

**94th Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
October 4, 2023 – 8:00 am
*Virtual Meeting***

Meeting Agenda

1. Call to Order and Introductions
 - a. New Members:
 - Sebastian McDougall (Moorhead City Council)
 - Scott Ebsen (M|State)
 - Jean Hollaar (MSUM)

2. Action Items:
 - a. June 29, 2023, Meeting Minutes
 - b. Request from Clay County for Transit Service in North Moorhead – Lori Van Beek

3. Informational Items:
 - a. Annual Update to Safety Plan – Jordan Smith
 - b. 2023 Operations Report for May through August, *including 5-Year Trend* – Luke Grittner & Lori Van Beek
 - c. Route 18 Proposed Changes and Public Hearing Update – Luke Grittner
 - d. Presentation of Moorhead Transit 2024 Operating Budget – Lori Van Beek
 - e. Update on Temporary Service Suspension and Related Staffing Shortage - Lori Van Beek and Julie Bommelman
 - f. Update on Negotiations with TransDev for 2024 Driver and Management Services – Julie Bommelman and Lori Van Beek

4. Other Business

**95th Meeting of the
Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board
June 29, 2023
Virtual Meeting**

Members Present:

Steve Lindaas, Moorhead City Council
Brad Olson, West Fargo City Commission
Denise Kolpack, Fargo City Commission
Kevin Hanson, Chair
Amber Borah, Dilworth City Council
John Strand, Fargo City Commission
Ryan Nelson, Moorhead City Council
Cindy Girdner, Valley Senior Services

Members Absent:

Brian Arett, Valley Senior Services
Gabrielle Lommel, Concordia College
Teresa Stolfus, M|State
Paul Grindeland, Valley Senior Services
Brit Stevens, NDSU
Annie Wood, MSUM

Others Present:

Julie Bommelman, City of Fargo
Michael Maddox, FM Metro COG
Matthew Pinotti, First Transit
Jordan Smith, City of Moorhead
Cole Swingen, City of Fargo
Lori Van Beek, City of Moorhead
Ayden Schaffler, FM Metro COG
Luke Grittner, City of Fargo

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Hanson notes that is quorum is present and officially began the meeting at 8:01 AM.

2. Action Items

a. March 15, 2023, Meeting Minutes

**b. Proposed Moorhead U-Pass Fees for Academic Year 2023-2024 (Previously tabled) –
Lori Van Beek**

Van Beek introduced the proposed U-Pass fees agreed upon by the Minnesota colleges in the region. The group decided to go with the current inflation rate – 6%, leading to a total fee of \$84,880. The recommended action was to approve the U-Pass fee increase. Mr. Hanson asked how this fee is funded. Van Beek said it comes from a combination of student tuition and college fees.

Mr. Stand moved to approve the proposed U-Pass Fee for Academic years 2023-2024. Lindaas seconds. Motion approved unanimously.

c. Continue discussion on Free and Promotional Fares – Julie Bommelman

Bommelman brought forth a continued conversation on MATBUS policy regarding free and promotional fares. Research was done into how other bus organizations have handled free/promotional fares, from major marketing campaigns to slashing fares during COVID. Bommelman refers to a paradigm shift in regard to COVID and working, with many people working remotely long-term and fewer people working downtown. Transit organizations have offered free and promotional fares to encourage downtown travel, and she noted that these organizations did not necessarily appear to be losing funds,

Bommelman notes that several organizations ended this trial run after 1 year. Larger agencies could do a lot more in regard to free and promotional fares, and could partner with other groups and organizations. Larger agencies have a commitment to be funded and fares are not what they are concerned about. These agencies are more concerned about servicing low-income groups and marginalized communities. They were all concerned about servicing all the populations in their cities, however.

MATBUS would like to develop partnerships with local businesses, agencies, and proposes a policy regarding free and promotional fare, pending legal team approval and public hearing.

Hanson asks what the recommended motion would be. Ms. Bommelman says that the motion is, pending legal review, to approve the new policy on free/promotional fares.

Lindaas moves to approve the new MATBUS policy on free/promotional fares. Olson seconds. Motion carried unanimously.

d. Preliminary 2024 Operating Budget – Lori Van Beek and Julie Bommelman

Ms. Van Beek notes that Moorhead has not yet completed a preliminary budget for 2024 for the following reasons. Minnesota has underfunded the budget in previous years, and says to use the current budget surplus to make up for lost budget. Caps budget increase at 3%, and requires minimum local match of 5% (new this year). Because of these policy changes, MATBUS can almost fully fund the organization in MN with state funds. Notes that there was a placeholder for an on demand transit vehicle, for use in 2025 and 2026 in areas where there is no current bus service. Fund/order in 24, implement in 25 and 26. She notes that First Transit has been purchased by Transdav, and received a message from them regarding driver wages and driver shortages. They received 3 proposals, which are currently under review. In addition, Moorhead pays part of the fees for the transportation center and garage facilities. In addition, Fargo HR department has not added wages or COLAs, so it is hard for Moorhead Transit to add wages/COLAs to the preliminary budget. Hopes to get these numbers soon. Fuel prices have stabilized, and they do not expect increases. Moorhead has bid going out in July. Van Beek notes that Moorhead Transit implemented a new account-based fare structure in 2022, so there will be no fare changes in 2024. Recommended motion is to approve based on the considerations listed and to bring back a final budget at the next meeting.

Kevin Hanson asks if there is more time to extend the contract. Van Beek says there is one more year in the contract, and notes that First Transit is a subsidiary of TransDav now.

Mr. Lindaas moves to approve for the preliminary budget to be finalized and brought to the MAT Coordinating board at the next meeting. Olson seconds. Motion carried unanimously.

Bommelman introduces the preliminary budget situation for the Fargo side of the river. Fargo Transit is in a similar situation to Moorhead, but do not receive operating funds from the state of ND. No legislative session changes to this this year. They do receive about \$400,000 a year from the state via other funding sources. Unsure if there will be changes to that funding, based on license sales and tax revenue. Fairly minimal amount but still money, Bommelman notes. Notes that finance director left, and city of Fargo has appointed an interim director, but staffing is short so things have not gotten in the system yet, including wages and COLAs. Asking to move forward and tie applications in 2024 with Moorhead based on what the City of Fargo finance department finalizes. Notes that she feels regretful about not having the numbers in yet, but feels as though it is necessary to bring this forward now.

Olson moves to approve the Fargo preliminary budget for finalization and for the final operating budget to be brought back to the MAT Coordinating board at the next meeting. Kolpack seconds. Motion carried unanimously.

After the motion, Bommelman notes what grants Fargo MATBUS will be going for in 2024 through 2027, using estimates. Notes MATBUS is looking for a new Southwest Metro transit hub, likely at West Acres Mall but nothing is set in stone yet. \$2.2 million grand total to fund research and development of this transit center. Fargo MATBUS is looking at adding a mobility manager position. 80% funding through federal grant – Mobility Share. Fargo MATBUS is looking at expanding the Metro Transit Garage using grants to meet the needs of staff (drivers, technicians, garage staff).

Hanson asks if these will come into the final budget. Van Beek says yes.

Olson moves approval of the additional grant research and information. Lindaas seconds. Motion carried unanimously.

3. Informational Items

a. 2023 Operations Report for March and April, including 5-year trend – Cole Swingen and Lori Van Beek

Swingen introduces the operations report for the Fargo side of the river for the months of March and April. Notes two routes have decreased services due to driver shortages. NDSU students have led to increased ridership on route 13, which services campus and downtown Fargo. Route 15 has experienced cuts but remains stable in ridership. Increased consistence in routes 18 and 20, which increased ridership. Route 24 saw increased ridership. LinkFM increased by double the ridership for the Celtic festival. On-Demand services have seen drastic decreases. Notes that some percentage of riders did not transfer to a new app, leading to the decrease. Paratransit seems to have stabilized. NDSU routes are seeing increase in ridership, except for route 32. Route 34 saw a 119% increase, due to more reliable timing measures.

Van Beek notes that Moorhead lines are also seeing increases, expect for Route 6 which was under construction. Notes she expects to see that route increase now that construction is complete. Route 2 saw a decrease in drivers but no decrease in ridership. Notes that Swingen added a comparison to pre-COVID, notes that Moorhead ridership numbers are close to 2019 numbers but still under. Swingen notes that Fargo is fairly low compared to pre-COVID levels. Swingen introduces college ridership, and notes that M-State has seen significant increases. Other colleges have remained solid. Van Beek notes

that senior ride had 82% recovered from COVID. Swingen notes that 2018 and 2019 are still higher than 2023 in a chart showcasing ridership. At the end of March 2021, free fares ended, leading to a decrease in ridership from March to April. Swingen attributes lower 2023 ridership to weather cancellations and delays.

Nelson asks what was done different to lead to the increase of M States ridership. Van Beek responds that enrollment is up and some marketing was done in the school.

Lindaas asks if route 34 increase was due to students being able to see when the bus was going to come via app. Swingen notes that Niskanen Hall now is included in the time table which he believes helped. Lindaas asks if overall MATBUS has a way to track overall app usage, specifically in regards to the college students, as he believes that they are more likely to use the app for timing bus arrivals and departures. Swingen says that they can do surveys but do not have way to track app usage. Notes that students are now going from using paper maps to the app. Van Beek notes that new software has been purchased, and that the old software is dated and has been bought and sold several times. Notes that students would like to see this app improved.

Olson asks if other routes have the capability to track buses. Swingen says that all routes can do this via a live tracker on the MATBUS website. Van Beek says that what is missing is not needing to be in the live tracker to see the bus approaching – picking favorite bus stops and seeing when a bus will be there while idle via notifications. The new software will have the ability to do this.

Hanson asks when the software will be implemented. Swingen says the beginning of 2024. Van Beek notes that when Fare Box receives a payment it geolocates and tracks the nearest bus stop, so they have some ridership data via that means. Notes that Remix is a route planning software that can show where the most people are riding to help guide changes.

4. Other Business

Hanson congratulates Lindaas on his new appointment to a fellowship in Washington DC, and notes he will not be returning to the board.

Van Beek would like to cancel the July meeting, as grants will be due in that timeframe. The next meeting will be September 20th, 2023.

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 AM.



MAT Board
Action Items
October 4, 2023

(701) 232-7500

matbus.com

650 23rd St N. Fargo, ND 58102



Action Item 2a

Review and approval of June 29, 2023, Meeting Minutes



2b. Clay County Request for Transit Service

Clay County is building new facilities at 34th Street North and 15th Avenue: Detox and DMV Transportation is an issue and they have requested bus service.

- Initial in-house analysis
- Not on an existing transit route
- Revising existing routes would affect service elsewhere
- Difficult to quantify demand to warrant new service
- Clay County could provide feeder service to the Walmart bus stop

Before any decision to alter existing service or add new service, additional analysis would be needed.

- **Does the Board wish to have this further studied through the Metro COG 2024 Work Program?**

Memorandum



To: MAT Coordinating Board

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

Date: October 4th, 2023

Re: *Annual Safety Plan Update*

MATBUS Safety Plan was adopted by the cities of Fargo and Moorhead in 2020. We are required to update the safety plan on an annual basis.

The safety committee has reviewed the plan and approved the plan on August 30th at our bi-monthly committee meeting.

Changes incorporated into the update include:

- Updated Safety Targets for 2023
 - Safety Events and Injury targets on Fixed Route increased.
 - Less Safety Events in 2022 than 2021 but the 5-year rolling average removed a year with only one event (2017)
 - Injuries on Fixed Route stayed the same (2) but the 5-year rolling average removed a year with only one injury (2017)
 - One Safety Event and one Injury in 2022 increased the Moorhead Targets
 - Safety Events and Injury targets stayed the same on Demand Response

MAT Board Informational Items

October 4, 2023



(701) 232-7500

matbus.com

650 23rd St N. Fargo, ND 58102



3a. Annual Safety Plan Update

MATBUS Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan was adopted by the cities of Fargo and Moorhead in 2020 and has been updated annually thereafter.

The Safety Committee reviewed and approved the plan on August 30th at their bi-monthly committee meeting.

Changes incorporated into the update include:

- Updated Safety Targets for 2023
 - Safety Events and Injury targets on Fixed Route increased
 - Less Safety Events in 2022 than 2021, but the 5-year rolling average removed a year with only one event (2017)
 - Injuries on Fixed Route stayed the same (2), but the 5-year rolling average removed a year with only one injury (2017)
 - One Safety Event and one Injury in 2022 increased the Moorhead Targets
 - Safety Events and Injury targets stayed the same on Demand Response



Annual Safety Plan Update - Targets

Mode of Service	Fatalities (Total)	Fatalities (per 100k VRM)	Work-related employee fatalities
Fixed Route Bus	0	0	0
On Demand/ADA Paratransit	0	0	0

Mean distance between major mechanical failures (Fixed Route)	Mean distance between major mechanical failures (On Demand)	Percentage of PM completed within 10% of scheduled mileage
9000	12000	90

Mode of Service	Safety Event (Total)		Safety Event (per 100k VRM)	
	Fargo	Moorhead	Fargo	Moorhead
Fixed Route Bus	2	1.4	.24	.29
On Demand/ADA Paratransit	.2		.06	
Valley Senior Services	0		0	

Mode of Service	Injuries (Total)		Injuries (per 100k VRM)	
	Fargo	Moorhead	Fargo	Moorhead
Fixed Route Bus	1.17	.6	.13	.13
On Demand/ADA Paratransit	0		0	
Valley Senior Services	0		0	



3b. Ridership

January – August Fargo Ridership by Route

Period	Route 11	Route 13	Route 14	Route 15	Route 16	Route 17
2022	29,013	45,098	61,770	147,554	18,386	20,586
2023	23,114	44,237	56,389	146,357	18,172	21,488
Change	-20.33%	-1.91%	-8.71%	-0.81%	-1.16%	4.38%

Period	Route 18	Route 20	Route 24	LinkFM	Ind. Park On-Demand	Paratransit
2022	24,638	17,466	11,922	2,245	4,420	36,511
2023	28,473	18,823	13,901	3,766	2,629	37,298
Change	15.57%	7.77%	16.60%	67.75%	-40.52%	2.16%

Period	Route 31	Route 32	Route 33	Route 34	Route 36	NDSU On-Demand
2022	7,460	42,557	66,351	12,144	11,583	3,226
2023	8,586	39,576	76,476	25,179	11,194	2,191
Change	15.09%	-7.00%	15.26%	107.34%	-3.36%	-32.08%



Ridership

January – August Moorhead Ridership by Route

Period	Route 1	Route 2	Route 3	Route 4	Route 5	Route 6	Route 9
2022	40,685	52,428	31,471	68,358	28,542	6,019	2,381
2023	48,114	52,423	33,582	73,181	31,037	5,879	3,761
Change	18.26%	-0.01%	6.71%	7.06%	8.74%	-2.33%	57.96%

Period	Moorhead Total
January-August 2019	335,579
January-August 2022	231,006
January-August 2023	249,860
2022-2023 Change	8.16%

Period	Fargo Total
January-August 2019	825,442
January-August 2022	525,297
January-August 2023	538,668
2022-2023 Change	2.55%



Ridership

January – August College Ridership

Period	NDSU	MSUM	Concordia	M State	NDSCS
2022	164,876	11,796	6,641	4,610	235
2023	183,429	11,753	8,527	8,275	271
Change	11.25%	-0.36%	28.40%	79.50%	15.32%



Ridership

January – August Metro Senior Ride (Moorhead/Dilworth)

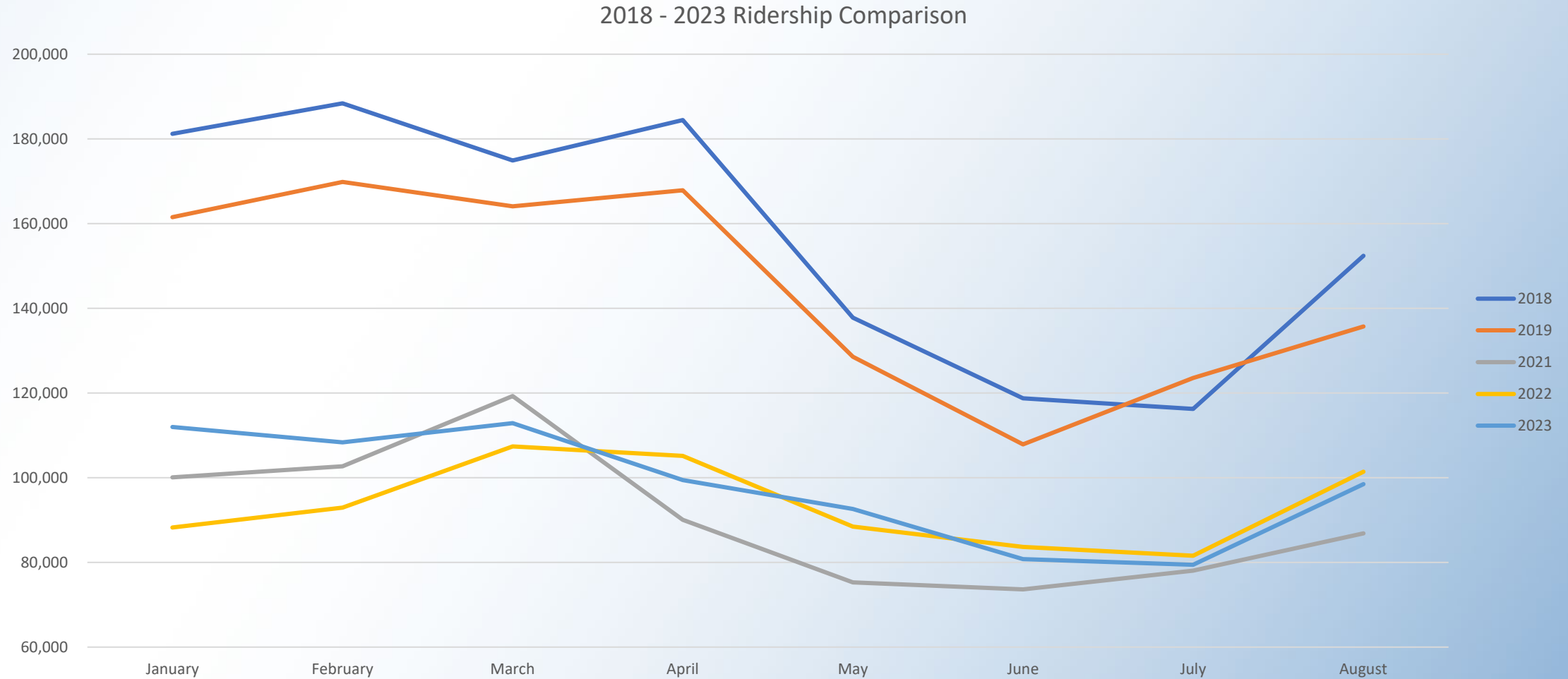
METRO SENIOR RIDE 2023									
MOORHEAD & DILWORTH, MINNESOTA									
Month	MOORHEAD SENIORS			DILWORTH SENIORS			TOTAL PASSENGERS		
	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022	% Change	2023	2022	% Change
January	638	560	13.93%	85	65	30.77%	723	625	15.68%
February	528	460	14.78%	68	28	142.86%	596	488	22.13%
March	672	723	-7.05%	81	54	50.00%	753	777	-3.09%
April	532	583	-8.75%	79	67	17.91%	611	650	-6.00%
May	730	616	18.51%	80	56	42.86%	810	672	20.54%
June	674	626	7.67%	81	76	6.58%	755	702	7.55%
July	576	512	12.50%	90	61	47.54%	666	573	16.23%
August	660	614	7.49%	67	91	-26.37%	727	705	3.12%
September									
October									
November									
December									
TOTAL	5,010	4,694	6.73%	631	498	26.71%	5,641	5,192	8.65%

TOTAL PASSENGERS							
Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Projected
TOTAL	10,907	10,454	10,172	5,695	6,681	7,932	8,461.50
% Change	1.32%	-4.15%	-2.70%	-44.01%	17.31%	18.72%	6.68%



Ridership Comparison

2018-2023 (Excluding 2020)





3c. Route 18

Proposed Changes and Public Hearing (Pt. 1)

Proposed Changes to Route 18: The proposed changes would remove a portion of the loop of Route 18 that currently travels past the Sheyenne High School, businesses along 40th Avenue S, and through a portion of the Osgood neighborhood. The route will travel its current path west on 40th Avenue S, south on 47th Street S and then east on 44th Avenue S where it will return to its current route.

Purpose: This service change will allow for increased on-time performance of the route and will help ensure that riders who utilize Route 18 can reliably make transfers to other MATBUS routes.

- 6 total comments were received in a comment box placed at the Ground Transportation Center
- A public hearing was held on Monday, October 2, 2023 at 5:00pm during the Fargo City Commission Meeting

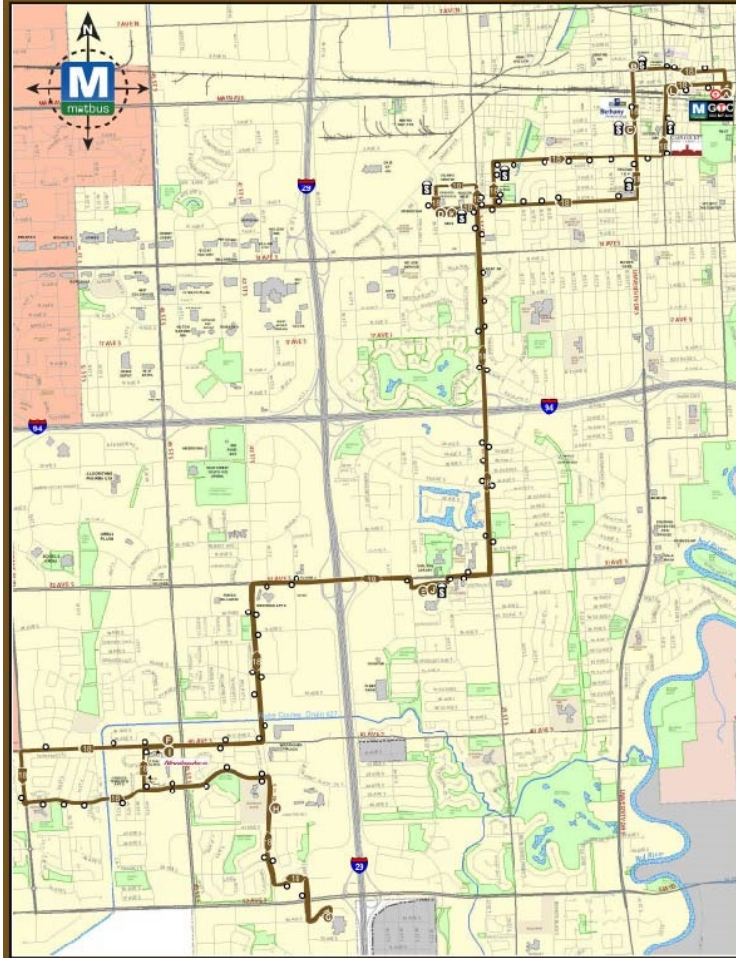
18-37	40th Ave S & 47th St S (Midblock North)	4665	42	0.1	0.2%	1.6 Boardings per day - 2% of total ridership	Reduce route distance by 1.9 miles
18-38	40th Ave S & 50th St S (Corner NE)	4567	1	0.0	0.0%		
18-39	40th Ave S & 56th St S (Corner NW)	4717	196	0.6	0.8%		
18-40	Veteran's Blvd & 44th Ave S (Corner NW)	4708	6	0.0	0.0%		Reduce route duration by 4 minutes
18-41	44th Ave S & 55th St S (Corner SW)	4571	1	0.0	0.0%		
18-42	44th Ave S & 53rd St S (Corner SW)	4572	7	0.0	0.0%		
18-43	44th Ave S & 51st St S (Corner SW)	4573	116	0.4	0.5%		
18-44	44th Ave S & 49th St S (Corner SW)	4666	121	0.4	0.5%		



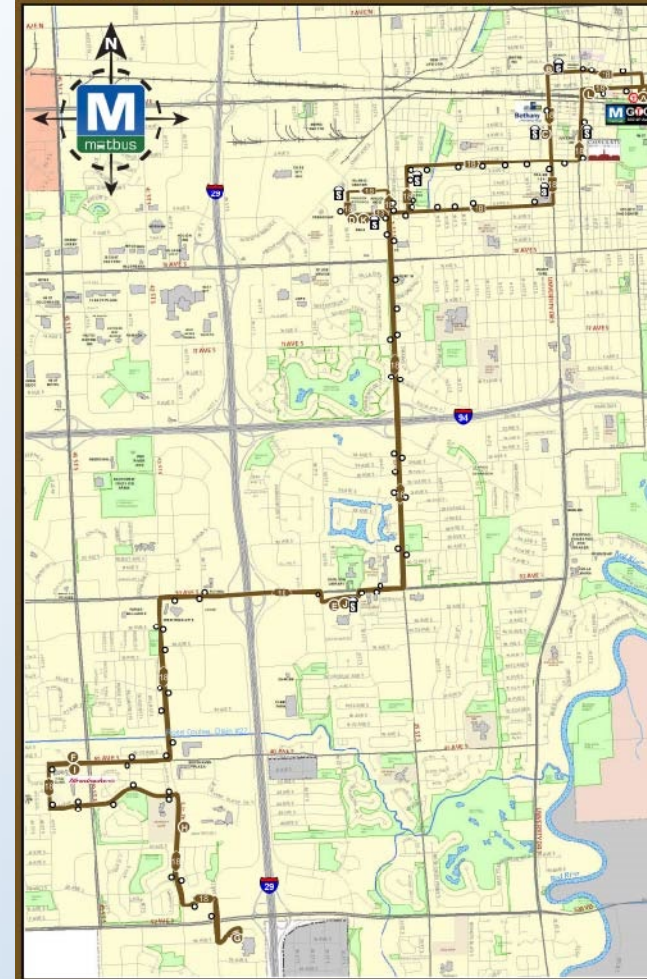
Route 18

Proposed Changes and Public Hearing (Pt. 2)

Route 18 - Current



Route 18 - Proposed





3d. Moorhead 2024 Operating Budget

Budget	Fixed Route	LinkFM	Total Fixed Route	Paratransit	Senior Ride	Mobility Management	Total Special Service	TOTAL
2023	\$3,674,686	\$5,743	\$3,680,429	\$497,026	\$163,233	\$43,300	\$703,559	\$4,383,987
2024	\$4,009,743	\$5,245	\$4,014,987	\$548,162	\$183,223	\$45,675	\$777,060	\$4,383,987
Difference	\$335,057	(\$498)	\$334,559	\$51,137	\$19,990	\$2,375	\$73,502	\$408,060
% Change	9.12%	-8.67%	9.09%	10.29%	12.25%	5.48%	10.45%	9.31%

The contract with TransDev for driver services is currently under negotiation. The 2024 budget reflects TransDev's current proposal.

2024 costs include the retirement of the Transit Manager and a four-month transition with the replacement employee.

Both 2023 and 2024 budgets are based on full approved service to 11:15 pm; however, due to driver shortages, current services end at 10:15 pm.

Revenue Source	Amount	% of Total
State of Minnesota	\$3,400,825	71%
Federal Transit (Including CARES Act)	\$996,853	21%
City of Moorhead (Property Tax)	\$0	0%
City of Moorhead (Reserve Fund)	\$0	0%
City of Dilworth	\$0	0%
Farebox & U-Pass	\$361,920	8%
Other Local	\$33,450	1%
TOTAL	\$4,793,048	100%



3e. Update on Temporary Service Suspension and Related Staff Shortage

Current Temporary Service Suspensions

- *Evening service ends at 10:15 p.m.*
- *Reduced frequency on Route 2, 13 and 15:*
 - *Route 2 is not operating 15-minute service from 2:30pm – 6:30pm, Monday-Friday, during the academic year.*
 - *Route 13 is reduced to hourly service.*
 - *Route 15 does not have a fourth bus departing the GTC on the hour.*
 - *Route 15 has two buses departing the GTC, at :15 and :45 after the hour, all day Monday - Saturday.*
 - *A third Route 15 bus departs the GTC at :30 after the hour from 10:30am to 5:30pm, Monday – Friday.*

Proposed Additional Temporary Service Suspensions

- *End weekday evening service at 9:15 p.m.*
- *Reduce Saturday Service to 7:15 a.m. to 7:15 p.m.*
- *Reduce Interlined Route 6 (Dilworth) and Route 9 (SE Moorhead) to 6:40 a.m. to 6:40 p.m.*



Update on Temporary Service Suspension and Related Staff Shortage

2023 Saturday Ridership (Jan 1 - Aug 15)



2023 Ridership by Time Period (Jan 1 - Aug 15)





Update on Temporary Service Suspension and Related Staff Shortage

Drivers needed for service:

- *89 for full service as approved*
- *63 available for service at this time*
- *75 needed for current temporary service*
- *65 needed for revised temporary service*

When the number of drivers in revenue service increases, the priority would be to add back frequency rather than span of service.

Negotiations with TransDev for driver and managements services in 2024 is ongoing and will address ways to attract and retain drivers.