

## MINUTES

### BAY-LAKE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

#### MARITIME METRO TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (TDP) 2026-2030 REVIEW COMMITTEE

March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, 11:00 am  
Conference Room West, Manitowoc City Hall  
(In-Person and Virtual)

#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Kevin Bottesi (Maritime Metro, Transit Division Manager), Chairperson
- Jerry Schnermetzler (Citizen Representative)
- William DeBaets (City of Manitowoc, Alderman District 5)
- Jenny Schneider (Two Rivers School District, Social Worker)
- Dan Koski (City of Manitowoc, Director of Public Infrastructure)
- Shanna Bratz (Maritime Metro Transit, Operations Supervisor)
- Deanna Genske (Ascend Services)
- Heather Ihlenfeldt (Two River Senior Center Supervisor)
- Kyle Kordell (City of Two Rivers)
- Amber Hutchison (Two Rivers Senior Center)
- Linda Grider (City of Manitowoc Mobility Manager)

#### STAFF PRESENT:

- Heena Bhatt (Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission)
- Bryce Thompson (Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission)

1. The meeting was called to order at 11:07 am by Kevin Bottesi.
2. The meeting Agenda for the March 31, 2026, Maritime Metro Transit Development Plan (TDP) 2026-2030 Review Committee meeting was approved.

**Moved** by Jerry Schermetzler and seconded by William DeBaets.

3. Public Input – 10 Minutes

During public input, Kyle Kordell opened comments regarding concerns about rising transit operating costs for the City of Two Rivers. Mr. Kordell noted a 44% increase over five years in the city's contribution and asked the committee to identify cost-control opportunities, as current trends threaten the city's general fund. Douglas and Patricia Klein expressed concerns regarding Route 1, particularly the segment along Monroe Street. They indicated that the

weight of the buses may be contributing to deteriorating road conditions and encouraged the committee to explore alternative routes. Mrs. Klein also shared a petition from nearby property owners supporting restructuring of the route off Monroe Street.

#### 4. Review of Driver Interviews & Stakeholder Meetings

Bryce Thompson provided an overview of the Maritime Metro driver interviews conducted in December 2025. He reported that drivers were generally satisfied with their experiences. Areas for improvement included challenges serving the YMCA due to vehicles cutting in front of buses, as well as delays when crossing Dewey Street due to high traffic volumes. When discussing underutilized segments, many drivers identified Route 5, particularly near the industrial park, as having little to no ridership. Mr. Thompson noted that some drivers believe this may be due to bus arrival times not aligning with typical work shift changes, as buses do not arrive at the top or bottom of the hour.

#### 5. Discussion of Draft Chapter 4: Recommendations

Mr. Thompson then presented draft recommendations for Chapter 4, noting that all proposals remain subject to revision. For Route 1, recommendations included extending the route to serve industrial areas along Hawthorne Avenue, which would add approximately 5.5 miles, and potentially reducing Saturday service to help offset costs. The committee also discussed relocating the stop at Aurora Medical Center, as buses experience difficulty navigating the busy parking lot. Mr. Bottesi and Ms. Bratz noted that traffic congestion in the lot creates operational challenges.

For Route 2, recommendations included shifting the YMCA stop closer to the building entrance to improve safety and traffic flow, as well as extending service to the Manitowoc Lake Breeze Apartments and Trails End Manufactured Homes, adding approximately 0.5 miles. Mr. Bottesi raised concerns about bus turnaround options, noting that only smaller residential streets are available. Ms. Bratz responded that school buses are able to turn around on 1st Street within the Trails End Manufactured Homes. Additional recommendations included adding a stop at the new housing development on Johnston Drive and extending weekday service hours to 9:30 p.m.

Route 3 recommendations included extending service hours to 10:00 p.m., as it has strong ridership and serves a mix of residential, retail, and social service destinations. The committee also discussed safety concerns at the Shopko Plaza stop, where vehicles frequently cut off buses in the parking lot. William DeBaets asked whether bus-only pavement markings could be installed; however, Dan Koski noted that such changes would require approval from the property owner. Mr. Koski suggested relocating the stop to 35th Street to avoid the parking lot altogether.

For Route 4, recommendations included coordinating with the City of Manitowoc and the Department of Public Works to evaluate converting the intersection of Dewey Street and South 14th Street into a four-way stop. Mr. Thompson explained that this may be a more cost-effective

alternative to a full reroute. The committee agreed that a traffic study should be conducted before making a decision.

Route 5 recommendations focused on coordinating with industrial park employers to better align bus schedules with shift changes. Heena Bhatt also suggested that an on-demand service model could be a cost-effective way to serve the area.

For Routes 6A and 6B, recommendations included shifting Saturday service from Route 6B to Route 6A due to low ridership on 6B. The committee also discussed the potential use of an on-demand service during these times.

Mr. Thompson presented cost estimates for proposed service changes, noting that extending evening service by two hours on two routes would cost approximately \$98,000 annually. He also estimated that reducing Saturday service on Route 1 would save the City of Two Rivers approximately \$15,000 per year.

Ms. Bhatt provided an overview of how an on-demand transit service would operate, explaining that it is a shared transportation model without fixed routes or schedules, allowing passengers to reserve rides in advance. Mr. Bottesi asked whether implementing such a service while reducing fixed-route hours would impact paratransit service; Ms. Bhatt clarified that it would not. The committee agreed that on-demand service should be explored as a potential cost-saving measure for Routes 1, 5, and 6. Ms. Bhatt estimated that such a service would cost the City of Manitowoc approximately \$100,000 annually and noted that it could serve the entire service area, unlike fixed-route extensions. Linda Grider asked whether the service could use agency fares, and Ms. Bhatt confirmed that it could. The committee directed Bay-Lake RPC to explore multiple scenarios involving on-demand service as an alternative to fixed-route service.

Mr. Thompson also provided an estimate for Sunday service, noting that it was one of the most requested improvements from the community. The estimated annual cost is approximately \$225,000 for the City of Manitowoc. Mr. Bottesi added that Sunday wages may increase this cost further due to double pay requirements.

#### 6. Next Meeting Date

Ms. Bhatt provided an update to the committee that the project has been extended through August of 2026. After further discussion with the committee, Bay Lake RPC is aiming to post the final draft plan for public comment in Mid-May, with formal approval of the plan in early July.

#### 7. Adjournment

**Moved** by Jerry Schnermetzler and seconded by William DeBaets the Maritime Metro Transit Development Plan (TDP) 2026-2030 Review Committee was adjourned at 12:28 pm.

Recording secretary,

Bryce Thompson

Transportation Planner