

# Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA)

## Supporting Transit Coordination, Accessibility and Efficiency in Minnesota

### BACKGROUND

Transportation is about more than improving individual lives; it is about improving all facets of our state's economy, culture, and communities. Reliable transportation is a prerequisite for a healthy economy and is often the first step toward independence and opportunity for people with low incomes, older adults, and people with disabilities. While there have been significant investments in transit at the federal, state, and local levels, serious gaps in service exist in many communities.

Unfortunately, a multitude of funding programs and requirements across dozens of departments and agencies make transportation coordination and communication a daunting task. At the federal level alone, there are at least 62 transit programs administered by eight departments and even more agencies. This creates a complex web of transportation that often results in duplicative efforts and confusion among transit customers.

To unravel this complex web, transportation coordination and cooperation is necessary. When representatives of different agencies and organizations involved in transportation programs work together, they can increase capacity to serve unmet needs, improve quality of service, improve understanding and access to services by the public, and achieve more cost-effective service delivery. This is the function of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA).

### ABOUT MCOTA - MINNESOTA COUNCIL ON TRANSPORTATION ACCESS

The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) was formed by the Minnesota State Legislature during the 2010 legislative session (MN Statute 2010 174.285). It consists of representatives from 13 separate agencies and organizations:

**MCOTA members:** Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with the Office of the Governor, Minnesota Council on Disability, Minnesota Public Transit Association, Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Commerce, Minnesota Department of Education, Minnesota Management and Budget, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Board on Aging, and Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

MCOTA is tasked with three major key transportation Issues:

- 1) Identify and reduce transportation gaps,
- 2) Develop more effective and streamline access to transportation,
- 3) Provide more transportation options.

### Driving Improvements:

MCOTA creates tools, advocates aggressively, and coordinates with the Minnesota State Legislature to drive progress in each of the major key transportation issues. Accomplishments include:

- Creating a model contract for use by local agencies contracting with external organizations to provide transportation services.
- Clarifying insurance requirements for organizational liability related to sharing clients and vehicles.
- Aiding the development of a cost allocation model for transit systems in Greater Minnesota.

- Developing a cost allocation methodology to more consistently and effectively describe transportation costs.
- Producing a planning guidance document with a model for locally developed and coordinated planning in Minnesota. This was key element in the development of Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) and Transportation Coordination Assistance Projects (TCAPs).
- Facilitated oversight of the implementation: (see Program Status chart)
  - Seven of the twelve RTCCs through Phase 2, currently in Phase 3, Implementation of Comprehensive Work Plan
  - Four of the twelve RTCCs through Phase 1, two projected to be in Phase 2 by end of 2020 and remaining two to be Phase 2 by July 2021
  - One of the twelve is currently started Phase 2, Operational Implementation Plan
  - Four of the six TCAPs to Phase 3, Implementation of Comprehensive Work Plan
  - And two of the six TCAPs have started Phase 1, Organizational Plan
- Once all 18 RTCC and TCAP programs are fully implemented (Phase 3, plus one to two years), we expect to see significant improvements in transportation access, such as:
  - Create a comprehensive transportation gaps analysis for all state agencies' service and programs
  - Implementation of a shared data base system to address most agencies (state and local) client's transportation access needs
  - Create a streamlined cost and billing system that is user friendly, effective and efficient
  - Implement services with new transportation funding partners to fill the gaps as the needs change and to be flexible with the changing environment and population

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on the Minnesota Council for Transportation Access, visit [CoordinateMNTransit.org](https://CoordinateMNTransit.org) or contact:

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