MINNESOTA
COUNCIL ON TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

MCOTA Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2023| 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Meeting held virtually via Zoom.

Members present:
- Vice Chair – Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services
- David Fenley, Minnesota State Council on Disability
- Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education
- Brandon Kasprick, Office of the Governor
- Ron Quade, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Maureen Schneider, Minnesota Board on Aging
- Shirley Schoening Scheuler, Minnesota Department of Health
- Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
- Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce
- Brandon Nurmi, Minnesota Public Transit Association
- Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Members absent:
- Chair – Tim Sexton, Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Nick Lardinois, Minnesota Management and Budget

Others present:
- Minnesota Department of Transportation: Sarah Ghandour, Tom Gottfried, Michelle Lichtig, Davin Simmons, Mai Thor, Kristie Billiar
- University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies: Arlene Mathison, Samantha Hahn-Douville, Chelsea Arbury Prorok
- Steve Workman, Consultant for NCMM at Easterseals, Inc. and Director or Transport New Hampshire
- Sheila Holbrook-White, Metropolitan Council
- Sherry Munyon, MPTA
- Abby Brown, Grants Specialist MDVA
- Heather Darby (MDVA)
- 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
- Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver, ARDC and Arrowhead RTCC

- Gavin Bukovich, ARDC and Arrowhead RTCC
- Tammi Hagen, Headwaters RTCC
- Tony Klaers, Headwaters RTCC
- Robin Rohr, Hennepin County TCAP
- Mark Schermerhorn, Anoka County
- Anne Larkin Walter, Anoka County
- Shelly Pflaum, United Community Action Partnership/Southwest MN RTCC
- Lynnell Popowski, Northwest Regional Development Commission/RTCC
- Robyn Bernardy, Dakota County TCAP
- Alan Herrmann, TCAP Scott/Carver Counties
- Barbara Bursack, Washington County TCAP
- Donna RSVP Litchfield, MN
- Cathy Gold
- Nick Leske
- William Schroeer, chair of Minnesota Shared Mobility Collaborative
- ASL interpreters Jenae and Rita
- CART captioner: Jayne

Call to Order and Member Roll Call
Diogo Reis, DHS, and called the meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access to order. There was a quorum of MCOTA members.

Review and Approve Agenda
A vote to approve the agenda was moved. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

September Meeting Minutes
A vote to approve the September meeting minutes was moved. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

Annual Election of Officers (chair and vice-chair)
Reis opened up the floor for conversation and nominations for the chair and vice-chair positions. Tom Gottfried, MnDOT, described the position roles. The chair's position is responsible for setting up the work teams and their point lead. Additionally, both the vice-chair and chair sit on the MCOTA executive committee to draft each agenda. Michelle Lichtig, MnDOT, suggested a rotating basis method, making the chair and vice-chair positions a more reasonable commitment. Reis and Gottfried noted that they would draft a rotation method and present to the group at the next MCOTA meeting.

Transportation Equity

Disability Justice
Gottfried introduced Mai Thor, Program Manager at MnDOT, to discuss Disability Justice and how it relates to the field of transportation. Thor began by providing a high-level explanation of what transportation equity is. Transportation equity means the benefits and burdens of transportation systems, services and spending are fair and just, which historically has not been

the case. Transportation equity requires ensuring underserved communities, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color, share in the power of decision making.

Under equality, everyone gets the same resources. Under equity, the specific historical and present-day circumstances and abilities of individuals and communities are taken into consideration to provide appropriate solutions that provide everyone with opportunities to live safe and healthy lives.

Equality must be prioritized in planning processes to enable all people to access and benefit from transportation, transit, and active transportation, to maximize the environmental and health benefits for society.

- Over 1 million rural households do not have access to a car (nationwide).
- 27% of households below the poverty line do not own a car (nationwide).
- Almost 660,000 Minnesotans (half metro, half greater) identify as having a disability.
- More than 17,000 working-age adults in greater Minnesota do not have a car.
- In greater Minnesota, nearly 24,000 older adults live alone and do not have a car.

Transportation, transit, and active transportation are for people, not cars, buses, trains, bikes, etc. It's about centering the individual and their lived experience. It's important to center individuals and their lived experiences in the research, decision making, and planning that is done.

10 Principles of Disability Justice – what this work is rooted in

- Disabled folks encompass different shapes, sizes, abilities, skin colors, genders, etc.
- Disability is an identity, the same as folks of different shapes, sizes, skin color, genders, etc. hold for themselves.
- Disabled folks hold different identities that are multiply marginalized and oppressed.

1. Intersectionality
2. Leadership of Those Most Impacted
3. Anti-Capitalism
4. Cross-Movement Solidarity
5. Wholeness
6. Sustainability
7. Cross-Disability Solidarity
8. Interdependence
9. Collective Access
10. Collective Liberation

Why should Disability Justice matter in transportation access?

As MCOTA members, we need to apply an intersectional, equity, and justice lens to our work.

"When people live at the intersection of multiple vectors of oppression, unfettered access to mobility and public space are not guaranteed."

Apply principles of Disability Justice to this work helps us do better and will impact all marginalized communities.

- Does our society have a preference for "able-bodiedness" in our built-in environment?
- Does our transportation infrastructure promote ableism?
- Does active transportation planning and infrastructure building have a bias to what kind of people can transport themselves?

The same values and principles that we just saw from the MnDOT Advancing Transportation Equity Initiative apply here. We have already been told by communities that this is the work they want us to do.

Centering the person as a whole, recognizing all people as essential and non-disposable not only centers the DJ framework, but also elevates the need to make equity a cornerstone of transportation access. This is how we are doing mobility management.

Through using an equity lens, mobility management connects resources together to meet the needs of the individual whose lived experiences have been challenged by marginalization. Just like prairie grass, at the surface, our customers appear small in number, but the connections, resources, and networks required to make it work for them are abundant and deep.

A group conversation was had regarding the connections of transportation equity and disability justice in present member departments.

Greater MN Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) & Transit Coordination Assistance Projects (TCAPs)
Lichtig noted that the past month has been very busy for many of the Mobility Managers and MnDOT staff as they have been involved as speakers in various conferences.

Conferences-Presentations and Exhibit Booth Support:

St. Louis County Human Services: Presentation – Robyn Bernardy, Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver and Mai Thor

- Exhibit Booth Support: Karen Onan, Michelle Thomas, and Gavin Bukovich

MPTA: Presentation – Alan Hermann and Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver

Grand Rapids Transportation Conference: Presentation – Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver and Tom Gottfried

Reimagine Aging: Scott Olson

Association of Travel Instruction: Robyn Bernardy

CALACT: Presentation – Michelle Lichtig

Mobility management is an approach to designing and delivering transportation services that starts and ends with the customer. It begins with a community vision in which the entire transportation network works together with customers, planners, and stakeholders to deliver the transportation options that best meet the community's needs.

Lichtig shared RTCC and TCAP updates:

Anoka

- Began conversations with other RTCCs and TCAPs on possible transfer locations in Anoka and Washington County

Dakota

- **GoDakota** Lyft program has 1580 eligible ride For Waiver eligible residents getting to and from employment as well as community access.

Hennepin County

- **MnDOT's newest TCAP in January**

Newtrax

- Four new bus service loops in Ramsey County – DHS Live Well at Home Grant
- Awarded August 2023 "Best Place to Work" for employers with over 50 employees.

Washington

- Significant partnership development through trainings/education outreach and collaboration with:
  - Residents and employees across county teams, departments, and organizations
  - Internal teams and external partners in housing, public health, transportation, and community engagement

Scott/Carver

- Hop Scott Volunteer Driver Van: Success recruiting new drivers.
- Average 100-120 trips/month, 75% food 25% people, mostly medicals and mental health center.

Arrowhead

- Dialysis Transportation regional partnership coordination. Working with National Center on Mobility Management (NCMM).

Headwaters

- White Earth Transit – RDC and RTCC collaborative relationship on various projects including Bemidji State University students working on marketing videos.

Mid MN

- Fare Free Farmer's Market Shuttle – National Development Organization Excellence Award – partnership Centra Care.
- Free Fare – Willmar Area Community Foundation Grant supports $18,000 free fare for Central Community Transit (CCT). Added an evening route.

- Supports initial projection: More people to use established stops and reduced dependence on dial-a-ride service, thereby improving efficiency. This, during the midst of a widespread driver shortage.

Southwest

- Protected Custody Transportation – Awarded funding for two vehicles through PrimeWest grant.

East Central

- Transportation/Transit transfer hubs project development, working with Moving Greater Minnesota Forward

Northwest

- Exploration of transportation options for city of Warren. Working with Moving Greater Minnesota Forward

Region Five

- Exploration of intercountry transportation – researching best practices

Lichtig shared the guidelines for the Center for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) transportation coverage.

- CMS is a member agency working within this structure for guidelines.
- The assurance of transportation is an essential feature of the Medicaid program that ensures beneficiaries' access to health care.
- The transportation assurance includes non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) provided through multiple modes of transportation.
- Public transit agencies are often used in state Medicaid transportation programs and recognized as a least costly option. State DOTs and Medicaid agencies should explore partnerships to better serve the Medicaid population.

Steve Workman, Easterseals Consultant and Director of Transport New Hampshire, provided updates of MCOTA agency interviews. Workman identified that mobility management is a combination of three things. It is a theory and an approach to delivering mobility services. Next, it is an operational model for delivering mobility management services. Lastly, it is a profession.

Workman noted that Minnesota is a leader in the CCAM model. The FTA is interested in hearing about the barriers faced in Minnesota's efforts, meaning it's important to engage in the interviews and dialogues on Minnesota's collective work.

MCOTA Work Teams
Removing Barriers
Work team lead Brandon Nurmi reported that the group is working on three projects. First a paper on guidance for insurance in shared vehicle and mobility projects. Second, a smaller subgroup is working on group funding rates for group transportation. Third, the work team is

working on an effort to try and better focus what efforts are being done within the team. They are working to put together a project portfolio to break down the different tasks into more bite-sized pieces.

Accessibility & Olmstead
Work team lead David Fenley reported that the group recently began to look into privacy issues and grievance procedures in transportation networks. Fenley noted this process should be more upfront and accessible to the public. The work team is looking to re-engage the Olmstead Implementation Office as they play an important role in this effort.

Volunteer Driver Programs
Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver shared the Volunteer Driver Program Initiatives Work Team Research Needs Statement. Sidlo-Tolliver noted that they would like to see from this research project a full report of findings, a plain-language summary and a PowerPoint presentation for funders and policy makers with recommended action steps.

A motion to approve the Research Needs Statement was moved. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

Sidlo-Tolliver also shared that the Volunteer Driver Work Team is looking for another MCOTA lead.

Communications
Jodi Yanda noted that the Communications Work Team has reviewed the annual report and it will be submitted to MnDOT's Government Affairs Office soon. The final publication will be in mid-January.

Metropolitan Council
Sheila Holbrook-White updated on two efforts of the Metropolitan Council. First, Metro Move is a transportation service that the Met Council has designed in collaboration with customers with disabilities and their families and allies in DHS counties. This program will be connecting home and community-based waiver participants to base support services, competitive employment, and community resources across the transit taxing district. It is a service that is distinct and separate from Metro Mobility. The service is expected to launch in second quarter 2024.
Second, Metro Transit Micro is an app enabled contracted micro service. It began in September 2022 and offers curb to curb services in a five-mile service area in North Minneapolis. At about 13 months, they have provided more than 55,000 trips using no more than four vehicles in that service area. They have worked collaboratively with community partners to ensure that those in the service area are aware of the service. The service only uses accessible vehicles and not does require the advanced reservations of Metro Mobility.

Thank you to CTS
Gottfried stated that this is the last MCOTA meeting that CTS will be coordinating and offered his thanks for the work they have done the past 10 years.

Public Comment

William Schroeer, chair of the Minnesota Shared Mobility Collaborative, shared an open invitation to the quarterly convening. At this meeting, the topic of EV car share in urban centric environments will be discussed.

Adjourn

Reis adjourned the meeting at 3:00 p.m.