

MCOTA - RESOLUTION – VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

WHEREAS: The analysis shows that volunteer driver services are often provided through community-based transit programs, including Community Action Partnerships that were established under the Federal Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and Faith In Action organizations, which are networks of interfaith, volunteer caregiving service providers initiated by private foundation but also receive other grants. They may also be provided by other nonprofit organizations. These programs may serve people within one city, one county, or multiple counties in a region. They help the senior, low-income or other less independent groups to their make medical, employment, education, elderly grocery, or pharmacy trips;

WHEREAS: 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. We compare the cost of volunteer driver programs to alternative services that may be available. On average, for each round-trip volunteer driver services can save from \$18 to \$185, depending on trip length and the type of alternative services. The annual savings of the six programs studies range from about \$75,000 to as much as \$1,480,000;

WHEREAS: Volunteer drivers are a foundational element in rural Minnesota public transportation and have supplemented rural public transit programs for decades. ~~Recent news of volunteer drivers only being allowed to receive the charitable mileage rate of 14 cents per mile untaxed could cause that foundation to crumble.~~ The dissolution of volunteer driver programs would have major negative impact on the people of Minnesota and Minnesota budgets;

WHEREAS: Minnesota Council on Transportation Access strives to assist [iningto-in](#) increas[inge](#) 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;

WHEREAS: Minnesota Council on Transportation Access is required by statute to make recommendation to improve availability, accessibility, cots-effectiveness of transportation services;

WHEREAS ~~Recent changes in state law have resulted in volunteer drivers and organizations that provide volunteer driver programs experiencing increased costs; The state volunteer driver program is at serious risk under the current scenario where a volunteer driver reimbursed for expenses such as mileage can be taxed, then considered “for hire” carriers, then see auto insurance increases for their volunteer driver activities. All reimbursements are for direct expenses — no profit is received by the volunteer;~~

BE IT RESOLVED that Minnesota Council on Transportation Access ~~makes a recommendation~~ recommends that state laws affecting volunteer drivers and organizations that provide volunteer driver programs be -clarified to the legislature that to ensure the availability, accessibility, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of transportation services, ~~that a solution must be adopted to prevent volunteer drivers who only receive reimbursement for expenses from being considered “for hire”.~~

~~Minnesota Council on Transportation Access Members:~~

- ~~• **Chair: Tim Henkel, Minnesota Department of Transportation**~~
- ~~• Vice Chair: Joan Willshire, Minnesota State Council on Disability~~
- ~~• At-Large Representative: Victoria Nill, Minnesota Department of Transportation~~
- ~~• Susan Bishop, Minnesota Department of Health~~
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- ~~• Ron Quade, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs~~
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- ~~• Claire Wilson, Minnesota Department of Human Services~~