

MCOTA Member Cover Letter:

Dear MCOTA Members:

Thank you for the work you are doing to improve community access for people in Minnesota and for your commitment to the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) as a valued member.

As part of shaping MCOTA's role, strategies, and tactics for the next 3-5 years, we invite you to participate in an anonymous survey to share your input regarding your view of MCOTA's role, alignment with your agency's priorities, and anything else you think would help MCOTA in its mission and vision.

As you are aware, the Minnesota Legislature established MCOTA in 2010, codified in [MN Statute 2010 174.285](#), to "study, evaluate, oversee, and make recommendations to improve the coordination, availability, accessibility, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and safety of transportation services provided to the transit public." The Legislature listed twenty specific duties for MCOTA in [Subdivision 2](#). To date, MCOTA has made progress in nearly all of these duties. Yet, significant transportation gaps persist.

As MCOTA completes nearly 10 years of work, the purpose of this survey is to refine and formalize the role of MCOTA as Minnesota's state-level coordinating council and to identify actions MCOTA can take to improve access to transportation throughout the state, especially for seniors and persons with disabilities.

As a member of MCOTA, we especially value your input on the direction that you would like to see MCOTA take in the future. Survey responses will remain anonymous. Answers will be collected until **March 22nd**.

We greatly appreciate your input and time!

MCOTA Member Survey:

Background on MCOTA

The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) was established by the Minnesota Legislature in 2010 under [Minn. Stat. 174.285](#), to "study, evaluate, oversee and make recommendations to improve the coordination, availability, accessibility, efficiency, cost-effectiveness and safety of transportation services provided to the transit public." To improve transit coordination and accessibility, the statute assigns the council 20 duties.

Mission

The mission of the MCOTA is to work together to remove obstacles that prevent the successful coordination of transportation programs and resources among their respective customers.

Vision

Minnesotans will have access to coordinated transportation services to meet their mobility needs

MCOTA's duties as established in Subdivision 2 of [MN Statute 2010 174.285](#)

Subd. 2. Duties of council.

In order to accomplish the purposes in subdivision 1, the council, following consultation with the legislative committees or divisions with jurisdiction over transportation policy and budget, or with appropriate legislative transportation subcommittees, shall adopt a biennial work plan that must incorporate the following activities:

- (1) compile information on existing transportation alternatives for the transit public, and serve as a clearinghouse for information on services, funding sources, innovations, and coordination efforts;
- (2) identify best practices and strategies that have been successful in Minnesota and in other states for coordination of local, regional, state, and federal funding and services;
- (3) recommend statewide objectives for providing public transportation services for the transit public;
- (4) identify barriers prohibiting coordination and accessibility of public transportation services and aggressively pursue the elimination of those barriers;
- (5) recommend policies and procedures for coordinating local, regional, state, and federal funding and services for the transit public;

- (6) identify stakeholders in providing services for the transit public, and seek input from them concerning barriers and appropriate strategies;
- (7) recommend guidelines for developing transportation coordination plans throughout the state;
- (8) encourage all state agencies participating in the council to purchase trips within the coordinated system;
- (9) facilitate the creation and operation of transportation brokerages to match riders to the appropriate service, promote shared dispatching, compile and disseminate information on transportation options, and promote regional communication;
- (10) encourage volunteer driver programs and recommend legislation to address liability and insurance issues;
- (11) recommend minimum performance standards for delivery of services;
- (12) identify methods to eliminate fraud and abuse in special transportation services;
- (13) develop a standard method for addressing liability insurance requirements for transportation services purchased, provided, or coordinated;
- (14) design and develop a contracting template for providing coordinated transportation services;
- (15) recommend an interagency uniform contracting and billing and accounting system for providing coordinated transportation services;
- (16) encourage the design and development of training programs for coordinated transportation services;
- (17) encourage the use of public school transportation vehicles for the transit public;
- (18) develop an allocation methodology that equitably distributes transportation funds to compensate units of government and all entities that provide coordinated transportation services;
- (19) identify policies and necessary legislation to facilitate vehicle sharing; and
- (20) advocate aggressively for eliminating barriers to coordination, implementing coordination strategies, enacting necessary legislation, and appropriating resources to achieve the council's objectives.

Questions:

1. How closely do the MCOTA legislative duties align with those of your organization (rank each one 1-5, very closely to not at all)?
2. What do you think MCOTA's role should be (select all that apply)?
 - a. Minnesota's state-level coordinating council, addressing transportation coordination topics from a statewide perspective
 - b. A coordinating group for organizations who provide services
 - c. A direct advocate for transit users with agencies and transportation providers
 - d. Other
3. What would be the most important thing for MCOTA accomplish in the next 3-5 years (rank in order of preference)?
 - a. Formalize MCOTA's role in organizing and supporting the development of RTCCs and TCAPs.
 - b. Encourage the development of and reduction of barriers to volunteer driver programs through legislative changes and education
 - c. Change the legislation authorizing MCOTA to focus on implementation
 - d. Define a role for MCOTA in the testing and deployment of automated vehicles in Minnesota
 - e. Optimize the number of service providers and agencies within the state.
 - f. Use common administrative tools to standardize recordkeeping and reporting.
 - g. Eliminate funding silos or find a way to share funds.
 - h. Offer state-supplied dispatch software and/or enable coordination between dispatch software programs throughout the state.
 - i. Other
4. What barriers get in the way of MCOTA accomplishing its mission?
5. How could MCOTA make progress in its mission?
6. What role would you like MCOTA to play in relation to the Greater Minnesota RTCCs and metro area TCAPs? Ideas could include:
 - a. MCOTA as an advisor, not a director, to RTCCs and TCAPs. Should MCOTA have any oversight of RTCCs and TCAPs?
 - b. MCOTA to advise and provide access to solutions (like hosting events like the volunteer driver forum).
 - c. MCOTA can be the conduit to legislative contacts to create a better, more collaborative transportation system. May need to help in pursuing legislative solutions.
 - d. MCOTA can break down the silos among state agencies and help collaboration at the local level.
 - e. Other
7. What support would you like MCOTA to provide to the Greater Minnesota RTCCs and metro area TCAPs? (Please rank or select all that apply):
 - a. Host an annual dialogue for all RTCCs and TCAPs
 - b. Host regional workshops for each RTCC/TCAP, either annually or biannually.
 - c. Develop other infrastructure to facilitate communication within and between the RTCCs and TCAPs (e.g., electronic discussion group(s), website).

- d. Provide technical assistance to RTCCs and TCAPs (e.g., mobility management training, other specialized training, dealing with HIPAA)
 - e. Develop tools/products that could be used by RTCCs and TCAPs; disseminate products developed by one RTCC/TCAP to the other RTCCs/TCAPs (sample by-laws, insurance agreements, waiver and other templates, etc.)
 - f. Assist with resolving state and federal barriers to coordination (funding restrictions, privacy regulations, insurance regulations, legislation, interagency conflicts).
 - g. Support RTCC/TCAP pilot projects.
8. How could MCOTA, with RTCC/TCAP advisory committee input, develop minimum standards for outcomes/performance measures? These outcomes could include:
- a. Increased ridership
 - b. Cost savings
 - c. Reduction in service gaps
 - d. Reduction in duplicative services
 - e. Fewer service denials
 - f. Consistent policies and practices among providers
 - g. Improved outreach to potential users
 - h. Continued success of programs that are already working well
 - i. Stakeholder satisfaction
 - j. Improved collaboration (such as ride-sharing) among members
9. Last May, MnDOT proposed a new working structure for MCOTA, to have fewer full meetings and to involve agency staff in working committees, which would serve as technical/problem-solving/nuts & bolts groups that are engaged and bring items for approval to MCOTA. Topics and membership would vary depending on strategic priorities. Proposed meeting schedule:
- 1. Quarterly full member MCOTA meetings
 - 2. One agency Commissioner meeting or legislative briefing annually
 - 3. Communications Committee meetings six times per year
 - 4. Up to five topical/organization working committees meeting at frequencies from monthly to quarterly. Topics could include insurance issues, volunteer driver programs, RTCCs, and engagement. Future committee topics might include Strategic Planning, Technology, Travel Training, and Vehicle Sharing
- a. What are your opinions on each element of this proposed structure?
- i. Structure - should this be modified?
 - ii. Yes
 - iii. No
 - iv. Comments
- b. Meeting frequency
- i. Move from monthly to quarterly full MCOTA meetings?
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No
 - 3. Comments
 - ii. Is there support for 6 Communications Committee meetings?
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No

3. Comments

iii. Is there support for up to five topical/organization committees meeting at frequencies of monthly to quarterly (topics could include insurance issues, volunteer driver programs, RTCCs, and engagement. Future committee topics might include Strategic Planning, Technology, Travel Training, and Vehicle Sharing)?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Comments

c. Legislative/agency leadership engagement

i. Should there be one annual agency Commissioner meeting or legislative briefing added?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Comments

d. Other

10. Other comments: