

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) Meeting Minutes November 17, 2021, 1:00–3:00 PM

Meeting held via Zoom.

Members present:

Chair – Tim Henkel, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Vice Chair – Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services
At-Large Representative – Victoria Nill, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Susan Bishop, Minnesota Department of Health
Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association
Rachel Dame, Office of the Governor
John Doan, Minnesota Board on Aging
Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education
David Fenley, Minnesota State Council on Disability
Nick Lardinois, Minnesota Management and Budget
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Members absent:

Rolando Sotolongo, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

Others present:

- Minnesota Department of Transportation:
 - Office of Transit & Active Transportation: Kristie Billiar, Tom Gottfried, Michelle Lichtig, Ben Lowndes, Mark Nelson, Alexandra O'Reilly, Noel Shughart
- Center for Transportation Studies: Kaydee Kirk, Arlene Mathison
- Robyn Bernardy, Dakota County
- Tammy Buttweiler, ConnectAbility of MN
- Emily Castaneda
- Heidi Corcoran, Milligan Partners
- Eric Day, MMDC
- Ashley Eckdahl, ECRDC
- Mike Greenbaum, Newtrax
- Alan Hermann, Scott County
- Matt Kallroos
- Anne Larkin Walter
- Nick Leske
- Shelly Madore, Olmstead Office
- Sherry Munyon, MPTA
- Scott Olson, Newtrax
- Karen Onan, East Central Regional Transportation Coordinating Council
- Lynnell Popowski, NWRTPCC
- Mark Schermerhorn, Anoka County Transit
- Terry Smith, MMRTCC
- Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver, Arrowhead RTCC
- Donna Whitcomb
- Courtney Whited, Board on Aging

Call to Order + Member Roll Call

Henkel called to order the November meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access at 1:01 PM on November 17, 2021. There was a quorum of MCOTA members.

Review and Approve Agenda

Reis moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Sutton. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

Meeting Minutes

- Fenley moved to approve the September minutes, seconded by Collins. The minutes were unanimously **approved**.
- Bishop moved to approve the October Senior Leadership Meeting minutes, seconded by Reis. The minutes were unanimously **approved**.

Agency Senior Leadership Team Meeting Next Steps

Gottfried provided an overview of the 2022-23 MCOTA work plan priorities and how the process is moving into assembling work teams. Gottfried previously connected one-on-one with member agency representatives for their input prior to the 10/1 meeting.

Lowndes reviewed the history of the process to date. He also reviewed the work plan in detail with members asking for any last changes and confirming there is support for moving forward and creating work teams.

Themed priorities changes/feedback:

1. **Remove barriers; increase funding:** Include "i.e." or "e.g." in the parenthesis to broaden and show these are just examples of essential needs, but they is not exhaustive. Also, "groceries" may not be the best term to use since some people may use a food shelf. It was clarified that the small group work teams will dig into the specifics of the themed priorities and address.
2. **Accessibility:** Change "safe and accessible pedestrian facilities" to "safe and accessible pedestrian and multi-modal facilities" to be more inclusive. Consider having the work team that will form work with TNCs like Uber and Lyft to include ADA options in their services. It was also suggested to include accessibility and inclusion practices training across state agencies.
3. **Driver shortages:** Ensure that GM driver shortages are also addressed/included.
4. **Volunteer drivers:** #4 could be a strategy for #1 and folded in. The members weighed in about their thoughts on if #4 should be a stand-alone work team or not. A majority of members decided it should be a stand-alone and the issues can be hashed out in the work team to determine if it should remain a stand-alone.

Recommended leaders of each work team are listed below. Gottfried will follow up with each of these individuals to get final confirmation. After they are confirmed Gottfried will be following up with others to populate the teams. Collins shared that she welcomes a co-leader given the amount of time she has to allocate to this effort.

Proposed leaders:

- Work Team #1 (remove barriers; increase funding): Bishop
- Work Team #2 (accessibility): Fenley
- Work Team #3 (driver shortages): Garvey
- Work Team #4 (volunteer drivers): Collins

MCOTA Work Teams

- **Communications Work Team:**
 - **Annual Report:** Mathison shared that the input from members was integrated, and the next draft has gone to MnDOT for review before it is finalized. The final draft will be submitted in mid-December.
 - **Newsletter:** Mathison reviewed the proposed content for the next newsletter. The newsletter is scheduled to send in early December. Munyon will follow up with Sen. Howe's office to ensure it is ok to mention him in the next newsletter article. Munyon will talk to the Senator on 11/19 and then will circle back with Mathison to confirm.
 - **Member Guide:** Mathison let the group know that the Member Guide is now available on the website [here](#).
- **Volunteer Driver Work Team:**
 - This work team will regroup and next meet 12/20. A top priority is the draft fact sheet. The fact sheet will be ready to be shared at the January meeting for endorsement. The brochure will also be discussed at the 12/20 meeting and he will bring next steps to the full group at the January meeting.
- **Operations:** Gottfried shared that this team has not met recently but did significant work earlier on the performance measures and logic model. These efforts are being implemented into the existing RTCC and TCAP agreements in 2022.

Greater MN Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) & Twin Cities Transit Coordination Assistance Projects (TCAPs) Program/Grants Update

Lichtig shared that the RTCCs and TCAPs have met a handful of times this fall for organized "lunch and learn" events to share and learn best practices from each other. The series has been very successful and valuable for members.

Agency Updates

Olmstead Plan

- Dame shared they have been working to help solve the overall statewide driver shortage problem. This could involve recruitment, trainings, incentives, etc.
- Munyon thanked MCOTA members for their legislative support from this past year including the federal initiative to increase the mileage reimbursement for volunteer drivers. A request was made at the 10/1 MCOTA Senior Leadership meeting by both MPTA and the Volunteer Driver Coalition that MCOTA, through their MnDOT legislative liaison, would take this issue at the federal level. She asked if MnDOT legislative liaison could set up meetings with the congressional delegation and Munyon be invited to join them. Henkel said that MnDOT staff would take this request back to their legislative liaison and follow up with Munyon.
- Billiar shared the next subcommittee meeting is this Monday. They will be reporting on "coverage of service" and Billiar will be getting that info from OTAT today. She also noted that the plan is going through an annual revision. All current goals have been reached. She encouraged members to start thinking about cross agency connections on how to report on the goals in the plan. Henkel echoed that he'd also like to see various agency perspectives regarding Olmstead and planning. Gottfried was asked to bring this topic back to a future meeting.

Member Round Robin

- Bishop shared that Covid continues to be a top priority of MDH and this includes the key component of transportation.

- Bishop would also like to get the MCOTA work plan that was discussed again today in order to share it with MDH locals. Gottfried noted that this work plan will be finalized and sent by email to members by mid-December.

Review Draft Agenda for January Meeting

Gottfried provided an overview of the January meeting. Members did not have any changes or questions.

Public Comment

There was not any public comment.

Adjourn

Bishop made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Fenley. The motion was unanimously **approved**. The meeting adjourned at 2:48 PM.