



HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (TDLCB)

Thursday, February 12, 2026

MINUTES

The Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) held a regular quarterly meeting on February 12, 2026, at 1:30 p.m. at the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida. The meeting was advertised in the Hernando Sun newspaper, on the Hernando-Citrus MPO website, and on the Hernando County website. The agenda was available on the Hernando-Citrus MPO website.

MEMBERS PRESENT

John Allocco, TDLCB Chairman, Hernando County Board of County Commissioner
Gretchen Samter, TDLCB Vice Chairman, Person with a Disability
Chris Leffert, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Elizabeth Alacci, Florida Department of Children and Family Services
Lindsay Braun, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Blind Services
Gerry Whitted, Citizen Advocate – Transit User as Primary Means
Melissa Arceneaux, Citizen Advocate
Shanika Figueroa Rodriguez, Local Representative for Children at Risk
Darlene Lollie, Public Transit System (TheBus)
Maia Watson, Florida Department of Health Care Administration
Jose Infante, Regional Workforce Development Board
Elizabeth Watson, Alternate, State of Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities

MEMBERS ABSENT

Sam Kinard, Representative from the Public Educational Community (Hernando County School District)
Robert Werts, Veteran Services Representative
David Knazar, Florida Department of Children and Family Services
Casey Ladd, Florida Department of Elder Affairs

OTHERS PRESENT

Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant
Lisa Becker, Chief Administrative Officer, You Thrive Florida, Community Transportation Coordinator
Steve Homan, Chief Operating Officer, You Thrive Florida, Community Transportation Coordinator
David Knazar, Florida Department of Children and Family Services
Paul Passarelli, Hernando County Delegation on Government Efficiency (DOGE) Committee Member

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- Chairman Allocco called the meeting to order at 2:27 p.m., immediately following the Annual Public Workshop.
- A quorum was declared, and the affidavit of publication was read into the record.

[It is noted for the record that TDLCB member, Gerry Whitted, excused himself temporarily from the meeting.]

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Lollie to approve the agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Figueroa Rodriguez and the motion passed 11-0.

[It is noted for the record that TDLCB member, Gerry Whitted, returned to the meeting.]

ANNUAL ELECTION OF THE VICE CHAIRMAN FOR 2026

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Lollie to elect Ms. Samter as the TDLCB Vice Chairman for 2026. The

motion was seconded by Mr. Whitted and the motion passed 12-0.

ELECTION OF GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2025

After Board discussion the following TDLCB Board members were nominated as the Grievance Committee for 2026:

1. Melissa Arceneaux, member
2. Darlene Lollie, member
3. Jeannette Estes, member
4. Gretchen Samter, Alternate

[It is noted for the record that TDLCB members, Gerry Whitted and Gretchen Samter, excused themselves temporarily from the meeting.]

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Arceneaux to retain the TDLCB Grievance Committee members with Gretchen Samter designated as the committee alternate for 2026. The motion was seconded by Ms. Watson and the motion passed 10-0.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Arceneaux to continue service as the TDLCB Grievance Committee Chairman and to appoint Darlene Lollie as Vice Chairman for 2026. The motion was seconded by Ms. Alacci and the motion passed 10-0.

[It is noted for the record that TDLCB members, Gerry Whitted and Gretchen Samter, returned to the meeting.]

ACTION ITEM

Annual Review and Approval of the Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Grievance Procedures

Ms. Elwin reviewed the agenda item and the staff recommendation. Ms. Samter requested that the county attorney review the statement, "No member of the Local Coordinating Board may appear before the Grievance Committee in a representative capacity." Chairman Allocco recommended that the TDLCB approve the Grievance Procedures as written and seek attorney review prior to the next annual review. MPO staff will obtain the attorney's review and report back to the TDLCB at a future meeting before next year's Grievance Procedures Annual Review.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Samter to approve the Hernando County TDLCB Grievance Procedures as written, originally approved on February 13, 2025, and reviewed on February 12, 2026, and authorize the Chairman's signature thereon. The motion was seconded by Ms. Figueroa Rodriguez and the motion passed 12-0.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Samter to have the county attorney review whether the statement on page 5 of the TDLCB Grievance Procedures, "No member of the Local Coordinating Board may appear before the Grievance Committee in a representative capacity" can be revised to allow TDLCB Board members to serve in a representative capacity. MPO staff will report back on the attorney's findings at a subsequent meeting prior to next year's Grievance Procedures Annual Review. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lollie and the motion passed 12-0.

REPORT

Quarterly Report for October 1 through December 31, 2025, by the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), You Thrive Florida

Ms. Elwin reported that Jeff Cottrell, CTC Coordinator for You Thrive Florida, was unable to attend the meeting and that the quarterly report was provided for informational purposes only, requiring no action. On Mr. Cottrell's behalf, she noted that ridership in November and December was lower than usual because the service operated fewer days due to the holidays. She added that many families take their loved ones out for activities during this period, which further reduces the need for You Thrive's services.

Chairman Allocco also observed a corresponding decrease in cancellations and no-shows.

Lisa Becker, Chief Administrative Officer for You Thrive Florida, announced that she has assumed oversight of You Thrive's paratransit services in preparation for Kris Bates' upcoming retirement. She commended Jeff Cottrell and his team for their professionalism and patience in managing the many requests the organization receives. Ms. Becker reported that the service is currently operating at capacity and has limited funding available for expansion. She noted that, beyond individuals with limited mobility, many residents are transportation disadvantaged simply because they lack access to transportation. She encouraged TDLCB members to contact You Thrive Florida if they are aware of organizations that could provide additional support to these citizens.

Steve Homan, Chief Operating Officer for You Thrive Florida, added that the organization continues to pursue additional funding sources to better serve transportation-disadvantaged residents in Hernando County.

Ms. Lollie, Hernando County Transit Administrator, reported that TheBus recently added five new routes and plans to introduce two additional routes later this year. She explained that TheBus provides complimentary ADA service to anyone located within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a designated route. Under Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations, ADA service requests cannot be denied; if contacted to provide transportation for medical or recreational purposes, both types of trips must be accommodated.

She noted that an interactive map is available on TheBus website to help residents determine whether they are located within the $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile ADA service area. The website address is:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7a968aaf8c2c4d48b38662786b5637f5/page/Page>

The fare for ADA service is \$2.50 per trip (\$5 roundtrip). She encouraged You Thrive Florida to refer ADA-qualified riders to the fixed-route ADA service when appropriate.

FEATURE PRESENTATION

1. David Knazar, Supervisor for Hernando and Citrus Counties for the Florida Department of Children and Families

Mr. Knazar provided a feature presentation outlining the adult protective services available to vulnerable adults. He explained how the Department receives and investigates reports of abuse and how the agency collaborates with other state partners to ensure appropriate services are provided. To report suspected abuse, individuals may call the Florida Abuse Hotline at 1-800-96-ABUSE (1-800-962-2873) or submit a report online at www.myflfamilies.com.

Chairman Allocco followed up on Mr. Knazar's example regarding assistance for individuals who may need help with tasks such as taking out the trash. He noted that Hernando County also offers a door-pickup trash service through its contracted hauler and encouraged residents to contact any county commissioner if such assistance is needed.

In response to a question from Mr. Infante, Mr. Knazar explained that the agency works with senior homes, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, adult family care homes, and group homes, not on the licensure side, but specifically regarding abuse and neglect concerns. These include issues such as medication management, nutrition, proper treatment, adequate feeding, and physical abuse.

In response to Ms. Samter's question, Mr. Knazar reported that Hernando County typically receives approximately 35 cases in a slow month and up to 50 cases in a busy month.

2. Shanika Figueroa Rodriguez, Hernando School District Supervisor of Federal Programs and District McKinney-Vento Liaison and TDLCB member representing Children at Risk

Ms. Figueroa Rodriguez delivered a presentation outlining the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance

Act, which provides legal protections to ensure that all children and youth experiencing homelessness have equal access to a free and appropriate public education. She explained that, under the Act, homeless children and youth are defined as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. She also noted that unaccompanied homeless youth are those not in the physical custody of a parent or legal guardian and may be living in kinship or friendship care.

Ms. Figueroa Rodriguez provided examples of the causes of homelessness among children and youth and described the services available to support them. These services include backpacks, school supplies, uniforms or school clothing, toiletries, and assistance with academic and extracurricular fees. She reported that for the 2025–2026 school year, 798 students have been identified as homeless out of approximately 23,000 Hernando County students. Of those 798 students, 88 are unaccompanied youth, including 39 high school students.

Mr. Infante shared that he serves as a Toys for Tots Coordinator and offered his support, noting that if there is ever a need for toys, he can be contacted. He emphasized that Toys for Tots is not solely a Christmas program and that the organization maintains toys and funds year-round.

Ms. Arceneaux expressed how much she enjoyed the featured presentations. Chairman Allocco reiterated that the feature presentation portion of the meetings provides an opportunity for the many TDLCB agencies represented to share how they can support one another.

Chris Leffert, Transit Programs Director for Florida Department of Transportation District 7, and Gretchen Samter, TDLCB member representing the Person with a Disability position, will deliver the featured presentations at the May 14, 2026, TDLCB meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS - There were no citizen comments.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Leffert reported that award notifications for the current year 5310 Formula Grant Program are expected to be released in March or early April. He also informed Ms. Lollie that Hernando County Transit received \$100,000 from the off-cycle 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas program. Ms. Lollie noted that these funds will be used to purchase additional infotainment screens for some of the smaller buses, providing real-time passenger information, multimedia entertainment, and targeted advertising.

MPO STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Elwin shared that she and Mr. Esposito participate in networking meetings to learn about programs being implemented elsewhere, helping them better serve the communities within their region. She noted that Mr. Esposito attended the Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council (MPOAC) meeting on Wednesday, January 28, in Orlando, and MPO Staff participated in the Florida Metropolitan Planning Partnership (FMPP) meeting on Thursday, January 29, also in Orlando, which was well attended by Florida MPOs.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) is scheduled for Thursday, May 14, 2026, beginning at 1:30 p.m., at the Hernando County Building Training Facility, 1661 Blaise Drive, Brooksville, Florida. The meeting agenda and back-up materials are available online at: www.hernandocounty.us/hernandocitrusmpo.

Chair Allocco adjourned the meeting at 3:35 p.m.