

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) Meeting Minutes
December 20, 2017
MnDOT Central Office Transportation Building
395 John Ireland Blvd, Saint Paul, Conference Room 461
1:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Members Present

- Chair – Tim Henkel, Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Vice-Chair – Joan Willshire, Minnesota State Council on Disability
- Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association (via phone)
- Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education (via phone)
- Tim Held, Minnesota Department of Health
- Jon Kelly, Minnesota Department of Commerce (proxy for Peter Brickwedde)
- Ronald Quade II, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (via phone)
- Thant Pearson, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council (via phone)
- Harlan Tardy, Minnesota Board on Aging
- Claire Wilson, Minnesota Department of Human Services

Members Absent

Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce (Jon Kelly served as proxy)

Others Present

- Minnesota Department of Transportation:
 - Kristie Billiar, ADA Program and Policy
 - Tim Mitchell (via phone)
 - Jake Rueter, Office of Transit
 - Tim Sexton, Office of Transit
 - Noel Shughart, Office of Transit
 - Sue Siemers, Office of Transit (via phone)
- University of Minnesota:
 - Kaydee Kirk, Center for Transportation Studies
 - Arlene Mathison, Center for Transportation Studies
- Earl Bower, DFL Senior Caucus
- Heidi Corcoran, Dakota County
- Larry Eisenstadt, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (via phone)
- Ilya Garelik, Minnesota Department of Human Services and Minnesota Board on Aging
- Alan Hermann, Scott County
- Tim Kirchoff, Anoka County
- Sharon Peck, Minnesota Department of Education (via phone)
- Kim Pettman, Transit Advocate
- Taylor Putz, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
- Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services
- Carla Sand, DFL Senior Caucus
- Rhonda Stadtfeld, Minnesota Non-Emergency Transportation (MNET) Program client
- Kjensmo Walker
- Tim Weltcin, Prime West Health (via phone)
- Sherry Yude, Minnesota Non-Emergency Transportation (MNET) Program client

Call to order, introductions, & member meeting participation

Henkel called to order the December meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access at 1:05 PM on December 20, 2017 at the MnDOT Central Office, St. Paul, MN and thanked those joining the meeting in person and also those who joined remotely by phone/web.

Review and approve agenda

Tardy moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Held. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

10/25/17 meeting minutes

Wilson moved to approve the October 2017 minutes, seconded by Kelly. The minutes were unanimously **approved**.

Review and approve final draft of the annual report

Mathison asked if the group had any final comments on the annual report that was emailed prior to the meeting. Members did not have any comments or changes. Willshire moved to approve the annual report, seconded by Pearson. The annual report was unanimously **approved**.

Member request: Panel volunteers for upcoming MCOTA research study on “Best Practices for Addressing Youth Employment and Training Transportation”

Eisenstadt and Shughart shared that one of the largest barriers to youth employment is a lack of transportation to jobs. This study will highlight effective practices that provide transportation for youth to employment. This study will also involve a research panel that will review the scope, charge of research, etc. before this comes to MCOTA. The study will be completed by June 30, 2018. Here is the scope of the study:

This task is to gather data on best practices that address the biggest barrier that our youth employment and training program graduates face; the lack of transportation. Again and again, surveys show that the inadequacy of transportation resources prevents our youth from obtaining jobs in apprenticeship, in construction, and in other industries that require mobility. In addition, youth who do not have their own transportation have difficulties getting to retail and service jobs with variable start and end times. The study would document both national and Minnesota examples of innovative programs meeting the transportation needs of working youth through surveys and/or semi-structured interviews.

MCOTA is seeking research panel members who have interest in youth and/or employment. Eisenstadt and Pearson agreed to serve on the research panel. Since the U of MN is a lead on the study, meetings will likely be held at the University of Minnesota. There can be a remote connection to join the meetings. Anyone else interested in serving on this research panel should contact Shughart.

Pearson made a motion to approve the research panel, panel structure, and study scope as outlined and discussed, Kelly seconded. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

Volunteer insurance brochure update

The aim of the brochure is to distinguish how volunteer drivers are different than Uber or Lyft drivers. The Insurance Federation of Minnesota came out with a separate, alternative brochure that agency staff did not feel was accurate. MCOTA and the Department of Commerce are creating a revised and accurate brochure. The committee that was originally assembled around this effort will be revived. The intent is to have this effort underway just after the first of the year.

Shughart also provided a brief overview of the efforts at the federal level to address and increase the reimbursement rate. Members restated their concern around issues regarding volunteer driver mileage reimbursement. It was asked if a meeting with legislators could be organized on these topics. Collins shared that there is a January 4 meeting with legislators on this issue.

Update on 5/9/18 MCOTA Volunteer Driver Program Forum subcommittee

Members should let Mathison know if they or their staff are interested volunteering on the subcommittee for the MCOTA Volunteer Driver Program Forum. A handout of the current subcommittee members was provided via email. Members include Collins, Garelik, Tardy, and Willshire as well as staff representatives Kirk, Mathison, Rueter, and Shughart. It was suggested to have a session(s) at the forum focused on legislative efforts and to invite legislators to participate, perhaps in the form of a roundtable.

FY18 MCOTA budget update

Shughart shared that MCOTA has spent about half of the funds to date, on par with where we are during the year. He will provide a detailed handout at the January meeting.

Agency updates

Action requested: Information

- MnDOT Office of Transit staffing changes – Shughart shared that the Office of Transit has gone through a recent reorganization that involved a participatory approach. As part of this, Rueter will be working more on MCOTA and other planning staff may be involved with other aspects of MCOTA.
- Update on volunteer driver program reimbursement committee – Collins shared that she is working on the volunteer driver reimbursement rate. As noted earlier, there is a January 4 meeting with the congressional House staff and other transit program representatives to address the impacts of the loss of volunteers across the state. Shughart added that there has been significant support from the Minnesota Council on Nonprofits on this issue.
- Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) application – Siemers shared the application is out and that a well-attended workshop was held in November. There will be a follow-up webinar in the new year for individuals to ask questions to Siemers and her staff. Applications are due at the end of March. Performance measures have not yet been developed for the RTCCs but MCOTA will be working on this as part of program implementation.
- Olmstead Plan – Billiar shared that there were not any changes to the Olmstead work plan. They are focusing now on the measurable goals. If anyone is interested in commenting on the current plan that can be done directly online or through a series of upcoming open houses. They are also helping with the rollout of the RTCCs. Members are asked to familiarize themselves with the Olmstead Plan. It was noted by Billiar that there have been few comments on the work plan changes. Pettman added that it is challenging for the public to navigate the system in order to provide comments on the plan and this might be limiting the responses.
- Dakota County Lyft project – Corcoran shared the progress of the planning team and the many pieces of the project. There has been approval of the nondisclosure agreement with Lyft. There is also progress on the billing aspects of the project. The goal of this project is to see how the County can leverage Lyft. Dakota County is also partnering with other area groups on this effort.
- Other agency updates: Members did not have any other updates.

Call for future agenda items

- Mathison noted a review a draft of the Forum agenda will be on the January meeting
- Billiar suggested the Olmstead Implementation Office on the quality-of-life survey for ~20 min + 10 Q&A

Public comments

- Four persons attended the meeting to share concerns about MNET. One individual spoke for the group. Yude shared that she is a MNET client. She addressed the Council about her concerns regarding the vendor she has been receiving rides from for non-emergency medical transportation and how now she is being denied access to that vendor. She and others would like to have exclusive access to this particular vendor. Yude, Henkel, and Wilson will talk offline to address this concern.
- Sand and Bower shared they have been working on specialized, door-to-door transportation for a number of years. They feel like their concerns are not being addressed and they're requesting help from the agencies to

address this, potentially from the Minnesota Board on Aging. Garelik will follow up with Sand offline to address this concern.

- Pettman added that it is necessary for MNET system and the vendors to receive disability sensitivity education and training. She felt that MNET is currently not serving all populations equitably.

Adjourn: Held made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wilson. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

Henkel provided an overview of the training topics related to disability sensitivity training that will be rolled out in two or three sessions. Members are encouraged to share their insights and feedback on the successes they've had on these topics within their organizations.

Presentation: Transit 101 and Gaps in Serving Persons with Disabilities

Pettman began the training by sharing the following:

- Inclusion of persons with disabilities is the focus of this effort. This also includes the implications of policy and the gaps/challenges a person with a disability faces with regard to transit.
- She shared about her own disabilities that are related to medical conditions they are: Lipoedema Stage IV (AKA Painful Fat Syndrome) Lymphedema, and Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome Type 3. She experiences a significant amount of pain with these conditions. The reason Pettman shared her conditions is that transportation providers struggle understanding the needs of bariatric clients with painful and swelling conditions. The conditions require increased width, height and legroom above the mandatory minimums set by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Shughart shared the following:

- He provided an overview of what is public transit, who rides transit, how do you use it, and what are some barriers. Topics included:
 - Transit modes: local bus, express bus, arterial BRT, highway BRT, light rail, commuter rail, dial-a-ride (Transit Link, Metro Transit), vanpool
 - People of all ages and geographies (rural and urban) use transit
 - Paratransit - ADA requirement
 - He recommended members ride transit like a typical user, if they have not already. He recommended talking to people who regularly take transit and ask what they think of it.
 - A series of transit-related videos were shared. Members asked if the videos have closed captioning and descriptive audio and advised incorporating these into the videos. Some members felt the background music in the videos is difficult for people who are hard of hearing.

Pettman shared about the very involved process of her planning and then making a transit trip using multiple transportation modes.

Shughart noted that he will be presenting these topics in the near future to his contacts in greater Minnesota.

Shughart closed by saying that future MCOTA training modules related to disability could include: disability sensitivity, pedestrian access/bus stops, public engagement, and the transit planning process. Members are encouraged to contact Shughart if they, or any of their staff, are knowledgeable on these subjects and could be available for delivering the training. The training ended at 3:28 p.m.

2018 meetings: Wednesdays, 1:00-3:30pm, MnDOT Central Office: Jan 24, Feb 28, Mar 28, Apr 25, May 23, June 27, July 25, Aug 22, Sept 26, Oct 24, Nov 28, Dec 19 (3rd Wed. of month)

Future agenda items TBA:

Disability awareness trainings

January agenda items:

- Review draft agenda for Volunteer Driver Program Forum
- Quarterly stakeholder communication (to be emailed prior to meeting) – Arlene Mathison, Center for Transportation Studies, U of MN; Action requested: Review, suggest content changes, and approve
- Public/Private Partnership Mobility Transportation Management (MTM)-Timber Trails Transit
- Volunteer insurance brochure update – Rolf Hage
- Olmstead Implementation Office on the quality-of-life survey – Kristie Billiar

March agenda items:

Begin FY19 work plan discussions

April agenda items:

Final approval of FY19 work plan

Standing agenda items:

Review and approve agenda

Review and approve meeting minutes

Quarterly communications – review and/or approve

FY18 MCOTA budget update

Agency updates

Call for future agenda items

Public comments