

**93rd Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
February 1, 2023 – 9:00 am
*Virtual Meeting***

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order and Introductions
2. Action Items:
 - a. November 16, 2022, Meeting Minutes
3. Informational Items:
 - a. 2022 Achievements – Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman
 - b. 2023 Goals – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek
 - c. Driver Shortage / Temporary Service Hours for 2023 – Julie Bommelman and Lori Van Beek
 - d. Vehicle Replacement Updates – Jordan Smith
 - e. Marketing Strategy for 2023 – Taaren Haak & Luke Grittner
 - f. Mobility Management Report / Paratransit Service Demand – Shaun Crowell
 - g. 2022 Operations Report – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek
4. Other Business

**92nd Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
November 16, 2022
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Jim Aasness, Dilworth City Council
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Steve Lindaas, Moorhead City Council
Gabrielle Lommel, Concordia College
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Teresa Stolfus, M|State
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Annie Wood, MSUM

Members Absent:

Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Paul Grindeland, Valley Senior Services
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Larry Seljevold, Moorhead City Council
Brit Stevens, NDSU

Others Present:

Heidi Benke, City of Fargo
Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Shaun Crowell, City of Fargo
Ari Del Rosario, FM Metro COG
Luke Grittner, City of Fargo
Taaren Haak, City of Moorhead
Matthew Pinotti, First Transit
Jordan Smith, City of Moorhead
Cole Swingen, City of Fargo
Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead

1. Call to Order and Introductions

a. Introduce Matt Pinotti, General Manager for First Transit

Chair Hanson called the meeting to order. A quorum was not present at the start of the meeting. Therefore, after introductions, the Chair continued to informational item 3.a. before circling back to the action items once a quorum was present.

Matthew Pinotti introduced himself as the new General Manager for First Transit after being promoted from Operations Manager in Fargo.

2. Action Items

a. September 28, 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.

b. Selection of a Vice-Chair

Ms. Van Beek brought up that it may be helpful to select a Vice-Chair in the event that the Chair is absent.

After hearing no volunteers, Chair Hanson suggested that we reach out to all board members in the coming months to try to fill that role.

c. 2024 State of North Dakota Capital Grant Applications – Julie Bommelman

Ms. Bommelman explained that the State of North Dakota sets aside capital grant funding for transit every year. For fiscal year 2024, ND has made \$12.8 million available. A summary table showed a breakdown of the City of Fargo Transit Department's capital grant requests for 2024. Ms. Bommelman reminded members that the ND state fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30. This means that the request also includes some local share funding for the City of Fargo's 2023 fiscal year. The capital grant request includes replacing paratransit schedule software, automated bus announcement system, miscellaneous support equipment, updating the Metro Transit Garage building, a mobility manager, the Ground Transportation Center deck overlay and bus and vehicle replacements.

Chair Hanson asked about the needs for updating the MTG building. Ms. Bommelman mentioned that they are interested in separating one of the offices into two, replacing carpet, replacing the bus wash and eventually looking at a possible expansion in the future.

Mr. Lindaas asked how competitive these State grants are. Ms. Bommelman said that funding is almost guaranteed, however the competition for this funding is shared among the 3 urban transit locations across ND (Fargo, Bismarck and Grand Forks). Grand Forks were previously awarded capital grant funding last year to build a new facility. This increases the odds of being awarded funding for all City of Fargo requests.

A motion to recommend to the Fargo City Commission approval to apply for grant funding for the items listed, and, upon successful receipt of funds, approve the grant execution was made by Mr. Lindaas and seconded by Mr. Strand. The motion was voted on and unanimously approved.

d. 2023 Meeting Schedule – Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman

Ms. Van Beek presented the proposed meeting dates for 2023. This included January 18, March 15, May 17, July 19, September (to be rescheduled to October 4 due to DTA conference), and November 15. Ms. Van Beek also asked the board to consider moving the January meeting to February because it is expected that the 2022 annual report data will be available by then. Mr. Strand suggested sending out a Doodle poll to check everyone's availability.

Chair Hanson asked whether anyone has considered if meetings should continue to take place virtually or resume in-person. Ms. Wood expressed that virtual meetings would be preferred to allow her to participate on the board and still attend 9am meetings on campus. Mr. Strand also added that attending virtually works well for him.

Mr. Lindaas asked if the board has had better attendance to meet a quorum since going virtual. Ms. Van Beek responded that she believes that this has been easier to achieve virtually. Chair Hanson agreed.

No action ended up being required regarding future meeting dates and a virtual versus in-person meeting option, but it was agreed upon that this can be revisited in future.

3. Informational Items

a. Temporary Service Hours for 2023 – Cole Swingen, Julie Bommelman, Lori Van Beek

Mr. Swingen provided some background about temporary service hours that are currently in place due to driver shortages. Current service hours end at 9:45pm. After internal review, MATBUS administrative staff is proposing to extend the temporary service hours by 30 minutes to 10:15pm. Part of the reasoning behind potentially extending service hours is due to the fact that more major retail and employment destinations are now open later.

Mr. Swingen also presented a graph which showed the percentage of ridership by time period. Generally, ridership steadily decreases after 5:30pm. Prior to covid, ridership drastically decreased after 10pm at less than 1% of total ridership. Routes that travel through major colleges (e.g. NDSU and MSUM) are typically utilized later in the evening compared to other core routes.

Adjusting the service end time to be 10:15pm will create more consistent 8-hour day, 40-hour week shifts for bus drivers. The longer afternoon shift is more beneficial for filling driver shifts and retaining drivers. Next steps include collecting passenger feedback and driver input based on an evaluation in 9-12 months to determine if the shift to a 10:15pm end time was valuable.

Mr. Lindaas asked if we have data about how long it takes for riders to adjust to new service hours. Ms. Van Beek recalled that service hours were extended in 2017 and a year after the change, ridership was up 25%.

Mr. Strand mentioned that someone had reached out to him to express concern that MATBUS schedules posted on the bus stops were not updated to reflect current changes. Mr. Swingen explained that these new changes are planned to come into effect in January of next year. At that time, MATBUS also plans to redo their maps and timetables to reflect these changes. Up-to-date information is also available on their website.

Chair Hanson asked if MATBUS has received any comments yet regarding the temporary service hours. Mr. Swingen responded that they haven't heard much since they did the initial hour change back in January. He reiterated that this impacted a very small percentage of their ridership. Ms. Van Beek clarified that this has only been a temporary change and therefore was not vetted through the public hearing process. According to their policy, they can make these administrative changes based on staff shortages. As a temporary change, MATBUS is still committed to bringing their service frequency up as they look to hire more bus drivers.

b. September-October 2022 Operations Report – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek

Mr. Swingen presented a summary of transit ridership in 2022 so far, compared to 2021. There was a mix of increases and decreases in ridership across Fargo. There were some reduced frequencies on Routes 11, 13, 14 and 15. Those routes subsequently saw decreases in ridership. Route 15 also dealt with a lot of construction this summer. This shifted some ridership from Route 15 to Route 16 to get from the GTC to West Acres. Route 16, 17 and 18 have seen

increases in ridership, whereas Route 20 and 24 saw slight decreases. The Industrial Park TapRide service and the college routes have seen the most significant increases.

Ms. Van Beek presented ridership data for Moorhead Transit. Similar to Fargo, the college routes (Route 1 and 2) have seen an increase in ridership while most other routes have seen ridership decreases.

Mr. Swingen also presented a table of college ridership. NDSCS was the only college to see a decrease in ridership.

Chair Hanson asked if MATBUS has heard of increased gas prices impacting transit ridership. Mr. Swingen confirmed that they have received a few comments regarding this choice, however it is hard to gauge how much of any increases in ridership are due to gas prices versus a natural bounce back from the pandemic. Ms. Van Beek added that typically transit does see a slight increase in ridership whenever gas prices rise.

Ms. Van Beek also presented data for Metro Senior Ride ridership. These numbers, along with paratransit, have continued to increase. There have been internal discussions about the expected future demand of these services.

4. Other Business

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:41 AM.



MATBUS
Informational Items
02/01/2023

(701) 232-7500

matbus.com

650 23rd St N. Fargo, ND 58102



Annual Achievements Report

EQUIPMENT:

- Participated in procurement for replacement of large buses as part of Duluth Consortium; award completed and prices revised due to Force Majeure Clause. Final order pending new price proposal in 2023. 1 Moorhead, 8 Fargo
- Awarded bid for replacement of two Paratransit buses for Moorhead (Units 1231 & 1232) in 2021; delivery delayed from 2022 to 2024 or later due to Ford chassis availability.
- Completed delivery and installation of shop hoist at Metro Transit Garage.
- Purchased a handheld language translation device for GTC dispatchers.

FARES:

- Implemented new account-based "Connect" mobile ticketing and fare capping (implemented May 4, 2022, upon two-week notice to passengers)



Annual Achievements Report

FARGO ROUTE & SERVICES CHANGES:

- Jan 10, 2022: Implemented temporary suspension of bus service due to driver shortage and to increase reliability. Reduced frequency on Routes 11, 13, 14 and 15. TapRide service to the Industrial Park suspended on Saturdays. All evening service ended at 9:45 p.m. rather than 11:15 p.m.
- May 16, 2022: Resumed normal frequency on routes temporarily suspended due to driver shortage. Routes gaining more services are Routes 11, 13, 14 and 15. TapRide service to the Industrial Park resumed on Saturdays. Continued suspension of evening service early at 9:45 p.m.
- December 12, 2022: Fargo City Commission approved minor route changes to Route 15, Route 18, Route 20, and Route 32 to improve consistency and on-time performance. Route 15 was reduced by .54 miles, making the route 2 minutes shorter. Route 18 was reduced by 3.6 miles, making the route 8 minutes shorter, Route 20 was reduced by 1.06 miles, making the route 10 minutes shorter, and Route 32 was adjusted to travel on different roads near the University Village Shelter to avoid issues with snow during winter. These route changes were implemented on January 9, 2023.



Annual Achievements Report

MOORHEAD ROUTE & SERVICE CHANGES:

- November 2022: The Route 3 long-term detour due to construction of 20th/21st Street Grade Separate ended.

SHELTERS & FACILITIES:

- Distributed RFQ for Architecture and Engineering Services for Dilworth Walmart Transit Hub Improvements
- Distributed RFP for Moorhead downtown Center Avenue shelters
- Distributed RFP for up to nine replacement shelters with solar lighting for Moorhead

STUDIES & PLANS:

- Updated Safety Plan in July 2022
- Updated Transit Asset Management Plan in October 2022.
- Completed the FTA Triennial Review (covering four years due to pandemic)
- Completed update to equipment inventory, physical on-site verification and correlation with financial records.



Annual Achievements Report

OTHER:

- Amended 2022 contract with First Transit to increase driver wages to attract and retain drivers with the goal to return service levels ASAP. First Transit wages for supervisors and payroll clerk increases as well. Fargo also increased wages for GTC Dispatchers and the Operations Supervisor.
- Negotiated one-year option to First Transit contract for CY2023.
- Distributed RFPs for shelter cleaning, snow removal and hauling and custodial services at MTG and GTC.
- Assisted State of ND in drafting the RFPs for replacement of CAD AVA/AVL replacement and Paratransit dispatch software
- Drafted new billing calculations for the West Fargo Mass Transit Agreement with approval by the West Fargo City Commission
- Began roundtable discussions for improving Paratransit operations, including analysis of the application process, scheduling, driver capability, vehicles, staffing, and software replacement.



2023 Goals

- Issue RFQ and Scope of Work for Planning Study on Phase 2 Implementation of Transit Authority
- 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
- Replace shelter concrete for improved accessibility on up to six locations
- Purchase updated technology for Paratransit scheduling
- Purchase updated technology for Fixed Route live tracking
- Continue major improvements to the Metro Transit Garage
- Continue discussions to replace and relocate the West Acres Transit Hub
- Further evaluate Route 15 and Route 18 to improve on-time performance
- Add additional Paratransit dispatching staff to keep up with growing demand
- Replace Fargo's existing TapRide software with TransLoc software for On-Demand service



Driver Shortage Update

- The Cities contract with First Transit for drivers and management
- Transit service requires paratransit and fixed route drivers (fixed route requires a Commercial Driver License (CDL))
- Provision of our full services requires a staff of 91 drivers, full and part-time
- We are currently down approximately 26% of our driving staff
- First Transit has put forth extensive recruitment efforts, however, it has not yielded the desired results
- Retention efforts have been implemented
- Wages and benefits have been increased in effort to be competitive
- Unemployment in area is very low
- Nationwide trend echoes what we are experiencing



Vehicle Replacement Updates





Marketing Plan for 2023

Goals

- Focus on education
- Utilize videos frequently
 - Series of videos on educational topics
- MATBUS Connect promotion and education
- Assess MATBUS.com to focus on ease of use and developing FAQs
- Maintain digital marketing presence consistently throughout the year
- Identify strategies to engage younger riders – elementary school, high school, college
- Identify underrepresented demographics – for connection or educational support
- Explore social media platform expansion



Mobility Management Report for 2022

(Paratransit Service Demand Trends)

- Approved Paratransit tracking 2016-2022, after 2017 applications had held steady until 2020. Starting in 2021 the amount of approved applications has started to trend back up.

Paratransit approved rider tracking

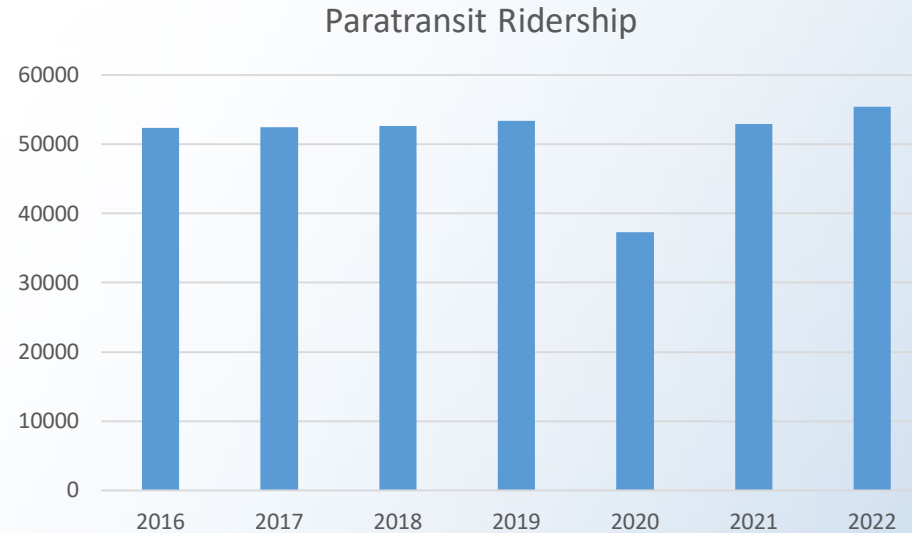




Mobility Management Report for 2022

(Paratransit Service Demand Trends)

- Paratransit Ridership since 2016 had been steadily increasing until 2020, starting in 2021 ridership really bounced back and has been trending higher.



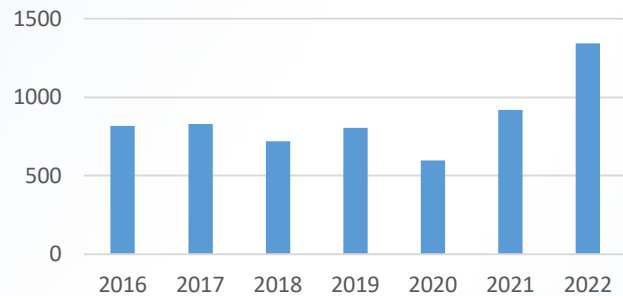


Mobility Management Report for 2022

(Paratransit Service Demand Trends)

- Starting in 2021 ridership for Dilworth and West Fargo has gone up significantly, while Fargo and Moorhead have stayed pretty consistent. This has an affect on our service and can lead to longer trip times, increased revenue hours, wear to vehicles, more fuel usage, and more scheduling challenges.

Dilworth Paratransit ridership



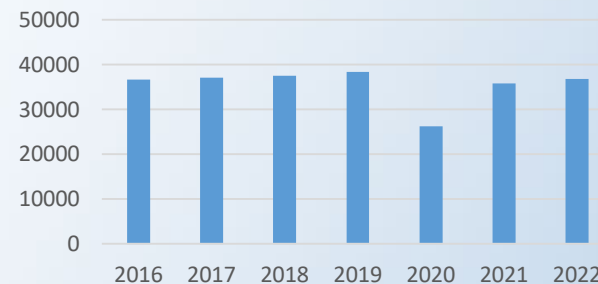
West Fargo Paratransit ridership



Moorhead Paratransit ridership



Fargo Paratransit Ridership





Ridership

Annual Fargo by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2021	50,021	69,846	110,333	251,304	21,926	27,842
2022	41,098	65,756	91,340	220,016	28,822	31,609
Change	-17.84%	-5.86%	-17.21%	-12.45%	31.45%	13.53%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Ind. Park TapRide	Paratransit
2021	30,353	26,455	17,834	3,867	4,332	52,919
2022	39,833	25,452	17,547	2,245	6,440	55,422
Change	31.23%	-3.79%	-1.61%	-41.94%	48.66%	4.75%

Period	Route 31	Route 32	Route 33	Route 34	Route 36	NDSU TapRide
2021	6,908	49,243	83,220	15,009	15,461	2,263
2022	13,072	81,657	115,938	25,893	24,172	6,068
Change	89.23%	65.82%	39.32%	72.52%	56.34%	128.14%



Ridership

Annual Moorhead by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2021	55,768	76,480	54,114	117,623	45,722	10,315	3,705
2022	59,886	79,828	45,639	104,010	41,800	8,736	3,964
Change	7.86%	4.38%	-15.66%	-11.57%	-8.58%	-15.31%	6.99%

Period	Fargo Total	Moorhead Total	System Total
2021	786,217	363,727	1,149,944
2022	836,958	343,863	1,180,821
Change	6.45%	-5.46%	2.69%



Ridership

Trips by Customer Type

Period	Adult	College	Elderly	Disabled	Youth	Child	Total
2021	775,976	219,430	84,011	128,582	16,603	17,887	1,242,489
2022	714,116	335,375	94,302	170,632	18,073	20,923	1,353,421
Change	-7.97%	52.84%	12.55%	32.70%	8.85%	16.97%	8.93%

Period	NDSU	MSUM	Concordia	M State	NDSCS
2021	191,071	13,699	7,572	5,568	446
2022	296,568	19,092	10,864	8,151	350
Change	55.21%	39.37%	43.48%	46.39%	-21.52%



Ridership

Annual Metro Senior Ride (Moorhead/Dilworth)

METRO SENIOR RIDE 2022									
MOORHEAD & DILWORTH, MINNESOTA									
Month	MOORHEAD SENIORS			DILWORTH SENIORS			TOTAL PASSENGERS		
	2022	2021	% Change	2022	2021	% Change	2022	2021	% Change
January	560	466	20.17%	65	12	441.67%	625	478	30.75%
February	460	485	-5.15%	28	38	-26.32%	488	523	-6.69%
March	723	548	31.93%	54	50	8.00%	777	598	29.93%
April	583	458	27.29%	67	36	86.11%	650	494	31.58%
May	616	450	36.89%	56	39	43.59%	672	489	37.42%
June	626	532	17.67%	76	63	20.63%	702	595	17.98%
July	512	551	-7.08%	61	53	15.09%	573	604	-5.13%
August	614	583	5.32%	91	80	13.75%	705	663	6.33%
September	668	590	13.22%	97	58	67.24%	765	648	18.06%
October	662	498	32.93%	72	68	5.88%	734	566	29.68%
November	594	571	4.03%	79	76	3.95%	673	647	4.02%
December	499	332	50.30%	70	44	59.09%	569	376	51.33%
TOTAL	7,117	6,064	17.36%	816	617	32.25%	7,933	6,681	18.74%

TOTAL PASSENGERS									
Month	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
TOTAL	10,143	10,765	10,907	10,454	10,172	5,695	6,681	7,933	
% Change	22.19%	6.13%	1.32%	-4.15%	-2.70%	-44.01%	17.31%	18.74%	
						Post-COVID Recovery	56%	66%	78%



Additional Statistics

By Year

Vehicle Revenue Hours

Moorhead

2021 – 35,427

2022 – 32,433.5

Change – (8.45%)

Fargo

2021 – 83,299

2022 – 68,265

Change – (18.05%)

Paratransit

2021 – 26,118

2022 – 28,248

Change – 8.16%

Vehicle Revenue Miles

Moorhead

2021 – 477,974

2022 – 436,712

Change – (8.63%)

Fargo

2021 – 952,526

2022 – 794,916

Change – (16.55%)

Paratransit

2021 – 343,445

2022 – 370,145

Change – 7.77%

Ridership per Hour

Moorhead

2021 – 10.27

2022 – 10.60

Change – 3.21%

Fargo

2021 – 9.44

2022 – 12.26

Change – 29.87%

Paratransit

2021 – 2.03

2022 – 1.96

Change – (3.45%)



Additional Statistics

By Year

Vehicle Revenue Hours

Metro Senior Ride

2021 – 5,581

2022 – 6,049

Change – 8.39%

Vehicle Revenue Miles

Metro Senior Ride

2021 – 58,085

2022 – 64,749

Change – 11.47%

Ridership per Hour

Metro Senior Ride

2021 – 1.20

2022 – 1.31

Change – 9.55%