HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (TDLCB)

Thursday, August 8, 2024

MINUTES

The Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) held a regular quarterly meeting on August 8, 2024, 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 and the agenda was available on the Hernando/Citrus MPO website.

MEMBERS PRESENT

John Allocco, Chair, Hernando County Board of County Commissioner
Elizabeth Alacci, Florida Department of Children and Family Services
Kevin Bargerstock, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation or Blind Services
Robert Werts, Veterans Service Representative
Gerry Whitted, Citizen Advocate – Transit User as Primary Means
Gretchen Samter, Person with a Disability
Melissa Arceneaux, Citizen Advocate
Darlene Lollie, Public Transit System
Casey Ladd, Florida Department of Elder Affairs
Riley Larsen, Florida Department of Health Care Administration
Jeannette Estes, State of Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities

MEMBERS ABSENT

Shanika Figueroa Rodriguez, Vice Chair, Local Representative for Children at Risk
Dave Newell, Florida Department of Transportation
Anthony Cavaliere, Representative from the Public Educational Community
John Eberle, Regional Workforce Development Board

OTHERS PRESENT

Bob Esposito, MPO Executive Director
Mary Elwin, MPO Coordinator
Joy Turner, MPO Administrative Assistant III
Joel Mendez, You Thrive, Community Transportation Coordinator, Alternate
Brian Hawkins, Hernando County Board of County Commissioner

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

Agenda Item F5, Review and Approval of the 2025 Meeting Schedule, is being added under Action Items and Agenda Item F4, Review and Approval of the Annual Operating Reports (AOR), is being postponed until November 14, 2024.

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sumter to approve the agenda, as amended. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lollie and the motion passed 11-0.

REVIEW/APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 9, 2024, TDLCB REGULAR PUBLIC MEETING

Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Arceneaux to approve the May 9, 2024, Minutes of the TDLCB's Regular Public Meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Werts and the motion passed 11-0.

PRESENTATION

Presentation by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) on the Hernando County FY 2025-2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP)

Jonathan Roberson, AICP, Research Associate for CUTR, made a presentation on the status of the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (Hernando TDP) for FY 2025-FY 2034. Chair Allocco asked for clarification on the complementary ADA trips provided within ¾-mile of fixed routes. Mr. Roberson affirmed complementary ADA trips are provided if the originating address is within ¾-mile from the bus route versus a bus stop. TheBus scheduler verifies if the address is within ¾-mile prior to scheduling the stop. Ms. Sumter asked if there is a limit to the number of complementary ADA trips in a day. Mr. Whitted mentioned he was told there was a cap of three complementary ADA trips per day. Later in the meeting (*under Board Comments*), Ms. Lollie affirmed there is no cap on how many complementary ADA trips can be scheduled in a day, however, the number of trips that can be realistically achieved in a day will be predicated on how long each trip takes, the number of other scheduled riders, and driver availability. Given the restraints listed, riders may want to consider scheduling accordingly with TheBus.

Mr. Roberson shared that a social media survey would be conducted in September to obtain public input on the opportunities and challenges for public transportation in Hernando County. Ms. Estes asked for a copy of the survey so she could obtain feedback from her stakeholders. Mr. Roberson affirmed that a link to the survey would be forthcoming. Ms. Sumter acknowledged that TheBus drivers and staff are courteous and professional, and the buses are clean and well-maintained. Ms. Sumter expressed the largest challenge is the time it takes to get to a destination and the need to extend the time the bus operates. Mr. Whitted conveyed that the infrastructure to get to the bus stop could be improved (more and safer sidewalks and bus shelters). Mr. Whitted shared that, as a wheelchair user, he looks at the bus stop as a quality-of-life issue not just a piece of infrastructure. Access to the bus allows people, especially those that are impoverished or socially isolated, to have access to go shopping, visit friends, or go to Starbucks. He also stated there is a lack of consistent marketing to educate and encourage bus ridership and there are many individuals in the community that could gain a sense of independence if they had knowledge of the services that are available. Chair Allocco acknowledged the challenges with using the bus and noted that the rising cost of auto insurance coupled with the population growth may lead to an increase in bus usage.

Ms. Sumter shared that glass enclosed bus shelters can get too hot to sit in and do not provide cover during heavy rain. Ms. Lollie responded that the shelters being reviewed by TheBus do not have glass or plexiglass but are aluminum mesh similar to the shelters at the airport and City Hall. The plexiglass shelters that are in the community are bought and maintained by a contracted vendor, Creative Outdoors, and not by TheBus. Ms. Lollie also shared that in order to implement 30-minute headways versus one hour, TheBus would have to double in size and double the bus fleet. Buses are being ordered each year and routes are being expanded, but the last bus that was purchased cost $584,000.

Mr. Roberson affirmed that the initial survey data reflects similar concerns discussed during the last MPO Board meeting and the next phase for the TDP will be to prioritize needs and develop a plan to move forward. Chair Allocco asked if there was ridership data available on the Saturday service introduced in Indian River. Mr. Roberson shared the Saturday service just started in August 2024. Commissioner Hawkins expressed his desire for public transit to be free of charge for Hernando County residents but acknowledges that it cannot happen right now and there are Federal responsibilities that necessitate charging a fee. Commissioner Hawkins also inquired if there is an opportunity or subsidies available to partner with ride share apps like Uber and Lyft during off-peak hours. He also conveyed the need for expanding services in the Deltona Road and Barclay Avenue areas. Ms. Lollie relayed several of the proposed route expansions and explained that once the public surveys are completed, the proposed routes would be *mapped out* and contained in a future presentation of the TDP. Mr. Roberson ended his presentation by sharing that in the most recent Indian River County Transit Development Plan (TDP), adding more routes was prioritized over reducing hourly headways to 30-minutes.

QUARTERLY REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (CTC), YOU THRIVE FLORIDA

The quarterly report of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) was included in the agenda packet and Joel Mendez shared there are three vehicles that are being wrapped (rebranded) with the new name and logo and that work should be completed by the end of the year. You Thrive Florida is hiring a driver (CDL Class B with a passenger endorsement) and interested parties can apply at YouThriveFlorida.org. The CTC is preparing for and attending the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) annual conference September 22-24, 2024. Chair Allocco asked if contracts written with Mid Florida versus You Thrive Florida were being updated. Ms. Elwin explained it would be a little bit of both. The CTD's contract indicates it is with Mid Florida Community Services. A novation agreement would have to occur with the CTD to utilize the name of You Thrive Florida.

ACTION ITEMS

1. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FY2025 ANNUAL UPDATE TO THE ADOPTED TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN (TDSP) FY 2024-FY 2028**

   Ms. Elwin highlighted the change for two TDSP goals, 1) conversion of TD system users to the fixed-route system goal to 3% versus 100%, and 2) decreasing the passenger no-show goal to 3% versus 1%. Chair Allocco agreed this makes sense as he remarked that a standard should be adjusted if it is not attainable. A section was added to *Barriers to Coordination* (page 5) that addresses specifics needs in Hernando County.

   Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Lollie to approve the Annual Update to the Adopted Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) FY 2024-FY 2028 for submittal to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The motion was seconded by Mr. Werts and the motion passed 11-0.

2. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE FY 2025 RATE MODEL CALCULATION FOR HERNANDO COUNTY**

   Chair Allocco commented that there was a slight decrease to the FY 2025 rate model which is positive.

   Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sumter to approve the FY 2025 Rate Model Calculation for Hernando County. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitted and the motion passed 11-0.

3. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL EXPENDITURE REPORT (AER) OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (CTC)**

   Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Arceneaux to approve the Annual Expenditure Report (AER) for FY 2023-FY 2024 and its submittal to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). The motion was seconded by Mr. Werts and the motion passed 11-0.

4. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE ANNUAL OPERATING REPORT (AOR) OF THE COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (CTC)**

   Agenda Item F4 was postponed until November 14, 2024 although the CTC will submit the report by the September 15, 2024, deadline.

5. **REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF THE 2025 MEETING SCHEDULE**

   Motion: A motion was made by Ms. Sumter to approve the 2025 Meeting Schedule with consideration being given to move the August 14, 2025, meeting to September 11, 2025, in order to allow sufficient time to prepare the Annual Operating Report for its submittal by September 15, 2025. The motion was seconded by Mr. Bargerstock and the motion passed 11-0.

FEATURE PRESENTATION – VETERANS SERVICES

Roberts Werts, Veterans Services Representative, emphasized that Veterans Services is not the same as Veterans (VA). Veterans Services works as a department under the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners but are trained by the VA to prepare paperwork and assist veterans in applying for disability, decision appeals, and help families navigate survival benefits when a veteran passes. Chair Allocco asked how Veterans Services assists veterans with their transportation needs. Mr. Werts affirmed Veterans Services works mainly with the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), You Thrive Florida, to arrange transportation to their office. Ms. Sumter mentioned private insurance, Medicare, and Medicaid, provide

allowances for transportation to appointments as well. Ms. Elwin shared that the CTC was previously utilizing an Innovative Service Development (ISD) grant to fund trips for veterans. The ISD grant was not renewed for FY2025, however, the veteran trip funds were absorbed in the CTC's budget and services will continue for veterans. Chair Allocco asked if there was a fixed-route bus stop at the Veterans Services Office and Ms. Lollie affirmed a review for a future stop could be evaluated but veterans may be better served using the complementary ADA service.

Riley Larsen, Florida Department of Health Care Administration, and Gretchen Samter, Person with a Disability, will provide the Feature Presentations for the November 14, 2024, TDLCB meeting.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

There were no citizen comments.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

- Based upon a discussion earlier in the meeting, Ms. Lollie affirmed there is no cap on how many complementary ADA trips can be scheduled in a day, however, the number of trips that can be realistically achieved in a day will be predicated on how long each trip takes, the number of other scheduled riders, and driver availability. Given the restraints listed, riders may want to consider scheduling accordingly with TheBus.

MPO STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Esposito provided the following updates:

- A 2055 Florida Transportation Plan development is in progress. A flyer was distributed for the public and partners to engage in the process, and the website is https://www.floridaftp.com.
- A Gulf Coast Safe Streets Summit Dignitary Panel Representative is needed for an October 9, 2024, meeting from 1:00-5:00 pm at the Port Tampa Bay Cruise Terminal-2, 651 Channelside Drive, Tampa, Florida. The Summit is an educational event that brings together community partners to elevate our efforts on how to design and implement safe and equitable transportation facilities for all modes of transportation. Each MPO/TPO is being asked to provide high level decision makers (appointed, elected, board member, county administrator, division director or community leader) to be part of a moderated dignitary panel. The moderator will ask questions to prompt a dialogue following Gil Penalosa's presentation. It's envisioned that panelists will respond and discuss doable change they now see possible.
- There will be two public workshops for the 2050 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP); one on August 5, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. in Brooksville and the other at 5:00 p.m. in Inverness. The workshops can be attended in person or virtually. An email invitation was sent earlier this week – please share with others who would benefit from this information. *[Subsequent to the meeting, the workshops were postponed due to tropical storm Debby and rescheduled for August 22, 2024.]*

ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting of the Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) is scheduled for Thursday, November 14, 2024, 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 2:43 p.m.