



HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (TDLCB)

Thursday, May 8, 2025

MINUTES

The Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) held a regular quarterly meeting on May 8, 2025, 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, Chair, Hernando County Board of County Commissioner
Gretchen Samter, Vice Chair, Person with a Disability
Michelle Sikavitsas, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7
Sam Kinard, Representative from the Public Educational Community
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)
Casey Ladd, Florida Department of Elder Affairs
Karen Wessel, Alternate, Florida Department of Health Care Administration
Miranda Burke, Alternate, Regional Workforce Development Board
Jeannette Estes, State of Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities

MEMBERS ABSENT

Tony Graham, Veterans Service Representative
Elizabeth Alacci, Florida Department of Children and Family Services

OTHERS PRESENT

Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Executive Assistant
Jeff Cottrell, You Thrive Florida, Community Transportation Coordinator
Maria DeJesus, Florida Department of Transportation, District 7

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

- Chair Allocco called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
- The Pledge of Allegiance and the introductions of Board, staff, and attendees followed the Invocation.
- A quorum was declared, and the affidavit of publication was read into the record.

APPROVAL/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Ms. Elwin stated that the original agenda was available May 1, 2025, and item D4, Review and Approval of the FY 2026 Rate Calculation for Services, has been added to today's agenda.

Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Samter to approve the modified agenda. The motion was seconded by Ms. Arceneaux and the motion passed 13-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2025, TDLCB ANNUAL PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Lollie to approve the February 13, 2025, Minutes of the TDLCB's Annual Public Workshop. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ladd and the motion passed 13-0.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2025, TDLCB REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Arceneaux to approve the February 13, 2025, Minutes of the TDLCB's Regular Public Meeting. The motion was seconded by Ms. Burke and the motion passed 13-0.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **Review and Approval of the Annual Evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)**
Ms. Elwin reviewed the Annual Evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and staff recommendations. She reported that the goal for converting riders from the Transportation Disadvantaged service to fixed-route use was changed from 100% to 3% in an effort to make the goal attainable, and the CTC achieved a 1% conversion rate. Chair Allocco requested a discussion not only about the new standard but also about the plan and process to reach this goal. Ms. Elwin noted that this discussion will take place during the annual update of the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP), which is scheduled for the September agenda.

Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Samter to approve the submittal of the CTC Annual Evaluation to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The motion was seconded by Ms. Wessel and the motion passed 13-0.

2. **Review and Comment on the Innovative Service Development (ISD) Grant Application by the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)**
Jeff Cottrell, the Director of Transportation at You Thrive Florida, explained that the ISD grant would be used to hire an additional driver and cover the operating and maintenance costs associated with adding essential Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) services. These services would include routes to the VA in Tampa, the VA in Port Richey, and several medical facilities in Pasco County. He also noted that if the grant were awarded, the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) would not receive the entire amount upfront; funds would be provided after billing for actual expenses incurred under the grant. Ms. Samter expressed her appreciation to the CTC for their efforts to expand TD services to additional locations and urged them to consider including service to Pasco-Hernando State College (PHSC) West Campus in New Port Richey to support education and employment opportunities.

Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Samter to support the CTC Innovative Service Development (ISD) grant application. The motion was seconded by Ms. Arceneaux and the motion passed 13-0.

3. **Review and Ratification of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Shirley Conroy Grant Application**
Ms. Elwin reviewed the agenda item and staff recommendation and noted the application would be reviewed by MPO staff prior to final submission to the Commission of the Transportation Disadvantaged.

Motion: A motion was made by Vice Chair Samter to ratify the CTC Shirley Conroy Grant application, and that the information provided to the CTD is correct and the application will be reviewed by MPO staff. The motion was seconded by Ms. Rodriguez and the motion passed 13-0.

4. **Review and Approval of the FY 2026 Rate Calculation for Services by the CTC**

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Lollie to approve the FY 2026 Rate Calculation as approved by the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The motion was seconded by Ms. Wessel and the motion passed 13-0.

REPORTS

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

Chair Allocco suggested updating the title of the quarterly report to accurately reflect the current reporting period, instead of labeling it "Quarterly Report for the Fiscal Period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025." Jeff Cottrell, the Director of Transportation at You Thrive Florida, reported an increase in trips during the last quarter. This rise may be attributed to private medical insurance limiting or halting funding for rides to medical appointments, which is putting pressure on the You Thrive system.

Chair Allocco inquired whether any marketing efforts or word-of-mouth referrals could explain the increase in service usage. He emphasized that effective marketing is important if the goal is to maintain high trip numbers. Mr. Cottrell confirmed that several medical clinics are now referring clients to You Thrive for their transportation needs and stressed the importance of securing additional funding to provide more services.

Vice Chair Samter asked if the system was at full capacity or simply strained. Mr. Cottrell affirmed that while the system is indeed strained, trips are prioritized for medical and nutritional needs. However, other trips, such as shopping excursions, may need to be scheduled two to three days in advance. He confirmed that no trip requests are currently being denied. When Chair Allocco asked if any medical trips were being declined, Mr. Cottrell responded that no medical trips have been turned away.

FEATURE PRESENTATIONS

1. Andras Serfozo, the Transit Operations Coordinator at Hernando County, delivered a presentation on the new routes being introduced by TheBus. In a response to Commission Allocco, Mr. Serfozo noted that ridership on the two new micro-transit routes—Route 6, serving downtown Brooksville, and Route 5, connecting SR 50/Cortez Boulevard to Ridge Manor—has exceeded expectations.

Ms. Lollie reported that the ridership numbers for March and April were 71 and 151 rides on Route 5, while Route 6 had 20 and 33 rides during the same months. Mr. Serfozo also discussed the addition of bus stops on SR 50/Cortez Boulevard once road construction is completed. Route 7, which will run along County Line Road and US 41, is expected to launch in mid to late June, while Route 8, named The Mermaid Run, will begin service when Pine Island Park reopens.

Ms. Lollie noted that TheBus is transitioning from naming routes by colors to a numbering system due to the growing number of routes and the limitation of available colors.

Ms. Burke raised a concern regarding the bus stops 523 (in between Zaxby's and Taco Bell) and 527 (west of Deep South Family BBQ) on SR 50/Cortez Boulevard, where riders feel uncomfortable due to individuals who remain at the bus stop benches all day. Ms. Arceneaux echoed this concern for the bus stop at the corner of Mariner Boulevard and Spring Hill Drive. Chair Allocco suggested that a letter be sent to the Sheriff's Department requesting increased law enforcement presence at these specific bus stops, particularly during the times of day when riders are using the service. He requested to be copied on this correspondence. Ms. Elwin emphasized that this measure would be especially important during the winter months when it gets dark earlier. Additionally, Chair Allocco encouraged business owners to arrange for someone to escort young employees to the bus stops when safety concerns arise.

Ms. Samter mentioned that adding new bus routes will help alleviate some of the pressure on the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) by providing ADA services within a quarter of a mile from the fixed-route system. Ms. Arceneaux suggested distributing printed brochures at major employment centers, such as the Walmart Distribution Center. Ms. Lollie stated that once the routes are finalized, new brochures and QR code placards will be created and distributed throughout the community.

- Casey Ladd, the Contract Management Administrator for Elder Options, provided an overview of the programs and resources available in North Central Florida through Elder Options. Elder Options serves seniors aged 60 and older, adults with disabilities aged 18 and older, and their caregivers.

Some of the resources offered by Elder Options include home care and support programs, caregiver training and support, healthy aging classes, wellness coaching, emergency home energy assistance, and services to prevent and address elder abuse. Ms. Estes clarified that Elder Options is a non-profit organization contracted by the State of Florida Department of Elder Affairs to provide services for the aging community on behalf of the Florida Department of Health Affairs.

Mr. Whitted praised the services provided by Elder Options and mentioned that he has participated in Tai Chi and diabetes management classes, and he plans to attend workshops this summer to become a trainer.

Lindsay Braun, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Blind Services, and Sam Kinard, Representative from the Public Educational Community, will provide the Feature Presentations for the September 11, 2025, meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Kimberly Braga mentioned that she is a dialysis patient who uses the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) services provided by TheBus three times a week. She described this service as amazing and highlighted how beneficial it has been to her life, calling it an absolute blessing. Chair Allocco encouraged Ms. Braga to write a testimonial that could inspire others who may need similar services.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

There were no further Board comments.

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025, 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 3:09 p.m.