

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) Meeting

Minutes (DRAFT)

September 24, 2025 | 1:00- 3:00 PM

Name	Organization	Attendance
Jon Benson	Deputy Director for Program Services, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development	X
Sergio Valle-Rodriguez	Legislative Affairs, Minnesota Department of Commerce	X
David Fenley	ADA Director, Minnesota Council on Disability	X
Kelly Garvey	Transportation Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education	X
Sarah Ghandour	Director, Office of Transit and Active Transportation, Minnesota Department of Transportation	X
VACANT	Office of Governor Tim Walz and Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan	
Jeffrey Schnobrich	Executive Budget Officer, Minnesota Management and Budget	X
Brandon Nurmi	Director, Minnesota Public Transit Association	X
Ellen Pillsbury	Active Transportation Coordinator, Minnesota Department of Health	X
Vice-Chair, Diogo Reis	Director, Health Improvement and Benefit Design Division, Minnesota Department of Human Services	
Maureen Melgaard Schneider	Chair, Minnesota Board on Aging	X
Gerri Sutton	Director, Metropolitan Council	X
Benjamin Johnson	Deputy Commissioner of Programs and Services, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs	

Call to Order, Member Roll Call

Acting Chair Diogo Reis being absent, MCOTA Executive Director Elliott McFadden called the meeting to order at 1:05 PM. McFadden conducted the roll call with 10 councilmembers present. Including council members, staff, and guests, 26 people were present.

Introduction of Elliott McFadden

With the retirement of former MCOTA chair Tom Gottfried in August, MnDOT assigned the role of Executive Director to Elliott McFadden. He introduced himself to the council. In addition, Peter Brickwedde introduced Sergio Valle-Rodriguez his replacement on MCOTA as the Department of Commerce Commissioner's designee, and Elliott recognized Jeffrey Schnobrich as the new Minnesota Management and Budget Commissioner designee and Benjamin Johnson as the new Department of Veterans Affairs Commissioner designee.

Review and approve September Meeting Agenda

McFadden reviewed the September 24 agenda and Gerri Sutton moved to approve the agenda with the updated membership. David Fenley. The motion carried unanimously.

Review and approve March Meeting Minutes

McFadden presented the March 26, 2025 MCOTA meeting minutes and David Fenley moved to approve the minutes as submitted. Jon Benson seconded. The motion carried with 9 members voting in favor of the motion and Sergio Valle-Rodriguez abstaining.

Review of MCOTA Bylaws and Meeting Schedule Update

McFadden presented the by-law changes based on discussion by MCOTA councilmembers at their July 23 work session. He highlighted the change from 6 meetings per year to one with the intent to have an in-person summit each spring with a business meeting to fulfill this requirement. Sergio Valle-Rodriguez asked if there were any options to move the summit from the spring since that is a busy season with the legislative sessions. McFadden said it was tentative. The summit would be based on councilmember availability, however that it would need to be by June to give staff enough time to produce the annual report for review before submission to the Legislature.

Gerri Sutton moved that the by-laws be updated based on the changes submitted. Maureen Melgaard Schneider seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Review of 2025 Annual Report

McFadden presented the draft version of 2025 Annual Report of MCOTA to submit to the Legislature. Jeffrey Schnobrich asked that the sentence on page 16 that reads "Funding for Greater Minnesota Transit was reduced by \$11 million annually from the General Fund" be edited to read "Funding for Greater Minnesota Transit was reduced by \$11 million annually from the General Fund in FY 2026 and FY2027, with the base for FY 2028 reverting to the previous amount." Schnobrich moved that the report be accepted and sent to the Legislature with his edits. Gerri Sutton seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

McFadden opened the floor to any comments from the public to MCOTA. There were none.

Future MCOTA Meetings

McFadden indicated that staff would be sending out a meeting poll to find the best time for the 2026 in-person summit. Sarah Ghandour asked if there would also be a proposed agenda of topics. McFadden said staff would

propose an initial agenda of topics and ask the councilmembers to review and make changes and additions. He said MCOTA could meet as a workgroup if necessary.

Adjourn

McFadden asked for a motion to adjourn. Jon Benson moved to adjourn, and there were no objections. The meeting adjourned at 1:35 PM.