MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

MCOTA Meeting Minutes
May 24, 2023 | 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Meeting held virtually via Zoom.

Members present:
- Chair – Tim Sexton, Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Maureen Schneider, Minnesota Board on Aging
- Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
- Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce
- Shirley Schoening Scheuler, Minnesota Department of Health
- Brandon Nurmi, Minnesota Public Transit Association
- Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Ron Quade, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs

Members absent:
- Vice Chair – Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services
- David Fenley, Minnesota State Council on Disability
- Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education
- Rachel Dame, Office of the Governor
- Nick Lardinois, Minnesota Management and Budget

Others present:
- Minnesota Department of Transportation: Tom Gottfried, Michelle Lichtig, Davin Simmons, Nissa Tupper
- University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies: Arlene Mathison, Samantha Hahn-Douville
- Eric Day, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and RTCC
- Terry Smith, Mid-Minnesota Development Commission and RTCC
- Mike Greenbaum, Newtrax/Ramsey County TCAP
- Scott Olson, Newtrax/Ramsey County TCAP
- Alan Herrmann, Scott/Carver County TCAP
- Anne Larkin Walter, Anoka County
- Shelly Pflaum, United Community Action Partnership/Southwest MN RTCC
- Lynnell Popowski, Northwest Regional Development Commission/RTCC
- Darla Waldner, Northwest Regional Development Commission/RTCC
- Gavin Bukovich, ARDC
- Karen Onan, East Central RTCC

- Robyn Bernardy, Dakota County TCAP
- Barbara Bursack, Washington County TCAP
- Tad Erickson, Region 5 RDC
- Glenda Phillipe, Roseau County
- Marcia, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council Inc
- Rhonda Danielson
- Heather Everson
- Therese Larson
- Tim Finseth
- Paul C
- Jean
- Joan
- ASL interpreters Sadi D and Tricia
- CART captioner: Lisa

Call to Order and Member Roll Call
Tim Sexton, MCOTA Chair, called the meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access to order at 1:02 PM. There was a quorum of MCOTA members. MCOTA members introduced themselves.

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

March Meeting Minutes
Maureen Schneider moved to approve the January minutes, seconded by Gerri Sutton. The minutes were unanimously **approved**.

Legislative and Governor's Budget Update
Tom Gottfried, Minnesota Department of Transportation
Gottfried stated that it was an economically viable and responsive legislation that occurred. Public transit in greater Minnesota and in the Metro area all received an increase in funding.

Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Brickwedde stated that he did not have many updates that directly related to the intersection of insurance and transportation. The Transformative Energy Bill was passed and was the largest ever energy bill.

Maureen Melgaard Schneider, Minnesota Board on Aging
Schneider noted that the Board on Aging's priorities this year were the legislative task force on aging as well as the Native American Elders coordinator position. Both were included in the Human Services Omnibus Bill and will be funded. They also received additional funding for the Office of Ombudsman for long-term care for additional staffing. This funding could be useful to home and community-based transportation. They will also see a continuation of the Minnesota Age Friendly Council funding and the Live Well at Home Expansion.

Brandon Nurmi, Minnesota Public Transit Association
Gottfried noted that MPTA was a strong partner in the conversation relative to Greater Minnesota public transit and supporting metro initiatives for additional funding. Nurmi had no further updates.

Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
Sutton stated that the Metropolitan Council has several legislative updates. First, they were included in the revised budget recommendations from the Governor last week. It included funding to be used to enclose up to 3 light rail stations, increase camera monitoring capabilities, and expand their presence by providing funding for community-based organizations to connect people to social services. A pilot will begin July 1st for free rides for certified Metro Mobility riders.

Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
Yanda noted that no bills were passed directly related to transportation, however, a bill was passed for additional funding to increase internet in areas that currently do not have internet.

Discussion of potential June 28 Senior Leadership meeting
Gottfried noted that June 28th is no longer a viable option for the Senior Leadership meeting and the group is looking for an alternative timeline to meet. Sexton explained that this meeting will act as a check in for Senior Leadership to provide updates on the 8 to 18 months of MCOTA and get feedback on the direction MCOTA will work towards in the upcoming year. Sexton asked members to remind their organization leadership to respond to the poll sent out to select a meeting date. Gottfried presented the draft agenda for the Senior Leadership meeting.

Presentation from Nissa Tupper on Complete Streets
Nissa Tupper, Minnesota Department of Transportation, presented on Complete Streets. As defined by Minnesota Statutes §174.75, "Complete Streets" is the planning, scoping, design, implementation, operation, and maintenance of roads to reasonably address the safety and accessibility needs of users of all ages and abilities. Complete streets consider the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles moving along and across roads, intersections, and crossings. It is sensitive to local context and recognizes that needs vary across urban, suburban, and rural settings.

MnDOT put the first Complete Streets policy into place in 2013 and was one of the first DOTs to develop a statewide policy. MnDOT must follow a Complete Streets approach in all phases of planning, project development, operation, and maintenance activities. In 2016 the MnDOT Complete Streets Policy was revised. The revision consolidated relevant guidance, established reporting process and requirements, and clarified policy exceptions.

Tupper explained the Safe System Approach, which is a guiding principle to address roadway safety. Complete Streets is a Safe System Approach implementation strategy for safer roads and safer speeds. A tangible example of this is rumble strips that alert drivers when they're unintentionally steering off the road. This approach is also unique because it focuses on keeping impacts on the human body at tolerable levels. Examples of this include controlling speeds or physically separating people that are traveling at different speeds.

Tupper stated that proactive road design to slow speed improves visibility, provides additional time for drivers to stop, and keeps impacts on the human body at tolerable levels. Separating people in space and time is important for road design because it increases visibility and awareness. If it is not possible to separate, then the next step is to try to manage kinetic energy to create predictable behaviors.

Tupper shared a slide indicating things under the umbrella of Complete Streets improvements. These include:

- Speed management
- Intersections
- Roadway departure
- Cross cutting
- Pedestrian/bicyclist
- Transit

This list was created to ensure that their efforts line up with the FHWA's proven safety counter measures.

MnDOT has put a pointed effort into reducing motor vehicle traffic fatalities, and they are seeing good returns on those efforts. Traffic fatalities for motorists have decreased over time. However, non-motorist traffic fatalities have increased over time. Minnesota rural counties are continuing to experience higher rates of non-motorist traffic fatalities than metro counties. Additionally, communities of color experience a larger burden of being struck and killed by drivers.

Many past transportation planning, design and operations decisions have inadvertently created "incomplete streets." These streets don't provide safe places for people to walk, bike or take public transportation. This is particularly dangerous for those who suffer disproportionately from transportation-related impacts: people with disabilities, communities of color, older adults, children, and low-income communities.

The updated policy states that the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) must follow a Complete Streets approach in all phases of planning, scoping, project development, construction, operations, permitting, and maintenance activities. Compliance is required by all MnDOT employees and MnDOT partners working on trunk highway projects, such as local agency representatives, consultants, and contractors.

Categories that are exempt are:

- Emergency, routine, preventative, or localized maintenance and repair work that does not change the structure or layout of the road and does not meet the ADA alteration threshold
- Projects such as storm water tunnels, storm sewers, landscaping, and slope stabilization that do not directly affect transportation system users or layout

- Roadside infrastructure projects on freeways that do not involve entrance/exit ramps, loops, or overpasses such as high-tension cable guardrails, sign replacements, and overhead sign structure replacements
- Installation or replacement of fiber optic cables, other transmission lines, solar panels or other energy infrastructure in state owned right-of-way

Addressing ADA is an integrated part of a Complete Streets approach to improve mobility and access for all abilities.

The updated Complete Streets guidance is grounded in relative vulnerability and context categories. Additionally, they have updated reporting process and performance measures along with the [MnDOT Complete Streets website](#).

Tupper noted that one of the important things of the Complete Streets approach is humanizing the transportation structure and being able to identify user groups to talk about people versus mode of transportation.

Local Human Services Coordination Plan trends and proposed projects/objectives
Simmons noted that the MnDOT Office of Transit and Active Transportation and Minnesota Department of Human Services partners with local planning organizations throughout Minnesota to carry out the planning process for Local Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plans (LCP) every five years since 2006. How each region approached their processes across the state differs slightly. Because this is for the FTA 5310 grants, the coordination of strategies must be derived from a locally developed coordinated public transit, human services, transportation plan that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with lower incomes.

The FTA requires updated plans every 5 years that at a minimum should include an assessment of transportation needs for these individuals with disabilities, an assessment of available services that identifies current providers, an assessment of gaps in service, and strategies and/or activities to address those gaps and achieve efficiencies and deliveries.

A survey indicated that across the board, most regional plans noted that they were short staffed and needed more time to complete their LCPs, which were originally slated to be done on December 31, 2022. Three timeline extensions were given for our planning partners to complete their LCPs.

Simmons noted that the most negative trends found were driver shortage and a severe staff shortage. Gottfried added that the positive trends found are awareness of the increased coordination and public engagement. Additionally, strong Regional Transportation Coordinating Council support from stakeholders was noted and acknowledgement of coordination opportunities.

MCOTA Work Teams
Removing Barriers and Accessibility & Olmstead

Gottfried reported that these two work teams had a joint meeting on May 19th. Two current initiatives are developing a white paper about shared vehicles which gets back to partners with commerce and relative to insurance along with transportation management coordination centers and how information can be streamlined to users.

Volunteer Driver Programs
Karen Onan shared a list of supporters for the Volunteer Driver Tax Appreciation Act of 2023 that was introduced in April 2023 by Representative Pete Stauber. This bill would increase the reimbursement rate for volunteer drivers from 14 cents a mile up to the business reimbursement rate which fluctuates as needed. This bill would also remove reimbursement rate from legislative jurisdiction and be permanently tied to the IRS reimbursement rate.

Gavin Bukovich shared that that the Volunteer Driver Initiatives Work Team research needs statement was updated to include focus on health care transportation as it relates to economic benefits.

Onan shared that the Lunch and Learn will be held May 27th at noon and will be a discussion on scheduling software. On July 27th, Elliott McFadden will be discussing Mobility-as-a-Service public transit pilot projects in Greater Minnesota.

Communications
Jodi Yanda noted that the June newsletter will be coming out next month. The Communications Work Team has also begun planning the annual report.

Adjourn
Sexton adjourned the meeting at 2:34 p.m.