

May 29, 2024: Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee

Meeting Summary

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About the Event

Wisconsin Non-Driver Advisory Committee (WiNDAC) members met virtually on May 29, 2024. The meeting ran from 9:00am to 2:15pm. This was an open/public meeting; observers could view the proceedings via a YouTube livestream.

The purpose of the meeting was to:

- Caregiver and Aging-related Non-Driver Issues Facing Wisconsin
- Non-Driver Ripple Effects Beyond Transportation
- Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making

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

May 29, 2024

- **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 thanked the members for their continued input and perspectives on WiNDAC.

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

- **Caregiver and Aging-related Non-Driver Issues Facing Wisconsin**
 - Denise Jess, Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired
 - Nick Musson, Greater Wisconsin Agency on Aging Resources
 - Tami Jackson, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

The panelists presented on the on caregiver and aging-related non-driver issues currently facing Wisconsin and in the future.

- **Non-Driver Ripple Effects Beyond Transportation**
 - Beth Ann Richlen, Judicare Legal Aid
 - Michael Basford, Wisconsin DOA Inter-agency Council on Homelessness

Beth Ann and Michael presented on the ripple effects to quality of life, mobility, work, etc. from their organizations' perspectives.

- **Small Group Discussion**

Small group discussion questions included:

1. What systems unconsciously assume people will be able to get there on time? Where is there unconscious reliance on non-driver ride providers?

2. Who are the non-driver adjacent populations that are impacted when a system does not work?
3. What are the impacts for the non-driver adjacent populations when they are filling in the gaps for non-drivers?
4. What is the impact when non-driver adjacent populations have limited capacity or become non-drivers themselves?
5. What is the impact when private sector or government processes (e.g., health care, legal services, etc.) are not designed from a non-driver centric perspective?
6. What happens when a community (e.g., local decisionmakers, public/private entities, etc.) does not address non-drivers' transportation needs?
7. If you assume populations are non-drivers, how does that change how you think about locating services, and what is required for individuals to access those services?
8. How do we send the right message, at the right time, to the right decision-makers, for decision-makers to understand the impact to non-drivers, non-driver adjacent populations, and local communities if a systemic solution is not developed?

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.

- **Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making**
 - Madalena Maestri, Federal Highway Administration
 - Sandi Villiesse, Federal Highway Administration

The Federal Highway Administration's presentation by the Federal Highway Administration on their guidance document for promising practices around meaningful public involvement and participation.

- **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
Lisa Hassenstab, Public Policy Manager, Disability Rights Wisconsin
Patrick Daoust, Transit Manager, Bay Area Rural Transit
Libbe Slavin, Injury Prevention Program Manager, Safe Kids Wisconsin
Jennifer Jako, Director, ADRC of Barron and Rusk Counties
Beth Ann Richlen, Executive Director, Judicare Legal Aid
Sallie Anna Pisera, Board Member, Union Cab
Kirsten Finn, Executive Director, Wisconsin Bike Fed
Dave Steele, Executive Director, MobilISE
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
Curtis Lemke, Program and Policy Analyst, Wisconsin Department of Veteran Affairs
Bobbi Craig-Hegna, Transportation Program Director and President, Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin and Wisconsin Association of Mobility Managers
Iris Jacobson, Education Consultant, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction
Jesus Ochoa, Transit Manager, Milwaukee County Transit System
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
LaTonya Johnson, Senator, Wisconsin State Senate
Susan Gaeddert, Community Programs Director, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin

WisDOT staff in attendance

Craig Thompson, Secretary, Wisconsin DOT
Andrew Levy, Wisconsin DOT Southeast Region
Chuck Wade, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Economic and Planning Development
Katie Patterson, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors
David Dahms, Wisconsin Bureau of Transportation Safety
Brad Basten, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Ethan Severson, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Johanna Schmidt, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Joy Loomis, Wisconsin DOT Research and Library Unit
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

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

1. What systems unconsciously assume people will be able to get there on time? Where is there unconscious reliance on non-driver ride providers?

- a. Problem for education as well. Bus transportation issues and kids would stand on the corner waiting to get picked up, this leads to bad grades in the first and second hours of school and classes.
- b. The criminal justice – parole officers said that bus is unreliable or clients getting afraid or upset that well miss their scheduled time because of transportation reliability issues.
- c. Non-driver would have to show up much earlier for appointments for official business or errands and must be frustrating and should be taken in consideration when thinking about the sacrifices non-drivers have to make.
- d. Folks also have to leave work early to catch a bus to get them home at a reasonable hour. Keep in mind meeting times at the end of the day to consider this.
- e. Fixed route system (bus system) stops that are scheduled on a time interval.
- f. Workplaces, employment (late or miss ride to work entirely)
- g. Court system, professional appointments, medical, etc.
- h. Voting and Elections (access polling places and absentee ballot returns) and election workers
- i. Childcare
- j. Medical and NEMT rides (reliance that someone will be available to provide a ride)
- k. Bad weather can really affect non-drivers and non-driver adjacent people because it effects travel routes and transportation severely.

2. Who are the non-driver adjacent populations that are impacted when a system does not work?

- a. Family members, women and caregivers chauffer kids and elderly parents, disproportionate.
- b. Transportation services used multiple times a week for doctor appointments, shopping, interviews, etc.
- c. Case managers providing supportive services – not provided from agencies.
- d. The “sandwich generation” kids and senior parents – giving rides to both younger and older populations.
- e. Family members at risk of losing jobs or work – family members have to stay home with a child because lack of rides to school or care. Or they may become late to work.
- f. Healthcare costs are rising – no show cost issue – because lack of transportation.
- g. Employers – loss of production time – lack of employee or loss of productivity due to distracted employees due to issues.
- h. Reliance on 1-2 family members, age and gender imbalance. For some, especially middle-aged moms, this can temporally halt or stop a career.

- 3. What are the impacts for the non-driver adjacent populations when they are filling in the gaps for non-drivers?**
- a. Disabled people that have had to cut back or end employment due to lack of transportation.
 - b. Another cost of unpaid labor that impacts women and other caregivers.
 - c. Parents get affected all time with the children: sickness, bus problems. Parents must balance work with their kids' potential issues.
 - d. Aging parents who become non-drivers can be a problem for working employees as well who need to balance work and family.
 - e. People leave the workforce to help caregiving. Most of that is transportation related.
 - f. Financial burden of providing transportation.
 - g. Mental Health – the increase stress can be a strain for some.
 - h. It creates emotional conflict of prioritizing children and work responsibilities or other errands.
- 4. What is the impact when non-driver adjacent populations have limited capacity or become non-drivers themselves?**
- a. Cost of living increases may cause a retired person is forced to go back to work.
 - b. Physical health is negatively impacted.
 - c. They are now needing to access systems and programs when before the non-driver's needs were met by the driver.
 - d. Food scarcities issues may arise due to difficulty of reaching the grocery store or food pantry, or the lack of income if the non-driver adjacent individual(s) is not working.
 - e. The penalties for missing appointments (healthcare, parole, court, shelters) compound difficulties.
 - f. Elderly and health issues affecting adjacent population may delay their retirement.
 - g. Social isolation. Lack of access to healthy food, personal interactions. Loneliness.
 - h. Students do not have access to extra-curricular activities, especially special needs, limits quality of life.
 - i. Non-driver adjacent populations can have piling affects from taking on that responsibility for transporting that non-driver, but the non-driver themselves also takes on many piling effects as well. Society does not often talk about these cycles, and one would think more attention and funding would get given to it. It can affect everyone at any point in our lives.
- 5. What is the impact when private sector or government processes (e.g., health care, legal services, etc.) are not designed from a non-driver centric perspective?**
- a. Enormous gaps in health care and employment. Social determinant of health. Jobs and health care outside the reach of public transport.
 - b. Access to voting/registration/polling locations.
 - c. People are unable to participate face to face in public processes (like city council meetings, advocacy, meeting with decision makers).
 - d. Non-drivers are punished for no-shows, the system continues but the non-driver is fined, or cannot receive the service, is delayed, or denied their rights.
 - e. Creates the perception that people do not care or do not exist because they cannot participate in meetings and decision making.
 - f. Infrastructure issues – access to businesses, housing, and other places are car centric. Can we plan further ahead to plan with accessibility and non-drivers in mind.

- g. Accessible voting is important for those with disabilities. Concerns about ID renewal. Additionally, there are concerns about access to routine health care for non-drivers.
 - h. Health and economic disparities are sometimes caused by transportation unreliability and get lead to negative outcomes to those people and their families.
 - i. Individuals with non-driver status who are also in poverty, or a young child will stack up and cause even more problems for those people. When opportunities are raised and if are brought into communities to help these twice or thrice affected people, it can really help them and their situation going forward.
- 6. What happens when a community (e.g., local decisionmakers, public/private entities, etc.) does not address non-drivers' transportation needs?**
- a. Transit is considered after the fact vs. integrating public transit at the front end.
 - b. Decision makers do not understand the needs of non-drivers.
 - c. If people are unable to get to their appointments, this may end up costing the business money because the individual is not able to access and receive the service.
- 7. If you assume populations are non-drivers, how does that change how you think about locating services, and what is required for individuals to access those services?**
- a. Healthcare providers recognize that they have to bring their services to people and provide telehealth. But telehealth only works for some people, the older population sometimes does not have that opportunity.
 - b. If children get sick during working hours, some people do not have opportunity to take off time from work to get their children the help they may need. This can lead to more expensive or limited time services, adding to the negative effectiveness non-driver and non-driver adjacent people experience.
 - c. Co-location of services – “one stop shop.”
 - d. Ability to access services virtually or a common access point (maybe like a library or somewhere that can get to without a vehicle).
 - e. Develop group appointments – block appointments so there is a time range for folks to attend. Allowances for missed appointments – not creating unjust punishments for no-shows.
 - f. Consider taking the service to those who need, at a location convenient for them.
 - g. Non-driver perspective creates better usable systems and understanding. Barriers reduced; scheduling adapted.
 - h. Getting community involvement and increasing confidence or understanding of parents and kids to walk or bus to school. Workshops in communities to increase this knowledge and confidence for modes that might help their kid or themselves get to where they need to be.
- 8. How do we send the right message, at the right time, to the right decision-makers, for decision-makers to understand the impact to non-drivers, non-driver adjacent populations, and local communities if a systemic solution is not developed?**
- a. Need a compelling “why” story the need for the systemic solution. Share the story widely.
 - b. Business owners sharing their opinions on how they need transportation to get their workers to their locations to work and be staffed and be the business partner we want all our local companies to be. Get more business good experiences and that will have more impact.

- c. Getting businesses to understand what non-drivers go through can also make an impact by them being more empathetic to their non-driver workers.
- d. Having programs and data tools to show where non-drivers are in the state to the public can really enhance information and progress for fixing related solutions. Grass roots level engagement is also important, tailoring activities to specific communities and their specificities and solving their problems is another important aspect.
- e. Consideration at the state to create regional transit authorities. The idea that boundaries for municipalities block transit availability is a real and severe problem. More regional collaboration, like every state surrounding Wisconsin has, it would make a significant difference getting more reliable non-driver transportation access.