

2025 SENATE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2254

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
1/30/2025

Relating to a bill for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

2:52 p.m. Chairman Clemens opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Clemens, Vice Chairwoman Cory, Senator Hogan, Senator Klein, Senator Paulson, Senator Rummel

Discussion Topics:

- Determining criteria for allocations
- General fees paid by riders
- Federal grants and matching funds amounts
- Turnaround on orders for public transit vehicles

2:52 p.m. Senator Boschee, District 44, introduced SB 2254, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32995.

3:01 p.m. Dale Bergman, Public Transportation Director, City of Fargo, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32507.

3:14 p.m. Brian Horinka, Transit Superintendent, Minot City Transit, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32648.

3:33 p.m. Julie Bommelman, Transit Director, City of Fargo, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32645.

3:53 p.m. Micha Olson, Attorney, North Dakota Protection & Advocacy Project, testified in favor and submitted testimony #32196.

3:58 p.m. Trevor Vannett, Consumer, testified in favor and submitted testimony #31359.

4:06 p.m. Chad Orn, Deputy Director for Planning, NDDOT, testified neutral and submitted testimony #32914.

Additional written testimony:

Leif Snyder submitted written testimony in favor #32422.

Cale Dunwoody, Vice President of Public Policy, FMWF Chamber of Commerce, submitted written testimony in favor #32980.

4:17 p.m. Chairman Clemens closed the hearing.

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Chance Anderson, Committee Clerk

**Testimony in Support of SB2254
2025 Legislative Session
January 24, 2025**

My name is Trevor Vannett and I live in Bismarck.

I support this bill as it includes funding for fixed route city transportation grants and calls for a legislative study to assess and develop a long-term funding plan for our transportation systems. I believe that this bill is vitally important for our state and will have a profound impact on the accessibility, economic vitality, and quality of life for all residents, particularly in urban and rural communities.

Sincerely,
Trevor Vannett
701-955-0000



Protection & Advocacy Project

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Senate Transportation Committee Senate Bill 2254 - January 30, 2025 Testimony of Micah Olson, P&A Position-In Support

My name is Micah Olson. I am attorney at Protection & Advocacy. I am speaking today in favor of Senate Bill 2254, a bill to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

In my work, I have frequently interacted with individuals who rely on public transportation. Prior to working at Protection & Advocacy, I worked as an Independent Living Advocate in Minot.

While working there, I found that public transportation works well for some aspects of daily life, but there are many limitations. In Minot, there are two choices for public transportation: The Minot City Bus, which runs on fixed routes, and Souris Basin Transportation, which provides paratransit in the Minot area. The Minot city bus operates from 7 am to 7 pm Monday through Friday. It does not operate on the weekends. Souris Basin Transportation has longer hours than the city bus but has limited hours on the weekend. Souris Basin also requires individuals to schedule a ride at least 24 hours in advance. Consumers have reported to me that 24 hours in advance is often not soon enough to guarantee that a ride will be available.

The BisMan City Bus has service on Saturday, but it does not operate on Sundays. Individuals who use paratransit in Bismarck have reported the same scheduling issues as in Minot.

Although fixed routes have a reliable schedule, its hours limit its usefulness. Someone who has a typical daytime work schedule could use it to get to and from work, but it would not be useful for someone who works past hours of operation and on the weekends. It is also not useful for people to run errands after work or on weekends. A person who relies on the city bus would have to plan to do errands during the week, which could be difficult for someone who works full-time.

Individuals who use paratransit reported some difficulties. Sometimes their work hours did not align with paratransit's schedule. They might arrive to work very early or late. Sometimes they would have to leave work early if paratransit came early. Consumers also reported not being able to schedule rides on the weekends, even if they attempted to schedule far in advance. Paratransit also does not allow for sudden or spontaneous trips. This affects an individual's ability to socialize and participate in community activities.

Even though public transportation is useful in many situations, several individuals I have interacted with have reported significant limitations. The fixed routes do not go to all areas of Minot and Bismarck, including to many new apartment buildings. Newer apartment buildings are often more accessible than older apartments and they

are often better options for disabled people.

In my work, I assisted a wheelchair user who did not drive in finding an apartment. We found an apartment that worked for him, but it was not on the bus route and he would need to use Souris Basin Transportation to get to work. I worked with other individuals who prioritized convenient access to the city bus over a fully accessible apartment.

Even though I do not typically need to use public transportation, it still could be relevant to my own life. Because I drive with a hand control, I would not be able to drive another vehicle if I had an unexpected problem with my car. The apartment where I previously lived in Minot was not on the bus route, so I would not have access to public transportation if I needed it. Paratransit likely would not assist me in this type of situation, since it would not be likely a ride would be available on short notice.

P&A supports SB 2254, as more funding for fixed routes would benefit disabled individuals in North Dakota. P&A also supports increased funding for paratransit.

Chairman Clemens and members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

I am writing you in support of SB 2254.

My name is Leif Snyder and am a resident of Minot. I have lost the ability to drive since losing about 70 percent of my vision. I find the fixed route bussing system in Minot inadequate as it runs from 7 am to 7 pm and not on weekends. The lack of weekends or at least adding Saturday would help immensely as would extending the available hours. I try not to use the para transport bussing (Souris Basin Transport) as there are those who need it more than I. There are scheduling issues that often require more than the required 24 hr notice because it is at times very busy. With the real threat of loosing 100% of my vision, I hope it still exists in the future and can be improved, if not for my sake the sake of others.

When possible I try to be as pedestrian as possible however while cars are safer than ever drivers are getting worse and worse as I have been hit as a pedestrian by vehicles 4 times, and the near misses are almost to many to count. Keep in mind every time I have been hit or nearly hit I have had the right of way or the supposed protection of a timed crosswalk. Thus I see the importance of an improved bus system as a necessity.

Thank you,
Leif Snyder

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City of Grand Forks
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TESTIMONY ON SENATE BILL 2254
Transportation
January 30, 2025

Dale Bergman, Public Transportation Director
City of Grand Forks, ND

Chairman Clemens and members of the committee, my name is Dale Bergman. I am the City of Grand Forks Public Transportation Director for the Cities Area Transit (CAT). I am a member of the Dakota Transit Association, and a member of The Community Transit Association of America (CTAA). I am here to testify in support of Senate Bill 2254.

We are a small urban transit property that provides fixed route bus service and complimentary paratransit service for elderly, senior and disabled clients who are unable to make it to a fixed route bus stop for their travel needs in the large urban cities. We are at all time highs in ridership since 2013 with 282,270 in 2024 which is an increase of 8.25% over 2023 and continues to climb, along with our paratransit ridership increasing to record highs of 56,681 rides in 2024. We take people to the places they need and want to go. We're connecting people to careers and opportunities with flexible transit options as part of a diverse and vibrant community of customers.

The current state-aid formula covers the elderly and disabled people riding the service in mainly the rural areas, but in the large cities we transport all individuals', adults, students, seniors, and disabled. They have needs like all of us to get to work, medical appointments, grocery shopping and daily living needs. They can be our neighbors, friends or family members that need the rides we provide. The current state funding formula only covers a small percentage (8%) of our services. The Federal portion is 50% percent, and the local match portion is 42% of a 3.5-million-dollar budget for operations. Our costs of service in the last 5 years have increased dramatically by over 40% for operations for labor, fuels, parts and supplies.

The cost of a 35-foot large, fixed route bus is currently \$700,000 and that does not include the cameras, CAD/AVL system and driver safety items we are required to have to protect drivers, passengers, and the city for insurance claims for accidents and injuries. The cost for a cutaway vehicle is currently at \$151,450 again without the safety equipment needed. These costs for vehicles have gone up 50% in the last 5 years and have caused a severe strain on our budgets.

With strain on the budgets of the city, we may not be able to continue the services as they currently are or add any additional services requested. The transportation services for the citizens will affect many parts of their lives from job access to medical care to even buying food for their families.

We ask for at DO PASS on SB 2254 to address the short term funding needs and the study for funding public transportation needs in the future.

Respectfully,
Dale Bergman
Public Transportation Director
City of Grand Forks

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2254
Funding for Urban Public Transit
Senate Transportation Committee**

January 30, 2025

Good afternoon Chairman Clemens and members of the committee. My name is Julie Bommelman, the Transit Director from Fargo. I am speaking in support of SB2254 because I see the impact and importance of public transportation on every citizen in the State of North Dakota.

SB2254 identifies the needs of public transportation (transit) providers in the urban areas (Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot and Bismarck) within North Dakota. The providers of urban transit within the State of North Dakota request a more substantive state funding program to assist with the costs associated with fixed-route ridership on public transportation. In partnership with transit officials in Minot and Grand Forks, we are respectfully requesting a \$15 million biennium appropriation to assist urban transit cities with the growing expenses of providing fixed-route transit, along with requiring a study to determine a permanent funding solution for urban fixed-route transit services in North Dakota.

We are representing urban transit providers in ND and the funding request before you today is for our fixed-route systems. Fixed-route systems are transit services operated along predetermined routes according to a fixed schedule. There is also paratransit service, which applies to all public entities who operate a fixed route system (there is a requirement to provide paratransit service that is both comparable and complementary to the fixed route services; this is a curb-to-curb or door-to-door accessible service for qualifying individuals who cannot use the fixed route system). Additionally, demand-response transit is any non-fixed route system of transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling by the customer.

1. Federal Reclassification

The designation of transit providers (urban, rural, tribal) is defined by population in accordance with the latest official federal census. The 2020 census reclassified the City of Fargo from a small to large urban designation with a population over 200,000 which resulted in a reduction of over \$600,000 or 17% in federal operating assistance. In accordance with ND Public Transportation Fund 39-04.2-02, the State public transit funding we currently receive can be used to operate transit services and as a local match to federal dollars. The State of ND funding is not designed, nor appropriately funded, to support the needs of urban fixed-route ridership. The funding model is based on elderly and disabled riders and results in inadequate and disparate funding. With the current allocation model, the urban counties are all at the bottom of the list, with Cass County being the very last at \$2.95 per rider.

I would like to emphasize the study is an imperative part of this bill, as it would allow the funding formula to be appropriately modified while protecting the current funds being allocated to the rural and smaller counties. We do not want to take away from their portion – we are looking to right-size the funding going to the fixed-route transit systems in our urban areas.

Urban areas recognize the requirement to fund a local portion for transit providers, however, the City of Fargo's General Fund cannot sustain the current annual subsidy. Due to rising costs of providing transit, the City of Fargo's annual Transit subsidy has grown to an anticipated \$5.5 million for 2025, from approximately \$600,000 per year in 2016. This "fiscal cliff" has been building over time, however, COVID transit funds during 2020-2023 camouflaged the issue and delayed the inevitable for several years. Fargo

has weathered significant increases in operating (i.e. bus driver services, security services, staffing/retainage) and in capital costs (bus replacements, parts, shelters, supplies). The rising costs not only limit our ability to expand critical transportation services but leave significant unmet needs such as expansion of service into unserved areas, Sunday fixed-route service, additional critical staff, updated vehicles/capital equipment, facilities upgrades/expansion and safety and security upgrades. I want to emphasize the criticality of receiving the requested funding for **maintaining** existing service levels and avoid transit service cuts like we saw during COVID. We are currently close to returning services to pre-COVID levels and do not want to see cuts in our service.

Transit is much more than just transportation, it is independent access and affects workforce/commerce, health (medical treatments and appointments), education, and basic needs such as grocery visits. Transit connects people to jobs, schools, social services, faith-based activities, health facilities and community activities. Transit allows workers and job seekers to reach places of employment, helps elderly and persons with disabilities lead independent lives, gives shoppers the opportunity to purchase goods and services and reduces congestion and improves air quality. The State of North Dakota reaps benefits from public transit within urban communities. As such, transit contributes to economic development and related state/local taxes, supports preventative health care and personal independence which allows residents to remain in their own homes and out of state-subsidized care facilities longer, and encourages higher education and related workforce development. For citizens who rely on publicly available transportation as their only way to reach school or employment, the lack of transportation programs and services can create barriers to education and potential job opportunities.

The Fargo area is also a regional medical center, a source of essential human services, and a growing draw for senior citizens, both locally and from outlying communities. Having transportation to these services and access to the community is key for quality of life (see attached input from passengers). In Fargo we have programs to encourage use of fixed-route public transportation: we offer a business/transit program where we partner with Sanford to purchase passes for their employees utilizing transit. They see the program as a benefit to their employees and themselves as it decreases the need for additional parking but enables them to attract employees who otherwise may not be able to reach their locations; we also offer demand-response services to the industrial park area and in the evenings around the North Dakota State University (NDSU) campus; and we partner with NDSU and other local colleges/universities to offer the U-Pass program which allows eligible college students to ride any fixed route in our system and the participating college/university pays a fee. In fiscal year 2024 Fargo alone provided 706,145 fixed route rides and 234,437 elderly/disabled rides in the State of North Dakota. **Fargo area ridership accounts for 50.5% and 34.2% of the State's total ridership in each respective category.**

We understand the commonsense response to our request for additional funding may be increasing fares or eliminating/reducing frequency of existing fixed routes. Fares make up approximately 10% of our overall funding and implementing either of these (increasing fares or reducing service) will likely result in lower fare revenues and ridership/passenger miles as demonstrated by experience in the industry. As a large urban, ridership and passenger miles are used to determine Federal Section 5307 operating funding and the consequence of increasing fares can lead to lower ridership and subsequently, lower fare revenue, referred to as a 'death spiral'. These services are critical to everyday life for many ND citizens. Urban transit providers would appreciate seeing a \$15 million biennium appropriation and the opportunity to address the interim committees during their study period to determine a permanent funding solution for urban and rural citizens in our state.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Transit Rider Input Received in Fargo (SB2254) (1.30.25)

1	I saw a bus driver be kindly to an elderly lady who was struggling with her groceries and was very patient with her helping her even though he had a schedule to keep. I know it could have been my mother or grandmother and seeing that made me happy. All the bus drivers I have interacted with on the Fargo MATBUS over the past two years have been great.
2	Received a voicemail from a citizen who wanted one of our drivers recognized for helping a blind rider as he got off the bus and was confused because of construction. She said the driver went above and beyond to help this rider and wanted him to be recognized.
3	Driver is a SAINT!! a lady came to the window after off boarding route 15 at 19:15 and wanted management to know how great of a driver he was and how much she appreciated him for his patience with having to deal with a very full bus that had a few rowdy passengers with 1099's on board. She said the driver had patience and professionalism like she has never seen before, she commended him to the fullest and said you could call her back if you want to.
4	Received a call from a rider that wanted to give the driver they had a Kudo's for being very kind and friendly. She stated that he did a phenomenal job and wanted to make sure that he was recognized for that.
5	This driver is such a good driver. He is always on time, nice and polite. I think he is the absolute best! He's very thoughtful and friendly to everyone. The best driver you have!
6	Passenger called in to compliment driver as he helped her on his, the hospital wouldn't help. Without his help she wouldn't have been able to ride his bus.
7	Passenger said driver is very helpful to persons with disabilities riding Route 16. He always makes the 'Cashwise Announcement' manually to make sure everyone hears it.
8	Passenger said that driver has a great personality and is very professional. She said she was feeling extra crabby one day and he handled her attitude with grace. She complimented him on that and the two of them laughed together.
9	Driver is the best driver you have. This man shows up every day and he doesn't complain. For being 73 years old, he does a damn great job. THIS MAN DESERVES DRIVER OF THE YEAR! This guy is the happiest man I know and is the best employee you have!
10	MATBUS driver yesterday deserves a 🙏🙏🙏🙏🙏 double raise for assistance he gave to a young man in a wheelchair on and off the bus!! THANK YOU 🙏
11	Passenger called to say that the GTC Dispatcher is really nice and helpful. She helped him with his paperwork from the Cour: ty for reloading his pass.
12	The driver is going above and beyond! Everyday when I get on the bus he always says Hi, Good morning how are you? And when I get off he says Have a great day! And waves at me when he drives by me on the Veterans Memorial Bridge on main! I make sure I leave at a quarter til because he makes me day so much better!
13	"I feel like the drivers don't get enough positive compliments, but this driver definitely deserves it! She was friendly and went out of her way to make sure that even in the melting ice and snow, that all of the passengers were able to board and deboard the bus with ease and safety. Most of the drivers are always in a rush and bordering on rude, but this young lady was thoughtful and I just wanted to let you know what a great employee she is!"
14	Passenger left a heartfelt voicemail giving props and lifting up dispatcher for helping her above and beyond! She said she was in a difficult situation and he helped direct her where she needed to go and got her a bus pass. Passenger said she is beyond appreciative, and because of the dispatcher's help, she is now at a new job and has her own apartment. She said please make sure the dispatcher gets the recognition he deserves!
15	You folks NEED more drivers like her. She has a great attitude and tells it like it is, also she is an excellent driver!!
16	You are greatly appreciated for all that you do for myself, other bus riders, the bus drivers, the GTC, and Fargo. Thank you very much.
17	I just wanted to say how awesome the driver of bus 1228 was today. I watched him go out of his way to make it in to our un-plowed parking lot and then he walked all of the way to the other end of our building to assist an elderly woman to the bus.
18	I am writing to express my gratitude for the beautiful thoughtfulness and courtesy that one of your bus drivers showed me and everyone else on her bus this past Thursday, January 13th. I don't know the name of this lovely young woman but she was driving late morning/early afternoon on January 13th, and I hope this information will allow you to identify her and to pass along my thanks.
19	She showed exceptional kindness in so many ways. As I was running toward the bus through heavy snow, she opened the door and called out to me that I didn't need to rush because she knew I was coming and would wait for me. Later, when I rang the bell for my stop, she steered the bus to a spot where I could get off onto cleared pavement instead of into a snowbank.
20	As each passenger got on and off, she greeted each one warmly and gave good wishes to each one who was leaving the bus. When one passenger spoke roughly to another passenger on his way out the door, she apologized on his behalf with reassuring and uplifting words.
21	I rely on the bus to get around town, especially during winter when the sidewalks are icy and the temperatures are low. Riding with a driver like this young lady makes a bus trip not only a form of transportation but also a reminder of how kind and gracious and caring people can be. Please thank her for me
22	Received a call from a rider wanting to compliment driver. The rider fell getting down from a snow bank while boarding the bus and could not get up and driver got off the bus to assist her. She also said that driver is very friendly and helpful, but can also be very strict as the rider has seen her deal with intoxicated riders.
23	I received a call from a rider that wanted to compliment a driver for going above and beyond. The driver helped an elderly man off the bus and to a safe spot because the sidewalk was very slippery. The rider thought that was a very nice thing to do and went above and beyond her duties.
24	I wanted to give a Kudos to the driver of bus 2182 this morning. I was running a bit late this morning due to the 1 hour frequency of Rte 11 and I get off after the bus arrives at the VA so I missed it so I had to walk down to GTC to try to catch an earlier bus and I was so sore I could barely move. Then, on top of that, with the time change it is so dark now when I leave that I had a hard time walking on the ice. Anyway, the driver stopped and waited for me at my stop and even got out and made sure I didn't slip on the ice. There was a big puddle last night and it froze of course but I didn't know and couldn't see how icy it was so I appreciate the driver waiting to make sure I got on the bus safely.
25	My class took the bus to the downtown square today. We wanted to let you know how amazingly helpful the bus driver for bus 11 was. He made our first city bus experience so easy. We are so excited to continue using Mat Bus here on out!
26	I noticed a couple of things that the driver did that I thought should get a kudo's. A passenger was trying to deboard at 20th St & 16th Ave and the spot looked to be full of snow or slippery, so the driver let the passenger stay on and he drove to the nearest driveway to let them off. Thought this was great customer service.
27	Passenger called to compliment driver on his behavior and helpfulness. She said he has a great personality and is upbeat. Passenger reported driver is was kind, patient, and understanding.
28	On Monday April 24th, I rode along with driver on Route 18 and she was very helpful to customers all along the route. She also did a great job with driving through the construction on 32nd Ave S, especially with how narrow some areas were.
29	Driver Did a great job even though there was rude passengers. Keep up the great work
30	Received a call from a gal who rode paratransit with her client. She wanted to call and tell us how great her driver was. She said that he is absolutely amazing, personable, kind and compassionate.
31	I want to commend one of your drivers. I have not seen this gentleman before but he was one of the nicest drivers I have encountered lately and I have had a host of problems with the connections lately and winter has not really started yet. First, he verified that the Rte 2 driver had called in my connection request. Then, when we got to 12th Ave and 20th St, the train stop arms were down but went back up after he started up at the red light. He stopped anyway he said to poke his head out the window just to make sure there was no train coming and I appreciate that. Then, when I took Rte 1 at 7:30 to come down to the library to send these messages, he was driving that bus. He greeted everyone very pleasantly. Nice to get some good service. Sorry I don't have a name or number but I hope you can track him down with the time and bus number and give him a kudos.
32	Rec'd a call from passenger and she was very complimentary towards a driver and wanted her to know. She said she was delightful and we were very smart to hire her. She picked her up from the VA today
33	I wanted to compliment the driver on Rte 15 Wednesday, Dec 20 which would have left West Acres about 3:53pm. I made my connection that day for the first time since I started riding that route back in September. I think it was bus 1200 that time but I especially wanted to commend the driver as I saw the bus stopped at a stoplight a few blocks back and started running to try to catch it. I had to be careful as there were some icy patches on the sidewalk and I was carrying a big tin since we had had a potluck at work that day but I made the connection and got home in time to do some outside cleanup and take advantage of the nice weather when it was still light enough to see.
34	Passenger informed me that she had a new driver and she expressed gratitude that the driver inquired about how to best help and work with her when picking her up from Bergstrom. Passenger found this gesture to be very considerate and was pleased to report that the driver was very kind.
35	Driver was driving north on 10th St and a little girl ran across the street in front of his bus. He did a great job of stopping the bus and avoiding an accident.

36	Driver was about to start the route and went up to a elderly gentleman waiting in the bus shelter for a route. He went up to the man and asked him if he wanted to ride inside the warm bus instead of waiting outside. The man said yes. The Scott proceeded to grab all the man's grocery bags and carry them inside the bus for him. I thought that was amazing customer service from Scott."
37	"I saw driver spot one of our regular riders walking west bound at GTC. He then asked rider would you like some assistance finding your bus and escorted him to the bus he was taking. Thank you for going the extra mile to make sure that rider found his way to correct bus."
38	A passenger called to say she had a very good experience with driver on 03/15. She said he went out of his way to help her and was a very kind man. She also said she has had many good experiences with our drivers and they deserve to be complimented
39	Passenger called to compliment driver saying as she is blind and this driver helped her from her door at home to the door at the business and was professional and pleasant. She said this driver was one of our best drivers.
40	Regular passenger called to thank dispatch for assistance in finding locations along routes whenever she is at the GTC and she is very grateful for the service as it is her only mode of transportation.
41	He's been deserving of some kind of award numerous times. He has a lot of patience and very good people skills.
42	Rec'd a call from rider and he wanted to compliment driver for his customer service. Passenger is a paraplegic and the Paratransit seats can be uncomfortable for him, but driver always takes the bumps slowly and slows down when necessary and is very considerate of his disability
43	A passenger called to compliment a driver on his safe driving. She stated another driver pulled in front of the bus and the driver was able to do an evasive maneuver to avoid a collision. She stated his quick action prevented a serious accident.
44	It was a terrific experience all the way from calling and booking the ride to to her rides. Your staff on the phone was so polite & courteous. The bus drivers were very kind to my 88 year old mother.
45	I just wanted to say thank you for providing great service. It truly made a difference in our day.
46	Driver called dispatch and stated she had female passenger that could not speak English and did not know where she was going. Dispatch had driver bring the On-Demand bus to the GTC where the Language-Link service was used to help her get here where the gal needed to go. During this the driver kindly gave the kids some snacks and drinks as I worked to help understand the passengers needs. We ended up taking her to the Sta-Mart truck stop where she would be safe.
47	I wanted to compliment one of your drivers this morning, I believe it was bus 4249, would have left GTC at about 6:45am Dec 19, rte 15 Westbound. I don't believe I had ever seen this driver before. We got to 13th Ave and 25th St Stop. There was a lady in a wheelchair waiting to board with a couple of other people and she was having trouble getting over the snowbank so the driver offered to pull up if she was okay with that he said and then she was able to negotiate the ramp and board. He checked to make where they were going and if they needed transfers and got her all buckled in, all with a smile so I appreciate his cheerful attitude and good service on what will probably be a trying day.

Testimony
Senate Bill 2254 - Department of Transportation
Funding for fixed route city transportation services grants and to provide for a legislative
management study.
January 30, 2025

Chairman Clemens and members of the committee, my name is Brian Horinka, and I serve as the Transit Superintendent for Minot City Transit. I am here today to passionately advocate for SB 2254.

Minot City Transit does more than operate fixed-route public transit services within our city limits; we are a vital lifeline for the residents of Minot. Historically, we functioned as a rural community, supported by Federal Section 5311 grants from North Dakota. However, our recent transition to an urban designation has brought us to the Federal Section 5307 Urban funding model, and with it, a new set of challenges. This funding process is complex and based on fluctuating formulas tied to population and ridership metrics, leading to unpredictability each fiscal year. This variability hinders our ability to budget effectively and identify the local resources necessary for the matching funds that are critical to securing these federal grants.

Moreover, the current State Aid for Transit grants prioritize support based on senior and disabled ridership, offering much-needed assistance to rural transit providers in our state. Unfortunately, urban transit providers like us receive significantly less funding due to the demographics of fixed-route users. The funding sought in this bill for the upcoming biennium is essential to bridge the gap between available federal resources and the local contributions required. By supporting this legislation, we will not only sustain existing transit services in our urban centers but also pave the way for the

expansion and enhancement of these critical systems as our communities continue to grow.

The current landscape of public transit funding is dire, marked by alarming volatility and soaring costs. In recent years, the expenses associated with delivering transit services have skyrocketed, putting immense pressure on already limited resources. We are grappling with rising operating expenses—fuel and parts costs have surged, while the urgent need to offer competitive wages to attract and retain staff is widening the financial chasm between what is needed and what is available.

Moreover, the price of replacement buses has escalated dramatically, driven by increasingly stringent EPA compliance and a dwindling number of manufacturers capable of meeting the current Buy America standards. To illustrate, a bus that cost us \$455,000 in 2021 now carries an eye-watering price tag of \$650,000 for replacement. This unsustainable inflation in costs forces agencies like ours to extend the lifespan of aging buses far beyond their intended use, resulting in escalating operational costs and an inevitable decline in service quality.

The impact of these rising costs is profound, threatening the very foundation of our public transit system and the essential services it provides to the community. Without immediate and significant intervention, we risk compromising the reliability and accessibility that transit riders depend on every day.

It is important to recognize that current transit funding models heavily emphasize ridership numbers, which can be misleading. In predominantly rural areas like ours, this focus presents significant drawbacks. We must shift our perspective from seeking

volume to valuing the impact our services have on individual lives. The numbers may appear smaller, but the stories behind them are profound.

Consider the single mother of five who relies on our services to ensure that her children reach their schools safely while she can get to work to provide for her family. Think of the gentleman who, due to health complications, can no longer drive but is able to attend his doctor's appointments and engage in community activities, thanks to our transit system. Most strikingly, reflect on the courageous young woman who survived a horrific accident, leaving her paralyzed from the chest down. With our ADA-accessible transit, she has regained a level of independence that allows her to live on her own and participate in life again.

These stories aren't just anecdotes; they represent the hundreds of individuals whose lives are profoundly impacted by the services we provide every single day. Without our transit system, these individuals—and many more like them—could face isolation, diminished quality of life, or even the loss of their homes.

Supporting SB 2254 is not just a matter of funding; it is about affirming our commitment to these lives and the vital role public transit plays in fostering vibrant, inclusive communities. Together, let's ensure that everyone in Minot and the other urban communities in North Dakota has access to the mobility and independence that is their right. Thank you.

**Senate Bill No. 2254****Senate Transportation**

Fort Totten Room | Jan. 30, 2025, 2:30 p.m.

Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Chad M. Orn, Deputy Director for Planning for the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT). I am here to provide neutral testimony on SB 2254.

SB 2254 would provide one time funding of \$15,000,000 to the NDDOT for the purpose of providing grants to fixed route city transportation providers for the 2025–2027 biennium.

In North Dakota, each of the four largest cities have a fixed route transit system. According to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Circular 4710.1 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidance, Chapter 8, even when fixed route transit systems are fully accessible, there will be some individuals whose disabilities prevent them from being able to use the system. Because of this situation, federal regulations have been put into place to ensure these individuals have transportation available to them on the same basis as individuals using the fixed route system. The ADA regulations in 49 CFR Part 37, Subpart F, require public entities that operate a fixed route system to provide paratransit services for persons whose disabilities prevent them from using the fixed route system.

Based on the federal regulations, NDDOT believes that paratransit services should be considered part of the fixed route transit operations, regardless of whether the service is provided directly by the public entity or through a contractor. We just want to make sure the intention of SB 2254 is to include paratransit services as part of the fixed route city transportation providers.

This concludes my testimony - I would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.



Letter of Support – SB 2254

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Chairman Clemens and members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2254.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Access to transportation is vital to the wellbeing and stability of our cities, communities, and workforce. We support the allocation of these transportation dollars as they will support critical services across the state.

In 2023, Fargo represented 38.5% of all elderly and disabled riders in the state as well as 50.5% of all general rider ship in the state. Ridership grew to 863,320 in 2024 and is projected to reach 870,963 in 2025. This increase comes at the same point in time where the metro was also reclassified by the Federal Transportation Authority (2024), and the FM Metro is facing a significant reduction in federal support.

These services are essential to our communities, with North Dakotans relying on them to participate in educational opportunities, entertainment, employment, health care, community, and more. The value of providing these services to our communities is why we urge this committee to give the bill a DO PASS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2254 Testimony Senate Transportation Committee January 30, 2025

Chair Clemens and Members of the Senate Transportation Committee,

SB 2254 is before you because great things are happening in North Dakota. We continue to experience population growth. With more people calling North Dakota home, we get to experience amazing opportunities and growing pains. Additionally, the in-state migration of North Dakotans moving to our larger cities for a variety of reasons has expanded the growth for those communities. This growth is captured in the 2020 Census, which as many of you know impacts a variety of funding formulas that our state, counties, cities and Tribal governments depend on, including transit.

Because of their population growth, Minot and Fargo both have experienced a change in their community designation for the purposes of transit funding from the Federal government. This has led to both communities receiving a reduction in Federal funding for their community transit programs. Transit that their residents depend on to get to work, school, medical appointments and enjoy the amenities their communities provide. As inflation continues to impact household budgets, public transit becomes a growing option for North Dakotans looking to reduce their spending or who can't afford repairing or replacing a vehicle.

SB 2254 proposes a one-time appropriation to the ND Department of Transportation to provide grants to the four communities with fixed route transit to assist with the growing costs and reduced funding they are currently experiencing. The reason for a one-time appropriation is to bridge the biennium for a focused study to occur to allow the communities with fixed route transit and the NDDoT to identify potential funding formulas to propose to the 70th Legislative Assembly. The current funding formula only takes into account the number of riders who are disabled or above a certain age. It does not take into consideration general ridership, which includes North Dakotans who depend on public transit for their job, education, commerce, healthcare needs and general enjoyment of the city they live in.

The investment of Federal COVID relief dollars in these cities over the past two biennia allowed them to continue to function with small adjustments. With the infusion of these funds no longer an option combined with their population-based designation change they are experiencing the perfect storm that seriously jeopardizes their ability to meet the demands of their growing communities. Additionally, if the current Congress enacts the fiscal restraint that they have been alluding to it could lead to further reduction in Federal funds. So, the study is not just necessary, but very timely. We believe that tapping into the talent of in-state consultants who have helped legislators, state agencies and local governments maximize funding opportunities for other infrastructure projects will lead to a sustainable funding model for the future of fixed route transit throughout North Dakota.

Following me you will hear from the transit directors from Minot, Grand Forks and Fargo who will be able to share how the transit systems they lead positively impact their respective communities. They will also provide you with greater detail of the fiscal constraints they are facing and how the one-time funding can hold them over until a longer term, more sustainable funding model can be developed.

I hope you'll provide SB 2254 with a Do Pass recommendation and I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.

2020 UACE	2020 Name	State(s)	FTA Region(s)	2020 Population	2020 Density (Population per square mile)	2010 Population	2010 Density (Population per square mile)	Comment 1 (Name Changes and New UZAs)	Comment 2 (FTA Threshold Changes)
57655	Minot, ND	ND	8	50,925	1,909.4	Previously had a rural designation		New UZA	Crossed 50k Threshold
29089	Fargo, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	216,214	2,781.6	176,676	2,514.3		Crossed 200k Threshold
34219	Grand Forks, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	68,160	2,573.6	61,270	2,506.6		
07921	Bismarck, ND	ND	8	98,198	2,346.2	81,955	2,114.6		

2020 Name	State(s)	FTA Region(s)	2000 Population	2000 Density (Population per square mile)	1990 Population	1990 Density (Population per square mile)
Minot, ND	ND	8				
Fargo, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	142,477	3,110.4	121,336	2,356
Grand Forks, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	56,573	3,376.4	58,103	3,073
Bismarck, ND	ND	8	74,991	2,210.5	66,476	1,819

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/2020-census-changes-uzapopulation>

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Fort Totten Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
2/6/2025

Relating to an act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

11:28 a.m. Chairman Clemens opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Clemens, Vice Chairwoman Cory, Senator Hogan, Senator Klein, Senator Paulson, Senator Rummel

Discussion Topics:

- Amendment to add paratransit and lower appropriation amount

11:30 a.m. Senator Klein moved amendment LC#25.1109.01001, testimony #35837.

11:30 a.m. Senator Rummel seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Claire Cory	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Jerry Klein	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

11:33 a.m. Senator Klein moved a Do Pass as Amended and Rerefer to Appropriations.

11:33 a.m. Senator Rummel seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator David A. Clemens	Y
Senator Claire Cory	Y
Senator Kathy Hogan	Y
Senator Jerry Klein	Y
Senator Bob Paulson	Y
Senator Dean Rummel	Y

Motion passed 6-0-0.

Vice Chairwoman Cory will carry the bill.

Senate Transportation Committee
SB 2254
February 6, 2025
Page 2

11:34 a.m. Chairman Clemens closed the hearing.

Chance Anderson, Committee Clerk

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

SENATE BILL NO. 2254

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Cory, Burckhard, Sickler

Representatives D. Ruby, M. Ruby

2-6-25
1082
JBY

1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route
2 city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management
3 study.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - FIXED ROUTE**
6 **CITY AND PARATRANSIT TRANSPORTATION GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING.** There is
7 appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise
8 appropriated, the sum of ~~\$15,000,000~~ \$5,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary,
9 to the department of transportation for the purpose of providing grants to fixed route city
10 transportation providers and their associated paratransit services, for the biennium beginning
11 July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding appropriated in this section is one-time
12 funding item.

13 **SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - FIXED ROUTE CITY**
14 **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FUNDING.** During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative
15 management shall study the funding needs of fixed route city transportation networks. The
16 study must include a review of how the fixed route transportation networks can address
17 population growth, economic development, workforce needs, and healthcare needs. As part of
18 the study, the legislative management shall develop a proposed funding formula within the
19 department of transportation budget for fixed route city transportation systems. The legislative

- 1 management shall report its recommendations, along with any legislation necessary to
- 2 implement the recommendations, to the seventieth legislative assembly.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
SB 2254**

Transportation Committee (Sen. Clemens, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1109.01001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2254 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

25.1109.01001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Senator Klein
January 31, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO

SENATE BILL NO. 2254

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Cory, Burckhard, Sickler

Representatives D. Ruby, M. Ruby

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2 city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management
3 study.

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Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly

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2025 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2254

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations - Government Operations Division Red River Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
2/17/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

10:04 a.m. Chairman Wanzek opened the hearing.

Members present: Chairman Wanzek, Vice-Chair Dwyer, Senator Burckhard, Senator Erbele, and Senator Sickler.

Discussion Topics:

- Reduction in Federal funding for paratransit
- Interstate cooperation
- Fixed cost for fleet
- Rural transit a separate bill
- Human service aspect of bill
- Program sustainability

10:04 a.m. Senator Boschee, District 44, testified in favor and submitted testimony #37862, #37869, and #37868.

10:22 a.m. Trevor Vanett testified in favor.

10:23 a.m. Cale Dunwoody, Vice President of Public Policy, Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Horace Chamber of Commerce, testified in favor.

10:24 a.m. Kory Peterson, former mayor of Horace, testified in favor.

10:25 a.m. Chairman Wanzek closed the hearing.

Carol Thompson, Committee Clerk



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND, 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2254 Testimony - Senate Appropriations Committee - Government Operations Division February 17, 2025

Chair Wanzek and Members of the Government Operations Division,

SB 2254 as amended was unanimously supported by the Transportation Committee. It provides a \$5M one-time grant to the cities of Minot, Bismarck, Grand Forks and Fargo for their fixed route transit and paratransit system. This would allow for a study to occur over the next interim to explore the feasibility of an updated transit funding formula for these four communities. The current funding formula only considers riders that are disabled or above an age that designates them as seniors. It does not take into consideration general ridership, which includes North Dakotans who depend on public transit for their job, education, commerce, healthcare needs and general enjoyment of the city they live in.

We continue to experience population growth. With more people calling North Dakota home, we get to experience amazing opportunities and growing pains. Additionally, the in-state migration of North Dakotans moving to our larger cities for a variety of reasons has expanded the growth for those communities. This growth is captured in the 2020 Census, which as many of you know impacts a variety of funding formulas that our state, counties, cities and Tribal governments depend on, including transit.

Because of their population growth, Minot and Fargo both have experienced a change in their community designation for the purposes of transit funding from the Federal government. This has led to both communities receiving a reduction in Federal funding for their community transit programs. Transit that their residents depend on to get to work, school, medical appointments and enjoy the amenities their communities provide. As inflation continues to impact household budgets, public transit becomes a growing option for North Dakotans looking to reduce their spending or who can't afford repairing or replacing a vehicle.

The investment of Federal COVID relief dollars in these cities over the past two biennia allowed them to continue to function with small adjustments. With the infusion of these funds no longer an option combined with their population-based designation change they are experiencing the perfect storm that seriously jeopardizes their ability to meet the demands of their growing communities. Additionally, if the current Congress enacts the fiscal restraint that they have been alluding to it could lead to further reduction in Federal funds. So, the study is not just necessary, but very timely. We believe that tapping into the talent of in-state consultants who have helped legislators, state agencies and local governments maximize funding opportunities for other infrastructure projects will lead to a sustainable funding model for the future of fixed route transit throughout North Dakota.

I hope you'll provide SB 2254 with a Do Pass recommendation or amend it into the Department of Transportation budget. I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.

2020 UACE	2020 Name	State(s)	FTA Region(s)	2020 Population	2020 Density (Population per square mile)	2010 Population	2010 Density (Population per square mile)	Comment 1 (Name Changes and New UZAs)	Comment 2 (FTA Threshold Changes)
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Bismarck, ND	ND	8	74,991	2,210.5	66,476	1,819

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/2020-census-changes-uzapopulation>

"Distribution of Funds per SB2254 using NDCC Transit Formula"

No calculations provided.

	# Providers per		\$5 Million	\$15 Million
	County	County	allocation	allocation
Bismarck-Mandan	1	Burleigh	\$ 1,445,359	\$ 4,336,078
Bismarck-Mandan	1	Morton		
Fargo Metro	1	Cass	\$ 1,988,318	\$ 5,964,954
Grand Forks	1	Grand Forks	\$ 800,500	\$ 2,401,501
Minot	1	Ward	\$ 765,823	\$ 2,297,467
			\$ 5,000,000	\$ 15,000,000

2024 Ridership estimates

	Fixed Route	Para Transit	Total Riders	Ridership %	Base Allocation per Metro	Allocated by rider	TOTAL Allocation		Base Allocation per Metro	Alloca
Bismarck-Mandan	121,538	90,207	211,745	13.41%	\$250,000.00	\$536,492.15	\$786,492.15	15.73%	\$500,000.00	\$1,0
Fargo-West Fargo	885,891	60,205	946,096	59.93%	\$250,000.00	\$2,397,095.91	\$2,647,095.91	52.94%	\$500,000.00	\$4,7
Grand Forks	282,270	56,681	338,951	21.47%	\$250,000.00	\$858,790.29	\$1,108,790.29	22.18%	\$500,000.00	\$1,7
Minot	81,945	0	81,945	5.19%	\$250,000.00	\$207,621.66	\$457,621.66	9.15%	\$500,000.00	\$41
Totals			1,578,737		\$1,000,000.00	\$4,000,000.00	\$5,000,000.00		\$2,000,000.00	\$8,0

2024 Ridership estimates

	Fixed Route	Para Transit	Total Riders	Ridership %	Base Allocation per Metro	Allocated by rider	TOTAL Allocation		Base Allocation per Metro	Alloca
Bismarck-Mandan	121,538	90,207	211,745	13.41%	\$500,000.00	\$402,369.11	\$902,369.11	18.05%	\$1,000,000.00	\$80
Fargo-West Fargo	885,891	60,205	946,096	59.93%	\$500,000.00	\$1,797,821.93	\$2,297,821.93	45.96%	\$1,000,000.00	\$3,5
Grand Forks	282,270	56,681	338,951	21.47%	\$500,000.00	\$644,092.71	\$1,144,092.71	22.88%	\$1,000,000.00	\$1,2
Minot	81,945	0	81,945	5.19%	\$500,000.00	\$155,716.25	\$655,716.25	13.11%	\$1,000,000.00	\$31
Totals			1,578,737		\$2,000,000.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$5,000,000.00		\$4,000,000.00	\$6,0

** CARES & ARPA one-time 100% funding (no match required) **FEDERAL** allocations to City and could be used as operating or capital

*** 5339 & 5310 are **FEDERAL** pass through funds (pass through State as capital grants)

**** **LOCAL** funds provided by the City as either operating or capital

***** **STATE AID** funds are the only funds provided by the **State of ND** to Urban Transit

Amounts are approved grant amounts.

GRAND FORKS CITIES AREA TRANSIT FUNDING						
	FEDERAL 5307 * OPERATING (formula federal funds)	FEDERAL CARES ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL ARPA ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL 5339 & 5310 *** CAPITAL PASS THROUGH	LOCAL FUNDS **** PROVIDED BY CITY	NORTH DAKOTA STATE AID *****
Fiscal Year	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)			(Jul 1 - Jun 30)
2019	\$2,732,618			\$890,149	\$222,538	\$259,164
2020	\$2,807,164	\$3,132,000		\$231,058	\$50,794	\$201,784
2021	\$2,602,232		\$1,102,000	\$180,427	\$29,992	\$246,730
2022	\$3,490,398			\$123,010	\$23,038	\$191,656
2023	\$3,572,115			\$67,112	\$16,778	\$259,625
2024	\$2,965,773			\$2,586,896	\$461,130	\$267,533

* 5307 **FEDERAL** funds received directly by City

** CARES & ARPA one-time 100% funding (no match required) **FEDERAL** allocations to City and could be used as operating or capital

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Amounts are approved grant amounts.

MINOT TRANSIT FUNDING						
	FEDERAL 5311* OPERATING (formula federal funds)	FEDERAL CARES ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL ARPA ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL 5339 & 5310 *** CAPITAL PASS THROUGH	LOCAL FUNDS **** PROVIDED BY CITY	NORTH DAKOTA STATE AID *****
Fiscal Year	(Jul 1 - Jun 30)	(Jul 1 - Jun 30)	(Jul 1 - Jun 30)			(Jul 1 - Jun 30)
2019	\$ 635,419			\$ 392,000	\$ 473,908	\$ 72,050
2020		\$ 1,151,404		\$ 128,000	\$ -	\$ 57,923
2021	\$ 715,126			\$ 360,000	\$ 530,143	\$ 69,088
2022	\$ 697,388	\$ 146,568		\$ -	\$ 553,909	\$ 47,424
2023	\$ 898,895			\$ -	\$ 517,734	\$ 61,722
2024	\$ 1,002,069			\$ 1,550,500	\$ 656,469	\$ 50,719

* 5311 **FEDERAL** funds received directly by City through NDDOT

** CARES & ARPA one-time 100% funding (no match required) **FEDERAL** allocations to City and could be used as operating or capital

*** 5339 & 5310 are **FEDERAL** pass through funds (pass through State as capital grants)

**** **LOCAL** funds provided by the City as either operating or capital

***** **STATE AID** funds are the only funds provided by the **State of ND** to Urban Transit

Amounts for 2019 - 2022 are approved grant amounts not actual expenditures.

BIS-MAN TRANSIT FUNDING							
	FEDERAL 5307 * OPERATING (formula federal funds)	FEDERAL CARES ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL ARPA ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL 5339 & 5310 *** CAPITAL PASS THROUGH	LOCAL FUNDS **** PROVIDED BY CITY	NORTH DAKOTA STATE AID *****	FEDERAL 5310 5310 OPERATING
Fiscal Year	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)			(Jul 1 - Jun 30)	
2019	\$ 1,820,988			\$ 382,160	\$ 1,445,214	\$ 403,443	
2020	\$ 1,330,565	\$ 3,766,362	\$ 1,332,896	\$ 294,400	\$ 1,517,697	\$ 405,943	\$ 71,168.00
2021	\$ 1,265,976		\$ 1,057,582	\$ 797,032	\$ 1,393,974	\$ 316,528	\$ 131,287.00
2022	\$ 1,711,465			\$ 762,718	\$ 1,429,139	\$ 386,593	\$ 141,260.00
2023	\$ 1,744,938			\$ 156,000	\$ 1,564,563	\$ 342,637	\$ 151,050.00
2024	\$ 2,126,199			\$ 768,118	\$ 1,699,724	\$ 442,113	\$ 157,275.00

* 5307 **FEDERAL** funds received directly by City

** CARES & ARPA one-time 100% funding (no match required) **FEDERAL** allocations to City and could be used as operating or capital

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2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations - Government Operations Division Red River Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
2/18/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

9:29 a.m. Chairman Wanzek opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman Wanzek, Vice-Chair Dwyer, Senator Burckhard, Senator Erbele, and Senator Sickler.

Discussion Topics:

- Rural transit and city fixed-route transit compared
- Funding source
- Study of funding formula

9:40 a.m. Senator Dwyer moved to amend SB 2254 to reduce appropriation from 5 to 2 million.

9:40 a.m. Senator Erbele seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

Motion passed 5-0-0

9:42 a.m. Senator Dwyer moved a Do Pass as Amended for SB 2254

9:42 a.m. Senator Erbele seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y

Motion passed 5-0-0

Senator Sickler will carry the bill.

9:44 a.m. Chairman Wanzek closed the meeting.

Carol Thompson, Committee Clerk

2025 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Harvest Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
2/19/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

9:51 a.m. Chairman Bekkedahl opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman Bekkedahl, Vice-Chairman Erbele, and Senators Burckhard, Cleary, Conley, Davison, Dever, Dwyer, Magrum, Mathern, Meyer, Schaible, Sickler, Sorvaag, Thomas, Wanzek.

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Action

9:51 a.m. Senator Sickler introduced the bill and submitted testimony #38060.

9:53 a.m. Senator Sickler moved amendment LC 25.1109.02001.

9:54 a.m. Senator Burckhard seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	Y
Senator Tim Mathern	N
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Y
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y

Motion Passed 15-1-0.

9:55 a.m. Senator Sickler moved a Do Pass as Amended.

9:55 a.m. Senator Wanzek seconded the motion.

Senators	Vote
Senator Brad Bekkedahl	Y
Senator Robert Erbele	Y
Senator Randy A. Burckhard	Y
Senator Sean Cleary	Y
Senator Cole Conley	Y
Senator Kyle Davison	Y
Senator Dick Dever	Y
Senator Michael Dwyer	Y
Senator Jeffery J. Magrum	N
Senator Tim Mathern	Y
Senator Scott Meyer	Y
Senator Donald Schaible	Y
Senator Jonathan Sickler	Y
Senator Ronald Sorvaag	Y
Senator Paul J. Thomas	Y
Senator Terry M. Wanzek	Y

Motion Passed 15-1-0.

Senator Cory will carry the bill.

9:56 a.m. Chairman Bekkedahl closed the hearing.

Elizabeth Reiten, Committee Clerk

February 18, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
FIRST ENGROSSMENT**

ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2254

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Cory, Burckhard, Sickler

Representatives D. Ruby, M. Ruby

HD
2/19/25
Page 1 of 2

1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route
2 city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management
3 study.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - FIXED ROUTE**

6 **CITY AND PARATRANSIT TRANSPORTATION GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING.** There is
7 appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise
8 appropriated, the sum of ~~\$5,000,000~~ \$2,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary,
9 to the department of transportation for the purpose of providing grants to fixed route city
10 transportation providers and their associated paratransit services, for the biennium beginning
11 July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2027. The funding appropriated in this section is one-time
12 funding item.

13 **SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - FIXED ROUTE CITY**

14 **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FUNDING.** During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative
15 management shall study the funding needs of fixed route city transportation networks. The
16 study must include a review of how the fixed route transportation networks can address
17 population growth, economic development, workforce needs, and health care needs. As part of
18 the study, the legislative management shall develop a proposed funding formula within the
19 department of transportation budget for fixed route city transportation systems. The legislative

- 1 management shall report its recommendations, along with any legislation necessary to
- 2 implement the recommendations, to the seventieth legislative assembly.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
ENGROSSED SB 2254**

Appropriations Committee (Sen. Bekkedahl, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1109.02001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** (15 YEAS, 1 NAY, 0 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2254 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar. This bill does not affect workforce development.

J-19-25

25.1109.02001
Title.

Prepared by the Legislative Council
staff for Senate Appropriations -
Government Operations Division
Committee

February 18, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FIRST ENGROSSMENT

ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2254

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Cory, Burckhard, Sickler

Representatives D. Ruby, M. Ruby

1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route
2 city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management
3 study.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - FIXED ROUTE**
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8 appropriated, the sum of ~~\$5,000,000~~ \$2,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary,
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Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly

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2025 HOUSE TRANSPORTATION

SB 2254

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee
Room JW327E, State Capitol

SB 2254
3/6/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

2:14 p.m. Chairman D. Ruby opened the hearing.

Members Present: Chairman D. Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Christianson, Dressler, Finley-DeVille, Frelich, Johnston, Hendrix, Kasper, Koppelman, Maki, Morton, Osowski, Schatz

Discussion Topics:

- Expanding communities
- Public vs private transportation
- Ridership
- DOT budget
- 5307 Funds

2:15 p.m. Senator Josh Boschee, District 44, introduced the bill and submitted testimony #39170.

2:27 p.m. Brian Horinka, Transit Superintendent, Minot City Transit, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38915.

2:45 p.m. Julie Bommelman, Transit Director, City of Fargo, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38695.

3:02 p.m. Dale Bergman, Public Transportation Director, City of Grand Forks, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39090.

3:11 p.m. Denise Kolpack, Deputy Mayor, City of Fargo, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39051.

3:19 p.m. Micah Olson, Attorney, ND Protection and Advocacy Project, testified in favor and submitted testimony #38889.

3:28 p.m. Trevor Vannett, Advocate for Public Transportation, testified in favor.

3:29 p.m. Kirsten Dvorak, Executive Director, The Arc of ND, testified in favor and submitted testimony #39158.

3:30 p.m. Kory Peterson, League of Cities, testified in favor.

Additional written testimony:

Karen Eriksmoen, Fargo Resident, submitted testimony in favor #38591.

Susan Dingel, Public Transportation Advocate, submitted testimony in favor #39016.

Connie Hoffman, Fargo Resident, submitted testimony in favor #39080.

Janelle Moos, Associate State Director Advocacy, AARP ND, submitted testimony in favor #39216.

Roxane Romanick, Representative, Designer Genes of ND, Inc., submitted testimony in favor #39289.

Cale Dunwoody, FMWF Chamber of Commerce, submitted testimony in favor #39308.

3:32 p.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the meeting.

Janae Pinks, Committee Clerk

March 3, 2025

Re: SB 2254 to the Senate Transportation Committee

Dear Senator Clemens and the Senate Transportation Committee,

I support a YES vote for SB 2254.

The city transportation system in Fargo needs additional routes and extended hours due to the growth of the city, growth in our population and the growing need for public transportation for our residents.

Working with young people who relied on the city transportation system for school and work, I saw how important it was to have ride opportunities that transport residents from the farthest areas of our community. Additional transportation funding for our elderly, who no longer drive, needs to extend to weekends and some holidays.

Please consider a vote IN FAVOR of the Grants for City Transportation SB 2254. This will benefit all our residents throughout North Dakota.

Please Vote YES, to SB 2254, for all of North Dakota! Thank you!

Karen Eriksmoen, Fargo



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2254
Funding for Urban Public Transit Fixed Route and Paratransit
House Transportation Committee
March 6, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chairman Dan Ruby and members of the committee. My name is Julie Bommelman, the Transit Director from Fargo. I am speaking in support of SB2254 because I see the impact and importance of public transportation on every citizen in the State of North Dakota.

SB2254 identifies the needs of public transportation (transit) providers in the urban areas (Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot and Bismarck) within North Dakota. The providers of urban transit within the State of North Dakota request a more substantive state funding program to assist with the costs associated with fixed-route and paratransit public transportation. In partnership with transit officials in Grand Forks, Minot and Bismarck, we are respectfully requesting a \$15 million biennium appropriation to assist urban transit cities with the growing expenses of providing fixed-route transit and paratransit, along with requiring a study to determine a permanent funding solution for urban transit services in North Dakota.

We represent urban transit providers in ND and the funding request before you today is for our fixed-route and paratransit systems. Fixed-route systems are transit services operated along predetermined routes according to a fixed schedule. There is also paratransit service, which applies to all public entities who operate a fixed route system (there is a requirement to provide paratransit service that is both comparable and complementary to the fixed route services; this is a curb-to-curb or door-to-door [origin to destination] accessible service for qualifying individuals who cannot use the fixed route system). Additionally, demand-response transit is any non-fixed route system of transporting individuals that requires advanced scheduling by the customer.

Federal Reclassification

The designation of transit providers (urban, rural, tribal) is defined by population in accordance with the latest official federal census. The 2020 census reclassified the City of Fargo from a small to large urban designation with a population over 200,000 which resulted in a reduction of over \$600,000 or 17% in federal operating assistance.

Federal, Local and State Aid Amounts 2019-2024:

In accordance with ND Public Transportation Fund 39-04.2-02, the State public transit funding we currently receive can be used to operate transit services and as a *local match* to federal dollars:

The State of ND funding is not designed, nor appropriately funded, to support the needs of urban fixed-route and paratransit. The funding model is based on elderly and disabled riders and results in inadequate and disparate funding. With the current allocation model, the urban counties are all at the bottom of the list, with Cass County being the very last at a per rider amount.

City funds or State Aid contributing \$.20 can be matched by federal funding of \$.80; in addition, \$.50 of operating can be matched by \$.50 in federal dollars. A balance of City funds and State Aid funding can be used to match federal dollars, thus the criticality of State funding.

CITY OF FARGO TRANSIT FUNDING						
	FEDERAL 5307 * OPERATING (formula federal funds)	FEDERAL CARES ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL ARPA ** ONE-TIME AWARD CAPITAL & OPERATING	FEDERAL 5339 & 5310 *** CAPITAL PASSTHROUGH	LOCAL FUNDS **** PROVIDED BY CITY	NORTH DAKOTA STATE AID *****
Fiscal Year	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)			(Jul 1 - Jun 30)
2019	\$ 2,732,618			\$ 3,257,713	\$ 2,571,027	\$ 494,275
2020	\$ 2,807,164	\$ 7,936,636		\$ 1,817,436	\$ 399,481	\$ 499,892
2021	\$ 2,602,232		\$ 3,130,087	\$ 777,072	\$ 2,503,733	\$ 386,865
2022	\$ 3,490,398			\$ 65,664	\$ 2,237,171	\$ 475,272
2023	\$ 3,572,115			\$ 2,112,649	\$ 2,656,417	\$ 395,161
2024	\$ 2,965,773			\$ 2,419,100	\$ 5,089,497	\$ 548,535

* 5307 **FEDERAL** operating funds received directly by City

** CARES & ARPA one-time 100% funding (no match required) **FEDERAL** allocations to City and could be used as operating or cap

*** 5339 & 5310 are **FEDERAL** pass through funds (pass through State as capital grants)

**** **LOCAL** funds provided by the City as either operating or capital

***** **STATE AID** funds are the only funds provided by the State of ND to Urban Transit

Amounts are approved grant amounts.

Urban areas recognize the requirement to fund a local portion for transit providers, however, the City of Fargo's General Fund cannot sustain the current annual subsidy. Due to rising costs of providing transit, the City of Fargo's annual Transit subsidy has grown to an anticipated \$5.5 million for 2025, from approximately \$600,000 per year in 2016. This "fiscal cliff" has been building over time, however, COVID transit funds during 2020-2023 camouflaged the issue and delayed the inevitable for several years. Fargo has weathered significant increases in operating (i.e. bus driver services, security services, staffing/retainage) and in capital costs (bus replacements, parts, shelters, supplies). The rising costs not only limit our ability to expand critical transportation services but leave significant unmet needs such as expansion of service into unserved areas, Sunday fixed-route service, additional critical staff, updated vehicles/capital equipment, facilities upgrades/expansion and safety and security upgrades. I want to emphasize the criticality of receiving the requested funding for **maintaining** existing service levels and avoid transit service cuts like we saw during COVID. We are currently close to returning services to pre-COVID levels and do not want to see cuts in our service.

I would like to emphasize the study is an imperative part of this bill, as it would allow the funding formula to be appropriately modified while protecting the current funds being allocated to the rural and smaller counties. We do not want to take away from their portion – we are looking to right-size the funding going to the fixed-route transit systems in our urban areas.

Transit is much more than just transportation, it is independent access and affects workforce/commerce, health (medical treatments and appointments), education, and basic needs. Transit connects people to jobs, schools, social services, faith-based activities, health facilities and community activities. Transit allows workers and job seekers to reach places of employment, helps elderly and persons with disabilities lead independent lives, gives shoppers the opportunity to purchase goods and services and contribute to the economic health of the area. The State of North Dakota reaps benefits from public transit within urban communities. As such, transit contributes to economic development and related state/local taxes, supports preventative health care and personal independence which allows residents to remain in their own homes and out of state-subsidized care facilities longer, and encourages higher education and related workforce development. For citizens who rely on publicly available transportation as their only way to reach school or employment, the lack of transportation programs and services can create barriers to potential job opportunities, education and healthcare.

The Fargo area is also a regional medical center, a source of essential human services, and a growing draw for senior citizens, both locally and from outlying communities. Having transportation to these services and access to the community is key for quality of life. In Fargo we have programs to encourage use of public transportation: we offer a business/transit program where we partner with Sanford to purchase passes for their employees utilizing transit. They see the program as a benefit to their employees and themselves as it decreases the need for additional parking but enables them to attract employees who otherwise may not be able to reach their locations; we also offer demand-response services to the industrial park area and in the evenings around the North Dakota State University (NDSU) campus; and we partner with NDSU and other local colleges/universities to offer the U-Pass program which allows eligible college students to ride any fixed route in our system and the participating college/university pays a fee. In fiscal year 2024 Fargo alone provided **706,145** fixed route rides and **234,437** elderly/disabled rides in the State of North Dakota. **Fargo area ridership accounts for 50.5% and 34.2% of the State's total ridership in each respective category.**

We understand the initial response to our request for additional funding may be increasing fares or eliminating/reducing frequency of existing fixed routes. Fares make up approximately 10% of our overall funding and implementing either of these (increasing fares or reducing service) will likely result in lower fare revenues and ridership/passenger miles as demonstrated by experience in the industry. As a large urban, ridership and passenger miles are used to determine Federal Section 5307 operating funding and the consequence of increasing fares can lead to lower ridership and subsequently, lower fare revenue, a 'spiral'. These services are critical to everyday life for many ND citizens. Urban transit providers would appreciate seeing a \$15 million biennium appropriation and the opportunity to address the interim committees during their study period to determine a permanent funding solution for urban and rural citizens in our state.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,
Julie Bommelman
Transit Director, City of Fargo
jbommelman@fargond.gov
701.476.6737



Protection & Advocacy Project

400 E. Broadway, Suite 409

Bismarck, ND 58501

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TTY: 711

www.ndpanda.org



House Transportation Committee

Senate Bill 2254 - March 6, 2025

Testimony of Micah Olson, P&A Position-In Support

My name is Micah Olson. I am attorney at Protection & Advocacy. I am speaking today in favor of Senate Bill 2254, a bill to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

In my work, I have frequently interacted with individuals who rely on public transportation. Prior to working at Protection & Advocacy, I worked as an Independent Living Advocate in Minot. Through my work, I have become familiar with public transportation in Bismarck, Mandan, and Minot.

Individuals I have interacted with who regularly use public transportation report that it works well for some aspects of daily life, but there are many limitations. For example; In Minot, there are two choices for public transportation: The Minot City Bus, which runs on fixed routes, and Souris Basin Transportation, which provides paratransit in the Minot area. The Minot city bus operates from 7 am to 7 pm Monday through Friday. It does not operate on the weekends. Souris Basin Transportation has longer hours than the city bus but has limited hours on the weekend. Souris Basin also requires individuals to schedule a ride at least 24 hours in advance. Individuals have reported to me that 24 hours in advance is often not soon enough to guarantee a ride will be available. The BisMan City Bus has a similar schedule, but has service on Saturday. It does not operate on Sundays. Individuals who use paratransit in Bismarck have reported the same scheduling issues as in Minot.

Although fixed routes have a reliable schedule, they often have limited hours, making fixed route transportation less useful in some situations. Someone who has a typical daytime work schedule could use it to get to and from work, but it would not be useful for someone who works on days or hours outside of the bus schedule. It is not useful for people to run errands after work or on weekends. A person who relies on the city bus in Minot would have to plan to do errands during the week, which could be difficult for someone who works full-time.

Even though public transportation is useful in many situations, several individuals I have interacted with have reported significant limitations. The fixed routes do not go to all areas of Minot, Bismarck, and Mandan, especially to newer apartment developments. Newer apartment buildings are often more accessible than older apartment buildings and they are often better options for disabled people. In my work, I assisted a wheelchair user who did not drive in finding an apartment. We found an apartment that worked for him, but it was not on the bus route, and he would need to use paratransit to get to work. I worked with other individuals who prioritized convenient access to the city bus over a fully accessible apartment.

Paratransit is often the preferred option for disabled individuals, as it provides door-to-door service, however many individuals who use paratransit still report ongoing difficulties, including work hours not aligning with paratransit's schedule. They might arrive to work very early or late. Sometimes they would have to leave work early if paratransit came early. Individuals also reported not being able to schedule rides on the weekends, even if they attempted to schedule far in advance. Paratransit also does not allow for sudden or spontaneous trips. This affects an individual's ability to socialize and fully participate in community activities and events. Because paratransit is not always readily available, paratransit users may also rely on fixed-route transportation.

Even if someone drives and owns a vehicle, public transportation may still be relevant and should be a viable option. Even though I do not typically need to use public transportation, it still could be relevant to my own life. Because I drive with a hand control, I would not be able to drive another vehicle if I had an unexpected problem with my car.

Additional funding for public transportation would benefit those who do not live near a bus route. The apartment where I previously lived in Minot was not on the bus route, so I would not have access to public transportation if I needed it. Paratransit likely would not be able to assist on short notice, which would affect my ability to get to work or run errands if I was without a personal vehicle.

P&A supports SB 2254, as more funding for fixed routes would benefit disabled individuals in North Dakota. P&A also supports increased funding for paratransit.



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2254
Funding for Urban Public Transit Fixed Route and Paratransit
House Transportation Committee
March 6, 2025**

Chairman Ruby and members of the committee, my name is Brian Horinka, and I serve as the Transit Superintendent for Minot City Transit. I am here today to passionately advocate for SB 2254.

Minot City Transit does more than operate fixed-route public transit services within our city limits; we are a vital lifeline for the residents of Minot. Historically, we functioned as a rural community, supported by Federal Section 5311 grants from North Dakota. However, our recent transition to an urban designation has brought us to the Federal Section 5307 Urban funding model, and with it, a new set of challenges. This funding process is complex and based on fluctuating formulas tied to population and ridership metrics, leading to unpredictability each fiscal year. This variability hinders our ability to budget effectively and identify the local resources necessary for the matching funds that are critical to securing these federal grants.

Moreover, the current State Aid for Transit grants prioritize support based on senior and disabled ridership, offering much-needed assistance to rural transit providers in our state. Unfortunately, urban transit providers like us receive significantly less funding due to the demographics of fixed-route users. The funding sought in this bill for the upcoming biennium is essential to bridge the gap between available federal resources and the local contributions required. By supporting this legislation, we will not only sustain existing transit services in our urban centers but also pave the way for the expansion and enhancement of these critical systems as our communities continue to grow.

The current landscape of public transit funding is dire, marked by alarming volatility and soaring costs. In recent years, the expenses associated with delivering transit services have skyrocketed, putting immense pressure on already limited resources. We are grappling with rising operating expenses—fuel and parts costs have surged, while the urgent need to offer competitive wages to attract and retain staff is widening the financial chasm between what is needed and what is available.

Moreover, the price of replacement buses has escalated dramatically, driven by increasingly stringent EPA compliance and a dwindling number of manufacturers capable of meeting the current Buy America standards. To illustrate, a bus that cost us \$455,000 in 2021 now carries an eye-watering price tag of \$650,000 for replacement. This unsustainable inflation in costs forces agencies like ours to extend the lifespan of aging buses far beyond their intended use, resulting in escalating operational costs and an inevitable decline in service quality.

The impact of these rising costs is profound, threatening the very foundation of our public transit system and the essential services it provides to the community. Without immediate and significant intervention, we risk compromising the reliability and accessibility that transit riders depend on every day.

The funding we are requesting is crucial not just for enhancing our public transit systems but for revitalizing the local economies in our communities. Recent reports from the American Public Transportation Association reveal that every dollar invested in public transit yields an extraordinary five dollars in long-term economic returns. This funding will not only stabilize our existing transit services but also pave the way for substantial growth and innovation in the future. It stands to fuel an economic renaissance in our cities, creating jobs, attracting businesses, and improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors. This investment is not merely about transit; it's about transforming communities and driving sustainable economic development for years to come.

It is important to recognize that current transit funding models heavily emphasize ridership numbers, which can be misleading. In predominantly rural areas like ours, this focus presents significant drawbacks. We must shift our perspective from seeking volume to valuing the impact our services have on individual lives. The numbers may appear smaller, but the stories behind them are profound.

Consider the single mother of five who relies on our services to ensure that her children reach their schools safely while she can get to work to provide for her family. Think of the gentleman who, due to health complications, can no longer drive but is able to attend his doctor's appointments and engage in community activities, thanks to our transit system. Most strikingly, reflect on the courageous young woman who survived a horrific accident, leaving her paralyzed from the chest down. With our ADA-accessible transit, she has regained a level of independence that allows her to live on her own and participate in life again.

These stories aren't just anecdotes; they represent the hundreds of individuals whose lives are profoundly impacted by the services we provide every single day. Without our transit system, these individuals—and many more like them—could face isolation, diminished quality of life, or even the loss of their homes.

Supporting SB 2254 is not just a matter of funding; it is about affirming our commitment to these lives and the vital role public transit plays in fostering vibrant, inclusive communities. Together, let's ensure that everyone in Minot and the other urban communities in North Dakota has access to the mobility and independence that is their right. Thank you.

Please vote IN FAVOR / VOTE YES / DO PASS on SB 2254. Fixed route and paratransit service in the state, throughout the state, in cities and in rural areas, would benefit from, be a little more stable, and potentially could expend service while at least maintaining service with the appropriation of more money for fixed route and paratransit services from the state to local transit providers. Costs of everything—vehicles, fuel, parts, repairs, new vehicles, salaries and wages, benefits—have gone up, but demand for and use of service has increased. More money from the state would add to funds available to maintain and expand service. Public transportation continues to be important, and if anything, is of increasing importance to our state's residents. VOTE YES on SB 2254. Sincerely, Susan Dingle, public transportation advocate, Dist. 35, a voter in every election



**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2254
Funding for Urban Public Transit Fixed Route and Paratransit
House Transportation Committee
March 6, 2025**

Good afternoon, Chairman Ruby and members of the Committee. My name is Denise Kolpack, and I am the Deputy Mayor of Fargo. I am speaking in support of SB 2254 and encourage a DO PASS recommendation.

SB 2254 identifies the needs of public transportation (transit) providers in the urban areas (Fargo, Grand Forks, Minot and Bismarck) within North Dakota. The providers of urban transit within the State of North Dakota request a more substantive state funding program to assist with the costs associated with fixed-route and paratransit public transportation. In partnership with transit officials in Grand Forks, Minot and Bismarck, we are respectfully requesting a \$15 million biennial appropriation to assist urban transit cities with the growing expenses of providing fixed-route transit and paratransit, along with requiring a study to determine a permanent funding solution for urban transit services in North Dakota.

Federal Reclassification

The designation of transit providers (urban, rural, tribal) is defined by population in accordance with the latest official federal census. The 2020 Census reclassified the City of Fargo from a small to a “large urban” designation with a population over 200,000, which resulted in a reduction of over \$600,000, or 17%, in federal operating assistance.

Federal, Local and State Aid Amounts 2019-2024:

In accordance with ND Public Transportation Fund 39-04.2-02, the State public transit funding we currently receive can be used to operate transit services and as a *local match* to federal dollars. City funds or State Aid contributions of \$.20 can be matched by federal funding of \$.80. In addition, \$.50 of operating can be matched by \$.50 in federal dollars. A balance of City funds and State Aid funding can be used to match federal dollars, thus the criticality of State funding.

CITY OF FARGO TRANSIT FUNDING						
	FEDERAL 5307 *	FEDERAL CARES **	FEDERAL ARPA **	FEDERAL 5339 & 5310 ***	LOCAL FUNDS ****	NORTH DAKOTA STATE AID *****
	OPERATING (formula federal funds)	ONE-TIME AWARD	ONE-TIME AWARD	CAPITAL PASSTHROUGH	PROVIDED BY CITY	
Fiscal Year	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)	(Oct 1 - Sept 30)			(Jul 1 - Jun 30)
2019	\$ 2,732,618			\$ 3,257,713	\$ 2,571,027	\$ 494,275
2020	\$ 2,807,164	\$ 7,936,636		\$ 1,817,436	\$ 399,481	\$ 499,892
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2024	\$ 2,965,773			\$ 2,419,100	\$ 5,089,497	\$ 548,535
* 5307 FEDERAL operating funds received directly by City ** CARES & ARPA one-time 100% funding (no match required) FEDERAL allocations to City and could be used as operating or capital *** 5339 & 5310 are FEDERAL pass through funds (pass through State as capital grants) **** LOCAL funds provided by the City as either operating or capital ***** STATE AID funds are the only funds provided by the State of ND to Urban Transit Amounts are approved grant amounts.						

Urban areas recognize the requirement to fund a local portion for transit providers; however, the City of Fargo's General Fund cannot sustain its current annual subsidy. Due to rising costs of providing transit, the City of Fargo's annual Transit subsidy has grown to an anticipated \$5.5 million for 2025, from approximately \$600,000 per year in 2016. I want to emphasize the criticality of receiving the requested funding for **maintaining** existing service levels and avoiding transit service cuts like we saw during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fargo is close to returning services to pre-COVID levels and does not want to see cuts in our service that would impact our patrons.

Performing the requested study between Legislative Sessions is a critical part of this bill, as it would allow the funding formula to be appropriately modified while protecting the current funds being allocated to the rural and smaller counties. Fargo does not want to take away from their portion – we are looking to right-size the funding going to the fixed-route transit systems in our urban areas.

Transit is much more than just transportation, it is independent access and affects workforce/commerce; health (medical treatments and appointments); education; and basic needs. Transit connects people to jobs, schools, social services, faith-based activities, health facilities and community activities. Transit allows workers and job seekers to reach places of employment, helps the elderly and persons with disabilities lead independent lives, gives shoppers the opportunity to purchase goods and services and contribute to the economic health of the area.

The State of North Dakota reaps benefits from public transit within urban communities. As such, transit contributes to economic development and related state/local taxes, supports preventative health care and personal independence which allows residents to remain in their own homes and out of state-subsidized care facilities longer, and encourages higher education and related workforce development. For citizens who rely on publicly available transportation as their only way to reach school or employment, the lack of transportation programs and services can create barriers to potential job opportunities, education and healthcare.

In fiscal year 2024 Fargo alone provided **706,145** fixed route rides and **234,437** elderly/disabled rides in the State of North Dakota. **Fargo area ridership accounts for 50.5% and 34.2% of the State's total ridership in each respective category.**

Thank you for your consideration and support of SB 2254. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Kolpack, Deputy Mayor
City of Fargo
DKolpack@FargoND.gov
(701) 241-1310

SB 2254 - Do Pass

Dear House Transportation Chairman Ruby and members of the and the House Transportation Committee,

My name is Connie Hoffman, a lifelong resident of North Dakota and residing in Fargo.

Please vote Do Pass for SB 2254, to provide a one time appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study to determine future funding.

Working at a local hospital, I see first hand employees using public transportation to get to work. Public transportation is critical for individuals with disabilities such that they can no longer drive, or those who are unable to afford a vehicle. Paratransit services provide specialized transportation services for medical appointments or discharging from the hospital. College students utilize public transportation to save money and convenience to get 'dropped off' near campus.

Please support this bill to help people get to work, get to school, get to doctor appointments or just to save money.

Please support SB 2254 with a Do Pass vote.

Thank you.
Connie Hoffman
3336 Jackson St S
Fargo, ND

255 N. 4th St.
PO Box 5200
Grand Forks, ND 58206-5200



City of Grand Forks
(701) 746-4636

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 2254
Funding for Urban Public Transit Fixed Route and Paratransit
House Transportation Committee
March 6, 2025**

**Dale Bergman, Public Transportation Director
City of Grand Forks, ND**

Chairman Dan Ruby and members of the committee, my name is Dale Bergman. I am the City of Grand Forks Public Transportation Director for the Cities Area Transit (CAT). I am here to speak in support of Senate Bill 2254 because of the importance of public transportation for our citizens in the State of North Dakota.

We are a small urban transit property that provides fixed route bus service and complimentary paratransit service for elderly, senior and disabled clients who are unable to make it to a fixed route bus stop for their travel needs in the large urban cities. We take people to the places they need and want to go. We're connecting people to careers, medical appointments, and opportunities with flexible transit options as part of a diverse and vibrant community of customers.

The current state-aid formula covers the elderly and disabled people riding the service in mainly the rural areas, but in the large cities we transport all individuals', adults, students, seniors, and disabled. Senate Bill 2254 identifies the needs of public transportation providers in the urban areas, but also the request for a study of a better state-aid funding program to provide a more sustainable funding source for urban properties. Our riders have needs like all of us to get to work, medical appointments, grocery shopping and daily living needs. They can be our neighbors, friends or family members that need the rides we provide. The current state funding formula only covers a small percentage (8%) of our services. The Federal portion is 50% percent, and the local match portion is 42% of a 3.5-million-dollar budget for operations. Our costs of service in the last 5 years have increased dramatically by over 40% for operations for labor, fuels, parts and supplies.

The costs of vehicles have gone up 30 to 50% in the last 5 years and have caused a severe strain on our budgets. With strain on the budgets of the cities, we may not be able to continue the services as they currently are or have the capital dollars for purchasing replacement vehicles. We will not be able to add any additional services requested. The transportation services for the citizens will affect many parts of their lives from job access to medical care to even buying food for their families. This will certainly have an impact on the economic impact on the cities.

We as urban transit providers would appreciate seeing the funding at the \$15 million biennium appropriations level and the opportunity to address the interim

committees during the study period to help find a permanent funding solution for all of our citizens of the great state of North Dakota and we are asking for a DO PASS on SB 2254 to address the short-term funding needs and the study for funding needs in the future.

Respectfully,
Dale Bergman
Public Transportation Director
City of Grand Forks



House Transportation
SB 2254
March 6, 2025

Chairperson and members of the committee,

My name is Kirsten Dvorak, and I am the Executive Director of The Arc of North Dakota, an organization committed to advocating for and supporting individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. I am here today to support Senate Bill 2254, which allocates essential funding for fixed-route city and paratransit transportation services.

Transportation is essential for the independence of individuals with disabilities, providing access to jobs, education, healthcare, and community involvement. Yet, public transportation—particularly paratransit services—is a necessity rather than a luxury for many. Having reliable and affordable transportation enables individuals with disabilities to engage fully in society and uphold their quality of life.

The \$2,000,000 allocated in SB 2254 for the Department of Transportation to enhance fixed-route and paratransit services represents a significant investment. Data and research consistently show that:

- Access to paratransit services enhances employment results: National data on disability employment indicates that transportation barriers rank high among the reasons for unemployment in individuals with disabilities. A strong transportation system actively promotes workforce participation and economic independence.¹
- Improved transportation access leads to better healthcare outcomes: Many individuals with disabilities depend on public transport for medical appointments, from essential therapies to routine healthcare visits. When reliable transportation is lacking, these individuals encounter delays in receiving care, which can exacerbate health issues and raise healthcare expenses.²
- Transportation facilitates community engagement: Individuals with disabilities deserve equal opportunities to participate in their communities, including attending social gatherings, shopping, and engaging in civic activities. Limited transportation services result in greater isolation for individuals with disabilities, impacting their quality of life.³

The legislative management study required by SB 2254 holds significant importance. With North Dakota's population increasing and demographics shifting, creating a long-term funding model for transportation services is essential. This study aims to guarantee that North Dakota's fixed-route and paratransit systems stay accessible, fair, and sustainable for the future.

SB 2254 is not just about funding transportation but about investing in the independence, dignity, and inclusion of individuals with disabilities. On behalf of The Arc of North Dakota and the thousands of individuals and families we serve, I urge you to support this bill. By doing so, you will be affirming North Dakota's commitment to ensuring that every citizen—regardless of ability—has the opportunity to live, work, and thrive in our communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Kirsten Dvorak
Executive Director
701-222-1854

¹ National Disability Employment Data, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, showing that individuals with disabilities experience significantly higher unemployment rates due to transportation barriers. Available at: <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsdisability.htm>

² American Public Transportation Association Report, detailing how public transit access correlates with improved healthcare access and reduced emergency visits for people with disabilities. Available at: <https://www.apta.com/research-technical-resources/research-reports/>

³ National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, highlighting the role of accessible transportation in promoting social inclusion and community participation for individuals with disabilities. Available at: <https://acl.gov/about-acl/about-national-institute-disability-independent-living-and-rehabilitation-research>



North Dakota Senate

STATE CAPITOL
600 EAST BOULEVARD
BISMARCK, ND 58505-0360



Senator Josh Boschee

District 44
736 Elm Street North, Apt. 8
Fargo, ND, 58102-3859
jboschee@ndlegis.gov

COMMITTEES:

Education
Workforce Development

SB 2254 Testimony House Transportation Committee - March 6, 2025

Chair Ruby and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

SB 2254 provides a one-time grant divided among the cities of Minot, Bismarck, Grand Forks and Fargo for their fixed route transit and paratransit system. This would allow for a study to occur over the next interim to explore the feasibility of an updated transit funding formula for these four communities. The current funding formula only considers riders that are disabled or above an age that designates them as seniors. It does not take into consideration general ridership, which includes North Dakotans who depend on public transit for their job, education, commerce, healthcare needs and general enjoyment of the city they live in.

Our state continues to experience population growth. With more people calling North Dakota home, we get to experience amazing opportunities and growing pains. Additionally, the in-state migration of North Dakotans moving to our larger cities for a variety of reasons has expanded the growth for those communities. This growth is captured in the 2020 Census, which as many of you know impacts a variety of funding formulas that our state, counties, cities and Tribal governments depend on, including transit.

Because of their population growth, Minot and Fargo both have experienced a change in their community designation for the purposes of transit funding from the Federal government. This has led to both communities receiving a reduction in Federal funding for their community transit programs. Transit that their residents depend on to get to work, school, medical appointments and enjoy the amenities their communities provide. As inflation continues to impact household budgets, public transit becomes a growing option for North Dakotans looking to reduce their spending or who can't afford repairing or replacing a vehicle.

The investment of Federal COVID relief dollars in these cities over the past two biennia allowed them to continue to function with small adjustments. With the infusion of these funds no longer an option combined with their population-based designation change they are experiencing the perfect storm that seriously jeopardizes their ability to meet the demands of their growing communities. Additionally, if the current Congress enacts the fiscal restraint that they have been alluding to it could lead to further reduction in Federal funds. So, the study is not just necessary, but very timely. We believe that tapping into the talent of in-state consultants who have helped legislators, state agencies and local governments maximize funding opportunities for other infrastructure projects will lead to a sustainable funding model for the future of fixed route transit throughout North Dakota.

I hope you'll provide SB 2254 with a Do Pass recommendation for the bill to receive further consideration in House Appropriations. I'm happy to stand for any questions or comments you may have.

2020 UACE	2020 Name	State(s)	FTA Region(s)	2020 Population	2020 Density (Population per square mile)	2010 Population	2010 Density (Population per square mile)	Comment 1 (Name Changes and New UZAs)	Comment 2 (FTA Threshold Changes)
57655	Minot, ND	ND	8	50,925	1,909.4	Previously had a rural designation		New UZA	Crossed 50k Threshold
29089	Fargo, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	216,214	2,781.6	176,676	2,514.3		Crossed 200k Threshold
34219	Grand Forks, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	68,160	2,573.6	61,270	2,506.6		
07921	Bismarck, ND	ND	8	98,198	2,346.2	81,955	2,114.6		

2020 Name	State(s)	FTA Region(s)	2000 Population	2000 Density (Population per square mile)	1990 Population	1990 Density (Population per square mile)
Minot, ND	ND	8				
Fargo, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	142,477	3,110.4	121,336	2,356
Grand Forks, ND--MN	ND, MN	5, 8	56,573	3,376.4	58,103	3,073
Bismarck, ND	ND	8	74,991	2,210.5	66,476	1,819

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/2020-census-changes-uzapopulation>



March 6, 2025

Senate Bill 2254 – Support

March 6, 2025

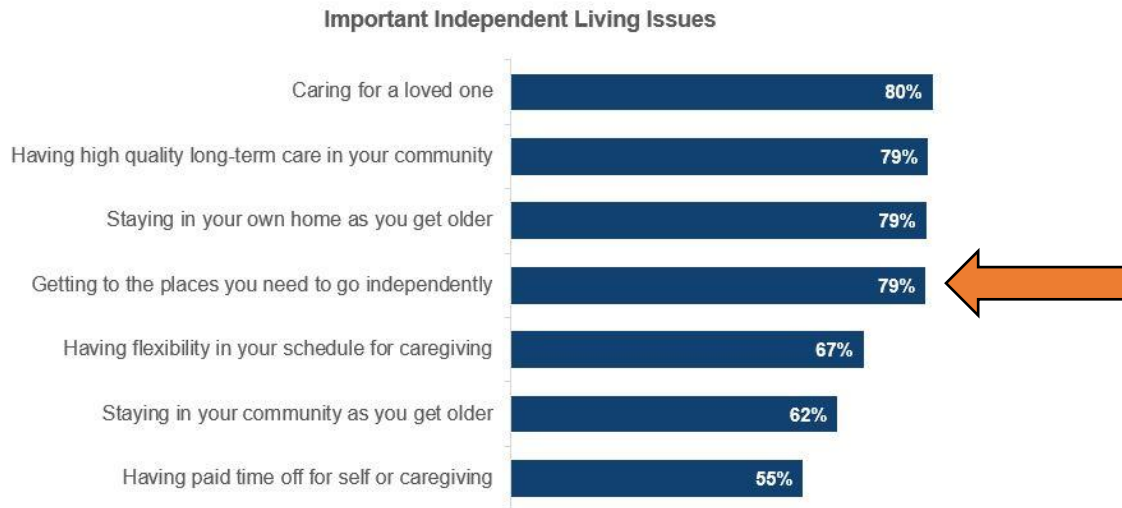
House Transportation

Janelle Moos, AARP ND- jmoos@aarp.org

Chair Ruby and members of the committee,

I'm Janelle Moos, Associate State Director of Advocacy for AARP ND and we stand in support of SB 2254. As you know, AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan membership organization with approximately 83,000 members in North Dakota. Our mission is to empower people to choose how they live as they age.

Transportation greatly impacts older adults' ability to choose how they live as they age. It is an important issue for individuals 50+ in North Dakota as evidenced by our 2020 Vital Voices Survey of older adults. As you can see in the chart below 79% of respondents said "Getting to the places you need to go independently" is extremely or very important to older North Dakotans.



11. For the following list of issues, please indicate how important each is to you personally. (Percent 'extremely important' or 'very important') (n=722)

Whether by choice or necessity, public transportation is a critical service for many people, including older adults. Older adults outlive their ability to drive by 7-10 years. According to AARP Public Policy Institute's analysis of the 2017 National Household Travel Survey, fully 18 percent of older adults 65 and older do not drive, and 35 percent of women over 75 don't drive at all.

For decades our nation's transportation policy has favored personal vehicles over other ways of getting around our communities. This has reduced transit options for those without access to a personal vehicle, such as some older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. Yet, transit service in many areas of the country is lacking because of insufficient funding to maintain or expand service, land use patterns that make it hard for transit to efficiently operate, and policies that prioritize the personal automobile over public transit options. In fact, 45 percent of Americans have no access to public transportation. A growing number of communities are continuing efforts to expand transit service and improve on-demand service to provide better transportation options.

Specialized transportation services, such as door-to-door paratransit and escorts to physician's offices, are critically important for many older adults yet these too are not always readily available.

Transit reduces isolation particularly for seniors and people with disabilities, by providing access to grocery stores, medical services, jobs, and schools. Imagine what your life would be like if you were totally dependent on others for your transportation, economic constraints restricted your ability to pay for taxis or rideshare trips, and you lived in a community where there were

no taxis and only rideshare trips available. This will be the likely reality for residents in your community if this supplemental funding isn't approved.

In closing, we are asking the committee to support SB 2254.

Thank you for your time and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.



SB 2254
House Transportation
Thursday, March 6, 2025
Rep. Dan Ruby, Chair

Chairman Ruby and Members of the House Transportation Committee:

My name is Roxane Romanick and I'm writing as the representative for Designer Genes of ND, Inc. Designer Genes' membership represents individuals with Down syndrome that either live in our state or are represented by family members in North Dakota. Designer Genes' mission is to strengthen opportunities for individuals with Down syndrome and those who support them to earn, learn, and belong. I am also the parent to an adult daughter with Down syndrome, who desires as much independence as any other young adult and who is working and trying hard to be a contributing North Dakota citizen.

Designer Genes is in support of SB 2254 and asks for your consideration of a "yes" vote. Ask any non-driving individual with a disability and/or who is ageing about how they access their community and you will need to be prepared to hear about how difficult and limiting it is to not be able to drive. North Dakota is not a state that is friendly to non-drivers due to our rural nature and vast spaces. The community of individuals with Down syndrome that I represent, especially the adults, are greatly impacted by not having more independent means of travel as most of them are not drivers. We have heard that more and more activities are limited for our individuals with Down syndrome that live in a group or apartment setting as public transportation options decline and there are decreasing staff available to provide transportation through our providers.

In the past, my husband and I worked out a weekly schedule with our daughter to decide how to make sure she could get to and from her job. She had a paratransit pass for the Bismarck ParaTransit system however, the rides were not dependable for getting to work on time. Long wait times, no subscription services, and difficulty with scheduling made return trips also impossible to count on. She is very adept at using a Ride Share app like Uber or Lyft, but a ride to work for her would have been roughly

\$8.00 one way and this would total to around \$250.00 a month. She also found that Uber and Lyft drivers were not always available. Bismarck's taxi services are expensive for someone on a fixed income. Elizabeth now lives in Minot, ND but her accepting her job at Minot State University was dependent on her finding housing close to the campus to avoid needing daily public transportation. Transportation is probably her greatest barrier to living as independently as possible.

Lack of transportation options has its costs. The Automated Vehicle Services for People with Disabilities—Involved Responsive Engineering (ASPIRE) Center at the University of Pittsburgh ([UTC Spotlight Newsletter - January 2022 \(transportation.gov\)](#)) noted in one their publications that “mitigating transportation-related barriers for people with disabilities would enable new employment opportunities for approximately two million people with disabilities and save \$19 billion annually in healthcare expenditures from missed medical appointments alone.” While Medicaid can cover non-emergency medical costs, there are no options available for individuals to use outside of the onerous demands of the para-transit system.

I believe that state sponsored support for increased transportation options for people with disabilities would have direct impact on individuals with Down syndrome and other disabilities to be fully contributing members in their communities.

Please consider the passage of SB 2254. I'm available for any questions.

Roxane Romanick
Designer Genes of ND, Inc.
701-391-7421
info@designergenesnd.com



Letter of Support – SB 2254

Thursday, March 6th, 2025

Chairman Ruby and members of the House Transportation Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of Senate Bill 2254.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Access to transportation is vital to the wellbeing and stability of our cities, communities, and workforce.

In 2023, Fargo represented 38.5% of all elderly and disabled riders in the state as well as 50.5% of all general rider ship in the state. Ridership grew to 863,320 in 2024 and is projected to reach 870,963 in 2025. This increase comes at the same point in time where the metro was also reclassified by the Federal Transportation Authority (2024), and the FM Metro is facing a significant reduction in federal support which will have an adverse effect on the city's ability to meet the transportation demands of the growing population. Investing in robust, reliable, and accessible public transportation builds stronger and more connected cities.

These one-time funds will bridge the gap caused by the reduction in federal funding. Additionally, in order to accurately and fully understand what long term funding strategies are available to support transportation– we recommend a legislative study be conducted during the interim session, providing the information needed to develop sustainable plans to support transportation across the state.

These transportation services are essential to our communities, with North Dakotans relying on them to participate in educational opportunities, entertainment, employment, health care, community, and more. The value of providing these services to our communities is why we urge this committee to give the bill a DO PASS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Transportation Committee Room JW327E, State Capitol

SB 2254
3/7/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city and paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

9:09 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby opened the meeting.

Members Present: Chairman D. Ruby, Vice Chairman Grueneich, Representatives Christianson, Dressler, Finley-DeVile, Frelich, Johnston, Hendrix, Koppelman, Maki, Morton, Osowski

Members Absent: Representatives Kasper, Shatz

Discussion Topics:

- Fixed routes
- Paratransit services
- Rural / city transit services

9:09 a.m. Representative Koppelman proposed an amendment to allocate two million dollars specifically for paratransit services on fixed routes.

9:12 a.m. Representative Koppelman moved to amend LC#25.1109.03001.

9:13 a.m. Representative Frelich seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Nels Christianson	N
Representative Ty Dressler	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVile	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Jared Hendrix	Y
Representative Daniel Johnston	Y
Representative Jim Kasper	AB
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	Y
Representative Doug Osowski	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	AB

9:18 a.m. Motion passed 11-1-2.

9:19 a.m. Representative Koppelman moved a Do Pass as Amended and rereferred to Appropriations.

9:19 a.m. Representative Christianson seconded the motion.

Representatives	Vote
Representative Dan Ruby	Y
Representative Jim Grueneich	Y
Representative Nels Christianson	Y
Representative Ty Dressler	Y
Representative Lisa Finley-DeVille	Y
Representative Kathy Frelich	Y
Representative Jared Hendrix	Y
Representative Daniel Johnston	AB
Representative Jim Kasper	AB
Representative Ben Koppelman	Y
Representative Roger A. Maki	Y
Representative Desiree Morton	N
Representative Doug Osowski	Y
Representative Mike Schatz	AB

9:26 a.m. Motion passed 10-1-3

9:26 a.m. Representative Koppelman will carry the bill.

9:26 a.m. Chairman D. Ruby closed the meeting.

Janae Pinks, Committee Clerk

March 7, 2025

Sixty-ninth
Legislative Assembly
of North Dakota

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO
SECOND ENGROSSMENT**

MRB
3/7/25

REENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 2254

1 of 1

Introduced by

Senators Boschee, Cory, Burckhard, Sickler

Representatives D. Ruby, M. Ruby

1 A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route
2 city ~~and~~ paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management
3 study.

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:**

5 **SECTION 1. APPROPRIATION - DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION - FIXED ROUTE**
6 **CITY ~~AND~~ PARATRANSIT TRANSPORTATION GRANTS - ONE-TIME FUNDING.** There is
7 appropriated out of any moneys in the general fund in the state treasury, not otherwise
8 appropriated, the sum of \$2,000,000, or so much of the sum as may be necessary, to the
9 department of transportation for the purpose of providing grants to fixed route city transportation
10 providers ~~and their~~ for associated paratransit services, for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025,
11 and ending June 30, 2027. The funding appropriated in this section is one-time funding item.

12 **SECTION 2. LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT STUDY - FIXED ROUTE CITY**
13 **TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FUNDING.** During the 2025-26 interim, the legislative
14 management shall study the funding needs of fixed route city transportation networks. The
15 study must include a review of how the fixed route transportation networks can address
16 population growth, economic development, workforce needs, and health care needs. As part of
17 the study, the legislative management shall develop a proposed funding formula within the
18 department of transportation budget for fixed route city transportation systems. The legislative
19 management shall report its recommendations, along with any legislation necessary to
20 implement the recommendations, to the seventieth legislative assembly.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
REENGROSSED SB 2254**

Transportation Committee (Rep. D. Ruby, Chairman) recommends **AMENDMENTS** ([25.1109.03001](#)) and when so amended, recommends **DO PASS** and **BE REREFERRED** to the **Appropriations Committee** (10 YEAS, 1 NAY, 3 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2254 was placed on the Sixth order on the calendar.

2025 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2254

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
3/17/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

9:38 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman Vigesaa, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Member absent: Vice Chairman Kempenich

Discussion Topics:

- Rural Transit

9:38 a.m. Representative Dan Ruby, Chairman, Transportation Committee, introduced the bill.

9:49 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

Krystal Eberle, Appropriations Committee Clerk

2025 HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2254
3/17/2025

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of transportation for fixed route city paratransit transportation services grants; and to provide for a legislative management study.

10:12 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa opened the meeting.

Members present: Chairman Vigesaa, Representatives Anderson, Berg, Bosch, Brandenburg, Fisher, Hanson, Louser, Martinson, Meier, Mitskog, Monson, Murphy, Nathe, Nelson, O'Brien, Pyle, Richter, Sanford, Stemen, Swiontek, Wagner

Member absent: Vice Chairman Kempenich

Discussion Topics:

- Committee Work

10:13 a.m. Representative J. Nelson moved a Do Pass.

10:13 a.m. Representative Mitskog seconded the motion.

10:17 a.m. Roll Call Vote

Representatives	Vote
Representative Don Vigesaa	Y
Representative Keith Kempenich	AB
Representative Bert Anderson	Y
Representative Mike Berg	Y
Representative Glenn Bosch	AB
Representative Mike Brandenburg	Y
Representative Jay Fisher	Y
Representative Karla Rose Hanson	Y
Representative Scott Louser	Y
Representative Bob Martinson	Y
Representative Lisa Meier	AB
Representative Alisa Mitskog	Y
Representative David Monson	Y
Representative Eric J. Murphy	Y
Representative Mike Nathe	Y
Representative Jon O. Nelson	Y
Representative Emily O'Brien	Y
Representative Brandy L. Pyle	Y
Representative David Richter	Y
Representative Mark Sanford	AB

Representative Gregory Stemen	Y
Representative Steve Swiontek	Y
Representative Scott Wagner	Y

10:17 a.m. Motion passed 19-0-4.

10:17 a.m. Representative Koppelman will carry.

10:18 a.m. Chairman Vigesaa closed the meeting.

Krystal Eberle, Appropriations Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE
REENGROSSED AND AMENDED SB 2254 ([25.1109.04000](#))

Appropriations Committee (Rep. Vigesaa, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (19 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 4 ABSENT OR EXCUSED AND NOT VOTING). SB 2254 was placed on the Fourteenth order on the calendar.