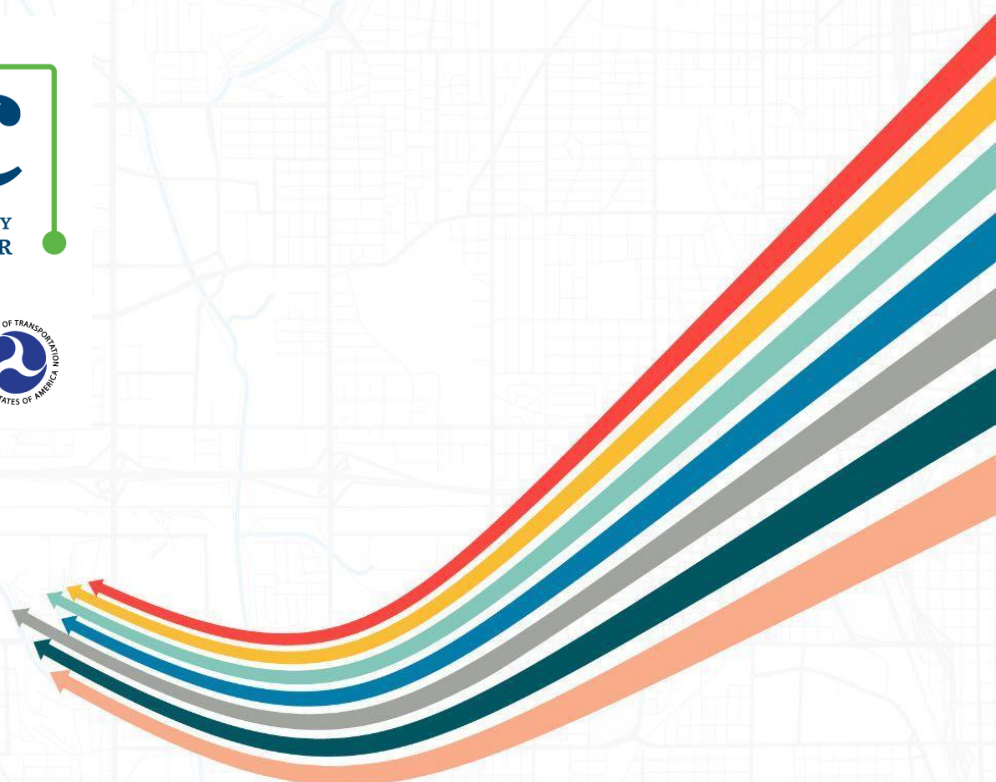


**MAPA & Metro:
NADTC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Symposium
August 25, 2023
Final Report**



NADTC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Symposium

Discussion Overview: August 25, 2023, Revive Center, Omaha, NE

Summary

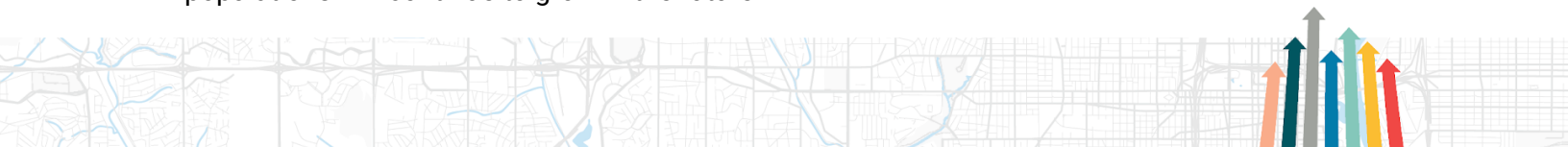
The Omaha - Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (MAPA) and Metro Transit held the NADTC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Symposium from 9am to 1pm on August 25, 2023 at the Revive Center in Omaha, Nebraska. There were a total 22 attendees, the diverse group consisting of six transportation providers, one Nebraska Unicameral elected official, three community organizations, three community members representing diverse populations, seven transit users, two attendees representing human service agencies, and provided their experiences and knowledge of the state of transportation in the Greater Omaha- Council Bluffs Metro Region.

The 22 participants were split into two groups and after initial introductions and presentation of the video the groups engaged in lively discussions. The following is a synopsis of the general description of the discussions that took place. In general the two groups provided general information regarding barriers, solutions and next steps that can be summarized within the following five categories:

1. Accessibility
2. Communication
3. Coordination
4. Education
5. Funding

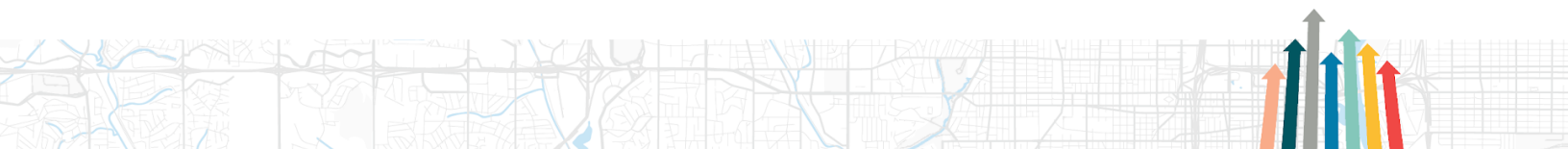
Initial discussion began with the overarching acknowledgement and agreement that the greater Omaha community is greatly segregated based upon race and socioeconomic status. This led to a discussion with regards to the isolation felt by other members of senior, LGBTQ+ and disabled communities. A common thread for the marginalized groups was the limitations that transportation plays within the region to bring people together. Specifically mentioning the inability to consistently and effectively access employment and medical resources, and an overall lack of accommodations for communities with barriers related to language, visual or hearing impairments, or socioeconomic status. This was further refined to include land use decisions that have separated uses and developed areas that lack access to daily needs. Additional concerns with regards to communication and the lack of awareness regarding the different services that coordinate transit within the region. The need for additional access, communications, coordination, education of services, was underpinned by the lack of funding for transit in the region.

Solutions identified during the symposium included better advocacy of the transportation system among all entities providing services, and the enhancement of existing service related to reliability, service time and wayfinding. Collaboration with medical providers on dynamic scheduling for appointments (to account for inconsistent transit times) along with community navigators for persons needing assistance with transportation or healthcare were also deemed of high importance. Creating and building upon resources for languages not prominently spoken in the community, particularly for refugee populations, was deemed a high priority as these populations will continue to grow in the future.



Throughout the meeting, MAPA's Coordinated Transit Committee (CTC) was identified as a crucial gathering point for continued discussions and to provide continuity to find and implement solutions. The CTC has a diverse committee membership and is charged with facilitating project selection for the Federal Transportation Administration's 5310 Urbanized area fund for enhanced transportation for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program. Additionally, some solutions identified by both groups were more specific to Metro Transit regarding universal design, access, and existing fixed route transit services. Additionally, individual communities providing transportation services were identified as potential partners to implement solutions.

In order to continue this work, MAPA will convene the CTC membership in October and report out the summary of findings and work with the committee on follow-up actions that can be pursued by the CTC. Additionally, MAPA and Metro will revisit the initial discussions and reconvene a larger committee of local elected officials, state representatives, transportation providers, and human services providers for the region to work through some of the common barriers and solutions that impact the region. A list of the initial diversity, equity and inclusion Transportation Stakeholder List is included for reference at the end of this document.

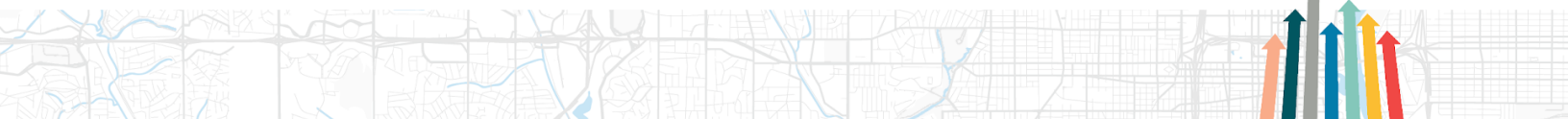


Barriers and Issues in Our Community

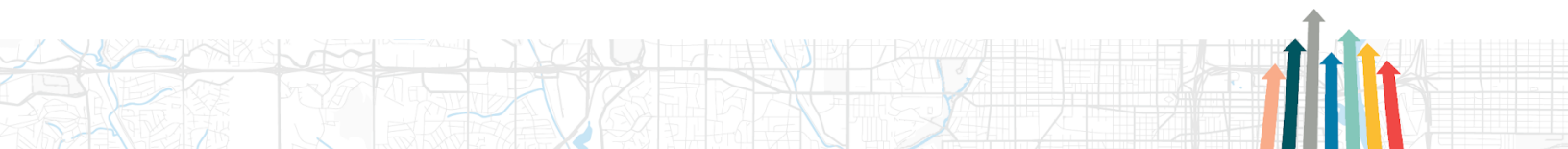
- Segregation and Isolation of marginalized communities
 - Segregation based upon race and socioeconomic status
 - Isolation among seniors and LGBTQ+ community
- Geographic areas not served by transit and paratransit
 - MOBY Service Limited to $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from fixed routes
 - In particular in Sarpy and Western Douglas Counties
 - Many government services are completely inaccessible without a personal vehicle
 - Jobs, medical resources, and other community resources not on bus routes, or on infrequent routes
- Language barriers
 - Most communication is only in English
 - Marginal usage of Spanish on some documents
 - Refugee populations have few resources for translation and assistance
- Barriers for persons with sensory or neurological disabilities
 - Resources in braille or in sign language limited
 - Discomfort for neurodiverse populations in loud settings (including buses)
- Societal Issues
 - The system is working as it was designed, meaning marginalized populations are not considered in the design of the built environment
 - Stigma around public transportation, poverty and race
 - Many cannot afford various transportation options

Solutions

- Accessibility
 - Create a platform of community navigators for persons from marginalized communities
 - Explore more free or low fare options for paratransit
 - Improve signage on buses and bus stops
 - Improve sidewalk system region-wide
 - Updated MOBY application and scheduling technology
- Communication
 - Improve tracking and timing of MOBY buses (similar to RideOMA or rideshare services)
 - Provide resources for persons without smartphones
 - Utilize traditional and social media platforms for announcements
 - MAPA and Metro should seek constant feedback from riders and providers, including surveys, outreach and public meetings
 - Health and transportation resources in multiple languages, with provisions for persons with hearing or vision impairments.
 - Partner with resettlement agencies on how to communicate with all new populations in the community, regardless of language spoken
 - Communicate Wins when they occur, and things that have worked in the past
- Coordination
 - Begin a discussion on dynamic and buffered scheduling at medical providers

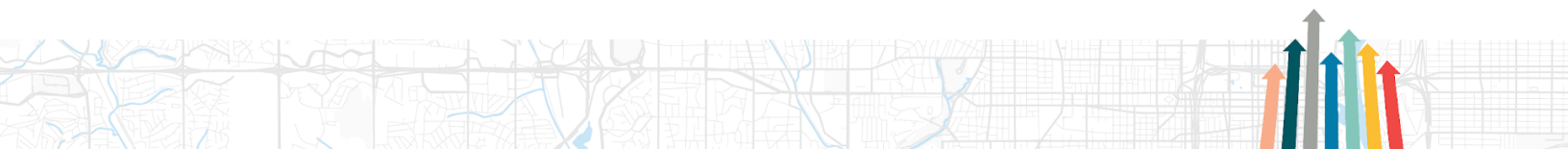


- Involve employers with DEI initiatives, including the Center for Disability Inclusion, Omaha and surrounding Chambers of Commerce, and large employers
- Continue progress on expanding and enhancing the Regional Transit Authority of Omaha to communities in Sarpy County, Pottawattamie County and Western Douglas County
- Education
 - Provide educational materials and events on using Metro, MOBY and other paratransit resources
 - Host training events for marginalized communities on how to use transit
 - Educate drivers on humanization of riders, to feel more like people than passengers
- Funding
 - Explore funding options for increased geographic reach and higher frequencies on existing routes
 - Explore new opportunities for free or reduced fares



Next Steps & Community Leaders

- MAPA Coordinated Transit Committee
 - Utilize the MAPA Coordinated Transit Committee as a platform for continuing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion to develop framework of priorities and partners to solutions, related to:
 - Accessibility
 - Communication
 - Coordination
 - Education
 - Funding
 - Develop a Language Access Plan for transportation and health resources
- Metro Transit
 - Develop a consistent and frequent method of surveying and receiving feedback from marginalized communities (potentially using a third party surveyor)
 - Explore the idea of community resource navigators
 - Explore new ideas for free or reduced fares
 - Lead conversation on improving scheduling (online) and customer service for paratransit service
- 5310 and Community Paratransit Providers
 - Lead discussion on liability and insurance issues related to sharing and transporting clients using multiple transportation services
- Joint Efforts (MAPA CTC, Metro and 5310 Providers)
 - Develop a Language Access Plan for transportation and health resources
 - Develop a consistent and frequent method of surveying and receiving feedback from marginalized communities (potentially using a third party surveyor)
 - Lead discussion on flexible and dynamic scheduling for health providers and shift workers to account for paratransit timing discrepancies
 - Explore the idea of community resource navigators



	Barriers	Solutions	Next Steps & Leaders
Accessibility	Segregation and isolation	<i>All items below</i>	<i>All participants and whole community</i>
	Geographic areas not served by transit	Funding and coordination	MAPA, Metro & CTC Members
	Sidewalks and bus stops not ADA accessible	Title VI Sidewalk Transition Plans	MAPA - Title VI Sidewalk plan compliance
Upgrade bus stops		Metro Transit	
Communication	Language barriers - especially for refugees	Develop Language Access Plan	Include Language Access in Title VI Plans
		Utilize resettlement agencies to build upon their existing work	Utilize the Coordinated Transit Committee to create this connection
	Lack of resources for hearing and visual impairments limited	Provide resources in braille	Health and Transportation Providers
		Include sign language interpreters in coordination	Depending upon event, include them in CTC correspondence
	Lack of ways to assess strengths and weaknesses of service	Consistent surveying of service	Explore third-party surveying of paratransit services (MOBY and communities)
Lack of signage and communication overall	Add signage to bus stops, buses, and frequent destinations	Metro Transit and 5310 Provider vehicles improve signage	
Coordination	Transit times sometimes cause late medical appointment arrivals or cancellations	Dynamic Medical Scheduling to accommodate transit riders	MAPA Coordinated Transit Committee - start discussion
	Insurance liabilities for riders outside of jurisdiction	Reach out to insurance providers on collaboration potential	MAPA Coordinated Transit Committee & 5310 Transit Providers
	Employer involvement	Invite more employers to CTC	MAPA Coordinated Transit Committee
	Expand Regional Transit Authority	Continue expansion into suburban communities	Metro Transit
Education	Some potential riders don't know how to use or navigate transit	Community resource navigators	Utilize CTC membership to evaluate how to explore creating this type of program
		Enhanced mobility guides	MAPA resource guide, coordinate with 211
		Rider training	Metro, MAPA and 5310 Providers
	Educate drivers on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of all marginalized communities, and humanizing riders	Enhance driver training to best serve riders, and provide a comfortable space	Metro Transit, MAPA CTC could help 5310 Providers with drivers
Funding	Fares too expensive for some riders	Explore more free or reduced fare systems	MAPA, Metro and 5310 Providers explore options
	Funding limits the reach of paratransit and transit service	Explore federal and state funding opportunities	MAPA, Metro and communities explore options

National Symposium: Stakeholder Group Attendee List

Community Name: Omaha - Council Bluffs Metropolitan Area

Date: August 25, 2023

Name	Email Address	Organization/Agency	Category
Back, Andrea	N/A	Transportation User/Advocate	TU
Buller, Heather	hbuller@cityoflavista.org	City of LaVista/Ralston	TP
Daffern, Jeremy	jeremy.daffern@nebraska.gov	Nebraska Deaf and Hard of Hearing Comm.	CO
Daly-Dejillas, Cailin	cailin.dalydejillas@cityofomaha.org	City of Omaha Dir of Human Rights + Relations	CM
Davis, Melanie	melanie.davis@unmc.edu	UNMC - Munroe Meyer Institute	HS
DeBoer, Wendy	wdeboer@leg.ne.gov	Nebraska Legislature	EO
Egbers, Kathlene	kegbers@unmc.edu	Transportation User/Advocate	TU*
Folker, Aimee	dacor411@gmail.com	Transportation User/Advocate	TU*
Kate, Albert	albert.kate@onelfs.org	Omaha Refugee Task Force	CO
Kipp, Paullissa	paulissaisms@gmail.com	Transportation User/Advocate	TU*
Lander, Mark	mark.lander@swipco.org	Southwest Iowa Transit Agency	TP
McFall, Rich	rich.mcfall@nebraska.gov	Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	HS
Nazari, Dordana	N/A	Transportation User/Advocate	TU
Owens, John	jowens@ometro.com	Metro Transit	TP
Padilla, Carolina	carolinap@interculturalseniorcenter.org	Intercultural Senior Center	TP
Parker, Amanda	amanda.parker@bellevue.net	City of Bellevue	TP
Phelps, Sarah	sarah@outlinc.org	Out Nebraska + Umbrella Alliance	CM
Quaites-Ferris, Vicki	vqferris@empoweromaha.com	Empowerment Network	CO
Shumate, Walt	wshumate@ometro.com	Metro Transit	TP
Sikigukira, Joseph	N/A	Transportation User/Advocate	TU
Walls, Meaghan	mwalls@centerfordisabilityinclusion.org	Center for Disability Inclusion	CM
White, Jamie	blanco816@icloud.com	Transportation User/Advocate	TU*

Stipend Recipients: **(4) *** Transportation Providers: **(6) TP** Elected Officials: **(1) EO** Community Organizations: **(3) CO**
 Community Members representing diverse populations: **(3) CM** Transportation Users: **(7) TU** Human Service Agencies: **(2) HS**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Transportation Stakeholder List

First Name	Last Name	Agency	Position
Transportation Providers			
John	Owens	Metro	Paratransit Manager
Ivan	Maldonado	Metro	Deputy Executive Officer
Carolina	Padilla	Intercultural Senior Center	Executive Director
Mark	Lander	SWITA	Transit Director
TBD	TBD	Notre Dame Housing	
LaVada	Pilcher	Nebraska Urban Indian Health Coalition	Elder Program Manager
Dani	Wright	Ponca Express	Ponca Express Transportation Manager
Marianna	Foral	City of Omaha Planning Department	Neighborhood Planner
Tony	Panowicz	City of Omaha Public Works Department	ADA Ramp & Resurfacing Field Manager
Tami	Jenson	City of Council Bluffs Public Works	Resource and Program Coordinator
Donna	Monteleagre	City of Papillion	Senior Services Manager
Amanda	Parker	City of Bellevue	Human Services Program Specialist
Cale	Brodersen	City of LaVista/Ralston	Senior Services Manager
John	Jeanetta	Heartland Family Service	CEO
Robert	Clements	State Senator - NE district 2	
Jordan	Bierce	Nebraska/ Western Iowa VA	
Statewide Elected Officials			
Carol	Blood	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 3
R. Brad	von Gillern	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 4
Mike	McDonnell	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 5
Machaela	Cavanaugh	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 6, Transportation Committee
Tony	Vargas	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 7
Megan	Hunt	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 8

John	Cavanaugh	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 9
Wendy	DeBoer	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 10, Transportation Committee
Terrell	McKinney	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 11
Merv	Riepe	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 12
Justin	Wayne	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 13
John	Arch	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 14
Christy	Armendariz	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 18
John	Frederickson	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 20, Transportation Committee
Kathleen	Kauth	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 31
Rick	Holdcroft	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 32
Lou Ann	Linehan	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 39
Rita	Sanders	Nebraska Legislature	State Senator - District 45
Don	Bacon	US Congress - NE	

Community Organizations

Vicki	Quates-Ferris	Empowerment Network	
Kimara	Snipes	One Omaha + South Omaha Neighborhood Alliance	
Albert	Kate	Omaha Refugee Task Force	Transportation Committee Chair
Mary	Angus	People First Nebraska	
Ashley	Wulf	Nebraska Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission – Omaha Advocates	
Jeremy	Daffern	Nebraska Deaf and Hard of Hearing Commission – Omaha Advocates	
Mickie	Saltzman	Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired	
TBD	TBD	AARP	
Albert	Varas	Latino Center of the Midlands	CEO
Terri	Crawford	UNO Service Learning Academy (Redlining),	Community Fellow, Board Member

		Malcolm X Foundation	
Tamika	Mease	North Omaha Community Partnership	Executive Director
Gina	Ponce	South Omaha Community Care Council + Bellevue University	President + Director of Latino Community Outreach
Lynette	Ingram	North Omaha Community Care Council	President
Community Members who represent diverse populations			
Keith	Station	City of Omaha Mayor's Office	Deputy Chief of Staff - Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Meaghan	Walls	Center for Disability Inclusion	Director of Business Relations - Nebraska
Marissa	Hattab	Douglas County	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer
Dell	Nared	Greater Omaha Chamber	Senior Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Sarah	Phelps	OutNebraska + Umbrella Alliance	Director of Operations + Programs
Cailin	Daly Dejillas	City of Omaha Director of Human Rights and Relations	Director + ADA Coordinator
Disability Advocates and Transportation Users			
Logan	Finn	Disability Advocate	
Nancy	Berg	Disability Advocate	
Chuck	Hourroune	Disability Advocate	
Jabari	Wright	Disability Advocate	
Ryan	Osentowski	Program Director for Radio Talking Book Service + Transit User	
Jamie	White	Disability Advocate	
Tina	Meinecke	Disability Advocate	
Stephanie	Lewis	Disability Advocate	
Kathy	Hoell	Disability Advocate	
Jamie	White	Disability Advocate	
Kathlene	Egbers	Disability Advocate	
Aimée	Folker	Disability Advocate	
Paulissa	Kipp	Disability Advocate	

Human Services & Community Agencies who serve diverse populations

Melanie	Davis	UNMC Munroe Meyer Institute	Advocate Mentor
Rich	McFall	Nebraska VR	
Mitch	Strong	Habitat for Humanity	Community Outreach Coordinator
Matt	Wallen	United Way of the Midlands, 2-1-1	SVP of Community Impact and Analytics
TBD	TBD	Outlook Nebraska	
Bekah	Jerde	Radio Talking Book Service	Executive Director
Mary	Bushman	Paralyzed Veterans of America Great Plains Chapter	Executive Director
Shauna	Dahlgren	Easterseals Nebraska	Work Incentive & Community Outreach Specialist
TBD	TBD	League of Human Dignity	
Trish	Bergman	Eastern Nebraska Office on Aging (ENOA)	Executive Director
TBD	TBD	Volunteers Assisting Seniors	
Jamie	Gross	Trivium Life Services	
Josephine	Rodriguez	One World Health Centers	Chief DEI Officer
		Charles Drew Health Centers	
Jessica	Johnson	UNMC Munroe Meyer Institute	Care Coordination Program