

November 30, 2023: Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

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About the Event

Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC) members met virtually on November 30, 2023. The meeting ran from 9:00am to 3:00pm. This was an open/public meeting; observers could view the proceedings via a YouTube livestream.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Discuss the status of WisDOT's Active Transportation Plan
- Receive an update on non-driver related research at the national-level
- Roundtable discussion on proven programs to meet the needs of Wisconsin's non-drivers

Twenty-seven committee members participated in the meeting. See Appendix A for attendance information. There were two breakout discussions, during which time committee members were grouped with a WisDOT facilitator and notetaker.

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- **Welcome Back and Preview of the Day** – WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson & WisDOT Division of Budget & Strategic Initiatives (DBSI) Administrator Lea Collins-Worachek

WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson welcomed WiNDAC members and thanked the WiNDAC co-chairs for planning and organizing the meeting. The Secretary closed by thanking the WiNDAC members for their continued efforts and looked forward to another productive meeting of WiNDAC.

Lea Collins-Worachek, DBSI Administrator and WiNDAC Co-Chair provided an overview of the meeting's agenda for the members.

- **Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Plan** – Matt Schreiber, Division of Transportation Investment Management

Matt Schreiber gave a presentation on the status of Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Active Transportation Plan. His presentation included an overview of the engage activities completed thus far during the planning process and the anticipated schedule for completion.

- **Context Setting for Small Group 1 Work** – WiNDAC Co-Chairs Denise Jess, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Tami Jackson, Public Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Denise Jess and Tami Jackson introduced the upcoming small group activity. WiNDAC members were to brainstorm strategies, mechanisms and tactics that can be used by participants in a planning process to ensure non-drivers needs are included into a plan or process.

- **Small Group Discussion 1**

Small group discussion questions included:

1. There are many government plans that define programmatic or operation work. Think about some plans or processes that you are familiar with that drive programmatic work.
2. How does or doesn't this plan or process address the challenges or needs of non-drivers?
3. What strategies can you use to embed meaningful considerations of non-driver needs into formal plans, programs or processes? How would you use your voice to carry out those strategies?
4. How do you specifically and continually elevate nondriver needs in and across processes?

Following the discussion, each small group highlighted their breakout room conversation to the whole committee. Themes and takeaways from the small group discussions can be found in Appendix B.

- **Non-Driver Research Update** – Ryan Spaight, Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives

Ryan Spaight provided presented recently completed and ongoing research to highlight themes, findings, and/or models that support non-drivers. Ryan presented three research projects:

1. Expanding Access to Our Communities: A Guide to Successful Mobility Management Practices in Small Urban and Rural Areas
2. Connecting Demand Response Transit with Fixed Service Transit
3. Volunteer Driver Programs (VDPs) Serving Rural and Low-Density Communities

- **Roundtable Discussion** – Roundtable discussion on creating transportation systemic change and implementing proven programs to meet the needs of Wisconsin's non-drivers.

- Panelists:

- Joy Loomis, FlexRide Milwaukee
 - Derek Schnabel, Epic Systems
 - Corie Dejno, Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program
 - Facilitator David Hubbard, WisDOT

- Roundtable questions for panelists:

- Please provide a brief description of your program, including what problem did your program seek to solve?
 - Who did you consider when planning for your program? How did you consider the needs of non-drivers?
 - What barriers or limitations remain for non-drivers in your program? If so, how should those issues be resolved?
 - Does your program support systems change or fill in specific gaps? Is your program scalable and adaptable to serve all non-driver populations?
 - What are the limiting factors when you think about scalability?
 - What aspects of your program are you the proudest of when it comes to addressing nondrivers' needs?

- **National Aging and Disability Transportation Center** – Carrie Diamond, National Aging and Disability Transportation Center, and Easterseals, Inc.

Carrie Diamond presented on ensuring a diversity of stakeholders are involved in the planning process, and the benefits of making investments for non-drivers.

- **Context Setting for Small Group 2 Work** – Denise Jess, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired, and Tami Jackson, Public Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Denise Jess and Tami Jackson introduced the second small group activity. WiNDAC members discussed Reimagining transportation and centering it on addressing the needs of non-drivers requires sustained effort and continual focus across all projects and programs. Small groups are to discuss strategies on how to structure projects, budget requests, and make the case to local and state decision makers about why investing in systems that work for nondrivers are the best value for communities and the state.

- **Small Group Discussion 2**

Attendees moved into small group breakout rooms for a second time. Discussion questions included:

1. How will we know when systems change has occurred?
2. What will be happening in the environment to tell us that non-driver experiences have improved?
3. How can funding opportunities and processes be structured to sustain non-driver projects and programs long-term?
4. How do you build a business case across jurisdictional lines and entities to leverage sources of funding for sustainable non-driver systems?
5. How are we making an argument that non-driver needs are applicable throughout the state and require investment and prioritization?

Following the discussion, each small group highlighted their breakout room conversation to the whole committee. Themes and takeaways from the small group discussions can be found in Appendix B.

- **Round Robin Session**

Committee members were called on to share their main takeaways from the meeting.

- **Closing Remarks** – Lea Collins-Worachek, Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives

Lea Collins-Worachek thanked the WiNDAC Committee members, WisDOT staff, and guest panelists and presenters for a productive meeting and highlighted the department's appreciation for the members continued input through the committee.

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Appendix A: Meeting Attendees

Members in attendance

Tami Jackson, Public Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
Denise Jess, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of the Blind & Visually Impaired
Lea Collins-Woracheck, Administrator, Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Kevin Coughlin, Policy Initiatives Advisor, Department of Health Services
Jenna Fogarty, DVR Workforce Development Area 2 Director, Department of Workforce Development
Sandra Villiesse, Transportation Specialist, Federal Highway Administration
Nick Musson, Transportation Specialist, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR)
Chris Hiebert, Chief Transportation Engineer, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)
Holly, Keenan, Lutheran Social Services - Wisconsin
Kirsten Finn, Executive Director, Wisconsin Bike Fed
Susan De Vos, Secretary/Treasurer, Wisconsin Transit Riders Alliance
Adam Lorentz, Transit Manager, La Crosse Municipal Transit
Beth Sweeden, Executive Director, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
Kerri Saban, Transit Manager, Namekagon Transit
Lindsey Blumer, President and CEO, Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership (WRTP/BIGSTEP)
Curtis Lemke, Program and Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs
Eric Anderson, Senior Transportation Planner, West Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission
Iris Jacobson, Education Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Joy Loomis, Program Manager, FlexRide Milwaukee
Tom, Winker, District 6 Director, Wisconsin Towns Associations
Rebecca Smith, Transportation Director and Chair, Janesville Transit and Wisconsin Public Transportation Association
Michael Basford, Director, Wisconsin Department of Administration's Interagency Council on Homelessness
Dave Considine, Wisconsin State Assembly
Susan Gaeddert, Community Programs Director, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin

WisDOT staff in attendance

Craig Thompson, Secretary, Wisconsin DOT
Ian Ritz, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors
Katie Patterson, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors
Evelyn Bromberg, Wisconsin DOT Research and Library Unit
Kaleb Vander Wiele, Wisconsin DOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Brad Basten, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Ethan Severson, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Hannah Brown, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Maryne Taute, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Jordan Montgomery, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
June Coleman, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Performance Improvement, Research and Strategic Initiatives
Rodney Saunders, Jr., Wisconsin DOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Dan Arneson, Wisconsin DOT Office of Public Affairs

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Appendix B: Small Group Outcomes Addendum

Addendum

This addendum summarizes the small group discussions. The content of this addendum is based on the notes taken during the small group discussions and the small group report out sessions.

Small Group Discussion 1

Small groups are to brainstorm strategies, mechanisms and tactics that can be used by participants in a planning process to ensure non-drivers needs are included into a plan.

1. There are many government plans that define programmatic or operation work. Think about some plans or processes that you are familiar with that drive programmatic work.

- a. Long range transportation plans such as Vision 2050.
- b. Local municipalities conduct planning activities with budget considerations and coordination may be done with Regional Planning Commissions.
- c. State Aging Plan, Independent Living plan provide insight in none driving populations. Helps integrate across other state plans.
- d. Some communities have bike/pedestrian transportation plans.
- e. Wisconsin seems to be doing a good job making these non-driver plans and strategies but does not see many of them being implemented. There is a disconnect between planning and implementation.
- f. Care plan attached to each individual – transportation plan to achieve goals. Vocational rehab services to get people with disabilities employment.
- g. American Rescue Plan Act \$30 mil grant program for transportation improvements.
- h. GWAAR represents 70 counties and 11 tribes, every 3 years they have to make an aging plan (strategic plan). GWAAR is very involved in preparing this plan with the counties and tribes; it is an opportunity for us to incorporate methods and opportunities to include non-drivers in these plans.
- i. Regional school districts have curricula review for different sectors of student life, so this may be another way to incorporate what youth are experiencing as non-drivers/potential drivers as a part of programmatic work. Additionally, we should consider the Wisconsin Technical College Systems as a way to incorporate the voices of non-drivers.
- j. Within DWD there is a DEI plan that is completed, which may be an opportunity to include non-drivers. State combined plan submitted to USDA Dept of Labor involves many actors and is an opportunity to enact change. We should also consider enacting change at the local level by increasing knowledge/providing education so that it is top of mind.
- k. Every county must put together a county coordination plan every 5 years, so this is a good opportunity to bring in non-drivers. The goal is to bring in anyone involved in transportation. This is an important way to engage the community.

2. How does or doesn't this plan or process address the challenges or needs of non-drivers?

- a. Priorities for funding do not address needs for non-driver facilities/assistance.
- b. Non-transportation plans: issues are documented, but solutions are not identified. Transportation plan conversations just starting to have discussions.
- c. There is a need to identify who is the intended and actual user of the plans.
- d. May need to expand early planning to consider all users. Early engagement may need to have more durable inclusion.
- e. Include non-users who cannot access systems and may not be seen.
- f. Location of facilities need to be considered, especially in new facility location/growth which defaults to open land away from city centers/networks.
- g. Many of the people we represent are not drivers. With that being true, we need infrastructure that accommodates more populations of Wisconsin that are safe and accessible for all. Many cannot afford a car, cannot drive, or just would like to walk and cannot because of the risks and inaccessibility. Thinking long-term about rail transit, though not optimal for all populations, it should be looked at as a very accessible mode for people with and without disabilities.
- h. Federal reporting does not align with specific populations who are users of transit.
- i. Many times, with youth, supportive services are not well defined, such as non-drivers or potential drivers. Creating these definitions would benefit plans and processes.
- j. What are the questions the planners are asking? Is there a standardized set of Qs surrounding the needs of specific groups of interest? As we evaluate processes, are we asking ourselves the right questions to evaluate the needs of these groups? Are we asking the right people, do we have representation from different groups when making these plans or creating questions? Do you have a non-driver on your committee that can speak to those specific issues? If not, how do you create a system to establish that representation since the non-driver is?
- k. Are you asking the right people? Anytime you are doing a plan, you are always trying to connect with the right population? We try to guide the groups we work with to include these considerations, but we know that it is also difficult for people to engage with typical engagement methods such as surveys or public meetings. We know that the best way to engage target populations, you need to go to them rather than expecting them come to us.
- l. Sometimes it is difficult to have conversations with groups when we do not have relationships developed. How do we establish rapport with diverse communities to ensure that we are getting honest feedback and information from these groups?

3. What strategies can you use to embed meaningful considerations of non-driver needs into formal plans, programs or processes? How would you use your voice to carry out those strategies?

- a. Get all voices involved in beginning of planning process. Systems that serve non-drivers best serve all of us.
- b. Drivers/non-drivers have the same human needs, access to amenities/services.
- c. Send the message – We are all non-drivers. We start out as non-drivers and end as non-drivers.
- d. There are always meetings for new construction projects in cities, but citizens often do not show up and therefore do not get their voices heard.
- e. Make a commitment to attempt to bring relevant populations of Wisconsinites to those meetings so they can their voices heard. Facilitating more of those people to show up could be a concrete goal and achievement.

- i. We would have to make it easy for them. For example, organized pick-ups of people who do not drive, who bike, who bus, in order to get them at the meetings.
- f. Better publicity and outreach of these meetings to make it very public, enable sign-ups, and more.
- g. We need to advocate at the federal level. Grants change over time. There is a need for continued focus on projects over multiple years. Sustainable funding is a struggle.
- h. State policy or application question: How do you see your transit system working for non-drivers?
- i. Sometimes people are wary of plans because of the work to do them but then ideas sit on the shelf. Building into the plan for checking back in with non-driver community and weighing how the plan can develop based on success or non-success of the plan thus far.

4. How do you specifically and continually elevate nondriver needs in and across processes?

- a. Give ample time for work/data sets/analysis and review.
- b. If public opinion is requested too late in the process, responders may feel it is set and cannot be changed.
- c. Begin with assumption that non-drivers will use all spaces. Conduct outreach to them first.
- d. State should have embedded policy/process to require this early engagement.
- e. Businesses look for inexpensive land that is not accessible. Later they find out that workforce cannot access employment. Need expectation that these concerns are included early in process.
- f. Have to go out and find the people that rely on biking and pedestrian infrastructure. We have gone out to these places that have high walking and biking populations and ask those improvement questions there, we cannot solely rely on people showing up to those meetings.
- g. Those pop-up events that focus on different populations in Wisconsin are helpful.
- h. DOT is the example for thinking about non-drivers. Decisions made at the state level set the tone and direction for future initiatives and transportation improvements. Needs to happen on the local government level.
- i. Continuing conversations within our personal organizations. We need to make sure to build it in internally so that we are educating ourselves if needed throughout the process.
- j. In addition, need to look at sustainability. Not necessarily always effective in ensuring that programs continue and have funding to do so.

Small Group Discussion 2

Reimagining transportation and centering it on addressing the needs of non-drivers requires sustained effort and continual focus across all projects and programs. Small groups are to discuss strategies on how to structure projects, budget requests, and make the case to local and state decision makers about why investing in systems that work for non-drivers are the best value for communities and the state.

1. How will we know when systems change has occurred?

- a. When non-drivers can get where they need to go on their own schedule, just like everyone else.
- b. There is increased economic development in our communities and our state.
- c. When you start seeing gaps get closed in the network of facilities for non-drivers, that is where you start seeing systems change start to occur. When you start seeing budgets specifically allocated to non-driver items as well.

- d. For non-drivers not to have stress and make back up plans to get to places they need to go without using private cars.
- e. Non-driver issues and opinions are not on the bottom of priorities for projects and construction. When funding is directed to non-driver needs
- f. If non-drivers needs or participation is engaged early in process.
- g. Improved quality of life raises perceptibly, such as access to amenities, needs are being met, and improved health outcomes.
- h. Additional public transit and railroads in discussions and projects.
- i. For funding for non-driver issues and solutions to be robust and primary instead of niche and complicated to obtain.
- j. Transportation is no longer a reason not to participate. Not a barrier – cost, territory, etc.
- k. Noticeable change in traffic volume as people utilize other options.
- l. Higher ridership on transit

2. What will be happening in the environment to tell us that non-driver experiences have improved?

- a. We may see an increase in non-drivers, because it makes it easier for people to choose that route. This will also help to bolster the system that has been created overall. People who rely on this system will benefit from those choosing to use non-driver systems.
- b. Accommodations that everyone can access.
- c. When reflected in satisfaction surveys from state departments, associations.
- d. When people can live where they want to live and access their needs as they determine.
- e. Injuries/fatalities decrease due to protections and accommodation improvements.
- f. When older adults less hesitant to give up driving.
- g. Non-drivers have a diversity of options, including their safety, and reliability.
- h. More activity friendly activities in communities, parks, recreation, health access.
- i. Will our cities look different with more non-drivers? Will our focus on drivers shift again? We have designed a lot of our planning to taking people to a central location. This is different than earlier part of last century with greater local places (grocery, hospital). There is an inefficiency when you are moving a lot of people to these central locations. This is one dynamic that could shift.
- j. Non-drivers may have lower unemployment rates because there will be better access to needs. Additionally, greater social engagement from non-drivers (attending doctor appts, family gatherings, etc.).

3. How can funding opportunities and processes be structured to sustain non-driver projects and programs long-term?

- a. Federal Highway Administration insists on non-driver components for funding. Helps get facilities in place. Need these requirements in state requirements for funding.
- b. Include requirements in the Facilities Design Manual.
- c. Different funding has different requirements. How to maximize benefits, partner with groups, maximize funding options together.
- d. Encourage greater coordination in planning, agency planning process to include non-drivers, i.e. zoning, when a business moves outside city limits, transportation be taken into account. Long range planning should include equal ranking for non-driver features/accommodations.

- e. There needs to be an increase in operational funding. There are a lot of special and capital funding. We need to be able to work across municipalities and funding so that we can work together. The limits of funding (geography) make providing these services so difficult.
- f. Think of all the different agencies that work on transportation – veterans services, health, workforce development. All have different funding and are trying to help people. Transit users are confused by these complex systems. Sharing funding and information is essential in maintaining this long term.
- g. Like to see a broad array of stakeholders that go into the planning and design of the projects to make sure more non-driving facilities are being implemented and accommodated.
- h. It is not the norm right now to have those with disabilities or those who do not drive on project planning committees. They should be included to make sure their opinions are actually heard and accounted for.

4. How do you build a business case across jurisdictional lines and entities to leverage sources of funding for sustainable non-driver systems?

- a. Doing more data collection to present to employers what is this untapped pool of potential employees that just do not have easy access to get to their location and that would be one piece.
- b. Limited workforce should be encouraging businesses to invest/partner to assist in options for non-drivers.
- c. Access to employment, access to walking facilities helps with health, health of communities.
- d. Everyone should collaborate outside their silos to improve quality of life. Loosen requirement on funding sources to cross geography, entities involved in projects.
- e. Funding should try to integrate goals from different agency perspectives to assist building of facilities/non-driver needs.
- f. Having those that use non-driver infrastructure, and their employers would be powerful for showing necessary funding for those facilities and more.
- g. The business case is there on many levels, esp. since many businesses have a labor shortage. They recognize that they do not have enough people to fill their positions in their location. It is accessing/tapping into that and letting them know that transportation can be a piece of the solution for them. There is a cost that can be calculated that is the value of getting people to work on time consistently. Additionally, this helps the neighborhoods where there is low employment in their economic power.

5. How are we making an argument that non-driver needs are applicable throughout the state and require investment and prioritization?

- a. This advisory committee existing is a testament to those needs statewide.
- b. It is good to use visuals and data to make the numeric case for better choice and how to organize your transportation networks and services. Continuing message that non-drivers are not just a fringe group and that Wisconsin decisionmakers need to make choices that benefit all of us, not just drivers.
- c. ArcGIS tool help visibility of non-drivers for planning process, and with employers. Supporting providing of data helps better decision making.

- d. Rural-urban divide is actually rural-urban divide from suburbs. Transportation challenges are different for non-drivers in rural-urban areas.
- e. Mobility managers can be advocates for accessibility and the needs of non-drivers.
- f. With historic infrastructure funding, we will see a generational impact that we will need to accomplish these goals. This is our shot to welcome everyone into the transportation community. The more people we can get to think innovatively about the future of transportation, the better prepared we are for Wisconsin's future.