also be stakeholders; a stakeholder is an individual or entity that would be affected by the project, including businesses, residents, elected officials, local government, and community organizations.

## **Timing**

Outreach to the public and stakeholders will be ongoing throughout the project in partnership between the SRF Team and MATBUS and Metro COG staff. Generally, activities will be concentrated in three different phases in conjunction with major project milestones:

- **Assessment of Needs.** In this first engagement phase, The SRF Team will disseminate project information to the public, while seeking their input on: travel patterns and use of the MATBUS system; present and future transportation needs; and transit service preferences and priorities. Input received during this phase will inform the remainder of the project, including the creation of goals, priorities, and performance measures; draft service concepts; and strategic recommendations.
- **Draft Recommendations.** The public will be asked to review and provide input on all draft service concepts and strategic recommendations prior to their inclusion in the draft TDP. The draft concepts and recommendations will be created based on the first phase of engagement, and then updated pending public feedback collected in this second phase.
- **Draft TDP.** The final engagement phase will focus on receiving feedback related to the completed draft TDP. Such will be important context for decision makers as they review and suggest edits to the draft TDP.

Additional information about the approximate timing of public engagement activities in relation to other project tasks, and the project as a whole, are included later in the *Schedule* section of this document.

# ENGAGEMENT TOPICS & THEMES

The SRF Team will engage the public to provide information about MATBUS and transit service in the Fargo-Moorhead region. Moreover, the public will be asked to provide input on existing conditions and emerging trends, unmet needs, and their vision for the future of transit service in the region, as well as subsequent recommendations made in response. All input relevant to the TDP will be recorded and considered to shape the development of the plan and guide decision-making.

The public and stakeholders will be asked to provide insight and input in the following categories.

## **Current Use**

MATBUS and Metro COG have access to a variety of quantitative data – on ridership, demographics, built form, etc. – that will be used throughout the project. However, these datasets must be accompanied by data collected directly from current MATBUS users and non-users.

The SRF Team will ask the public when, where, why, and how they travel and use transit in the region. The Project Team wants to hear from MATBUS users about their experience, and from non-users about their real or perceived barriers to using transit.

## **Needs**

The Project Team will ask the public about any unmet transportation needs. As the Fargo-Moorhead region continues to grow and change – in economic activity, development patterns, and the size and makeup of its population – so do its transportation needs. Characteristics of the MATBUS service area are constantly changing, and the TDP represents an opportunity to closely examine and address emerging and previously unmet needs.

## **Preferences, Tradeoffs & Priorities**

Planning for and operating a transit system will always require a series of tradeoffs given fiscal constraints. While engaging the public, the SRF Team hopes to illuminate these tradeoffs in order to better understand preferences and priorities.

Absent unlimited resources, how should MATBUS prioritize improvements? How should it balance competing interests when designing service? For example:

*As a transit passenger, would you rather a “one seat” ride that takes 30 minutes, or one that is 10 minutes faster but also requires a transfer between two buses?*



There is no “right” answer to this or other hypothetical questions about tradeoffs. Asking the public to identify their preferences and rank their priorities will enable more informed decision-making within real resource constraints.



# DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Results of the public engagement strategies deployed throughout the TDP will be documented and shared with decision-makers and the general public.

## Public Input Documentation

The Project Team will share summaries of engagement efforts and input received with the project committees described below to help make key project decisions. Comments emailed or mailed to MATBUS, Metro COG, or the SRF Team outside of a specific engagement event will also be included in the summaries. Summaries of engagement efforts and input received will be posted on the project website at project milestones and leading up to project decisions.

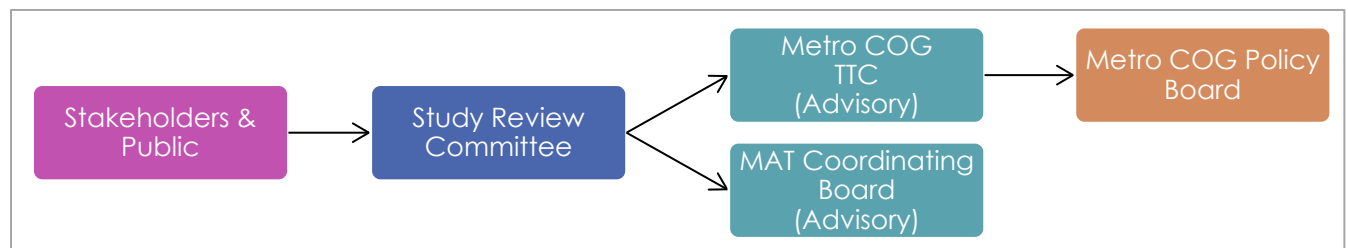
Input received throughout the project will be documented and summarized in a final TDP document. The following materials will be produced by the SRF Team and provided to Metro COG:

- Presentation Materials
- Meeting Handouts and Display Boards
- Draft/Final Survey Instruments
- Social Media Content
- Meeting/Event Summaries (may be incorporated into deliverables as appendices)
- Study Review Committee agendas, slides, and summaries

## Decision-Makers

Stakeholder input received throughout the TDP will be weighed by multiple decision-maker groups, including the project's Study Review Committee (SRC), the Metro Area Transit (MAT) Coordinating Board, and Metro COG's Policy Board and Transportation Technical Committee. The relationships between these groups are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Decision-Making Structure





## Study Review Committee

Development of the MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP will be guided by the Study Review Committee (SRC), which will provide oversight and input into the development of the Plan. The SRC membership is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Study Review Committee Members

| Organization/Member Type              | Member   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| MATBUS Staff                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager</li> <li>• Taaren Haak, Moorhead Assistant Transit Planner &amp; Marketing Specialist</li> <li>• Julie Bommelman, Fargo Transit Director</li> <li>• Matt Peterson, Fargo Assistant Transit Director</li> <li>• Jordan Smith, Fargo Transit Fleet &amp; Facility Manager</li> <li>• Cole Swingen, Fargo Transit Planner</li> </ul> |
| Metro COG                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michael Maddox, Project Manager</li> <li>• Anna Pierce, Assistant Planner</li> </ul>  |
| Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kevin Hanson, Board Chair</li> </ul>  |
| First Transit (Contracted Operator)   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Josef Rivera, General Manager</li> </ul>  |
| MATBUS Riders/Representatives         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amar Hussein, Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota</li> <li>• Dan Holte, MATBUS rider advocate</li> <li>• John Gilbert, MATBUS rider advocate</li> <li>• Linda Ohnstad, MATBUS rider advocate</li> <li>• Tom Hill, United Way of Cass-Clay</li> </ul>   |
| Local Government Partners             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peyton Mastera, City of Dilworth</li> <li>• Tim Solberg, City of West Fargo</li> </ul>  |
| State Government Partners             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becky Hanson, NDDOT</li> <li>• Voni Vegar, MnDOT</li> </ul>   |
| Federal Government Partners           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renae Tunison, Federal Transit Administration</li> </ul>  |

The SRF Team will organize and host up to nine (9) SRC meetings throughout the course of the project. These are expected to occur every 1-2 months over the duration of the project, corresponding with major milestones. The SRF Team will attend up to six (6) of these meetings in person and will plan attendance to coincide with key deliverables.<sup>1</sup>

The SRF Team will:

- work in cooperation with Metro COG in scheduling the meetings;
- develop materials necessary to conduct the SRC meetings (excluding presentation slides), which will be distributed to SRC members at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting date; and

<sup>1</sup> As able, following the most up-to-date guidance from public health officials regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.

- create meeting summaries for distribution and review by the SRC, no later than one (1) week following the meeting.

### **Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board**

The Metro Area Transit (MAT) Coordinating Board is responsible for providing a coordinated public transit system within the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. The MAT Coordinating Board facilitates and oversees a coordinated decision-making process between the City of Fargo and the City of Moorhead regarding delivery of public transit and ensures that decisions are developed in consultation with other local units of governments, public institutions, stakeholders, and the general public (Table 2).

The SRF Team will present twice to the MAT Coordinating Board. The SRF Team will work with the Metro COG Project Manager and SRC to determine when these presentations will occur in relation to the overall TDP timeline.

### **Metro COG Policy Board**

The Policy Board is Metro COG's executive decision-making body. The Policy Board reviews and approves all of Metro COG's work activities, budgets, bills, etc., and discusses transportation issues affecting the metropolitan area. Metro COG is comprised of 16 voting members who represent the metropolitan planning area and establish overall policy direction for all aspects of the area wide planning program. The Policy Board consists of at least three-quarters elected officials, and each jurisdiction's voting power is based on its approximate share of the area's population (Table 2).

Upon incorporation of feedback received from the SRC and MAT Coordinating Board, the final TDP document(s) will be provided to Metro COG for presentation to and approval from the Policy Board.

### **Metro COG Transportation Technical Committee**

The Transportation Technical Committee (TTC) advises the Policy Board on technical matters associated with Metro COG's work activities, mission, and specific transportation planning issues. The committee is comprised of engineering, planning, and transit staff from local jurisdictions, and representatives from North Dakota Department of Transportation and Minnesota Department of Transportation (Table 2).

Upon incorporation of feedback received from the SRC and MAT Coordinating Board, the final TDP document(s) will be provided to Metro COG for presentation to and approval from the TTC.

Table 2: Representation of Relevant Standing Committees

| Type                                  | Representing  | Number of Voting Members by Committee |                        |               |
|---------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
|                                       |   | MAT Coordinating Board                | Metro COG Policy Board | Metro COG TTC |
| Government                            | Dilworth City Council (or Staff)                        | 1                                     | 1                      | 1             |
|                                       | Fargo City Commission (or Staff)                        | 2                                     | 4                      | 3             |
|                                       | Horace City Council                                     |                                       | 1                      | 1             |
|                                       | Moorhead City Council (or Staff)                        | 2                                     | 3                      | 3             |
|                                       | West Fargo City Commission (or Staff)                   | 1                                     | 2                      | 2             |
|                                       | Cass County Commission (or Staff)                       |                                       | 1                      | 2             |
|                                       | Clay County Commission (or Staff)                       |                                       | 1                      | 2             |
|                                       | MnDOT   |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | NDDOT   |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | Fargo Planning Commission                               |                                       | 3                      |               |
|                                       | Horace Planning Commission                              |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | Metro COG Executive Director                            |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | Institution   | Concordia College                     | 1                      |               |
| M State                               |   | 1                                     |                        |               |
| Minnesota State University – Moorhead |   | 1                                     |                        |               |
| North Dakota State University         |   | 1                                     |                        | 1             |
| Stakeholder                           | Bicycle/Pedestrian                                      |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | Freight   |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation |                                       |                        | 1             |
|                                       | Valley Senior Services                                  | 2                                     |                        |               |
| Gen. Public                           | Jointly Appointed Board Chair                           | 1                                     |                        |               |
| <b>Total Voting Members</b>           |   | <b>13</b>                             | <b>16</b>              | <b>22</b>     |

# STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION

The SRF Team has developed an initial list of stakeholders to engage throughout the project (Table 3). It represents potential stakeholders that should be considered by the Project Team and SRC. This is not an exhaustive list; it will be updated as the project progresses. The universe of strategies that could be used to engage these groups are summarized in the following pages.

Table 3: Stakeholder Groups

| Stakeholder Type  | Stakeholder Groups and Resources   |
|---|--|
| Higher Education Students, Faculty, and Staff                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concordia College</li> <li>• Minnesota State University – Moorhead (MSUM)</li> <li>• Minnesota State Community and Technical College (M State)</li> <li>• North Dakota State College of Sciences (NDSOS)</li> <li>• North Dakota State University (NDSU)</li> </ul>     |
| Middle and High School Students and Parents                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cass County Career &amp; Technical Education Center</li> <li>• Fargo Public Schools</li> <li>• Moorhead Area Public Schools</li> </ul>  |
| Newly Arrived Immigrant Communities and LEP Populations             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Diversity Resources</li> <li>• Family Health Care</li> <li>• Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota</li> <li>• New American Consortium</li> <li>• New American Development Agency</li> <li>• Somali Business Center</li> </ul>                               |
| People with Disabilities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CCRI, Inc.</li> <li>• Connections</li> <li>• Freedom Resource Center for Independent Living</li> <li>• North Dakota Assistive</li> <li>• North Dakota Association for the Disabled</li> </ul>   |
| Older Adults  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AARP Minnesota</li> <li>• AARP North Dakota</li> <li>• Clay County Age Well</li> <li>• Valley Senior Services</li> </ul>  |
| Workforce Development, Economic Development, and Business Community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CareerForce – Moorhead</li> <li>• Downtown Moorhead, Inc.</li> <li>• Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corp.</li> <li>• Job Service North Dakota</li> <li>• Moorhead Business Association</li> </ul> |
| Health and Human Service Providers and Resources                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Plains Food Bank</li> <li>• Lakes &amp; Prairies Community Action Partnership (CAPLP)</li> <li>• United Way of Cass-Clay</li> <li>• Village Family Service Center</li> <li>• YMCA of Cass and Clay Counties</li> </ul>  |

| Stakeholder Type               | Stakeholder Groups and Resources  |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Healthcare Providers           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essentia Health Fargo</li> <li>• Family Health Care</li> <li>• Prairie St. John's Hospital</li> <li>• Sanford Health</li> </ul>  |
| Housing Organizations          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clay County HRA</li> <li>• Fargo Housing &amp; Redevelopment Authority</li> <li>• Fargo-Moorhead Coalition to End Homelessness</li> <li>• Housing Authority of Cass County</li> <li>• Moorhead Public Housing Agency</li> </ul>  |
| Community Groups and Advocates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens' Climate Lobby Fargo Moorhead Chapter</li> <li>• Fargo-Moorhead Climate Group</li> <li>• Fargo Neighborhood Coalition</li> <li>• Fargo Public Library</li> <li>• Moorhead Block Clubs</li> <li>• Moorhead Neighborhood Services</li> <li>• Moorhead Public Libraries</li> </ul> |

# PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## **Adapting to COVID-19**

The COVID-19 pandemic has, temporarily, changed public life in Fargo-Moorhead and the nation. The safety of the public and Metro COG, MATBUS, and SRF Team staff is the highest priority. Thus, the approach to engaging the public as part of the TDP must be broadened and re-imagined.

Typically, the SRF Team prefers to engage the public by meeting them where they are at. As much as possible, the Team tries to tap into already-scheduled community events and make ourselves physically present in the community by hosting pop-up meetings at popular locations. This allows for two-way communication and results in better representation of historically marginalized communities. However, COVID-19 may result in few or no in-person engagement opportunities.

The SRF Team will employ a hybrid public engagement approach. Initial project engagement will rely on online and distanced-based engagement. The SRF Team will conduct formal and informal in-person engagement as able, following the most up-to-date guidance from public health officials. The COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges, but the SRF Team is confident that authentic and meaningful public engagement can still take place, using proven online and distance-based engagement methods.

## **Sharing Information**

The following methods will be used by the SRF Team to share project information and promote opportunities for submitting input.

### **Project Website**

The MATBUS TDP project website will be hosted on Metro COG's existing website at <http://fmmetrocog.org/2021TDP>. All public-facing project materials will be hosted on the project website, along with project information and opportunities to provide input. The SRF Team will provide Metro COG with content for the project website. Metro COG staff will be charged with uploading, editing, and managing the project website.

### **Social Media**

The SRF Team will leverage MATBUS and Metro COG's existing social media channels (and those of project partners) to develop social media content that is creative, broad reaching, and cost-effective. Facebook and Twitter will be the primary social media platforms used as part of the TDP project. The primary focus of social media posts will be



information sharing, including directing social media users to the project website for information about MATBUS, the TDP, and engagement opportunities. When a specific event is approaching, social media posts will focus on promoting the event, whether it is online or in-person. At other times, social media posts will be used to raise awareness of the project generally or share recordings or summaries of previously completed engagement activities.

Social media content may include photos and other graphics, text posts, and polls. Visually interesting content tends to engage more users than text-only posts; for this reason, posts will include photographs or other graphics as often as possible. Twitter and Facebook polls may be used as an informal, easily accessible way to gather input for the TDP.

TDP-specific social media posts will be shared once every one (1) to two (2) weeks (or as needed) via existing Metro COG and MATBUS accounts, including:

- [facebook.com/fmmetrocog](https://www.facebook.com/fmmetrocog)
- [facebook.com/matbusfm](https://www.facebook.com/matbusfm)
- [twitter.com/matbus](https://twitter.com/matbus)

The SRF Team will work with MATBUS and Metro COG to determine whether there are opportunities for targeted advertisements via existing social media accounts. Doing so would be a cost-effective means of extend the reach of project messaging, including to members of the public who do not currently ride MATBUS.

When appropriate, the SRF team will also collaborate with stakeholder and partner organizations to share these posts through these organizations' social media accounts to broaden their reach. Events targeted toward the general public will be promoted online for the two weeks leading up to their scheduled date and any follow-up items will be communicated via the same channels.

Any social media content developed by the SRF Team will be reviewed by MATBUS staff before being shared through MATBUS and Metro COG social media channels. All social media content developed for the TDP will be posted directly by Metro COG or MATBUS staff.

## **Email Updates**

Email updates will be distributed by the SRF Team and through MATBUS' existing Rider Alerts. Email updates will announce opportunities to get involved and share links to surveys and recent engagement summaries around project milestones. Content for email updates will be coordinated and developed by the SRF Team then reviewed by Metro COG and/or MATBUS staff.

Those interested in receiving TDP project emails can sign up through the project website and other engagement events and opportunities. The SRF Team will develop a contact list from interested individuals who participate in engagement activities. Additionally, the Team will seek opportunities to use the existing mailing lists of stakeholders – elected officials, community organizations, business associations – to broaden our reach.

## **Traditional Media**

Traditional media outlets – including television, radio, and print media – may serve as additional avenues to promote the project. The SRF Team will work with Metro COG staff and the SRC to identify free media opportunities with local television, radio, and print outlets. The SRF Team proposes the distribution of press releases to local news media in the initial and last few months of the project. A preliminary list of potential outlets is listed below.

- Television: Moorhead Community Access Media (MCAM), TV Fargo 56, Fargo Access 68, Prairie Public TV
- Radio: Prairie Public Radio, MPR KCCD 90.3 News, KCCM 91.1 Classical, Radio Free Fargo 95.9, WDAY Radio 93.1, Y94 Radio
- Print: The Forum, West Fargo Pioneer, High Plains Reader

## **Gathering Input**

### **Surveys**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SRF Team proposes that two separate surveys be conducted: A Community Survey in the spring/summer, and a Passenger Survey in the fall.

#### Community Survey

A Community survey that is geared toward MATBUS stakeholders (including riders) and the general public will be used to gather information about how the transit system is working for customers, identify areas of need, preferences, priorities, and demographics. Those who don't use MATBUS will be asked about their perceptions of the transit service and which strategies or situations (if any) might cause them to use MATBUS service in the future.

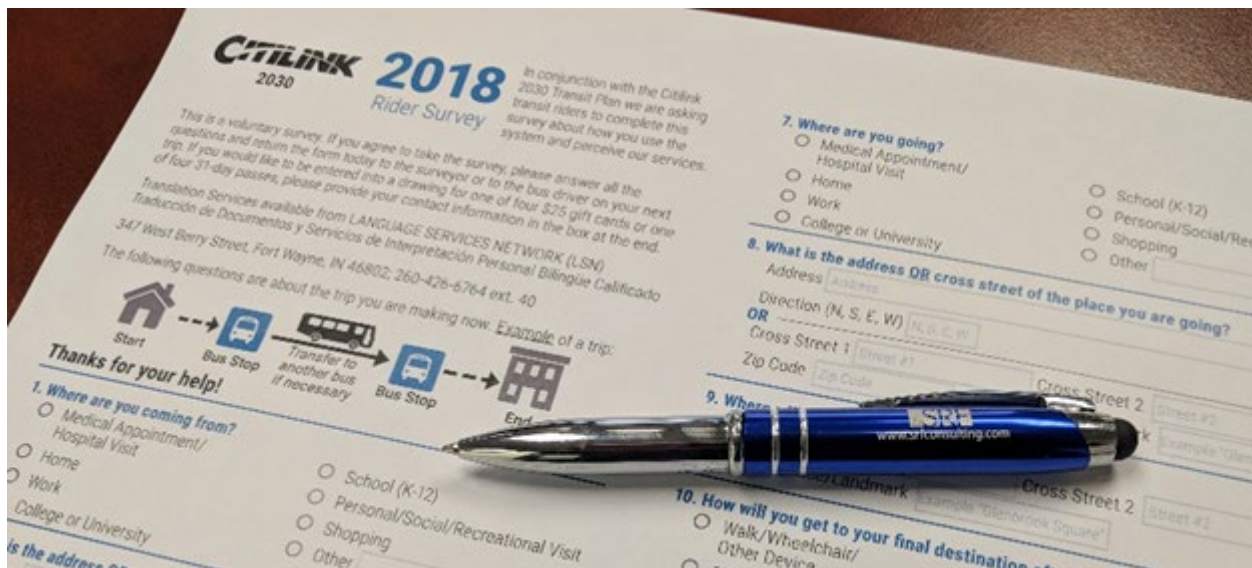
The SRF Team will develop the survey instrument early in the project. Metro COG and the SRC will review the survey tools to ensure that the appropriate data are collected to inform the TDP. The survey will be distributed and completed electronically; however, paper surveys will be available upon request. The survey will be shared in electronic communications (i.e., project website, social media, email updates, etc.), traditional media, and promoted when engaging stakeholders through other means. Survey

completion will be incentivized by holding random giveaways, as allowable; this could include multi-day transit passes and/or gift cards to local businesses.

### Passenger Survey

A key task for this TDP is to conduct an on-board Passenger Survey. The Passenger Survey should be promoted to passengers while they ride MATBUS buses. **Given the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent reductions in MATBUS service and ridership, the SRF Team proposes that the Passenger Survey be postponed until late September or October 2020.** Hopefully, by that time, public life and MATBUS service and ridership will resemble pre-COVID-19 conditions. The Passenger Survey will be a useful tool only if it represents fairly typical conditions, including the presence of higher education students. It is very important that these students are appropriately represented in the Passenger Survey responses. The SRF Team will continue to seek guidance from Metro COG and MATBUS staff about how and when to conduct the Passenger Survey, including alternative methods.

The SRF Team would develop the survey instrument. Passenger Survey questions would mirror those asked in the general Community survey, where possible. The SRF Team would leverage their expertise and work with Metro COG staff to review the survey tools to ensure that the data collected would feed into the technical analysis for the TDP.



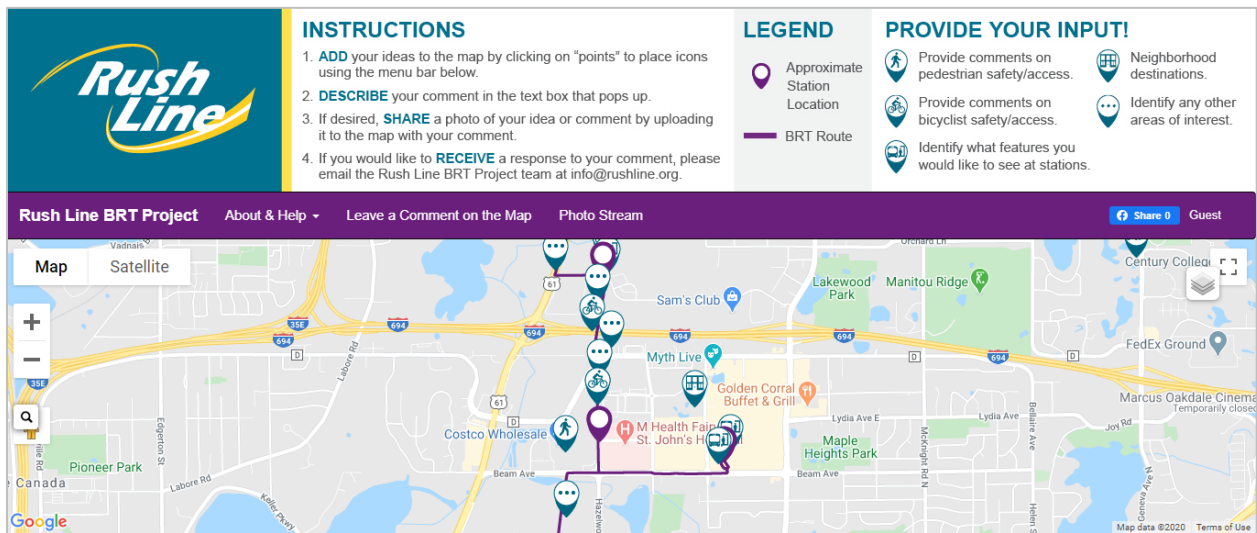
The SRF Team proposes conducting the survey electronically; however, paper surveys will be available as needed. While not exclusionary – anyone will be able to participate – the Passenger Survey will be designed with MATBUS passengers as the intended audience. It can be completed while riding MATBUS buses or afterwards. As with the Community Survey, completion of the Passenger Survey would be incentivized by holding random giveaways, including multi-day transit passes and gift cards to local businesses.

In the summer/fall of 2020, the SRF Team would develop a survey methodology and sampling plan. The SRF Team would recommend a survey method to obtain as many surveys as possible, but that aims for a representative sample of MATBUS ridership, including identification of a target survey sample by route based on average daily ridership. As part of this activity, the SRF Team would develop the staffing plan required to administer the survey in collaboration with MATBUS staff.

The SRF Team would oversee the entire survey effort. If necessary, the SRF Team would use surveyors from a local temporary staffing agency to supplement our workforce to maximize survey touchpoints. All survey workers would be background checked. The SRF Team would work with Metro COG and MATBUS staff on a final strategy for the survey effort as part of the SRC meeting process.

## Interactive Map

An interactive comment map, or “wikimap,” is a customizable online mapping tool that enables the public to provide geographically specific comments on a variety of predetermined topics. The map is available to anyone with access to the Internet. An example of is shown below.



A comment map for the MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP is being developed to allow users to leave comments regarding frequently-visited origins and destinations, areas where they would like to see new or improved bus service, and areas where improved bus facilities are desired, in addition to general comments. Users will also be able to draw on the map the existing bus route(s) they regularly use and propose brand new bus routes on. Existing MATBUS fixed bus routes and stops will be shown on the map to provide users with geographic context for their comments.

## Design Your Transit System Exercise

The SRF Team will explore opportunities to create a web based “Design Your Transit System” exercise that approximates a simplified budgeting process. This exercise would educate the public and stakeholders about the tradeoffs, costs, and benefits, of designing a transit system, while collecting data on preferences and priorities. This tool would be hosted by SRF, with a link prominently displayed on the project website; it would augment the interactive comment map and Customer and Passenger surveys. An example of what the exercise could look like is available [here](#). Like the comment map, the “Design Your Transit System” exercise can be completed by anyone with access to the Internet.

## Online Public Workshops

The SRF Team will host three (3) online public workshops to present project information and gather input. Two of these workshops will be promoted to the general public and occur early in the project to gain input on needs and priorities and establish a baseline understanding. The third online public workshop will coincide with the presentation of draft service concepts and strategic recommendations.

The online public workshops will be conducted using Zoom, an online video conference platform that enable interaction and live polling. The workshops could potentially be simultaneously streamed on Facebook Live to increase their reach.

The public workshops will be a mix of presentation, interactive activities, and question and answer session. In the first two workshops, the SRF Team will give a “Transit Planning 101” presentation, outlining the considerations and tradeoffs that MATBUS must weigh when designing transit service. Once a baseline understanding of transit fundamentals has been established, the audience will be asked to participate in a series of activities that include the identification of priorities via live polling. The third workshop will present draft service concepts and strategic recommendations, with live audience feedback and polling.

These online public workshops could be recorded and posted on the project website and social media for those unable to attend live. Audience members would be automatically notified of any recording upon joining the workshop. Recording will be done at the discretion of Metro COG,

## Stakeholder Small Group Meetings

In addition to broad-based engagement that is targeted at the public, SRF will facilitate a series of small group meetings and one-on-one interviews at two (2) key points in the project:

- In the summer of 2020 to gain input on needs and priorities early in the plan's development, and
- later again in the fall of 2020 to vet and prioritize draft recommendations.

Approximately three small working groups will be assembled from an agreed upon list of key stakeholders (Table 3); where possible, stakeholders will be organized by likeness of the communities they represent (e.g., employers and workforce development professionals could be within the same meeting). With some flexibility on group composition and scheduling, the SRF Team will complete a total of six (6) small group meetings – two for each group of stakeholders (summer and fall 2020). Meetings will consist of an interactive format to encourage dialog among participants. Route maps and other materials will be available for stakeholders to graphically record their thoughts.

Given the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial round of stakeholder small group meeting will be conducted using Zoom, an online video conference platform that enable interaction and live polling. One-on-one meetings via Zoom will be used to solicit input from key stakeholders unable to participate in the small group interviews.

Following the stakeholder workshops, the SRF Team will assemble responses and prepare summaries. Separately, SRF will hold specific meetings and engagement strategies that address requirements for Task 4, the Consolidated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP).

### **Pop-Up Meetings (As Able and Necessary)**

When public health guidance permits, the SRF Team may host in-person pop-up meetings at popular destinations in the MATBUS service area. The SRF Team expects that any pop-up meetings would be held in fall of 2020, if warranted and possible. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, pop-up meetings may be replaced by other online and distance-based strategies.

Pop-up meetings initiate open dialogue with people by meeting them in places where they are comfortable, such as outside a community gathering place, near a housing development, or in a well-used local park. Engaging stakeholders in places they work, live, and play is an effective method for gaining public input, particularly from those less likely to participate in traditional engagement methods such as formal open houses.

The goal of pop-up meetings is to introduce the project and gather input in an informal setting. Locations for pop-up meetings may include:

- Well-traveled areas such as downtown Fargo and Moorhead
- MATBUS Transit Center
- Parks and community centers
- Farmers markets and grocery stores



- Breweries and coffee shops
- Libraries
- Student centers

Project staff facilitating these meetings may incentivize participation with small giveaways such as individually wrapped granola bars, or entry into a random drawing to win multi-day transit passes and gift cards to local businesses.

At each pop-up meeting, staff will have a range of materials including informational posters and one-page summaries of the project. Posters will address the following topics:

- A map of the service area where respondents can identify the start and end locations of their trips as well as locations in need of service or improved service
- An interactive board that allows people to provide input on their priorities for service, such as frequency, service hour span, or service area

DRAFT examples of these posters are included in the Appendix. The SRF Team will produce all pop-up meeting materials.

### **Formal Presentations to Metro COG Committees**

The SRF Team will give up to four (4) formal presentations and will be responsible for preparing the presentation materials. The SRF Team will present twice to the MAT Coordinating Board, and two (2) additional presentations at the direction of the SRC. The SRF Team may conduct these presentations using Zoom, an online video conference platform that enable interaction and live polling.

The SRF Team proposes that one of these four presentations serve as the federally required public meeting and be accompanied by the appropriate public meeting notice. Metro COG will be tasked with ensuring the appropriate public meeting notice is issued.

### **Engagement for the Consolidated Plan**

Task 4 of the TDP will develop the Consolidated Human Service Transportation Plan (CHSTP) for the Fargo-Moorhead region. The plan will identify all local human service providers and all rural and regional providers with regular service to the metro area. A survey will be distributed to these providers to indicate the local service needs and gaps for seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income populations.

The results from the survey of providers will be presented and discussed at a stakeholder meeting for all providers, as well as during an open house for the public. During these events, participants will be asked to provide their input on potential coordination strategies to fill the identified gaps in service for transportation disadvantaged

populations. Engagement for the CHSTP will be facilitated by the SRF Team using the Zoom video conference platform.

## SCHEDULE

All time-sensitive engagement will be scheduled approximately 30 days in advance to ensure adequate advertisement and participation. Table 4 identifies major engagement milestones and initial project schedule. This schedule is illustrative and subject to change and will be updated throughout the duration of the project.



# APPENDIX

Below are DRAFT examples of informational posters that could be used at stakeholder small group and pop-up meetings.

Please indicate:

- Where most of your trips start ● Where you would like to have service
- Where most of your trips end ● Where you would like better service

**matbus system map**  
august 2019 edition

**NDSU DAYTIME**  
For NDSU campus students from North Dakota, check out matbus.com and the MATBUS app or park at the NDSU Transit Station.

**NDSU EVENING**

**DOWNTOWN**  
JEFFERSON LINES operates out of the GTC. Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8:30am to 11:30pm. Call Center: 701.232.7500. jeffersonlines.com

**LINKUP**  
LinkUP is a service connecting the downtowns of Fargo and Moorhead. Hours: Weekdays 7:00am - 9:00am, Saturdays 8:00am - 9:00am. the downtowns' fun, fast and free link! GetLinkUP.com for more route info.

**DILWORTH ROUTE 6**

**TAPRIDE**  
TapRide is an on-demand service that helps riders reach their destinations faster. Download the TapRide app available in Google Play and the App Store, and request your pickup and drop-off locations within the zone. Fargo Industrial Park riders: Connect to MATBUS South Station on Street of a North (Routes 11 & 24) (Monday - Friday, 10:15 AM - 10:30 AM).

**FARGO/WEST FARGO ROUTE 20**

**WEST AREAS**

**MAP LEGEND**

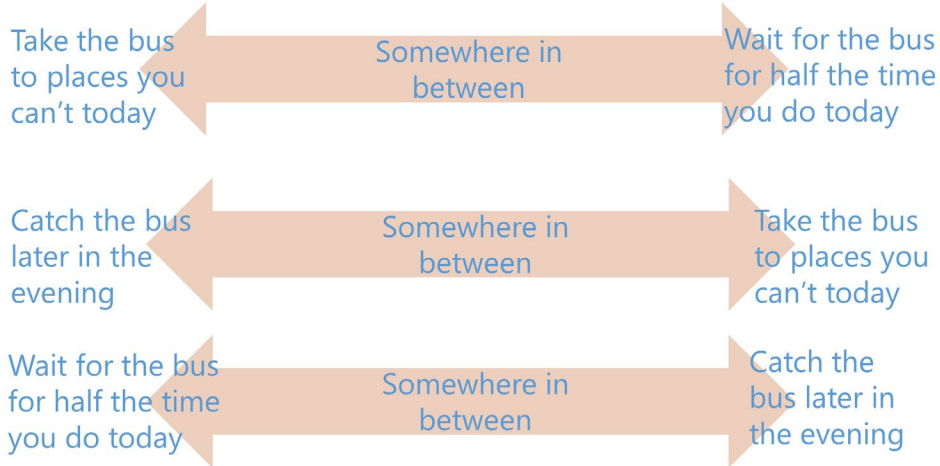
|                                 |          |
|---------------------------------|----------|
| Fargo City Limits               | Route 1  |
| Moorhead City Limits            | Route 2  |
| West Fargo City Limits          | Route 3  |
| Dilworth City Limits            | Route 4  |
| Higher Education                | Route 5  |
| Public Land / Park              | Route 6  |
| Transfer Hub (Blue or Yellow)   | Route 11 |
| Transfer Point (Blue or Yellow) | Route 12 |
| Designated Bus Stop             | Route 13 |
| TapRide Pickup Location         | Route 14 |
| Park & Ride Location            | Route 15 |
| Service On Request              | Route 16 |
| Taxi Alternatives               | Route 17 |
|                                 | Route 18 |
|                                 | Route 19 |
|                                 | Route 20 |
|                                 | Route 21 |
|                                 | Route 22 |
|                                 | Route 23 |
|                                 | Route 24 |

**FARGO/WEST FARGO ROUTE 24**

Download your bus schedule at [matbus.com](http://matbus.com).  
Call 701.232.7500 for more assistance.

Developing a better transit system requires us to consider tradeoffs, balance needs, and prioritize improvements

Use a dot to indicate what you would prefer.  
Would you rather be able to...



Would you rather ...

