

Study Review Committee MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan

June 11, 2020, 2:00-3:30pm
Zoom Meeting – Conference Call

Attendees

Name	Organization/Role	Name	Organization/Role
Michael Maddox	Metro COG	Becky Hanson	NDDOT
Anna Pierce	Metro COG	Stacey Hanson	NDDOT
Julie Bommelman	MATBUS	Wayne Zacher	NDDOT
Matthew Peterson	MATBUS	Kevin Hanson	MAT Coordinating Board
Lori Van Beek	MATBUS	Amar Hussein	Lutheran Social Services of ND
Jordan Smith	MATBUS	Thomas Hill	United Way of Cass-Clay
Cole Swingen	MATBUS	Linda Ohnstad	Rider advocate
Tarren Haak	MATBUS	Jon Gilbert	Rider advocate
Tim Solberg	City of West Fargo	Joe Kapper	SRF
Malachi Peterson	City of West Fargo	Menno Schukking	SRF
Peyton Mastera	City of Dilworth	Jake Knight	SRF
Voni Vegar	MnDOT	Will Calves	AECOM

Absent

Name	Organization/Role	Name	Organization/Role
Josef Rivera	First Transit	Renaë Tunison	FTA
Dan Holte	Rider advocate		

Presentation Slides Attached

The attached slides were presented at the meeting and include additional detail. The following sections in this document are summaries of discussions had during the meeting.

Welcome and Introductions

Joe Kapper (SRF) provided an overview of the agenda and led introductions among attendees of this first Study Review Committee (SRC) meeting.

Project Tasks

Joe provided an overview of the tasks included in the MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan (TDP), grouped into four main phases. Will Calves (AECOM) gave an update on the contextual review.

Michael Maddox (Metro COG) emphasized that the TDP project was scoped to be more of a visionary effort. The TDP needs to focus not just on the next five years, but also well beyond as the area grows and changes. This means considering new route concepts and transit service models and not just making small adjustments to individual routes. Joe confirmed that the consultant team (SRF and AECOM) were given this direction and stated all options will be on the table. Will mentioned the inherent tradeoffs between different transit service models and ways of designing service; each has pros and cons, and this group will need to consider and balance. There is no right answer. It should reflect the communities' values, which highlights the importance of establishing clear goals and objectives.

SRC members asked a few questions after the initial project overview. Linda Ohnstad (long-time rider and senior) wanted to know what the bus stop analysis would entail and if existing use would be incorporated into decision making. Joe stated it will assess bus stops based on spacing, siting, accessibility and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, and amenities such as bus stop signs and shelters and associated standards. Jake Knight (SRF) also mentioned it would be guided in part by existing ridership at each bus stop.

Kevin Hanson (MAT Coordinating Board) and Michael asked how engagement will be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Joe mentioned the Public Engagement Plan for the project and stated this is still a work in progress. Unfortunately, until the safety of the public and all staff can be ensured, the consultant team will conduct engagement online. On-going coordination between Metro COG, MATBUS, and the consultant team will determine what level of in-person engagement is possible. New strategies to effectively engage all people will continue to be considered and evaluated.

Jon Gilbert (MABUS rider advocate) asked whether passengers will be allowed to give input through surveys. Jake stated this is a priority and an important part of the TDP. There will be a Community survey distributed soon. The consultant team hopes to be able to do a separate on-board passenger survey in fall 2020. For this to be a useful exercise, ridership will need to be representative of regular ridership and thus needs to be near pre-COVID levels. There remains some uncertainty regarding the return of higher education students to campus, whose representation in the survey results are critical.

Transit Terminology

Joe gave an overview of some common terminology that will be used throughout the project to ensure all participants have a shared understanding.

Thomas Hill (United Way of Cass-Clay) asked if LinkFM is still operating. Joe replied that this service was discontinued in January. Lori van Beek (MATBUS) clarified it will still run during special events, but many of those events were postponed due to COVID-19.

Public Engagement Plan

Jake gave an overview of the purpose and goals of public engagement during the TDP planning process. A Public Engagement Plan was developed for the project; this document acts as a guide for the project team and is available on the project website (<http://fmmetrocog.org/2021TDP>). Some of the tools to gather input virtually include a community survey, an online interactive comment map ("wikimap"), and a "Design your own transit system" preference exercise. Michael clarified that the Public Engagement Plan is a living document and will be updated as certain in-person activities will be permitted again.

Lori wanted to know how college students, faculty, and staff will be reached during the summer. Jake said it is the hope to ask the colleges to share surveys and other engagement tools on behalf of the project team using their existing networks. Jake also asked the SRC members to use their channels and networks to distribute public engagement materials both within their organizations and with their clients and social media. Jon suggested the team talk with individuals that can help if needed to do a mass email from college officials.

Community Survey

Menno Schukking (SRF) gave an overview of the goals of the Community survey and asked SRC members to provide feedback on the draft questions. Specifically, whether the questions provide value to make recommendations to MATBUS on service improvements and to what level customer service questions are desired.

For question seven, Anna Pierce (Metro COG) wanted to know whether each option would have a separate answer. Menno confirmed that each option would have a "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" scale.

At the end of the meeting, Joe clarified that the project team would like to know if SRC members thought the questions help planning the future of MATBUS. The consultant team is also looking for opportunities to remove some questions to shorten up the survey (as necessary).

Lori liked question nine, which asks whether transit is perceived to be valuable to the community. Jon has heard from some riders that they did not understand why certain routes, such as Route 4, only headed north on one particular street but not going south. This person wanted to see the route go both directions on the same street. He would like an opportunity for people to provide this type of detailed constructive criticism. Joe stated these geographically specific comments are great feedback for the interactive comment map. Michael hoped the SRC members would reach out to riders to hear these concerns directly.

Michael asked if there is an open-ended question to address specific concerns (like those referred to by Jon). Jake showed open-ended question 14 to confirm that one is expected to be included. Anna asked if there is a question about transfers and would like to review the questions to see if a couple changes in wording are necessary. Jake said a question would be added to the survey about transfers. SRC members will be provided with the specific survey questions and answer options and will be asked to provide feedback, including on phrasing.

Next Steps

SRF will share the presentation slides of today's meeting, the Public Engagement Plan, and draft survey questions with the SRC members. SRC members are encouraged to review the project website, Public Engagement Plan, and the draft survey questions. Survey question feedback is requested from the SRC by June 22. The next SRC meeting is expected in late July or early August.

Assigned tasks between this meeting and the next include the following:

Task	Metro COG	SRF + AECOM	SRC
Distribute meeting slides and summary, and draft survey questions		X	
Review and provide comments on survey questions by 6/22 (emailed 6/12)	X	X	X
Review and provide any comments on Public Engagement Plan (available at fmmetrocog.org/projects-rfps/2021TDP/project-materials)			X
Finalize and distribute Community survey	X	X	
Promote Community survey and project website through your networks	X	X	X
Continue work on contextual review; coordinated plan; goals, priorities, and performance measures		X	
Send Doodle poll for next SRC meeting		X	

MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan

Study Review Committee
June 11, 2020



METROCOG
FM REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

SRE AECOM

Meeting Agenda

- Study Review Committee (SRC) member introductions
- Introduction to the project
- Public engagement
- Next steps

SRC Member Introductions

Project Introduction

Project Introduction

Project
purpose

Project tasks

Roles

Role of the
SRC

Decision-
making
structure

Schedule

Project Purpose

- Build on past work/studies related to transit in the Fargo-Moorhead (FM) region
- Evaluate current MATBUS policies and operations regarding the provision of transit service within the FM region
- Identify community transit needs
- Analyze new service strategies and technologies
- Meet state and federal requirements
- Identify performance measures/performance monitoring strategy
- Five-year goals and objectives

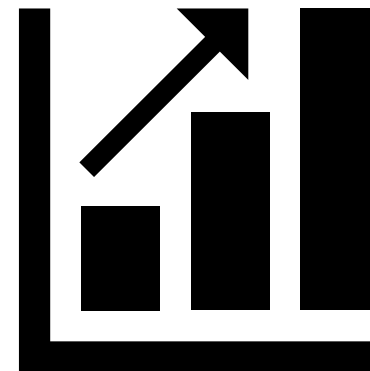
Project Tasks

Seven major project tasks grouped into four phases:

1. Input and needs assessment
2. Strategic planning
3. Transit development plan framework
4. Finalize plan

1. Input and Needs Assessment

- Contextual review
 - Literature review
 - Data collection and existing conditions
 - Assets
 - Service levels
 - Ridership
 - Origin-destination patterns
 - Evaluation of tapride
 - Performance review
- Public and stakeholder engagement
- Identify set of preliminary transit needs



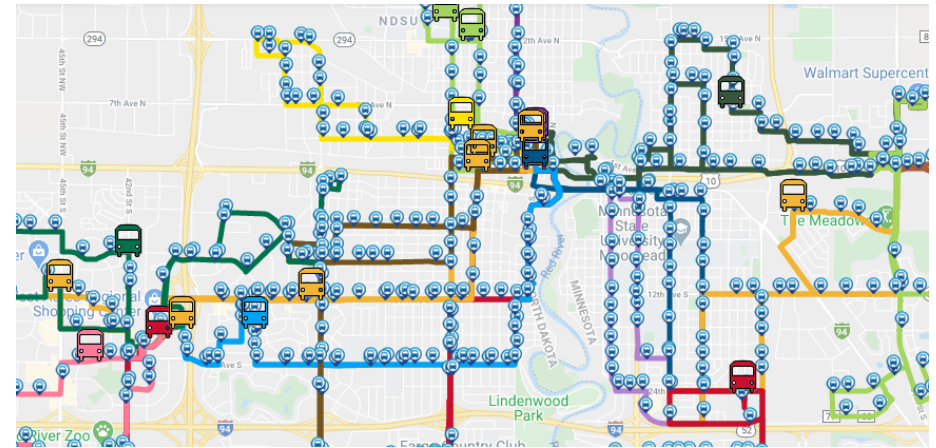
2. Strategic Planning

- Establish project goals, objectives, and draft performance measures
- Deliver needs assessment technical memo
- Complete bus stop assessment field work/documentation



3. Transit Development Plan Framework

- Future system needs
 - Alternatives development and analysis
 - Service guidelines
 - Fixed route service concepts
 - Needs and opportunities
 - Network type
 - Capital improvements
 - Staffing needs



3. Transit Development Plan Framework

- Coordinated Plan Work
- Additional outreach and engagement

4. Finalize Plan

- Plan recommendations and components
- Identify priorities and funding strategies
- Commence final outreach with boards and commissions
- Deliver Transit Development Plan

Roles

- Project lead: Metro COG
 - Michael Maddox
 - Anna Pierce
- Project guidance and direction
 - Study Review Committee (SRC)
- Project consultants
 - SRF
 - AECOM

Consultant Team

SRF

- Overall project management, coordination with Metro COG
- Primary staff for SRC
- Stakeholder engagement
- Coordination plan
- Project goals and objectives – strategic planning lead
- Stop analysis/field assessments
- Future system needs (support)
- Project documentation



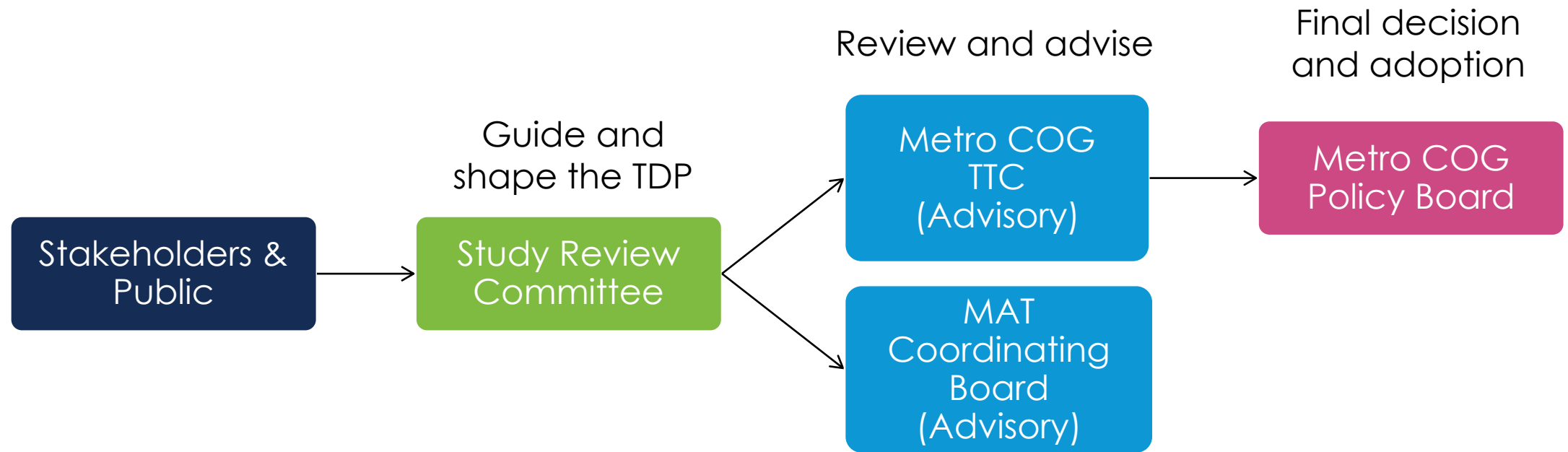
AECOM

- 2 SRC Meetings associated w/ Task 3 and Task 7 milestones
- Transit service assessment
- Future system needs (lead)

Role of the SRC

- Provide oversight and input into the development of the TDP
- Represent the interests and perspectives of your organization/stakeholder group
- Review project materials ahead of SRC meetings
- Ask questions and participate in discussion during SRC meetings
- Help us spread the word about the TDP

Decision-Making Structure



Current Schedule

- Project completion in March 2021
- Some outreach and field work delayed until Fall/Winter 2020 in response to COVID pandemic
- In progress:
 - Task 2: Public Participation
 - Task 3: Contextual Review
 - Task 4: Coordinated Plan

Moving Forward

- July – September:
 - Coordinated Plan
 - Needs assessment, goals and objectives, performance measures
 - Field work for bus stop assessment
 - Evaluate project timeline
- September – December:
 - Develop plan recommendations
 - Complete any follow up outreach

Moving Forward

- December – March:
 - Finalize and adopt plan
- Major Deliverables:
 - Public Engagement Plan (currently in draft format)
 - Notes from SRC meetings
 - A Needs Assessment Technical Memo at the conclusion of Task 3
 - Consolidated Human Services Transportation Plan
 - Stop Analysis Technical Memorandum
 - Goals, Priorities, and Performance Measures Technical Memorandum
 - Draft Transit Development Plan
 - Final Transit Development Plan
 - Executive Summary

Initial questions about the project?

Transit Terminology

Terminology: Entities

- **MATBUS:** Brand of public transit service provided jointly by the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead
- **Metro COG:** Designated transportation policy-making body for the FM region (among other things)
- **Partner cities:** Cities of Dilworth and West Fargo, who purchase transit service from the cities of Moorhead and Fargo, respectively
- **FTA:** Federal Transit Administration, a federal funding partner
- **NDDOT:** North Dakota Department of Transportation, a state funding partner
- **MnDOT:** Minnesota Department of Transportation, a state funding partner

Terminology: Transit Modes

- **Fixed route:**

- Services provided on a repetitive, fixed schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations
- Each fixed route trip serves the same origins and destinations

- **Demand response:**

- A transit mode comprised of passenger cars, vans, or small buses operating in response to requests from passengers
- Transit operator dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passenger(s) and transport them to their destinations
- Origin to destination; not defined by routes or bus stops
- Shared rides

Terminology: MATBUS Transit Services

- **MATBUS Fixed Route:**

- Buses travel on predetermined (fixed) routes and schedules in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth
- Open to the public

- **LinkFM (Fixed Route):**

- Free circulator route connecting the downtowns of Fargo and Moorhead
- Operating during designated community-sponsored events



Terminology: MATBUS Transit Services

- **MAT Paratransit (Demand Response):**

- Non-emergency, lift-equipped shared-ride transportation service
- For people who are functionally unable to independently use the MATBUS fixed route in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth
- Requires passenger certification

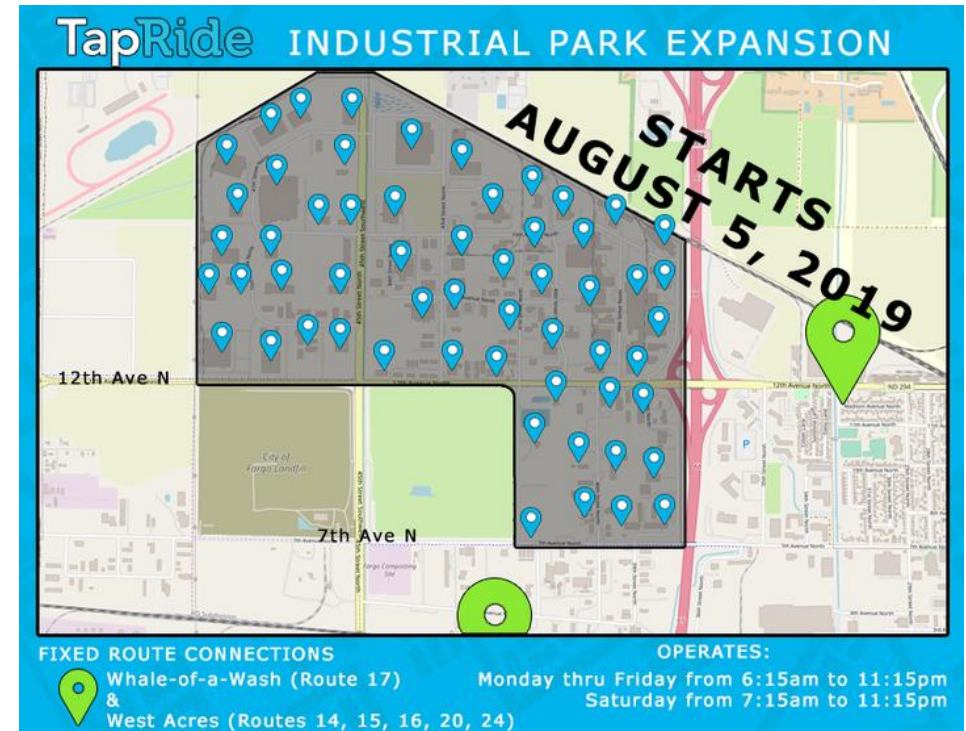
- **Metro Senior Ride (Demand Response):**

- Non-emergency, non-lift-equipped shared-ride transportation
- For those age 60 or over in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth



Terminology: MATBUS Transit Services

- **TapRide (Demand Response):**
 - On-demand shared-ride service
 - Open to the public
 - Passengers request rides through a smartphone app or telephone
 - Advanced dispatching technology and a smaller service area enable shorter wait times
 - Designed so it can be used as a “first mile/last mile” solution to connect with MATBUS fixed routes
 - Currently available on the NDSU campus during the academic year and within the Fargo Industrial Park



Public Engagement

- Public Engagement Plan
- Strategies and tools
- Survey content

Approach

A planning process that is

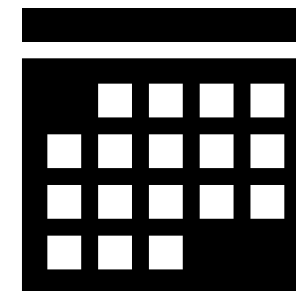
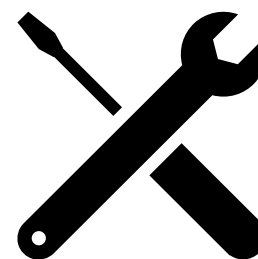
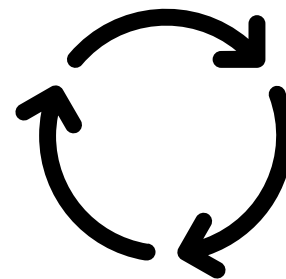
- **Transparent**
- **Authentic**
- **Inclusive**
- **Enables two-way communication**
- **Occurs early and continues throughout**

Goals for Engagement in the TDP

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

Public Engagement Plan

- Our guide for engaging stakeholders and the public
- Updated as needed throughout the project
- What's in it?
 - Public input and decision-making process
 - Stakeholders
 - Strategies and tools
 - Timeline



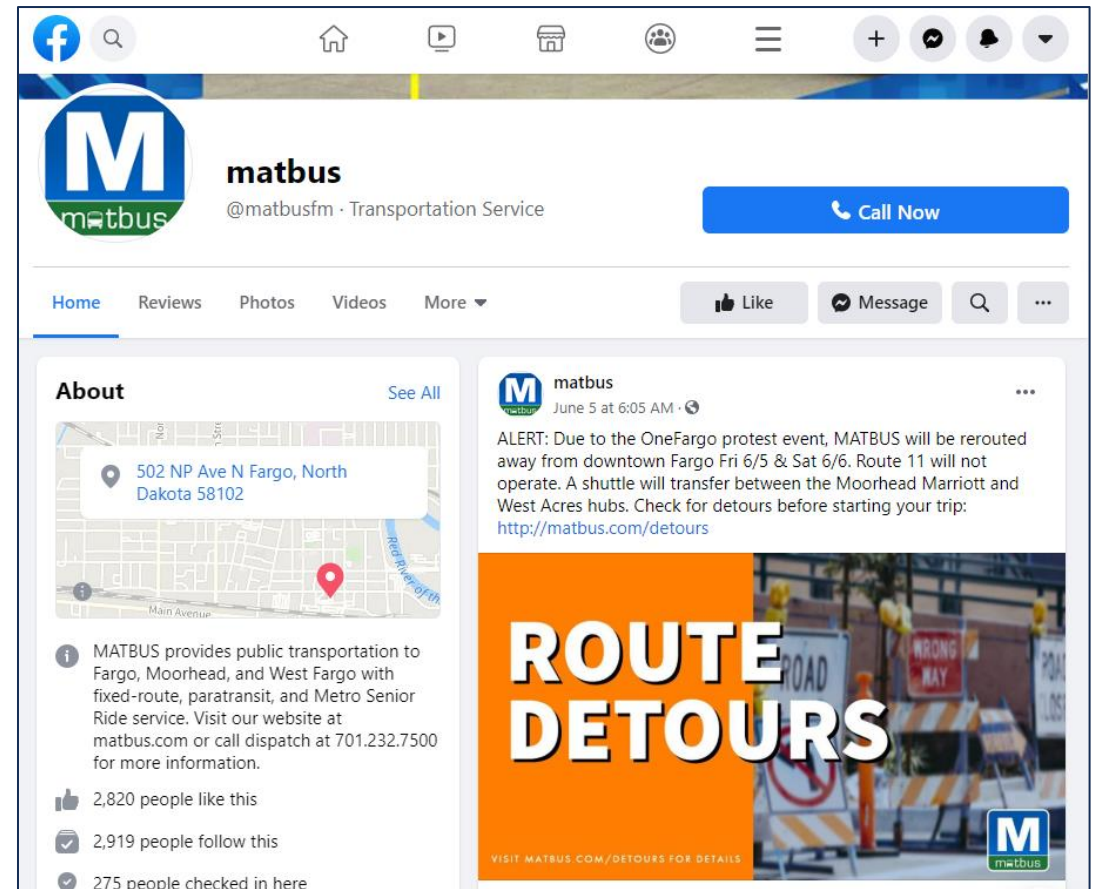
Potential Stakeholder Groups

- Regular MATBUS users
- Higher education students, faculty, and staff
- Middle and high school students/parents
- People with disabilities
- Older adults
- Newly-arrived immigrant communities
- People with limited English proficiency
- Workforce development community
- Economic development and business communities
- Health and human service providers and resources
- Healthcare providers
- Housing organizations
- Community and advocacy groups

Who are we
missing?

Tools for Sharing Information

- Project website
- Metro COG and MATBUS social media accounts
- Email updates
- Traditional media
- Others as needed, as we adapt



Project Website

- fmmetrocog.org/2021TDP
- Updated throughout the project

MATBUS 2021 - 2025 Transit Development Plan

[HOME](#) [GET INVOLVED](#) [EVENTS](#) [PROJECT MATERIALS](#) [FAQ](#)

Help us shape the future of the transit service in the region

Project Overview
The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Council of Governments (Metro COG) and the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead are developing the **MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan (TDP)**, which will provide a vision for transit in the region over the next five years. The MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP will review existing conditions, gather feedback, document community needs, and result in recommendations for how MATBUS should align transit services to meet the needs of a growing region.

Objectives
The objectives of the MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP include, but are not limited to:

- Evaluate current MATBUS policies and operations for providing transit service within the Fargo-Moorhead region,
- Identify transit needs of the community,
- Analyze new service strategies and technologies in order to provide enhanced transit service to the public,
- Ensure coordination between human services and transportation providers to address mobility needs of the region, and;
- Provide MATBUS staff and leadership with goals/recommendations to implement over the course of the next five years.

Partners
The MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP is a project of Metro COG, in cooperation with the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead, and their partner cities, West Fargo and Dilworth. The project is guided by a Study Review Committee (SRC) comprised of MATBUS riders; staff from MATBUS and Metro COG; Local, State, and Federal government partners; and



Resources

[Sign Up for MATBUS TDP Updates](#)

[MATBUS Website](#)

[MATBUS 2021-2025 TDP RFP](#)

Project Contact Information

Tools for Gathering Input

- Community survey: general public + MATBUS riders
- On-board MATBUS passenger survey (Fall 2020 TBD)
- Online interactive comment map
- “Design your transit system” preference exercise
 - Budgeting exercise acknowledging tradeoffs
 - Allocating limited \$\$\$ toward service and facility improvements

Tools for Gathering Input

- Online public workshops
- Stakeholder and small group meetings
- Informal “pop-up” meetings in the community (TBD)



Public Engagement Timing

Engagement activities will occur throughout the project, but be concentrated in three different phases

- 1. Assessment of needs (Summer 2020)**
- 2. Draft recommendations (Fall 2020)**
- 3. Draft TDP (Winter/Spring 2021)**

Questions or ideas about public engagement approach and strategies?

Before we discuss the community survey

Community Survey

Community Survey

- Available online and on paper by request
- Audience
 - Live, work, learn, visit the FM region
 - MATBUS riders and non-riders
- Timeline
 - Distribute online mid/late June 2020
 - Open for two months

Community Survey

What are we asking?

- About experiences, perceptions, and preferences regarding MATBUS
- Demographic questions to better understand existing/potential riders

How will we use the results?

- Understanding existing travel behavior
- Creation of service recommendations
- Prioritization
- Other: Internal use for MATBUS (e.g., customer service)

Seeking SRC input on content

Community Survey

Seeking SRC input on content

- Are we asking the right questions?
- Are these questions important and providing value?
- Are we using inclusive language?
- Are we using simple, understandable language?

Next Steps

Next Steps

Next SRC Meeting: Late July or early August

Task	Metro COG	SRF + AECOM	SRC
Distribute meeting slides and summary, and draft survey questions		X	
Review and provide comments on survey questions (by 6/22)	X	X	X
Review and provide any comments on Public Engagement Plan (available at fmmetrocog.org/projects-rfps/2021TDP/project-materials)			X
Finalize and distribute Community survey	X	X	
Promote Community survey and project website through your networks	X	X	X
Continue work on contextual review; coordinated plan; goals, priorities, and performance measures		X	
Send Doodle poll for next SRC meeting		X	

Online Survey: Draft Questions

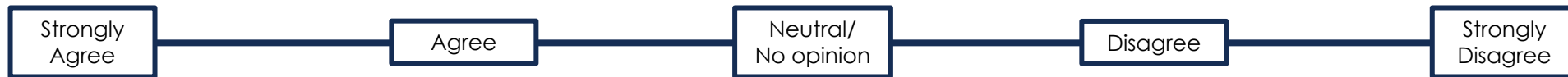
1. Before the current COVID-19 pandemic, did you or anyone in your household use MATBUS on a regular basis?
2. If yes, how often?
3. In the last three months, have you or anyone in your household used MATBUS on a regular basis?
4. If yes, how often?
5. Which routes do you use most often?

Online Survey: Draft Questions

6. When using MATBUS, what is your usual trip purpose?
(Select all that apply)
- A. College/technical school
 - B. Medical appointment
 - C. Personal, recreational, or social activity
 - D. School (K-12)
 - E. Shopping or running errands
 - F. Work
 - G. Other (please specify) _____

Online Survey: Draft Questions

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MATBUS?



- A. MATBUS can get me where I need to go
- B. MATBUS operates early enough on weekday mornings to work with my schedule
- C. MATBUS operates late enough on weekday evenings to work with my schedule
- D. MATBUS operates early enough on Saturday mornings to work with my schedule
- E. MATBUS operates late enough on Saturday evenings to work with my schedule
- F. MATBUS buses regularly operate on time
- G. Information about MATBUS service and fares is easy to access and understand
- H. It is easy to get to/from MATBUS bus stops
- I. It is easy to board MATBUS buses

Online Survey: Draft Questions

8. If you do not use MATBUS, what are the reasons discouraging you from doing so? (Select all that apply)
- A. Doesn't serve the places I need to go [Follow-up question about where]
 - B. Doesn't run early enough [Follow-up question about when]
 - C. Doesn't run late enough [Follow-up question about when]
 - D. Doesn't run on days I need to travel
 - E. Doesn't arrive often enough (too infrequent) [Follow-up question about how often]
 - F. The bus is unreliable
 - G. Riding the bus takes too much time (too slow)
 - H. Riding the bus is confusing [Follow-up question about how]
 - I. I prefer driving
 - J. I prefer walking or bicycling
 - K. Other (please specify) _____

Online Survey: Draft Questions

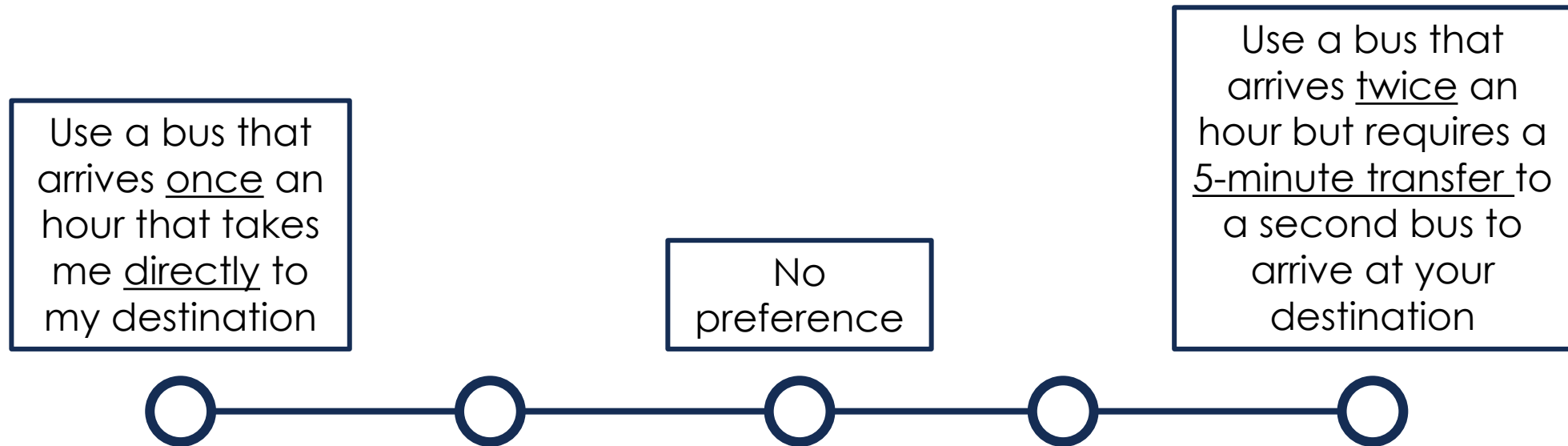
9. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MATBUS?



- A. It is important for the community to provide public transit
- B. Transit contributes to quality of life in the Fargo-Moorhead area
- C. Transit contributes to the economic health and sustainability of the Fargo-Moorhead area

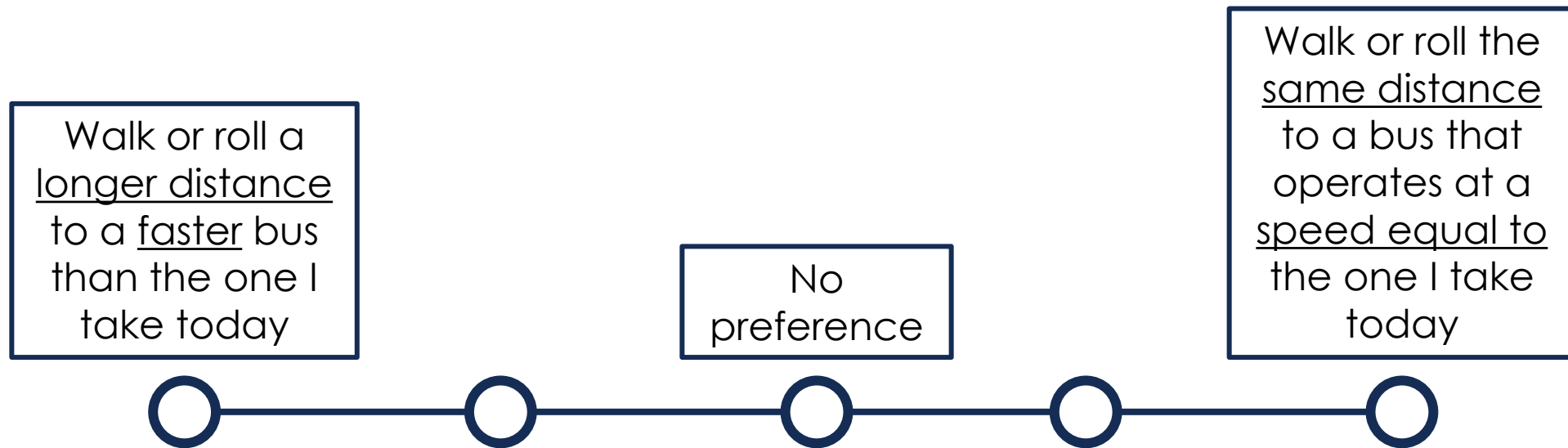
Online Survey: Draft Questions

10. How should the bus route network be designed? (1 of 2)



Online Survey: Draft Questions

11. How should the bus route network be designed? (2 of 2)



Online Survey: Draft Questions

12. Please rank the following potential service improvements, with 1 being the most important to you and 3 being the least important. (1 of 2)
- A. Design MATBUS routes to serve locations that are currently unserved by transit (i.e., increase the footprint of transit)
 - B. Increase frequency of service (e.g., a bus scheduled to serve my stop every 15 minutes rather than every 30 minutes)
 - C. Operate my regular bus route later in the evening

Online Survey: Draft Questions

13. Please rank the following potential service improvements, with 1 being the most important to you and 3 being the least important. (2 of 2)

- A. Invest in better weekday service
- B. Invest in better Saturday service
- C. Add Sunday service

Online Survey: Draft Questions

14. What other improvements to the bus network would you like to see? Please provide any additional comments here

[Open ended question with comment box]

Online Survey: Draft Questions

- 15. Do you consider yourself to have a disability that limits your mobility?
- 16. Do you own a smart phone or other Internet-connected mobile device?
- 17. What is your age?
- 18. What is your race and/or ethnicity? (Select all that apply)

Online Survey: Draft Questions

19. Including yourself, how many people live in your household?
20. How many working vehicles are available in your household?
21. What is the combined annual income for your household?
22. What is the primary language spoken in your household?

Online Survey: Draft Questions

23. Are you a student, faculty, or staff at a university or community/technical college in the Fargo-Moorhead region?

[Follow-up about where and relationship]

24. Are you a student (or the parent/guardian of a student) enrolled in grade K-12 in the Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, or Dilworth School District?

[Follow-up about school level]

Online Survey

Seeking SRC input on content

- Are we asking the right questions?
- Are these questions important and providing value?
- Are we using inclusive language?
- Are we using simple, understandable language?

Other Potential Questions

How well does MATBUS service meet travel needs in the community?



- A. For people who rely on transit?
- B. For commuters?
- C. For students?
- D. For visitors?

Other Potential Questions

Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about MATBUS?



- A. I feel/would feel safe riding MATBUS
- B. MATBUS vehicles are clean and well-maintained
- C. MATBUS stops and shelters are clean and well-maintained
- D. MATBUS provides good customer service

Other Potential Questions

- How long does your bus trip usually last? [in minutes]
- Do you feel the price you pay to ride MATBUS is a good value?
- Where do you live? Please list the address, cross streets, OR neighborhood/landmark.
- Where do you [work/shop/visit]? Please list the address, cross streets, OR name.