

MEETING MINUTES

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

ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP

**Collier County Government Center
Admin Building “F”, IT Training Room, 5th Floor
3299 Tamiami Trail East, Naples, FL 34112
March 5, 2025 | 1:30 p.m.**

1. CALL TO ORDER

A. Roll Call

Chair Pernas called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Ms. Miceli called the roll and confirmed a quorum was present.

Members Present

Tony Pernas, MPO Board member, Everglades City, LCB Chair
Carmen Henry, Southwest Florida Regional Workforce Development Board, Vice-Chair
Leah Watson, Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Monica Lucas, Local Medical Community
Sarah Gualco, Area Agency on Aging SWFL-FL Dept. of Elder Affairs
Stacy Booth, Florida Dept. of Transportation

Members Absent

Brett Nelson, Children at Risk
Charles Lascari, Rep. of Disabled
Cheryl Burnham, Florida Association for Community Action
John Lambcke, Collier Schools Transportation Director
Lisa O’Leary, Fla. Dept. of Edu./Div. of Vocational Rehab Services
Michael Stahler, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration
Oscar Gomez, Veterans Services
Tabitha Larrauri, Fla. Dept. of Children and Family Services

MPO Staff

Dusty Hansen, Senior Planner
Suzanne Miceli, Operations Support Specialist II

Others Present

Omar De Leon, Public Transit Manager, Collier Area Transit
Brian Wells, Director, Collier County Public Transit & Neighborhood Enhancement
Alex Showalter, Collier Area Transit
Mari Maldonado, Collier Area Transit
Jacob Stauffer, Collier Area Transit
Richard Brubaker, Collier Area Transit
Silvia Garcia, Collier Senior Center
Tiffany Campbell, Corporate Compliance and Continuing Improvement
Idela Hernandez, Employment Network of Southwest Florida
Genesis Tucker, Community Member

1. CALL TO ORDER

- A. Roll Call
- B. Pledge of Allegiance

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

3. ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP ON LOCAL TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED (TD) PROGRAM AND PROCESS

A. Public Comments on Local TD Program and Process

Ms. Hansen said that each year the LCB conducts an in-person public workshop to solicit feedback from the public on the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program in Collier County and address any unmet needs or other areas that relate to the program.

Ms. Hansen invited comments from the public.

Ms. Tucker said she was aware that she had been added to Collier Area Transit's (CAT) Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) waiting list for personal trips, and that because of CAT budget constraints, the CAT's inability to provide personal trips limits her ability to take trips to shop for groceries and daily needs (causing her to incur hefty delivery and shipping charges) or to go to the library to access needed resources for obtaining employment and to meet with friends. The CTC's pause on providing personal trips also precludes her from attending community events, keeping her isolated and unable to be enjoy healthy community connections, something that greatly helps with her mental wellness.

Mr. De Leon said that there is a seven tier Trip Priority List, and that due to funding constraints, CAT is only able to prioritize top five tier trip needs: Medical, Employment, Education, Social Agency, and Nutritional, but not Group Recreation or Personal Business. Staff was looking for ways to add Group Recreation and Personal Business trips back to the program.

Ms. Tucker asked if CAT would consider increasing rider fare to provide the program with more

funding so the service could be expanded.

Mr. De Leon mentioned that a fare study to evaluate the fixed route and paratransit programs was upcoming and considering fare structure increases to allow for expanded service would be included in the study.

Ms. Booth asked **Ms. Tucker** how far she lives from a fixed route stop. **Ms. Tucker** said she lives in Golden Gate Estates, which is far from any fixed route stops.

A group discussion followed, and it was noted that grocery shopping is considered a Nutritional trip, which does qualify under the TD program (depending on the store). Since **Ms. Tucker** attends Easter Seals and is included in Florida's Home and Community-Based Services waiver, **Ms. Watson** asked to follow up with **Ms. Tucker** to discuss possible additional transportation services for her personal trips. Around July 1, 2025, the TD program priorities tier would be reevaluated based on data for the new fiscal year.

B. Member Comments on Local TD Program and Process

None.

C. Annual TD Program LCB Training

Ms. Hansen provided a presentation of the Local Coordinating Board of the Transportation Disadvantaged annual training (which can be viewed in the March 5, 2025 LCB Public Workshop Agenda).

A group discussion followed, and it was noted that to qualify for the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) trips in the TD program, submitted applications are reviewed and assessed by CAT with categories that include disability status and distance from a fixed route service and whether the individual could potentially use fixed route service comfortably. Every year, CAT receives an allocation to assist with funding TD trips, which is decided by the State. That amount has remained around \$800,000 for several years, regardless of trip or demand increases.

4. ADJOURNMENT

*No further business being conducted, **Chair Pernas** adjourned the meeting at 2:01 p.m.*