

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access

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.

About the Council

The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access was formed by the Minnesota State Legislature during the 2010 legislative session (MN Statute 2010 174.285). It succeeds the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination (ICTC), which was established by Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty in 2005. It consists of representatives from 13 separate agencies and organizations:

- Office of the Governor
- Minnesota State Council on Disability
- Minnesota Public Transit Association
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Minnesota Department of Health
- Metropolitan Council
- Minnesota Department of Education
- Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
- Minnesota Board on Aging
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Minnesota Department of Commerce
- Minnesota Management and Budget

Fast Facts

- Accessible transportation is a necessity for people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and older adults; it is also essential for economic growth and vitality.
- A complex web of transit funding and regulations at all levels of government creates barriers to establishing an accessible and efficient transit system.
- The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access was established by the Minnesota State Legislature during the 2010 legislative session.
- The Council succeeds the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination (ICTC), which was established in 2005 by Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty.
- The Council's mission is working together to remove obstacles preventing the successful coordination of transportation programs and resources.
- Thirteen separate agencies and organizations are represented on the Council, which is tasked with 20 duties related to five Key Issue Areas.
- Through the creation of high-value toolsets, coordination with the Minnesota State Legislature, and aggressive advocacy, the Council is driving progress in each of the five Key Issue Areas.

For More Information

For more information on the Minnesota Council for Transportation Access, visit www.coordinatemntransit.org/MCOTA/index.html.

The Council is tasked with 20 duties related to five Key Issue Areas:

1. Vehicle and Client Sharing

Vehicles used in human service transportation should be made available to other state, federal, and publicly-funded programs in order to reduce duplicative transportation services and idle time for drivers and vehicles.

2. Cost Sharing & Purchasing

State agencies are encouraged to work together to create funding mechanisms that support shared ownership of funding responsibilities to ensure adequate resources are available for transportation services.

3. Communication & Coordinated Planning

Agencies are encouraged to participate in a community transportation planning process for human service transportation programs to promote the development and delivery of coordinated transportation services.

4. Reporting & Evaluation

State agencies dealing with transportation services are encouraged to agree upon common measurements and definitions for tracking and reporting the costs of those services.

5. Research & Demonstration Projects

State agencies should conduct demonstration projects to investigate coordinated planning, vehicle, and client sharing and cost sharing in order to test the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of new transit approaches.

- Producing a planning guidance document with a model for locally developed and coordinated planning in Minnesota.
- Developing a glossary of transportation terms for participating agencies to refine into a consistent set of terminology.
- Developing a cost allocation methodology to more consistently and effectively describe transportation costs.
- Documenting successful local coordination practices to aid the local coordination planning process.

Driving Improvements

The Council creates tools, advocates aggressively, and coordinates with the Minnesota State Legislature to drive progress in each of the five Key Issue Areas. Recent 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.
- Reviewing the usage of the Minnesota Coordination website, coordinatemntransit.org.