



# DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

## RURAL TRANSIT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

mnrtap.us

### Statewide Technology Plan RTAP Update

The Statewide Technology Plan is being developed in conjunction with a consulting firm. They have been asked to complete the following tasks:

#### Technology Maturity Assessment

- Review current technologies in use and 5 year plans for future goals

#### Technology Trends and Opportunities

- Review overall current trends and future opportunities for technology

#### Industry Peer Review

- Review systems nationwide to compare transit system size, capacity, and organizational structure in relation to Minnesota Transit Systems.

#### Technology Goals and Objectives

- Consultant works with MnDOT and partners to develop future goals and funding priorities for technology across Minnesota

#### Technology Standards

- Develop model of standards for technology needs for systems, relating to agency size and organizational structure.
- Hold a half-day meeting to review findings and show ideas for future technology direction, to be held on multiple days using video conferencing.

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## Technology Analysis & Systems Growth Plan

- Work with systems to build a technology plan, system efficiency, and transit growth

## Minnesota Rural Public Transit Technology Plan

- The culmination is a written Statewide Technology Plan

OTAT has not received a formal notice to proceed from MnDOT Consulting Services for the consultant. We think this will happen in June. We have established members for the steering committee. We look forward to a kick off in late June or early July.

## FTA Announces Grants for Bus Technologies

Congratulations to the City of Rochester (small urban 5307 transit provider), which will receive \$3,156,746 to purchase new electric buses for service expansion and related charging infrastructure.

## Training Update

Minnesota RTAP began offering twelve online courses in March. Since that time, RTAP has received over 1,000 course registrations spanning 24 agencies, with over

Course	Registered	Completed	% Complete	Vendor
Maltreatment Awareness	192	99	51.56%	Mornard & Associates
PASS	215	80	37.21%	Mornard & Associates
Bloodborne Pathogens	117	77	65.81%	Mornard & Associates
Defensive Driving — Coaching the Van Driver	87	37	42.53%	Minnesota Safety Council
Defensive Driving — Coaching the Experienced Driver	54	40	74.07%	Minnesota Safety Council
Low Visibility and Driving	115	74	64.35%	Minnesota Safety Council
Safe Winter Driving	112	70	62.50%	Minnesota Safety Council
Backing Safely	120	78	65.00%	Minnesota Safety Council
Securement 101	35	19	54.29%	Q'Straint
Recruiting, Building and Retaining a Sustainable Driver Workforce	2	0	0.00%	CTAA
<b>Total</b>	<b>1049</b>	<b>574</b>	<b>51.73%</b>	

50% of the courses completed to date. Response to online training has been overwhelmingly positive, with many agencies and drivers requesting additional courses. RTAP has also offered four webinars to date offering engagement and conversation around essential topics, with webinars to continue through the summer. Over 340 people have been trained through the online courses.



## The Reopening of Transit During COVID-19

Around the world, public transit ridership has been devastated by the lockdowns and social distancing related to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). According to most estimates, ridership levels are at least 70% below pre-pandemic levels, with some areas losing even more. As a transit provider, you know first-hand the impact COVID-19 has had on Minnesota's public transit service.

The stay-at-home orders combined with the accurate perception that public transit requires you to be close to other people are the main factors behind the ridership collapse. Public transit ridership has been reduced to those individuals who do not have other options that offer less risk of exposure to COVID-19. It is understandable that people who have the option to drive

or ride with family or friends are going to do that because they have control of who has been in and touching surfaces inside the vehicle.

Public transit's trip purpose has changed drastically in the past few months and riders are now focused on accessing essential services. In addition, many of the current riders are traveling to work in hospitals and nursing homes, grocery stores, pharmacies, and other services required for the community to continue to function. COVID-19 has showed us the degree to which we all depend on those individuals getting to work. For both these reasons public transit cannot simply shut down. Even with schools closed, restaurants closed, and much of the economy closed, there is still a need for public transit.

As we emerge from the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders and business shutdowns, the need for public transit beyond the essential or limited service is greatly increasing. Public transit must come back to full service and it must

succeed. The looming question is, how will public transit reopen and reopen in a manner that provides protection for

riders and transit staff. The reopening of public transit will not happen overnight but will happen gradually and incorporate social distancing and other safety precautions such as enhanced vehicle and facility cleaning. Reopening transit services will be unique to each transit system and will require a well thought out plan. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), the American Public Transit Association (APTA), Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) and others realize reopening is challenging and

*Even with schools closed, restaurants closed, and much of the economy closed, there is still a need for public transit.*

transit systems are looking for guidance. Many resources have been developed to assist with the design and implementation of a reopening plan unique to each transit system. Below is a list of useful resources that provide recommendations and best practices for continuing transit services in these challenging times.

- FTA [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) Resource Tool for Public Transportation](#)
- FTA [Safety Advisory to Reduce Risk of Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Among Transit Employees & Passengers](#)
- CTAA's [Recommended COVID-19 Safety Protocols](#) (added April 16) – **Note that Section 7 (Essential Trips) of this excellent resource does not reflect ADA prohibitions on trip type restrictions on paratransit. See [FTA FAQ CR1](#) for clarification.**
- CTAA's [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#)
- CDC [Resources for Businesses and Employers](#) includes links to fact sheets for Bus Transit Operators, Rail Transit Operators, Transit Maintenance Workers, and Transit Station Workers
- CDC's [COVID-19 FAQs web page](#)
- FTA's [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) web page](#) provides links to Federal resources
- FTA's [Frequently Asked Questions from FTA Grantees Regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#) (added April 8; frequently updated by FTA)
- National RTAP's [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\): Information and Resources for Transit Technical Brief](#) (March 2020) provides information targeted at rural transit agencies as well as links to additional resources

- National Aging and Disability Transportation Center's (NADTC) [COVID-19 Resources](#) web page
- [American Public Transportation Association's \(APTA\) Public Transit Response to Coronavirus or COVID-19](#) web page provides links to resources, transit system stories, a community forum, and advocacy alerts
- APTA's [Summary of key points from NCHRP Report 769: A Guide for Public Transportation Pandemic Planning and Response](#)
- National Center for Mobility Management's (NCMM) [Mobility Management in the Coronavirus Pandemic](#) blog post (March 23, 2020) and [COVID-19 Resource Center](#)
- CTA's [COVID-19 Resources and News](#) web page provides links to numerous resources and best practices, including:
  - [Rural Transit Manager's COVID-19 Roundtable](#)
  - [How Transit Systems Can Continue to be Effective During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Pandemic](#)
  - [Advanced Preparations for Employee Health and Safety](#)
  - [Properly Cleaning Your Vehicles and Other Transit Facilities](#)
  - [Working with Your Local Health Departments](#)
  - [Communicating Service Reductions](#)
  - [What To Do if Your Employee Tests Positive](#)
  - [Wheelchair Securement](#)
- Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) [Emergency Management Tips and Practices for Bus Transit Systems](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Health Situation Update for COVID-19](#)

## Funding Opportunities:

- [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act \(CARES Act\)](#), signed into law March 27, 2020, which provides \$25 billion to support the transit industry
- FTA's [Emergency Relief Program](#)
- FTA's [Emergency Relief Docket](#)
- FTA's [Emergency Relief Manual](#)
- FTA's [Frequently Asked Questions from FTA Grantees Regarding Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- NADTC's [Emergency Activity Tracking for Transportation Programs](#) addresses what to do now for possible reimbursement later



Photo by [Jon Tyson](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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This publication is free.

Visit the [Minnesota Rural Transit Assistance Program](https://mnrtp.us) website for a catalog and a listing of upcoming 2020 events:

[mnrtp.us/calendar-of-events/](https://mnrtp.us/calendar-of-events/)

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