

MEETING MINUTES

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

Collier County Government Center
Building “F”, Information Technology Training Room
3299 Tamiami Trail East
Naples, FL 34112
September 7, 2022
1:30 p.m.

**Virtual participation via ZOOM

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Ms. Otero called the regular meeting to order at approximately 1:37 p.m., and confirmed a quorum was present. Ms. Otero led the meeting in the absence of Chair Solis and due to Ms. Corris participating remotely. Those at the meeting introduced themselves at the request of Ms. Otero. Ms. *Hanson* moved to allow the members attending virtually to participate in the meeting. Mr. *Vogel* seconded. Passed unanimously.

Members Present In-person

Brett Nelson, Children at Risk
Dale Hanson, Florida Dept. of Transportation
Dylan Vogel, Citizens Advocate/User
Eileen Streight, Citizens Advocate/Non-User
Gabrielle Galanti, Local Medical Community
Oscar Gomez, Veterans Services

Members Participating Remotely

Anne Chernin, Elderly
Leah Watson, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Michael Stahler, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
Susan Corris, SWFL Regional Workforce Development Board, Vice-Chairperson

Members Absent

Commissioner Andy Solis, Chair
Cheryl Burnham, Florida Association for Community Action
Maricela Morado, Area Agency on Aging SWFL-FL Dept. of Elder Affairs
Robert Richards, Florida Dept. of Education, Div. of Voc. Rehab.
Sherry Brenner, Disabled
Tabitha Larrauri, Florida Department of Children and Family Services

MPO Staff

Anne McLaughlin, Executive Director
Brandy Otero, Principal Planner

Dusty Siegler, Administrative Assistant

Others Present

Lilith Sileika, Veterans Services

Michelle Arnold, Director, Collier County Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement

Omar DeLeon, Collier County Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement

Mari Maldonado, MV Transportation

B. Pledge of Allegiance

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

None.

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

4. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

A. Approval of May 4, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes

Mr. Vogel moved to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes for May 4, 2022. Ms. Hanson and Ms. Corris seconded. Passed unanimously.

5. BOARD ACTION

A. Review of Annual Operating Report

Ms. Otero explained that the Annual Operating Report is required by the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged (“CTD”).

Mr. DeLeon described and highlighted the report (Attachment 1 to Item 5A, Agenda):

CTD requires the report be submitted by September 15, 2022. The report is specific to paratransit operations and includes transportation disadvantaged services, ADA services and additional services, such as senior services. The county is the transportation coordinator and has to coordinate the contracts. Coordinated contractors help with paratransit and transportation services and so are eligible to apply for FDOT funds for capital assets (e.g., a bus). The report is an accumulation of data from Collier County Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement (“PTNE”) and coordinated contractors.

CTD is a State program and its fiscal year is July to June. The statistics in the report are from July, 2021, through July, 2022. In that time, approximately 74,000 passengers who are

elderly, children at risk, have disabilities or are low income, were provided transportation.

The report shows the different funding mechanisms used to provide services to the community. Funding comes from the CTD, a trip and equipment grant, local governments, Federal Transit Administration funds and other State programs.

The report also shows the different passenger types, qualifications for certain passenger services (such as the elderly, children at-risk, persons with disabilities, and low-income); purposes for travel (medical, employment, education, nutritional, and life-sustaining); the unduplicated passenger head count (individual people who used services) of 1,067; unmet services (because of constraints, including due to a driver shortage) of 347 trips; the amount of no show passengers; and the amount of complaints (70 for the year) and accommodations (20 for the year). The presentation also provides information on: the coordinated contractors; mileage based on services provided; number of callers; number of vehicles requiring maintenance; number of accidents; vehicle inventory; number of operators; revenue information; and expense information.

After the report is submitted to and reviewed by the CTD, it will be brought back before LCB for approval in December.

The information reported is gathered by entering data into a software program. **Ms. Otero** commented that there appears to be a difference in the way the information is reported this year from last year. **Mr. DeLeon** explained that a new software provider was obtained in August of 2021, and the new software is different from the former in how information is categorized. **Ms. Otero** indicated the software change is significant to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (“TDSP”) being updated because information from the report is used to create the graphs/tables in the plan. **Ms. Otero** requested everyone to keep in mind that the new categorization of passengers does not mean that our population has shifted; it is just in the way the information is being processed.

6. REPORTS & PRESENTATIONS

A. CATConnect Update

Mr. DeLeon provided a presentation:

CATConnect struggled with operational issues last year due mostly to driver shortage issues. There has been an increase in riders since the beginning of this year, with over 7,000 trips per month starting in March; operator wages were increased; and more staff was hired to provide services and increase capacity. CATConnect is encouraging passengers to travel during off-peak days/times.

On-time performance has increased. There has been an increase in compliments. Operators and customer service have been doing a great job.

In August, CATConnect started using a mobile application, Ecolane, which allows passengers to book and cancel trips, see the location of their bus, and in the future, pay fares. User

response to Ecolane has been positive, including related to the accessibility format option in the application. The next step would be to allow credit card payments on Ecolane.

Ms. Arnold pointed out that there is currently an online account pay system and passengers can deposit money into the account and fares are deducted as they take trips.

Mr. DeLeon informed everyone that CATConnect has partnered with the Florida Developmentally Disabled Council for the CATConnect Select pilot program, which is a door-to-door paratransit service program. The on-demand service will allow individuals with disabilities to book their trip a day in advance and be picked up the next day or within 30 minutes of their booking. Individuals that are currently eligible for paratransit services will be eligible for the Select program as well. Operators will need to be trained in working with individuals with disabilities and have a Level 2 background check. The pilot program runs through September 30, 2023. The cost, efficiency and effectiveness of the program will be evaluated. If successful, PTNE may implement the program.

PTNE is working on the last items that need to be taken care of to start the Select pilot program. Under the program, the passenger would be responsible for the first \$4.00 of the fare and the grant will pay for the following \$16.00, and anything that exceeds that first \$20.00 will be the responsibility of the passenger. A similar program has been successful in Hillsborough County. The pilot program will be promoted and information about it will be on the website in the near future.

B. CTC Quarterly Report

Mr. DeLeon indicated that many of the items were addressed in his previous presentation. Performance and reliability have increased since driver shortage has been alleviated; Usage has increased and is at approximately 7,000 trips per month; and vehicle hours and revenue have increased. CATConnect is evaluating ways to increase its productivity and working to reduce the amount of no shows. Tickets are no longer sold due to the pre-paid program. The amount of missed trips has been declining overall. Any complaints get investigated and followed up on, as appropriate.

C. MPO Quarterly Progress Report

Ms. Otero provided a report regarding the Transportation Disadvantaged Planning Grant: The MPO is required to provide certain deliverables to get the grant. The progress report is included in the agenda packet. Over the last quarter, the MPO completed: the Bylaws and presented them to the LCB in May; the TDSP annual update; and the LCB Community Transportation Coordinator Evaluation. The MPO also brought the approval of a new LCB member to represent the medical community, Ms. Galanti, before the MPO Board and MPO staff attended the CTD Vision Summit in May.

Ms. Otero stated that this is the close-out of the grant, so the next report will start all over again. The MPO will continue to report to LCB quarterly about the status of the grant and what

deliverables have been met.

D. FDOT Report

Ms. Hanson provided the following report:

Federal Transit Act (“FTA”) Section 5311 CRRSAA (Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act) funding, programmed in fiscal year 2021/2022 and 2022/2023, has been awarded to Collier County in the amount of \$2,264,610, with no local match required. For Federal Fiscal Year 2022, which is also State Fiscal Year 2022/2023, FDOT has competitive federal grant applications for FTA Section 5310, which is for seniors and individuals with disabilities, Section 5311, which is for rural areas, and Section 5399, which is for buses/bus facilities. Recommendations on the applications from last year were sent to all agencies. Public transportation grant agreements will be sent to agencies who were awarded between October, 2022, and March, 2023. Federal FY 2023 and State FY 2023/2024 grant applications for FTA Sections 5310, 5311, and 5339 are due on December 16, 2022.

FDOT is having an Annual Grant Management & Funding Opportunities Webinar, which is a grant workshop, on Thursday, October 6, 2022. There will be a morning and afternoon session, both of which are different from each other, so it is recommended that both sessions be attended.

Central Office is holding an FTA/FDOT Section 5311 Informational Webinar on September 15, 2022. In terms of training, Florida Public Transportation Association is having an annual conference. The conference is being held in Naples from September 18 through 20, 2022. Registration closes on September 9. Ms. Hanson can provide the website information for the registrations.

Mobility Week will be held Friday, October 21, through Friday, October 28, 2022. Virtual and in-person events will be available. Ms. Hanson can provide the website information. **Ms. Arnold** commented that PTNE is providing free transportation on a Saturday, potentially November 5, and **Mr. DeLeon** indicated that PTNE has partnered with election offices to provide free transportation for early voting.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

None.

8. DISTRIBUTION ITEMS

A. Final 2022 TDSP Annual Update

Ms. Otero: The TDSP Annual Update and the updated rate model were approved by LCB at the last meeting. Ms. Otero noticed a scrivener’s error in the TDSP Annual Update thereafter in that it did not include the updated rate model. The agenda packet contains correction of the scrivener’s error, specifically page 21, which includes the updated calculated rates. The change from last year to this year was nominal.

9. BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Ms. Streight commented that she has heard great things about CATConnect and the Ecolane mobile application from her population base.

Mr. Vogel commented that the drivers on CATConnect do a really great job.

Ms. Galanti commented that she has a population that frequently uses paratransit and she was not aware of the application, but it appears that it will be beneficial, especially for populations in rural areas, who sometimes do not have the income to pay for their rides. Agencies like David Lawrence Center and NAMI sometimes have grant funding to help. With programs like this, the rate of individuals that can make it to their appointments should increase. **Ms. Arnold** stated that PTNE is working with the Lighthouse of Collier to develop a similar program where Lighthouse provides fares for those participating in their programs.

Mr. Nelson commented that he is new to the LCB and new to Florida. He is impressed by how the information and data was presented during the meeting.

Mr. Gomez indicated that Ms. Sileika will likely be attending future meetings on behalf of Veterans Services and he and Ms. Sileika may be alternating their attendance.

10. NEXT MEETING DATE

December 7, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

11. ADJOURNMENT

No further business being conducted, Ms. Hanson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Vogel seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 2:33 p.m.