

**Minnesota Council on Transportation Access**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

**Members Present**

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

**Members Absent**

Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce (Jon Kelly served as proxy)  
Claire Wilson, Minnesota Department of Human Services (Diogo Reis served as proxy)

**Others Present**

Ilya Garelik, Minnesota Department of Human Services/Minnesota Board on Aging  
Jacqueline Peichel, Minnesota Department of Human Services/Minnesota Board on Aging  
Kristie Billiar, Minnesota Department of Transportation ADA Program and Policy  
Jake Rueter, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Noel Shughart, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Transit  
Sue Siemers, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Transit (via phone)  
Tim Sexton, Minnesota Department of Transportation  
Luke Van Horn, Dakota County  
Kaydee Kirk, Univ. of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies  
Arlene Mathison, Univ. of Minnesota, Center for Transportation Studies  
Kim Pettman, Transit Advocate

**Call to order and introductions**

Henkel called to order the September meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access at 1:04 PM on September 27, 2017 at the MnDOT Central Office, St. Paul, MN.

**Review and approval of agenda**

Willshire made a motion to approve the agenda; the motion was seconded by Sutton and then was unanimously **approved**.

**Review and approval of 8/23/17 meeting minutes**

Shughart requested edits to the public comments section of the September minutes be made in to better capture the comments; Shughart will share the updated language with CTS. Willshire moved to approve the 8/23/2017 MCOTA meeting minutes with this revision; the motion was seconded by McMullen and was then unanimously **approved**.

It was shared that Mike Schadauer is retiring in early October. Henkel thanked Schadauer for all his work with MCOTA and on all of the many programs and projects he has been involved with over the years. Tim Sexton will be the incoming MnDOT Office of Transit director for the next six months and will participate on MCOTA. Sexton was most recently with MnDOT's Office of Environmental Stewardship.

#### **Annual election of officers (chairs and at-large representative)**

Sutton nominated Sexton for the at-large position, seconded by Willshire, the motion was **approved unanimously**.

Sutton nominated Willshire for the vice chair position, seconded by McMullen, the motion was **approved unanimously**.

Willshire nominated Henkel for the chair position, seconded by Sutton, the motion was **approved unanimously**.

A motion to approve the 3 nominations was made by Willshire, seconded by Sutton, the motion was **approved unanimously**. The updated roster is attached.

#### **Next stakeholder communication**

Mathison provided an overview of the September communication and the group reviewed the information. Willshire moved to approve the communication, seconded by McMullen, the motion was **approved unanimously**. Per group feedback, Mathison will also add the state logo in future communications.

#### **Update on volunteer driver program reimbursement committee**

Shughart provided an overview of this issue including state vs. federal rules and regulations. Federal law on this subject, especially law relating to no-load miles, was an issue our two Minnesota U.S. senators were involved with. Also, the new study on volunteer driver programs shows the value and economic benefits of volunteer drivers.

Members felt that the best groups to head up this issue around organizing to change federal law are: 1) the Public Transit Association (PTA) or the 2) Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN). Each state has these two types of organizations. Many states are coming together through these organizations to organize around this issue. The volunteer driver rate has been capped at \$0.14 cents per mile for the last 20 years and the goal is changing federal legislation is to uncap this rate.

The next step in the process is to, by mid-October, to have a joint meeting of the PTA, MCN, and the legislators to discuss all the information that has been pulled together on this issue.

Collins of Central Community Transit said that if volunteers are part of a senior group they are exempt from this tax liability. Many organizations are trying to get 55+ volunteers registered under this category as a short-term solution. They're still be able to be reimbursed by a public transit agency at their rate but they'd still be under the RSDT volunteer category. Collins brings this to MPCA on 9/28/17 and it is hoped they will take the lead on organizing.

#### **MCOTA research projects final report**

Shughart provided an overview of the work completed to date, including the findings, on the following two projects that were formally presented at the August meeting:

1. **Economic and Social Benefits of Volunteer Driver Programs in Minnesota: Case Studies**, Jerry Zhao, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, U of MN

- 6 case studies were profiled and Medicaid transportation was the main focus for the research study.
- The analysis shows that volunteer driver services are often provided through community-based transit programs or by other nonprofit organizations. They help the senior, low-income or other less independent groups to their make medical, employment, education, elderly grocery, or pharmacy trips. Volunteer driver programs save costs for federal and state human services programs, and provide critical services for customer with special transportation needs. Such services are especially indispensable in rural areas where other modes of transportation are often unavailable or a lot more expensive. The study compared the cost of volunteer driver programs to alternative services that may be available.
- Members agreed that this study presents quantifiable information that can be readily shared with legislators.

Members were comfortable with publishing this report.

2. **Public Sector Uses of Transportation Network Companies: Case Studies**, Saif Benjaafar, Industrial & Systems Engineering, U of MN

- This study presented a literature search of Transportation Network Companies.
- The case studies identified opportunities including extending the reach of transit, an alternative to transit, on-demand transportation for older adults and for persons with disabilities.
- The case studies also highlighted challenges including investments in marketing and outreach, experimentation, quality of service monitoring and enforcement, technology barriers, access for persons with disabilities and for older adults, and long-term risks.
- There is regulatory compliance related to access; this also touches on issues related to disabilities, civil rights, and rural areas. Previously this type of information was not very available. The group discussed how this study was too broad to drill down specific issues of disabilities, civil rights, and rural areas.
- Group discussion:
  - Willshire would like to add to the abstract that the disabilities, civil rights, and rural usage focus was not fully addressed and will be addressed in the future.
  - Pearson asked if the youth population will also be a part of future study on this topic.
  - The parameters of these programs do not fit the current ADA guidance. New guidance and regulation has not been developed yet. It is not clear what will or will not work. It will take specific project studies, like the one Met Council is doing rather than a study with a state/federal scope.
  - Sutton noted that Uber and Lyft have not yet figured out how to include accessible vehicles. A hybrid model is starting to develop to address the missing component of accessibility. It is not known how the traditional Uber and Lyft models address these topics. Mathison noted these companies are changing as the industries as evolving too. For example, maybe a “home grown” model can address rural needs.
  - Members discussed the how the report was not able to fully address disability, civil rights, and rural usage. Mathison felt the research completed addressed the subject matter per the project scope. The University did the research to the best of their ability given the scope of the project, but still acknowledges there is more research to be done on this issue. Willshire added that MCOTA should ensure that “access” be added to future research; in addition, she suggested a disclaimer is added when

this report is published. She felt it is worth mentioning that access was not fully addressed as part of the scope. Mathison said that a few sentences will be drafted as a disclaimer for the researchers to review and approve.

- Mathison commented that TNCs in our current environment change so fast and that, because of this, it is good to get the most up-to-date research out and available. The report can address the limitations of the study (that is, that accessibility has not fully been addressed) and be clear that the conclusions are based on a limited set of examples.
- Pettman added that sometimes people do not see how individual users are being impacted. She felt that people and programs would inadvertently be hurt with releasing the report in its current form and does not recommend issuing the report. Uber and Lyft do not serve people with disabilities.

Sutton recommended approving the release of the first report and tabling the second report in order to accurately address accessibility. CTS and the researchers will draft the language and Shughart will provide oversight. The motion was unanimously **approved**.

It was also shared that these research projects did not have a research panel due to the quick timing, but for the future projects there will be research panels. MCOTA is serving as a proxy for a research panel for these two projects.

#### **Overview of annual report + subcommittee request**

Mathison shared the process for the report development before it goes to the Governor's office by January 15. A subcommittee is assembled from the various agencies. Mathison shares the draft report to the subcommittee in early October and the subcommittee meets via phone in mid-October before it goes to the full group at the October meeting. Shughart added that it will be helpful to have people on the subcommittee who are good with editing with attention to detail. Shughart will reach out to Held to serve on the subcommittee. Sexton will likely serve on the subcommittee.

#### **Update on 5/9/18 MCOTA Volunteer Driver Program Forum + subcommittee request**

Shughart shared the goals of this effort are to develop information sharing among all the volunteer programs and find potential solutions. Shughart is seeking at least one MCOTA member to serve on the planning committee for this event in addition to the other stakeholders she has identified. Collins and Garelik volunteered to serve on the committee and Willshire will consider volunteering depending on her schedule this spring.

#### **Agency updates**

- Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils application: Siemers shared that the RTCC application will be released after the September MCOTA meeting. Shughart shared that the Notice of Funding Availability for RTCCs is under final review by the Governor's office and the application will be ready tomorrow. The planning group is requesting each MCOTA member to distribute to their members' networks in order to get the word out about this effort. Henkel requests that members go above and beyond with getting the word out and making a personal outreach to people in their networks. If there are any questions, please contact Siemers, Shughart and/or Mitchell. CTS will send out this email to MCOTA on behalf of the agencies.
- Olmstead Plan update: Billiar shared at the last subcommittee meeting, outreach efforts were discussed. Sutton and Shughart provided testimony at the meeting. In October Billiar will share the RFP with the group, which will have already been released. Shughart, Sutton, and Billiar are

meeting on the work plan to keep this moving forward. The work plan is not anticipated to change significantly this next year.

- Peichel shared a handout and information about the 10/6/17 Pacesetter Prize Award Celebration. MCOTA members were invited to attend.
- Shughart shared an update on the volunteer driver brochure, a project in partnership with the Department of Commerce. This project is moving forward with the assistance with Rolf Hage. This topic will be shared at a future meeting.

#### **Public comments**

Pettman requested that members and other individuals involved with MCOTA take a ride on paratransit in order to better understand this mode of transportation, especially with respect to the issues around Uber and Lyft. She also suggested researchers involved with MCOTA take awareness and sensitivity training with regard to persons with disabilities. It was suggested that MCOTA members and staff go through similar training. Tardy asked if this training could be done at one of the upcoming MCOTA board meetings. Pettman also shared that she is attending the upcoming Minnesota Public Transit Association event and people are welcome to connect with her in person at that event or call her at 320-428-2715.

#### **Adjourn**

Sutton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Willshire, the motion was unanimously **approved**. The meeting ended at 2:38 p.m.

#### **Future 2017 meetings:**

- Wednesday, November 15
- Wednesday, December 20 (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month)

#### **2018 meetings, 1:00-3:30pm MnDOT Central Office:**

- Wednesday, January 24
- Wednesday, February 28
- Wednesday, March 28
- Wednesday, April 25
- Wednesday, May 23
- Wednesday, June 27
- Wednesday, July 25
- Wednesday, August 22
- Wednesday, September 26
- Wednesday, October 24
- Wednesday, November 28
- Wednesday, December 19 (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month)

#### **Future agenda items:**

Public/Private Partnership MTM-Timber Trails Transit

#### **Standing agenda items:**

Review and approve agenda  
Review and approve meeting minutes  
Monthly communications – review and/or approve  
FY18 MCOTA budget update  
Agency updates  
Public comments