

May 23, 2023: Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

Contact: *Ethan Severson, WisDOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives*

About the Event

Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC) members met virtually on May 23, 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 the 2023-2025 Wisconsin State Budget
- Receive an update on the WisDOT Transit Performance Metric Pilot
- Discuss the creation of the WisDOT Non-Driver Resource Toolkit

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-Woracheck

WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson welcomed WiNDAC members and thanked the WiNDAC co-chairs for planning and organizing the meeting. During today's meeting committee meeting, members would be looking at fictional case scenarios to practice an inclusive planning model centered around non-drivers. The Secretary closed by thanking the WiNDAC members for their continued efforts and looked forward to another productive meeting of WiNDAC.

Lea Collins-Woracheck introduced herself to the committee as the new DBSI Administrator and a WiNDAC Co-Chair. She continued by previewing the events of the day.

- **Wisconsin 2023-2025 State Budget Update** – Jim Donlin, DBSI Bureau of Budget, Director

Jim Donlin gave a presentation on the status of Wisconsin 2023-2025 State Biennial Budget. His presentation included an overview of the biennial budget process and highlights from the 2023-2025 Governor's 2023-2025 Biennial Budget request as it pertains to transportation.

- **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 use a fictional case scenario to practice an inclusive planning model centered around non-drivers. The small group's task was to analyze which site was most optimal to create new infrastructure from a non-driver perspective. Factors include: who and why people would be going to or through the area, existing non-driver infrastructure (pedestrian, transit etc.), current use pattern, etc.

- **Small Group Discussion 1**

Small group discussion questions included:

1. What is near the current proposed site?
2. Why would people be going to or through the area?
3. What is the site's proximity to other assets?
4. What is the current hard pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure (if any)?
5. If you were a pedestrian or bicyclist, how safe would you feel in this area?
6. Are there non-drivers who are not using this area and why not?
7. What else needs to be considered to optimize this site from a non-driver centric perspective?

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.

- **WisDOT Transit Performance Metric Pilot Update** – Ian Ritz, WisDOT DTIM Transit, Section Chief

Ian Ritz provided an update on the status of the performance metric pilot, that tracks and supplements three new performance measures. The three measures included in the pilot relate to denied rides, non-service occurrences, and requests for accommodation. Ian's presentation highlighted the results of the pilot between January and December 2022.

- **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 continued to use fictional case scenarios to practice an inclusive planning model centered around non-drivers. The groups analyzed one of two common transportation scenarios: changing existing hard infrastructure or changing how existing mobile infrastructure operates. Small groups worked to decide the most optimal option from a non-driver perspective.

- **Small Group Discussion 2**

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

- Scenario 2 – Changing existing hard infrastructure
 1. What is near the current proposed site?
 2. Why would people be going to or through the area?
 3. What is the site's proximity to other assets?
 4. What is the current hard pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure (if any)?
 5. If you were a pedestrian or bicyclist, how safe would you feel in this area?
 6. Are there non-drivers who are not using this area and why not?
 7. What else needs to be considered to optimize this site from a non-driver centric perspective?

- Scenario 3 – Changing existing mobile infrastructure
 1. Who does the regional transit system serve now and how are they served?
 2. What does it mean to expand capacity for rural transit?
 3. Is it of more value to increase frequency, routes, coverage of evenings and weekends, distance served, and/or connections between surrounding communities?
 4. Are there other destination points that benefit in addition to the employer if capacity is increased?
 5. Are their downstream impacts of adding extra stops or extra time and additional coverage?
 6. What are the positive and negative impacts of changing how the rural transit system delivers services?

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 Resource Toolkit** – Ethan Severson, Bureau of Performance Improvement, Research and Strategic Initiatives, Strategic Initiatives Program Officer, WisDOT

Ethan Severson presented to the WiNDAC members the development of the WisDOT Non-Driver Resource Toolkit which includes three resources to provide users with additional information and tools that can be used to contribute to planning efforts that impact Wisconsin's non-driving population.

1. Wisconsin Geography of the Non-Driver Flyer
2. An abbreviated user guide for the Non-Driver ArcGIS Online Application, including a template for users to upload GPS-based locations into the Application
3. The case scenarios discussed at the meeting

- **Round Robin Session**

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

- **Closing Remarks** – WisDOT Deputy Secretary Paul Hammer

WisDOT Deputy Secretary Paul Hammer provided closing remarks, thanking WiNDAC members for participating in the meeting. He closed the meeting by discussing the importance of the committee's insights and WiNDAC's work.

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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
Sandra Villiesse, Transportation Specialist, Federal Highway Administration
Jennifer Jako, Director, Aging and Disability Resource Center of Barron, Rusk, and Washburn County
Barbara Beckert, Director of External Advocacy SE WI, Disability Rights Wisconsin
Nick Musson, Transportation Specialist, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources (GWAAR)
Chris Hiebert, Chief Transportation Engineer, Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission (SEWRPC)
Bob Schneider, Associate Professor, Department of Urban Planning, UW-Milwaukee
Holly Keenan, President, Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers
Kirsten Finn, Executive Director, Wisconsin Bike Fed
Susan De Vos, Secretary/Treasurer, Wisconsin Transit Riders Alliance
Adam Lorentz, Transit Manager, La Crosse Municipal Transit
Alena DeGrado, Transportation Coordinator, Milwaukee County Division on Aging and Disability Services
Sallie Anna Pisera, Driver & Board Director, Union Cab
Bobbi Hegna, Transportation Program Director, Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin
Patrick Daoust, Transit Manager, Bay Area Rural Transit
Beth Ann Richlen, Executive Director, Judicare Legal Aid
Beth Sweeden, Executive Director, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
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
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
Rishelle Eithun, Injury Prevention Program Manager, Safe Kids Wisconsin
Susan Gaeddert, Community Programs Director, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin

WisDOT staff in attendance

Craig Thompson, Secretary, Wisconsin DOT
Paul Hammer, Deputy Secretary, Wisconsin DOT
Andrew Levy, Wisconsin DOT Division of Transportation System Development
Chuck Wade, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development
Matt Sorenson, Wisconsin DOT Planning Section
Sara Husen, Wisconsin DOT Planning Section
Ian Ritz, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors
Evelyn Bromberg, Wisconsin DOT Research and Library Unit
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
June Coleman, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Performance Improvement, Research and Strategic Initiatives
Rodney Saunders, Jr., Wisconsin DOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Mike Denruiter, 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

WiNDAC members used a fictional case scenario to practice an inclusive planning model centered around non-drivers. The small group's task was to analyze which site is most optimal to create new infrastructure from a non-driver perspective. Factors include: who and why people would be going to or through the area, existing non-driver infrastructure (pedestrian, transit etc.), current use pattern, etc. Group responses are summarized below by question. Some responses may have been mentioned multiple times.

1. What is near the current proposed site?

Site A:

- Presence of highways and the location is on the outskirts of city center
- Residential area is further away
- Sports stadium would create lots of traffic during events/games
- Assuming pedestrians would have to walk along Hwy Q and cross the interstate to access the hospital

Site B:

- Traffic lights may equate to more regulated crossing sites
- More bus stops than Site A and there are better bus service hours
- Freight Rail intersects the area, which could be dangerous
- Apartments, office building and lakes nearby
- Could be too crowded, not accessing a growing city as it grows outward

Site C

- Residential neighborhood somewhat accessible to the new site
- Bus service is throughout the day
- Chemical factory is nearby
- More space to expand hospital campus in future
- Highway is a direct route for ambulances
- From a workforce standpoint, since there are other major businesses in the area (industrial park) there is opportunity for shared costs on shuttle vans, ridesharing in the area
- Elementary school would need to consider traffic calming. Frequency of transit and transit stops that are right adjacent to site C will make using transit to the site significantly easier (especially for those using mobility devices)
- Outlet mall complex may have food, walking, etc., for workforce and patient families to be nearby but get out of the hospital in regard to mental health and wellbeing

2. Why would people be going to or through the area?

Site A:

- Sports stadium/events
- Park for recreation
- To get through one part of the city to the next – commuters and travel
- Potential shopping in commercial area

Site B:

- Work, home, visitors/tourists
- Lake/park - recreation sites such as boating, sailing and being at the beach

Site C:

- Work and residential
- Outlet mall, car dealership and school and numerous highway intersections for commuting
- Some sidewalks and bus stops
- One disadvantage is that there isn't a lot of practical places to stop (grocery store), could increase time on transit for workforce

3. What is the site's proximity to other assets?

Site A:

- Commercial development area allows for flexibility on how will build out and space is available
- Near residential area – people who live near could work in that area as it develops
- Sports Stadium nearby – good for athletes and sports spectators
- Could expand public transit with commercial development and hospital
- Nearby restaurants and shops – asset to folks visiting patients in the hospital

Site B:

- Hotel space for people visiting patients
- Bus and pedestrian friendly – walkable, lots of traffic lights, easy to get around
- Harder for cars – but better for non-drivers
- Freight rail could become a barrier between dense apartments and proposed hospital site

Site C:

- Shopping at the outlet mall and car dealership
- Accessibility by car, bus, and pedestrian
- Consideration in regard to housing – is the housing there affordable to the people working there? This could be a consideration, especially if it is unaffordable for the majority of the workforce at the hospital

4. What is the current hard pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure (if any)?

Site A:

- The site seems difficult for pedestrians with the highway sectioning off the area

Site B:

- The site includes bicycle lanes, wide sidewalks and a railroad crossing

Site C:

- No current buffer or protected bike lanes. Someone biking to work may feel uncomfortable on frontage road
- 6-ft sidewalk along the main road to connect transit stops

5. If you were a pedestrian or bicyclist, how safe would you feel in this area?

Site A:

- The site does not allow for much bus, bike and pedestrian access
- Potentially dangerous to bike on a county highway

Site B:

- The hospital may generate more traffic, including frequent use of emergency vehicles
- Of the three sites – best access for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Crossing railroad is potentially hazardous when considering the frequency of the train traffic

Site C:

- Okay in residential area and along bus route, but need to find solution on crossing the parking lots
- Potential for redevelopment and adding ped/bike friendly infrastructure and housing
- One thing to consider is how to designate space for bikes on the sidewalk away from other pedestrians.

6. Are there non-drivers who are not using this area and why not?

Site A:

- The site is located five miles from the city center, which could be limiting factor for non-driver access especially due to the highways

Site B:

- The site is relatively accessible, but could be concerns to the area becoming too densely populated or crowded at times

Site C:

- There is no bike path available and only one sidewalk that follows bus routes
- Regarding the outlet mall, it would be a single task destination rather than a multi-task destination

7. What else needs to be considered to optimize this site from a non-driver centric perspective?

Site A:

- There is a need for more infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrians and buses
- The non-driver related infrastructure could connect better to each other
- Potentially include new right-of-way to accommodate pedestrian access
- Extending bus routes to the hospital itself

Site B:

- For people using mobility devices, a long detour to go around the freight rail line may exist

- Would like to see bike and pedestrian facilities improved with site development. Pedestrian bridge, enhanced bicycle facility
- Transit service is an important consideration. Site C has additional transit service time. Important for non-drivers
- Would like to see additional information about transit service level (travel time). Site B has frequency of 2 hours (headway). Concern about long wait times and ability to coordinate appointments with transportation

Site C:

- Needs additional lighting for pedestrians and bicyclists
- There is a need for more infrastructure for bicycles, pedestrians and buses
- A need to build highway crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Create opportunities for non-drivers such as grocery stores to make this stop multi-use

Small Group Discussion 2

WINDAC members fictional case scenarios to practice an inclusive planning model centered around non-drivers. The groups analyzed one of two common transportation scenarios: changing existing hard infrastructure or changing how existing mobile infrastructure operates. Small groups worked to decide the most optimal option from a non-driver perspective. Group responses are summarized below by question. Some responses may have been mentioned multiple times.

Scenario 2 – Changing existing hard infrastructure

1. What is near the current proposed site?
 - Downtown businesses, residential (apartments), neighborhood school, industrial manufacturing
2. Why would people be going to or through the area?
 - Commuting to work via transit or automobile
 - Recreational Walking
 - Dining, Shops, Offices, Entertainment Destinations
3. What is the site's proximity to other assets?
 - Apartments, schools, residential areas, mixed use development
 - Sidewalks (12-foot wide)
 - Major Road (35 mph)
 - Functions as a downtown main street
4. What is the current hard pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure (if any)?
 - Sidewalks and crosswalks
 - No bike lane or accommodation, consider separated bike lane
5. If you were a pedestrian or bicyclist, how safe would you feel in this area?
 - There is limited access for pedestrian and bicycles may rely on the sidewalks for safety
 - Recommend improvements like: reduce speed limit, road diet, add signalized intersections (every 5 blocks can be a long distance), improve intersection safety improvements, median for pedestrian refuge, audible pedestrian signals, pedestrian beacon / rapid flashing beacon

- Concern that people will be tempted to cross at unsignalized intersections. Encourage people to cross at desirable locations
 - There is limited site distance for pedestrians between parked cars
6. Are there non-drivers who are not using this area and why not?
- Bicyclists, individuals with mobility impairments or those with children for the following reasons:
 - Vehicles traveling at a higher speed (35 mph)
 - No pedestrian refuge or dedicated bicycle facilities
7. What else needs to be considered to optimize this site from a non-driver centric perspective?
- Corridor Study (conflict points, crash data, access points, crash reduction factors, bulb outs, community needs, pedestrian study)
 - Alternative Transportation Options (e-scooters, e-bikes)
 - Transit Study (passenger counts)
 - Infrastructure changes such as (timed lights, signage, dedicated bicycle lanes, road diet, continental crosswalks, roundabout installation, etc.)
 - Taxi perspective – additional traffic signals is a more expensive ride

Scenario 3 – Changing existing mobile infrastructure

1. Who does the regional transit system serve now and how are they served?
- Adults, youth, public transit
 - Daytime travel (not 2nd or 3rd shift workers)
 - Workers are most likely using service, could add more workers and users with expansion of service
 - Current residents who live along the transit lines, those with medical appointments, and especially those commuting
2. What does it mean to expand capacity for rural transit?
- Coordinating businesses to have same start/end times to make it easier for employees to use transit
 - Implement a one-call center to help residents navigate options/systems/mobility managers
 - Implement a Shared Ride Taxi service that is county-wide (vs city only) to access more areas
 - Implement Tripper Service during busy times (morning shifts, evening shifts)
 - Increase passengers (vehicle size and ridership)
 - Shared services across communities that can be accessible via transit
 - Companies could add a 2nd shift of work if buses/transit ran longer – more employment opportunities
 - Could change/expand to Deviated Fixed Route services vs. Traditional Fixed Route
3. Is it of more value to increase frequency, routes, coverage of evenings and weekends, distance served, and/or connections between surrounding communities?
- Getting commitment to increased frequency, coverage, distance is important to ensure stability and success
 - Difficult to prioritize expansion of current route vs additional routes
 - Valuable to increase options in terms of affordability
 - Connection to specific centers of interest in rural communities would be beneficial
 - Increasing scheduling and coverage for non-urban area residents

4. Are there other destination points that benefit in addition to the employer if capacity is increased?
 - Destinations such as hospitals, educational facilities (K-12 schools, tech schools, etc.), municipal buildings, daycares, fitness centers or stadiums, work-force housing locations, senior housing/centers, grocery stores, restaurants, etc.
 - Improving transit access may attract additional employers
5. Are there downstream impacts of adding extra stops or extra time and additional coverage?
 - Economic benefits for economy through restaurants, stores, bars, etc.
 - Potential for increase workforce if additional service and coverage are provided
 - There is the potential for additional transit operational costs such as maintenance, local match, etc.
6. What are the positive and negative impacts of changing how the rural transit system delivers services?
 - Positives:
 - Fixed route systems service multiple communities
 - Public transit is typically more affordable compared to paying for gas in rural communities
 - Opening up opportunities that previously were inaccessible
 - Car deficient households are given more options
 - Negatives:
 - Must be balanced with increase of time, if frequency is to be increased
 - Drastic changes toward existing routes may temporarily lower ridership
 - Expansion of service could come with more oversight and costs