

Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2020, 1:00–3:30 PM
MnDOT Central Office Transportation Building
TEC Conference Room (basement level)

Members present:

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
Peter Brickwedde, Minnesota Department of Commerce
Tiffany Collins, Minnesota Public Transit Association
Shawn Kremer, Minnesota Management and Budget
Kelly Garvey, Minnesota Department of Education (remotely via Zoom)
Diogo Reis, Minnesota Department of Human Services
Gerri Sutton, Metropolitan Council
Jim Varpness, Minnesota Board on Aging

Members absent:

Rolando Sotolongo, Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs
Jodi Yanda, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Others present:

Minnesota Department of Transportation:

Kristie Billiar, ADA Program and Policy
Tom Gottfried, Office of Transit and Active Transportation
Erik Rudeen, Office of Government Affairs
Jacob Rueter, Office of Transit and Active Transportation

University of Minnesota:

Frank Douma, Humphrey School of Public Affairs (remotely via Zoom)
Kaydee Kirk, Center for Transportation Studies
Arlene Mathison, Center for Transportation Studies

Courtney Whited, Minnesota Board on Aging

Alan Hermann, Scott County (remotely via Zoom)

Matthew Johnson, Mid-Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordination Council

Kim Pettman, Transit Advocate (remotely via Zoom)

Mark Schermerhorn, Anoka County Transit (remotely via Zoom)

Sheila Holbrook-White, Washington County (remotely via Zoom)

Leah Hegg, American Cancer Society Road to Recovery Program (remotely via Zoom)

Heather Molesworth, West Central Minnesota Communities Action, Inc. (remotely via Zoom)

Sherry Munyon, MPTA

Ashley Eckdahl, East Central Regional Development Commission

Karen Amundson, East Central Regional Development Commission

Brian McCoy, Headwaters Regional Development Commission

Mike Greenbaum, NewTrax (remotely via Zoom)

Tom Cruikshank, WSB (remotely via Zoom)

Representative from the Area Agency on Aging

Brad Kershner

Call to Order + Introductions

Henkel called to order the January meeting of the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access at 1:01 PM on January 22, 2020. Everyone introduced themselves.

Review and Approve Agenda

Reis moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Bishop. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

Public Comments

Pettman shared some comments:

- In January there was a meeting hosted by the Minnesota Council in Disability on Legislative priorities 2020; the video/audio tape is available.
- At the January Senate Human Services Reform Senate Committee, ARC and others provided testimony. At this committee meeting the topic of transportation came up. At MCOTA, she expressed that the public needs to be meaningfully reached out to and included at the table with these types of councils (such as MCOTA).
- She has a concern that all people attending meetings, including non-voting members (public), are treated equally and fairly and given time to speak when they would like to on agenda items.
- She also encouraged everyone at the meeting to ask themselves: why are you here and who are you representing? She stated that the decisions MCOTA members make affect many people statewide and to consider this seriously.

12/18/19 Meeting Minutes

Bishop moved to approve the December minutes, seconded by Collins. The minutes were unanimously **approved**.

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Reuter provided an overview of the plan and an update on the webinar held January 8. Members asked if there a process in place to meet the deliverables. It was noted that the work group will be established in year 1 and they will set.

MCOTA could reach out to MMB staff for some guidance on this process to help think through what is measured, what should be measured, etc. MMB is working on this type of work and could be a good resource.

Varpness moved to approve the strategic plan, seconded by Nill. The agenda was unanimously **approved**.

Henkel expressed his thanks for everyone involved with this process and to Rueter who shepherded the process closely.

MCOTA Staffing Updates

Henkel and Nill shared about the new MCOTA executive director position. The position is to ensure MCOTA has the necessary staffing and oversight and to move the path forward. MCOTA is to be present in the daily work of agencies where transportation is intertwined. Gottfried will be the executive director. The position is a good fit for him given his talents and enthusiasm and he will be key in helping position MCOTA moving forward. Gottfried said a few words and shared in brief how his 30 years of experience will aid him, including this past year's experience he has with DHS. Henkel and Gottfried will work together on next steps, namely putting together the workplan.

Volunteer Driver Brochure

Varpness shared the revised version of the brochure and walked through the changes to the brochure since the group last reviewed it at the March 2019 meeting.

Questions and comments:

- Brickwedde agrees we need to update our communications with a brochure/tool like this. However there were a number of errors and the brochure has declarative statements that may create confusion. It was recommended to create a subcommittee on this topic to develop the brochure(s) and potentially other communications, including the MCOTA website. Varpness was open to a subcommittee and he is willing to coordinate to bring this topic back to the group. Brickwedde volunteered to be on the subcommittee.
- It also expressed by Brickwedde that it is difficult to include everything about this topic in one brochure. In order to engage with volunteer drivers, could we create a separate communications/brochure tailored for volunteer drivers? The other brochure would be for organizations that use volunteer drivers. Much of the content may be similar but there are clear distinctions.
- Collins shared that her organization uses this brochure for the drivers for a variety of reasons: it helps when having a conversation with an insurance provider, it helps their organization as a whole and it is useful for volunteer drivers themselves. Collins will volunteer with this effort as well.
- It was suggested pulling in agency communications staff and have their voices at the table. MnDOT can do this.
- Can the brochure be translated into other languages, be culturally compliant, and ADA accessible?
- Pettman has said she is willing to volunteer for the committee.
- Hegg said she could be involved as well.
- Kremer asked to run the draft through the agencies first to ensure everything is in compliance before bringing back to MCOTA.
- Gottfried will establish committee and Varpness will help lead.

Legislative Update

Rudeen shared about the Governor's bonding recommendations including \$112 million for local roads and bridges, \$10 million for greater Minnesota for transit capital across the state, rail safety and passenger rail for \$10 million, as well as funds for MnDOT buildings.

On the policy side, there are a couple proposals on private run limos and inspections that will be required (by private providers) and there are changes to special transportation services (STS). In 2016 MnDOT began regulating STS providers.

On automated vehicles (AVs), new CAV task force was appointed and their second meeting was January 22. Last year there was some legislation on CAV and some of this included truck platooning (significant fuel savings). Secondly, the testing and deployment of AVs did not pass last year – MnDOT is not planning to put forth a new legislative proposal on this topic but is open if legislators initiate the conversation. MnDOT will first focus on education for legislators and bringing an AV to the Capitol area to show them.

Draft Quarterly Stakeholder Communication

Mathison shared proposed content for the next communication that is scheduled for late February. Proposed topics: latest annual report, new strategic plan, announce Gottfried's new role, upcoming meetings, and a RTCC announcement/brief summary of topics. Gottfried would like to see the

RTCCs/TCAPs be a feature of each issue. Holbrook-White will connect with Sutton and Gottfried to put some of this content together. Henkel would also like to use the newsletter as a storytelling opportunity.

Pettman asked if MCOTA can distribute the e-newsletter to legislators and their staff. She also suggested that the legislative library be aware of the newsletter. Mathison shared that Senator Dibble is on the list. Henkel will let Mathison know if any further action is needed and he noted that MCOTA submits the annual report to the legislature.

Agency Updates

- **MPTA's Volunteer Driver Legislation Proposal** – Munyon shared that MPTA has a bill drafted that was introduced in 2019 and updated for 2020. The first bill they introduced was only for public transit. The new bill was expanded to expand the definition of volunteer drivers to driving people and goods. They are also working with the interface and liability issues of volunteer drivers and insurance companies. They looked at other states at what they are doing. From the insurance perspective, could there be a cap for associations with organizations providing rides. On the tax side, and on the insurance provision, some drivers receive reimbursement, a stipend, and the IRS 14 cent/mile reimbursement. They are required to file a federal form with \$600 or more reimbursement (actual expenses for mileage, and any other travel costs). MPTA is providing language on expansive subtraction language. But this language does not include anything on stipend. They have sent impacted agencies the draft bill. Munyon will share this with MCOTA members through Rueter. At a minimum, they'd like a bill with all the nuances worked out with state agencies.
- **Olmstead Plan** – Billiar shared that the plan is in the revision phase and public comment ends January 31. The Olmstead office had a number of listening sessions around the state as has the Office of Corrections. The MnDOT portion of the plan doesn't have any changes and usually is fairly static. Their next meeting is January 27.
- **Other Member Updates**
 - Gottfried shared that Pettman asked if MCOTA will be on the Secretary of State website. Yes, it is appropriate for this group to be on the Secretary of State site. He handed out a copy of the information that was submitted.
 - Rueter shared that the Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration contacted MCOTA to invite to be part of the June 3-5 MAVA Volunteer Engagement Leadership Conference being held at Hamline University. MCOTA could potentially present if members are interested. One potential topic would be to share about the volunteer driver work.
 - Nill thanked Reuter for all his good work and shared this as his last meeting before moving into new roles at MnDOT. In addition, she shared that the Senior DFL Caucus reached out for her office to speak to them on February 19th on topics of transportation, including MCOTA.

MCOTA Meetings Remote Connection

- Sound quality varies so people need to speak up. Consider a better microphone.
- Of those who provided feedback, most felt that Zoom is good enough and works just fine.
- Some have not found the additional visual capabilities to be utilized much.

Adjourn

Brickwedde made a motion to adjourn; Nill seconded. The motion was unanimously **approved**. The meeting adjourned at 2:16 PM.