

**Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA)
Meeting Minutes**

Thursday, July 27, 2017

Members Present

Chair – Tim Henkel, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Vice-Chair – Joan Willshire, Minnesota State Council on Disability
Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association (via phone)
Thant Pearson, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services (via phone, proxy for Claire Wilson)
Mike Schadauer, Minnesota Department of Transportation (proxy for Tim Henkel)

Members Absent

Julie Belisle, Minnesota Department of Education
Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce (Jon Kelly was proxy at this meeting)
Tim Held, Minnesota Department of Health
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
Harlan Tardy, Minnesota Board on Aging
Claire Wilson, Minnesota Department of Human Services (Diogo Ries was proxy at this meeting)

Others Present

Kristie Billiar, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Frank Douma, Univ. of Minnesota, Humphrey School of Public Affairs (via phone)
Sara Dunlap, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Kaydee Kirk, Univ. of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies
Matt Knutson, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Roger Long, Voigt's Bus Companies
Arlene Mathison, Univ. of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies
Jacqueline Peichel, Minnesota Department of Human Services/Minnesota Board on Aging (via phone)
Kim Pettman, disability advocate (via phone)
Tim Weltcin, Prime West Health (via phone)

Call to order and introductions

Willshire called to order the monthly meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access at 1:07 PM on July 27, 2017 at the MnDOT Central Office, St. Paul, MN.

Review and approval of agenda

Due to lack of quorum the agenda was not officially approved.

Review and approval of minutes from 6/28/2017 meeting

Due to lack of quorum the minutes were not officially approved. This this be added to the August agenda.

Update on action steps on volunteer driver programs

Willshire and Shughart shared that a meeting was held in late July with the committee; there was good representation from greater Minnesota. Shughart also walked through the document shared. The committee discussed the notification from the IRS about volunteer driver reimbursement and researched the topic further. Seniors are exempt from this with respect to the federal requirements however seniors being exempt at the state level is not clearly stated. The group assembled a list of questions for the Department of Revenue:

1. Are the taxable income exemptions also applicable to state taxable income under the notification that was issued March 24, 2017?

2. What are the eligible expenses, do they include the cost of operating a motor vehicle; fuel, gas, maintenance, depreciation, and insurance?
3. Is the State tax exempt rate set in Statute by the State Legislature or is this a policy directive from the Department?

It was suggested to evaluate the economic benefits of volunteer driver reimbursement through a comprehensive study.

There are three federal reimbursement rates: business rate (~53 cents/mile), charitable rate (14 cents/mile), and the medical rate (16 cents/mile). Should volunteer driver medical trips be reimbursed at the medical rate? There is some movement to raise the latter two rates.

The next step is to meet with Department of Revenue staff and present the above questions.

Report on joint Department of Human Services/MnDOT meetings

Shughart shared the draft "Transportation Planning Process from MnDOT and DHS" report from the State Management and Budget Office on the joint DHS/MnDOT meetings. The draft report outlines the process and results to date, including a joint work plan, was shared. One of the goals with these meetings has been the roll out of the RTCCs.

Status update Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs)

Shughart reviewed the handout on the Greater Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils phase one 2018 application for RTCC organizational planning grants. The document details project goals, available funding, program policies, letter of intent and application submission, notice of affidavit of publication, stakeholder provider contact list, project selection, appeal process, grant contract award, pre-award audit, reporting and reimbursement requirements and timeline. Membership of the RTCCs is anticipated to be broad. There are two main phases to the RTCC process: 1) the organizational planning/development and 2) organizational implementation. If anyone has comments on this process please send them to Sue Siemers and Noel Shughart.

Some members suggested to make the application as simple as possible. In response, it was noted there were a number of stakeholder meetings to create this process and many should be familiar with the application/information anticipated to be issued.

It was suggested that when the final version of the application is ready in the next few weeks that MCOTA set up a conference call with members to do final approval.

Billiar added that with respect to Olmstead, the deadline for getting the application on the street that is the end of September.

Review website redesign

Members reviewed the [new website design](#). The site has been made to be responsive on phones, smaller devices, etc. as well as having ADA accessibility. Willshire's staff did a comprehensive accessibility review of the site and their findings have been addressed.

The group discussed additional coordination with local people and adding local resources to the website as needed. Could MCOTA further highlight www.Minnesotahelp.info as a resource? The Minnesota Board on Aging oversees and maintains that website and can be contacted with questions on how to promote this resource.

Most people come to the MCOTA website through a link provided in an email. Members should also ensure that the final webpage link (www.CoordinateMNTransit.org) is on their own organization's website to direct people there.

Members agreed to review the website content before the next meeting at which time approval will be requested. If the conference call is held for the RTCC application, members could also approve the website at that time since there was not a quorum at the July meeting.

New legislative required studies

DHS transportation waiver program

Knutson provided information on the DHS transportation waiver program. The goal is to get the RFP out this September. There will be a recommendation and report sent to the legislature in 2019.

- A service that can be authorized for people who receive home and community based services.
 - Day training and habilitation has a formula
 - Waiver transportation does not have a formula – it just needs to meet support plan needs
 - Waiver transportation is a market rate service
 - 11,500 waivers were received in FY16 (out of 30,000)
- 3 types of transportation rates:
 - One trip maximum = \$20.21 regardless of mileage
 - Commercial trip = \$1.54/mile
 - Transportation reimbursement rate = 54 cents/mile
- A DHS gaps analysis is done every 2 years and transportation is a significant gap identified. Olmstead is also requiring that this be addressed.
- Research and analysis: A redesign of the transportation waiver system and an RFP are currently under development. This includes payment and coordination changes. The goal is to increase access to transportation to more individuals and to more providers as well as have these experiences be positive.

It was recommended MnDOT staff review the RFP before it is finalized. Knutson will share the link to the RFP with Shughart to share with the full MCOTA group.

Metro Mobility connections to Lyft and Uber

This item will be moved to the August meeting since Sutton was unable to attend the July meeting.

FY18-19 work plan and budget

Shughart provided an overview of the FY18 MCOTA proposed forum and research project. It was suggested to look into providing scholarships to the forum for those who cannot afford the \$25 registration fee – Shughart will follow up.

If the conference call is held for the RTCC application, members could approve the updated work plan and budget at that time since there was not a quorum at the July meeting.

Agency updates

- Willshire shared that the July 26 rally marking is the 27th anniversary of the ADA law was well attended with more than 200 people.

- Billiar shared that the Olmstead update meeting happened in late July. The RTCC RFP needs to be ready by end of September. The work plan will be updated in September and MCOTA will be consulted for input.

Public comments:

Pettman noted that getting public support is important to support transit coordination efforts and encourages MCOTA to continue to do this.

Adjourn: Henkel motioned to adjourn; Willshire seconded; motion was unanimously **approved** at 2:57 p.m.

Future 2017 meetings:

- Wednesday, August 23
- Wednesday, September 27
- Wednesday, October 25
- Wednesday, November 15
- Wednesday, December 20

Potential future agenda items: August:

MCOTA research projects (attachments to be emailed prior to meeting)

Action requested: Review and approval of project findings and recommendations.

1. **Economic and Social Benefits of Volunteer Driver Programs in Minnesota: Case Studies**, Jerry Zhao, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota (15 min)
2. **Public Sector Uses of Transportation Network Companies: Case Studies**, Saif Benjaafar, Industrial & Systems Engineering, University of Minnesota (15 min)

Next stakeholder communication (attachment to be emailed prior to meeting)

Action requested: Review, suggest content changes, and approve

MnDOT autonomous vehicles bus study (attachment to be emailed prior to meeting) – Jay Hietpas, MnDOT

Action requested: Information

Metro Mobility connections to Lyft and Uber (attachment to be emailed prior to meeting) – Gerri Sutton

Action requested: Information

Public/Private Partnership MTM-Timber Trails Transit

Program review of coordination projects – Noel Shughart, MnDOT

2018 MCOTA meeting schedule – Kaydee Kirk, Univ. of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies

Standing agenda items:

- Review and approve agenda
- Review and approve meeting minutes
- Monthly communications – review and/or approve
- FY18 MCOTA budget update
- Agency updates
- Public comments