

MEETING MINUTES

**LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD
FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED of the
COLLIER METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
REGULAR MEETING**

**Board of County Commission Chambers
Collier County Government Center
3299 Tamiami Trail East, 3rd Floor
Naples, FL 34112
September 1, 2021
1:30 p.m.**

****Virtual participation via ZOOM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call with Self Introductions

Commissioner Solis – called the meeting to order at 1:31 pm.

Ms. Otero called roll.

Members Present In-person

Commissioner Solis, Chair

Dale Hanson, FDOT

Susan Corris, SWFL Regional Workforce Development Board, Vice-Chairperson

Leah Watson, Agency for Persons with Disabilities

Oscar Gomez, Veterans Services

Members Participating Remotely

Cheryl Burnham, Florida Association for Community Action

Eileen Streight, Citizens Advocate/Non-User

Maricela Morado, Area Agency on Aging SWFL-FL Dept. of Elder Affairs

Jocelyn Schafer, Representative for Children at Risk

Alana Watson, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration

Bianca Borges, Local Medical Community

Anne Chernin, Elderly

Members Absent

John Kasten, Public Education

Dylan Vogel, Citizens Advocate/User

Robert Richards, Florida Dept. of Education, Div. of Voc. Rehab.

Tabitha Larrauri, Florida Department of Children and Family Services

Sherry Brenner, Disabled

MPO Staff

Brandy Otero, Principal Planner

Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director

Danielle Bates, Administrative Assistant

Scott Philips, Principal Planner

Others Present

Elena Ortiz-Rosado, PTNE
Omar DeLeon, PTNE, Transit Manager
Braian Morales, MV Transportation
John Irvine, Project Manager for Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (via Zoom)

2. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR COMMENTS ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Otero: 5B we're not asking for approval, just review and comment.

Ms. Watson moved to approve the agenda. Ms. Corris seconded. Passed unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

5. Approval of May 5, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes

Ms. Watson: I was present at the last meeting but listed as absent.

Ms. Corris moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for May 5, 2021. Commissioner Solis seconded. Passed unanimously.

6. BOARD ACTION

A. Approval of LCB Membership Certification

Ms. Otero: This is an annual activity. It gives the Board an opportunity to look at membership, make sure that alternates are accurate and that everyone is represented correctly. Attachments include the membership list and statute. One vacancy remains for private transit representation. Staff asks that the Board approve the list.

Ms. Corris moved to approve. Ms. Watson seconded. Passed unanimously.

B. Review and Approval of Annual Operating Report

Mr. DeLeon: Annual Operating Report is brought to the Board for review and comments annually, it's comprised of operational statistics for the state fiscal year. It's a requirement for the Commission of Transportation Disadvantaged Trip and Equipment grant. Presented an overview of the statistics in the report.

Coordinated contractors must have agreements to apply for funding and to provide service. There are three entities in Collier County with agreements. There is a question about the data provided by Sunrise Community regarding the ridership and the trip count. They confirmed today that there is an error that needs to be corrected. The trips were duplicated and should be 36,456 for the year.

Commissioner Solis: Looking back at the previous reporting period, is the data skewed? **Mr. DeLeon** responded that he asked the same question. During COVID, Sunrise stated that they increased

the number of trips provided to the center and the number of outings. PTNE and the MPO both questioned the numbers.

Commissioner Solis: How is 36,000 trips in relation to not last year but prior year, are we back to normal?

Mr. DeLeon: Continued presenting statistics for Coordinating Contractors.

Ms. Otero: Reached out to the TD Commission to discuss discrepancy in data. Once report is final it will come back to this Board in December for approval. Suggest that PTNE continue to coordinate with Sunrise to review the number of trips, 36,000 still seems high. It is important that the data is accurate. The data is used to evaluate the system as a whole and for the CTC to request additional funds.

Commissioner Solis: Expenses are high, five times the previous amount. It would be helpful to have information from the previous reporting period. Easter Seals is reporting zero from the last period because they just started? **Ms. Otero:** That is correct, they just received a bus. For Sunrise's previous reporting, 2018-2019, the total trips were 3,046. So, the jump to 36,000 is very high.

C. Review and Approval of Plan to Prioritize TD Trips

Mr. DeLeon: A recommendation to approve plan to prioritize TD trips in response to capacity limitations. CAT Connect service and other entities are experiencing difficulties with staffing. Currently experiencing a driver shortage. It's occurring nationwide and it's impacted operations and the number of trips we can reliably deliver on time. Staff is currently taking trips and reservations, but we are exceeding capacity. People are on the bus for too long or are arriving too late. Within TDSP there is a mechanism to allow CAT to prioritize trips. The intention is to level the days. Drivers have been asked to work 6 days a week instead of 5, increasing Saturdays, when there are less medical. Intent is to prioritize necessary trips for medical, employment, nutritional, and group rec, then asking individuals if they can wait to see if can handle capacity or ask them for a different day or time or move the trip to the weekend. Trying to see how it increases reliability, don't want riders to miss doctors appointment or jeopardize employment.

Ms. Otero: Clarification, in executive summary, recommendation is to revise priorities in TDSP, education is not called out, it's included in employment, we want to spell that out. Priority 1: medical, 2: employment, 3: education, 4: nutrition, 5: social (agency related), 6: group recreation; currently disabled and elderly group are separated, but new list it would be combined, final priority is personal business. Recommendation is that trips in 1-5 are booked as needed and 6 and 7 are shifted to days with capacity. Approve this on pilot basis, can bring data back in December, cannot deny Americans with Disability Act (ADA) trips, only impacts Transportation Disadvantaged trips. After reviewing the data, the Board can make a decision and amend the TDSP.

Ms. Watson: Can't deny ADA trips, when people apply, they are pre-determined as TD, are their TD trips being denied in shortage? **Mr. DeLeon:** Evaluated for both funding mechanism. Origin and destination must be within ¾ mile of fixed route bus for ADA trip. Outside of that corridor is a TD trip, this will impact TD passengers. **Ms. Watson:** Medicaid is capping monthly trips, typically folks are sent to Medicaid first. Has there been any influence from this? **Mr. DeLeon:** For the month of July there were 70 ADA passengers, applications don't stop for eligibility. Not sure if this is due to Medicaid.

John Irvine: Aware of the problem, Collier County is not alone, driver shortage is happening in Lee County and throughout the state and country. What is the County doing to look into hiring additional contractors to provide the service? Don't like to see priorities used it's a funding shortage, but this is a shortage of capacity. We would like to see CTC obtaining more transportation providers that can handle the services. Employment trips can mean someone losing their jobs. Want to everything we can to assist.

Mr. De Leon: MV has talked about what they're doing to get more applicants, we have started conversations with different entities for supplementing services, including a couple private entities. Solicitation and procurement is long process, can't be done in a month. What MV is doing will assist with trying to get back to normal, driver pool is impacting us, MV looking at subcontractors who say they're too busy to assist.

Mr. Morales: National shortage of labor all areas all regions. Looked at labor pool last year, did market analysis, however learned that CDL drivers started at \$15.60 per hour for the low starting point. Renegotiated union contract and increased driver pay from \$13.03 to \$16 per hour. After two weeks of advertising saw \$16 per hour wasn't getting traction, so hired a recruiter, the training rate wasn't attractive, still \$11 per hour for training, eliminating training wage for fixed route and paratransit, increased the sign on bonus from \$500 to \$1500 paid out after training. There was a shortage in 2018 and the rate was changed from \$10/11 per hour to \$13.03 per hour and we received a lot of applications, not now. Recruiters are cold calling people who applied previously. Jacksonville Transportation Authority is offering a \$15,000 sign on bonus. Used to only be private sector doing that, MV was awarded the contract in 2019, we reached out to subcontractors in 2018 during the procurement process and they wanted \$40-\$60 a trip. Even giving them dialysis trips, the best trip 3x week, providers have quoted \$60 trip one way. Approached CDL holders in December offered fixed route and they're not interested. Had meetings with County and the Deputy Department Head to propose another spike in wages. We completed another market analysis in June, starting rate went up to \$18.40, never seen shift in one year that high. High insurance premiums are harder for small companies. Canals make the trips more difficult, trips to Immokalee 45-minute trips. Haven't hit news like Lee schools, managing the shortage on daily basis. Best we can do is 70-80% on time performance.

Mr. De Leon: You see the situation, but we're working on plan to increase reliability and on time performance, on top of priorities, not where we want to be but that's where we are. We will come back with update in three months.

Ms. Corris moves to approve. Ms. Hanson seconds. Carries unanimously.

7. REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

A. CTC Quarterly Report

Mr. DeLeon: Presented quarterly statistics. On time performance met expectations, in the higher 90s for service. Ridership is starting to rise, at over 6,500 per month and continues to grow. Hoping to decrease no shows. Implemented Ecolane software. Now they get a call the night before to remind them or they can cancel, also more certainty, when trip is on the way they get a call with estimated time of arrival. Hoping this will decrease no-shows. There are less trips on Saturday and Sunday than weekdays so hoping to level that out. Better in June, more efficient with delivery of service.

Ms. Hanson: When was Ecolane put in effect?

Mr. De Leon: August 6. Spike in June for cancellations, which is typical for rainy season. No suspensions, process for suspending for no shows: 3 times within a period. Haven't had that, because we give them a call, reminders. Missed trips, are trips that are scheduled but couldn't be performed, we monitor to make sure not increasing. Complaints are investigated, come to county staff, documented, full investigation process to identify if valid, safety infraction, or running late. Responses are logged for all complaints letting staff know how the complaint was resolved or how we intend to resolve.

B. MPO Quarterly Progress Report

Ms. Otero: This report is informational, to keep you up to date for the status of the TD planning grant. Last quarterly report closed out our annual grant. We completed all deliverables, including: submitted new membership list, updated grievance procedures, completed transportation disadvantaged service plan, and CTC progress report. All submitted to TD commission. Starting new grant year and report.

C. FDOT Report

Ms. Hanson: Few Announcements: FTA Section 5310, 5311, and 5339 applications- FDOT will host the Annual Grant Workshop virtually on Thursday, September 30, 2021. There will be a morning and afternoon session. Grant applications for this cycle are due Friday, December 17, 2021. FTA Section 5310 and 5311 CRRSAA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act) and ARP (American Rescue Plan) Operating funding – Programmed in State Fiscal Year 2021/2022 and State Fiscal Year 2022/2023, Solicitation opens Friday September 3, 2021. Associated Webinar will be held Tuesday, September 14, 2021. Applications are due Monday, October 4, 2021. FFTA/CTD Annual Conference and EXPO is scheduled for October 24 - 27, 2021. Mobility week will be held October 29 through November 5, 2021. Several virtual events along with a few in-person events will be available. Additional information will follow.

8. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

9. DISTRIBUTION ITEMS

Ms. Otero: Draft 2022 calendar, let us know if you have questions. Coordinating with Lee and Charlotte to not have conflicting dates. Also believe there is no conflict with Sarasota and Manatee.

10. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

None.

11. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 1, 2021 at 1:30 p.m.

Commissioner Solis: Where?

Ms. Otero: Depends, we've booked HR training room, but if its hybrid it must be here and it depends on if agency reps are allowed to travel. Will let you know.

12. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Solis adjourned at 2:28 pm