

**WEST MICHIGAN METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROGRAM
(WESTPLAN) POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

MEETING MINUTES

December 20, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Arter called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. A roll call was taken, and a quorum was present.

ATTENDANCE (Roll call)

A. Members Present

Kim Arter, Laketon Township, Chairperson
Roger Morgenstern, City of Norton Shores
Bill Mogren, City of North Muskegon
Roger Belknap, Ottawa County
Field Reichardt, Ottawa County Road Commission
Arnie Erb, Whitehall Township
Marcia Hovey-Wright, MATS
Jack Kennedy, Muskegon County Road Commission
Diane Goodman, City of Roosevelt Park
Heather Bowden, MDOT
Bonnie McGlothin, City of Muskegon Heights
Kevin McLaughlin, Harbor Transit
Robert Monetza, City of Grand Haven
Ryan Kelly, Ottawa County- Township Rep
Steven Salter, City of Whitehall
Roger Vanderstelt, Village of Fruitport
Bob Hires, City of Montague

B. Members Not Present

Wally Delamater, Village of Spring Lake (Non-Voting)
Andrew Sibold, FHWA (Non-Voting)
Richard Carlson, Ferrysburg (excused)
Michelle Hazekamp, Muskegon County Commissioner (excused)
Rachel Gorman, City of Muskegon

C. Others Present

Steve Sanocki, Muskegon Community College
Rebecca Hopp, City of Ferrysburg
Tyler Kent, MDOT
Blake Wright, MDOT

D. Staff Present

Joel Fitzpatrick, WMSRDC
Robert Johnson, WMSRDC
Jamie Way, WMSRDC

I. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes were reviewed from the November 15, 2023, meeting. It was noted that Jack Kennedy was listed twice. A motion was made and supported to approve the amended minutes from the meeting. Motion approved. *M/S Salter/Morgenstern*

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

The WestPlan Public Participation Plan procedure was followed to achieve public participation for this meeting. No members of the public spoke.

III. TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

FY2023-2026 TIP- Mr. Joel Fitzpatrick reviewed the two projects which were on amendment. A motion was made and seconded to approve the amendment. Motion carried. *M/S Morgenstern/Hovey-Wright*

IV. 2050 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN)

A. Long Range Plan Update - Mr. Joel Fitzpatrick spoke about the Goals and Objectives chapter which was included in the agenda. Mr. Joel Fitzpatrick presented the Goals and objectives chapter. The public comment period is from November 29 through December 14 as required by the MPO's Public Participation Plan. A suggestion was made to include mention of electric vehicles. A question was asked regarding the public involvement procedures for the MPO. Discussion ensued.

V. MPO ROUNDTABLE

A. Public Transportation

- Marcia Hovey Wright gave an update. Muskegon County commissioners voted to expand the hours of the Go To MATS and bus services. The total number of hours for the week has increased.
- Mr. Field Reichhardt posed a question regarding connections between Muskegon Area Transportation System and Harbor Transit. Scott Borg, Director of Harbor Transit responded that discussions are ongoing, but Muskegon County needs to complete its process. Currently it is in the process of evaluating whether to become an authority.

B. MDOT Updates

- Ms. Heather Bowden, MDOT introduced herself as Jeff Franklin's replacement. She noted that the Federal Aid buyout program had been canceled for FY 2025.
- Tyler Kent: 5-year program was approved just before thanksgiving. Would like to do that again in the spring. Large Seaway Dr over Black Creek is still going and will continue to be worked on with the weather.
- Concern over slippery conditions on the US-31 bridge at Grand Haven was expressed. Tyler stated he would ask about it.

VI. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The WestPlan Public Participation Plan procedure was followed to achieve public participation for this meeting. Mr. Joel Fitzpatrick shared an email that was received from Ms. Darma Canter. The email is attached to these minutes.

VII. ADJOURN- Meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m.

From: canter2000@aol.com
To: [Amy Haack](#); [Joel Fitzpatrick](#)
Subject: When they take away your keys, your freedom quickly collapses.
Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 6:40:43 PM

WMSRDC Transportation

Millions of taxpayer dollars spend for "public" transportation and yet our people are abandoned, degraded and denied publicly funded bus services. Please share this text with any county or state official you know. This shames all Muskegon residents.

Read this recent MATS experience.

"Thank you Go2/Via AGAIN I'm missing a doctor's appointment because you have no cars available. I've been trying to get a ride for TWO HOURS! I'm so sick of this shit. Yes, I could have booked ParaTransit through MATS. I didn't. I could have taken a bus, but it won't get me there in time since I was on the phone trying to book a ride with Go2/Via. Frigging fed up with not getting medical care because of Go2.

Just venting here. I'm not looking for solutions. I have them and didn't book 3 days ahead. My insurance company won't help with rides since there are NO services in Muskegon that work with them. I've called every service. Insurance stiffes the ride services by cutting their payout and they're fed up with it. This leaves people like me in power chairs having to pay out of pocket which insurance does not reimburse. And I can't afford the \$50-\$60 they charge each way. Power chairs are great to keep independence as long as you don't go outside of their range."

Share widely.

A couple years ago MATS changed its transportation program. 1. After 20 years of providing bus service to every corner of Muskegon County for residents with disabilities and seniors, the bus service became a para-transit only. Meaning the disabled rider service would only be eligible for residents living within one-half mile of the actual bus route, and limited to the southwest quarter of the county. 2. They closed the Muskegon Heights terminal.

I filed an a MDOT / DOJ complaint because the change in service impacted minority communities who had no alternative transportation services and were the most dependent on publicly subsidized, local transportation. The complaint was substantiated and the WM/DOJ decided to hand the complaint back to the county to implement a plan of

correction. At no time during this process did the DOJ or the county call me, the complainant. As MATS started formalizing their plan, I called to comment or ask questions, but I was never invited to participate in any open discussion about minority or low-income resident services.

I send this to the WMSRDC Transportation because the people who are literally bound to their homes are seniors and the disabled in all the rural areas of Muskegon County. I hope you will share this with the two committees and invite a representative group to discuss their current and future transportation needs.

Darma Canter
1898 Orshal Rd
Muskegon MI 49445