



Founded in 1975 the Minnesota Public Transit Association (MPTA) is the only statewide coalition of transit systems and transit advocates. MPTA speaks out for transit systems and transit riders across the State of Minnesota. MPTA advocates for high-quality transit service that is accessible and available to everyone. Our mission is to support transportation alternatives that improve the quality of life for people in communities large and small, urban, suburban, and rural and includes biking, walking, and rolling infrastructure.

2023 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Adopted by the Board of Directors on December 16, 2022

Public Transit is important to many of our citizens daily lives, providing access to jobs, housing, food, education and health care. Minnesota must support a comprehensive, multimodal transportation system that provides sufficient dedicated, stable and long-term resources for public transit systems throughout the state. MPTA supports comprehensive statewide public transit that considers the proper transit modes for geographic areas to improve access and mobility for all citizens; with an emphasis on expanding bus service. The efficient movement of people and freight is key to maintaining our economic competitiveness.

- Provide adequate funding to serve Greater Minnesota communities who provide a variety of services that meet their community's needs, including Dial-A-Ride, Fixed route, volunteer drivers and contracted services.
- Provide adequate funding to serve the entire metropolitan area, including suburban communities for the build out the bus systems and bus rapid transit including operations, technology, vehicles, and facilities. Investment should be equitably targeted to local express service, reverse commute service and micro transit service, including our suburban communities.

FUNDING

Support transit funding that is adequate, stable, and predictable across the state. Increase funding for all transit systems, including directing funding for MicroTransit services, electrification of vehicles and facilities, and also for technology and safety purposes.

- Appropriate \$35 million for greater Minnesota transit this session to match federal funding for five years. Appropriate \$29.2 million for Metropolitan Area transit for the purchase of electric vehicles and infrastructure.
- General Fund appropriation of \$20 million for the biennium, \$10 each year, for greater Minnesota transit unmet needs; including the unfunded requests for 2023 operating grants.
- Dedicate 100% of the total revenue collected from sales tax on auto parts for transportation purposes, including transit, similar to sales tax on leased vehicle and rental vehicles. Currently a flat amount of \$145.6 million goes to transportation purposes and the rest is deposited into the general fund.
- Increase MVST rate to 6.875% from 6.5% and increase the MVST share for Suburban Transit Providers from 4.3% to 5%. (This matches the rate of the general sales tax.) 40% of increased revenues will be deposited into the Transit Assistance Account. Greater MN could potentially receive approximately \$2 million and the Metropolitan Area Transit providers \$18 million.
- Increase state share of funding to reduce the local match requirement for Greater Minnesota systems to allow less burdensome access to both operating and capital funding. Citizens in communities with low wealth are often disadvantaged in available transportation options.
- Support *dedicated, ongoing* funding mechanisms that can support transit, such as:
 - A package delivery fee (apply MVST split of 60-40)
 - A fee on Transportation Network Companies (4% of fare)
 - Increase metro area sales tax for transit

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

- \$5 million Greater Minnesota Transit facilities
- General fund appropriation for purchase buses to fill the backlog and assist with dramatic price increases
- \$2 million for safe routes to school across the state
- \$8 million for active transportation across the state (\$7 million in bonds, \$1 million in cash)
- \$100 million for Bus Rapid Transit/Busway Capital Improvements
- \$16 million for Northern Lights Express (passenger rail corridor to Duluth)

VOLUNTEER DRIVER FEDERAL INITIATIVE

- Volunteer Driver Reimbursement – authorize the IRS to set the charitable rate for driver volunteer at the same rate as the business mileage rate. The charitable rate has never changed and still 14 cents per mile reimbursement while business rate is currently 62.5 cents per mile. Volunteers are willing to donate their time, estimated at \$29/hour but should not be asked to subsidize this cost as well. This low reimbursement rate is a financial burden and disincentive to volunteer drivers.

POLICY

- Statutorily reduce the local match required of GM Transit systems for operations and capital.
- Support 3rd Party testing for CDL licensure.
- MnDOT must prepare a report every two years, beginning in 2024, identifying the biennial cost of meeting the Greater Minnesota transit operating and capital needs by 2030; as referenced in MS174.24 (b) (5)
- MnDOT Transit Grants Selection Process –OTAT must publish the awards on continue collaboration with OTAT on the transparent process for evaluating, ranking, selecting, and publishing information on financial awards for public transit operating grants (similar to capital grants) in Greater Minnesota on the MnDOT website.
- Funding for Transit Signal Priority and programming, to give transit a green light at intersections and painting bus lanes bolster transit, should be applied in both urban and suburban areas.
- Monitor the 5-Year Transit Systems Plan updates for each system in Greater Minnesota.
- Monitor legislative proposals modifying or creating new governance models for metropolitan area and/or Greater Minnesota transit planning or service delivery.
- Monitor proposal to expand twin cities metro area taxing district. Support for expansion is contingent on increasing funding for operations. The taxing district revenue is only for capital and communities will have expectation for service that otherwise can't be met without a loss of service somewhere else.
- Monitor the legalization of marijuana for potential transit driver implications

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