

Agenda Item 1b

**20th Meeting of the
MATBUS Coordination Committee
June 17, 2026 – 9:00 AM
Metro COG Conference Room/Zoom**

Members Present:

Deb White, Moorhead City Council, Chair
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
Perry Baatz, Dilworth Finance Officer
Brit Stevens, NDSU Transportation Manager
Ben Griffith, Metro COG Executive Director

Members Absent:

Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Mike Rietz, Moorhead Assistant City Manager
Dustin Scott, West Fargo City Administrator

Others Present:

Andrew Almer, MATBUS
Adam Altenburg, Metro COG
Pat Carlson, Kimley-Horn
Shaun Crowell, MATBUS
Brenda Derrig, City of Fargo
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Services
Josh Gordon, MATBUS
Luke Grittner, MATBUS
Jean Henning, City of Fargo
Aiden Jung, Metro COG
Brian King, HDR
Cassie McNames, KLJ
Wyatt Papenfuss, City of Fargo
Matt Pinotti, MATBUS
Jordan Smith, MATBUS
Linghao Zhang, Metro COG
Karina Zimney, Handi Wheels Transportation

1a. Approve Order and Contents of the Agenda

A motion to approve 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 May 20, 2026

A motion to approve the minutes for the May 2026 regular meeting was made by Mr. Strand and seconded by Ms. Flannagan. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

2. Public Comment Period

No members of the public addressed the committee.

3a. Preliminary 2027 Operating Budget Approval for MnDOT Grant Submission

Ms. Bommelman presented an overview of the preliminary 2027 operating budget. She explained that the budget reflects the proposed Moorhead and Dilworth service hour and frequency changes, the 2027 Fargo cost-of-living adjustment, updated 2027 health insurance rates, and revised overhead rates. She noted that the budget is being presented for preliminary approval because MATBUS staff and the City of Moorhead are pursuing a MnDOT grant that requires preliminary budget approval before the application can proceed. Mr. Smith added that the proposed microtransit pilot project is contingent upon receiving the MnDOT grant.

Chair White expressed concern about the increased costs allocated to the City of Moorhead, noting that Moorhead's share now exceeds that of the City of Fargo. Mr. Smith explained that the proposed service expansion also increases Moorhead's share of the system's overhead costs, resulting in the higher overall contribution.

Chair White commented that it would be beneficial if the proposed microtransit pilot could provide connections to the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) in Fargo. Mr. Smith agreed and stated that MATBUS staff could explore that possibility.

Chair White suggested that the City of Fargo contribute additional funding to the pilot project so that its total contribution would remain consistent with the previous year's level. Ms. Flannagan noted that the amount proposed for the City of Moorhead represents the maximum level of funding the city is able to provide. Mr. Smith concurred, adding that no additional service expansion is being proposed in Moorhead beyond what is included in the preliminary budget.

A motion to approve the preliminary 2027 Operation Budget was made by Ms. Thompson and seconded by Mr. Griffith. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

4a. Revised Capital Allocation Plan

Mr. Smith presented the revised capital cost allocation plan. He explained that the revised plan was developed to provide a clearer distinction between capital projects that have been approved and funded through 2026, and projects that will require funding consideration beginning in 2027 and beyond.

Mr. Smith also noted that some errors were identified in the previous capital cost allocation plan. Specifically, a few projects included in 2027 grant applications were inadvertently carried forward into the allocation spreadsheet. He explained that removing these projects from the plan will result in changes to the capital cost allocations. Mr. Smith emphasized that no formal action is being requested at this time, as MATBUS intends to bring forward a revised Joint Powers Agreement before seeking approval of a new capital cost allocation plan.

Ms. Bommelman provided a brief update on the status of the revised Joint Powers Agreement, noting that a draft has been completed and is currently undergoing internal review before being presented to the MATBUS Coordination Committee. Chair White added that it may be beneficial for the partner agencies to provide input to MATBUS regarding their expectations for the new Joint Powers Agreement. Ms. Bommelman agreed and noted that the partner agencies should have comments back to her within a week.

4b. Ground Transportation Center Project Update

Cassie McNames of KLJ provided the committee with a comprehensive overview of the current condition of the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) and the findings from the recent structural assessment.

Presentation highlights included:

- An overview of the structural issues identified during inspections conducted last fall.
- A review of the proposed deck repair phasing plan.
- An update on the increasing number of distressed post-tensioning tendons identified during inspections. Ms. McNames noted that 9 distressed tendons were identified in 2020, an additional 4 were identified in 2021, and 25 more were identified during the 2025 deck repairs, representing a significant increase in deterioration.
- A presentation of six potential options for the future of the GTC:
 - **Option 0:** Maintain the status quo.
 - **Option 1A:** Install permanent steel shoring.
 - **Option 1B:** Install external post-tension reinforcement.
 - **Option 1C:** Repair the existing post-tension reinforcement.
 - **Option 2:** Complete a partial garage infill.
 - **Option 3:** Relocate transit operations away from the current GTC.

Ms. McNames noted that, with any of the proposed options other than Option 3, a significant investment would be required to conduct a more comprehensive evaluation of the extent of the existing structural damage. Based on KLJ's current assessment, she stated that the firm's recommendation is to relocate the GTC. She explained that the substantial upfront costs and ongoing expenses associated with repairing and maintaining the existing facility may outweigh the long-term value of constructing a new facility.

Ms. Derrig noted that, from the city's perspective, there is concern about making a significant investment to further investigate the structure only to determine that relocation is still necessary. She also commented that this presents an opportunity to reevaluate what type of transit facility is needed today to best serve the community.

Ms. Bommelman added that a future facility could take a variety of forms and may not need to replicate the existing GTC. She noted that alternatives such as smaller storefront locations, fare media vending machines, and other service delivery models could be considered as part of the planning process.

Ms. Bommelman noted that transit operations can continue at the GTC in the short term, with buses being staged in the 4th Street parking lot. She explained that this arrangement provides adequate space for dispatch operations and indoor seating for transit users. However, she noted that while this solution is workable in the short term, she would not like to see the temporary arrangement continue for more than another year.

Chair White asked whether there are any short-term capital improvements that could improve the current temporary arrangement. Ms. Bommelman noted that a canopy structure in the 4th Street parking lot and additional security improvements would be beneficial. She also stated that discussions have occurred with administrative staff from the partner jurisdictions regarding a study of future transit operations, including potential locations for a new operations center and opportunities for smaller satellite facilities.

Chair White asked when MATBUS anticipates returning to the committee with recommended next steps. Mr. Smith responded that MATBUS expects to have a more comprehensive plan and path forward prepared for the committee's review by the August MCC meeting.

Ms. McNames reiterated the importance and urgency of addressing the GTC decision. She noted that while the facility remains operational, additional structural issues may exist that have not yet been identified. She explained that without further investigation, it will be difficult to fully understand the extent of the existing damage and determine the appropriate path forward.

Chair White noted that there appear to be two concurrent discussions occurring: the long-term future of MATBUS operations and the more immediate need to determine short-term solutions for the existing facility. Mr. Strand suggested that a task force be convened immediately to work with the consultant and help determine next steps. Chair White responded that a task force should likely be established by the August MCC meeting.

Chair White asked whether the building inspector could provide a more comprehensive update to the committee regarding the condition of the facility. Ms. Derrig noted that a meeting could potentially be scheduled by the July meeting to bring together Ms. McNames, the building inspector, and the committee to discuss the findings and next steps.

4c. May Budget to Actuals Review

Ms. Henning provided the committee with an overview of the May budget-to-actuals review. She noted that MATBUS is approximately \$2.3 million below projected revenue due to pending reimbursement from a MnDOT grant. She also reported that expenses are approximately \$400,000 over budget, primarily due to the ongoing impacts of overtime costs, which have been a concern for several months.

Ms. Flannagan asked whether MATBUS intends to pursue a sub-allocation approach for federal grant funding or wait until the new Joint Powers Agreement is finalized. Ms. Bommelman explained that a memorandum of understanding between the city administrators from Fargo and Moorhead addresses the current allocation process. She noted that there are administrative challenges associated with having one agency serve as a sub-recipient compared to sub-allocating federal funds. She added that, based on discussions with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), there appears to be openness to Moorhead receiving the funds through a sub-allocation process.

4d. Safety and Security Update

Mr. Pinotti provided the committee with an overview of the month's security concerns. Highlights included a physical altercation outside of the GTC and an incident involving a young child who was separated from their family and was successfully reunited with their parents.

Mr. Pinotti noted that there has been a slight increase in security incidents compared to previous months, which he attributed in part to increased activity associated with the warmer weather.

5. Other Business

Ms. Bommelman informed the committee that she will be retiring at the end of July. She thanked the committee for all their guidance and support and expressed her excitement to go back to the North Dakota legislature to advocate for more transit funding from the state.

Chair White adjourned the meeting at 10:32 AM.