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matbus

2026-2030 Transit Development Plan

Final Report

MATBUS TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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Real People. Real Solutions.
NELSON NYGAARD

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Introduction

As the Fargo-Moorhead region experiences growth and development, the need for an efficient and sustainable transit system is increasingly important. Metro COG and MATBUS worked together to prepare a new Transit Development Plan (TDP) that will look at current transit needs and develop a forward-looking vision for regional transit in the years 2026 through 2030. This project aims to create a robust and viable transit plan that better serves the community, improves connections, and supports economic growth.

This TDP is structured to walk you through the plan development process, beginning with a review of existing conditions, followed by the identification of future system needs and closing out with a focus on implementation.

Purpose

Building on the goals, objectives, and transit system recommendations established in the 2021-2025 TDP, this strategic plan helps to identify transit service needs, prioritize improvements, and determine the resources required for implementing service adjustments in the Fargo-Moorhead region. In addition, a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) has been developed to review and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the region's transportation system and its providers.

Mission Statement

MATBUS provides safe, reliable, customer-focused transit options that equitably connects our communities to enhance the quality of life in the Fargo Moorhead region.

Vision Statement

MATBUS enables people in the Fargo Moorhead region to get where they want to go, when they want to go, through a **safe, equitable, reliable, efficient, and sustainable transit system**.

Project Management Team

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Planning Process

Phase 1: Existing Conditions

Running from August through November 2024, this phase focused on understanding the current transit landscape with the goal of identifying key transit barriers in need of resolution. Core activities included Data Collection & Analysis, Community & Stakeholder Engagement, and Identifying Route Performance Issues & Opportunities.

Phase 2: Future System Needs

This phase took place between December 2024 through April 2025. The goal of this phase was to identify service alternatives and gain feedback on potential solutions for transit in the Fargo-Moorhead metro area.

Phase 3: Implementation Strategies

From April through August 2025, this phase focused on finalizing recommendations and developing the coordinated plan. The final engagement element was to present the implementation strategy to local leadership. The goal of this phase was to ensure that the implementation strategies are feasible, attainable, and to identify implementation partners.

Figure 1. Planning Process Overview

Engagement Plan Overview

Public involvement is a critical component of the TDP, guiding the future and shared vision of transit operations for the Fargo-Moorhead region. This community and stakeholder engagement plan aimed to capture and leverage input to enhance project implementation through the use of a Study Review Committee (SRC) and various Public Input Opportunities. Results from each engagement phase are provided throughout this plan.

Study Review Committee

The Study Review Committee (SRC) consists of 16 members representing the stakeholders from across the MATBUS service area. This committee played an important advisory role in guiding the plan's development, ensuring that community needs and perspectives were integrated throughout the process.

Through the development process, the project team engaged the SRC and facilitated discussions in the following four key touchpoints.

1 Issues, Opportunities, and Public Engagement Approach

The primary objectives of this meeting were to outline effective engagement efforts, gain a better understanding of the SRC's perception of the transit system, and utilize maps to gather comments on issues and locations needing service. During the meeting, participants discussed various strategies for engaging the community and ensuring their feedback was incorporated into the study. This collaborative effort provided valuable insights into the current perception of the transit system and highlighted areas that required attention.

2 Service Alternatives

The second SRC meeting focused on exploring and evaluating different service alternatives. This meeting aligned with the second public input opportunity to gather comprehensive feedback.

3 Implementation Strategies

The third SRC meeting reviewed community feedback on service alternatives and evaluated an initial version of the preferred service plan. The Coordinated Plan was also introduced to the SRC at this meeting.

4 Draft Plan Review

The final SRC touchpoint included a review of the draft plan, sharing highlights and key themes for SRC members to share final input on.

Public Input Opportunities

Similar to the SRC process, the public was engaged over three phases during plan development. Primary engagement tools included interactive maps, surveys, open houses, a project overview video, and focus group discussions.

1 Issues & Opportunities

Identify key issues an needs while exploring future opportunities for the transit system. Interactive maps, surveys and in-person engagement served as the primary tools during this phase.

2 Service Alternatives

Preliminary service planning feedback from system users and key stakeholders was gathered on two service scenarios, allowing the project team to explore new ideas to guide development of the preferred service plan.

3 Draft Plan

The final public input opportunity provided an opportunity for the public to review the draft plan and recommended changes in the preferred service plan. Engagement tools included an online survey and interactive comment map, as well as paper surveys and plan information available at the GTC.

Focus Groups

While the SRC offered a structured oversight mechanism, focus groups provided on-the-ground and direct feedback to the TDP. Focus groups garnered community-specific insights into their specialized needs within the transit system, ensuring the TDP is well-informed and aligned with diverse perspectives. The project team held six, 60-minute focus groups during the existing conditions phase to gather feedback on critical issues and opportunities. Groups were split into the following sessions:

- Local Jurisdiction Planners
- Human Services
- Community Based Organizations
- Businesses
- Emergency Preparedness
- Educational Institutions

System Context

MATBUS Operational Overview

MATBUS, the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area Transit system, is the primary public transportation system serving the communities of Fargo and West Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead and Dilworth, Minnesota. MATBUS was established through a Joint Powers Agreement and is currently in the process of implementing its 2024 Reorganization Study, operating under an interim agreement. With the reorganization of MATBUS, several changes were made to the existing agreement to account for the proposed organizational framework.

The MATBUS Coordination Committee (formerly the Metro Area Transit Coordinating Board) serves in an advisory role and provides recommendations to MATBUS. The Board consists of members appointed by the following governing bodies or institutional entities who are recognized as having a financial stake in the operations of MATBUS:

- Two (2) Fargo City Commission Members
- Fargo Transit Director
- Fargo Finance Director
- Two (2) Moorhead City Council Members
- Moorhead Finance Director
- Moorhead Administrative Designee
- West Fargo Administrative Designee
- Dilworth Administrative Designee
- Metro COG Director
- NDSU Designee

The MATBUS Coordination Committee (MCC) is responsible for providing a coordinated public transit system within the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area. The MCC facilitates and oversees a coordinated decision-making process between the City of Fargo and the City of Moorhead regarding the delivery of public transit and ensures that decisions are developed in consultation with other local units of government, public institutions, stakeholders, and the general public. The primary functions of the MCC include:

- Development of new Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between Fargo and Moorhead;
- Oversee transition to 2025 organizational structure / staffing plan;
- Ensure implementation of budget principles for 2025/2026;
- Continue ongoing coordination with the City of Dilworth, City of West Fargo, area colleges and universities, and other partners through the organizational transition;
- Coordination with MnDOT, NDDOT and Metro COG on state and Federal programming decisions and approval of the Cost Allocation Plan,(Exhibit A);and
- Guidance and input on the pending Transit Development Plan (TDP) update.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) shall provide funding to the City of Fargo as the Designated Recipient. As the Designated Recipient, Fargo shall provide funding to participating entities. This requires a coordinated decision-making process to verify funds are shared in an equitable manner. The participating entities will continue to use an existing locally developed coordination process based on decades of cooperative Federal aid programming for public transit.

A full existing conditions analysis can be viewed in Appendix A

MATBUS Services

Currently, MATBUS provides fixed route and demand response transit service throughout the Fargo-Moorhead metro area with 19 fixed routes running Monday through Saturday. MATBUS operates three service modes – Fixed-Route Bus Service, MATBUS On-Demand, and MAT Paratransit.

- **Fixed-Route Service** is the backbone of MATBUS' services and includes routes in Fargo, West Fargo, Moorhead, and Dilworth. The service also operates within the North Dakota State University (NDSU) and Minnesota State University–Moorhead (MSUM) campuses. Citywide service continues throughout the year while University service operates primarily during the NDSU academic year to connect staff, students, and faculty from off-campus locations to the center of campus.
- **MATBUS On-Demand** is offered in the Fargo Industrial Park and on the NDSU Campus and its surrounding area. The service is meant to connect fixed-route riders to Fargo Industrial Park businesses and NDSU students to and from campus after fixed-route service ends.
- **MAT Paratransit** offers door-to-door paratransit service to complement its fixed-route service. It is a shared ride, origin-to-destination ADA complimentary service for eligible individuals with disabilities.

Challenges for the MATBUS system range from serving portions of the metropolitan area that continue to sprawl away from the urban core to maintaining transit's attractiveness and competitiveness in an area where the use of the private automobile is relatively unconstrained by parking limitations or severe congestion. The system is also still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic which reduced transit ridership across the country. Most recently, the metropolitan area transitioned to a Transportation Management Area, requiring the development of a more coordinated system and resulting in a decrease in federal funding.

Community Demographics

An analysis on current community demographics was completed to understand whether MATBUS is meeting the needs of the community, whether there are gaps in service, or if there are parts of the service area that are not receiving sufficient service to satisfy travel demands.

Figure 2 illustrates that the current transit system effectively serves the majority of the Fargo-Moorhead region's population and employment centers. Notably, the above-average presence of equity priority groups within a ½-mile radius of transit routes highlights the system's continued commitment to providing mobility options for groups who are more reliant on public transportation.

In order to assess the current system's effectiveness in serving areas with elevated transit demand, equity priority areas were identified and defined by census block groups that are above average in at least 3 of the following:

- Low-Income Households
- Senior Population
- BIPOC Population
- Vehicle-Free Households

Figure 3 shows equity priority census blocks with a ½ mile buffer created from existing transit coverage. While the census blocks do not show the population distribution within individual blocks, this over demonstrates that the existing services provide a fairly comprehensive coverage of the Equity Priority Areas.

Figure 3. Equity Priority Area Analysis

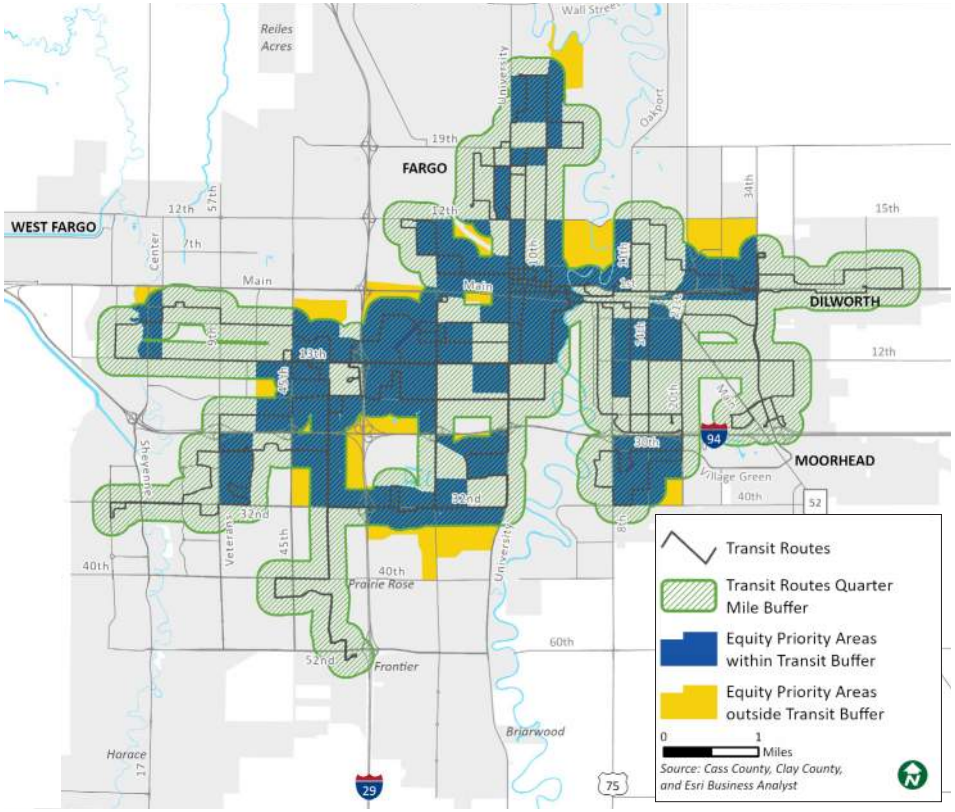


Figure 2. Regional Demographic Analysis

	population	jobs	people within 150% poverty level	car-free households	people living with a disability	65+ population	people of color
Within 1/2 Mile of Transit	**170,109**	**108,704**	**23%**	**8%** **37%** with one car	**12%**	**13%**	**22%**
Fargo-Moorhead Region	**251,527**	**153,955**	**10%**	**2.5%** **23%** with one car	**12%**	**14%**	**13%**

Source: Remix, 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan, US Census

Fixed Route Services

Fixed Route Overview

MATBUS provides fixed-route service via 19 active routes that carry users throughout the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area—Fargo and West Fargo in North Dakota and Moorhead and Dilworth in Minnesota.

The Ground Transportation Center (GTC), located at 502 NP Avenue in Fargo, serves as a central hub for bus operations, facilitating transfer between Moorhead and Fargo routes. MATBUS services are timed to meet each other at these various transfer hubs, with connections between the Moorhead and Fargo services occurring at the GTC. The additional "satellite" hubs are used to facilitate timed connections between buses serving suburban areas, they include:

- West Acres Shopping Center Transit Hub
- North Dakota State University (NDSU) Transit Hub (A. Glenn Hill Center)
- Marriott Transit Hub (Courtyard by Marriott, Moorhead)
- Dilworth Walmart Transit Hub

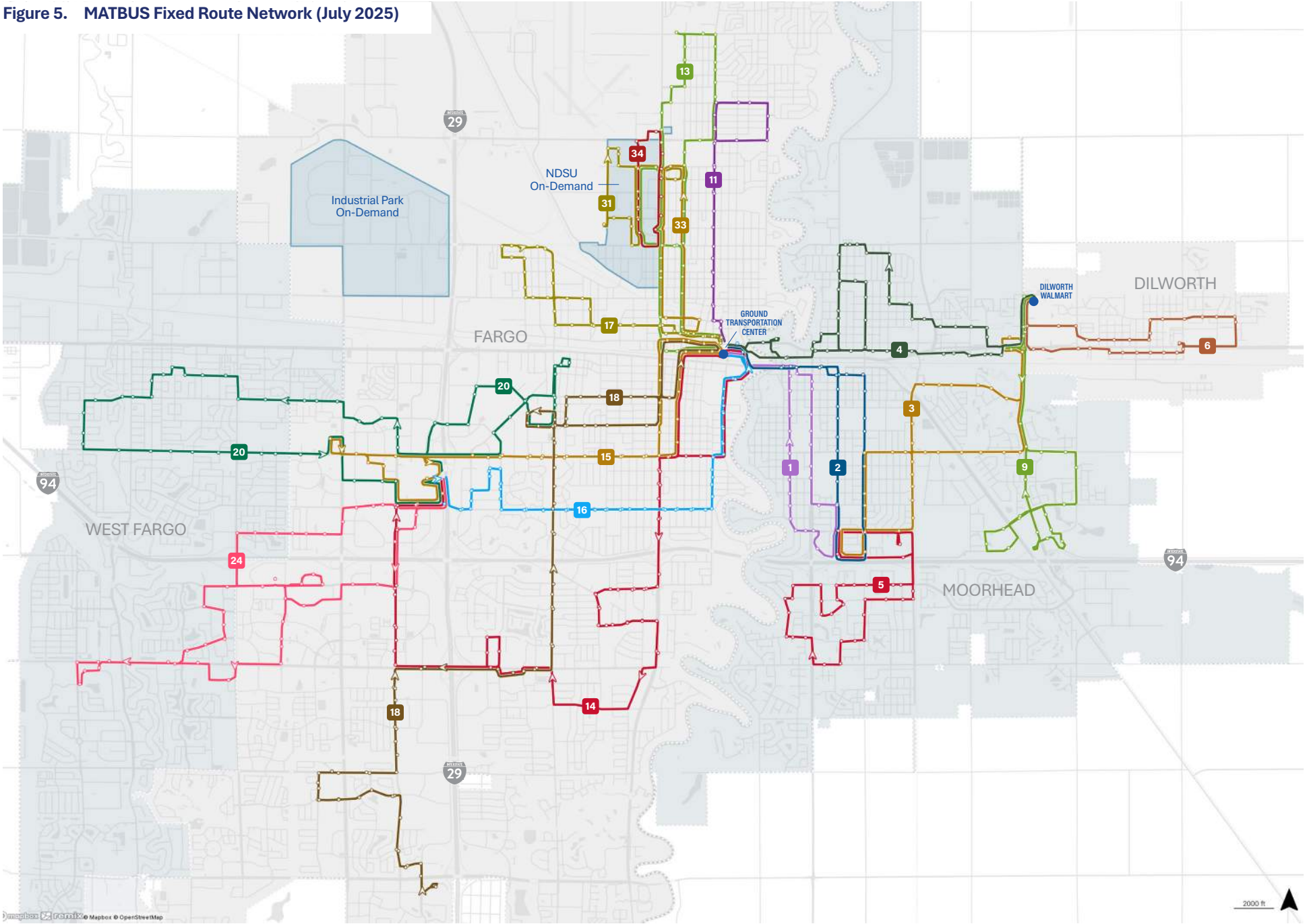
Figure 4 provides a Fixed Route Service Overview as of July 2025, detailing service and operational characteristics, including frequency and span of service. MATBUS routes range in frequency from seven to 60 minutes between routes. As is also shown in Figure 4, in Fargo and West Fargo the agency operates 14 routes from roughly 6:15 AM to 10:15 PM on Monday through Friday and 7:15 AM to 10:15 PM on Saturday. There is no Sunday Service. Routes 31, 33, 34 and a demand-response service directly serve North Dakota State University (NDSU) and operate on weekdays only, with Routes 31 and 33 operating only during the fall and spring semesters.

Figure 4. Fixed Route Service Overview (July 2025)

Rt.	Description	Inter-lining	Monday - Friday		Saturday	
			Freq. (min)	Span	Freq. (min)	Span
Moorhead / Dilworth Routes						
1	Downtown, Concordia, Hopkins Elementary, Marriott, Brookdale Mall, Library	Rt. 3	30	6:15 AM – 10:15 PM	30	7:15 AM – 10:15 PM
2	Downtown, Hornbacher's MSUM, Hopkins Elementary, Marriott	Rt. 5	30 15 min between 2:15-6:15p during MSUM academic year	6:15 AM – 10:15 PM	30	7:15 AM – 10:15 PM
3	Marriott, Cashwise, Target, Moorhead High, 24th Ave., and 14th St	Rt. 1	30	6:19 AM – 10:19 PM	30	7:19 AM – 10:19 PM
4	Downtown, Park View Terrace, Courthouse, Churches United, Target, Walmart, Cash Wise, DMV, Moorhead Center Mall, Hjemkomst	-	30	6:16 AM – 10:16 PM	30	7:16 AM – 10:16 PM
5	Marriott, M State, Hornbacher's Lakeland	Rt. 2	30	6:16 AM – 10:16 PM	30	7:16 AM – 10:16 PM
6	Walmart, Community Center, Houge Estates, City Hall, CVS Pharmacy	Rt. 9	60 Additional trips at 6:10p and 6:40p	6:40 AM – 7:10 PM	60	7:40 AM – 6:10 PM
9[1]	Walmart, Cash Wise, Horizon, Vista, Sanford, Menard's, Axis Clinicals	Rt. 6	60	7:10 AM – 5:40 PM	60	7:10 AM – 6:40 PM
Fargo / West Fargo Routes						
11	GTC, Sanford, VA Hospital, Hornbacher's Fargo North	Rt. 14	30 60	6:15 AM – 6:40 PM 6:45 PM – 10:10 PM	30 60	7:15 AM – 6:40 PM 6:45 PM – 10:10 PM
13	GTC, Klai Hall, Barry Hall, Roosevelt, Hornbacher's U32 Apartments, NDSCS, SHAC, Memorial Union, Family Fare, Renaissance Hall	Rt. 15	30 60	6:15 AM – 6:40 PM 6:15 PM – 10:10 PM	60	7:15 AM – 10:10 PM
14	Prairie, Island Park, Sanford, Kmart, Family Fare, Essentia, Rasmussen College, West Acres, YMCA, Hornbacher's Courthouse	Rt. 11	30 60	6:10 AM – 7:10 PM 6:15 PM – 10:10 PM	30 60	7:15 AM – 7:10 PM 7:15 PM – 10:10 PM
15	GTC, Holiday, Bethany Homes, Fraser, CVS, West Acres, Target, TJ Maxx, Walmart, Job Service of ND, Courthouse	Rt. 13	30 15 30	6:14 AM – 10:40 AM 10:00 AM – 5:30 PM 5:45 PM – 10:14 PM	30	7:14 AM – 10:14 PM
16	GTC, Fargo High Rise, Lindenwood Park, Essentia Clinic, Fargo South High, Cash Wise, West Acres, Public Library	-	60	6:15 AM – 7:40 PM	60	7:15 AM – 7:40 PM
17	Madison School, YWCA, Centre, University Manor	Rt. 18	60	6:15 AM – 9:40 PM	60	7:15 AM – 9:40 PM
18	GTC, Bethany Homes, SEHS, Avalon West, Essentia, Hornbacher's Microsoft, Walmart	Rt. 17	60	6:15 AM – 10:15 PM	60	7:15 AM – 10:15 PM
20	West Acres, ShareHouse, WF High, WF City Hall/Police, High Rise, Sanford Clinic, Walmart, Cass Co. Jail, SEHS, Islamic Center	-	60	6:21 AM – 9:55 PM	60	7:21 AM – 9:55 PM
24	West Acres, Sanford Medical Center, Cash Wise, Bluestem Dr./26th Ave., Costco	-	60	6:30 AM – 10:10 PM	60	7:30 AM – 10:10 PM
NDSU Routes						
31[2]	Minard, Steven Hall, Wallman Wellness, Peltier Complex, Research and Technology Park, University Village, Fargodome, High Rises	-	20	7:40 AM – 6:20 PM	-	-
33[2]	NDSU Hub, Klai Hall, Barry Hall, University Village, SHAC	-	10	6:55 AM – 7:15 PM	-	-
34[2]	Transit Hub, Reed/Johnson Halls, Fargodome, NDSCS, Niskanen	-	20	7:44 AM – 4:44 PM	-	-

[1]Route 9 will enter the Vista Center parking lot Monday - Friday from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM. Outside of these days and hours, riders can request door accessibility. Riders wishing to be dropped off at the door can notify the driver when they board the bus.
[2]NDSU Campus Circulators. Routes operate Monday-Friday during the NDSU academic y ear (U-Pass Program)

Figure 5. MATBUS Fixed Route Network (July 2025)



Common Destinations

The stop locations with the highest annual boardings are in higher-density transit-supportive areas, which are logical points of higher trip generation due to the proximity of housing, commercial establishments, and a supportive pedestrian infrastructure and other amenities. Three of the five stops with the highest daily boardings are transfer hubs, so their position on the list does not necessarily indicate a high demand for service to their respective broader geographic areas. The highest traffic stop is the GTC, and the busiest stop in Moorhead is at the Marriott Transit Hub. The Dilworth Walmart stop is both an important destination and a transfer point. Common destinations are examined in detail in individual route profiles. Sample automatic passenger counter (APC) data from September 2024 was mapped to show boarding and alighting data by stop across the entire MATBUS system. GTC is an outlier in terms of overall ridership and was therefore excluded from stop level mapping to allow other higher ridership locations to stand out on their own.

Top 5 Ridership Locations

1. Ground Transportation Center
2. West Acres Mall
3. NDSU Campus
4. 13th Avenue Walmart
5. Marriott Transfer Hub

Figure 6. Weekday Ridership (Average Daily - September 2024)

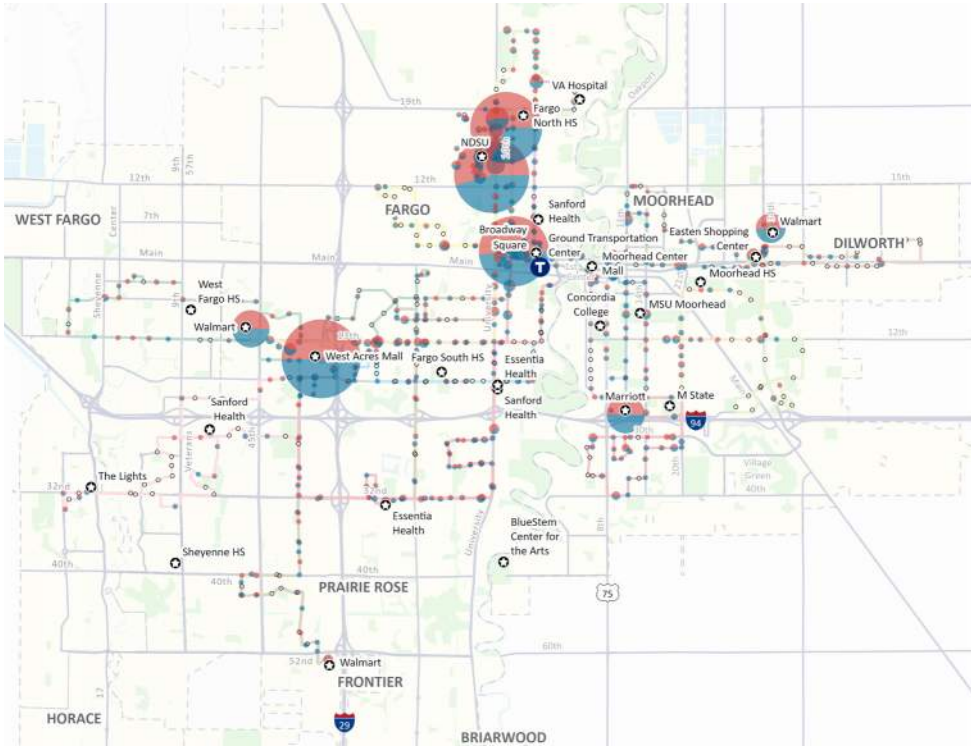
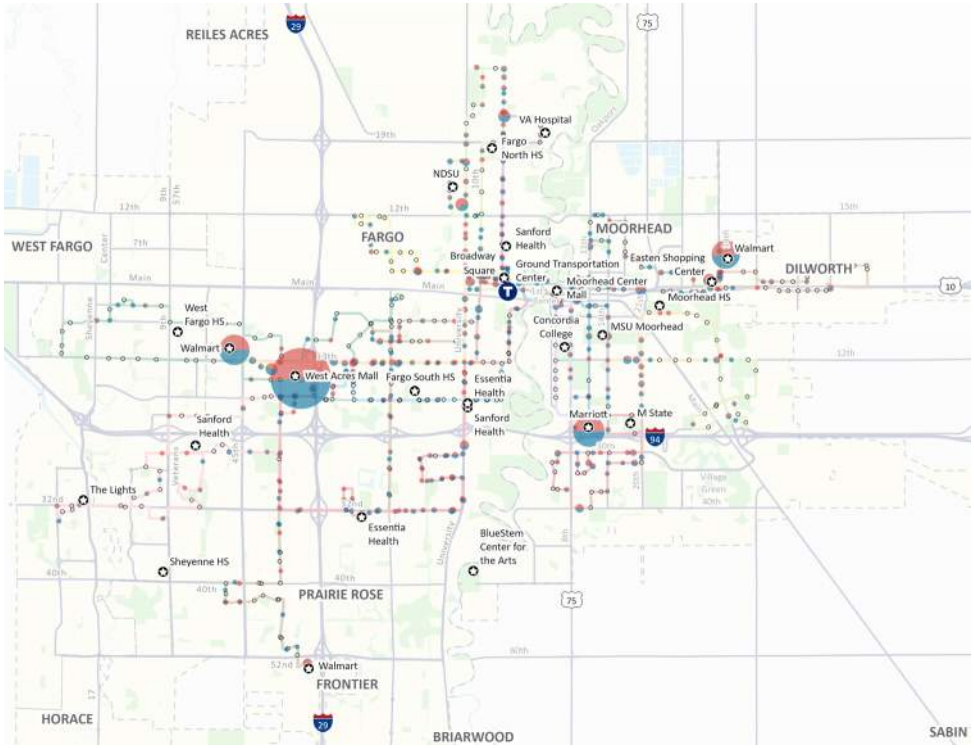


Figure 7. Weekend Ridership (Average Daily - September 2024)



Recent Service Changes

Since the publishing of the MATBUS 2021-2025 Transit Development Plan in December 2021, there have been several recent changes to the agency's fixed route service.

- **Routes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 11, 14, 15**, and **24** were reduced by an hour Monday through Saturday. Service now ends at approximately 10:15 PM rather than 11:15 PM.
- **Routes 6** and **9** are no longer interlined. The buses no longer alternate trips between the two routes. Route 6 also operates along a slightly modified route to serve the commercial area directly north of Center Avenue E.
- **Route 13U** was suspended. This route served North Dakota State University and operated every 30-to-60-minutes every Monday through Saturday from 6:15 AM to 11:15 PM.
- **Route 15** was reduced from a 15-minute schedule to a 30-minute schedule during the morning rush hour from 6:14 AM to 10:40 AM. The route was increased from a 60-minute schedule to a 30-minute schedule from 5:45 PM to 10:14 PM. The route also operates along a slightly modified route near West Acres Mall. In May 2025, the route went from a 60-minute run time to 90-minutes to address on-time performance .
- **Route 16** was extended by an hour Monday through Saturday. Service now ends at 7:40 PM rather than 6:45 PM.
- **Routes 17** was reduced by an hour Monday through Saturday. Service now ends at 9:40 PM rather than 10:45 PM.
- **Route 18** operates along a slightly modified route, now extending to the Osgood Golf Course along the southern portion of the route.
- **Route 20** operates along a slightly modified route, now serving additional commercials areas along 13th Avenue S.
- **Route 24** operates along a slightly modified route near West Acres Mall.
- **Route 31** was expanded. The route now extends east along 17th Avenue N to serve the Fargodome and University Village. The new routes follows the recently eliminated Route 32E/32W.
- **Routes 32E** and **32W** were eliminated. These routes served North Dakota State University and the residential neighborhood south of the university. The routes operated every 30-minutes Monday through Friday from 7:25 AM to 6:00 PM.

Non-Fixed Route Service

MATBUS On-Demand

MATBUS On-Demand is a free on-demand transit service offered in the Fargo Industrial Park and on the NDSU Campus and its surrounding area. Using the TransLoc app, users can book a personalized ride for up to five people within the designated service area, with pick-up and drop-off points of their choosing.

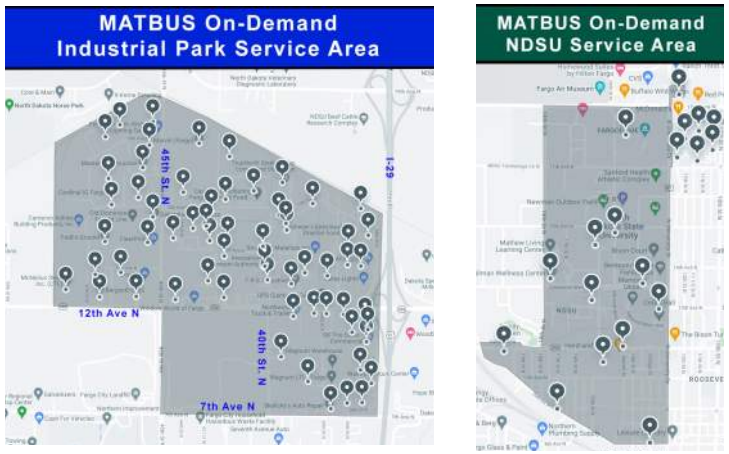
In March 2023, TapRide rebranded to become MATBUS On-Demand. The services previously offered from TapRide remained largely the same with service offered at the Fargo Industrial Park and on the North Dakota State University (NDSU) campus during the academic year. To book a ride, riders can download the free TransLoc app to ride with up to 5 people. If riders do not have a smartphone, they can let their fixed route driver know to connect MATBUS On-Demand services or call the Ground Transportation Center (GTC).

Services at the Fargo Industrial Park are offered between the hours of 6:15 AM to 10:15 PM Monday through Friday year-round. The Fargo Industrial Park is connected to the fixed route service at two locations, Whales of a Wash bus shelter (Connects to Route 17) and West Acres MATBUS hub (Connects to Routes 15, 15, 16, 20, & 24).

Services on the NDSU campus are offered from 6:45 PM to 10:15 PM during the academic year Monday to Friday. This service is meant to provide students with free, on-demands rides after fixed route campus service has ended for the day. The shuttle service area includes R.H. Barry Hall in Downtown Fargo.

Due to low usage and disproportionately high costs, on-demand service to the Industrial Park was approved for elimination by the MATBUS Coordination Committee in September 2025.

Figure 8. On-Demand Service Areas

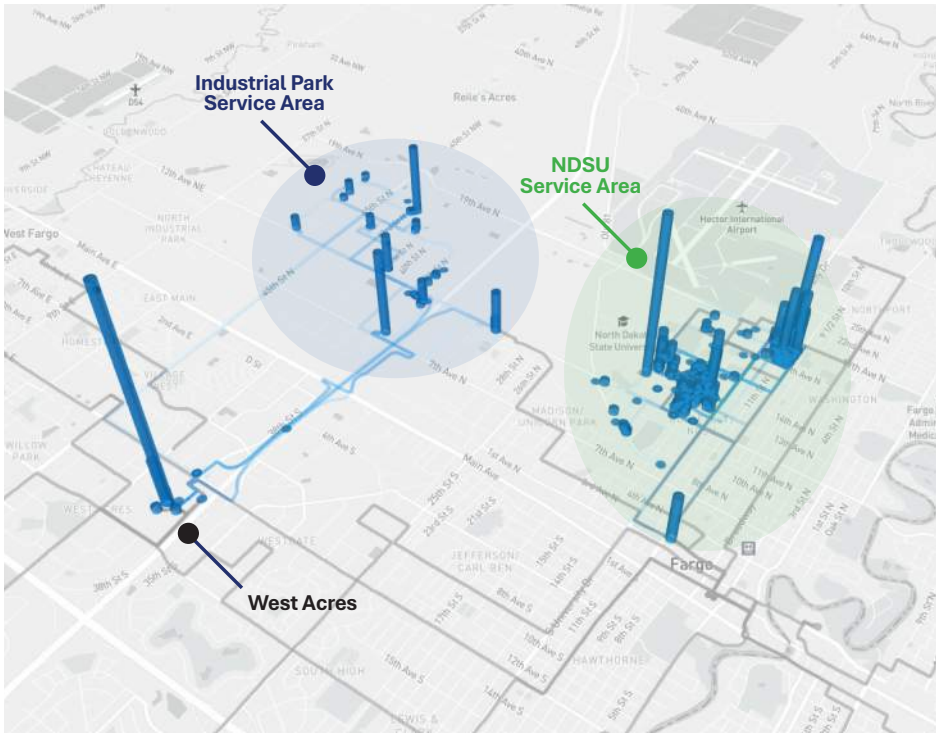


Common Destinations

MATBUS On-Demand origin and destination data was reviewed for the months of September and October 2024. In the Fargo Industrial Park service area, the West Acres Transit Hub was a major trip generator and connection point for riders. Other top destinations included Thrifty White Pharmacy, GPK Products, Jefferson Lines, and the Whale of a Wash bus shelter, which serves as a connection point to Route 17.

In the NDSU Campus Service Area, origin and destination trends mimic travel patterns from the existing fixed routes that operate during the day. Top destinations, as shown in Figure 9, include the NDSU Wellness Center, Ehly Hall, and University Village.

Figure 9. On-Demand Origins & Destinations (September - October 2024)



MAT Paratransit

MATBUS offers door-to-door paratransit service to complement its fixed-route service. MAT Paratransit service is available in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to people with disabilities who have obtained a Special User Card from the Transit Offices for the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead. While typically the minimum provision for Paratransit requires service within a set distance of fixed-routes service, MAT Paratransit operates within the entire city limits of Moorhead and Dilworth, Minnesota, and Fargo and West Fargo, North Dakota. MAT Paratransit operates as a shared ride service, so vehicles often pick up multiple passengers traveling to different destinations at the same time. Paratransit service is generally available during the following periods.

- Monday – Friday: 6:15AM – 10:15 PM
- Saturday: 7:15 AM – 10:15 PM
- Sunday: 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM

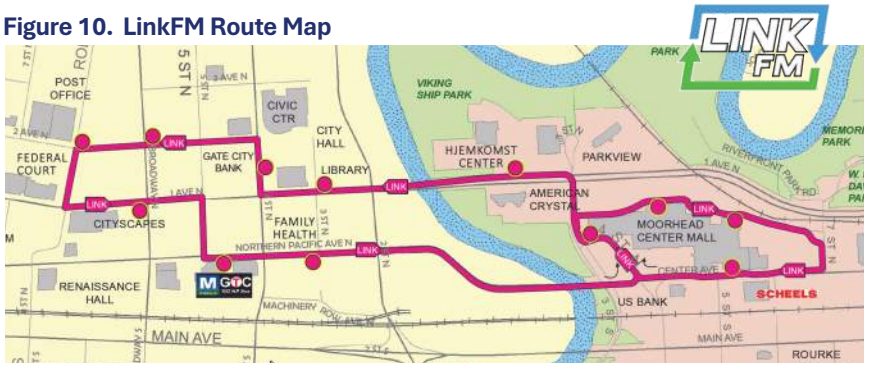
The cost of each ride is $3.00 per passenger, though personal attendants and children under the age of seven can ride for free if accompanying an eligible passenger; a coupon book of 20 tickets is also available for $60.00.

While Sunday paratransit is not required due to no fixed route service operating, MATBUS has historically chosen to implement the Sunday paratransit service and will continue with the service for the foreseeable future.

LinkFM

From 2015 to 2020, LinkFM was a daily, fare-free circulator route connecting the downtown areas of Fargo and Moorhead. From 2021 to 2025, LinkFM operated during designated community-sponsored events. LinkFM service was eliminated in May 2025.

Figure 10. LinkFM Route Map



System Performance

Performance Measures

Federally required performance-based measures allow MATBUS to review trends over time and make operational decisions to ensure the transit system adheres to both federal targets and local standards. The National Transit Database (NTD) records financial, operating, and asset conditions of transit systems across the United States annually, allowing agencies to make multi-year comparisons and perform their own trend analyses. In addition, FTA uses NTD data to apportion funding to urbanized and rural areas. A summary of NTD performance measures for the Fargo-Moorhead region is provided in Figure 11, broken out by fixed route and paratransit service, as well as by North Dakota and Minnesota services.

Figure 11. National Transit Database (NTD) Performance Measures for Fixed Route & Paratransit by Year

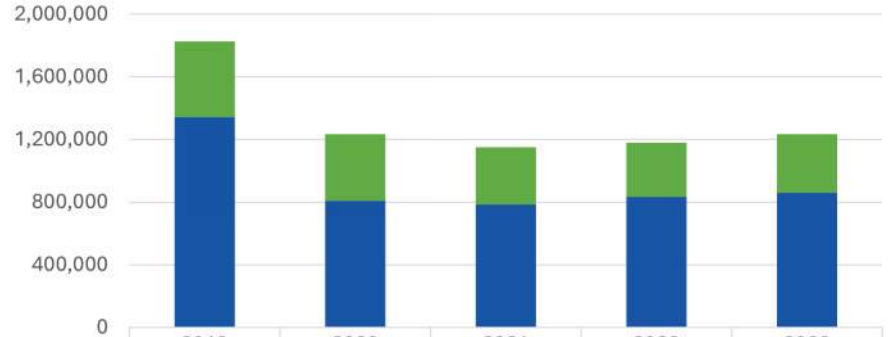
	Performance Measure	Fargo - West Fargo					Moorhead - Dilworth				
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2019	2020[1]	2021	2022	2023
OVERALL	Passenger Trips (UPT)	1,396,884	885,604	835,041	889,763	917,203	492,839	425,747	370,615	351,795	383,279
	Revenue Hours (VRH)	104,354	97,149	109,274	96,496	93,727	41,317	41,740	41,008	38,483	38,575
	Revenue Miles (VRM)	1,291,852	1,178,307	1,295,341	1,164,872	1,133,380	552,273	595,139	536,059	501,505	509,534
	Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	13.4	9.1	7.6	9.2	9.8	11.9	10.2	9.0	9.1	9.9
	Operating Expense	$8,324,269	$8,994,556	$8,823,216	$10,956,070	$11,272,421	$2,754,524	$2,985,174	$3,225,142	$3,574,466	$3,816,354
	Passenger Revenue	$853,178	$198,637	$176,941	$659,308	$595,179	$423,386	$141,704	$319,873	$346,875	$365,658
	Operating Cost per Passenger	$5.96	$10.16	$10.57	$12.31	$12.29	$5.59	$6.78	$8.70	$10.16	$9.96
	Operating Expense-to-Revenue Ratio	9.8	45.3	49.9	16.6	18.9	6.5	21.1	10.1	10.3	10.4
FIXED	Passenger Trips	1,343,534	848,312	782,239	834,392	859,658	482,667	418,341	363,726	343,863	374,928
	Revenue Hours	81,464	80,189	83,157	68,248	65,922	34,812	35,738	35,427	32,434	32,462
	Revenue Miles	967,238	939,436	951,896	794,727	741,381	477,934	435,144	477,974	436,712	434,401
	Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	16.5	10.6	9.4	12.2	13.0	13.9	11.9	10.3	10.6	11.5
	Operating Expense	$6,833,334	$7,509,635	$7,010,496	$8,705,578	$8,912,572	$2,478,901	$2,583,072	$2,936,632	$3,235,736	$3,454,868
	Passenger Revenue	$693,452	$157,804	$101,863	$500,901	$415,555	$368,115	$119,084	$276,882	$297,017	$309,405
	Operating Cost per Passenger	$5.09	$8.85	$8.96	$10.43	$10.37	$5.14	$6.06	$8.07	$9.41	$9.21
	Operating Expense-to-Revenue Ratio	9.9	47.6	68.8	17.4	21.4	6.7	21.7	10.6	10.9	11.2
PARATRANSIT	Passenger Trips	53,350	37,292	52,802	55,371	57,545	10,172	7,406	6,889	7,932	8,351
	Revenue Hours	22,890	16,960	26,117	28,248	27,805	6,505	6,002	5,581	6,049	6,113
	Revenue Miles	324,614	238,871	343,445	370,145	391,999	74,339	159,995	58,085	64,793	75,133
	Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	2.3	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.1	1.6	1.9	1.2	1.3	1.4
	Operating Expense	$1,490,935	$1,484,921	$1,812,720	$2,250,492	$2,359,849	$275,623	$402,103	$288,510	$338,730	$361,486
	Passenger Revenue	$159,726	$40,833	$75,078	$158,407	$179,624	$55,271	$22,620	$42,991	$49,858	$56,253
	Operating Cost per Passenger	$27.95	$39.82	$34.33	$40.64	$41.01	$27.10	$29.61	$41.88	$42.70	$20.79
	Operating Expense-to-Revenue Ratio	9.3	36.4	24.1	14.2	13.1	5.0	17.8	6.7	6.8	6.4

Source: National Transit Database (NTD), 2019 - 2023 (Data for 2024 had not been released and confirmed as of drafting this report)
[1] 2020 NTD Report for Moorhead unavailable, internal reporting used in its place.

Fixed Routes

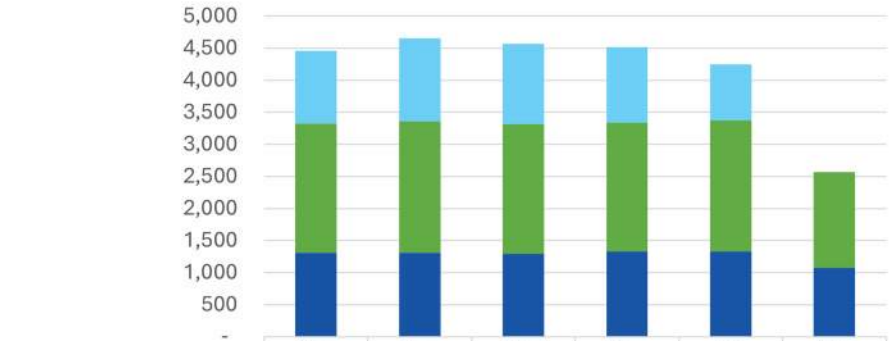
In 2023, a total of 1,234,586 rides were provided on MATBUS fixed routes. Of these trips, 30 percent were attributed to Moorhead and Dilworth service while the remaining 70 percent were attributed to Fargo and West Fargo. Annual ridership has been increasing between three to five percent in recent years with 2023 ridership at 68 percent of 2019 levels. While 2024 annual ridership was not yet available at the time of this review, the first half of the year experience a five percent increase over 2023.

Figure 12. Annual Fixed Route Ridership (2019-2023)



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Moorhead	482,667	425,747	363,726	345,318	374,928
Fargo	1,343,534	807,654	786,147	834,392	859,658

Figure 13. Average Fixed Route Ridership by Day of Week (2023)



	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NDSU Daily Average	1,132	1,295	1,252	1,176	867	-
Fargo Average Daily	2,017	2,048	2,023	2,009	2,044	1,497
Moorhead Average Daily	1,308	1,310	1,296	1,329	1,335	1,074

Figure 14. Total Rides by Hour (2023)

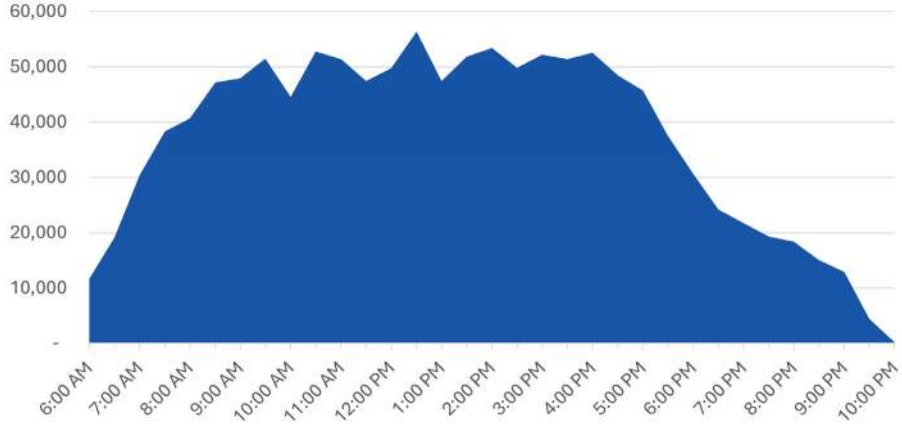
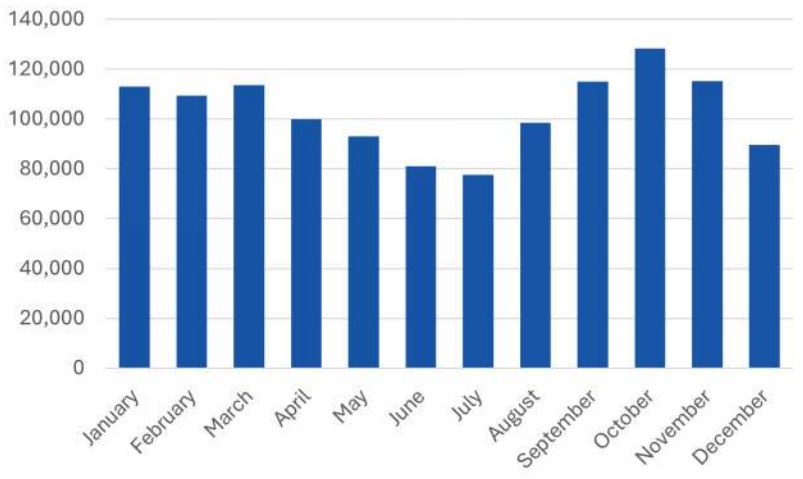


Figure 15. Total Rides by Month (2023)



Fixed Route Performance

Figure 16. Average Daily Boardings by Route

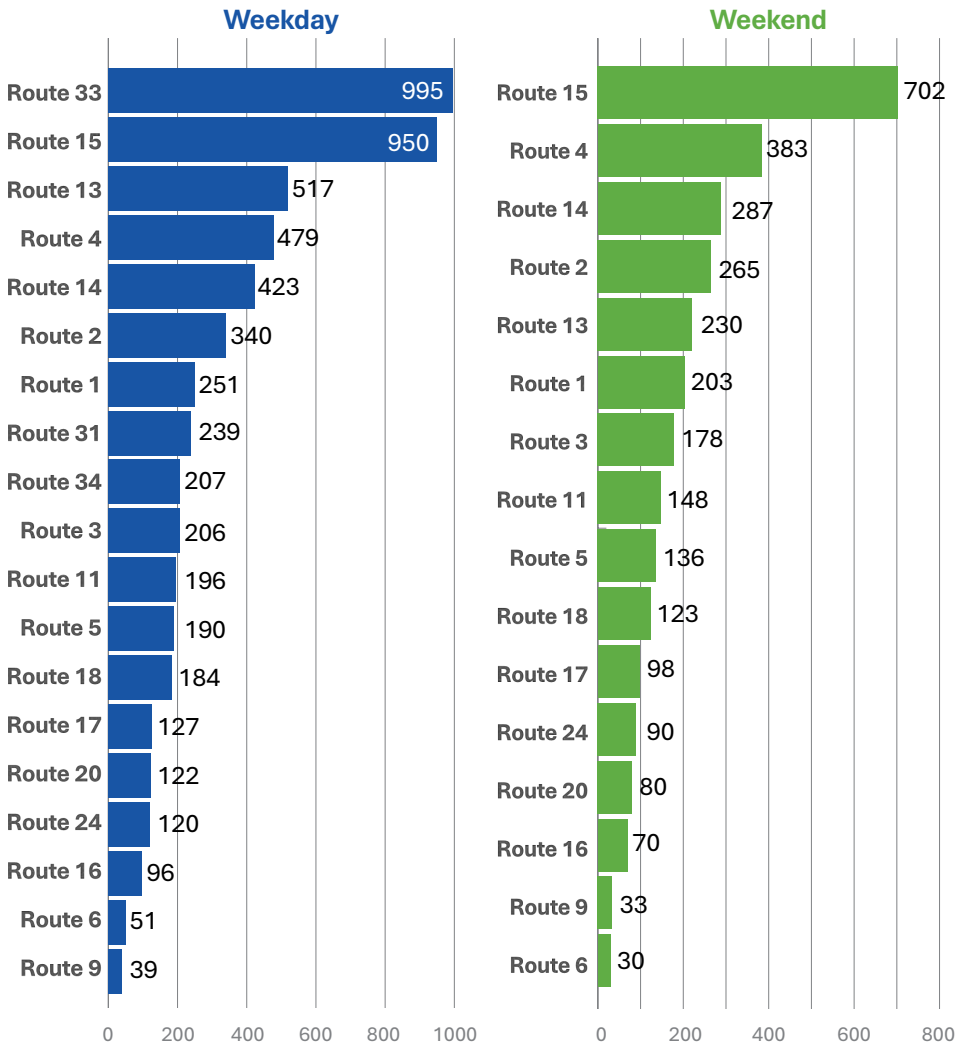
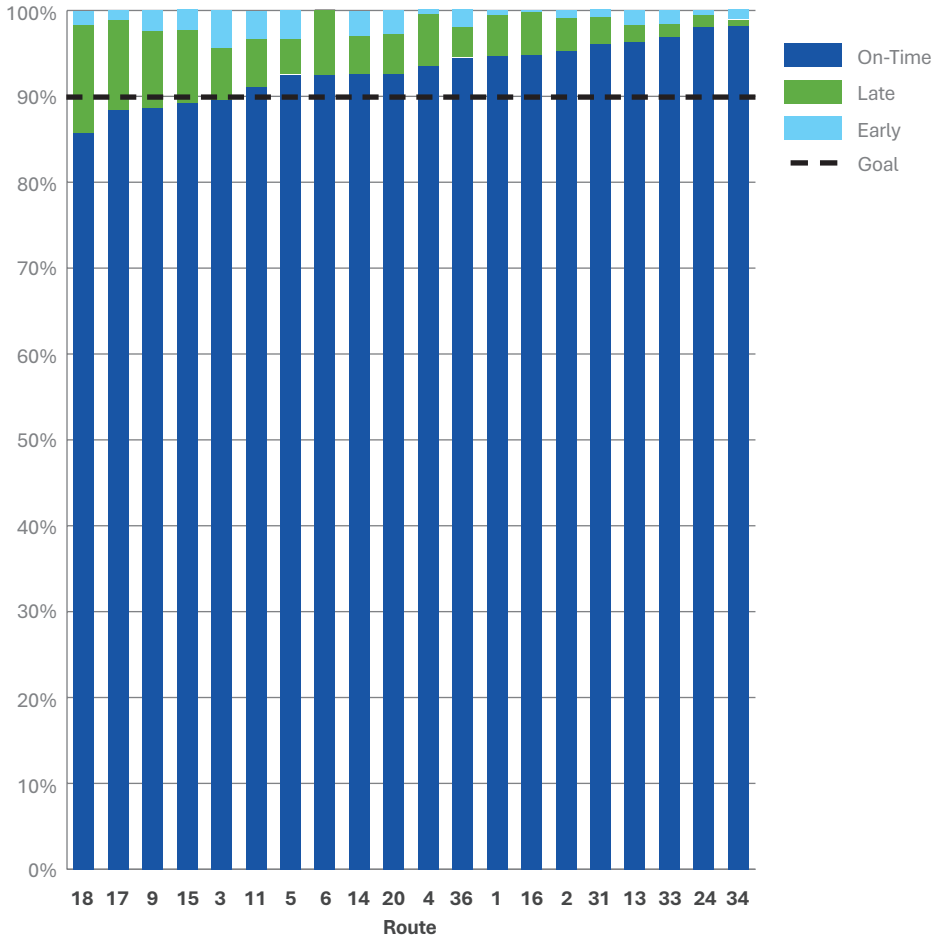


Figure 17. On-Time Performance by Route

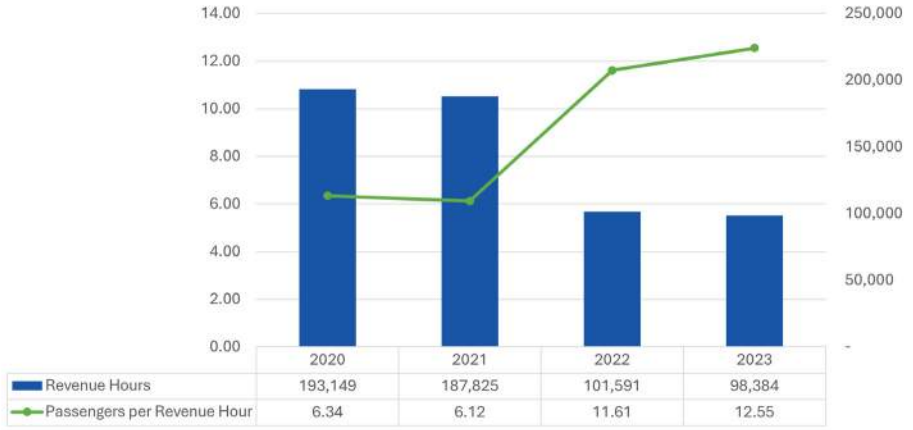


Route by route performance details can be viewed in Appendix B: Route Profiles

Efficiency & Effectiveness

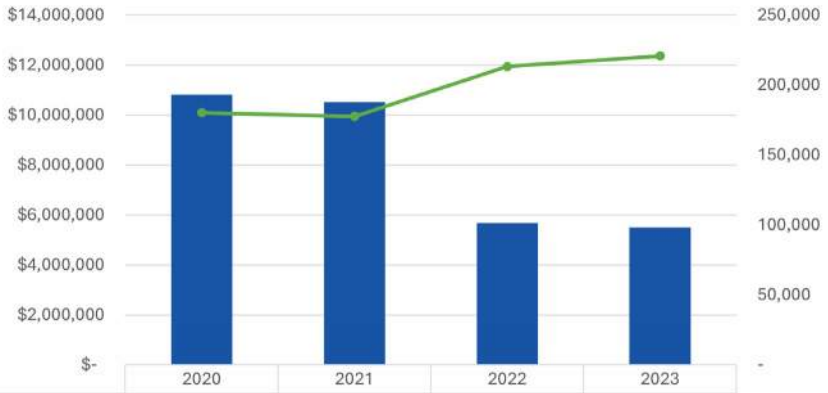
Service efficiency and effectiveness are measured by comparing operating expenses to both hours of service and the number of passenger trips provided. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted these metrics nationwide as operating expenses were on the rise and ridership remained lower than pre-pandemic levels for most transit agencies. To determine MATBUS's service efficiency and effectiveness metrics, 2020-2023 data provided by MATBUS and data from the NTD were reviewed for fixed route and demand-response services in both Fargo and Moorhead. This review found that fixed route operations have become more streamlined and efficient since 2021, nearly doubling the number of passengers per revenue hour when comparing 2023 to 2020. At the same time, total revenue hours have dropped by 49 percent. This indicates that service reductions in 2022 had little to no impact on overall ridership on MATBUS fixed route services.

Figure 19. Fixed Route Passengers per Revenue Hour (2020-2023)



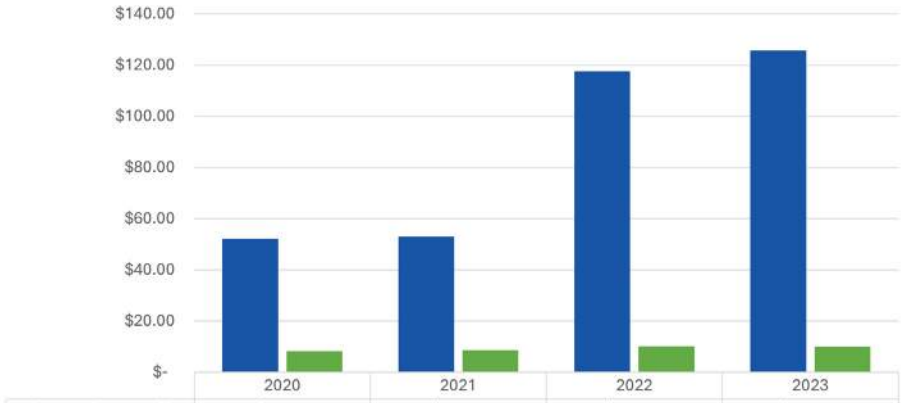
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue Hours	193,149	187,825	101,591	98,384
Passengers per Revenue Hour	6.34	6.12	11.61	12.55

Figure 18. Fixed Route Annual Operating Expenses vs. Revenue Hours (2020-2023)



	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue Hours	193,149	187,825	101,591	98,384
Operating Expenses	$10,092,707	$9,947,128	$11,941,314	$12,367,440

Figure 20. Fixed Route Cost Per Revenue Hour & Per Passenger (2020-2023)



	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cost per Revenue Hour	$52.25	$52.96	$117.54	$125.71
Cost Per Passenger	$8.24	$8.65	$10.12	$10.02

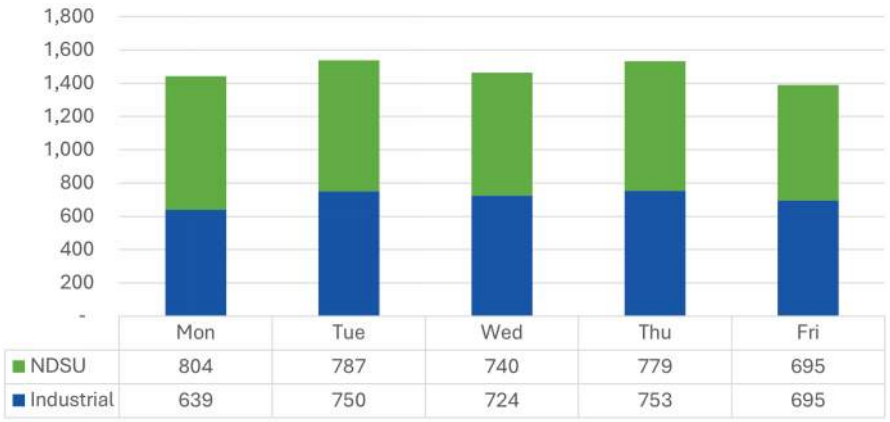
MATBUS On-Demand

Ridership

Ridership data was observed on MATBUS On-Demand from March 6, 2023 through October 31, 2024. Trends are largely driven by the NDSU service zone, which makes up nearly 60% of overall ridership. When school is in session, monthly ridership averages over 560 rides. In the summer months, when NDSU service is not operating, ridership ranges between 250-300 rides.

Figure 21. MATBUS On-Demand Rides per Month

Figure 22. MATBUS On-Demand Rides by Day of Week



Service Reliability

On average, MATBUS On-Demand experienced 65 trip cancellations per month. 13% of these cancellations occurred in the Industrial zone while the remaining 87% occurred in the NDSU zone. Of the 1,319 trip cancellations during the review period, 239 (18%) were identified as no-show, meaning the rider did not show up for their trip.

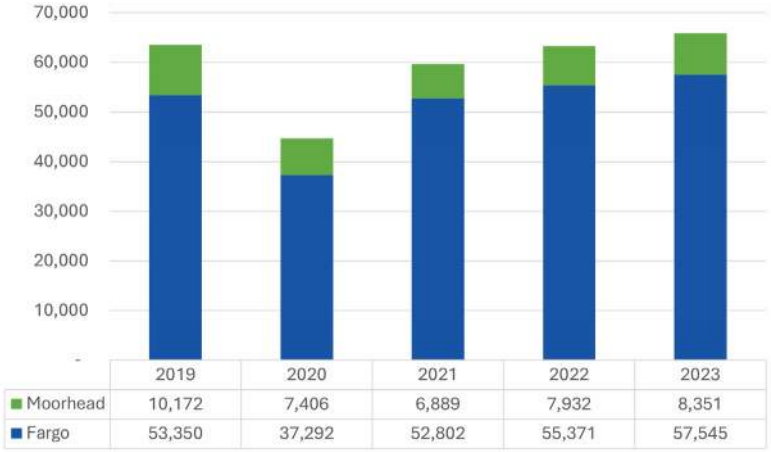
Figure 23. MATBUS On-Demand Cancellations & No Shows by Service Area

MAT Paratransit

Ridership

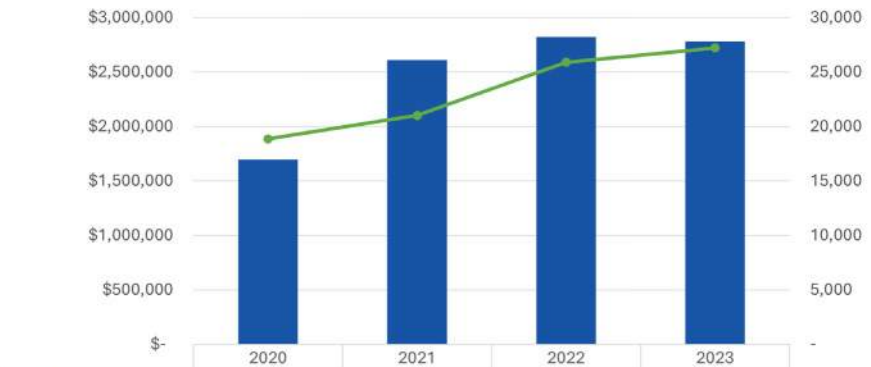
Contrary to fixed route ridership, MAT Paratransit experienced a quick recovery following the onset of the pandemic. Averaging a 15 percent growth rate since 2020, ridership in 2023 surpassed 2019 (pre-pandemic) levels with 65,896 rides. Moorhead ridership accounts for 13 percent while Fargo accounts for the remaining 87 percent of MAT Paratransit ridership.

Figure 24. MAT Paratransit Annual Ridership (2019 - 2023)



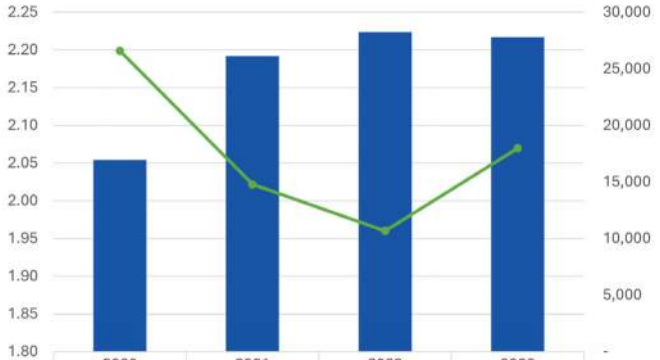
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Moorhead	10,172	7,406	6,889	7,932	8,351
Fargo	53,350	37,292	52,802	55,371	57,545

Figure 25. Paratransit Annual Operating Expenses vs. Revenue Hours (2020-2023)



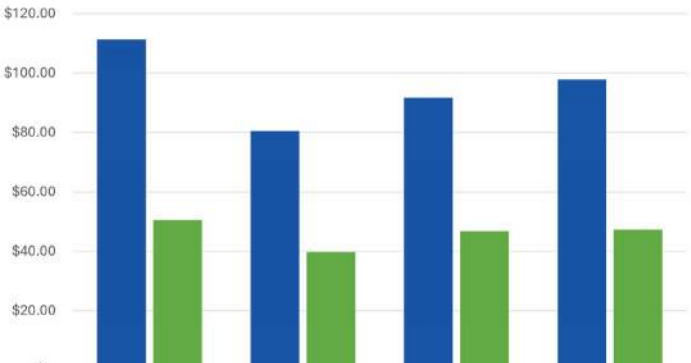
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue Hours	16,960	26,117	28,248	27,805
Operating Expenses	$1,887,024	$2,101,230	$2,589,222	$2,721,335

Figure 26. Paratransit Passengers per Revenue Hour (2020-2023)



	2020	2021	2022	2023
Revenue Hours	16,960	26,117	28,248	27,805
Passengers per Revenue Hour	2.20	2.02	1.96	2.07

Figure 27. Paratransit Cost per Revenue Hour & per Passenger (2020-2023)



	2020	2021	2022	2023
Cost per Revenue Hour	$111.26	$80.45	$91.66	$97.87
Cost Per Passenger	$50.60	$39.79	$46.76	$47.29

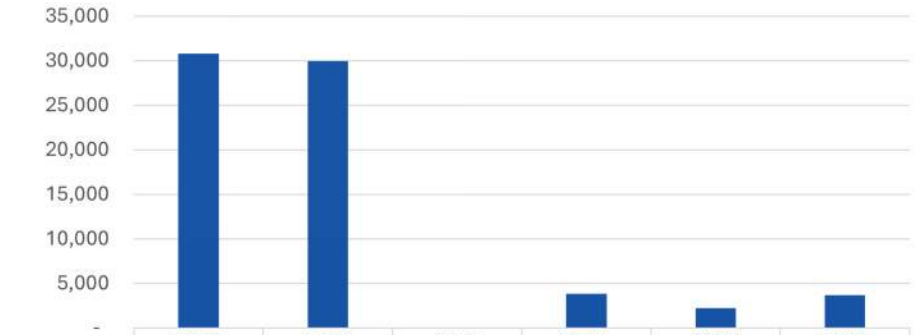
LinkFM

LinkFM provided service to seven events in 2024. These included:

- Frostival Frozen Fortress at Viking Ship Park (January 27, 2024)
- Celtic Festival at Hjemkomst Center (March 16, 2024)
- Scandinavian Festival at Hjemkomst Center (June 21-22, 2024)
- Downtown Fargo Street Fair (July 18-20, 2024)
- Trollwood Mainstage Musical at Bluestem Center for the Arts (July 16-20, 23-27, 2024)
- Pride in the Park at Bluestem Center for the Arts (August 10, 2024)
- Pangea: Cultivate our Cultures at Hjemkomst Center (November 16, 2024)

LinkFM ridership trends show a decrease since 2018, however this is due to the service only being provided to designated events, a change that occurred in 2021 following a service suspension in 2020. While overall ridership is lower in recent years, LinkFM continued to provide vital service for popular community events. MATBUS and the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead agreed to eliminate LinkFM services in May 2025.

Figure 28. LinkFM Annual Ridership (2018-2023)



	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Annual Rides	30,790	29,959	-	3,866	2,241	3,697

Existing Fleet

The Cities of Fargo and Moorhead currently own the entirety of their vehicle fleet for both fixed-route service and demand response services. Under the proposed reorganization framework, each city would continue to own all of its fixed-route vehicle fleet, but the cities would evaluate lease options (Moorhead to Fargo) for the paratransit vehicle fleet. For fixed routes, Fargo owns 31 vehicles and Moorhead owns 12. In addition, 18 vehicles are dedicated to paratransit service, 4 to Senior Ride, and 2 to microtransit, bringing the total fleet count to 67 vehicles

Figure 29. Fleet Count by Service

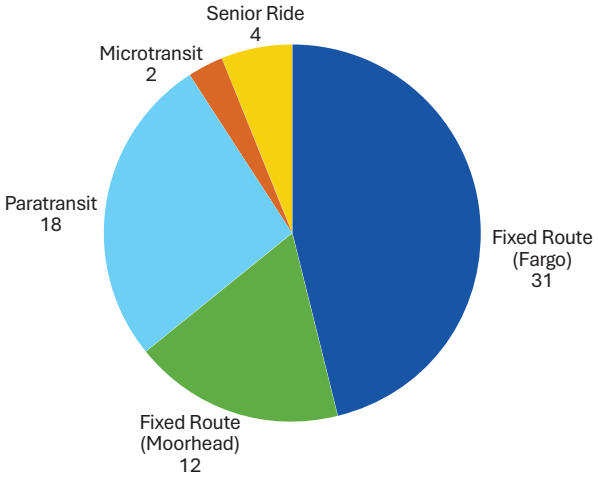
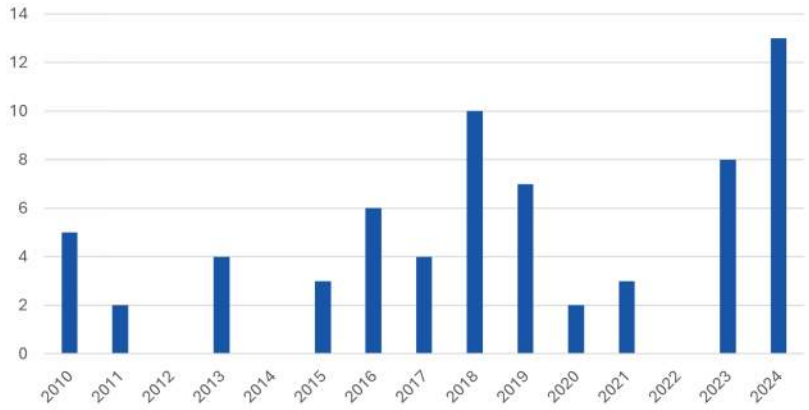


Figure 30. Fleet Count by Model Year



Designated Stops

A review of existing policies and stop data using Remix and Transify was conducted as part of the designated stop analysis. This analysis evaluated existing stop characteristics to establish baseline measures for designated stops.

Policy Review

MATBUS currently has a designated bus stops policy in effect, outlining where passengers can board or deboard a bus, the process for temporary route changes and detours, criteria for bus stop locations, and procedures for customers to request a designated bus stop.

Current policy goals include:

1. Improve reliability and on-time performance
2. Heighten visibility of transit routes
3. Improve visibility and clarification of bus stop locations
4. Reduce incidents of missed passengers
5. Improve customer satisfaction by identifying all bus stop locations

To determine locations for designated bus stops, nine criteria are identified in the policy:

1. Bus stops will be placed at least two blocks apart unless there is demonstrated high demand requiring additional stops.
2. Traffic flow and existing traffic signal and sign placement will be considered in placement of the stop.
3. The bus stop location must be safe for passengers to board and deboard and not create a hazard for other traffic.
4. The bus stop cannot be in a right-hand turning lane, unless the bus route turns right at that location.
5. It is preferred that the bus stop be located at or near concrete at an accessible corner or driveway.
6. If the bus stop is on the far side of the intersection, it is preferred that the stop allow the bus to completely clear the intersection and allow passengers to board and deboard on concrete.
7. Mid-block stops will be considered on long blocks (a double block or more) and loops. The stop should be the point where a corner would normally exist and includes “T” intersections.
8. If the stop request is based on a passenger’s disability, MATBUS staff will review the request to determine the best option, including the possibility of alternative transportation.
9. MATBUS staff will review bus stop boarding data yearly and will make determinations based on ridership to add or remove bus stops.

In addition, MATBUS has a Reasonable Accommodation policy that grants accommodations to meet short term needs of passengers. Examples of reasonable accommodations include dropping passengers off at the nearest paved sidewalk or driveway prior to or after a signed bus stop and making an announcement for a passenger stop that is not a regularly announced location.

Designated Stop Analysis

Stop Amenities

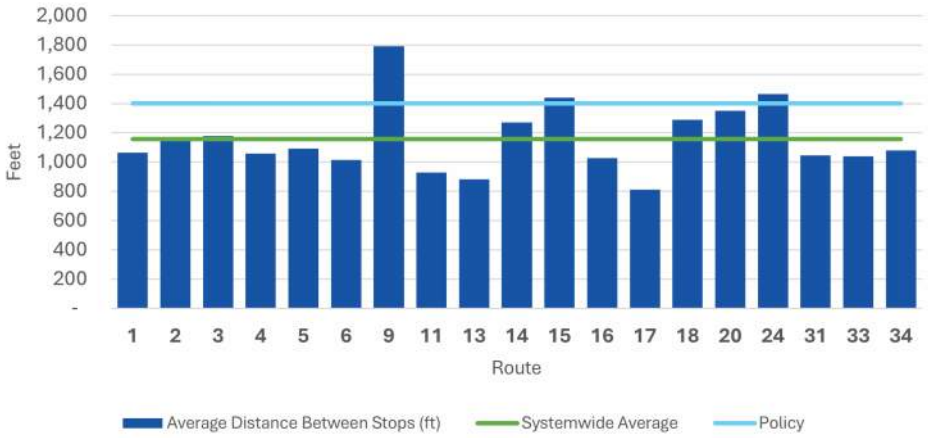
All MATBUS stops include a sign to identify the location where the bus will pick up or drop off passengers. Existing signs include the MATBUS logo, text identifying the bus stop, and MATBUS contact information. Bus stop signs on NDSU’s campus are branded with NDSU colors. Figure 31 displays current bus stop signs

Figure 31. MATBUS Stop Signs

Stop Distances

MATBUS's current policy states that bus stops will be placed at least two blocks apart unless there is a demonstrated high demand requiring additional stops. While block lengths vary throughout the Fargo-Moorhead region, this analysis assumed an average block length in the region of 700 feet (1,400 feet for two blocks) to assess at a route level, how many stops are compliant with the policy. Using stop-to-stop distances from Remix, this analysis found the average distance between stops systemwide is 1,158 feet, or just over 1.5 blocks. Figure 32 displays average distance between stops by route, in comparison to the system average and policy threshold. On average, just three routes sit above the policy threshold when looking at average distances at the route level.

Figure 32. Average Distance Between Stops by Route



There are currently **685 bus stops** throughout the Fargo-Moorhead region.

Bus shelter near Hornbacher's (Moorhead)

Bus stop near Rustad Recreation Center (West Fargo)

Bus stop at 32nd Avenue S & 39th Street S (Fargo)

Figure 33. Stop-to-Stop Distances by Route

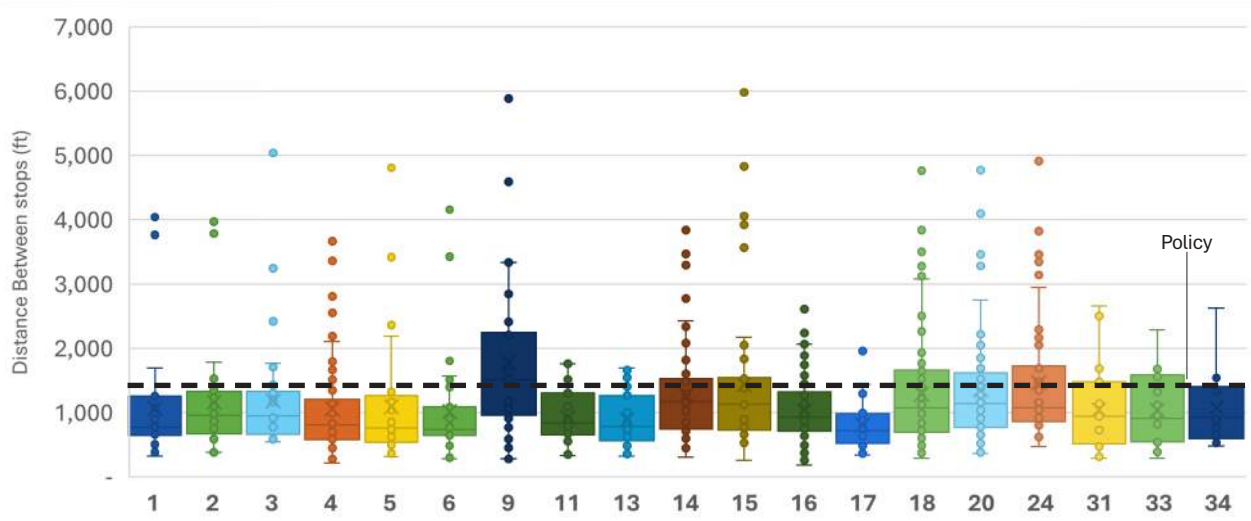
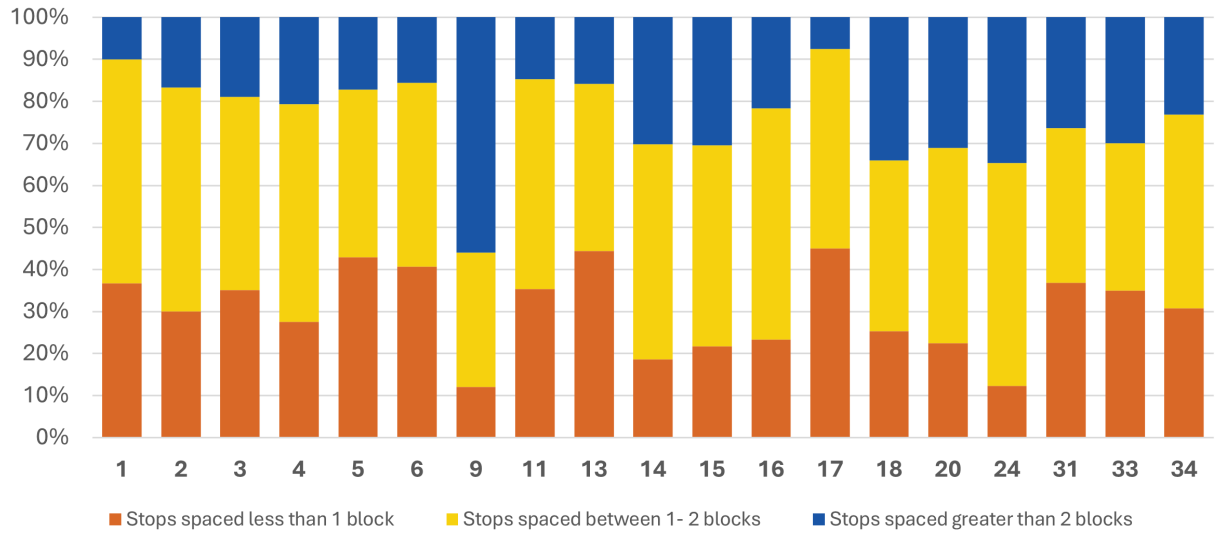
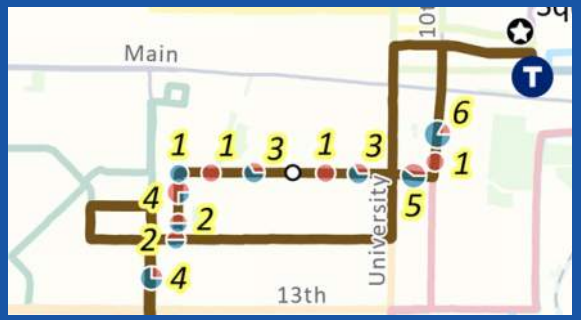


Figure 34. Stop Distance Compliancy by Route



To better understand the fluctuation that exists along each route, individual stop-to-stop distances were reviewed to determine how much of a route may or may not be in compliance with the stop distance criteria. Figure 33 plots out stop distances between every stop, identifying both outliers and mean values for each route. Figure 34 applies the stop distance criteria and breaks down the percentage of stop-to-stop segments that are less than one block, between one and two blocks, or greater than two blocks. In general, the majority of stops in the MATBUS system are less than two blocks apart, with only 25% being located more than two blocks apart.

Route 18 Stop Spacing vs. Ridership Example



The image above highlights an area of Route 18 along 5th Avenue South that has an opportunity to consolidate stops. Overall ridership is lower at many of the stops on 5th Avenue South, however it's common for stop spacing to be one block apart. By reducing the number of stops to be compliant with the two-block minimum, travel times would improve while having a minimal impact to existing riders.

Stop Locations

The placement of stops on MATBUS's system includes a mix of near-side, far-side, and mid-block locations. While far-side stops are generally preferred in the transit industry, there are advantages and disadvantages to each stop type. Figure 35 compares advantages and disadvantages of each stop location type.

Figure 35. Comparative Analysis of Bus Stop Locations

Stop Type	Advantages	Disadvantages
Near-Side	• Minimizes interference when traffic is heavy on the far side of the intersection • Passengers access buses closest to crosswalk • Intersection available to assist in pulling away from curb • No double stopping • Buses can service passengers while stopped at a red light • Provides driver with opportunity to look for oncoming traffic including other buses with potential passengers	• Conflicts with right turning vehicles are increased • Stopped buses may obscure curbside traffic control devices and crossing pedestrians • Sight distance is obscured for crossing vehicles stopped to the right of the bus. • The through lane may be blocked during peak periods by queuing buses • Increases sight distance problems for crossing pedestrians
Far-Side	• Minimizes conflicts between right turning vehicles and buses • Provides additional right turn capacity by making curb lane available for traffic • Minimizes sight distance problems on approaches to intersection • Encourages pedestrians to cross behind the bus • Requires shorter deceleration distances for buses • Gaps in traffic flow are created for buses re-entering the flow of traffic at signalized intersections	• Intersections may be blocked during peak periods by queuing buses • Sight distance may be obscured for crossing vehicles • Increases sight distance problems for crossing pedestrians • Stopping far side after stopping for a red light interferes with bus operations and all traffic in general • May increase number of rear-end accidents since drivers do not expect buses to stop again after stopping at a red light
Mid-Block	• Minimizes sight distance problems for vehicles and pedestrians • Passenger waiting areas experience less pedestrian congestion	• Requires additional distance for no-parking restrictions • Encourages patrons to cross street at mid block (jaywalking) • Increases walking distance for patrons crossing at intersections

Source: T Table A-4, Appendix A, TCRP, original source: K. Fitzpatrick et al., Guidelines for Planning, Designing, and Operating Bus-Related Street Improvements. FHWA/TX-90/1225-2F, Texas Transportation Institute, College Station, TX. August 1990.

Designated Stop Recommendations

MATBUS's Designated Stop Policy provides the foundation for providing accommodations for all riders while balancing the need for operational efficiencies. In an effort to advance the policy and ensure the MATBUS system adheres to the nine identified criteria, it is recommended that MATBUS staff complete an annual review of bus stops to update ridership data, identify opportunities for stop consolidation, assess ADA compliance, and review customer requests on a route level basis. This annual review process allows for opportunities to connect with riders on each route, understand their needs, and implement quick, low-cost improvements that have an impactful difference in the customer experience.

CASE STUDY

BETTER BUS STOPS

Metro Transit in Minneapolis/St. Paul has established the **Better Bus Stops** and **Better Bus Route** programs to identify low-cost improvements aimed at improving the customer's everyday use of the transit system.

The Better Bus Stop program includes a publicly available map of planned bus stop improvements, focusing on items such as transit information, concrete boarding pads, local agency coordination for pedestrian improvements, and shelter needs.

The Better Bus Route program aims to improve speed and reliability through bus stop consolidation, improve access to the stops with ADA improvements, improve the waiting experience for customers, and make service easier for everyday customers to understand through route and schedule simplification.

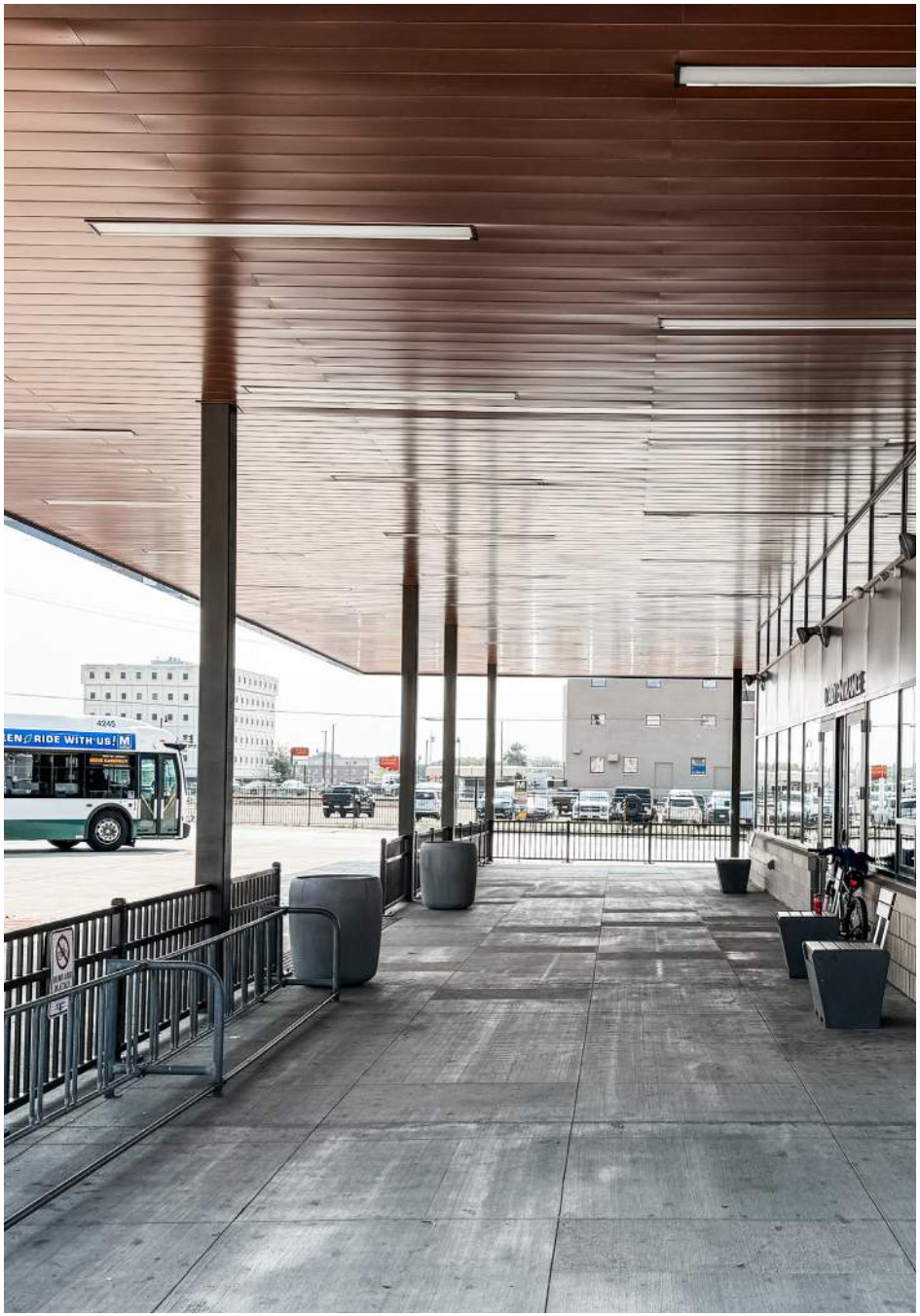
Fore more information, visit:
www.metrotransit.org/better-bus-stops
www.metrotransit.org/speed-reliability

Transit Hub & Transfer Review

MATBUS provides fixed route service to nearly 700 stops. More than 100 of these stops serve more than one fixed-route and nearly 300 stops provide some sort of shelter. Major transit hubs and facilities are described in Figure 36.

Figure 36. Major Transit Hubs and Facilities

Facility	Description
Ground Transportation Center (GTC)	Serving as the core of MATBUS operations, the GTC is the main transfer hub between Moorhead and Fargo routes and is in downtown Fargo
Metro Transit Garage (MTG)	Fixed Route and Paratransit buses are stored, maintained, and cleaned daily at the MTG, just southwest of NDSU.
West Acres Shopping Center Transit Hub	Located at the Roger Maris Museum entrance, this stop features indoor and outdoor seating, system maps, and an emergency phone.
NDSU Transit Hub	This hub is located by the A. Glenn Hill Center at NDSU in Fargo. It is heated/cooled, with seating, lighting, system maps, and digital arrivals screens.
Marriott Transit Hub	Located off I-94 in Moorhead, south of Concordia College, this stop features several amenities including lighting and a large shelter with indoor and outdoor seating.
Dilworth Walmart Transit Hub	This hub links Moorhead and Dilworth routes and is located on the west side of the Dilworth Walmart. It features a shelter and seating. MATBUS continues its efforts to coordinate with Walmart on the installation of a more permanent facility at the existing shelter site.



In 2018, MATBUS completed a Transit Facility Study to address several facility-related issues facing the system. These include overcrowding at the MTG, expansion of the West Acres Transit Hub, renovation of the GTC and accommodation to take over some functions currently housed at the MTG, as well as an evaluation of general stop level and minor hub needs. The evaluation of stop level and minor hub needs to use a four-level, tiered approach to prioritizing investment based on ridership and the scope of a potential investment.

Transfer Analysis

Figure 37 maps out arrival and departure times by route at each of the five transit hubs. This analysis highlights areas where transfer opportunities are most convenient. In general, MATBUS routes operate a pulse schedule where most, if not all, routes at a transit hub depart at the same time. This is especially true at the GTC, Marriott, and Dilworth Walmart hubs.

75%

of surveyed riders regularly use transfers to reach their final destination

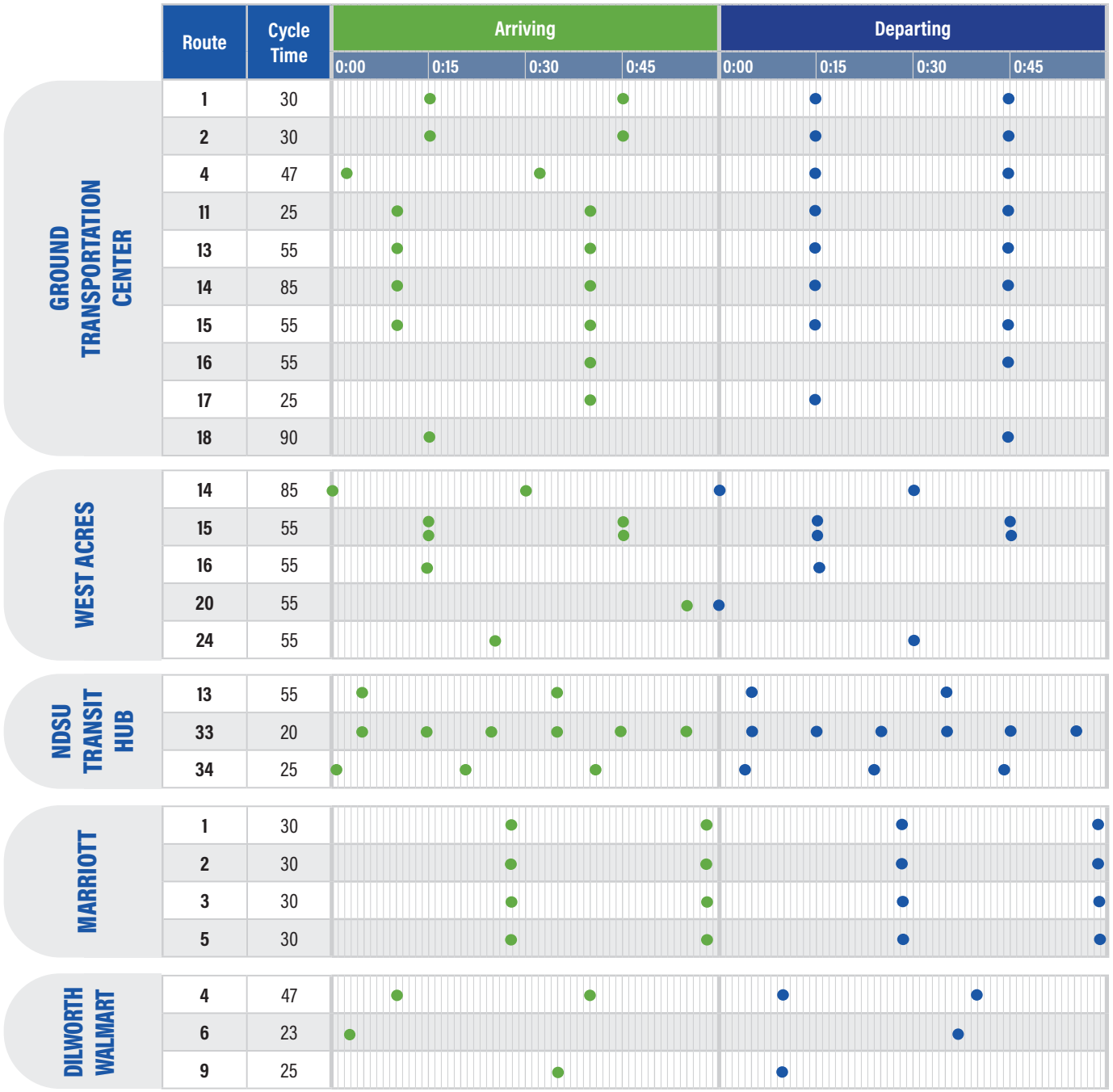


Figure 37. Transfer Analysis

Fare Structure

Policy & Fare Media

MATBUS offers a range of fare options and services designed to accommodate various rider needs. Fare products include single rides, passes, and discounted rates, with multipliers used to compare value across different fare types—lower multipliers generally indicate better value. Reduced fares are available for seniors (60+), people with disabilities, Medicare card holders, and K–12 students, with eligible riders required to show ID. Free transfers are available within 90 minutes of boarding, automatically applied via the Connect smartcard or app, while cash users must request a transfer ticket. Fare capping applies to smartcard and app users, limiting daily and monthly charges to $3 and $42, respectively.

In addition to fixed-route services, MATBUS provides door-to-door options: Paratransit for eligible individuals with disabilities and Metro Senior Ride for seniors, both at $3 per ride. On Sundays, when fixed routes are inactive, these services are available to the general public for $25. Certain groups ride free on fixed routes, including preschool-aged children, service-connected veterans, personal care attendants, and college students with valid student IDs.

MATBUS will be seeking local approval to implement a fare increase in 2025.

MATBUS Connect launched in 2022, allowing riders to set up their own payment accounts with stored values and the ability to cap fares.

A more detailed fare structure analysis can be viewed in Appendix A

Figure 38. Fare Structure

MATBUS Fare Product	Fare	Equivalent Number of Single Rides
Fixed Route		
Single Ride Full Fare	$1.50	-
Single Ride Discounted Fare*	$0.75	0.5x
1-Day Pass (Cash)	$5.00	3.3x
120-Day College Semester Pass**	$60.00	40.0x
31-Day Business Pass***	$27.00	18.0x
Package of 20 Single-Ride Tickets	$30.00	20.0x
Paratransit		
Single Ride for ADA paratransit-eligible riders	$3.00 (cash or prepaid coupon)	2x
General public on Sundays	$25.00	13.3x
Non-emergency medical rides****	$38.00	12.7x
Metro Senior Ride		
Single Ride	$3.00	2x

Older adults (60+), people with disabilities, Medicare holders, youth (K-12th grade)
*** Available for students, faculty and staff that are not included in the U-Pass Program*
****Available for purchase by employers only*
*****Available only for residents of skilled nursing and ICF-IID facilities*

Figure 39. Fare Media

Fare Media	Description
Cash Fares	Passengers can pay with bills or coins, and change is given via coupons that are only usable for MATBUS transit. Cash can be used to purchase single rides, day tickets, and 20-ride coupon books.
MATBUS Connect Card	The Connect card is a contactless reloadable card that is available for free. Cards can be ordered online and shipped or purchased at the Ground Transit Center (GTC). Passengers can load funds online or at the GTC using cash, checks, cards, gift certificates, or vouchers. Fares are capped each day and per month; therefore, day tickets and monthly passes are not available through Connect.
MATBUS Connect App	The Connect app allows passengers to activate tickets for use 5 minutes before scanning mobile ticket. Passengers can load funds online or at the GTC. Free transfers are available within 90 minutes of boarding.
U-Pass	College students can ride fare-free with a valid student ID from North Dakota State University (NDSU), Minnesota State University Moorhead (MSUM), Concordia College, Minnesota State Community and Technical College Moorhead (M State), or North Dakota State College of Science Fargo (NDSCS).

Fixed Route Rides by Customer and Fare Type

MATBUS Connect was rolled out in 2022 and allows users to pay for rides through a smartcard or smartphone. In 2023, roughly one-third of passengers used MATBUS Connect, with 29% paying with the Connect app and 6% paying with Connect smartcards. 35% of rides are paid for with cash or are fare-free.

Almost 30% of rides are U-Pass rides, which allows students at North Dakota State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, Concordia College and Minnesota State Moorhead to ride the bus for free with a valid student ID.

Over 40% of all fixed route rides are taken by adults, and an additional 30% are taken by college students, which is likely due to the U-Pass program (Figure 41). Almost a fifth of MATBUS riders are disabled, and another 8% are elderly.

Figure 40. Fixed Route Rides by Fare Type (2023)

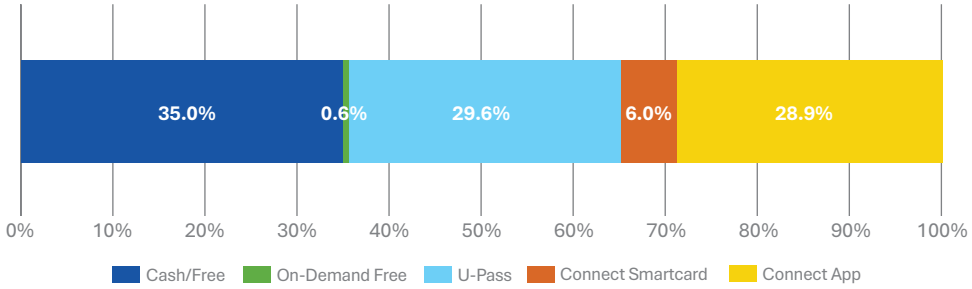
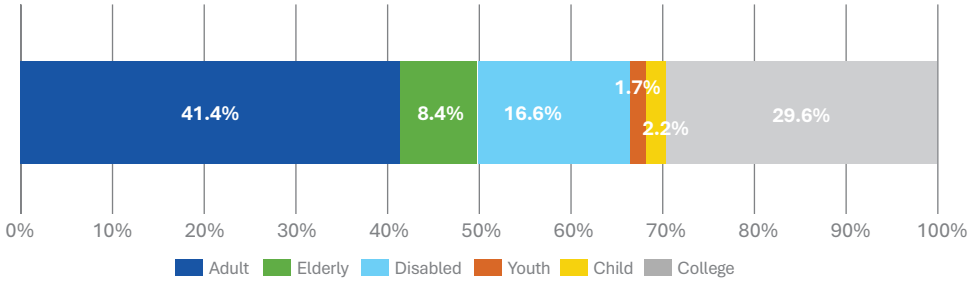


Figure 41. Fixed Route Rides by Customer



Fare Performance

Operating costs on MATBUS have increased while fare revenue has decreased. It is important to note that this is not unique to MATBUS. Many transit providers across the country have experienced similar trends over the past 5-10 years as expenses have risen at the same time ridership has fluctuated significantly – primarily because of the COVID pandemic.

MATBUS's fare performance sharply declined at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and has not yet recovered to pre-COVID levels as of 2023. Fixed route fare revenue decreased by almost three-quarters from 2019 to 2020, and while revenue saw strong growth in 2021, fare revenue numbers have not recovered to pre-COVID levels (Figure 42). At the same time, fixed route operating expenditures have increased and in 2023 were 150% of pre-COVID levels (Figure 43).

Figure 42. Fixed Route Fare Revenue

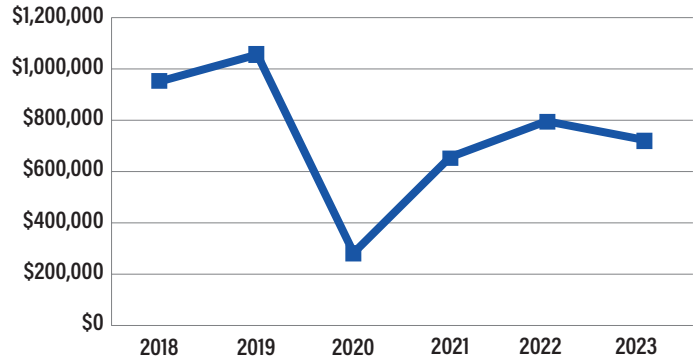
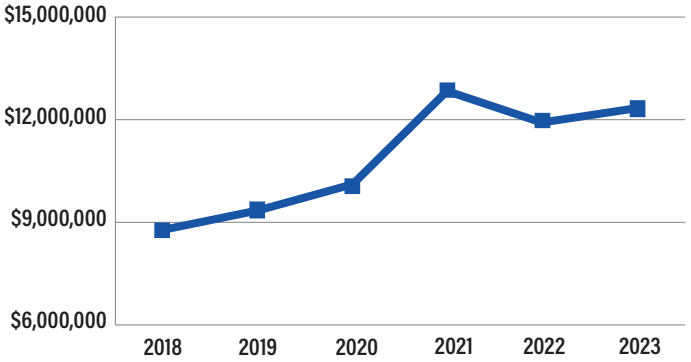


Figure 43. Fixed Route Operating Expenditures



Farebox recovery is the proportion of fare revenue collected as a percentage of operating costs. Farebox recovery dropped dramatically in 2020, falling from 11.5% to 2.8% (Figure 44). Farebox recovery has increased since its low point in 2020 but appears to have plateaued since 2022 (around 6%).

The average fare and cost per boarding (Figure 45 and Figure 46) illuminates the impact that ridership has on fares. The average fare per boarding dropped in 2020 but quickly rebounded and has surpassed pre-pandemic levels. In 2022, the increase in the 120-day student passes, monthly business passes, and non-emergency medical transit rides, as well as the increase in the monthly cap on fares, is reflected in the increase in fare per boarding between 2021 and 2022. The increase in fare per boarding between 2020 and 2021 could also be attributed to a change in travel patterns brought on by the pandemic – for example, passengers traveling only a few days per week might pay full price per ride without ever hitting the fare caps instituted in 2022.

The average cost per boarding more than doubled between 2018 and 2021 but has since leveled off at just under $12 per boarding.

Figure 44. Systemwide Farebox Recovery

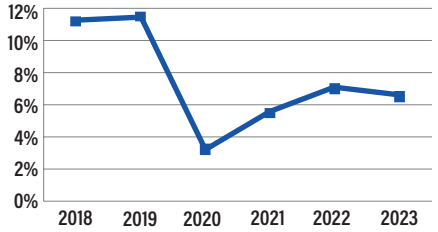


Figure 45. Average Fare per Boarding

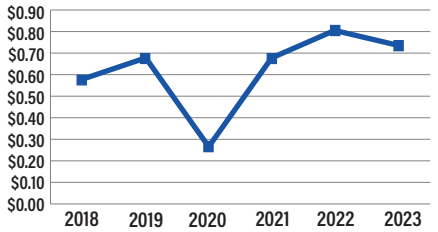
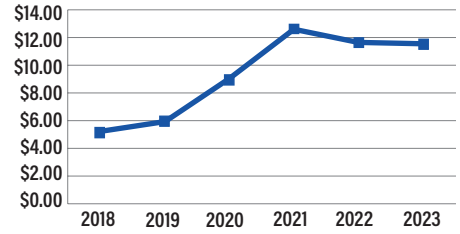


Figure 46. Average Cost per Boarding



Peer Comparisons

Figure 47 shows fare prices and multipliers for transit agencies located in other comparable regions: Bisman (Bismarck, ND), Cities Area Transit (Grand Forks, ND), Duluth Transit Authority (Duluth, MN), Metro Bus (St. Cloud, MN), and StarTran (Lincoln, ND). These regions were chosen because they have similar regional populations and either have a large university presence, are located in North Dakota, or both. MATBUS's single ride fare of $1.50 matches three of the peer agencies' fares, though Metro Bus in St. Cloud is expected to raise their base fare to $1.50 in 2025. Out of the peer agencies studied, only MATBUS provides fare capping. MATBUS's daily fare cap roughly aligns with the average day pass multiplier of the peer agencies, and the monthly fare cap is just above the average monthly pass multiplier. Unlike some peer agencies, MATBUS does not limit discounted rates to off-peak hours.

Figure 47. Peer Agency Fare Comparison

Agency	Full Fare	Reduced Fare	Day Pass	Weekly Pass	Monthly Pass	Other Passes	Paratransit (Dial-a-Ride)	Fare Capping?
MATBUS	$1.50	$0.75	$5.00 (3.3x)	N/A	$27.00 (employer provided, 18x)	$60 (120-day college semester pass, 40x)	$3.00 (2x)	Yes $3 daily (2x) $42 monthly (28x)
Bis-Man Transit (Bismarck, ND)	$1.50	$0.75	$6.00 (4x)	N/A	$36.00 (24x)	$24 (reduced rate monthly pass, 1.6x)	$3.00 (2x)	No
Cities Area Transit (Grand Forks, ND)[1]	$1.50	$0.60	$5.00 (3.3x)	N/A	$35.00 (23.3x)	$18 (14-day pass) $18 (summer youth pass) $13 (10-ride pass)	$3.00 (2x)	No
Duluth Transit Authority (Duluth, MN)	$1.50 (peak)	$0.75 (reduced and off-peak)	$3.00 (2x)	$15.00 (10x)	$40.00 (26.7x)	$55 (summer youth pass, 36.7x)	$3.00 (peak, 2x) $1.50 (off-peak, 2x)	No
Metro Bus (St. Cloud, MN)	$1.25[1]	$0.60 (off-peak only)[2]	$4.25 (3.4x)	$17.00 (13.6x)	$47.00 (37.6x)	$10.50 (10-ride pass)	$2.50 (2x)	No
StarTran (Lincoln, NE)	$1.25	$0.60 (seniors only)	$2.50 (2x)	N/A	$17.00 (13.6x)	$23 (20-ride pass, 18.4x) $8 (low-income monthly pass, 6.4x) $11 (senior saver 20-ride pass)	$2.50 (2x)	No

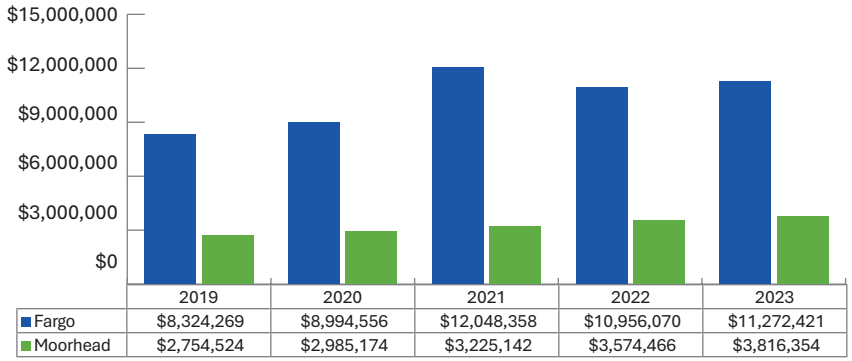
[1] Following the completion of the peer agency comparison, Cities Area Transit increased their fares in January 2025.

Financial Outlook

Historic Financials

Operating expenses for the Cities of Fargo and Moorhead were obtained for the years 2019 to 2023. Annual operating costs are shown in Figure 48. In 2023, operating expenses for both Fargo and Moorhead totaled $15,088,775, an increase of 36 percent from 2019. Figure 49 and Figure 50 display revenue sources used for operating expenses in 2023, as reported to NTD.

Figure 48. Annual Operating Expenses

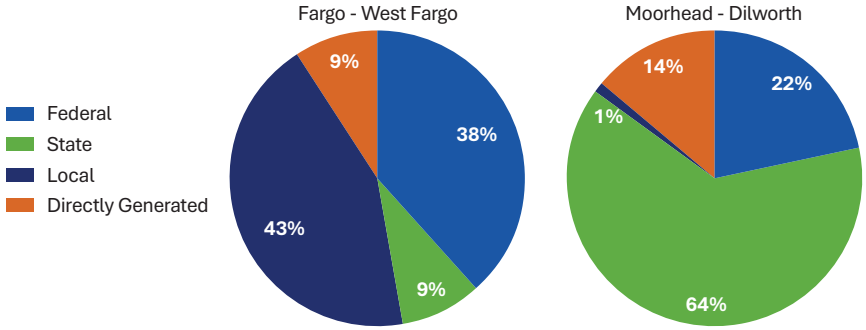


	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fargo	$8,324,269	$8,994,556	$12,048,358	$10,956,070	$11,272,421
Moorhead	$2,754,524	$2,985,174	$3,225,142	$3,574,466	$3,816,354

Figure 49. 2023 Operating Budget Summary

	Fargo - West Fargo North Dakota	Moorhead - Dilworth Minnesota
Operating Revenues		
Federal	$4,300,337	$906,042
State	$1,047,771	$2,644,499
Local	$4,856,756	$25,904
Directly Generated	$1,067,556	$572,003
Farebox Revenue	$595,179	$365,658
Total Operating Revenue	**$11,272,420**	**$4,148,448**
Operating Expenditures		
Fixed Routes	$8,912,572	$3,454,868
Demand Response	$2,359,849	$361,486
Total Operating Expenses	**$11,272,421**	**$3,816,354**

Figure 50. 2023 Sources of Operating Funds



Future Financial Structure

The Transit Reorganization Study, approved in June 2024, reviewed changes to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding allocations following the Fargo-Moorhead region's transition to a Transportation Management Area (TMA). In an effort to streamline the number of FTA grantees, the City of Fargo has been identified as the Designated Recipient for all FTA programs starting in Federal Fiscal Year (FY) 24.

Following the approval of the Transit Reorganization Study, an interim joint powers agreement (JPA) was developed to oversee the implementation of an organizational structure and operational practices, including how federal funding flows from the FTA to the City of Fargo. The interim JPA was approved by the Cities of Moorhead and Fargo in September of 2024. The City of Fargo will receive all federal funding apportioned to the UZA and distribute portions of the federal funds to local agencies. The amount Moorhead will receive is equal to the amount published in FTA's annual federal apportionments. West Fargo and NDSU receive a portion of the funds allocated to Fargo through Fargo's cost allocation formula. These portions are based on population, population density, bus revenue miles, and "bus incentive" (see formula below).

BUS INCENTIVE FORMULA

Bus Passenger Miles X (Bus Passenger Miles / Operating Expenses)

Phase One Engagement

This engagement phase included multiple methods of input opportunities and tactics that included an open house, digital engagement tools, a meeting with the Study Review Committee (SRC), and pop-up with MATBUS operators. A detailed engagement summary is provided in Appendix C.

Study Review Committee

On September 9th, 2024, a meeting was held with the SRC to gain a better understanding of their perception of the transit system and utilize maps to gather comments on issues and locations for engaging the community. This collaborative effort provided valuable insights into the current perception and highlighted areas that required attention. SRC members were able to pinpoint issues and suggest locations that needed improved transit services.

Public Open House

On October 9th, 2024, an open house was held at the Ground Transportation Center (GTC) to engage with the community and gather feedback on how riders are currently using the system. Interactive poster boards were provided asking questions about current travel patterns and priorities for the future. A large map was also available for attendees to mark specific areas of concern or opportunity.

Rider Survey

A survey was developed and adapted to multiple formats to collect responses from the public. The first format being at the open house through the use of display boards and printed paper versions of the full survey. The other two opportunities to gather responses were via paper surveys made available to riders on buses and at the GTC and an online survey posted to the project website. Collectively, 179 survey participants' responses were collected. This combined the eight filled out at the open house, 136 completed from paper surveys on buses, and 35 online responses.

The survey results highlight a strong base of regular riders who value accessibility, reliability, and convenience. Riders primarily use MATBUS for work, errands, and medical appointments, making it a vital service for daily life. The most significant areas for improvement for current ridership includes enhancing service frequency and expanding operations to Sundays. Survey results are displayed on the following page.

Interactive Comment Map

Feedback was collected using INPUTiD™, an interactive web mapping platform that allowed participants to provide location-specific insights on MATBUS services. Participants were able to select from four response categories, including Idea/Opportunities, Needing Improvement, New Stop, or Frequency. Common themes in the feedback collected included improved connectivity to key destinations, restoration of past services, enhanced safety and amenities, and optimized routes.

Phase 1 Open House at the GTC

Current Travel Patterns

Figure 51. How often do you use MATBUS?

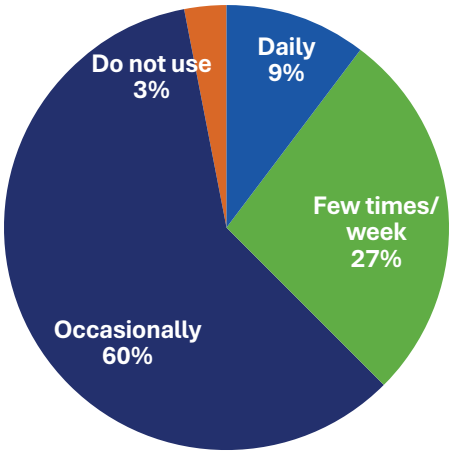


Figure 52. How long have you been riding MATBUS?

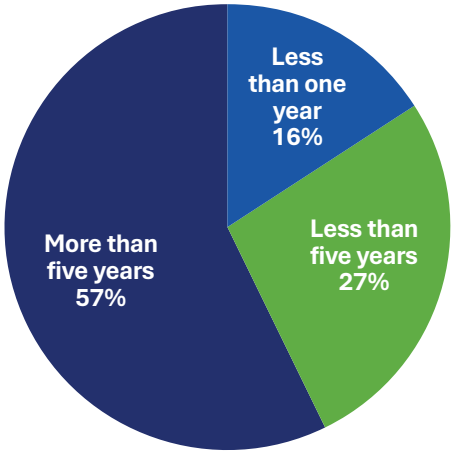


Figure 53. Do you transfer to complete your trip?

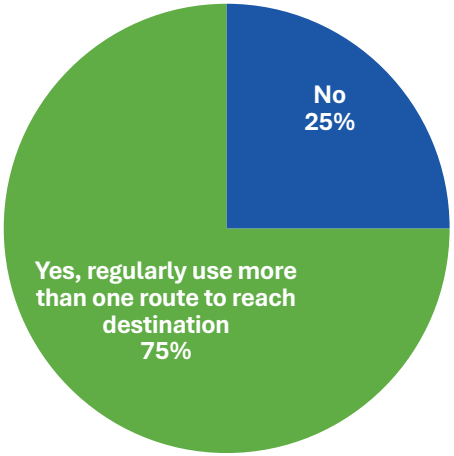


Figure 54. How do you primarily get information about MATBUS?

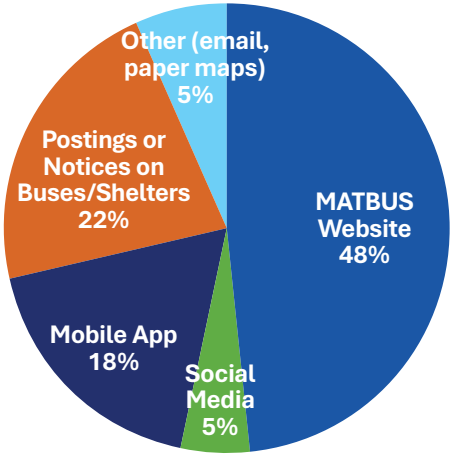
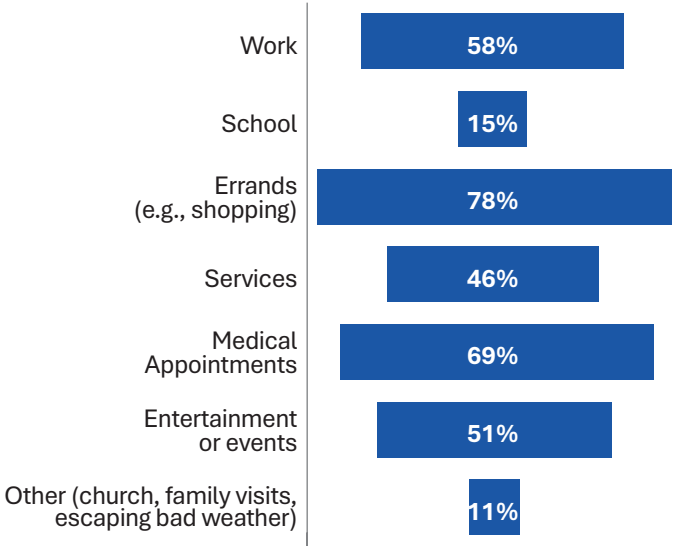


Figure 55. Trip Purpose



Future Improvement Priorities

Figure 56. Service Access Priorities

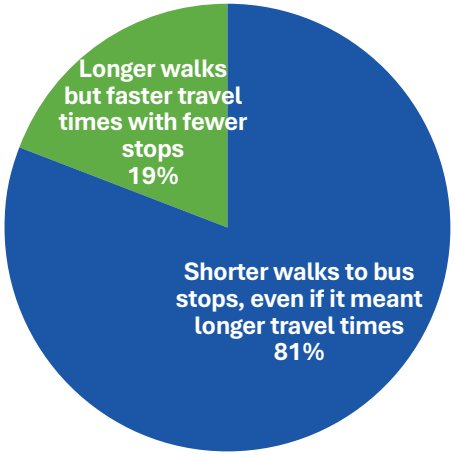
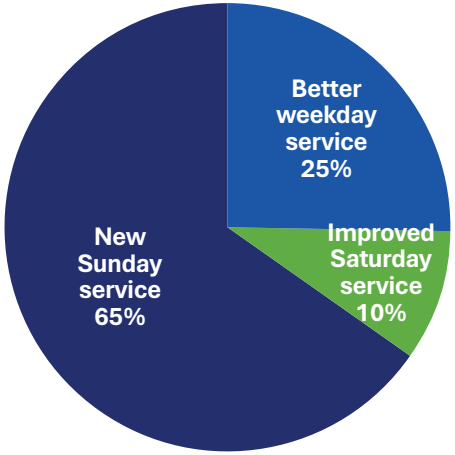


Figure 57. Service Expansion Priorities



Service Scenarios

In late 2024 and early 2025, the project team developed two service scenarios, each representing different changes that could be made to the MATBUS fixed route service. The service scenarios were labeled Scenario 1 and Scenario 2, as summarized below and shown as maps on the following page.

Scenario 1

This scenario explored the streamlining of fixed route services and included route changes that focused on generating more ridership. This means that some areas with low or no ridership saw reduced or eliminated service. Key themes of Scenario 1 include:

- Streamline fixed route service, particularly on lower-ridership routes
- Reduce the number of transfers (particularly in Dilworth and South Fargo/West Fargo)
- Eliminate segments with low or no ridership
- Focus on direct connections to major destinations

Major changes in Scenario 1 include:

- Routes 6 and 9 would connect to a new express route (4E) in Moorhead offering service to the GTC without transferring
- Route 4E would operate every 30 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays
- Route 4 would continue to serve the Clay County Service Center and other portions of existing Route 4, but operate every 60 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays
- Routes 14 and 15 would be streamlined to offer faster, more direct service to major destinations
- Routes 18, 20, and 24 would be modified to focus service just on major destinations and be connected, offering service to the GTC without transferring
- A new Route 19 offering service to south Fargo and faster service to the Walmart on 52nd Avenue S, operating every 60 minutes on weekdays and Saturdays
- Route 13 would be modified to operate in both directions on Broadway north of 19th Avenue N

Scenario 2

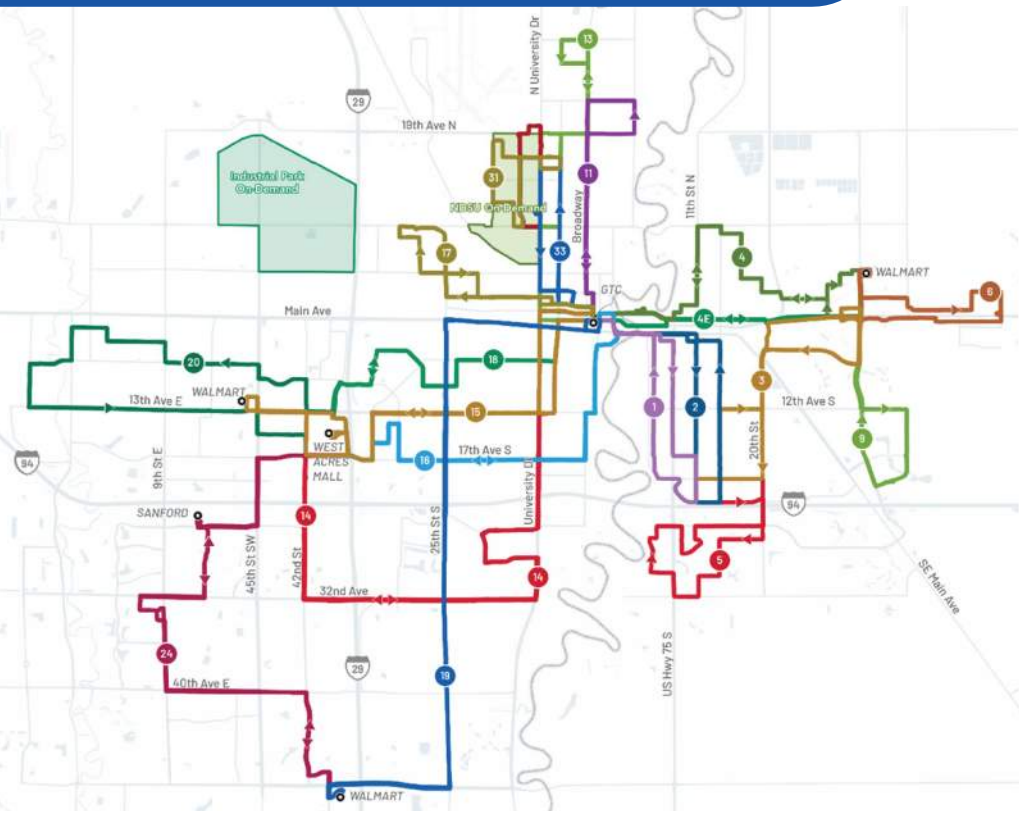
This scenario maintains much of the same network throughout the region and introduces several new on-demand zones to expand geographic coverage. Key themes of Scenario 2 include:

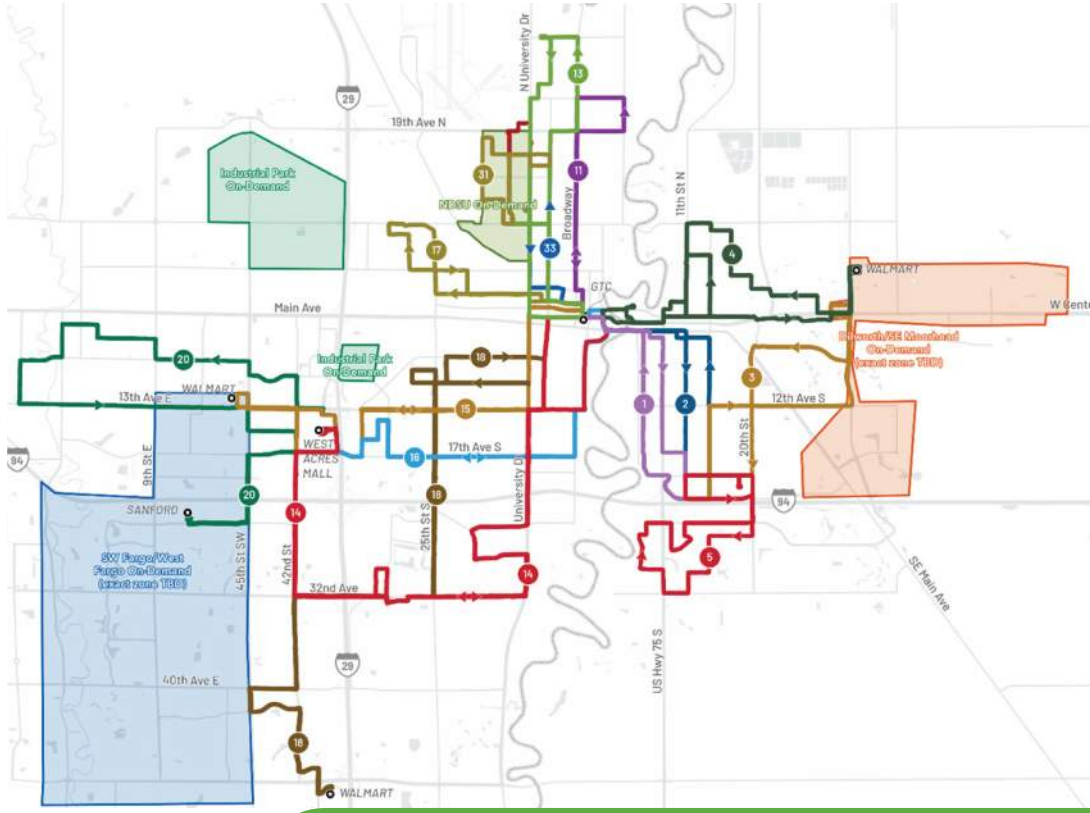
- Introduce several new on-demand zones that would replace lower-ridership routes (see below to find out how on-demand zones work)
- Maintains most of the coverage-oriented service throughout the region
- Prioritizes transfers to core routes with higher frequency.

Major changes in Scenario 2 include:

- A new on-demand zone in SW Fargo/West Fargo would replace the existing Route 24 (see below to find out how on-demand zones work)
- Route 20 serving West Fargo would be restructured to provide fixed route service connecting Sanford Health to West Acres
- A new on-demand zone would replace Route 6 in Dilworth and Route 9 in Moorhead (see below to find out how on-demand zones work)
- Route 15 would be streamlined to offer faster, more direct service to West Acres
- Route 18 would be streamlined to improve on-time performance
- The existing on-demand service to the Fargo Industrial Park would provide service to the Cass County Jail

Scenario 1





Scenario 2

Under a budget-neutral approach, the two conceptual service scenarios were developed to explore how MATBUS fixed route and on-demand services could be provided in the future. They served as a way to test different ideas and gather both public and stakeholder feedback on potential route modifications, new connections, and additional on-demand services. The feedback received was used to combine concepts from each scenario into the preferred service plan (discussed in Chapter 4).

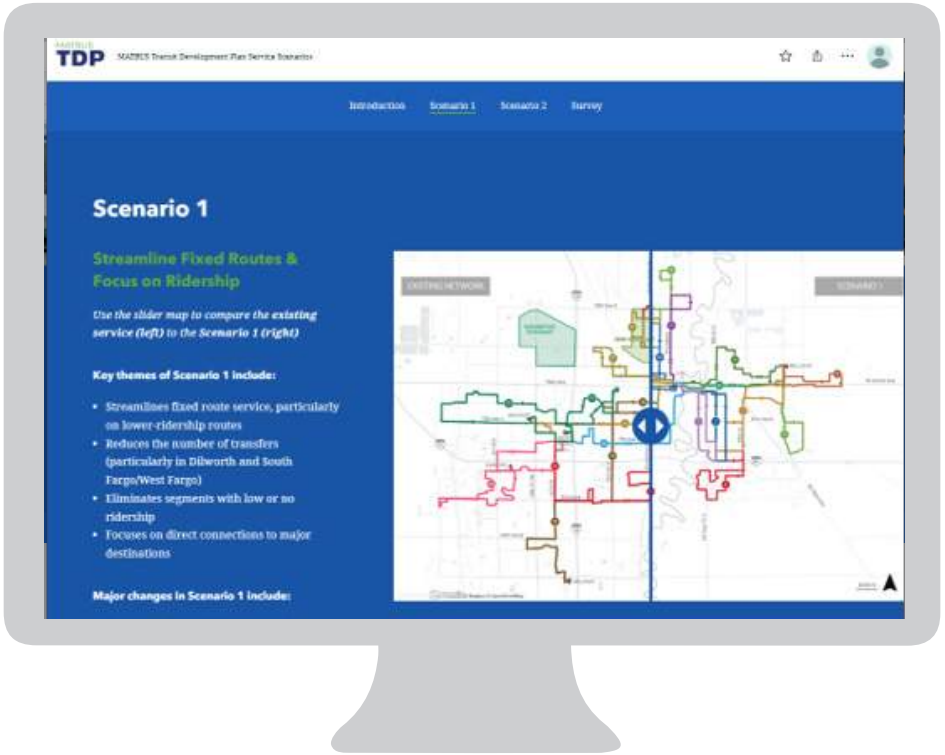
Phase Two Engagement

Story Map & Survey

To get input from the community, an ArcGIS Story Map and a second online survey was released at the end of January 2025 and remained open through May 2025. A total of 75 people completed the survey.

It is important to note that the two scenarios were conceptual and were intended primarily to get input on community priorities and to assist the project team in developing the preferred service plan (see Chapter x), which contains a combination of concepts presented in both scenarios. It was also noted in the survey that transit service in the Fargo/Moorhead region is currently operating at reduced service levels compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic. As much as MATBUS would like to restore service levels and/or add new service, the priority must be to ensure service can operate reliably with existing resources. As such, the two scenarios were constrained to existing resources.

Figure 58. Scenario Website



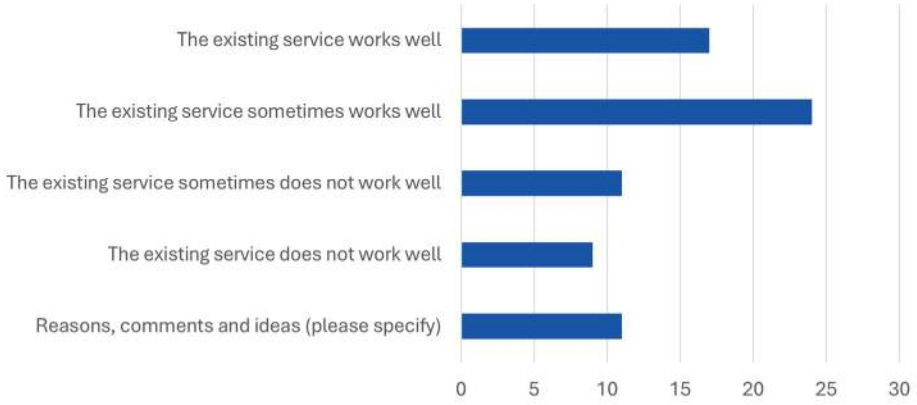
Feedback on Existing MATBUS Service

Respondents were first asked to assess how well the existing MATBUS service works for them. As shown in Figure 59, about 2/3 of respondents are satisfied with MATBUS, saying it works well or mostly works well, whereas the remaining 1/3 said that MATBUS service could be improved. This feedback indicates that there is not a strong need to make major changes to the system.

Many respondents (55) had comments about the existing service, as summarized below:

- Lack of route coverage and connectivity in West Fargo, including desire for a north-south connection
- High demand for Sunday service
- Service gaps and accessibility issues, especially in the southwest part of Fargo
- Frustration with leadership and budget constraints that result in frequent changes in service, often without enough notification
- Concerns about safety and rider conduct
- Desire to not change Routes 14 and 15
- Praise for single-seat rides through interlining (e.g., Route 3 provides service to the GTC), as well as the live bus tracker and bus stop amenities

Figure 59. How Well Does the Existing MATBUS service work for you?



Feedback on Scenario 1

Next, respondents were asked to provide their feedback specifically related to Scenario 1, as shown in Figure 60. While just over half of respondents liked the changes in Scenario 1, a significant number of respondents (33%) did not think these changes should be made. Eleven respondents also provided general comments about this scenario, as summarized below:

- Concerns about service reductions, especially as it relates to high-need areas that are low-density
- Desire to expand service coverage, especially in south and southwest Fargo.
- Desire for more direct connections between Fargo and Moorhead

Feedback on Scenario 2

Respondents were then asked to provide feedback on Scenario 2, as summarized in Figure 61. While this scenario generated some support, primarily for the expanded coverage associated with the on-demand zones in Fargo, West Fargo and Moorhead/Dilworth, more respondents said that these changes should not be made compared to those who support this scenario. Eleven respondents also had open-ended comments about this scenario, as summarized below:

- Some support for on-demand service, but many expressed concerns related to seniors without smartphones, wait times, reliability, and fares.
- Desire for fixed route services over on-demand, especially in Dilworth and West Fargo.
- Concerns about implementing a large on-demand zone, hiring operators, etc.
- Suggestion to pilot the on-demand service before a full rollout
- Desire for more information about the on-demand service

Comparison of Scenario 1 and 2 Feedback

Figure 62 compares the responses to Scenario 1 and Scenario 2. Overall, respondents are more supportive of Scenario 1, especially if the responses to "I think these are good changes" are considered more supportive than "I'm not sure but I think this might be good." While the responses are not prescriptive of changes to MATBUS services, they are indicative of what changes people are more supportive of.

Figure 60. Overall, what do you think about Scenario 1?

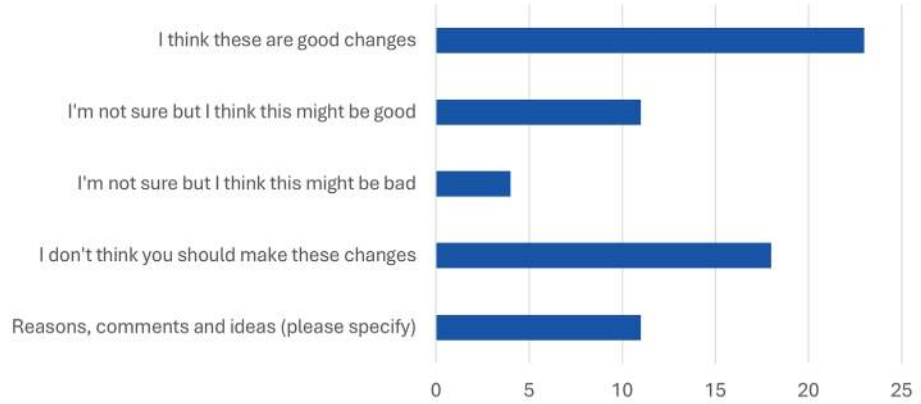


Figure 61. Overall, what do you think about Scenario 2?

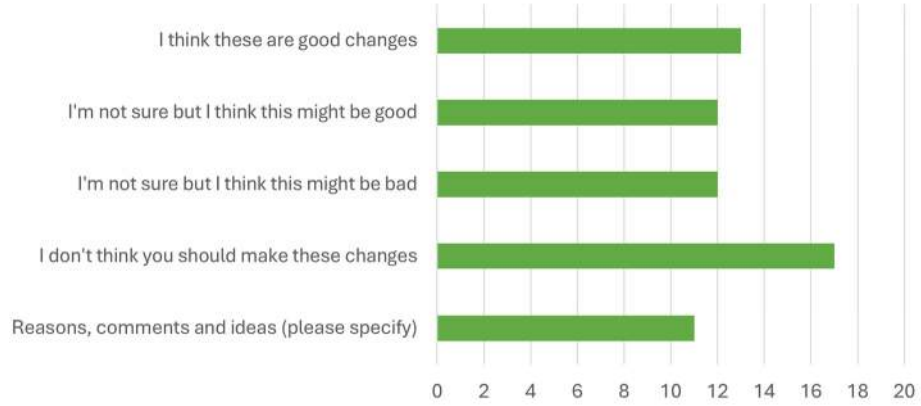
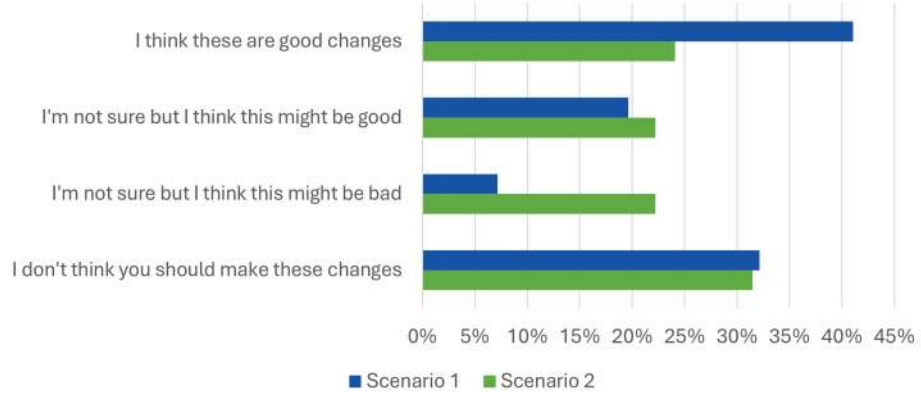


Figure 62. Comparison of Responses to Scenarios 1 & 2



Respondents were also asked if they wanted to provide general comments about the existing MATBUS service, either of the scenarios, or service in general. The following summarize the feedback that was received:

- Strong demand for Sunday service, longer weekend and Saturday service hours to support jobs, events, and shift workers.
- Desire for more frequent service
- Need for expanded service in the growing areas in the region, particularly south Fargo and West Fargo.
- Preference for more direct routes, particularly between Fargo and Moorhead that bypass the GTC
- Desire to continue providing service to low-income areas over merely increasing ridership
- Desire for a dedicated source of local funding instead of relying on grants and contributions from the local municipalities
- Belief that there is too much service to north Fargo and the NDSU campus area

Dilworth & West Fargo Community Surveys

Separate surveys were developed for the communities of Dilworth and West Fargo to solicit feedback on key concepts being considered within the scenarios for each city.

Phase 2 Open House at the Carlson Library

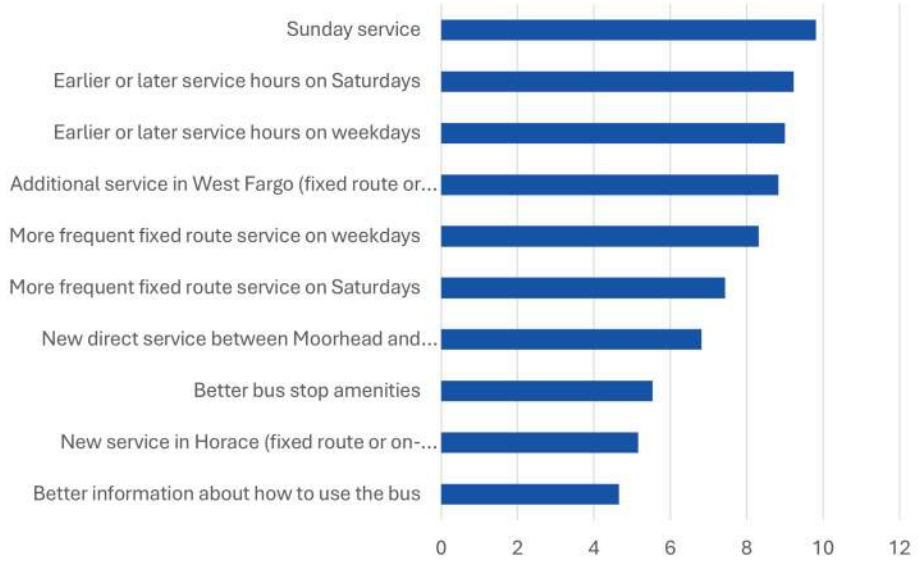
In West Fargo, survey participants noted an interest in providing more on-demand service in their community, however not at the expense of fixed route. Participants also noted the changes being considered on Routes 20 and 24 removed service from key locations and a north/south connection in West Fargo was missing.

In Dilworth, residents had less of an interest in the on-demand service concept than West Fargo. There was strong support for considerations in Scenario 1, particularly for the more direct connection that would be provided with the limited stop Route 4E.

Future Improvement Priorities

Finally, respondents were also asked about future investments in MATBUS service if more funding, vehicles, and operators can be secured. They were given a list of ten potential improvements and asked to rank them from most important to least important. It was clear from these responses that Sunday service was the top priority, closely followed by extended service hours on weekdays and Saturdays. Some respondents also felt that it is important to provide addition service to West Fargo, followed by more frequent service on weekdays. Respondents said that better information about bus service was the least important priority, presumably because good information already exists. They also did not think that new service to Horace was a priority.

Figure 63. Future Improvement Priorities



Preferred Service Plan

Based on the feedback from the scenarios survey (and a preference for the service concepts presented in Scenario 1), discussions with MATBUS and FMCOG staff, and feedback from the Study Review Committee, a preferred service plan was developed for MATBUS. The key themes for the preferred service plan are shown to the right.

It is important to note that the preferred service plan was designed to operate with existing financial resources and to better align existing service with demographic and travel changes in the Fargo-Moorhead region. A map of the preferred service scenario is provided in Figure 64. A summary of changes at the route level is provided in Figure 65. Where route changes are proposed, details are provided later in this chapter along with impacts on ridership associated with those changes.

Simple & Direct

Routes should connect destinations as directly as possible and are easy to understand, especially for new riders.

Bi-Directional

Routes should operate in both directions on the same street whenever possible to reduce the complexity of the service.

Fewer Transfers

Service should be focused on offering a “single-seat” ride when possible, to reduce the chance that a connection will be missed.

Maintain Access

Direct and bidirectional service should be balanced with coverage to ensure access to destinations, especially where required by road patterns and land use.

Scalable

Service should be designed to be enhanced or reduced without losing the integrity of the network.

Reliable

Routes should be designed to ensure they operate on time and connections can reliably be made.

Figure 64. Preferred Service Plan

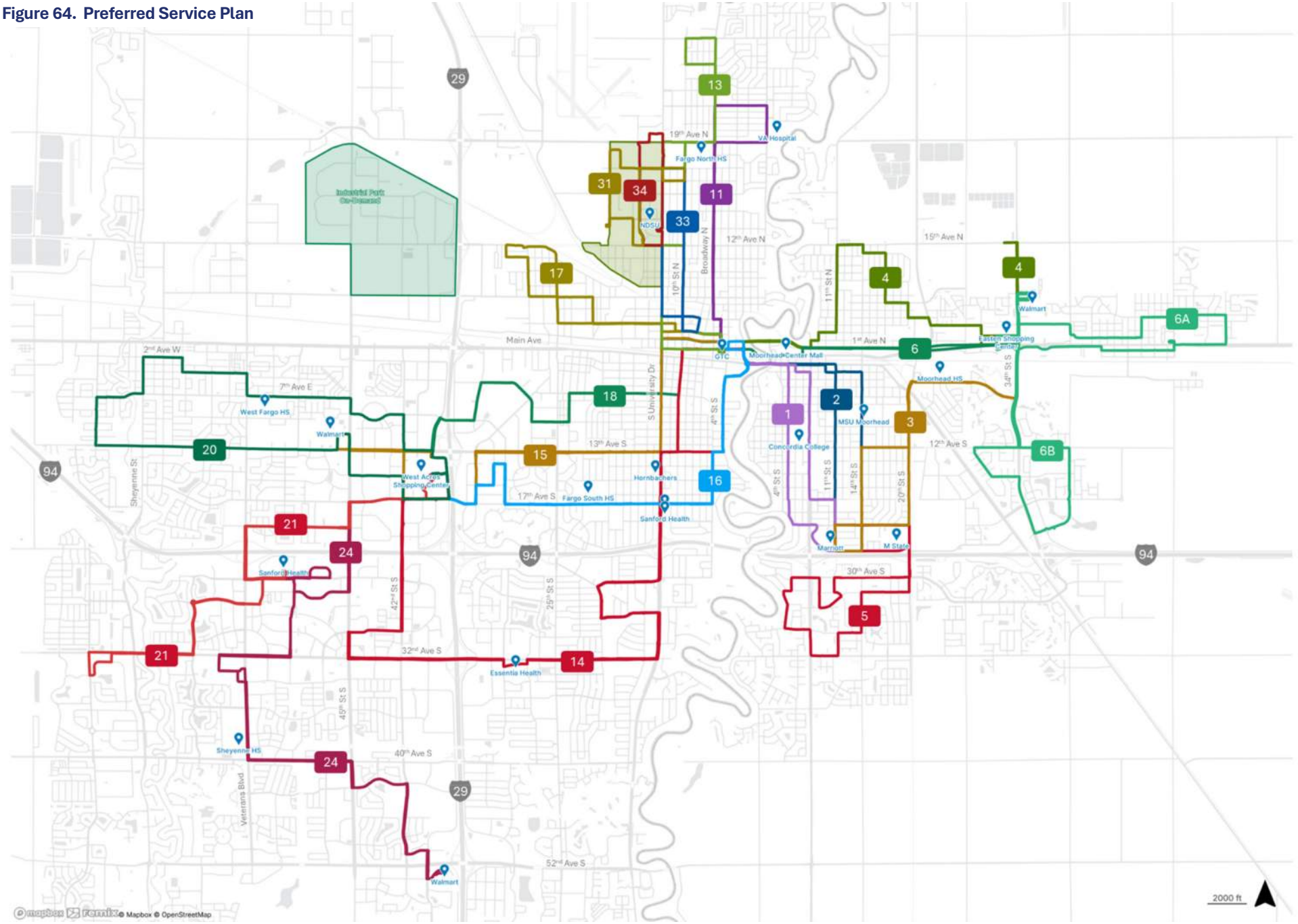


Figure 65. Comparison of Existing Service with Preferred Service Plan Changes

Route	Existing System			Preferred Service Plan		
	Destinations Served	Frequency	Span	Route Changes	Frequency	Span
Moorhead / Dilworth						
1	Marriott Transfer Hub, Brookdale Mall, Concordia (5th St.), Moorhead Public Library, GTC, Rourke Art Museum, Concordia (8th St.), Hopkins Elementary	M-F: 30-min. Sat: 30 min.	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m.	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes • Continues to interline with Route 3	Same as existing	
2	Marriott Transfer Hub, MSUM (14th St.), Harmon Glass, GTC, Rourke Art Museum, Hornbacher's, MSUM (11th St.), Hopkins Elementary,	M-F: 30-min. Sat: 30 min	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m.	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes • Continues to interline with Route 5	Same as existing	
3	Marriott, 12th Ave. S and 19 1/2 St. S, Cash Wise, Target, Moorhead High School, 20th St. S/14th Ave., 24th Ave. S/14th St.	M-F: 30-min. Sat: 30 min	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m.	• Modified to make service on 4th Ave bidirectional and to address on-time performance issues • Continues to interline with Route 1	Same as existing	
4	GTC, US Bank, 14th St. N/10th Ave, Clay County Courthouse, Churches United, Walmart, Cash Wise, 4th Ave. N/24th St., 20th St. N/7th Ave., Moorhead Manor, DMV, Riverview High Rise, Moorhead Center Mall, Parkview Terrace	M-F: 30-min. Sat: 30 min.	M-F: 6:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m. Sat: 7:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m.	• Modified to be bidirectional from GTC to Dilworth Walmart via Clay County Courthouse/Social Services (renamed as Route 6) • Frequency reduced to 60 minutes (M-F and Sat) • No change in service span	Same as existing	
5	Marriott, M|State 28th Ave., Hornbacher's Azool, Days Inn, Lakeland Mental Health, 30th Ave. S/18th St., M State Door 2	M-F: 30-min. Sat: 30 min.	M-F: 6:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m. Sat: 7:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m.	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes • Continues to interline with Route 2	Same as existing	
6	Dilworth Walmart, Community Center, Dilworth Elementary, 4th Ave. NE/Woodbridge Drive, Houge Estates, Dilworth City Hall, CVS Pharmacy	M-F: 60-min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:40 a.m.- 7:03 p.m. Sat: 7:40 a.m.- 6:03 p.m.	• Modified existing Route 4 to operate bidirectionally from GTC to Dilworth Walmart via 1st Ave (renamed as Route 6) • Interlines with Routes 6A and 6B	M-F: 30-min. Sat: 30 min	M-F: 6:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m. Sat: 7:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m.
6A	N/A			• New Route that replaces Route 6 (no change in alignment) • Interlined with new Route 6 to offer single-seat ride to the GTC	M-F: 60-min. Sat: 60 min.	M-F: 6:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m. Sat: 7:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m.
6B	N/A			• New route that replaces existing Route 9 that is modified to serve Ridgewood Blvd. and a portion of 12th Avenue S. and renamed as Route 6B • Interlined with new Route 6 to offer single-seat ride to the GTC	M-F: 60-min. Sat: 60 min.	M-F: 6:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m. Sat: 7:16 a.m.- 10:16 p.m.
9	Dilworth Walmart, Cash Wise, Horizon School, Vista Center for Education, Sanford Medical Center, Menard's, Career Academy, Casey's General Store, AXIS Clinicals	M-F: 60-min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 7:10 a.m.- 5:35 p.m. Sat: 7:10 a.m.- 6:35 p.m.	• Route replaced by Route 6B	N/A	

Route	Existing System			Preferred Service Plan		
	Destinations Served	Frequency	Span	Route Changes	Frequency	Span
Fargo / West Fargo						
11	GTC, Sanford Health, Washington Elementary, VA Hospital, Gate City Bank, Fargo North High, Northport, Hornbacher's	M-F: 30/60-min. Sat: 30-60 min.	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:10 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:10 p.m.	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes	Same as existing	
13	GTC, Klai Hall, R. H. Barry Hall, Roosevelt Elementary, NDSU Transit Hub, Northport Hornbacher's, Trollwood Village, NDSCS - Fargo, Sanford Health Athletic Complex, Family Fare, People Ready, Renaissance Hall	M-F: 30/60-min. Sat: 60 min.	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:10 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:10 p.m.	• Modified to be bidirectional on Broadway N. with terminal loop at north end via 32nd Ave N, 10th St N, and 30th Ave N. • Simplify routing through NDSU campus	Same as existing	
14	GTC, Island Park, Essentia / Sanford, Family Fare, Essentia Hospital, Flying J, Rasmussen College, West Acres, YMCA, Love's, Hornbacher's, Courthouse	M-F: 30/60-min. Sat: 60 min.	M-F: 6:10 a.m.- 10:10 p.m. Sat: 7:10 a.m.- 10:10 p.m.	• Extended west via 32nd Ave S to 45th St S and 30th Ave S to serve Elliot Place • No longer makes the apartment loop (33rd St S, 30th Ave S, 32nd St S)	Same as existing	
15	GTC, Holiday Station, Bethany Homes, Fraser Halls, CVS, West Acres, Target, TJ Max, Walmart, Job Service, Courthouse	M-F: 30 min. Sat: 30-60 min.	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m.	• Modified to serve 34th St to 17th Ave to West Acres improve on-time performance	Same as existing	
16	GTC, Fargo High Rise, Essentia Clinic, South High School, West Acres, Cashwise	M-F: 60 min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 7:40 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 7:40 p.m.	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes	Same as existing	
17	GTC, Madison Elementary, Metro Transit Garage (MTG), New Life Center, Centre, Inc., University Manor	M-F: 60 min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 9:40 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 9:40 p.m.	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes	Same as existing	
18	GTC, Madison Elementary, Metro Transit Garage (MTG), New Life Center, Centre, Inc., University Manor	M-F: 60 min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m. Sat: 7:15 a.m.- 10:15 p.m.	• Shortened route between GTC and West Acres that covers eastern segments of existing Route 20 • Interlined w/ modified Route 20 at West Acres to offer a single-seat ride to the GTC • Continues to interline w/ Route 17 at GTC	Same as existing	
20	West Acres, ShareHouse, West Fargo High School, WF City Hall/Police, WF High Rise, WF Sanford Clinic, Walmart, Centre, Inc., Cass County Jail, Southeast Human Services, Somali Business Center	M-F: 60 min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:21 a.m.- 9:55 p.m. Sat: 7:21 a.m.- 9:55 p.m.	• Shortened route to focus on West Acres to West Fargo • Route extended to serve downtown West Fargo on Sheyenne Street • Interlined w/ modified Route 18 to offer a single-seat ride to the GTC	Same as existing	
21	N/A			• New bidirectional route connecting West Acres to The Lights via Rustad Center and temporary West Fargo City Hall	M-F: 60 min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:30 a.m.- 10:10 p.m. Sat: 7:30 a.m.- 10:10 p.m.
24	West Acres, Sanford Medical Center, Cashwise Foods, Bluestem Dr, Costco, 19th Ave & Burlington Dr.	M-F: 60 min. Sat: 60 min	M-F: 6:30 a.m.- 10:10 p.m. Sat: 7:30 a.m.- 10:10 p.m.	• Modified to provide bi-directional service between West Acres and south Walmart via Sanford, Scheels Arena, Cash Wise, & Hornbacher's • Interlines w/ Route 16 at West Acres	Same as existing	

Route	Existing System			Preferred Service Plan		
	Destinations Served	Frequency	Span	Route Changes	Frequency	Span
NDSU						
31	Minard Pullout (West), Stevens Hall, Wallman Wellness Ctr., Peltier Complex, Research & Tech Park, Fargodome West Shelter, University Village Shelter, High Rises	M-F: 20-min.	M-F: 7:40 a.m.- 6:20 p.m. *Operates only during NDSU academic year.*	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes	Same as existing	
33	NDSU Transit Hub, Family Fare, Klai Hall, University Village, SHAC, Centennial Shelter	M-F: 10-min	M-F: 6:55 a.m.- 7:15 p.m. *Operates only during NDSU academic year.*	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes	Same as existing	
34	NDSU Transit Hub, Reed/ Johnson Halls, NDSCS - Fargo, Niskanen Expansion, Centennial Shelter	M-F: 20-min	M-F: 7:44 a.m.- 4:44 p.m. *Operates only during NDSU academic year.*	• No alignment, frequency, or service span changes	Same as existing	

Route Changes Details

This section provides more details about specific route changes included in the Preferred Service Plan. Because many routes in the existing system remain unchanged, this section only highlights those routes where more significant changes are proposed. Several of the routes are grouped together geographically since the changes are related to each other.

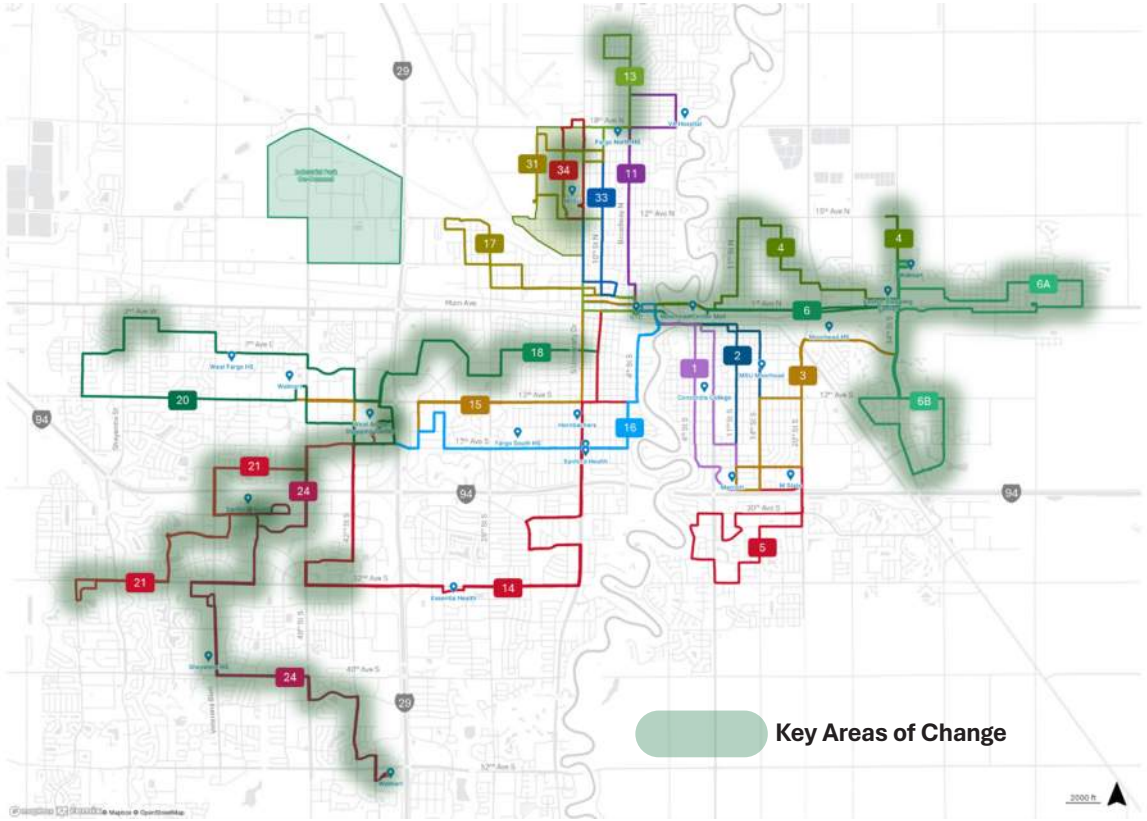
This section includes the following routes and/or areas in the region:

- Route 3, serving south and southeast Moorhead
- Routes 4, 6 and 9, serving central Moorhead, southeast Moorhead, and Dilworth
- Route 13, serving the NDSU campus and north Fargo
- Route 14, serving central and south Fargo
- Routes 18, 20, 21 (new route), and 24, serving central Fargo, West Fargo, and southwest Fargo

For each route or group of routes, changes are summarized related to 1) changes in frequency, 2) changes in geographic coverage, 3) service span changes, and 4) ridership impacts.

Figure 66 to the right highlights (in green) the routes or route segments that have changes in the Preferred Service Plan.

Figure 66. Overview of Route Changes



Route 3 (Moorhead)

Frequency Changes

No changes to frequency are recommended.

Coverage Changes

- Route 3 would be modified to provide bidirectional service on 4th Avenue S to 34th Street S.
- This would provide improved service to Moorhead High School and improve on-time performance by avoiding two at-grade rail crossings on 12th Avenue S.
- Route 3 would continue to be interlined with Route 1.

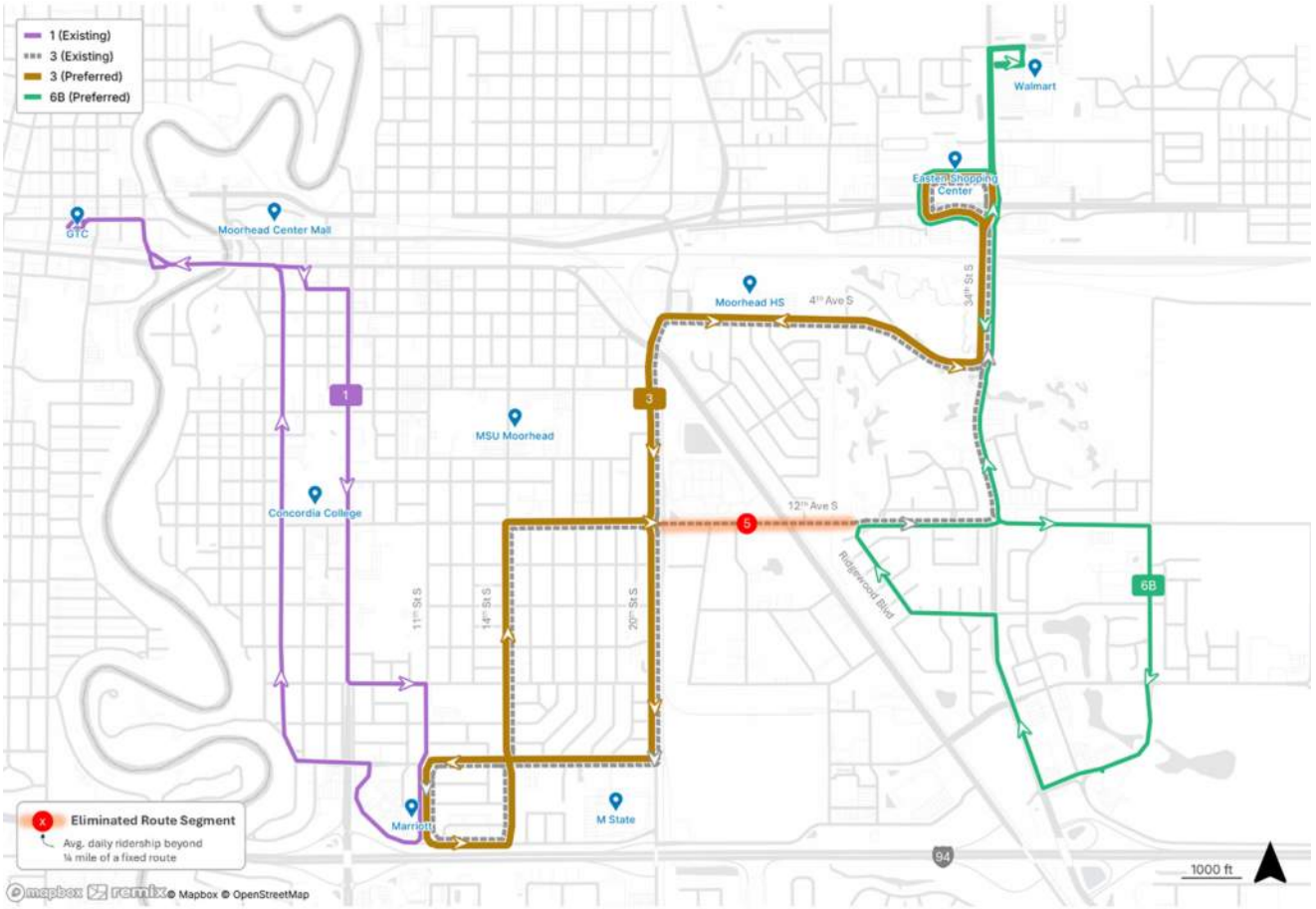
Service Span Changes

No changes to hours of service or days of service are recommended.

Ridership Impacts

Approximately 5 weekday boardings and alightings on 12th Avenue S would be impacted by the change to Route 3, which is just beyond ¼ mile walk to the closest stop west of 20th Street S. It is important to note that Route 6B (discussed in more detail below) would cover a portion of 12th Avenue S currently served by Route 3 (but only in one direction).

Figure 67. Route 3 (Moorhead) Route Changes



Route 4, 6, & 9 (Moorhead & Dilworth)

Frequency Changes

- Route 4 would be reduced to hourly frequency, weekdays and Saturday.
- Route 6 would operate every 30 minutes on weekdays and Saturday; Routes 6A and 6B would operate hourly on weekdays and Saturday.

Coverage Changes

- Route 4 would be modified to serve the Clay County Social Services Department and Courthouse, as well as the neighborhoods in north Moorhead, the Dilworth Walmart and be extended to serve the Clay County DMV and Detox Center on 15th Avenue N. This would be a bidirectional route as opposed to a one-way alignment on the existing route.
- The southern segment of the existing Route 4 would be converted to a new bidirectional route (renamed as Route 6) that would operate every 30 minutes weekdays and Saturday from the GTC to the Dilworth Walmart, generally via Main Avenue, 1st Avenue N, Viking Trail and 34th Street N. This route would be interlined with Routes 6A and 6B, both of which would operate hourly weekdays and Saturday.
- Route 6A would be the same as the existing Route 6 but be interlined with the new Route 6 to offer a new single-seat ride to the GTC for passengers boarding in Dilworth.
- Route 6B is essentially Route 9 but modified to exclude route segments with no or very low ridership. This route would also serve Ridgewood Boulevard between 34th Street S and 12th Avenue S, covering a segment of 12th Avenue S that would be eliminated on existing Route 3. As with Route 6A, Route 6B would be interlined with the new Route 6 that offers a single-seat ride to the GTC.

Service Span Changes

Because Route 6, 6A and 6B would be interlined, the service span for Routes 6A and 6B should be extended compared to the service span on existing Routes 6 and 9 (which ends between 6:00-7:00 p.m.). It may be possible to end Routes 6A and 6B earlier than Route 6 assuming the running time in the evenings will be faster than during the middle of the day.

Ridership Impacts

The change to Route 4 would impact approximately 10 weekday boardings and alightings with the elimination of service to 14th Street N and 10th Avenue N. It should be noted, however, that the distance between 14th Street N and 11th Street N and 17th Street N (both of which will have service) is just over ¼ mile. Also, the modified Route 4 would offer service in both directions, which may improve travel times compared to the one-way service on 14th Street N/10th Avenue N.

Figure 68. Route 4/6/9 (Moorhead & Dilworth) Route Changes

Route 13 (Fargo)

Frequency Changes

No changes to frequency are recommended.

Coverage Changes

- Route 13 would be modified in several locations. On the north end, this route would be modified to make a smaller terminal loop via 32nd Avenue N, 10th Street N, and 30th Avenue N and operate bidirectional service along Broadway. This would make offer more direct travel on these two corridors.
- On and near the NDSU campus, the existing route makes a series of one-way loops to serve both Albrecht Boulevard N and the NDSU Transit Hub. To make this route easier to understand, the route would be modified to operate in both directions on Albrecht Boulevard N.

Service Span Changes

No changes to hours of service or days of service are recommended.

Ridership Impacts

Two passenger boardings and alightings would be impacted by the changes to the north end of this route (on 10th Street N, 28th Avenue N, 12th Street N, and University Drive N).

Figure 69. Route 13 (Fargo) Route Changes

Route 14 (Fargo)

Frequency Changes

No changes to frequency are recommended.

Coverage Changes

This route would be modified in two locations. First, it would be extended to 45th Street S and 30th Avenue S to serve new apartments (Elliott Place) in this area. To allow time for this new deviation, the apartment loop on 33rd Street S and 32nd Street S would be eliminated.

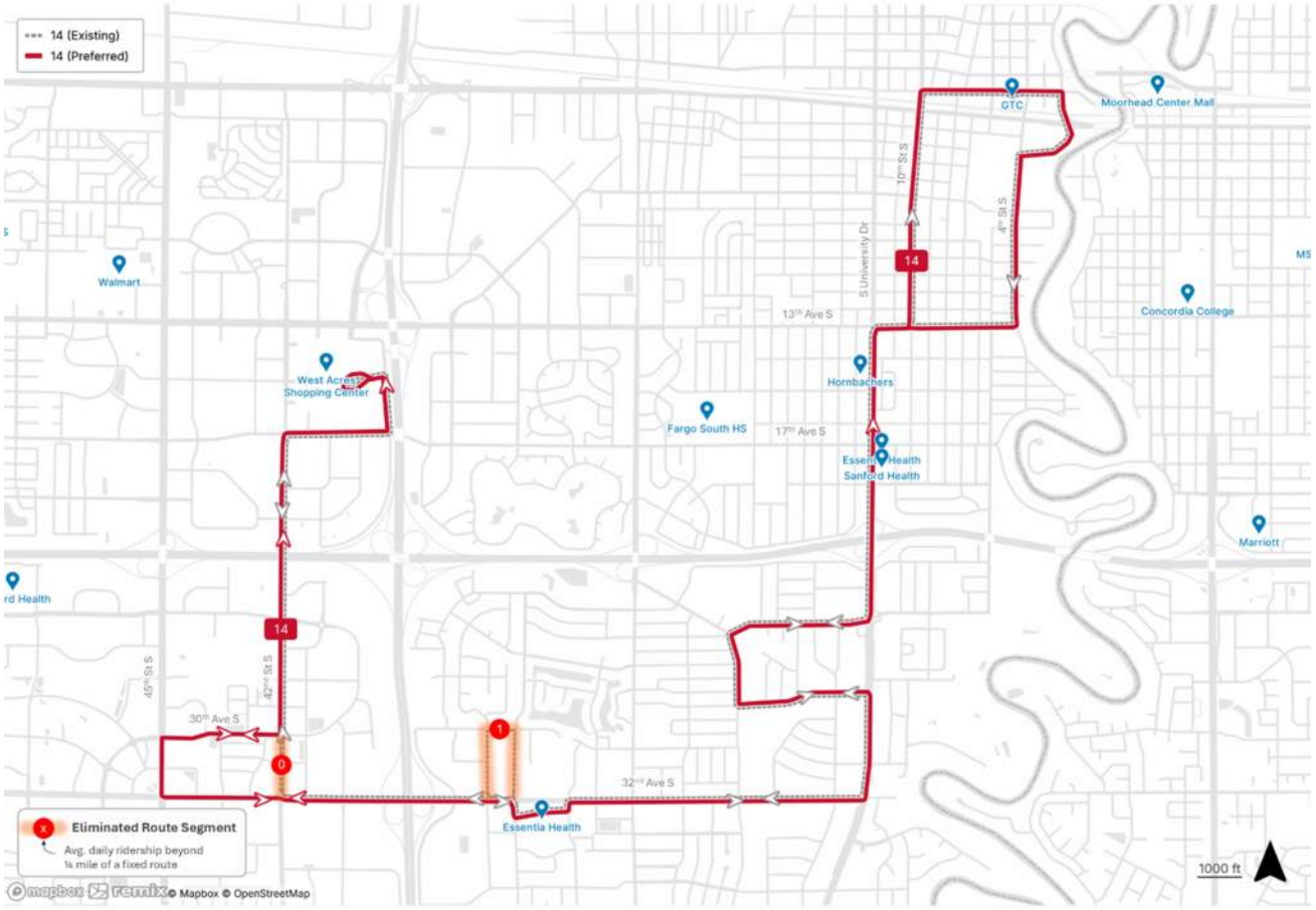
Service Span Changes

No changes to hours of service or days of service are recommended.

Ridership Impacts

The removal of service to the 33rd Street S/32nd Street S loop would impact one weekday boarding and alighting.

Figure 70. Route 14 (Fargo) Route Changes



Route 18, 20, 21 (*new route*), & 24 (Fargo & West Fargo)

Frequency Changes

No changes to frequency are recommended for any of the existing routes. The new Route 21 would operate hourly on weekdays and Saturdays.

Coverage Changes

- Route 18 would be modified to operate bidirectionally from the GTC to West Acres along a portion of the existing Route 18 alignment and the eastern portion of existing Route 20. This route would be interlined with a modified Route 20. The remainder of existing Route 18 would either be eliminated or replaced by modified Route 24.
- The eastern loop of existing Route 20 would be covered by the modified Route 18, allowing this route to be interlined with Route 18 and extended to Sheyenne Street to serve downtown West Fargo. This change would provide a single-seat ride on Route 20 to the GTC.
- Existing Route 24 would be modified to operate bidirectionally from West Acres to the south Walmart via Sanford, Scheels Arena, Cash Wise on 32nd Avenue/Veterans Boulevard, and Hornbacher's on 40th Avenue S/45th Street S. This route would replace the southern part of existing Route 18 south of 40th Avenue S. This route would continue to operate hourly on weekdays and Saturdays.
- A new Route 21 would provide coverage to the western portion of the existing Route 24. This route would operate bidirectionally between West Acres and 32nd Avenue W and 9th Street W (near The Lights). This new route would operate hourly on weekdays and Saturdays.

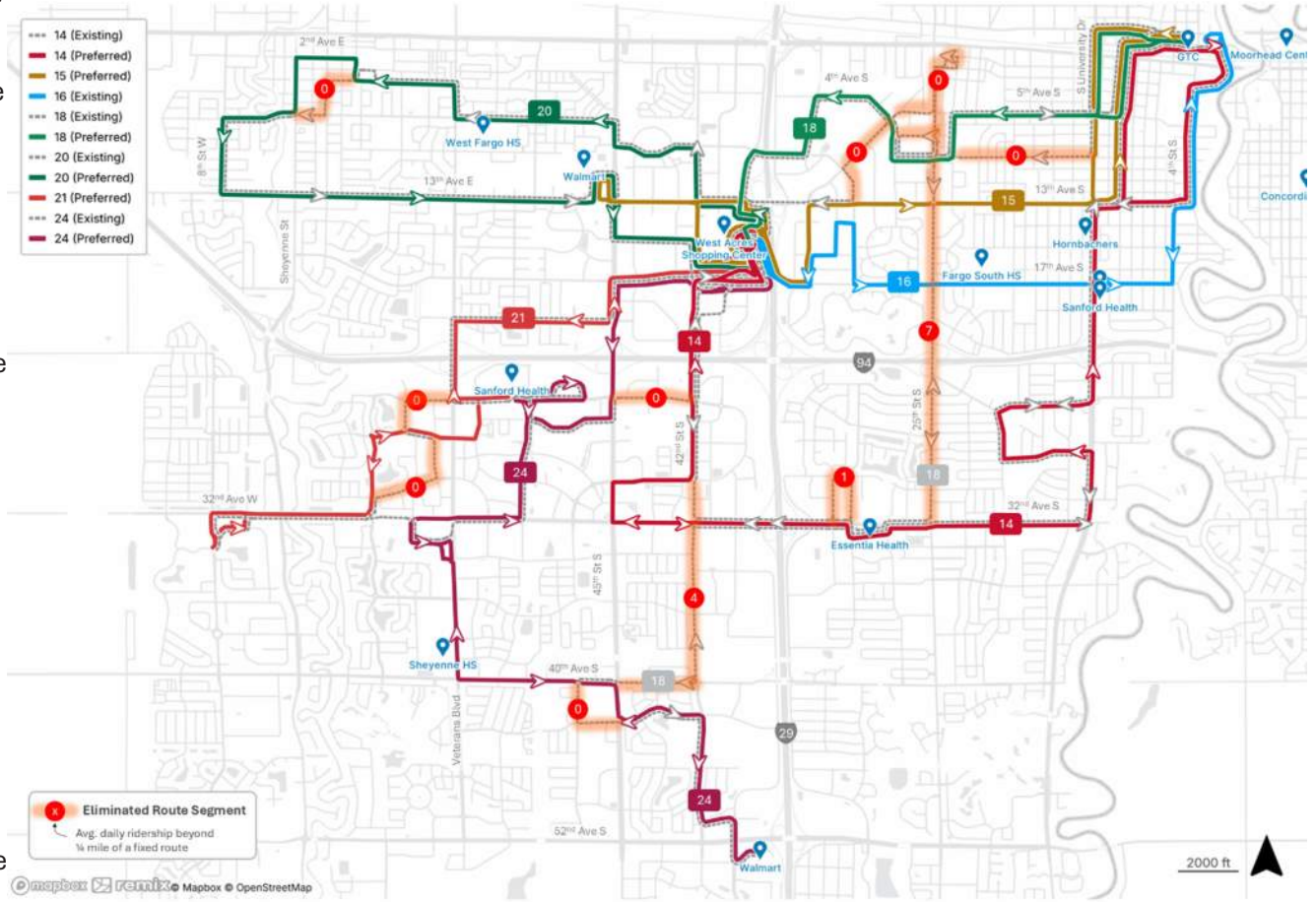
Service Span Changes

Modified Routes 18, 20 and 24 would continue to have the same service span as the existing routes. The new Route 24 would operate approximately the same hours as Route 24.

Ridership Impacts

- With the changes to Route 18, approximately 7 boardings and alightings would be unserved on 25th Street S between 17th Avenue S and 32nd Avenue S and another 4 boardings and alightings would be unserved on 42nd Street S between 32nd Avenue S and 40th Avenue S.
- All other segments where service is removed are either within ¼ mile of a fixed route or there is no or very low ridership impact.

Figure 71. Route 18/20/21/24 (Fargo & West Fargo) Route Changes

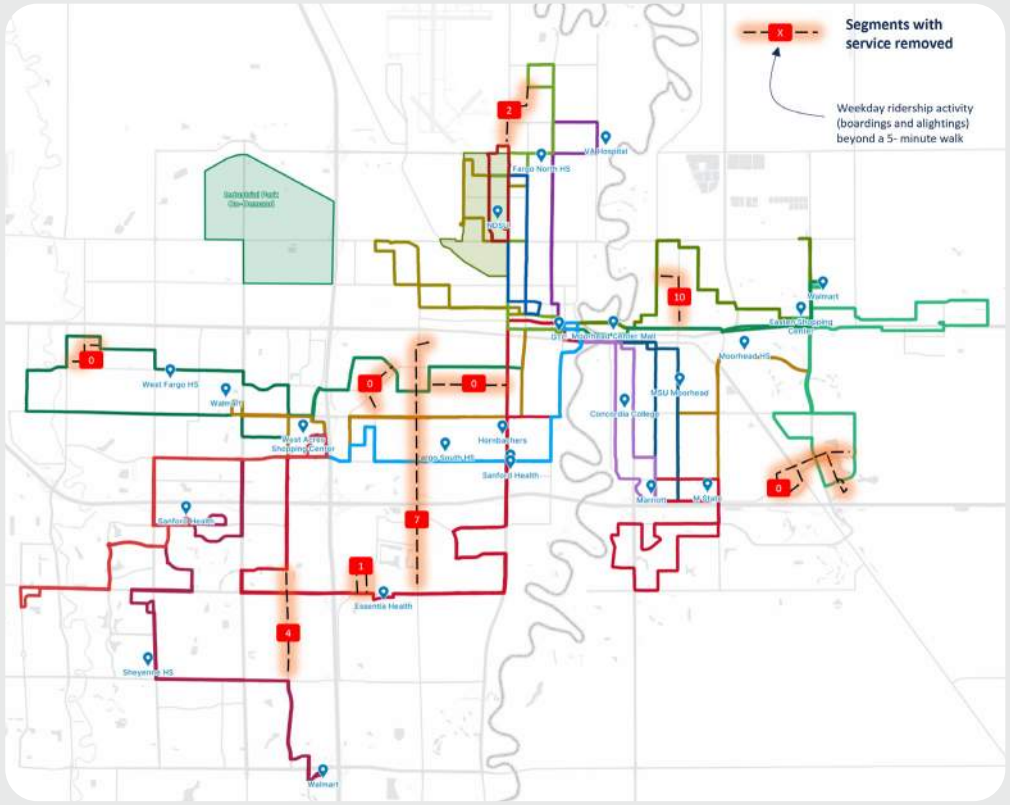


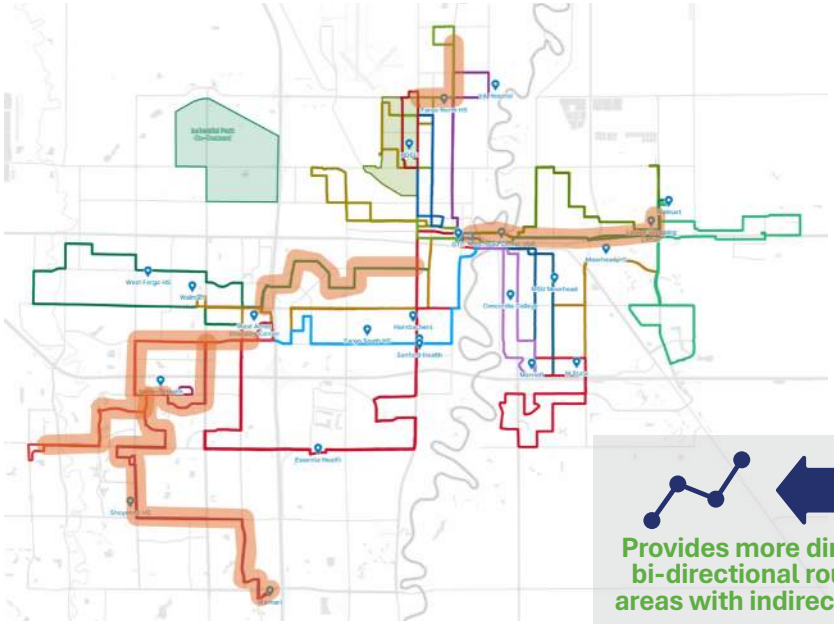
Regional Impact

99.6% of existing customers will continue to be served

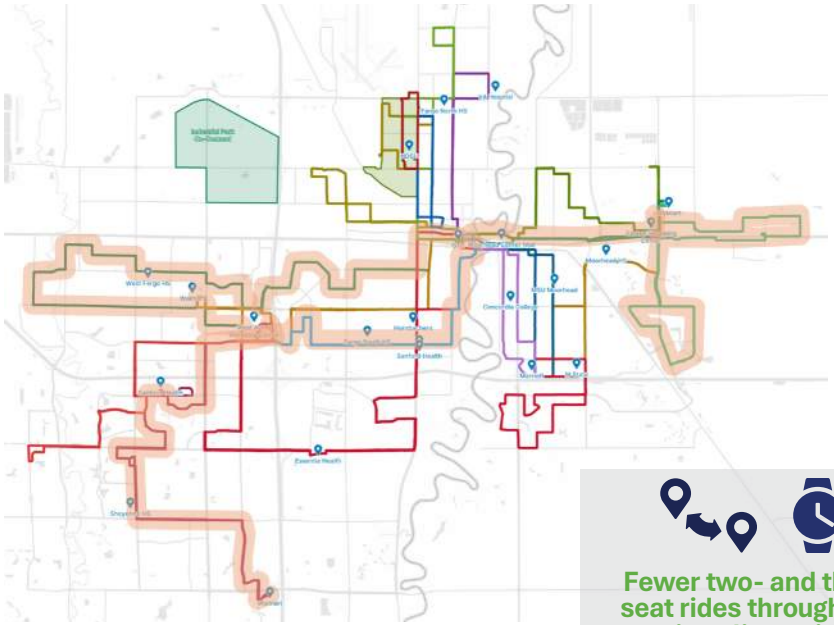
Increases the number of residents served by 2%

Increases the number of jobs served by 5%





Provides more direct and bi-directional routing in areas with indirect routing



Fewer two- and three-seat rides through new interline pairs

Phase Three Engagement

The third phase of engagement included an online survey and interactive map, as well as a virtual open house held on Wednesday, August 27th. Feedback was collected on service recommendations and a draft of the final plan. It should be noted that during the open comment period, MATBUS was also seeking feedback on service reductions and fare increases separately from this process. As a result, some of the feedback received relates to proposed changes not included in the TDP.

Survey responses reflected a broad range of community concerns and suggestions, including the following:

Service Frequency & Reliability

- Strong opposition to hourly service; many respondents feel that hourly schedules are regressive and discourage ridership. There is a call to maintain or restore 30-minute frequencies on key routes (e.g., Routes 4, 13, 14, 15, 16).
- Concerns about route timing and on-time performance, especially for routes that are being extended or reconfigured. Respondents question whether the proposed changes are practical and whether routes have been "test-driven" for feasibility.

Route Changes & Transfers

- Opposition to moving the main transit hub from West Acres to Walmart, citing lack of space and amenities at Walmart for multiple buses and transfers.
- Confusion and frustration over route maps and lack of clear information. Respondents request more readable maps, detailed route narratives, and clarity on transfer points.

Equity & Accessibility

- Concerns about cutting Paratransit service on Sundays, with strong advocacy for maintaining accessible transit for disabled riders and those who work weekends.
- Calls for bus shelters and amenities in growing neighborhoods, especially where new apartments and businesses are increasing demand.

Fare Structure & Funding

- Mixed views on income-based fare programs. Some respondents support reduced fares for seniors and disabled riders, but oppose further income-based programs, arguing that transit should be run as a business, not a charity.
- Questions about funding allocations, especially regarding NDSU's share of transit funds and the impact on fixed-route services for the four cities.

Branding & Rider Experience

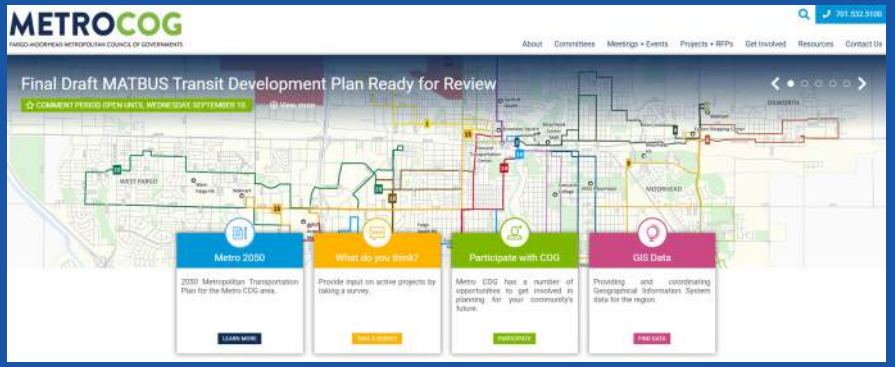
- Suggestions to rebrand MATBUS to something more recognizable and appealing (e.g., Fargo Transit Authority, FMTA).
- Desire for more colorful, "happier" buses and improved rider experience.

Community Engagement & Communication

- Frustration with lack of public information and engagement. Some respondents only found out about the plan by chance and felt the city did not adequately communicate changes or seek feedback.

Additional comments received through the interactive map focused on major strategic gaps and opportunities in the region, including:

- Critical connectivity gaps between Hector International Airport, NDSU's main campus, and downtown Fargo.
- Transit support for urban growth, particularly with Moorhead's downtown redevelopment and new housing density.
- A need for higher frequency service (every 15 minutes or less) connecting downtown, NDSU, and major employment centers such as West Acres
- Restoring service to high-density neighborhoods

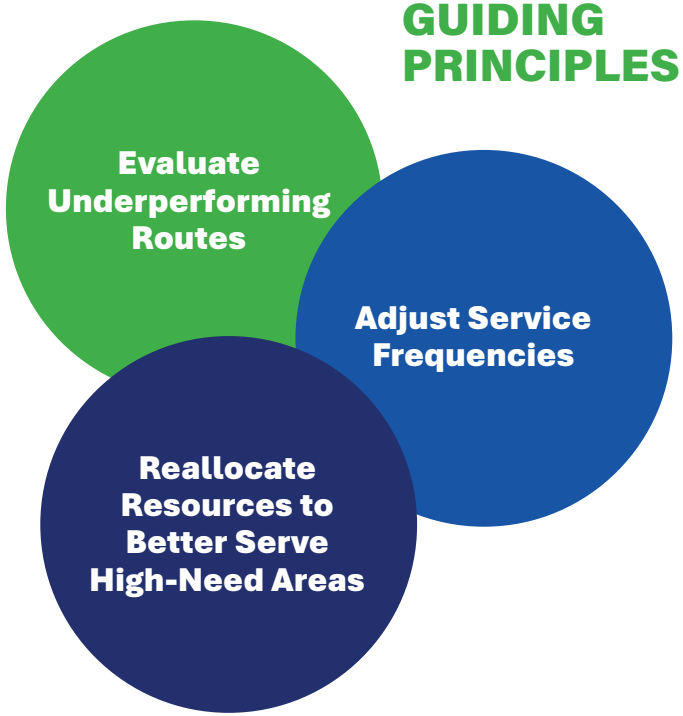


Metro COG's Website Advertising the Final Plan Review Period

Aligning Transit Service with Budget Realities

The financial outlook for public transportation in the Fargo-Moorhead area is becoming increasingly uncertain due to budget constraints facing the City of Fargo. These limitations may result in reduced MATBUS transit services. In response, MATBUS staff are collaborating with city officials to create a scaled-back service plan guided by the principles outlined in this TDP. This includes evaluating underperforming routes, adjusting service frequencies, and reallocating resources to better serve high-need areas. Service reductions being considered should align with the TDP's preferred service plan, with the long-term objective of restoring full service as funding permits.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



MATBUS TDP

Plan Description

The Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (CHSTP) planning initiative is being led by Metro COG for the Fargo-Moorhead region. It is an update to the CHSTP completed in 2021 and documents the coordinated approach to providing and funding transportation services for people with limited incomes, older adults, and people with disabilities. To do so, the plan assesses the transportation needs of target populations and identifies strategies for meeting those needs. It is updated every five years per federal requirements and is used to guide funds from the Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program.

The unmet needs of target populations in the Fargo-Moorhead area were identified using community engagement and demographic information. The project team held two focus groups—one with transportation providers and another with a community-based organization—and distributed a questionnaire to all transportation providers in the region. Crosstabs from the MATBUS TDP 2025 Community Survey were used to deduce ridership and travel information for people with disabilities, people living on low incomes, and senior populations. The demographic analysis and community engagement identified the following needs in the area:

- Longer service span on existing transit and transportation services.
- More (and less complicated) funding.
- Shorter transit travel times and more reliable service.
- Reduced fares.
- Increased service coverage and access to destinations.
- Shorter wait times and better bus stop shelters.
- Improved information-sharing.
- Enhanced on-demand travel options.

Coordinated Plan Goals

Given the identified needs, the CHSTP lists the following updated goals for 2025–2029:

Goal #1: Service availability and accessibility

Public transit and supplemental transportation services should be available throughout the week, have a span of service that meets user needs, and be accessible to major destinations.

Goal #2: Education, Marketing, and Awareness

Accurate information should continue to be available to enhance awareness of current available services and how these services can be accessed.

Goal #3: Financial Sustainability and Fiscal Responsibility.

Funding should be directed to promote coordination and to ensure regional partners continue to participate in coordination activities.

Goal #4: Promote Regional Coordination

Continue working with regional transportation providers to promote collaboration, outreach, and service coordination.

Goal #5: Use of New Technologies

The region should continue promoting new technologies to improve service delivery and coordination.

Each goal is associated with a set of recommendations, which are bigger-picture initiatives that Metro COG and stakeholders can implement or facilitate. These are identified in Figure 72.

Figure 72. Coordinated Plan Goals and Recommendations

Goal	Recommendation
Goal 1: Service Availability and Accessibility	Plan to add **Sunday service** in areas of highest transit need
	Systematically add **service early mornings and evenings**
	Work with the cities and developers early to **plan for transit and access to transit** in new residential communities, industrial areas, and major employment locations
	Explore opportunities to **expand access to wheelchair accessible vehicles**
	Explore the possibilities for low-income fare/pass programs
Goal #2: Education, Marketing, and Awareness	Develop **marketing and informational materials in multiple languages** to assist Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and New American populations
	Develop a **mobility management newsletter** focused on coordination activities, resources, and events
	Continue promoting local and regional transportation services through the **FM Ride Source**
	Continue promoting **travel training** to help people become familiar with public transit and specialized transportation services in the region
Goal #3: Financial Sustainability and Fiscal Responsibility	Create **funding matrix** to bring awareness to available funds and upcoming deadlines for grant funding
	Develop **internal educational campaign** for providers who would otherwise use grants, including 5310 funding on timelines and how funding works
Goal #4: Promote Regional Coordination	Develop **regional coordination working group (RCWG)** to promote coordination with public transit providers and specialized transportation services throughout the region
	Continue **coordinating with major employers, local colleges, and tribal nations**
Goal #4: Use of New Technologies	Explore the use of **Transportation Network Companies (TNCs)** to supplement paratransit or other specialized transportation services
	Research **platforms or apps that coordinate ride requests** and scheduling for specialized transportation

Projects that address transportation gaps identified in the CHSTP are eligible to be funded through federal funds distributed by Metro COG to regional partners. **The full Coordinated Plan can be found in Appendix D**.

MATBUS TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN