



2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Adopted by the Board of Directors on February 9, 2024

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.

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.

CAPITAL INVESTMENTS

- **\$10 million for Greater Minnesota Transit**
- \$1 million for safe routes to school across the state
- \$1 million for active transportation across the state (\$7 million in bonds, \$1 million in cash)
- \$75 million for Bus Rapid Transit/Busway capital improvements
- \$50 million for ABRT Corridor improvements

FUNDING

- 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; electrification of vehicles and facilities, provide for technology and marketing.
- 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.
- In 2025 – Seek an increase in state funding to reduce the local match requirement for Greater Minnesota rural transit 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.

POLICY

- Expand statute to allow 3rd Party testing bill for CDL licensure of greater Minnesota transit drivers.
- Support the MnDOT Technical Policy bill which includes updates to the Greater Minnesota Transit Program. Repeals Chapter 8835, administrative rules which were adopted as temporary in 1974 and makes additional changes to Minn. Stat. 174.21 to 174.255 to align state and federal requirements.
- Ensure that local contributions other than cash are considered part of the local match for transit facilities.
- Allow use of state funds for transit facility improvements to protect rolling stock investment, regardless of original building funding.
- Continue discussions with DVS on barriers to licensing GM transit bus drivers.
- Monitor Transit Signal Priority and programming, to give transit a green light at intersections and painting bus lanes bolster transit and should be applied in both urban and suburban areas.
- Support MnDOT report to the legislature every two years, identifying the biennial cost of meeting the Greater Minnesota transit operating and capital needs by 2030; as referenced in MS174.24 (b) (5)

- 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.

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 just increased to 67 cents per mile, January 2024. 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.
- MPTA will continue to co-chair the Volunteer Driver Coalition which is working to expand support across the nation.

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