

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) Meeting

Minutes **DRAFT**

November 20, 2024 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Supporting meeting materials are available on the [MCOTA website](#)

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jon Benson	Deputy Director for Program Services, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	X
Peter Brickwedde	Assistant Commissioner of Government and External Affairs, Minnesota Department of Commerce	
David Fenley	ADA Director, Minnesota Council on Disability	X
Kelly Garvey	Transportation Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education	X
Temporary Acting Chair, Sarah Ghandour	Office of Transit and Active Transportation, Minnesota Department of Transportation (interim MnDOT designee)	X
Brandon Kasprick	Policy Advisor, Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan	
Chris Kakos	Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs	X
Nick Lardinois	Executive Budget Officer, Minnesota Management and Budget	
Brandon Nurmi	Director, Minnesota Public Transit Association	X
Vice-Chair, Diogo Reis	Director, Health Improvement and Benefit Design Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services	
Shirley Schoening Scheuler	Active Living Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Health	X
Maureen Melgaard Schneider	Chair, Minnesota Board on Aging	
Gerri Sutton	Director, Metropolitan Council	X

Call to Order, Member Roll Call

Executive Director, Tom Gottfried, called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm. Gottfried conducted roll call via chat. Seven members were present. A quorum was established. 28 people were present, including members, staff, and guests.

Acknowledgement of Temporary Acting Chair

There is no active Chair of MCOTA and the Vice-Chair, Diogo Reis, was absent. Gottfried made a motion to make Sarah Ghandour the Temporary Acting Chair for the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approve September Meeting Minutes

Gerri Sutton made a motion to approve the September Meeting Minutes. Brandon Nurmi seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Review and Approve November Meeting Agenda

Chris Kakos made a motion to approve the November Meeting Agenda as amended with Ghandour as Chair. Nurmi seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Study

Gottfried introduced Laura Roads, Director of Commercial Vehicles Operations. MCOTA has been asked to participate in a CDL study. Gottfried is the representative from MCOTA on the committee.

Rodes presented on the CDL Study history and progress. View the PowerPoint presentation on the [MCOTA website](#). Gottfried shared that MCOTA focuses on the passenger services side of the CDL discussion: School busses, transit, and non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT). This study will provide contextual information for MCOTA's strategic plan.

Dynamic Transportation Option Study

Gottfried introduced Caroline Miller, Assistant Office Director. Miller presented on the Dynamic Transportation Options Study. View the PowerPoint presentation on the [MCOTA website](#). The results of this study will be incorporated into the Greater MN Transit Plan by the Office of Transit and Active Transportation.

Maureen Melgaard Schneider shared that the healthcare systems have a stake in this study. The number one reason for missed health appointments is a lack of transportation. Missed health care appointments across the country cost 150 billion dollars each year. Solo-aging contributes to this unfortunate issue.

FY '24 Annual Report, Draft Submitted

No comments have been submitted by the members. Ghandour opened the floor for any feedback on the Draft Report. No comments were made.

Gottfried requested a motion to approve the Draft 2024 Annual Report. Nurmi made a motion to approve the Draft 2024 Annual Report. Kakos seconded; motion carried unanimously.

The report will be sent to Jennifer Witt, the Legislative Liaison Officer, who is responsible for all MnDOT's reporting requirements.

Strategic Direction Work Team Updates

Gottfried presented the two drafted surveys: The Transportation Provider Survey and The Transportation User Survey.

[Transportation Provider Survey](#): MnDOT will send the survey to all providers listed under public fundings, 510 providers have received grant funding for vehicles, and transportation providers have been identified by the RTCCs and TCAPs.

There is currently no list of NEMT providers. MCOTA is seeking assistance from the Department of Health Services (DHS). The Special Transportation Services (STS) providers will be determined with assistance from the Commercial Vehicle Operations division of MnDOT. The complete list of providers will include between 250 and 300 contacts. Gottfried is reaching out to MCOTA membership to ensure the list is comprehensive of all paid professional drivers. The transportation provider list will be generated and sent out in early December.

Gottfried opened the floor for questions and comments.

Ghandour asked if survey results will be available by the next MCOTA Work Team meeting on December 18th, 2024. Gottfried responded that the results received will be presented, however, not all survey responses will be received by then.

Melgaard Schneider asked if Gottfried will be speaking with the Area Agency on Aging Directors, as the initial meeting was postponed. Staff have offered to conduct the survey. Gottfried confirmed that he will be in contact with the Area Agency on Aging Directors.

[Transportation User Survey](#): Gottfried shared that the survey will be distributed through each State agency to reach all end users rather than only public transportation users through MnDOT.

Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver asked how this survey would be distributed. Gottfried explained it will be sent out through the agencies that have providers. MCOTA will likely rely on RTCCs and TCAPs to distribute the survey as well. Sidlo-Toliver shared that a paper document option could be offered.

Public Comment

Ghandour opened the floor for public comment.

Gottfried shared that Arrowhead RTCC is working on the missing medical appointments issue. Sidlo-Tolliver, Mobility Manager at Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC), shared that there is a Healthcare Access Subcommittee specifically looking at transportation to empower small communities to do a socioeconomic qualitative study on the impacts of the missed appointments specific to Minnesota. Gottfried shared that there are opportunities to collaborate with the RTCCs and TCAPs to get State-specific data.

Future MCOTA Meetings

Gottfried shared the dates of the next three public MCOTA meetings:

- Wednesday, January 22, 2025 (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)
- Wednesday, March 26, 2025 (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)
 - A draft policy recommendation, produced by the MCOTA Members, will be presented at this meeting.
- Wednesday, May 28, 2025 (1:00 – 3:00 p.m.)
 - The policy recommendation will be adopted at this meeting.

Ghandour stated that this timeline is advancing quickly. Ghandour urged for member participation in the efforts moving forward to accomplish the strategic plan.

Adjourn

Ghandour adjourned the meeting at 2:35pm.