

November 22, 2022: 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 22, 2022. 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 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding
- Explore project development opportunities to improve non-driver transportation
- Reflect on the impact of the committee's work to date, provide feedback

The meeting included presentations on the following topics: WisDOT asset management, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Implementation, non-drivers in Wisconsin, and a Waupaca County Workforce Innovation grant. There were two breakout discussions, during which time committee members were grouped with a WisDOT facilitator and notetaker.

Of the committee's 46 member organizations, 22 participated in the meeting. See Appendix A for attendance information.

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- **Welcome Back and Preview of the Day** – WisDOT Secretary Craig Thompson & June Coleman, Bureau of Performance Improvement, Research, and Strategic Initiatives Director, WisDOT

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Secretary Craig Thompson welcomed WiNDAC members and thanked the WiNDAC co-chairs for planning and organizing the meeting. He said that during the meeting committee members would be looking at project development opportunities to improve non-driver transportation in Wisconsin and reflecting on the accomplishments of the committee. The Secretary closed by saying that he looked forward to another productive meeting of WiNDAC and thanked the committee members.

June Coleman previewed the events of the day—noting that WiNDAC would reflect and build on the work of past meetings and develop innovative project ideas that could improve the transportation system for Wisconsin non-drivers.

- **WisDOT Asset Management: Bike/Ped Modelling Presentation** – Brian Gaber, Office of Asset and Performance Management Director, WisDOT

Brian Gaber gave a presentation on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure asset management at WisDOT. He began by giving a primer on WisDOT's asset management approach, describing the department's system health focus. He discussed WisDOT's efforts to build an operational pilot model for

bicycle/pedestrian trip prediction to guide current project decision-making and bridge the gap to a more sophisticated model. He shared information about ongoing efforts to develop a mobility model using machine learning and big transportation data, along with a predictive safety machine learning model for bicycle and pedestrian crashes.

- **BIL Implementation Discussion** – Casey Newman, WisDOT Division of Business Management Administrator & Jessica Wagner, Federal Discretionary Funds Coordinator, WisDOT

Casey Newman and Jessica Wagner provided an overview of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and showcased WisDOT's BIL webpage. The webpage contains resources about discretionary BIL funding, grant writing resources, and a letter of support request form. They closed by providing links to local and federal resources related to BIL.

- **Context Setting for Small Group Work** – Denise Jess, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired

Denise Jess described the upcoming small group activity. She said that WiNDAC members would be asked to develop innovative project ideas that could improve the transportation system for Wisconsin non-drivers.

- **Small Group Discussion 1**

Attendees moved into small group breakout rooms. Discussion questions included:

1. How would this project/approach specifically improve non-driver mobility or reduce burdens/barriers on non-drivers?
2. By addressing challenges for non-drivers, who else do we help? And how do they benefit?
3. Who are potential partners who should have an interest in this project? Why should they be interested?
4. What outcomes does this project seek to achieve? How will we measure success?
5. Is this idea something that could be used in other situations, or that has potential for growth?
6. What role can your organization play during the application/development phase of this project? During implementation?

Themes and takeaways from the small group discussions can be found in Appendix B.

- **Non-Drivers in Wisconsin Presentation** – Denise Jess, Executive Director, Wisconsin Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired & Tami Jackson, Legislative Liaison, Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities

Denise Jess provided an overview of non-drivers in Wisconsin and provided some demographic information about Wisconsin to prepare the group for the second small group activity. Tami Jackson shared some highlights and accomplishments of the committee over the past two and a half years, along with lessons learned.

- **Small Group Discussion 2**

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

1. What is the biggest message we need to convey about non-drivers and transportation systems?
2. What players need to be at the table and convinced to approach transportation from a non-driver perspective?
3. How do drivers benefit when non-driver transportation options are improved?
4. When you reflect on WiNDAC, what are notable accomplishments, strategies, opportunities that have resulted from this committee?
5. How will you bring the work of WiNDAC into the other work that you do?

Themes and takeaways from the small group discussions can be found in Appendix B.

- **Wisconsin Workforce Innovation Grant-Waupaca County** – Holly Keenan, Mobility Manager, Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Valerie Lefler, Executive Director, Feonix Mobility Rising & Jess Betts-Nelson, Community Development Manager, Feonix Mobility Rising

Holly Keenan, Valerie Lefler, and Jess Betts-Nelson gave a presentation about a Wisconsin Workforce Innovation grant funded by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development. The grant supports a micro transit program in Waupaca County called Catch-a-Ride, which will deploy five vehicles offering 24/7 service. They showcased the mobile application and online portal for Catch-a-Ride, which will begin beta deployment in December 2022.

- **Round Robin Session**

Committee members were called on and asked to share their main takeaways including what they found valuable from the meeting.

- **Closing Remarks - WisDOT Secretary's Office**

Wisconsin Department of Transportation Deputy Secretary Paul Hammer provided closing remarks, thanking WiNDAC members for participating in the meeting. He discussed the importance of WiNDAC's work and how the committee's insights are being integrated into the priorities that WisDOT is working on right now—including BIL implementation and public safety. The Deputy Secretary closed by thanking the committee and wishing them a happy Thanksgiving.

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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
June Coleman, Director, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Performance Improvement, Research and Strategic Initiatives
Tim Cornelius, Insurance Examiner, Office of the Commissioner of Insurance
Sandra Villiesse, Transportation Specialist, Federal Highway Administration
Jane Penner-Hoppe, Senior Policy Advisor, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families
Jenna Fogarty, DVR Workforce Development Area 2 Director, Department of Workforce Development
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)
Gregg May, Transportation Policy Analyst, 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
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
Kevin Coughlin, Policy Initiatives Advisor, Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Bobbi Hegna, Transportation Program Director, Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin
Patrick Daoust, Transit Manager, Bay Area Rural Transit

Guests in attendance

Jess Betts-Nelson, Feonix Mobility Rising
Valerie Lefler, Feonix Mobility Rising

WisDOT staff in attendance

Craig Thompson, Secretary, Wisconsin DOT
Paul Hammer, Deputy Secretary, Wisconsin DOT
Casey Newman, Administrator, Wisconsin DOT Division of Business Management
Chuck Wade, Director, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development
Brian Gaber, Director, Wisconsin DOT Office of Asset and Performance Management
Jessica Wagner, Wisconsin DOT Federal Discretionary Fund Coordinator
Ian Ritz, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors
David Hubbard, Wisconsin DOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Kaleb Vander Wiele, Wisconsin DOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Ryan Spaight, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Brad Basten, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Ethan Severson, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Hannah Brown, Wisconsin DOT Strategic Initiatives Team
Rodney Saunders, Jr., Wisconsin DOT Division of Budget and Strategic Initiatives
Mark Knickelbine, Wisconsin DOT Office of Public Affairs
Katie Patterson, Wisconsin DOT Bureau of Transit, Local Roads, Railroads and Harbors
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 round robin session.

Innovative Pilot Projects/Plans

In small groups, WiNDAC members were asked to develop an innovative transportation pilot project or plan to address non-driver barriers—either in whole or in part. The list of non-driver barriers WiNDAC members chose from included:

- **Multijurisdictional travel:** Non-driver transportation options may be unavailable, or may lack connectivity when crossing jurisdictional lines (e.g., county lines, or city lines).
- **Land-use/development planning:** The needs of non-drivers may not be accounted for in land-use/development planning.
- **First mile/last mile connectivity:** Home to work, to medical services, to grocery store routes may create economic hardships if transportation stops short of the actual destination, particularly in rural areas.
- **Safety at bicycle/pedestrian crossings:** Pedestrian and bicyclist serious injuries and fatalities are on the rise, and crossings can be particularly unsafe.
- **Transportation options and capacity:** Non-driver transportation options may be limited or may not have sufficient capacity to meet non-driver needs.

Group responses are summarized below:

- **Project 1: Feasibility study to make all paratransit service on demand**
 - The project could expand Flex Drive model to a public/private partnership, including medical, first/last mile destinations, etc., and encompass rural areas without transit systems.
 - This could be an opportunity to use 53.10 funding more creatively.
 - There would need to be enough accessible vehicles and trained volunteer drivers.
 - Creates a workforce with paid drivers
 - Requires a cost analysis (training, insurance etc.)
 - Benefits include:
 - Better, more flexible mobility options that lead to better outcomes, fewer limitations on people (employment)
 - Greater labor pool for employers
 - Reliable, consistent mobility
 - Prospective partners: ADRCs Medical centers, business organizations, veterans' services, NPOS/RPCs, municipalities, counties, WisDOT.

- **Project 2: Funding stream for driver incentives to drive individuals with special needs, provide driver training and create a provider list.**
 - Transition to a brokerage model for non-emergency medical transportation. The coordinated outreach and the marketing could provide relief for the driver shortage and a part of that outreach could be providing driver training.
 - The creation of an app or provider list that would utilize a funding stream for vouchers that would require training for the drivers. Could start with one or two locations by applying for grant. Then bring the successful pilot to the agencies.
 - Benefits include:
 - Incentive for drivers so there is more availability for rides
 - The training enhances the quality of services the users receive
 - The provider list improves the user experience regarding knowledge and availability of providers.
 - If more funding is put into local/traditional transit agencies, users could use regular transit or para-transit options.
 - Prospective partners mentioned: this small WiNDAC group, DHS – non-emergency medical transportation, WisDOT, Department of Health Services, Department of Veteran Affairs, Department of Workforce Development, Department Public Instruction, Employers Colleges, Universities, Managed Care Organizations Transportation Providers such as Union Cab, Advocacy Organizations, Public Transit Systems
- **Project 3: Subsidized statewide flex ride program**
 - The program would offer rides not limited to employment trip purposes, but for all needs.
 - Could look at this as an expansion of Catch-A-Ride
 - 24/7/365 transportation for all as a guiding principle.
 - No rider/destination/type limitation
 - Opportunity to leverage big data
 - Ability to connect/map/coordinate funding with mobility management and see it from a statewide/regional overview
 - Create an entity/system to combine grants/funding from multiple sources for a project
 - Technology is available now \ (data and analysis)
 - Make current programs more efficient and use for planning purposes (who lives where and where do they go?)
 - Benefits include:
 - Increased employment
 - Increased access to healthcare (earlier healthcare)
 - Increased mobility (local government / political boundaries)
 - Eliminates challenges regarding local cost shares, contributions and coordination of funding / change of leaderships
 - Provide expertise to smaller cities/agencies/counties to get service for their riders

- Prospective partners: Public transit agencies, government agencies, providers, employers, healthcare, daycare, etc.

Non-driver messaging

WiNDAC members were asked the following question: What is the biggest message we need to convey about non-drivers and transportation systems?

Responses are compiled below. Bolded responses indicate that the idea was mentioned by two or more groups.

- **Benefits are societal not just for the non-driver (economic, employment, healthcare, mental, etc.)**
- **There are more non-drivers in Wisconsin than you think. Share widely that 31% of Wisconsin residents are non-drivers.**
- This is a community issue; we need to take care of each other.
- People need to be more aware of the limitations that non drivers face.
- This is an equity issue.
- This is not a problem that can remain unsolved – aging population, rural state, shrinking family size, etc. Vast parts of the state will become unlivable. Property values, economic development will decline.
- People should know that non-drivers are no different than anyone else. Humanize and show the diversity of the non-driver. Non-drivers participate in the community, go to work.
- Everyone is impacted directly or indirectly.
- This is a systems issue. By not addressing issues, it is costing us more in the long run (health care options, transportation, economic conditions)
- All of us are non-drivers sometimes.
- Transportation planning needs to have a broader point of view.

Who needs to be at the table?

WiNDAC members were asked the following question: What players need to be at the table and convinced to approach transportation from a non-driver perspective?

Responses are compiled below. Bolded responses indicate that the idea was mentioned by two or more groups.

- **Counties, municipalities**
- **Elected officials**
- **Transit agencies**
- **Taxi companies**
- **State Agencies**
 - **Wisconsin Department of Health Services**
 - **Wisconsin Department of Transportation**
- **Employers and employment agencies**
- **Private Sector**
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

- Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs)
- Transportation Network Companies (Uber, Lyft, etc.)
- Insurance companies
- Managed Care Organizations
- Veterans service organizations
- Wisconsin Manufacturing and Commerce
- Chambers of Commerce
- Wisconsin Hospital Association
- County Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs)
- Planning agencies
- Advocacy agencies
- Centers for Independent Living
- Transportation Coordination Committees (TCCs)

How drivers benefit

WiNDAC members were asked the following question: How do drivers benefit when non-driver transportation options are improved?

Responses are compiled below. Bolded responses indicate that the idea was mentioned by two or more groups.

- **Beneficial air quality and environmental impacts can be high.**
- **When road/sidewalk/infrastructure is improved – it also improves safety for auto drivers.**
- **Increases economic activity: more customers for retail, entertainment, private business.**
- **Better wellbeing and health outcome. Levels of stress can be high for non-drivers and families.**
- Less road congestion when more people use public transit.
- Makes it easier for everyone to get around – more mobility options for all.
- The gift of time – the person who would have had to drive them gets that time back.
- Fixed route services would become safer.
- Better street crossing with accessible pedestrian signals, curb cuts, etc.
- Property values tend to increase when a neighborhood is walkable or bikeable.
- There is more access to education. Some people pick their courses on when they could make the bus route, cab options.
- Keeps our families together – there are people aging in place.
- Chauffeur effect/Pink tax – women tend to be ones who transport older parents and kids. This would free up their time to use in other ways.
- Cab drivers/drivers/volunteer drivers have more work and employment.

WiNDAC accomplishments, strategies, and opportunities

WiNDAC members were asked the following question: When you reflect on WiNDAC, what are notable accomplishments, strategies, opportunities that have resulted from this committee?

Responses are compiled below. Bolded responses indicate that the idea was mentioned by two or more groups.

- **WisDOT pulled together a significant amount of information with respect to non-driver data. It is very helpful to have the information: ArcGIS Online Non-Driver Application.**
- **Connectivity of people who are engaged and at the table. The variety of organizations being brought together allow for many voices to be heard at once.**
- **Better, shared understanding of how to work together to solve these issues; WiNDAC is an opportunity for a vast number of perspectives to meet at the table.**
- Concrete exercise in understanding the specific needs of non-drivers.
- WisDOT problem solving.
- Created priority list of problems that need solving.
- Operationalizing opportunities like BIL.
- The richness of the conversations have grown exponentially since the first meeting in June 2020. Feel as if there many allies to help do the work across the state.
- Awareness of the topic has been very helpful. The awareness and amplification of the issue.
- Opportunity to elevate this topic to have the governor talk about it. Ask the governor to message on the issue.
- A reliable place to communicate, discuss, learn, share with each other.
- Transit is doing a performance measure pilot based on WiNDAC's recommendations.

Bringing WiNDAC into other work

WiNDAC members were asked the following question: How will you bring the work of WiNDAC into the other work that you do?

Responses are compiled below. Bolded responses indicate that the idea was mentioned by two or more groups.

- **Direct impact: my organization's work provides direct service to non-drivers.**
- **Using new-found connections/relationships to share updates and work together.**
 - Formalized a unified front about these issues and having a unified list of recommendations.
- **Communicating with legislators, constituents.**
- **Plan to share the ArcGIS tool share with colleagues, along with what WINDAC has discussed thus far.**
- Discover and pursue new opportunities (grants or otherwise).
- Reporting back to employees, clients, directors, etc. on the work of the committee.
- New performance measures – getting feedback from WiNDAC.
- Updated external groups to share the good work WiNDAC is doing and how it is organized.
- Advocate and try to make as much noise as possible.
- Could make use of the driver incentives, streamlining of coordination between state agencies and social services.
- Maintain relationship with the managed care organizations, funding for community-based services, non-emergency medical transportation.
- Do research on find out local non-driver needs.
- Examples to reference, point to functioning committee.
- WiNDAC has provided a wider perspective on the non-driver issue.
- Become a better planner and resource, prepare clients for the future.