

In Transit

A bimonthly newsletter published by the Minnesota Public Transit Association.

November 2018 Edition

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President's Column

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The elections are over and we have a whole new political landscape for transit! We're optimistic that transit and infrastructure investments will be higher on the agenda as we head into 2019.

MPTA is busy preparing for a new year with a new legislature and new Congressional members. It will be critical for all of us to get to know new elected officials at all levels and educate them about the importance of transit service in their districts. We're here to help if you need to know who your new elected officials are, how to contact them and what the important talking points are for 2019. We will be sharing our MPTA Legislative Agenda for 2019 as soon as the Board approves it at our December meeting. If you have suggestions, please let me know.

We had a great MN/WI Public Transportation Conference in La Crosse. Thanks to everyone who helped plan the conference, including staff, speakers and attendees! Your contribution makes a big difference. This event provided a great opportunity to learn from colleagues in both Minnesota and Wisconsin as well as getting updates on action at the federal level.

We want to welcome our newest MPTA Board members: Len Simich, SouthWest Transit; Melinda Estey, SMART Transit; and Phil Pumphrey, Duluth Transit Authority. Thanks for stepping up and helping to lead MPTA.

MPTA continues to work closely with the Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) on a number of new initiatives including the development of 5-Year Transit System Plans, changes to the rules governing transit in Minnesota, more transparency in the funding distribution process and additional solicitations in 2018 for buses and transit facilities. We hope that these additional solicitations will allow you the opportunity to make needed capital investments in a timely manner. We appreciate our ability to meet with leaders at OTAT and share the concerns and ideas of member systems when it comes to these critical issues. Please let me know if you have suggestions or concerns about these initiatives.

I would like to thank all of the transit system representatives who participated in the Transportation Forums that were held around the state this fall. MPTA joined with Progress In Motion, an arm of the Minnesota Transportation Alliance, to host seven regional Forums that focused on local transportation systems and challenges. Meetings were held in Mankato, Willmar, St. Cloud (at New Flyer), Burnsville, Rochester, Duluth and Moorhead. We had great representation from the transit systems in those areas. We appreciate everyone that provided information and stories related to the critical need for transit service in those communities; it was very important to the success of the forums.

We will be sending out invoices for 2019 membership dues in December. Please renew your membership and join with the other transit systems in supporting a strong advocacy effort with our new governor and legislature to support transit systems all across the state.

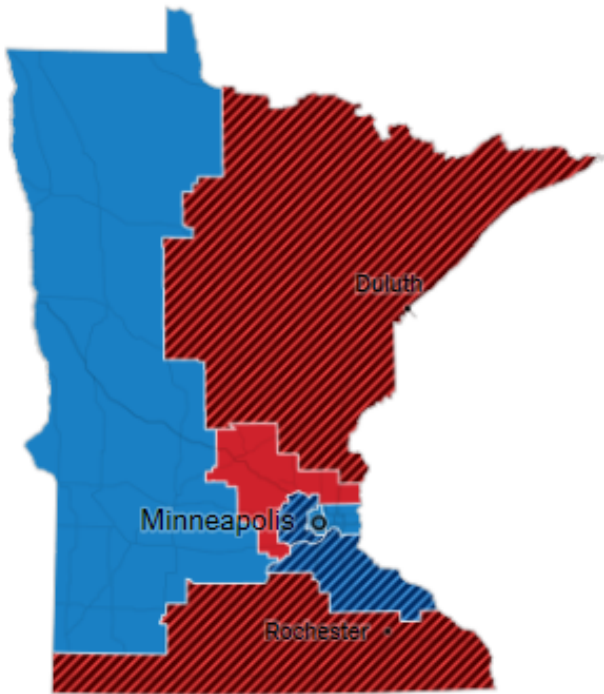
Speaking of advocacy, be sure to mark your calendars for Transportation Day at the Capitol on February 7th. This event will take place at the Capitol Ridge Hotel in St. Paul – as usual. It will be a great opportunity to hear from legislators, meet one-on-one with your representatives and learn more about the transportation proposals from Governor-Elect Walz.

Happy Holidays! Thank you for your support and membership.

U.S. House Dem. **5 won** Rep. **3 won**

District	Candidate	Rpt.
1	✓ 50% Hagedorn REP.	50% Feehan DEM. 100% >
2	✓ 53% Craig DEM.	47% Lewis* REP. 100% >
3	✓ 56% Phillips DEM.	44% Paulsen* REP. 100% >
4	✓ 66% McCollum* DEM.	30% Ryan REP. 100% >
5	✓ 78% Omar DEM.	22% Zielinski REP. 100% >
6	✓ 61% Emmer* REP.	39% Todd DEM. 100% >
7	✓ 52% Peterson* DEM.	48% Hughes REP. 100% >
8	✓ 51% Stauber REP.	45% Radinovich DEM. 100% >

* Incumbent



Dem. Lead Win Flip Rep. Lead Win Flip

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/06/us/elections/results-minnesota-elections.html>

“President’s Column”

Legislative Report

Margaret Donahoe

Executive Director

Minnesota Transportation Alliance

The November 6th election has led to some major changes in the composition of Congress and the Minnesota Legislature. While some races continue to be outstanding with very close margins, we do know the outcome of most races and which party will be in power.

Minnesota finds itself with the distinction of being the only state in the Union with a divided legislature. The Minnesota House will now have a majority of DFLers along with a DFL Governor, while the Minnesota Senate will continue to be led by the GOP. This sets up an interesting dynamic, one that isn't too different from the 2015 Session when the House was controlled by Republicans and the Senate was led by Democrats and we had a DFL Governor.

Governor-Elect Tim Walz has already announced plans to make transportation a top issue. He campaigned on the need for greater investments in transit and highways and has not shied away from announcing his support for an increase in the state gas tax. With a DFL controlled House and a strong transportation champion in the governor's office, we're optimistic that increased transit funding will be a hot topic during the 2019 Session.

At the federal level, Minnesota will have 5 new Congressional members heading to Washington, D.C. It's not clear if any of them will serve on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee but with Congressmen Nolan and Lewis leaving the committee, it would be nice to have some representation from Minnesota. Please take a minute to contact new legislators and members of Congress from your area. It's a great time to make an impression before they get too busy with their work and are faced with many competing issues.

US Senate

Democrats – 44 seats

Republicans – 51 seats

Independents – 2 seats

Undecided – 3 seats (Arizona, Florida, Mississippi)

GOP majority but Republicans don't have 60 votes to stop filibusters.

US House

Democrats – 228 (gained 33 seats)

Republicans – 199 (lost 33 seats)

Undecided – 8

Minnesota US Senate

Amy Klobuchar (D) won against Jim Newberger (R)

Tina Smith (D) won against Karin Housely (R)

Minnesota Congressional Delegation 5 Democrats, 3 Republicans

1st District – Jim Hagedorn (R) won against Dan Feehan (D) Seat left open by Tim Walz
2nd District – Angie Craig (D) won against Jason Lewis (R) – Incumbent
3rd District – Dean Phillips (D) won against Erik Paulsen (R) – incumbent
4th District – Betty McCollum (D) - incumbent won against Greg Ryan (R)
5th District – Ilhan Omar (D) won against Jennifer Zielinski (R) seat left open by Keith Ellison
6th District – Tom Emmer (R) - incumbent won against Ian Todd (D)
7th District – Collin Peterson (D) – incumbent won against Dave Hughes (R)
8th District – Pete Stauber (R) won against Joe Radinovich (D) seat left open by Rick Nolan

Minnesota Election Results Minnesota VOTER TURNOUT –78.4%- the previous high was in 2002

Governor

Tim Walz (D) won against Jeff Johnson (R). Lt. Governor Elect: Tim Walz/Peggy Flanagan- DFL.
<https://mn.gov/tim-walz/>

Attorney General

Keith Ellison (D) won against Doug Wardlow (R)

Secretary of State

Steve Simon (D) won against John Howe (R)

State Auditor

Julie Blaha (D) won against Pam Myhra (R)

Minnesota Legislature

MN Senate

One open seat due to retirement of Senator Michelle Fischbach District 13
Jeff Howe (R) won against Joe Perske (D)
Senate retains 34-33 majority

MN House *Pending recounts 75 DFL seats 59 GOP seats

New Legislators - 39 17-18 #Flipped seats
#5A – John Persell (DFL) – former Rep. Bliss (R) *Recount triggered 4 vote lead
6B – Dave Lislegard (DFL) - former Rep. Metsa (DFL)
13A – Lisa Demuth (R) – former Rep. Howe (R)
#14B – Dan Wolgamott (DFL) – former Rep. Knobloch (R)
15B – Shane Mekeland (R) – former Rep. Newberger (R)
19A – Jeff Brand (DFL) – former Rep. Johnson (DFL)
20B – Todd Lippert (DFL) – former Rep. Bly (DFL)
23B - Jeremy Munson (R) – former Rep. Cornish (R)
#33B – Kelly Morrison (DFL) – former Rep. Pugh (R)
34A – Kristin Robbins (R) – former Rep. Peppin (R)
#34B – Kristin Bahner (DFL) – former Rep. Smith (R)
#36A – Zach Stephenson (DFL) - former Rep. Uglem (R)
#38B – Ami Wazlawik (DFL) – former Rep. Dean (R)
#39B – Shelly Christensen (DFL) – former Rep. Lohmer (R)

40B – Samantha Vang (DFL) – former Rep. Hillstrom (DFL)
#42A – Kelly Moller (DFL) – former Rep. Jessup (R)
#44A – Ginny Klevorn (DFL) – former Rep. Anderson (R)
44B – Patty Acomb (DFL) – former Rep. Applebaum (DFL)
46A – Ryan Winkler (DFL) former Rep. Flannagan (DFL)
47B – Greg Boe (R) – former Rep. Hoppe (R)
#48B – Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn (DFL) – former Rep. Loon (R)
#49A – Heather Edelson (DFL) – former Rep. Anselmo (R)
49B – Steve Elkins (DFL) – former Rep. Rosenthal (DFL)
50A – Michael Howard (DFL) – former Rep. Slocum (DFL)
#52B – Ruth Richardson (DFL) – former Rep. Regina Barr (R)
53A – Tou Xiong (DFL) – former Rep. Ward (DFL)
#53B – Steve Sandell (DFL) – former Rep. Fenton (R)
#54A – Anne Claflin (DFL) – former Rep. Franke (R)
#55A – Brad Tabke (DFL) – former Rep. Loonan (R)
#56A – Hunter Cantrell (DFL) – former Rep. Christensen (R)
#56B – Alice Mann (DFL) – former Rep. Peterson (R)
57A – Robert Bierman (DFL) – former Rep. Maye Quade (DFL)
#57B – John Huot (DFL) – former Rep. Wills (R)
60B – Mohamud Noor (DFL) – former Rep. Omar (DFL)
61B – Jamie Long (DFL) – former Rep. Thissen (DFL)
62A – Hodan Hassan (DFL) – former Rep. Clark (DFL)
62B – Aisha Gomez (DFL) – former Rep. Allen (DFL)
64A – Kaohly Her (DFL) – former Rep. Murphy (DFL)
67B – Jay Xiong (DFL) – former Rep. Johnson (DFL)

Senate Majority Leader – Paul Gazelka
President of the Senate – Jeremy Miller
Senator Minority Leader – Tom Bakk
Speaker of the House – Melissa Hortman
Majority Leader – Ryan Winkler
Minority Leader – Kurt Daudt

Election Directory available: <https://buff.ly/2JMbl3k>

Key Dates:

State Budget forecast released between end of November and 1st week in December
Legislature convenes January 8.
Governor Walz biennial budget release in mid-January
February Budget & Economic Forecast used by Legislature is establishing their appropriations
Committee Deadlines – not yet established – approximately March/April
Legislature Adjourns May 20

MN/WI Public Transportation Conference & Expo



Thank you to everyone that attended, volunteered, participated in, and sponsored the 2018 Minnesota/Wisconsin Public Transportation Conference and Expo in La Crosse, Wisconsin in October. At MPTA's Annual Meeting, we announced the winners of this year's Transit Awards. They are as follows:

Distinguished Career

Tim Kirchoff, Anoka County Transit
Tony Knauer, Rochester Public Transit

Management Innovation

Minnesota Valley Transit Authority
Route 420 Dakota County Technical College

Transit Professional of the Year

Erlene Welshons, Rolling Hills Transit

Minnesota Operator of the Year

Clarence Skala, White Earth Public Transit
Bob Braegleemann, Metro Bus

Transit System of the Year

Maple Grove Transit



Congratulations to all of our winners! If you'd like to view this year's session presentations, please visit our website: <https://www.mpta-transit.org/event/2018-mnwi-public-transportation-conference-expo>.

Next year's conference will be at the River Centre in St. Paul on Wednesday, October 9 through Friday, October 11.



Over 70 vendors, providing access to products and services that benefit Greater Minnesota's transit systems.

18 educational sessions given by a variety of transit professionals, as well as two keynote speakers.



Two receptions for networking and socializing with colleagues and friends, old and new, as well as live music.



"MN/WI Public Transportation Conference & Expo"

Upcoming Events



MINNESOTA PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

View the MPTA Events Page online
at: <https://www.mpta-transit.org/events>

2019 Transportation Day at the Capitol

Thursday, February 7, 2019

Best Western Plus Capitol Ridge in St. Paul

161 St. Anthony Avenue

People from all across the state of Minnesota come together with legislators to focus on transportation needs, future funding and the importance of improving safety and efficiency on our transportation systems at the Capitol during Transportation Day.

The top transportation priorities for 2019 include transportation funding, connected and autonomous vehicle legislation, and the capital bonding bill.

If you would like to meet your legislators, MPTA staff will be arranging individual meetings for you.

Please keep an eye on our website and social media pages for updates on registration.



SouthWest Transit Breaks Record with State Fair ridership

Brittany Stevens

Marketing Coordinator
SouthWest Transit



SouthWest Transit completed another record-breaking year of State Fair bus service, providing 104,378 rides to and from the Minnesota State Fair. The previous ridership record, set in 2016, was 100,034 rides.

In addition to setting a new over-all ridership record, SouthWest Transit set several other records throughout the 12 days of the Minnesota State Fair while still running regular route service. These records include:

- Highest opening day ridership with 9,700 customers
- Highest single day ridership with 14,462 customers on September 1st

“All in all, our State Fair operation was a big success,” said SouthWest Transit Chief Executive Officer Len Simich. “We moved a large number of people with very little waiting, and our staff did a tremendous job of displaying the excellent customer service our riders have come to expect and appreciate.”

SouthWest Transit (SWT) provides express and local bus service to residents of Eden Prairie, Chanhassen, Chaska, Carver, and surrounding communities. SWT operates five park-and-ride locations, including its main hub, SouthWest Station in Eden Prairie. Additional information and complete schedules for SWT can be found at www.swtransit.org or by calling our customer service line at 952-949-2BUS (2287).



RPT Lends a Hand in Cannon Falls



City of Rochester, MN

<https://www.rochestermn.gov/Home/Components/News/News/5322/>

Rochester Public Transit pitched in to the Cannon Falls relief effort in over the weekend. After last week's damaging storms, a state of emergency was declared as much of the city was without power. Residents of The Gardens nursing home were evacuated that morning to local hospitals and Cannon Falls High School which was serving as a temporary shelter.



"We got the call Friday around 1 o'clock from the City of Rochester Director of Emergency Management, Ken Jones, that some residents were being relocated to Centennial Gardens in Richfield and they needed transportation." Said Tony Knauer, Transit and Parking Manager for the City. "We immediately began arranging for vehicles and staff."

By about 6 P.M., three fully accessible ZIPS paratransit vehicles left the RPT garage along with an accessible van. When they arrived at the high school, 17 seniors—four ambulatory and 13 using wheelchairs, were waiting to be transported to the Twin Cities suburb for

accommodations better suited to meet their needs.

First Transit Road Supervisor Tabitha Miller described the scene, "People were thankful to see us, and the folks being transported were in good spirits for the most part." Along with Miller, two other First Transit road supervisors and a driver assisted in the effort, arriving back in Rochester after midnight on Saturday morning.

"Our substantial fleet of well-maintained and fully-accessible vehicles is a great resource during emergencies, whether it's our community or one nearby that needs the help," According to Jim Baldwin, General Manager of First Transit in Rochester. "We are ready and willing to assist when situations like this arise."



Sartell On-Demand Ride Service



Berta Hartig

Marketing & Communications Manager
St. Cloud Metropolitan Transit Commission

Sartell residents might be ringing in the New Year with a new ride service.

Metro Bus is proposing replacing Route 32 with a new type of on-demand, shared-ride service within Sartell that picks up people closer to their homes and drops off closer to their destinations. It is also proposing extending Route 31 beyond Walmart to serve the clinics and businesses on Connecticut Ave. and CentraCare Health Plaza.

"We want to pilot the service changes for six months to see if they will be as good as we think," said Doug Diedrichsen, Planning Manager for St. Cloud Metro Bus. "Everyone we've talked to so far has been excited about the potential of this new service model."

Metro Bus has scheduled two open houses to educate the public about the proposed service trials. The first meeting is scheduled immediately following the Monday, September 24 Sartell City Council meeting at Sartell City Hall, 125 Pine Cone Rd. N., Sartell. Metro Bus will also present the plan during the 6 pm city council meeting. The second open house is 3-5 pm Saturday, October 6 at the Sartell Community Center, 850 19th St. S., Sartell. If approved by the Metro Bus Board of Commissioners in October, the pilot program will start January 2.

The open houses will detail the proposed service trials, display the service area map, answer questions and collect feedback from the public. Accommodations will be made to enable people with special needs to participate in the open houses. Please contact Metro Bus early at 320.257.4580 or info@stcloudmtc.com to make arrangements.

Metro Bus designed the new on-demand shared ride service, which it calls ConneX, to increase transportation coverage in Sartell. Because of the low connectivity of the developments, Sartell is a difficult area to adequately serve using traditional fixed routes.

Individuals currently using Dial-a-Ride in Sartell may benefit using ConneX. If they qualify for Dial-a-Ride only because they are physically unable to walk to the nearest bus stop but could walk to the nearest curb, they could save money. If the trial is approved, ConneX, which provides curb-to-curb service, will cost the same as a Fixed Route fare, \$1.25. Dial-a-Ride, which provides door-through-door, driver-assisted service to qualified individuals with disabilities costs \$2.50 per ride.

Maple Grove Transit branding wins national award

Samantha Schwanke
Program Coordinator
MPTA

Prime Advertising & Design, Inc., which created the new branding for Maple Grove Transit, was awarded an American Graphic Design Award by Graphic Design USA (GDUSA). The award letter reads, “For 55 years, Graphic Design USA has sponsored competitions to spotlight areas of excellence and opportunity for creative professionals. GDUSA’s American Graphic Design Awards is the original and the flagship, open to the entire creative community and honoring outstanding works of all kinds and across all media. Roughly 10,000 entries were submitted; a highly selective 10% are recognized with a Winners Certificate.”

Roclyn Bradshaw, Creative Director of Prime Advertising & Design, Inc., had this to say, “We periodically like to submit our work to national and local design award competitions. GDUSA has been a publication that I have received as a designer for the past 10+ years.

The 55th Annual GDUSA American Graphic Design Awards competition is open to everyone in the community: advertising agencies, design firms, corporate, institutional and publishing inhouse departments. It honors outstanding new work (had to be completed within the last year) of all kinds: print, packaging, p-o-p, internet, interactive and motion graphics.

We submitted the Maple Grove Transit and MYRIDE Branding into the “Surface Graphics” category. We were very proud of how the transit branding and vehicle wrap designs turned out and felt like the competition would too. The awards will get posted up to their website late November/early December as well as getting printed in their Nov/Dec 250-page publication that gets mailed out to graphic designers and all who subscribe nationwide.”



Best of B3 Recognition 2018

Buildings, Benchmarks & Beyond Minnesota

Excerpts from "Best of B3 Recognition 2018"



BUILDINGS, BENCHMARKS & BEYOND
Tools and Programs for Sustainable Buildings in Minnesota

The State of Minnesota is leading the nation in requiring 70% more energy efficient State buildings in an effort to have all State construction carbon neutral by 2030. Designed to increase energy efficiency and sustainability, the State of Minnesota's Buildings, Benchmarks, and Beyond (B3) programs were developed for and are required on State-funded projects in Minnesota. On October 25, 2018, the fourth annual Best of B3 Recognition Luncheon was held at International Market Square in Minneapolis to recognize the achievements of B3 program participants. The winners in each category were selected by a committee made up of staff from the CSBR and the Departments of Administration and Commerce.

Best of B3 Design: The City of Mankato Transit Facility minimized negative impacts by reusing an existing building and using locally sourced and recycled materials in addition to a modular precast concrete wall panel system to utilize product efficiencies and reduce waste.

Best of Sustainable Buildings 2030: Also winning the SB 2030 award, the City of Mankato Transit Facility used strategies like high-efficiency boilers, exhaust energy recovery, daylighting, and rooftop photovoltaics to use a predicted 39% less energy per square foot than its SB 2030 Standard.

Best of B3 Benchmarking – City: The City of Morris tracks energy use for 21 buildings and over 44,000 sf. Through an organization they created called the Morris Model, the City has been exploring ways to become more energy efficient. In 2017, the City achieved an energy use intensity that is 15% lower than the code-based benchmark, a 10% reduction from the previous year.

To see all of the winners, please visit <https://www.b3mn.org/best-of-b3/>.



Duluth Transit unveils new electric buses

Excerpts from the Duluth News Tribune's article "Duluth unveils new electric bus"

[Click here](#) to read the whole article



With a shiny metallic ceiling, unscathed floors and even a rear window, Duluth's newest city bus took to the streets Thursday morning for its inaugural loop around downtown, completely carbon dioxide-free.

"To be celebrating departing from diesel is kind of an emotional shift in my brain," said Charlie Zelle, the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation. "But...I think the electrification of our fleet is the future."

Unlike its noisier cousins, the loudest feature of the seven new buses won't be the engine, rather the commotion of its passengers. The new electric buses will also sport a fiberglass body so they are lighter with rounded edges.

Duluth is the first city in Minnesota to use these buses, and one of 10 public transportation organizations in the country to take the first step toward zero-emissions public transit.

Rick Nolan's senior adviser, Tom Whiteside, spoke on behalf of the congressman, commending the city for taking the first step into zero-emissions transportation. Mayor Emily Larson expressed the importance of the social connection people got from riding the bus. The DTA board president, Aaron Bransky, said the new buses were a test to see how efficient the vehicles could be in a harsh climate.

"We are going to be comparing the operating and maintenance costs of electric buses with conventional diesel buses," Bransky said. "We have a robust maintenance program and keep records of how much things cost and they're going to work."

It's one of the reasons Duluth was selected for the \$6.3 million grant from the Federal Transit Authority. Its record keeping will help the city gain a better understanding of the efficiency of the buses. And in a hilly city that reaches sub-freezing temperatures annually, Duluth was the right choice for the experiment.

"It's a very calculated experiment," Phil Pumphrey said, the general manager of the DTA. "There's already a movement within the industry to move toward this."

Pumphrey said electric buses have been around for awhile, but their mainstream success has only taken off in the last five years. Because of Duluth's geography, the city is now benefiting from that trend, capitalizing on a future that both urban centers in the Twin Cities and Rochester hope to soon embrace.

The first-time expense of the buses wasn't cheap. Pumphrey said they'll cost about \$900,000 each — about twice as much as the diesel buses the city owns. However, Bransky said he hopes the long term benefits outweigh the initial fee.

"Generally electric vehicles cost more on the front end, but cost less to run over time," he said. "Not just fuel, but maintenance as well."

However, the buses will have a supplemental heating system that will be diesel-run. It's meant to prolong the battery life of the engine and keep the driver and passengers warm in the winter.

Despite getting its introduction in late October, residents shouldn't expect to see the vehicles on the road until Nov. 19.

Updates from the Office of Transit and Active Transportation



On Wednesday, October 17, Mark Nelson began an 9-month mobility with the Office of Transit and Active Transportation (OTAT) as the Planning and Program Manager for Greater MN Transit. This position will be responsible for a comprehensive review of OTAT's policies, programs and procedures related to the Greater MN Transit Program. The intent is to find opportunities for efficiencies, transparency, and process improvement so that OTAT can better align resource investments with identified goals and performance measures and effectively articulate these investment decisions to staff, partners, and stakeholders. Mark's location and contact information will remain the same. Please welcome Mark to his new role.

Mark is a certified planner with a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota, and he also has a M.A. in Public Administration from the Evergreen State College, Olympia, WA. During his mobility, Mark's position as Program Director for Statewide Planning and Transportation Data Analysis in the Office of Transportation System Management will be filled by Philip Schaffner.

Tori Nill will continue to serve as Director of OTAT through the end of 2018 and a search has begun for a permanent director.

Five-Year Transit Plans

In 2017, the state finalized the Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan, a 20-year strategic plan for investing in public transit and reaching the legislative target of meeting 90 percent of transit needs by 2025. Thirty mid- and small-sized service providers have been grouped into five Greater Minnesota regions.

Through a competitive request-for-proposal process, a consultant team has been selected for each region.

By summer of 2019, each of the 30 providers will have a personalized five-year plan that identifies strengths, unmet needs, and future transit service changes, as well as a financial plan that is adaptable to changing environments. The five-year plans will help MnDOT and MPTA better articulate transit needs to the legislature.



Visit our website to learn more and for updates: <https://www.mpta-transit.org/five-year-transit-plans-greater-minnesota-systems>

In Transit



Upcoming Events

Find event information: [MPTA Events](#)

Transportation Day at the Capitol

February 7 at the MN State Capitol in St. Paul

2019 Minnesota Bus Roadeo

July 12-13 in Marshall

2019 MN Public Transit Conference & Expo

October 9-11 at the RiverCentre in St. Paul

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