

**Minnesota Council on Transportation Access**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, March 22, 2017

**Members Present**

Chair – Tim Henkel, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Julie Belisle, Minnesota Department of Education  
Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association (via phone)  
Tim Held, Minnesota Department of Health (via phone)  
Ronald Quade II, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs (via phone)  
Harlan Tardy, Minnesota Board on Aging (via phone)  
Claire Wilson, Minnesota Department of Human Services (via phone)

**Members Absent**

Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce  
Thant Pearson, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development  
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council  
Vice-Chair – Joan Willshire, Minnesota State Council on Disability

**Others Present**

Kristie Billiar, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Heidi Corcoran, Dakota County  
Frank Douma, Univ. of Minnesota, Humphrey School of Public Affairs + 2  
Judy Ellison, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Nicole George, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Rolf Hage, Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Kaydee Kirk, Univ. of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies  
Roger Long, Voight's Bus Companies  
Arlene Mathison, Univ. of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies  
Tim Mitchell, Minnesota Department of Transportation (via phone)  
Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services  
Mike Schadauer, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Noel Shughart, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Transit  
Sue Siemers, Minnesota Department of Transportation (via phone)

**Call to order and introductions**

Tim Henkel called to order the January meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access at 1:04 PM on March 22, 2017 at the MnDOT Central Office, St. Paul, MN.

**Review and approval of agenda**

Willshire requested to move the volunteer insurance and driverless buses/cars items to the top of the agenda. Schadauer made a motion to approve the agenda with the suggested changes; the motion was seconded by Sutton and then was unanimously **approved**.

**Review and approval of minutes from 2/22/2017 meeting**

Belisle moved to approve the 2/22/2017 MCOTA meeting minutes; the motion was seconded by Pearson and was then unanimously **approved**.

### **Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs)**

1. Overview of purpose, process, and finding to-date of the DHS/MnDOT joint sessions: Mitchell shared the process to receive input on transportation coordination and shared issue areas at a local level. The two agencies hired a facilitation group from MMB to assist with the meetings. The first meeting was March 3 and the next meeting in late March. A goal of this expanded partnership is to provide effective transportation.
2. Report on joint DHS and MnDOT meeting: Wilson and Henkel shared that the first meeting was very productive. The group is seeking to explore and expand what the definition and vision of partnership could be. They have begun to identify joint resources and coordination around where both agency systems address transportation and address any overlap. They are discussing what pilot projects might look like in an on-going way as well. The RTCC concept hinges in part on the partnership of MnDOT and DHS. It sets the bar for future opportunities with the RTCC concept and with other future projects.
3. Progress report on RTCCs: Siemers shared that it is anticipated the RFP would be issued this fall. Siemers and her office are assessing the current mobility management programs.

### **Status of Volunteer Drivers Language Change**

Hage shared that a bill on volunteer driver language was introduced on the House side. There is some interest in the concept and to provide clarity on this issue on both House and Senate sides.

Shughart discussed the issue of whether volunteers are considered employees. The Insurance Federation is an organization that represents the insurance companies who have volunteer drivers. There are also nonprofit trust organizations for non-profits who work with volunteer drivers. The Insurance Federation and the trusts interpret the current law differently. Each of these organizations come out with policies for their members to follow; the organizations have not come together to form one consistent message. Companies/providers are dictating their policies by what the insurance companies are saying.

Members discussed the idea of convening a workshop with these various groups in the next year as part of the MCOTA work plan in order to identify a definition that works for all.

### **Presentation on driverless cars + group discussion**

Douma presented on the topic of driverless cars. Among the topics covered, he shared that the issue of equity has not been part of the driverless cars conversation at the national level, however Minnesota is intentionally integrating this focus. How can these vehicles be deployed in terms of equity and mobility? Driverless cars will also impact persons with disabilities; there have been a number of research reports and initiatives around this. We can make an impact with the design of accessible vehicles in these early stages. The goal is to create a more inclusive transportation system. MCOTA has an opportunity to help influence the technology/design aspects and also support more demonstration opportunities in Minnesota. How can deployment of driverless cars be statewide (not just the Metro area)?

It would be valuable to have the government sector attending the TU-Automotive Conference (connected car conference and expo) that takes place in June. Government representatives should attend to advocate for developers to include accessibility in their design up front.

The group talked about ways to get information out about autonomous vehicles. MCOTA could provide funding for research. The timeline when we'll see these cars on the roads is relatively short (perhaps by 2020). Is it better for MCOTA to focus on what is coming vs. spending efforts to improve current systems? The group discussed the freight system and also how driverless vehicles will impact young people and their

commutes to school. Overall members felt that MCOTA should be concerned about ensuring the technology is getting deployed so that it is supporting MCOTA's mission to the best of our ability.

### **Proposed amendment to by-laws**

Shughart reviewed with the group proposed language for the by-laws to indicate who would chair a meeting if both the Chair and Vice-Chair cannot attend:

“The At Large member shall in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, shall preside at the meetings of the Council.”

Schadauer suggested dropping the second “shall” from the proposed text. The group will review and approve the final version at the next meeting.

### **MCOTA stakeholder communication for March**

The handout reflected the ideas from the March meeting as well as the subcommittee's input. The group did not have any comments. The group recommended this for distribution.

### **FY17 MCOTA budget update**

Shughart provided an overview of the biennial budget report for FY16-17. Members should contact Shughart to request any changes to the budget. This item will be presented at each MCOTA meeting. Shughart shared that there is a balance of \$23,000 that is unspent. These dollars can be reinvested back into transit operations with MnDOT's offices. It will be determined by the end of April if this money will go back into the Office of Transit account.

### **FY18-19 activities**

Shughart shared that volunteer driver programs across the state are individualized and there is no statewide agency coordinating. There is an idea to create a day-long forum or conference on the topic of volunteers and transportation, possibly to be held in May. When MCOTA used to be ICTC there was a similar conference held.

There is also an idea to create a survey to identify/address some of the possible gaps in services that may be created with Olmstead implementation. This effort could connect with Douma's work. This could be valuable information for RTCCs as well.

It was noted that MCOTA is looking for research projects for this year.

Henkel asked what the budget needs of the RTCC rollout is. It will be beneficial to connect any MCOTA research to the needs of RTCCs.

Shughart said that he will be identifying any projects by the April meeting. Members should contact Shughart to submit ideas.

### **Agency updates**

- Billiar said the revision of the Olmstead Plan is now complete and had minor changes. The work plan item to develop a work group will instead be part of the MnDOT and Met Council standard subcabinet meetings group. It is best to have Met Council directly involved and at the table.
- Billiar also shared that recent subcabinet meetings addressed the MnDOT 2-year multimodal plan and other changes to the plan. In late February they discussed their quarterly report. The group is discerning next steps.

- Schadauer shared updates on the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan’s performance measures, service improvements, and financial information. The updated plan is available for public comment through April 11.
- Henkel reminded the group regarding next year’s project ideas and they should submit ideas to Shughart. Also, the chair rotation for MCOTA will happen in July.

**Public comments**

There were no public comments.

**Adjourn**

The meeting ended at 2:28 p.m.

**Future meeting dates:** 1:00-3:30 p.m., MnDOT Central Office

- April 26
- May 24
- June 28
- July 26
- August 23
- September 27
- October 25
- November 15
- December 20

**Future agenda items:**

April:

- AV bus study – Jay Hieptas, MnDOT (invited)  
*Action requested: Information*
- Presentation by Mobility Transportation Management (MTM) on their activities (attachment to be emailed prior to meeting) – Jim Nienaber, Transportation Manager, MTM  
*Action requested: Information*

Standing agenda items:

- Review and approve agenda
- Meeting minutes
- Monthly communications - approval
- FY17 MCOTA budget update
- Agency updates
- Public comments