MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

MCOTA Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2022 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Meeting held virtually via Zoom.

Members present:
Chair – Tim Sexton, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Vice Chair – Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Dylan Galos, Minnesota Department of Health
David Fenley, Minnesota State Council on Disability
Maureen Schneider, Minnesota Board on Aging
Jim Miller, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association
Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council

Members absent:
Rachel Dame, Office of the Governor
Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Nick Lardinois, Minnesota Management and Budget
Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Others present:
- Reena Shetty, State of Minnesota Age Friendly Minnesota
- Minnesota Department of Transportation: Kristie Billiar, Tom Gottfried, Michelle Lichtig, Mark Nelson, Sue Siemers
- University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies: Arlene Mathison, Samantha Hahn-Douville
- Barbara Bursack, Washington County TCAP
- Alan Herrmann, Scott/Carver County TCAP
- Karen Onan, East Central RTCC
- Shelly Pflaum, United Community Action Partnership RTCC
- Robin Rohr, Hennepin County TCAP
- Anne Larkin Walter, Anoka County
- Mike Greenbaum, Newtrax/Ramsey County TCAP
- Nick Leske, United Community Action Partnership
- Scott Olson, Newtrax/Ramsey County TCAP

- Ted Nelson, Prairie Five Transportation Director/RTCC
- Mark Schermerhorn, Anoka County Transit TCAP
- Lynnell Popowski, Northwest Regional Development Commission/RTCC
- Joan Willshire, former member and Disability Advocate

Call to Order and Member Roll Call
Tim Sexton, MCOTA Chair, called the November meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access to order at 1:06 PM on November 16, 2022. There was a quorum of MCOTA members.

Review and Approve Agenda
Diogo Reis moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Gerri Sutton. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

September Meeting Minutes
Tiffany Collins moved to approve the September minutes, seconded by David Fenley. The minutes were unanimously **approved**.

Legislative Updates
Tom Gottfried stated that he was not aware of any legislative updates related to MCOTA. The legislative proposals from MnDOT will be shared with MCOTA in the January meeting.

Diogo Reis reported no legislative updates from the Department of Human Services.

David Fenley reported no legislative updates specific to transportation from the MN Council on Disability. David Fenley stated that they are hoping for an increased budget, which would have a tangential effect on the role they play in transportation circles. David Fenley noted that the MN Council on Disability has their Legislative Forum on Thursday, December 15th. He will send a more formal invite to MCOTA members and friends.

Presentation on Age-Friendly Minnesota Council
Reena Shetty, Executive Director, explained that the Age-Friendly Minnesota Council was created by Governor Walz in late 2019. Public/private partnership of multiple state agencies and leaders developed recommendations for an age-friendly state – one that engages older people and understands that to be age-friendly, a community must consider the social, economic, and environmental and lifestyle factors that influence health and aging for everyone. Reena Shetty stated that the council worked entirely during the pandemic and that Minnesota was the first state to develop an age-friendly preliminary plan during a pandemic.

Reena Shetty shared the state agencies involved in the Age-Friendly Council including; Minnesota Department of Economic and Employment Development, Minnesota Department of Transportation, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Minnesota Department of Commerce, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Board on Aging, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs,

Minnesota Department of Human Services, and Minnesota Department of Health. Shetty also shared that five community members and one tribal government representative are also involved in the Council.

Reena Shetty noted that there are 462 Age-Friendly communities in the United States and 10 Age-Friendly States including Minnesota. There has been rapid growth of Age-Friendly communities since Minnesota joined the network, and there are currently 14 communities in Minnesota.

There are eight domains of livability that makes a community Age-Friendly:
- Community Support and Health Services
- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- Transportation
- Housing
- Social Participation
- Respect and Social Inclusion
- Civic Participation and Employment
- Communications and Information

The Minnesota Age-Friendly Council identified Emergency Preparedness as the ninth Minnesota-specific domain.

Reena Shetty stated that there are three main priorities for the next three years:
- Emerging and Intersecting Age-Friendly Policies
  o Advance age-friendly policies;
  o Coordinate state, local and private partner's collaborative work on emergency preparedness for older adults, communities, and persons in zip codes most impacted by COVID-19
- Building an Age-Friendly Master Plan
  o Leverage public and private resources to develop a blueprint for an Age-Friendly Minnesota
  o Communicate strategically to gain broad support
  o Leverage data to support messaging and establish metrics for success
  o Engage state legislatures to create lasting change
- Opportunity for Inclusive Work through Age-Friendly Community Grants
  o Two grant categories
    ▪ Technical Assistance Provider (TAP) Grants: TAP grantees will help communities complete grant applications and undertake other age-friendly efforts
    ▪ Community Grants will help communities undertake age-friendly work

- o Communities defined broadly – units of governments, nonprofit organizations, collaborative community efforts, businesses, etc.
- o Grants will support work to:
  - Advance age-friendly planning, systems, policies and environments
  - Coordinate state, local and private partners' collaborative work on emergency preparedness for older adults, communities, and persons in zip codes most impacted by COVID-19
- o Funding areas:
  - Health and social services
  - Transportation access
  - Safe and affordable housing
  - Social connection and inclusion
  - Ageism and racism
  - Outdoor spaces and buildings
  - Communications and access to technology
  - Opportunities to stay engaged and financially secure
  - Emergency preparedness

FY23-24 Work Plan

Tom Gottfried shared that since the At Large Member position is not identified in the statute regarding MCOTA membership, there will not be an At Large Member position for now.

Tom Gottfried presented on MCOTA's role in transportation access. MCOTA fulfills the following three roles:

Lead

For Transportation Access issues beyond the scope or mission of any given state agency it is MCOTA's role to lead and partner with the appropriate agency/agencies and stakeholders.

Partner

For Transportation Access issues or situations that cross over agency disciplines or missions. MCOTA is a partner with stakeholders and other state agencies.

Support

For Transportation Access issues it is MCOTA's primary mission and focus. MCOTA can Provide support from MCOTA member agencies and identify the best state and/or national resources for support.

Gottfried identified the different types of issues that are faced when MCOTA is providing support.

Enterprise-wide

This is an issue that involves multiple state agencies (at least two) and will need partners from the specific state agencies as the issue is vetted and in turn buy in for the potential recommendation(s).

Example: Definition of what is a Volunteer Driver and adjusting the allowable reimbursement rate for Volunteer Drivers to Match the IRS mileage rate. Commerce for language for Insurance classification, DHS and MnDOT to align definitions and Revenue for state tax adjustment. 2021 Session Law.

Agency Specific
This is an issue that is specific to that state agency only, however has a direct or indirect impact on other state agencies and will need partners from the impacted agencies and the specific state agency to vet out the issues and potential recommendations.

Example: Span of Paratransit service of Greater MN Public Transportation. MnDOT and the impacted state agencies' programs.

Gottfried noted that as of MCOTA's review and endorsement of the Work Teams 2023/2024 Work Plans at the July and September MCOTA meetings, the four active Work Teams are moving ahead through the vetting of the issues and working towards solutions and recommendations to be reviewed and approved by MCOTA and by Senior Leadership as appropriate.

The projected timeline will depend on the topic and complexity of issue, but planning they expect the following:
- Policy and Potential Legislative action recommendations: Draft March MCOTA meeting, Final Draft May MCOTA meeting for approval and potentially moved to Senior Leadership in June.
- Research and study recommendations: Draft January MCOTA meeting, Final Draft March MCOTA meeting for approval, with Studies and Research to be completed by end of the calendar year.

Greater MN Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) & Transit Coordination Assistance Projects (TCAPs)
Michelle Lichtig, MNDOT Project Manager gave an update on Mobility Management development regarding the RTCCs and TCAPs. Michelle Lichtig described recent presentations and outreach, National Association of Development Organizations presenters; Matt Kallroos Region Five and Michelle Lichtig MNDOT, Minnesota Association of Development Organizations presenters; Terry Smith Mid-Minnesota RTCC, Lynnell Popowski Northwest RTCC and Michelle Lichtig MNDOT, and St Louis County Human Services Conference, prensenters; Robyn Bernardy Dakota County TCAP, Karen Onan East Central RTCC, Beverly Sidlo Tolliver Arrowhead RTCC and Michelle Lichtig, MNDOT. Michelle Lichtig explained the importance of visibility and outreach for advancing the concept of mobility management.

Michelle Lichtig shared that in the future they look to present more and to engage attendees in Minnesota to become knowledgeable about mobility management/transportation coordination and to participate in their TCAP/RTCC.

Support Our Troops VAN – 6W RTCC Initiative
Ted Nelson, Executive Director, Prairie Five Community Action shared that Support Our Troops is a grant from the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs and is funded through specialized "Support Our Troops" license plates, an option to purchase when acquiring a new or used vehicle. Prairie Five Community Action Council is the fiscal organization, while 6W RTCC manages and gives guidance to the initiative. Ted Nelson explained this effort was initiated by the 6W RTCC and developed the grant with community partners' input. 6W RTCC prepared and submitted the grant.

Through the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs Support Our Troops program 6W RTCC received a $80,000 grant to purchase a wheelchair-accessible van to provide transportation to Minnesota Veterans in the five-county region of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine.

Partnerships for this project involved: Prairie Five, 6WRTCC, MN Department of Veterans Affairs (MDVA), County Veterans Service Officers (CVSO).

The initiative is still recruiting drivers. Eligible passengers must have been discharged honorably from the military A passenger may be accompanied by a non-veteran.

Although the "Support Our Troops" grant program has been available for several years this is the first time funds were granted for a vehicle. The grant program staff for the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs has been very helpful providing guidance with this new initiative and see this as an opportunity to partner with Prairie Five and 6WRTCC to implement needed transportation.

So far, 43 rides have been completed.

MCOTA Work Teams
Removing Barriers
Dylan Galos shared that kick-off meetings have occurred for each sub work group. More updates will come after the next full work team meeting.

Gottfried reminded that the Removing Barriers and Accessibility & Olmstead Work Teams have broken into subgroups and have combined efforts on certain goals. Most sub-groups have had mostly informational gathering at this point in time, with members reaching out to their own organizations for information on further support of work team goals.

Accessibility
David Fenley provided an update that the work team has met twice since the last MCOTA meeting. The main goal the past few meetings has been to hone in on one goal of raising awareness around non-emergency medical transportation and how counties communicate this to their constituents.

Volunteer Driver & Forum Series
Tiffany Collins shared that the Work Team held their first Volunteer Driver Forum in October and had more than sixty-two [actually about 70] participants. The forum recording is posted to the MCOTA website. The next session will tentatively be held on February 16, 2023 from 1-3pm.

Looking ahead, the Work Team plans to bring the Volunteer Driver Brochure to the next meeting, they are looking into future Lunch and Learns, and updating the 2017 Volunteer Driver Program Research.

Communications
Michelle Lichtig updated that the Work Team is completing final edits on the Annual Report.

Arlene Mathison, MCOTA consultant with Center for Transportation Studies, updated that they are working on the dissemination plan for the Annual Report after it is finalized in January.

Michelle Lichtig noted that the newsletter will be sent out in January. Once the Annual Report is completed, the Work Team will begin working on building the resource library.

Agency Updates
Olmstead Plan
Kristie Billiar stated that the updated plan will be presented at the next sub cabinet meeting.

Member Round Robin
Dylan Galos updated shared that he last week he attended the American Public Health Association Conference in Boston. There is some innovative work being done by a couple of researchers using the National Household Travel Survey and examining the number of people living with disabilities who are meeting exercise requirements. The way the research is coded is that they examined any movement using a personal assisted device, whether person powered or electronically powered as being able to get around. They examined based on urbanity density and some environmental features. Dylan Galos offered that if anyone is interested in learning further about this research to contact him. He felt that this research is relevant to thinking about active transportation, accessibility and what it means to be inclusive.

Maureen Melgaard-Schneider updated that Minnesota Board of Aging Operations Committee met at the end of October over a two-day session where they heard from each of their seven area agencies on aging across the state. Each agency presented their area plans that outline

and detail the work they will do in their local service areas through 2023. Maureen noted that discussion included many topics related to transportation, referencing the RTCCs and TCAPs.

Review Draft Agenda for Next Meeting
The draft agenda of the January meeting was shared. Members did not have any changes or questions.

Adjourn
Sexton adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Action Items
- Tom Gottfried to communicate in writing the projected MCOTA Work Team timeline to the four MCOTA Work Teams prior to the January MCOTA meeting.

- Volunteer Driver Work Team to bring the Volunteer Driver Brochure to the January MCOTA meeting