

**89th Meeting of the  
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board  
March 16, 2022 – 8:00 am  
*Virtual Meeting***

***Meeting Agenda***

1. Call to Order and Introductions
  
2. Action Items:
  - a. October 20, 2021, Meeting Minutes
  - b. Fargo Title VI Plan – Shaun Crowell
  - c. 2023 Preliminary Budgets/Capital/FTA Section 5307 Highlights –
    - i. Fargo - Julie Bommelman
    - ii. Moorhead - Lori Van Beek
  
3. Informational Items:
  - a. Address Staff Shortages – Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman
    - i. Amendment to First Transit Contract
    - ii. Other GTC Staff
    - iii. Temporary Service Reductions due To Driver Shortage – Cole Swingen & Taaren Haak
  - b. Federal Triennial Review Update – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek
  - c. TMA/Large UZA Letter to FTA (Splitting Funds Formula) – Julie Bommelman & Lori Van Beek
  - d. 2021 Annual Achievements Report –Lori Van Beek & Julie Bommelman
  - e. Request for Proposals – Cole Swingen
    - i. Shelter Window Cleaning
    - ii. Shelter Snow Removal
    - iii. Custodial Services at GTC & MTG
    - iv. Replace Software for Scheduling Paratransit and Fixed Route
  - f. Genfare System Implementation Update – Lori Van Beek & Jordan Smith
  - g. Mobility Management Updates – Shaun Crowell
  - h. 2021 Year-end Operations Reports – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek
  - i. 2022 Jan-Feb Operations Report – Cole Swingen & Lori Van Beek
  - j. Marketing Activities and Annual Marketing Plan for 2022 – Taaren Haak & Luke Grittner
  - k. 2022 Fuel Bids – Jordan Smith
  - l. Interesting Transit Articles
  
4. Other Business



# MAT Board Action Items March 16, 2022

***(701) 232-7500***

***matbus.com***

***650 23rd St N. Fargo, ND 58102***



# Fargo Transit Title VI Program

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The Federal Transit Administration requires the Transit Department to have a Title VI Program specific to Transit, which has to be updated every three years. The program has been provided for review and specifies applicability to the Transit Department.

**Recommended Action:** The requested motion is to recommend approval of the attached Transit Title VI Program to the Fargo City Commission.



# Fargo Proposed 2023 Capital Projects

The attached listing is an excerpt from the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

The 2023 projects listed would require a local share match of \$561,500. The annual CIP allocation to Mass Transit would be requested during the budget process.

**Recommended Motion:** Provide the 2023 CIP to the Fargo budget team and recommend the 2023 projects for consideration in the 2023 budget.

City of Fargo - Transit			2023
Capital Improvement Plan			Estimated
CAPITAL GRANTS - 5339/5310/UR			
Replace 2010 Para Scheduling Software - Fargo Share of \$125K total	federal		\$ 26,800
	local		\$ 6,700
	total		\$ 100,000
Replace 2012 AVA System - Fargo Share of \$900K	federal		\$ 480,000
	local		\$ 120,000
	total		\$ 600,000
Misc. Support Equipment (5339/5307) (Informational/Interactive Kiosks; computers)	federal		80,000
	local		20,000
	total		\$ 100,000
Replace ToolCat - Fargo Share of \$96,000 grand total (5339/5307)	federal		\$ 51,200
	local		\$ 12,800
	total		\$ 64,000
Upgrade Metro Transit Garage per Study (5339/5310)	federal		\$ 452,800
	local		\$ 113,200
	total		\$ 566,000
Mobility Manager Salary (Fargo share) 5310	federal		\$ 81,600
	local		\$ 20,400
	total		\$ 102,000
Replacement Fixed Rt Buses (1200 and 1201)	federal		\$ 920,000
STP/UR/5339/5310 funding federal	local		\$ 230,000
	total		\$ 1,150,000
Replacement Para Buses (8171 and 8172)	federal		\$ 153,600
STP/UR/5339/5310 funding federal	local		\$ 38,400
	total		\$ 192,000
	TOTAL FEDERAL	federal	\$ 2,246,000
	TOTAL LOCAL	local	\$ 561,500
	GRAND TOTAL	total	\$ 2,807,500



# Fargo Proposed 2023 Operating Budget

The listing is a summary of the proposed 2023 Fargo operating budget.

The 2023 operating budget estimates higher increased costs for fuel, technical support, First Transit services, custodial, snow removal and hauling, paratransit and farebox cards. The proposed operating budget for transit would be requested during the upcoming Fargo budget process.

Note: the overall increase from FY22 to FY23 is approximately 7%.

**Recommended Motion:** Provide the 2023 operating budget to the Fargo budget team and recommend the projections for consideration in the 2023 budget.

	FY2022	FY2023
Fargo Fixed Route	\$ 4,397,617	\$ 4,632,602
Paratransit	\$ 1,114,260	\$ 1,269,714
Ground Transportation Center	\$ 659,155	\$ 725,071
Planning	\$ 86,651	\$ 95,316
Mobility Management	\$ 126,948	\$ 129,546
Metro Transit Garage	\$ 3,504,348	\$ 3,725,120
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 9,888,979</b>	<b>\$ 10,577,368</b>



# Moorhead Proposed 2023 Capital Projects

The listing provided in your packet is an excerpt from the 10-year Financial Plan of capital equipment and facility improvements needed for the 2023-2027 CIP.

The 2023 projects listed would require a local share match of \$146,960. The annual CIP allocation to Mass Transit of \$150,000 would be used, with the remaining \$3,040 banked for future capital projects.

**Recommended Motion:** Provide the 2023-2027 CIP to the Moorhead City Manager and recommend the 2023 projects for consideration in the 2023 budget.

			2023
<b>Moorhead Mass Transit</b>			
<b>Shelters:</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>		
Target #109 & Mstate #111	FTA 5339 80%; State 10%, City 10%	80%	45,600
<b>Paratransit Vehicles:</b>			
Paratransit Bus - 5 year life - Replace Unit 7181	FTA 5307	85%	96,000
<b>Facility Equipment &amp; Improvements:</b>			
Facility Improvements - Metro Transit Garage (1/3 Mhd Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5339	80%	283,000
Facility Equipment - Replace 2009 Tool Cat (Originally 100% Mhd to be replaced 1/3 Mhd Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5307	80%	32,000
<b>Technology:</b>			
Technology - Replace 2012 AVA/AVL - 10 year life (1/3 Mhd Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5307	80%	98,500
	FTA 5339	80%	201,500
Technology - Paratransit Scheduling Software - 10 year life (Mhd 20% Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5339	80%	25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>781,600</b>
<b>FUNDING:</b>			
CIP			150,000
Federal Grant @ 85% (FTA 5307)			81,600
Federal Grant @ 80% (FTA 5307, FTA 5339 & STBGP)			548,480
State Grant @ 10%			4,560
Mass Transit Reserves			(3,040)
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>781,600</b>



# Moorhead Proposed 2023 Operating Budget Considerations

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- MnDOT 2023 Operating Grants are due June 30, 2022.
- Preliminary indications are that the State increase may be between 7-10% to address staff shortages and wage increases implemented by transit agencies across Minnesota.
- No new service changes are proposed at this time. New service applications are competitive and must be supported by the Transit Development Plan or other planning document.
- Identified issues for budget consideration:
  - First Transit Contract for 2023 under negotiation and reflects wage increase amendment from 2022, implementation of step increases and proposed COLA.
  - Moorhead cost shares in various services provided by Fargo for the transit system based on our Master Agreement, including: Ground Transportation Center, Metro Transit Garage, Technology and Technical Support, Mobility Management and MAT Paratransit Service.
  - Fuel prices are increasing substantially.
  - 3% COLA for City of Moorhead employees under consideration.
  - Fare structure changes effective in 2022 and the affect on 2023 budget revenues and expenses.

**Recommended Motion:** Direct staff to move forward with operating budgets and grant applications for 2023 in coordination with the Moorhead City Manager based on the considerations listed and bring back a final 2023 budget at the regularly scheduled July meeting.





# MAT Board Informational March 16, 2022

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***650 23rd St N. Fargo, ND 58102***





# First Transit Contract Amendment

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- Due to driver and dispatch shortages and the need to attract new and retain existing staff, the Cities and First Transit met and recommended a strategy of pay increases and advertising. The following contract amendments were approved by the Fargo Commission and Moorhead Council:
  - Increased the starting pay for drivers by 10% from \$19.30 per hour to \$21.23, along with reducing the number of steps on the pay scale from 25 to 11 steps (in place of longevity payments). All drivers would receive a minimum 10% increase and advance to the next closest step to their current pay step.
  - Increased the First Transit management fee to cover wage increases averaging 5% for Road Supervisors, Operations Manager, Safety Supervisor and Payroll Clerk.



# First Transit Contract Amendment (Cont.)

- Other strategies implemented:
  - Accepted changes to the Ground Transportation Center budget under the Joint Powers Agreement between Fargo and Moorhead to increase Dispatcher wages and Operations Supervisor wages by 10%.
  - Authorized the Fargo Transit Director and Moorhead Transit Manager to negotiate a one-year option to extend the contract with First Transit for CY2023. Under the existing contract terms, the increase cannot exceed the most recent Consumer Price Index.
  - First Transit placed advertising on the driver's side of 10 large transit buses.





# Temporary Service Reductions

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- Due to continued driver shortages
- Allows for more reliability of service for riders
- Beginning Monday, January 10, 2022
- All services ending at 9:45 p.m., plus additional timetable reductions to specific routes
- Expansion of November 8, 2021 reductions to Route 2, Route 15, TapRide Industrial Park
- In effect until at least May 2022, with two weeks notice given before reinstating service
  
- Rider Communication
  - News release to local media
  - Website news post
  - Rider Alert
  - Facebook and Twitter
  - Posters at GTC



# Temporary Service Reductions (Cont.)

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- **All MATBUS & MAT Paratransit Service Ends at 9:45 p.m., Monday-Saturday**
- **Route 2:** The additional bus that runs between 2:30 pm and 6:30 pm will be suspended. Route 2 will be a half-hour route all day.
- **Route 11:** reduced to hourly service, with trips leaving the GTC at :45 after the hour
- **Route 13:** reduced to hourly service, with trips leaving the GTC at :45 after the hour
- **Route 14:** reduced to hourly service, with trips leaving the GTC at :15 after the hour
- **Route 15:** Buses will leave the GTC at :15 and :45 after the hour all day. There will also be an additional bus leaving at :00 after the hour from 10:00am to 6:00pm.
- **Route 32W:** discontinued until further notice
- **Route 33:** 10-minute service all day
- **NDSU TapRide:** new hours are 6:30-9:45pm
- **TapRide (Industrial Park):** TapRide service to the Industrial Park will not be available Saturdays. Industrial Park service will continue as usual on weekdays.



# Federal Triennial Review Update

- Federal Transit Administration review of four-year period July 2018 – June 2022
- Transit notified in December 2021
- Submission deadline of Feb. 25 met
- FTA Consultant does desk audit of 23 areas
- Final virtual meeting with results to be held in June

1	LEGAL
2	FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND CAPACITY
3	TECHNICAL CAPACITY - AWARD MANAGEMENT
4	TECHNICAL CAPACITY - PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND SUBRECIPIENT OVERSIGHT
5	TECHNICAL CAPACITY - PROJECT MANAGEMENT
6	TRANSIT ASSET MANAGEMENT
7	SATISFACTORY CONTINUING CONTROL
8	MAINTENANCE
9	PROCUREMENT
10	DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE
11	TITLE VI
12	AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) - GENERAL
13	AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) - COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT
14	EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
15	SCHOOL BUS
16	CHARTER BUS
17	DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ACT
18	DRUG AND ALCOHOL PROGRAM
19	SECTION 5307 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
20	SECTION 5310 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
21	SECTION 5311 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS
22	PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION AGENCY SAFETY PLAN (PTASP)
23	CYBERSECURITY





# TMA/Large UZA Split Letter to FTA

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- The urbanized area (UZA) of Fargo-Moorhead will likely exceed 200,000 in population upon completion of the 2020 census and become a Transportation Management Area (TMA). This designation could potentially be in place by October 1, 2022, which is the start of the federal fiscal year.
- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) apportions funds for urbanized areas to states and designated recipients, which are responsible for receiving and apportioning FTA funds to eligible projects within the applicable urbanized area. A designated recipient is responsible for administering the program on behalf of a UZA with a population of 200,000 or more.
- Designations for UZAs of 200,000 or more in population become effective when the governor of a state officially notifies the appropriate FTA regional administrator(s) in writing of that designation and remains in effect until changed by the governor of a state by official written notice of re-designation to the appropriate FTA regional administrator.



# TMA/Large UZA Split Letter to FTA (Cont.)

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- A state or designated recipient may authorize another public entity to be a “direct recipient” for Section 5307 funds. A direct recipient is a public entity that is legally eligible under federal transit law to apply for and receive grants directly from FTA. The designated recipient must inform FTA of the arrangement in a “split letter,” which establishes the allocation of Section 5307 funds in a large UZA. FTA can only make grants to direct recipients after the designated recipient provides a split or suballocation letter to the FTA regional office.
- The amount of funds available to direct recipients is determined cooperatively by public transit providers, the MPO, and the designated recipient(s) for the UZA, in adherence with federal planning requirements and communicated to FTA by the designated recipient.





# TMA/Large UZA Split Letter to FTA (Cont.)

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- FTA encourages the designation of a single designated recipient for each UZA 200,000 or more in population, including such UZAs that span more than one state, in order to streamline the administration of the program and foster coordination. However, nothing precludes the designation of multiple designated recipients.
- In cases where a UZA extends into more than one state, and the public transportation providers are also located in more than one state, the governor of each state must participate in the process to designate a recipient.
- For each designated recipient, the state must submit an Opinion of Counsel certifying the entity's legal capacity to perform the functions of a designated recipient.



# Annual Achievements Report

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## EQUIPMENT:

- Effective October 15, 2021, began use of bus green light priority on traffic signals along Moorhead bus routes
- Completed Farebox Upgrade, with mobility ticketing and pay as you go fare capping
- Participated in procurement for replacement of large buses as part of Duluth Consortium (Award to be completed in 2022): 1 Moorhead, 8 Fargo
- Awarded bid for replacement of two Paratransit buses for Moorhead (Units 1231 & 1232) to be delivered in 2022
- Installed permanent barriers in all buses for driver safety
- Installed air filtration system in all buses



# Annual Achievements Report (Cont.)

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## **FARES:**

- Suspended fares of Fixed Route and MAT Paratransit through March 31, 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Fare collection resumed on April 1, 2021.
- Approved new account-based fare structure with mobile ticketing and fare capping (to be implemented in 2022 upon two-week notice to passengers)

## **MOORHEAD ROUTE & SERVICE CHANGES:**

- Route 4 – Removed service from Cash Wise parking lot, per request of property owner
- Route 6 – Extended route further east to 14th St NE for new development area - removed service from the Cash Wise parking lot to continue to fit route in 30-minute trip - reversed route to more efficiently serve CVS
- Route 9 - Removed portion of route that traveled west of Career Academy - reversed Sanford loop to serve Vista Center on the west side of 34th St S - added on-request service to Vista building through parking lot - removed service from Cash Wise Parking lot



# Annual Achievements Report (Cont.)

## MOORHEAD SHELTERS:

- Cash Wise shelter moved from parking lot to 34th St boulevard, due to Cash Wise requesting the removal of routes from their parking lot. Added sidewalk to connect to parking lot.
- Hornbacher's shelter (11th St) moved location south across the street to match up with the route path better - new style shelter with solar lighting
- Courthouse shelter moved location farther north to other side of intersection - new style shelter with solar lighting
- "A Place for Hope" had concrete for a shelter poured as part of the 12th Avenue South reconstruction. Nov. 2021 moved a used shelter to this location.
- Replaced wood fence with PVC around utilities at Marriott Transfer Hub
- Disposed of Dilworth AXIS shelter and replaced with LinkFM shelter from the Center Mall
- Replaced shelter at Queens (Belsly & 18th St S) after destroyed by a car





# Annual Achievements Report (Cont.)

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## **FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS – METRO TRANSIT GARAGE:**

- Replaced lighting with LED (both interior and exterior)

## **FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS – GROUND TRANSPORTATION CENTER:**

- June 2021 - December 2021 - Phase 2 of the Ground Transportation Center construction project was substantially completed.

## **STUDIES AND PLANS:**

- Completed five-year Transit Development Plan, including Human Services Plan Update
- Began implementation of Safety Plan in July 2021

## **OTHER:**

- Began new two-year contract with First Transit for 2021-2022; GTC dispatchers became Fargo employees
- MATBUS hosted the 2021 Dakota Transit Association Conference





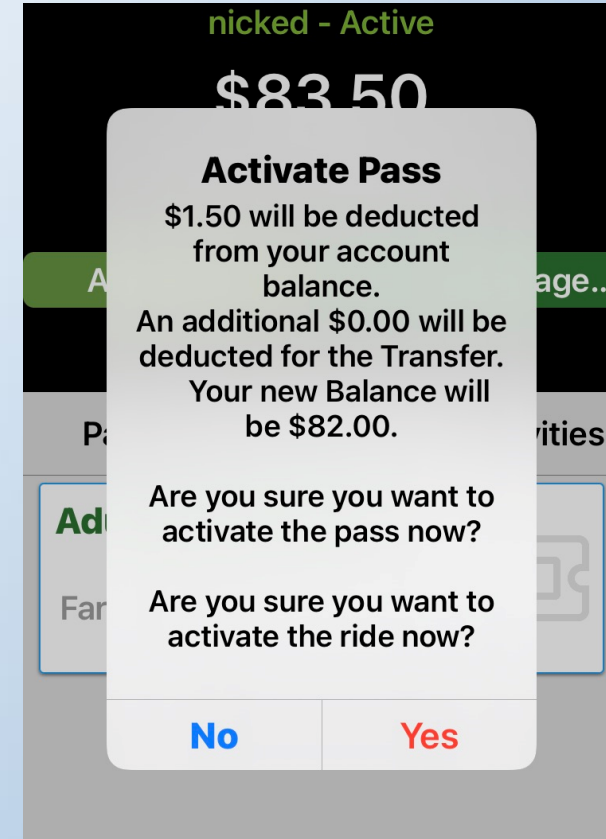
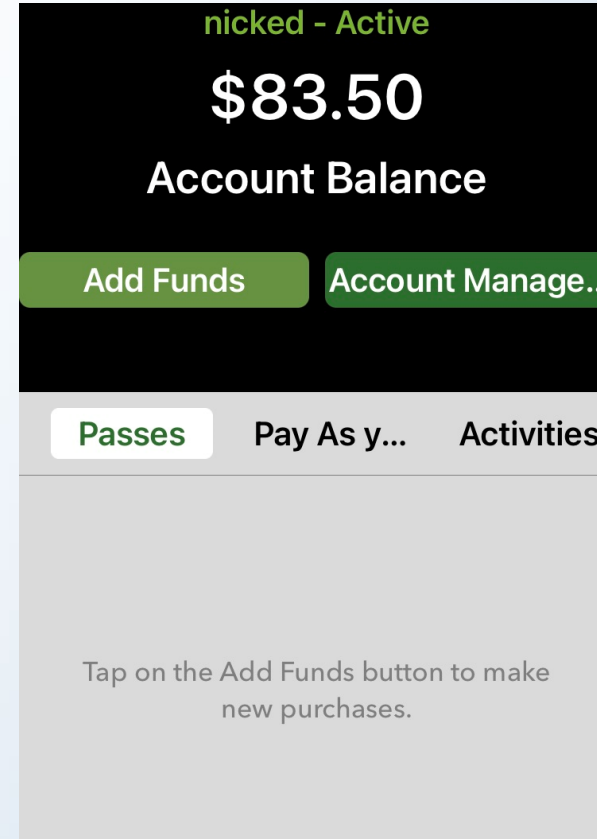
**MATBUS will be requesting bids for the following services in 2022. All bids will be received through the request for proposals process.**

- **Shelter Cleaning** – 5-year contract to clean all MATBUS bus shelters and empty trash receptacles on a weekly/biweekly basis.
- **Snow Clearing and Removal** – 5-year contract to clear and remove snow from all MATBUS bus shelters, as well as the Metro Transit Garage and Ground Transportation Center.
- **MTG & GTC Custodial Services** – 5-year contract to provide daily custodial services for the Metro Transit Garage and Ground Transportation Center facilities.
- **Paratransit Scheduling Software** – Purchase replacement day-to-day scheduling software for MATBUS Paratransit operations.
- **Fixed Route Scheduling Software** – Purchase replacement day-to-day scheduling software for MATBUS fixed route operations; used to make automatic announcements of major bus stops and for live tracking.



# Genfare Update

- Pending go-live with the system no later than April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Fare structure was approved by Fargo and Moorhead in 2021 to be implemented with a two-week notice to passengers.
- Continuing to test each system feature and correct any errors or clarify anything confusing.
- The mobile app is in the testing phase as well.
- Establishing an education campaign with videos.







# Mobility Management Updates

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- Resuming in-person Travel Trainer Training at the GTC in March, we have been doing a stripped down webinar version since the pandemic started.
- In the process of updating and printing the 2022 FM Ride Source Directory.
- Updated and printed an updated MAT Paratransit Brochure for 2022.
- Updated and submitted for approval the Fargo Title VI Program which is due every three years.
- Working on the DBE (Disadvantaged Business Enterprises) goals for Fargo and Moorhead for the next three years.
- Processed 288 MAT Paratransit applications for 2021, which was up from 203 in 2020.
- Active member of the Civil and Human Rights Task Force through Freedom Resource Center.



# Ridership

2021 Annual Fargo Ridership by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 13U	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2020	55,227	64,803	17,626	115,371	300,090	23,913	34,209
2021	50,021	69,846	15,461	110,333	251,303	21,926	27,842
Change	-9%	8%	-12%	-4%	-16%	-8%	-19%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Ind. Park TapRide	Paratransit
2020	31,035	31,040	18,396	93	6,705	37,137
2021	30,353	26,455	17,834	3,867	4,232	52,802
Change	-2%	-15%	-3%	4058%	-37%	42%

Period	Route 31	Route 32E & Route 32W	Route 33	Route 34	NDSU TapRide
2020	10,465	53,917	69,518	21,298	2,122
2021	6,908	49,220	83,220	15,009	2,312
Change	-34%	-9%	20%	-30%	9%



# Ridership

2021 Annual Moorhead Ridership by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2020	61,976	91,236	60,435	138,038	54,076	15,244	4,742
2021	55,768	76,480	54,114	117,623	45,721	10,315	3,705
Change	-10%	-16%	-10%	-15%	-15%	-32%	-22%

Period	TOTAL
2020	425,747
2021	363,726
Change	-15%



# Ridership

2021 Calendar Year College Ridership

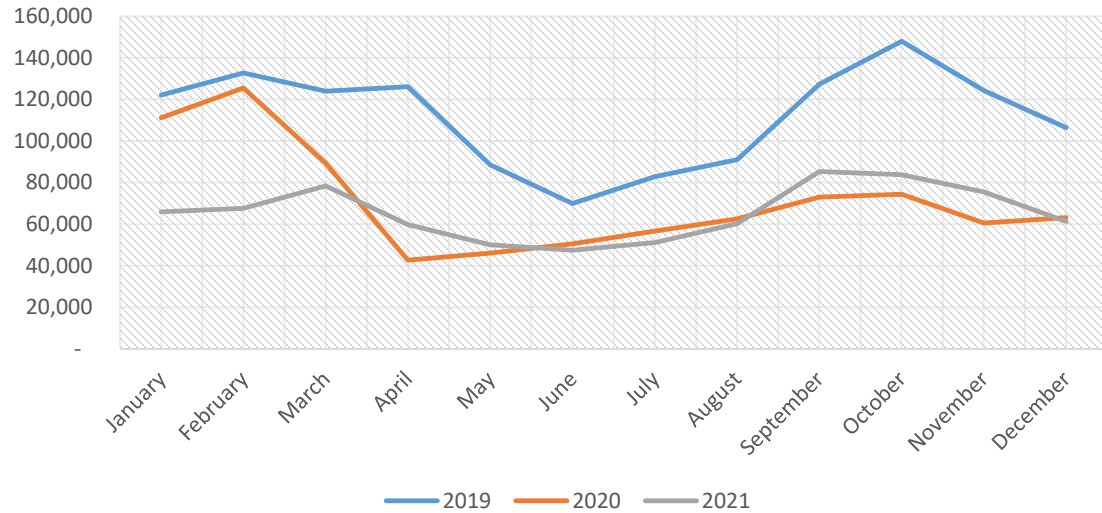
Period	NDSU	MSUM	Concordia	M State	NDSCS
2020	187,621	10,533	2,708	3,911	697
2021	191,213	13,716	7,578	5,582	454
Change	2%	23%	64%	30%	-54%



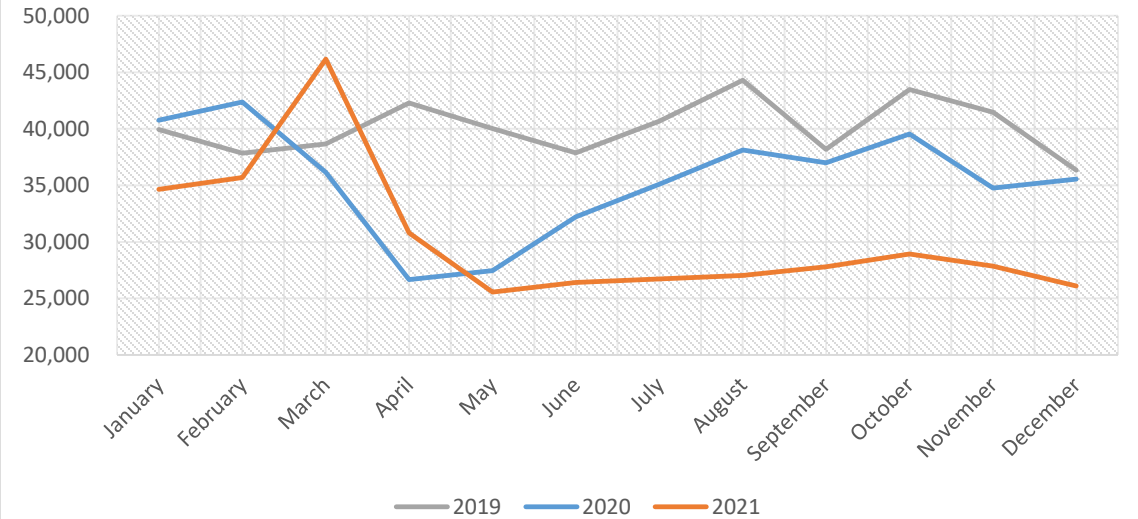
# Ridership

## 2021 Annual Fargo and Moorhead Ridership by Month

### Ridership by Month - Fargo Fixed Route



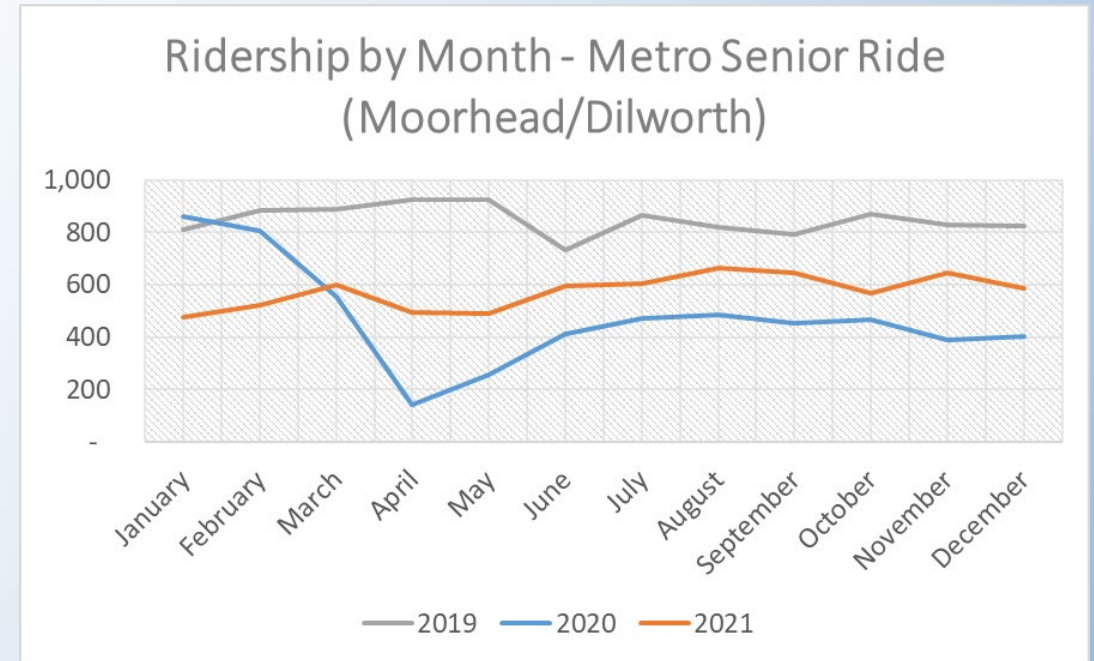
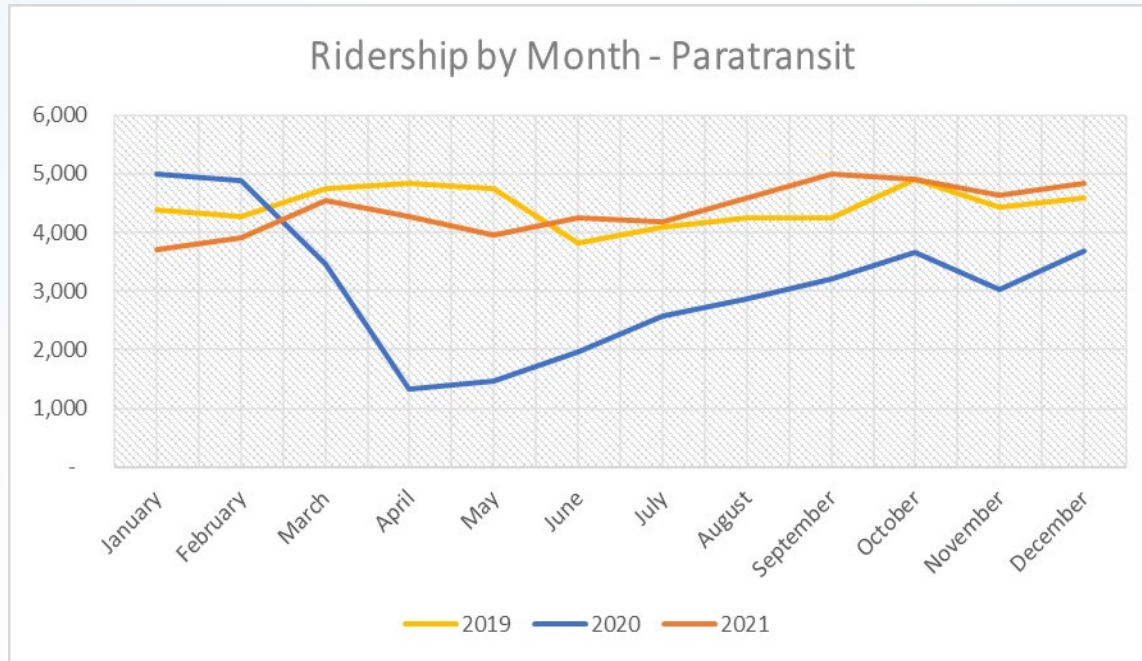
### Ridership by Month - Moorhead Fixed Route





# Ridership

## 2021 Annual Metro Senior Ride (Moorhead/Dilworth) & Paratransit







# Ridership

## 2021 Annual Metro Senior Ride (Moorhead/Dilworth)

MONTH	METRO SENIOR RIDE								
	2020 Ridership			2021 Ridership			% CHANGE		
	Moorhead	Dilworth	Total	Moorhead	Dilworth	Total	Moorhead	Dilworth	Total
Jan	756	104	860	466	12	478	-38%	-88%	-44%
Feb	712	95	807	485	38	523	-32%	-60%	-35%
Mar	463	89	552	548	50	598	18%	-44%	8%
Apr	91	51	142	458	36	494	403%	-29%	248%
May	189	69	258	450	39	489	138%	-43%	90%
Jun	344	66	410	532	63	595	55%	-5%	45%
Jul	451	19	470	551	53	604	22%	179%	29%
Aug	460	24	484	583	80	663	27%	233%	37%
Sep	422	32	454	590	58	648	40%	81%	43%
Oct	432	35	467	498	68	566	15%	94%	21%
Nov	331	58	389	571	76	647	73%	31%	66%
Dec	367	35	402	518	66	584	41%	89%	45%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,018</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>5,695</b>	<b>6,250</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>6,889</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>-6%</b>	<b>21%</b>

**NOTE: Ridership decreased during the COVID-19 Pandemic beginning in March 2020.**

Year	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TOTAL	4,050	5,111	5,961	6,323	7,492	8,042	8,301	10,143	10,765	10,907	10,454	10,172	5,695	6,889
% Change		26.20%	16.63%	6.07%	18.49%	7.34%	3.22%	22.19%	6.13%	1.32%	-4.15%	-2.70%	-44.01%	20.97%





# On-Time Performance

2021 Annual Fargo by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 13U	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2020	87.17%	89.39%	92.66%	94.86%	89.00%	97.58%	86.70%
2021	91.39%	92.47%	86.00%	93.23%	82.50%	93.91%	90.94%
Change	-4.22%	3.08%	-6.66%	-1.63%	-6.5%	-3.67%	4.24%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Paratransit
2020	88.72%	80.70%	91.44%	87.45%	92.07%
2021	87.22%	64.72%	90.84%	89.16%	89.60%
Change	-1.50%	-15.98%	-0.60%	-1.71%	-2.47%

Period	Route 31	Route 32E	Route 32W	Route 33	Route 34
2020	91.89%	96.17%	92.60%	92.62%	92.66%
2021	94.23%	92.50%	93.05%	96.11%	88.95%
Change	2.34%	-3.67%	0.45%	3.49%	-3.71%

## 90% OTP Goal

### Fixed Route OT Criteria:

- > 5 min late
- > 1 min early

### Paratransit OT Criteria:

- > 15 min early or late from scheduled pickup time



# On-Time Performance

2021 Annual Moorhead by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2020	92.72%	89.69%	71.68%	86.95%	84.55%	84.60%	85.43%
2021	92.42%	91.54%	79.67%	90.39%	90.39%	86.53%	87.36%
Change	-0.30%	1.85%	7.99%	3.44%	5.84%	1.93%	1.93%



# 2021 Feedback Report

## Top Reported Incidents

Tracking Detail	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Documentation	Total
Police / Security Presence	28	9	69	106
Passenger Behavior	36	12	80	128
Emergency Services	7	1	32	40
Fall / Injury	8	5	12	25
Policy Issue	40	29	17	86
Biohazard	1	0	0	1

## Incident Summary

Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Documentation	Total
120	56	210	386
31%	14.5%	54.5%	100%



# 2021 Feedback Report

## Collision Log

### Total Collisions 2020 & 2021

Period	Preventable	Non-Preventable	Insignificant	Unreported	Document
2020	21	21	7	-	3
2021	21	31	9	-	2
Change	+0	+10	+2	-	-1

► Documented collisions are due to damage found for various reasons that do not reflect on the operator of the vehicle.



# Ridership

2022 YTD through February Metro Senior Ride (Moorhead/Dilworth)

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									
April									
May									
June									
July									
August									
September									
October									
November									
December									
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>951</b>	<b>7.26%</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>86.00%</b>	<b>1,113</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>11.19%</b>



# Ridership

2022 YTD (Jan-Feb) Fargo Ridership by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 13U	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2021	8,351	10,525	2,752	17,751	48,093	4,128	6,568
2022	6,137	9,006	4,290	11,357	29,267	3,579	4,026
Change	-27%	-14%	56%	-36%	-39%	-13%	-39%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Ind. Park TapRide	Paratransit
2021	4,694	5,307	2,661	0	756	7,621
2022	4,402	3,559	2,559	0	733	9,030
Change	-6%	-33%	-4%	0%	-3%	18%

Period	Route 31	Route 32E & Route 32W	Route 33	Route 34	NDSU TapRide	Total
2021	1,184	9,070	8,652	2,725	488	133,705
2022	2,958	14,950	32,117	4,936	1,270	135,146
Change	150%	65%	271%	81%	160%	1%



# Ridership

2022 YTD (Jan-Feb) Moorhead Ridership by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2021	9,512	13,403	11,043	24,752	8,324	2,497	825
2022	8,711	10,523	6,360	14,074	6,267	1,655	490
Change	-8%	-21%	-42%	-43%	-25%	-34%	-41%

Period	Total
2021	70,356
2022	48,080
Change	-32%





# Ridership

2022 YTD (Jan-Feb) College Ridership

Period	NDSU	MSUM	Concordia	M State	NDSCS
2021	19,056	174	49	49	26
2022	61,559	2,943	1,662	839	86
Change	69%	94%	97%	94%	70%



# On-Time Performance

YTD 2022 through March 5th - Fargo by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 13U	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2021	78.42%	78.61%	94.36%	88.35%	78.71%	84.85%	82.45%
2022	90.72%	95.05%	88.34%	92.42%	72.60%	96.24%	88.04%
Change	12.30%	16.44%	-6.02%	4.07%	-6.11%	11.39%	5.59%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Paratransit
2021	83.37%	72.15%	88.19%	-	89.79%
2022	82.05%	69.70%	98.73%	-	86.74%
Change	-1.32%	-2.45%	10.54%	-	-3.05%

Period	Route 31	Route 32E	Route 32W	Route 33	Route 34
2021	87.24%	74.03%	94.54%	97.94%	91.23%
2022	95.98%	96.12%	-	95.51%	90.22%
Change	8.74%	22.09%	-	-2.43%	-1.01%

## 90% OTP Goal

### Fixed Route OT Criteria:

- > 5 min late
- > 1 min early

### Paratransit OT Criteria:

- > 15 min early or late from scheduled pickup time



# On-Time Performance

YTD 2022 through March 5th - Moorhead by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2021	93.94%	91.39%	76.08%	92.26%	90.12%	91.83%	90.99%
2022	92.13%	88.42%	77.42%	90.87%	88.40%	82.44%	82.33%
Change	-1.81%	-2.97%	1.34%	-1.38%	-1.72%	-9.39%	-8.66%



# 2022 YTD Feedback Report

Incidents YTD 2022 through February

## Top Reported Incidents

Tracking Detail	Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Documentation	Total
Police / Security Presence	0	0	0	0
Passenger Behavior	1	0	7	8
Emergency Services	0	0	0	0
Fall / Injury	0	0	1	1
Policy Issue	2	1	1	4
Biohazard	0	0	0	0

## Incident Summary

Substantiated	Unsubstantiated	Documentation	Total
3	1	9	13
23%	8%	69%	100%



# 2022 YTD Feedback Report

Collision Log YTD 2022 through February

## YTD Collisions 2022

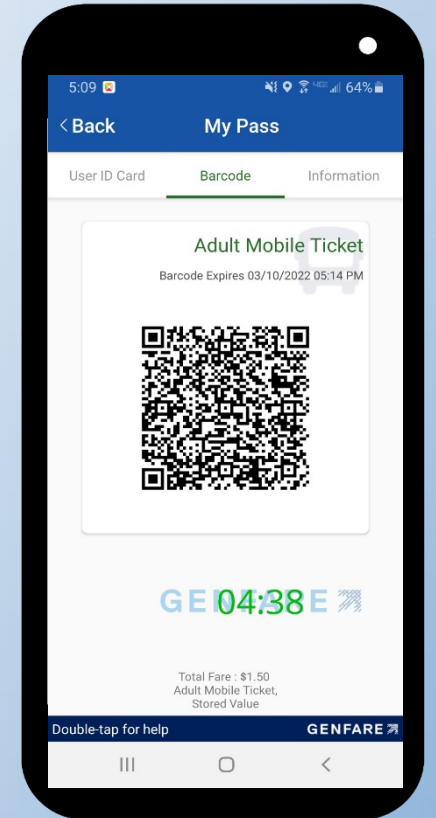
Period	Preventable	Non-Preventable	Insignificant	Unreported	Document
2021	2	9	-	-	-
2022	1	6	-	-	-
Change	-1	-3		-	

► Documented collisions are due to damage found for various reasons that do not reflect on the operator of the vehicle.



# Marketing Update 2022

- MATBUS Connect
  - Tentative launch date of May 2, 2022
  - Fine tuning edits to app and website, farebox functionality
  - Preparing educational materials
  - Working with outside vendors to produce educational and promotional videos, digital marketing
  - Focus on education and attracting new technology fluent riders
  - Mobile payment options are more prevalent in other transit systems, shopping environments







# Marketing Update 2022

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- Mask mandate extended to April 18
- LinkFM events and community events
  - Celtic Festival service – March 19
  - Get Your “Can on the Bus” – April 18-23
- Looking to have a more sustained advertising presence throughout the year, primarily through digital
- Goal of creating more accessible education through short videos and social media
- Updating the How to Ride video
  - Including MATBUS Connect information and remodeled GTC
- Creating a year-round campaign to update community and riders about system improvements
  - Consistent branded messaging for us to talk about updates
  - Grand re-opening of GTC
  - Replacement shelters
- Moorhead marketing/communications intern continuing into 2022



# 2022 Fuel Bids

- Fuel prices in 2021 were well within budget at an average price of \$1.70/gallon for a total cost of \$648,483 when \$755,046 was budgeted. Cost of fuel in 2021 was \$24,059 less than in 2020 which saw a spending of \$672,542
- Fuel for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of 2022 was bid in July of 2021 and we awarded a contract to Northdale Oil in the amount of \$1.23/gallon.
- On January 29, 2022, we accepted bids for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2022. Fuel for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2022 was awarded to Mansfield in the amount of \$1.78/gallon.
- Fuel for 2022 will average \$1.51/ gallon and have a total anticipated cost of \$482,316. .
- This cost is well within our \$755,046 budgeted amount for 2022.



# Memorandum

**To:** MAT Coordinating Board

**From:** Shaun Crowell – Mobility Manager

**Date:** March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Re:** *2022 Fargo Title VI Program*

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**RECOMMENDATION:** The MAT Coordinating Board are asked to consider the following actions:

1. Approval in substantial form the Fargo Transit Title VI Civil Rights Program; and
2. Authorization to submit same to the Fargo City Commission and then to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

**BACKGROUND / KEY POINTS:** All programs receiving financial assistance from the FTA are subject to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d) and the Department of Transportation's implementing regulations, Circular 4702.1B.

As a recipient of federal funding, MATBUS for the City of Fargo Transit must:

- Ensure that the level and quality of public transportation service is provided in a nondiscriminatory manner;
- Promote full and fair participation in public transportation decision-making without regard to race, color or national origin;
- Ensure meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

Every three years, City of Fargo Transit must report to FTA by submitting materials that show their programs, policies and activities comply with DOT's Title VI regulations. All recipients must also have their Title VI program approved by the appropriate governing official, i.e. the City Commission for City-operated entities.

Fargo Transit's Title VI program includes the following:

- Any notices to the public of protections against discrimination afforded by Title VI, as well as a list of their locations;
- A Title VI discrimination complaint form and instructions to the public on how to complete it;

- A list of any public transportation-related Title VI investigations, complaints or lawsuits filed with the recipient since the time of the last submission;
- A public participation plan including outreach to minority and limited English proficient populations within the service area (may also include other traditionally underserved constituencies, such as people with disabilities and low-income populations);
- The recipient's plan for assisting persons with limited English proficiency;
- The recipient's service standards and service policies;
- Any additional relevant information that demonstrates adherence to Title VI regulations.

The previous program submission received approval from the regional FTA Civil Rights Officer in 2019 and will expire November 30, 2022. The 2022 submission must be received and approved prior to October 1, 2022; therefore, the draft program must be approved by the City and a certified resolution forwarded to FTA upon approval. FTA may require additional documentation during their review, which will be provided by Transit staff upon request.

**FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:** There are no costs involved in the approval of this policy.



# Memorandum

**To:** MAT Coordinating Board

**From:** Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager

**Date:** March 8, 2022

**Re:** *Proposed 2023-2027 Moorhead Transit Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)*

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The attached listing is an excerpt from the 10-year Financial Plan of capital equipment and facility improvements needed for the 2023-2027 CIP.

The 2023 projects listed would require a local share match of \$146,960. The annual CIP allocation to Mass Transit of \$150,000 would be used, with the remaining \$3,040 banked for future capital projects.

**Recommended Motion:** Provide the 2023-2027 CIP to the Moorhead City Manager and recommend the 2023 projects for consideration in the 2023 budget.

Attachment 2(c)

Moorhead Mass Transit			2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	TOTAL
<b>Shelters:</b>		<b>Funding Source</b>						
Target #109 & Mstate #111	FTA 5339 80%; State 10%, City 10%	80%	45,600					45,600
Queens #112	FTA 5339 80%; State 10%, City 10%	80%		34,490				34,490
Romkey #110	FTA 5307	80%				36,000		36,000
Riverview	FTA 5307	80%				36,000		36,000
Shelter - Replace annually	FTA 5307	80%					37,000	37,000
<b>Paratransit Vehicles:</b>								
Para Bus - 5 year life - Replace Unit 7181	FTA 5307	85%	96,000					96,000
Para Bus - 5 year life - Replace Unit 7191	STBGP 80%/State 10%/City 10%	80%		106,000				106,000
Para Bus - 5 year life - Replace Unit 7221 (replace 2027, 2032)	FTA 5307	85%					115,000	115,000
Para - Bus 5 year life - Replace Unit 7222 (replace 2027, 2032)	FTA 5307	85%					115,000	115,000
<b>Senior Vehicles:</b>								
Senior - 4 year life - Replace Unit 5191 (Unit 5241) - replace in 2028	STBGP 80%/State 10%/City 10%	80%		38,000				38,000
Senior - 4 year life - Replace Unit 5192 (Unit 5242) - replace in 2028	STBGP 80%/State 10%/City 10%	80%		38,000				38,000
Senior - 4 year life - Replace 2019 Expansion Van Unit # 5193 (Unit 5243) - replace in 2028	STBGP 80%/State 10%/City 10%	80%		38,000				38,000
<b>Large Buses:</b>								
Bus - 12 year life - Expansion bus - Fixed Route	FTA 5307	85%				609,000		609,000
Bus - 12 year life - Replace Unit # 2151	FTA 5307	85%					627,270	627,270
<b>100% Local:</b>								
Five-year TDP consultant (local share only) (replace 2030)	Local	100%			15,333			15,333
<b>Facility Equipment &amp; Improvements:</b>								
Facility Improvements - Metro Transit Garage (1/3 Mhd Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5339	80%	283,000					283,000
Facility Equipment - Replace 2009 Tool Cat (Originally 100% Mhd to be replaced 1/3 Mhd Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5307	80%	32,000					32,000
Facility Equipment - Replace scrubber / washer & Press - 10 year life (100% Mhd, Replaced 1/3 Mhd)	FTA 5339	80%			33,000			33,000
Facility Equipment - Replace Man Lift (1/3 Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%				8,667		8,667
Facility Equipment - Replace Pressure Washer (1/3 Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%				2,667		2,667
<b>Technology:</b>								
Technology - Replace 2012 AVA/AVL - 10 year life (1/3 Mhd Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5307	80%	98,500					98,500
	FTA 5339	80%	201,500					201,500
Technology - Paratransit Scheduling Software - 10 year life (Mhd 20% Share of Joint Project)	FTA 5339	80%	25,000					25,000
Technology - Replace 2017 PEM or 2019 APOS at MTG - 5 year life (100% Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%		21,000				21,000
Technology - cameras, radios, etc (100% Mhd)	FTA 5307	80%				70,000		70,000
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>781,600</b>	<b>275,490</b>	<b>48,333</b>	<b>762,334</b>	<b>894,270</b>	<b>2,762,027</b>
SUBTOTAL Shelters @ 80%			45,600	34,490	-	72,000	37,000	189,090
SUBTOTAL Vehicles @ 80%			-	220,000	-	-	-	220,000
SUBTOTAL Vehicles @ 85%			96,000	-	-	609,000	857,270	1,562,270
SUBTOTAL 100% Local Match			-	-	15,333	-	-	15,333
SUBTOTAL Facility Equipment, Improve. & Technol. @ 80%			640,000	21,000	33,000	81,334	-	775,334
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>781,600</b>	<b>275,490</b>	<b>48,333</b>	<b>762,334</b>	<b>894,270</b>	<b>2,762,027</b>
<b>FUNDING:</b>								
CIP			150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	750,000
Federal Grant @ 85% (FTA 5307)			81,600	-	-	517,650	728,680	1,327,930
Federal Grant @ 80% (FTA 5307, FTA 5339 & STBGP)			548,480	220,392	26,400	122,667	29,600	947,539
State Grant @ 10%			4,560	25,449	-	-	-	30,009
Mass Transit Reserves			(3,040)	(120,351)	(128,067)	(27,983)	(14,010)	(293,451)
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>781,600</b>	<b>275,490</b>	<b>48,333</b>	<b>762,334</b>	<b>894,270</b>	<b>2,762,027</b>





# Memorandum

**To:** MAT Coordinating Board  
**From:** Lori Van Beek, Moorhead Transit Manager  
**Date:** March 9, 2022  
**Re:** ***2023 Proposed Operating Budget Considerations***

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The State of Minnesota Office of Transit and Alternative Transportation (OTAT) 2023 applications for operating assistance are due June 30, 2022.

Preliminary indications are that the statewide budget target for the CY 2023 Greater Minnesota Transit operating grant agreements may be 7-10% over 2022 due to wages increases implemented by transit agencies to address driver shortages.

New service grant applications will be competitive statewide and must be supported by planning documents, such as the 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan. We are not proposing any new services in the 2023 budget.

**Although the 2023 Operating Budget has not yet started, we have identified the following items that could impact the CY 2023 budget for the Board's consideration:**

First Transit Contract: The two-year contract will be completed on December 31, 2022 and the option to extend one year is under negotiation; prices will reflect wage increases approved for 2022 implementation as well as 2023 step increases and COLA. No change is expected to safety, incentive or sign-on bonuses.

Shelter Cleaning and Snow Removal: Our shelter cleaning and snow removal contracts will conclude in 2022 and are being rebid for 2023 after completion of five years. An increase is expected to reflect the current economy and increased fuel and supply costs.

Fargo Master Agreement and Cost Sharing: Moorhead cost shares in various services provided by the City of Fargo for the transit system per our Master Agreement. Fargo's proposed budget is due April 1, 2022, and will need to be reviewed and considered for inclusion in Moorhead's budget and operating grants:

- *Ground Transportation Center (GTC)*
- *Metro Transit Garage (MTG)*
- *Technology and Technical Support*
- *Mobility Management*

- *MAT Paratransit Service*

**Recommended Motion:**

Direct staff to move forward with operating budgets and grant applications for 2023 in coordination with the Moorhead City Manager based on the considerations listed and bring back a final 2023 budget at the regularly scheduled July meeting.



# Memorandum

**To:** MAT Coordinating Board

**From:** Jordan Smith, Assistant Transit Director – Fleet and Facilities

**Date:** March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

**Re:** *2022 Fuel Procurement*

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The City of Fargo Transit Department and Public Works Department request fuel bids six months in advance to achieve the best price possible.

Fuel prices in 2021 were well within budget at an average price of \$1.70/gallon for a total cost of \$648,483 when \$755,046 was budgeted. Cost of fuel in 2021 was \$24,059 less than in 2020 which saw a spending of \$672,542

Fuel for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarters of 2022 was bid in July of 2021 and we awarded a contract to Northdale Oil in the amount of \$1.23/gallon. On January 29, 2022, we accepted bids for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2022. Fuel for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of 2022 was awarded to Mansfield in the amount of \$1.78/gallon. Fuel for 2022 will average \$1.51/ gallon and have a total anticipated cost of \$482,316. This cost is well within our \$755,046 budgeted amount for 2022.

## Is transit recruitment a question of throwing the right amount of money at a problem?

Several agencies are offering up significant hiring bonuses to qualified recruits including operators and mechanics.

Mischa Wanek-Libman

At the national level, transit ridership has been on a steady increase during the past 52 weeks.<sup>1</sup> While current ridership numbers represent about 55 percent of pre-pandemic numbers, transit systems across the United States have seen a roughly 35-percent increase in ridership during the past year. That ridership is steadily increasing amid the “Great Resignation” – where many employees are voluntarily leaving their companies – has produced tough times for transit agencies looking to recruit new talent and hold onto the talent they already have.

Some agencies are digging deeper into budget reserves or utilizing some of the emergency funding provided by the federal government to increase wages, as well as provide bonuses to existing and new employees.

### Pandemic bonus

In April 2021, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) said it would use approximately \$13 million from a budget surplus to provide nearly three-fourths of its staff one-time pandemic payments of \$3,500. MARTA said bus and rail operators, mechanics and supervisors, as well as members of the

MARTA Police Department with the rank of major and below would receive the payments.

“I am extremely grateful to our frontline employees who have carried us through this pandemic,” said MARTA General Manager and CEO Jeffrey Parker at the time of the payment announcement. “These are people who could not work from home, who showed up every day to keep the buses and trains running and protect our customers, all while considering the health risks to themselves and their families.”

However, on Nov. 11, MARTA announced it would temporarily modify service to address a shortage of bus operators. All the authority’s routes will operate, but MARTA is having to adjust service to absorb a 14 percent staffing deficit. It cites COVID-19 as being the greatest threat to operator retention and recruitment. The authority does have policy that requires either a vaccination card be submitted or an employee receive weekly tests. MARTA says operators are leaving due to health concerns or being terminated due to noncompliance with the authority’s vaccination/testing policy. Additionally, absenteeism is high and MARTA believes the temporary adjustments will provide more reliability to service.

Unfortunately, the situation experienced in Atlanta is being repeated at agencies across the U.S. In the St. Louis region, the Bi-State Development Agency of the Missouri-Illinois Metropolitan District (St. Louis Metro) implemented service changes on 38 of its Missouri MetroBus routes, including suspending six routes as it too battles bus operator shortages. St. Louis Metro says it “continues to aggressively recruit and train new operators” and is offering \$2,000 hiring bonus for MetroBus and Metro Call-a-Ride operators, as well as mechanics and electricians.

## **Hiring bonuses increase**

In Denver, Colo., the Regional Transit District recognizes the compounded impact of the “Great Resignation” with the increase in ridership and is offering a \$4,000 hiring bonus for bus operators, light-rail operators/engineers, body shop technicians, general repair mechanics, signal power maintainers, electro-mechanics and facilities maintenance mechanics.

“RTD is comprised of people who move people and without frontline team members the agency could not realize its mission of making lives better through connections,” Debra A. Johnson, RTD general manager and CEO said.

Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (CapMetro) in Austin, Texas, is offering a hiring bonus of \$3,500 for some qualified candidates and has offered an agreement to the Amalgamated Transit Union, which represents CapMetro bus operators and mechanics, to significantly increase the hourly wage of operators and mechanics.

Under the increased wage, bus operators would start at \$22 per hour, which represents an increase of 30 percent and an annual salary of between \$54,000-\$76,000. Mechanics would earn at least \$31 per hour, which is up to a 13 percent increase with an annual salary of between \$71,000-\$84,000. Additionally, CapMetro explains the wage structure increases a staff member’s hourly rate, the longer they serve, which is designed to reward and incentivize retention.

“Our staff has been on the frontlines of the pandemic for the last two years, so this is not only a great way to support our workforce but also to ensure that we are providing equitable, competitive wages and benefits to such dedicated public servants,” said Capital Metro Deputy CEO Dottie Watkins. “I was once a bus operator myself, so I know how important it is to take care of those who make it possible for us to serve customers.”



TriMet in Portland, Ore., announced its intention in October to increase starting pay of bus operators to \$21.36, but as of Nov. 29, the agency is adding a \$2,500 hiring bonus. TriMet says the new wage and hiring bonus extends the agency's menu of benefits, which includes health, dental, vision, pension and retirement plans, paid training, as well as paid leave among other benefits.

Bus operators comprise about one-third of the agency's workforce and TriMet says it is committed to growing its team as it begins planning for the future.

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1. Ridership statistics pulled from APTA Ridership Trends powered by Transit:  
<https://transitapp.com/apta>

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**Source URL:** <https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/21248317/is-transit-recruitment-a-question-of-throwing-the-right-amount-of-money-at-a-problem>

# Denver RTD says it will use extra \$53 million from feds to bolster hiring, service restoration

It's among 35 struggling transit agencies in 18 states that will share \$2.2 billion in federal pandemic relief funds awarded by the Biden Administration under a competitive "additional assistance" program.

March 7, 2022

By Jon Murray, Denver Post

A \$53 million federal grant announced Monday will add some gas to the Regional Transportation District's tank as the agency attempts to rev up hiring this year and close staffing gaps that have kept it from restoring more train and bus service.

It's among 35 struggling transit agencies in 18 states that will share \$2.2 billion in federal pandemic relief funds awarded by the Biden Administration under a competitive "additional assistance" program. For RTD, the new grant comes on top of \$774 million in past relief money that was given strictly based on federal transit formulas.

As cities seek to fully reopen, public transit systems straining to win back riders after being crushed by the COVID-19 pandemic are getting big funding boosts both to stay afloat and to invest in new fleets of electric buses. The Biden administration also plans to make \$1.5 billion in grants available soon under last fall's bipartisan infrastructure law, with a total of \$7.5 billion coming over five years, for transit agencies to purchase low- or no-emission buses made by U.S. workers and to build bus facilities.

RTD's new \$53.2 million grant won't solve its staffing problems, but spokeswoman Laurie Huff said the agency plans to use it in large part "to bolster transit service delivery by recruiting and retaining talent." The money also will provide pressure relief for the rest of RTD's operating budget, set at \$771 million this year.

Another tool to address staffing shortages is expected soon in the form of a new union contract proposal, still being finalized, that would make RTD's salaries more competitive. The Denver Post reported last month that Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1001 has told its members that the contract is poised to increase base pay for operators, maintenance workers and other front-line staff by more than 25% over three years.

RTD's train and bus schedules now provide about 70% of pre-pandemic service on average. A Post series reported recently that the agency's leaders have outlined plans to restore service to 85% in coming years, but high vacancies among operators and other staff are the chief obstacle. Beyond that, RTD's significant financial challenges stand in the way of a full return of service in the next five years, even as the agency adjusts to uncertain commute patterns.

The agency's board soon will consider a "system optimization plan" that would increase transit service in high-demand areas, while gradually reducing or eliminating some outlying suburban bus routes with low ridership. The public comment deadline on the plan is Wednesday.

During a Feb. 24 stop in Colorado, U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg told The Post that transit agencies across the country face challenges similar to RTD.

"Transit agencies have been really beat up in the last few years by what happened with COVID, and we don't yet know exactly what the commuting patterns in the next 10 years are going to look like," Buttigieg said. "What we do know is that transit can be an excellent, affordable, equitable, safe, climate-friendly option, and so as a matter of policy, we need to invest in it — but recognize that the transit of the future may not look exactly like the transit in the past, and that's OK."

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The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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