

Transportation for Michigan Fall Advocacy Day

Prepare Yourself

Hosted by Trans4M | December 10, 2014

Background

The Transportation for Michigan Fall Advocacy Day at the Capitol is an annual event, held every fall to educate legislators and advocate on key policy issues that facilitate a 21st century transportation network.

Our priority issue this year is transportation funding. We'll be speaking with State Representatives and Senators about current legislation that would increase state funding for our complete transportation system.

Preparation & Conference Call

If you have never communicated with policy makers before, don't worry. No prior experience is needed to participate in Advocacy Day. We'll make sure that you are comfortable with the issue priorities and that you get up to speed quickly. We will also provide you additional guidance and walk you through the "asks" on the day of the event. **Detailed fact sheets regarding our priority issue will be available on our website at <http://trans4m.org/join-the-movement/advocacy-day/>**

However, to ensure you are prepared for everything the day has in store, **join us for a preview conference call** on Monday, December 8 to learn more about the issues and prepare. There are two options to call in: 2:00-3:00 or 6:00-7:00 pm. The call in information is the same for both calls: 712-775-7031, Meeting ID 170-051-711.

Agenda

- 8:15 AM:** Registration Begins at the Michigan Municipal League Offices
(208 N. Capitol Ave, Lansing, MI)
- 8:45 AM:** Welcome briefing (continental breakfast provided)
- 9:30 AM:** Meetings with Representatives and Floor Visits
- 11:30 AM:** Lunch with guest speaker (lunch provided)
- 12:45 PM:** Group picture on the Capitol steps
- 1:00 PM:** Meetings with Senators and Floor Visits
- 3:00 PM:** Conclude

Dress Code

There is no formal dress code to meet with your Legislator. Keep in mind, however, that the Legislators and staff you will be meeting with typically wear business attire. To be most effective in this setting, wear appropriate attire (business casual at a minimum).

Parking

Parking in downtown Lansing requires using either metered street or garage parking. Please arrive early to ensure you have enough time to park and walk to Michigan Municipal League's Office.

Check-In

Upon arrival, **please check-in NO LATER than 8:45 AM** at the Michigan Municipal League and enjoy a continental breakfast. Promptly at 8:45 AM we will review the talking points and legislative issues and then answer any questions that you may have.

Group Photo - 12:45 PM

Please join us on the Capitol steps for a group photo. We have very limited time to take the photo, so we ask for your cooperation to help us keep on schedule.

2014 Advocacy Agenda

This year we will be focused on one very specific key issue: Transportation Funding. For additional information, including talking points, please visit the Trans4M website at: <http://trans4m.org/join-the-movement/advocacy-day/>

Be Prepared

Term limits in the Legislature are short so seats turn over frequently. Your legislator meets with hundreds of different interest groups each year and you may be one of their first encounters with a transportation advocate, so it's especially important that you are well prepared for your meetings. Know the material – practice at home beforehand so you are prepared to speak on the legislative priorities.

If possible, research your legislators before hand. Visit www.house.mi.gov and www.senate.mi.gov to see what committees they sit on and what issues may be important to them. Since the various modes of transportation have a plentitude of benefits, it is often easy to relate our advocacy priorities back to issues that are important to them. A brief biography of your legislator will also be made available to you.

Using local examples to make your point can also help make a connection as to why transportation is important to his or her district. Transportation Committee members are especially important because they typically handle issues that effect transportation policy. Natural Resources, Tourisms, and Outdoor Recreation Committee members are especially important as they tend to deal with issues important to trails.

Legislators on committees of interest will be highlighted on the information you will receive at check-in. In addition, there will be notes about any legislators who have sponsored or are currently sponsoring or cosponsoring bills of interest. Please be sure to thank any current sponsors or cosponsors and request past supporters to once again support our efforts. Your information packets will also include information about the voting records of each legislator on the issue of importance.

BRING A PICTURE ID - YOU WILL NEED IT TO ENTER THE HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING.

Legislative Meetings

Your scheduled meetings will be in one of three places: the Anderson House Office Building (Representatives), the Farnum Building (Senators) or the State Capitol (Representatives and Senators in leadership). All three buildings are within a couple blocks of each other (a map

will be provided). We often schedule meetings 30 minutes apart, which is usually plenty of time to get from one meeting to the next, but it is important to keep an eye on the time.

Expect your meeting to last 10 –20 minutes at most. After introductions, this means you will only have a few minutes to go over each issue and make the “ask.”

Legislators are extremely busy, and although we attempt to schedule as many meetings as possible with your actual representative and senator, their schedules can change quickly and without notice. Thus, you will very likely be meeting with someone from the legislator’s staff. If this happens, do not be disappointed (or least do not show it).

Legislative staffers are invaluable resources, which typically do a great job relaying our priorities to the legislator.

You will have an issue paper that clearly states our position on our legislative priority. Explain the issue to the best of your ability and personalize it whenever possible.

We believe in the buddy system, so in addition to your main meetings, you may find that we schedule you for additional meetings with legislator other than your own. We may also do this to ensure we have meetings covered with all the legislators who serve on committees of interest. We thank you in advance for your assistance!

Untraditional Visits (Floor Visits)

It can be difficult to always get meetings scheduled directly with your Senator or Representative during our half day Advocacy Day. Occasionally, we are able to arrange untraditional visits where a legislator gives us permission to have you pull them off the House or Senate floor with a note. You can do this by going to the appropriate chamber in the Capital building and tell the Sergeant of Arms that your legislator has requested that you pull them off the floor. They will give you a note to fill out. Remind them that this is part of our Advocacy Day event and that their office previously communicated with Trans4M staff about stepping out of chamber for a few minutes. When they greet you, thank them for making special arrangements and keep your comments extremely brief.

Legislative Visit “Do’s”

- Introduce yourself with a smile and handshake, as a Transportation for Michigan representative.
- Remind them that you are a constituent who lives in their district (if that is true).
- Start on a positive note — thank them for something, even if it’s just their time
- Be confident, sit up straight and look them in the eye.
- Use stories related back to the district; a personal story will leave an image that will be remembered long after the data and statistics fade.
- Assume that they have no or little knowledge of the topic.
- Go over the issue paper and make a specific request (the “ask”).
- Collect business card(s) so you know who to follow up with.
- Bring a camera/phone to get a photo of you with the Legislator and/or staff.
- Take notes immediately following your meeting.

Legislative Visit “Don’ts”

- ❑ Don’t make up information. It is OK to say “I don’t know” and that you “will follow up” and then be sure to follow up.
- ❑ Don’t be intimidated — legislators are just people just like you.
- ❑ Don’t get distracted — it’s easy to chat about mutual acquaintances, the weather, other issues — and find your time has suddenly disappeared.
- ❑ Never come off accusatory or angry — even if you don’t agree with them on how they voted on an issue. You are representing Transportation for Michigan who is nonpartisan. Remember sometimes you need to leave your personal feelings at the door.

After the Meeting

Follow up with your legislator as soon as possible! Send any promised information or materials. Write a thank-you letter after you return home with a personal memory about your meeting. In your follow up correspondence, attach another copy of the issue papers that you left at the office, which you can download at <http://trans4m.org/join-the-movement/advocacy-day/>. Stay in contact and continue to monitor and follow up as these issues move through the legislative process.

Questions

Please direct questions to Laurel Burchfield, Trans4M Coordinator: Laurelb@trans4m.org or 517.999.0411.