

## MCOTA 2022-23 Work Plan Priorities

November 17, 2021

### MCOTA's Top 2022-23 Priorities

The following priorities are based on the top challenges and opportunities identified by each MCOTA member, and as ranked by senior leaders and members at the October 1, 2021 Senior Leadership Meeting

These priorities all serve to advance the top-ranked goal of providing **sufficient, accessible and affordable transportation throughout the state.**

1. Remove transportation barriers for people to **access health care and other essential needs** (social, groceries) that contribute to well-being (DHS, MDH). Includes **additional funding and diversification of funding sources for rural transportation** (MPTA)
  - MCOTA's potential role:
    - Encourage state agencies that fund transportation for Minnesotans to offer flexible transportation funding options. e.g., Dakota County developing contract with Lyft to transport people with disabilities to and from the workplace. (DEED)
    - Advocacy for additional funding sources such as the DHS waiver transportation for existing rural transportation programs, such as Greater Minnesota public transit.
    - Advocacy for more funding for existing rural transportation programs, such as Greater Minnesota public transit.
2. **Create buy-in at all levels of government that ADA compliance AND accessibility and usability are essential** for all projects, programs & services, including requiring that Transportation Network Companies such as **Lyft and Uber offer accessible vehicles and be accessible** for people with disabilities. (MCD, MDVA) and remove barriers to enable **safe and accessible pedestrian facilities** for all users (MDH)
  - Greater compliance with ADA requirements for bus stops is needed (Kristie Billiar)
  - MCOTA's potential role:
    - Identify barriers and potential ways to alleviate them.
    - Identify ADA Coordinator for each state agency; invite them to MCOTA meetings/teams to provide updates related to their agency's ADA compliance and Olmstead Plan progress.
3. **Driver shortages** for public transit, school buses, and other transportation (Met Council, Education, MDVA)
  - The driver shortage issue is more global than MCOTA resources and is best addressed holistically, such as through a Governor's task force.

- What would it take to solve this? State and federal action, in partnership with private sector (how to incentivize greater pay/benefits/working conditions, etc.)
  - MCOTA’s potential role: advocacy with the Governor’s office; an outgrowth of 13 commissioners’ priority focus (for Governor to take the lead on a state-wide task force, ...)
4. We need more **volunteer drivers** due to fewer available people and increasing demand for senior transportation, including wheelchair accessibility. (Bd on Aging, MDVA)
- **Low mileage reimbursement rate** and tax liabilities are barriers for **volunteer drivers**. (MPTA)
    - MCOTA’s potential role: MPTA would like MCOTA and MnDOT to carry the lead on the Volunteer Driver Program. Specifically, we are requesting that your federal liaison work directly with congressional staff with hopes of raising the IRS charitable mileage reimbursement rate to match the federal business rate.
  - **Additional support for volunteer driver programs**. (Bd on Aging)
    - MCOTA’s potential role: The Board on Aging requests that MCOTA:
      - Update and distribute the Volunteer Driver Brochure “Getting There Safely – Insurance + Liability Information for Volunteer Drivers”
      - Design and implement a statewide Volunteer Driver Recruitment marketing campaign that is facilitated through MnDOT.
      - Design and implement a Volunteer Driver program curriculum.

## MCOTA’s Top 2022-23 Priorities – with original submitted priorities

This table shows the priorities with the original submitted priorities that shape them.

Themed priorities	Original submitted priorities
<p>1. Remove transportation barriers for people to <b>access health care and other essential needs</b> (social, groceries) that contribute to well-being (DHS, MDH). Includes <b>additional funding and diversification of funding sources for rural transportation</b> (MPTA)</p>	<p><b>Minnesota Department of Human Services:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation barriers for people to access health care and other meaningful life activities.</li> <li>• Sufficient and affordable transportation throughout the state</li> </ul> <p><b>Minnesota Public Transit Association</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We would like to seek additional funding options for rural transportation potentially partnering with DHS for example.</li> </ul> <p><b>Minnesota Department of Health</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation needs for people with disabilities, elderly people, beyond medical services such as</li> </ul>

	<p>social connections, groceries and other essential needs that contribute to well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pedestrian needs: Remove barriers to enable safe and accessible pedestrian facilities for all users</li> <li>• Ease of connecting to rides for “just in time service”</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Create buy-in at all levels of government that ADA compliance AND accessibility and usability are essential</b> for all projects, programs &amp; services, including requiring that Transportation Network Companies such as <b>Lyft and Uber offer accessible vehicles and be accessible</b> for people with disabilities. (MCD, MDVA) and remove barriers to enable <b>safe and accessible pedestrian facilities</b> for all users (MDH)</p>	<p><b>Minnesota Department of Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation needs for people with disabilities, elderly people, beyond medical services such as social connections, groceries and other essential needs that contribute to well-being.</li> <li>• Pedestrian needs: Remove barriers to enable safe and accessible pedestrian facilities for all users</li> <li>• Ease of connecting to rides for “just in time service”</li> </ul> <p><b>Minnesota Council on Disability</b></p> <p>Transportation is the keystone to living working and playing in the community of your choice. The Minnesota Council on Disability’s top transportation issue is buy-in from individuals at all levels of government, especially among leadership and decision makers.</p> <p>It is important for state and local government leaders to take accessible affordable transportation for persons with disabilities seriously, not only in speech and not only when it serves an immediate purpose (be it political, budgetary, or a crisis).</p>
<p><b>3. Driver shortages</b> for public transit, school buses, and other transportation (Met Council, Education, MDVA)</p>	<p><b>Minnesota Dept. of Education:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school bus driver shortage</li> </ul> <p><b>Metropolitan Council</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driver Shortage</li> </ul> <p><b>Minnesota Dept. of Veterans Affairs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need for skilled or certified drivers specific to wheelchair accessibility</li> </ul>

4. We need more **volunteer drivers** due to fewer available people and increasing demand for senior transportation, including wheelchair accessibility. (Bd on Aging, MDVA)

- **Limited/costly insurance** is a barrier for **volunteer drivers**. (Bd on Aging)
- **Low mileage reimbursement rate** and tax liabilities are barriers for **volunteer drivers**. (Bd on Aging, MPTA)

#### **Board on Aging:**

- **Volunteer Drivers:** The decrease in the number of Volunteer Drivers and the increasing demand for senior transportation access beyond just medical trips.
- Further, recommending that we request that MCOTA take the following action items to support this issue:
  - Update and distribute the Volunteer Driver Brochure "Getting There Safely - Insurance + Liability Information for Volunteer Drivers"
  - Design and implement a statewide Volunteer Driver Recruitment marketing campaign that is facilitated through MN/DOT.
  - Design and implement a Volunteer Driver program curriculum.

#### **Minnesota Public Transit Association**

- MPTA would like MCOTA and MNDOT to carry the lead on the Volunteer Driver Program. Specifically, we are requesting that your federal liaison work directly with congressional staff with hopes of raising the IRS charitable mileage reimbursement rate to match the federal business rate.
- We would like to seek additional funding options for rural transportation potentially partnering with DHS for example.

#### **Minnesota Department of Commerce:**

Opportunities and challenges with automobile insurance in an evolving personal transportation environment, include, but are not limited to: vehicle sharing arrangements, shared personal mobility services like scooters or bikes, and autonomous vehicles.

	<p><b>Minnesota Dept. of Veterans Affairs</b></p> <p>MDVA requests that MCOTA continue its work with an emphasis on improving the environment in where Volunteer Drivers may be accessed, and Wheelchair accessibilities are more available. According to the DAV veteran’s transportation manager, any area outside what is considered a medium metro area, (Mankato – St. Cloud – Rochester), it becomes extremely difficult and cost prohibitive to provide transportation for veterans who use wheelchairs. Any work to provide additional wheelchair accessibility in rural areas would be greatly beneficial.</p>
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## Additional Challenges and Opportunities

The following challenges and opportunities were ranked lower by senior leaders and members at the October 1, 2021 Senior Leadership Meeting.

### #1 Theme: Transportation accessibility and availability

1. **Equity initiative:** potential state-wide adoption of modeled after the Council’s ([TAP - Metro Transit](#)) program. (Met Council)
  - MCOTA’s potential role: Working with MCOTA partners and other state agencies to review and evaluate the possibility of scaling this program statewide
2. **Waiver Transportation Pilot** (Met Council)
  - MCOTA’s potential role: Working with MCOTA partners (MnDOT, DHS, Met Council and MPTA) to follow the current pilot project between Met Council (Metro Mobility) and DHS, and see if there is potential broader application for Greater Mn Transit Paratransit services.

### #3 Theme: Public transit

1. Rebuild **passenger confidence in safety** of transit service in the pandemic environment. (MnDOT)
  - MCOTA’s potential role: Working through the existing RTCC/TCAP and public transit to develop education and marketing campaigns to improve passenger confidence in public transportation.
2. Change in 5310 recipients’ services require smaller vehicles to be flexible and responsive to serve more community-based jobs and bring more effective services to customers. Change program to enable smaller vehicles. (MnDOT)
  - MCOTA’s potential role: Engaging the different partners that would be impacted by the vehicle pool.

### #4 Theme: Legal, regulatory or policy barriers

1. Challenge with **long-term resource capacity** to support MCOTA, RTCC and TCAP programs (MnDOT)

- MCOTA's potential role: to work with all the member state agencies and determine what resources (staffing and funding) members can provide.
- 2. Transportation providers serve Minnesotans in multiple programs and must meet **duplicative standards**. (DHS)
  - MCOTA's potential role: Research and identify the various state agency programs' standards and identify duplications and/or conflicting requirements.
- 3. Service collaborations face **legal, regulatory or policy barriers** that make it very complex and difficult to coordinate. (MnDOT)
  - MCOTA's potential role: Research and identify the barriers to collaboration and identify ways to mitigate them. Example: vehicle sharing.
- 4. **Inability to share data** between state agencies is a barrier to collaboration and coordination. (Met Council)
  - MCOTA's potential role: Research and identify state agencies' data sharing practices and seek corrections at the policy and/or legislative level. Example: Board on Aging needs a certain set of data for Title 3 funds; DHS NEMT needs another set of data.
- 5. In partnering with multiple state agencies and counties to help people with employment, **each has distinctions in eligibility and methods**. (DEED)
  - MCOTA's potential role: Research and identify the various state and local agency programs' standards and identify duplications and/or conflicting requirements.

## #5 Theme: Insurance

1. Opportunities and challenges with automobile **insurance** in an **evolving personal transportation environment** (Commerce)
  - MCOTA's potential role: Specifically, in Vehicle (agency owned) sharing in improving Volunteer Driver Services, to improve vehicle utilization by several service organizations and determine potential transportation access improvements.

## #6 Theme: Climate change

1. **Climate resiliency and adaptation** will impact transportation and transit choices and options such as electric vehicles. (Commerce)
  - MCOTA's potential role: to research local regional adaptation of transportations programs (beyond Public Transit) to adjust to climate change, example flooding displacement and evacuations.

## Proposed Initial Priority Work Teams

<b>Members</b>	<b>Work Team #1 (remove barriers; increase funding)</b>	<b>Work Team #2 (accessibility)</b>	<b>Work Team #3 (driver shortages)</b>	<b>Work Team #4 (volunteer drivers)</b>	
Susan Bishop, Minnesota Department of Health					
Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce					
Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association					
John Doan, Minnesota Board on Aging					
David Fenley, Minnesota Council on Disability					
Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education					
Nick Lardinois, Minnesota Management and Budget					
Diogo Reis, Minnesota					

<b>Members</b>	<b>Work Team #1 (remove barriers; increase funding)</b>	<b>Work Team #2 (accessibility)</b>	<b>Work Team #3 (driver shortages)</b>	<b>Work Team #4 (volunteer drivers)</b>	
Department of Human Services					
Rolando Sotolongo, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs					
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council					
Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development					