

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 23, 2023

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) was held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, February 23, 2023, in the County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27th Street, Vero Beach, Florida.

Note: Audio and video recordings of the meeting can be found at
<https://www.ircgov.com/Boards/TDLCB/2023.htm>.

Present were: Chairman **Deryl Loar**, Commissioner, District 4, Vice Chairman; **William Lundy Parden**, Disabled Representative; **Jennifer Idlette**, Public Education Representative; **Marie Dorismond**, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Representative; **Victoria Anderson**, FAHCA Representative; **Melissa Arndt**, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Representative **Amber Young**, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDVR) Representative; **Dr. Harry Hurst**, Citizen Advocate Representative; **Milory Senat**, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Representative; **Danica David**, Citizen's Advocate; **Dalia Dillon**, Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Representative.; and **Jennifer Sideregts**, CSRC Representative.

Absent were: **Bob McPartlan**, FDC&F Representative; **Darlene Silverstein**, Medical Community Representative, **Angela David-Green**, FACA Representative.

Present were IRC staff: **Brian Freeman**, Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Staff Director; **Jim Mann**, MPO Senior Planner; **Mark Vietze**, MPO GIS Planner; **Patti Johnson**, MPO Staff Assistant and **Kim Moirano**, Recording Secretary. Also present was **Karen Deigl**, Executive Director, Senior Resource Association.

TWO VACANCIES: Children at Risk and Senior Community Representatives.

Call to Order

Chairman Commissioner Joseph Earman stated it had been a pleasure and an honor serving on the Board for the last two years. The Board of County Commissioners decided to appoint Joseph Earman as Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. He stated he had way too many duties so as being the Chairman he appointed Deryl Loar to take over as the Chairman of TDLCB.

Chairman Deryl Loar called the TDLCB meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Chairman Loar requested that everyone identify themselves and who they are affiliated with.

Election of Vice Chair – Action Required

ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Arndt, the Board voted unanimously (12-0) to re-elect Mr. William Lundy Parden as Vice Chairman for 2023.

Approval of Minutes of the November 17, 2022 Regular Meeting – Action Required

Chairman Loar asked if there were any additions or corrections to the TDLCB Meeting Minutes of November 11, 2022.

ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Mr. William Lundy Parden, the Board voted unanimously (11-0) to approve the November 11, 2022 minutes as presented.

Amber Young arrived at 10:05 a.m.

Planning Status Report – No Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman stated the majority of funding for the Public Transportation System talking about both the Go Line and the Community Coach door to door service comes from the Federal Government through the Federal Transit Administration. We're talking about over Three Million Dollars annually in recent years that the County has received from FTA for the operation and capital means of the system. Every three years, FTA goes through what's called a triangular view where they take an in depth look at how we're running the system and just complying with all the different requirements for it. We're kind of in the middle of that right now. There will probably be more information in the future that says that's done. In previous reviews we've always come out with flying colors but it's also a chance for us to get to learn a little bit more. Reviewing people that we work with each time we do this so it's a little different right now because they're still kind of doing it in kind of a hybrid format where it's not all in person as it had been in previous years.

In January Jon Howard, the planner over the last couple of years, left the County and moved out of state. He stated that we appreciated Jon's contributions to supporting the MPO and the TDLCB. He and his wife were from a more Northern climate and he thought they kind of missed the snow and the cold weather. Mark Vietze has been filling in and has done an admirable job helping to put together some of the items in the Agenda packet.

Community Transportation Coordinator Status Report – No Action Required

Ms. Karen Deigl, President/CEO, Senior Resource Association presented an overview of the First Quarter of 2022-2023 Transportation Report, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. Chris Stephenson was not able to attend the meeting. He was in West Palm at a title program that had been started with FDOT and the transportation systems in the state so he is learning all about what FDOT does and FDOT's staff is learning all about what the Senior Resource Association does as transit systems.

Ms. Deigl stated that for the October to December quarter the Community Coach paratransit trips have decreased by three over the last period. The ADA trips are down and that's a good thing because ADA trips are not sponsored through the TD. They do not get reimbursed for those trips like they do with their TD trips. If any numbers are going to be down, they want the ADA trips to be down.

Their on-time performance for Community Coach was 92 percent in the first quarter. Their rate on which their on-time performance is supposed to be is greater than 75 percent. The Community Coach applications received for the first quarter they had received 154 applications and approved 97. Their total active riders were 1,961. Anyone that is disapproved is because they are actually able to ride the Go Line which is a cost-savings if someone can ride the Go Line. What they do when someone applies, they do go through an eligibility process. They fill out forms. A lot of the forms might be incomplete. So, they contact them and try to get the forms completed. Obviously, they are regulated. Those forms are checked so they have to make sure that they're completely filled out for them to be a rider. It could be a physical ability to ride the Go Line. When somebody applies and says they would like to have ADA status, they actually have a third-party who is providing that eligibility process. They used to ask the riders to have their doctor provide them the form and, of course, when anyone goes to their doctor, it's check, check, check so their ADA numbers were through the roof. Again, they do not get reimbursed for those trips so to help solve that problem they went to a third-party provider and that's TCCH. Those are just a few of the reasons why persons would not be eligible. Also, they do go through the ridership on an annual basis. If someone has not been a rider with them for over 12 months, they purge those names off the list and so currently again they have 1,961 active riders in their system. Mr. Freeman stated it is a

screening process. They have limited resources to provide the service so they want to make sure that the people who are receiving the service are really those who are truly eligible for it. There is a TD eligibility process, the Transportation Disadvantage and then there's the Americans with Disabilities Act eligibility process. They have slightly different somewhat overlapping requirements. A lot of people end up being eligible under both or just one of the two but on a service side, the State Commission reimburses them for the TD trips not the ADA trips. So, those are a costlier trip to provide. It was several years ago the kind of eligibility screening process was kind of tightened up especially with an eye towards the ADA side. Mr. William Parden asked if the rider was not approved whether they could pay it themselves. Ms. Deigl stated no, they don't have a fee for service opportunity. If they cannot ride it, the reason why they wouldn't be able to ride it would be because they could get on the Go Line. They don't leave anybody sitting at home obviously so they've gone through the process and if they haven't provided them the information that is required, they may not need the ride like they had wanted because they're not going the full route of giving Senior Resource Associates what they need. Ms. Deigl indicated that anybody that is deemed eligible they have to do a re-apply every three years for them.

The Treasure Coast Development is a disabilities advantage ride program that started back in 2020. It was a private project. They had received funding and this past year they applied for an innovative service development grant through the Commission for Disadvantaged Transportation Disadvantaged and they were awarded a 1.2 million dollars grant for St. Lucie, Indian River and Martin County. The numbers are continually going up. St. Lucie County has really increased and a lot of that is because the Good Will, Good Stream, Gulf Stream sites that were in Martin County they consolidated to Fort Pierce and St. Lucie County. Everyone is now being transported to St. Lucie County and that's where the numbers are captured. Also, there was some group homes that were in Martin County that were closed down or they were moved to St. Lucie County. That increased the numbers in St. Lucie. A great program. They received the bonus funding this year. Again, they will be going back. They just received word from the Transportation that they're going to be able to apply for the grant but not as much as last year. Last year was \$750,000 per County. They only had 4 million to award and they received 2 million of those dollars for the Treasure Coast. This year they're allowing them to apply for \$500,000 for each County and so they will be doing the same a million dollars for Indian River County and St. Lucie. Ms. Deigl indicated it would impact the ridership. They are reimbursed on the number of rides that they provide so that's where it would impact it mostly and not so much on their overhead because they outsource all of those rides to other vendors. They don't have drivers and buses on the road for that particular program to other transportation services. So, it would be the number of rides.

The Go Line overview. They operated 77 days in the first quarter and their ridership is up by 3 percent which is once again on track to be the best ridership ever and that actually includes closing one and a half days due to the hurricanes so the numbers would have been even greater.

They had 11 road calls versus 7 and again those are just calls that when their bus breaks down, something happens and they have to go out and change their buses. That's going to be expected. Their vehicles are getting older. They're on track to be replacing nine buses in the next couple of years. So, she expected that that would increase as the year goes along. Dr. Hurst said he was kind of surprised because they thought they had a very good maintenance program. Ms. Deigl stated they're in, they're out. She said as the buses get older. Mr. Freeman said there is a schedule for most of the buses based on their useful life. They actually have a rather significant round of vehicle acquisition coming up in about two years. Well, actually the intent is to have those vehicles delivered about two years from now so they will be actually be ordered in the near future depending on the type of vehicle they can have a lead time of months to over a year before they're delivered. Dr. Hurst asked whether the vehicles that we are phasing out if they're offered to other non-profit agencies. Ms. Deigl stated that by the time Senior Resource Associates is done with the trucks they're pretty duck taped so they do put them up on the County's Disposition Auction. Mr. Freeman stated that the county has a disposition program. What happens is that the vehicles that are on the mailing service today are then transitioned to be spares or back up vehicles so that there could be a rotation whenever a bus is pulled off the road for preventive maintenance. The vehicles that are on the daily service today are then transitioned to be spares or back up vehicles so that there could be a rotation so whenever a bus would pull off the road for preventative maintenance or whatever there's already a small group of vehicles that are used to put in the use each

day. So, every day there is at least probably a couple of vehicles that are kind of rotated out of service. They have some new vehicles through the 5010 program. Ms. Deigl stated that was one of the reasons why their numbers and their ADA are down because ARC does such a wonderful job with their transportation program.

The Go Line Bus Shelter Project they have slated a number of shelters to be put in. Todd who is with MBV, he's finishing up the plans and he's met with the installer and they should be starting construction on a number of these shelters in the near future. She looked forward to having more up in the community. Dr. Hurst stated that the Simme-Seats are very impressive to see and how much they are used when you drive by them.

Ridership on Route 7 which is the route that goes from the I.G. Center to the mall is up 10 percent and other than the Burlington Coat Factory opening up, she wasn't quite sure. They are going to be tracking that to see if there is any trend and reasons why. Route 15 which is the route that is from the I.G. Center to Fort Pierce, the Community State College is up 73 percent. The route was stopped during COVID. It resumed last year and so this number, in fact, is apples to apples because it was running the first quarter of the year of 2021-2022. There has been a significant increase in the number of people that are using that this year which is nice to see.

Their on-time performance is 95 percent of all stops and they have to be better than 90 percent. They maintain that higher level consistently. The number of shelters and semi-seats has not changed as of yet. The installations will change those numbers coming up hopefully in the next six months.

Advertising on the bus has really grown which is wonderful. Mr. Freeman stated that advertising brings in between \$30,000 to \$40,000 a year. Ms. Deigl stated that's nice because those are dollars that they can use for things that grants will not allow them to pay for, like, coffee for their drivers to have in the drivers' room. The program is being run very well.

Their complaints were down by one. She always like to say that compared to the number of trips that they're doing having six complaints in three months' time certainly is not anything that they are upset about. Ms. Deigl stated that they have a marketing company that manages the kind of contract with the advertisers and they're the ones who are responsible for marketing that program. Probably one of the biggest is the buses themselves running around with the ads on it.

Review of Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #2 for the 2022/23 Planning Grant

– Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman stated that this is the quarterly progress report and reimbursement invoice for the Planning Grant that reflects the activities that were done to support this committee and the program overall for the quarter that ended December 31st. After review and approval, they will submit it to the State Commission for reimbursement.

ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Dalia Dillon, the Board voted unanimously (12-0) to approve the Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #2 for the 2022/23 Planning Grant as presented.

Consideration of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Selection – Action Required

Ms. Freeman stated that this is a process that every MPO and every CTC in the State has to go through every five years. Basically, every five years the MPO through the TDCLCB coordinates a selection process to make a recommendation on who the Community Transportation Coordinator should be for Indian River County. The contract that the Community Transportation Coordinator enters into is actually not with the County but is with the State Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The State Commission has contracts with the CTCs all around the State. For as long as we've had the TD

Program in Indian River County which he thought went back to 1990, the CTC has been Senior Resource Association so as part of that process back in October they advertised for letters of interest if there were agencies or businesses that want to apply via the CTC. They have to have a competitive process. They did receive two responses. One was from Senior Resource Association and the other one was from a for profit business known as "Transitions Commute Solutions." They're out of Winter Garden and so because they have the two responses they advertised an RFP or request for proposals right around the holidays and it had a response date that was in late January and only the Senior Resource Association responded. They provided a copy of their proposal. The staff recommended to the TDLCB that the TDLCB recommend that the Senior Resource Association be selected once again to be the Transportation Coordinator. This would be for another five-year period. It runs through June 30th of 2028. That recommendation will go to the MPO Board where they would act on it at their April meeting and then from there, they would then go on an Agenda for the Commission. That meeting will be in either April or May. So, this process would all be completed before the current contract ends on June 30th of this year. Dr. Hurst stated we could not make a better choice. We would be hard pushed to find anyone who could compete competitively with this organization.

**ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Jennifer Idlette,
the Board voted unanimously (12-0) to move the Community
Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Selection to the MPO.**

Consideration of the 2023 Title VI Program Update – No Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman stated that the Federal Government through the Federal Transit Administration provides the majority of the funding to both the operating and capital means for both the Go Line and the Community Coach. One of the things that they're required to do as a recipient of those funds is to maintain a non-discrimination program. This is in Title VI and they have to update it every three years both ensuring that there is no discrimination in the provision of the services. If there is anyone who feels, like, there has been discrimination there is a process through which they could submit that complaint. They have a copy of the update to the program. It's essentially the same as it was when they adopted it three years ago. There have been some updates on some of the Census information in there. One change that will be made to this before it goes to the Board of County Commissioners is just to be consistent with all of the programs that the County maintains. For those other programs the non-discrimination contact person is the County Attorney Dylan Reingold. What they're going to do is make this consistent with the County's overall Title VI Program instead of having the infield staff director be the contact. It will be the County Attorney. So, he will be the single point of contact for any kind of program.

2023 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update Presentation – No Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman stated that every five years they do an update to the Transit Development Plan. That's a pretty holistic examination of the Transit System and looking at how it's operating, how it compares to other communities with similar communities as ours. It also looks at what the needs are to grow and develop the system and what kind of implantation plan would be feasible or doable for that. They tend to bring in some outside experts when they do the Transit Development Plan Major Update. The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) which is based out of the University of South Florida has undertaken this effort for them. Jonathan Roberson who is a project manager attended by ZOOM provided an introduction to where we are with the Transit Development Plan. One of the major undertakings that they do with this is a rider survey. They have teams of surveyors go out on the buses and interview the riders and what their thoughts are on the system and what they would like to see with it. There's a lot of continuity with the questions so they can look at the information that they receive with the previous efforts. When they did this five years ago, they had about 760 responses that they were able to collect. They've set a goal for over 1,000 surveys this time. They also reached out to non-users of the system to find out why maybe they haven't thought about riding the system or what might entice them to ride the system. All of this will be coming back to the Board later this year as they try to wrap up the plan

by September.

Jonathan Roberson, Project Manager with the University of South Florida's Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) presented his presentation. He stated that every five years the State likes to see the Transit providers and agencies and counties do a Transit Development Plan ("TDP"). That's a plan that looks at all the capital and operating needs from the agency and how things are performing now. They help with transit sites all over the State. A TDP is a requirement by the State. The last one was done in 2018. It covers a ten-year-time frame. It looks at all of the plans in the community that relate to transportation. It identifies and updates current goals and objectives in the community. It's likely that those might have changed since 2018. One of the most important things is to identify and prioritize the public transportation improvements in the community. They've developed a financial plan that looks at what could be done with existing resources and what new resources might be needed to meet the needs of what folks need now and what's projected ten years in the future. By doing a TDP the Go Line System, in particular, is state block grants which is operating money on an annual basis so that's one of the reasons for doing the TDP. This is a strategic plan for Indian River County that allows staff and stakeholders to maintain the existing system and properly and safely, cost effectively and help the customers but it also prepares additional means for the community to grow on. It's a strategic blue print as a county, as an agency, as an LCD. It's also a marketing tool to teach people that maybe aren't as familiar about this system whether it's Community Coach or Go Line. TDP should reflect Indian River County and the community as we know it.

The last TDP was done in 2018. It's mostly focused on the Go Line Fixed Route Service but at this major effort will look at and include the Community Coach Services as well since they're related. There were 4 annual updates in the year since 2018 that kind of provide updates on what has happened in the last fiscal year. The County continues to grow. It will grow over 15 percent probably by 2030 and over 30 percent by 2045 are the projections. That's actually a little more than the state average. The growth is continuous and it will continue to grow. Most of this population density is situated in the east portions of the county. Western growth will continue. Go Line bus station serves a lot of the population areas that are most dense in the county so that's helpful and that probably is reflected in our ridership program.

Another thing to look at in the County and for transportation demands currently and projected in the future is the over 65 population. That continues to grow and also our under 18 population is starting to grow again. One thing these two populations have in common is they typically need public transportation services. Over 65 means more of a Community Coach service or other flexible service and the 18 population is all types of services. Over 50 percent of the total population in the county now consists of these populations that need some kind of transportation so the need is there. They found that the medium annual household income is slightly beyond the rise especially since the COVID year of 2020. But the number of persons in poverty they have found has also been going up to 2021. So, typically folks in poverty are also dependent on transportation and need a public transportation system that can get them to work and other things.

Both the housing and the building permits in general have gone up and are past pre-COVID levels. Growth will continue to happen. They will take a look at where it's happening in the County and will provide an update later for the Board on whether new transit service or more transit service is needed to serve this growth. They will take a deep dive into the existing Go Line Fixed Route System which has 14 fixed routes, the express routes to the State College. Currently, they offer a service Monday through Saturday. It's a fare free system which is a very interesting aspect and there are different types of transit hubs throughout the County and the surrounding County. The Go Line System is one of the systems that has grown the most in the State and frankly nationally. It really has been on an upward growth since it began in 2001. They have seen agencies are lucky to be at 80 percent of their pre-COVID ridership so Go Line it looks to us like it's come ahead and it's doing some things right. The Community Coach System ridership has definitely experienced a post-COVID rebound and there was a decline. The ADA trips went up a bit. There is a decline in TD trips. This is mostly because of a decline in the available State TD funds. Overall the ridership has increased. The advantage ride program that provides the trips into the four counties, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin and Okeechobee. They are going to start sampling

all the Go Line Bus Routes starting in early March. This gives them the chance to talk with the people that are riding the service now. They're also going to be sending out a series of on line and social media surveys asking people for their opinions on the Go Line System and if they don't use the Go Line System currently or the Community Coach System. The survey takes them to a bunch of questions on what they think are important about having the Public Transportation System like Go Line and Community Coach. They also would like to do a number of meetings with other local officials and stakeholders. They want to get out and talk to people and see what their needs are for the future or what their observations are about the existing system. They also like to interview the drivers and get their views on the system on what's working for the passengers and what's not. There will be a lot of public outreach during the next several months. There will be a complete assessment of the community and the existing Go Line System and Community Coach System. They're going to look at other situations, other funding programs, other policies that could affect public transportation in a good way. Develop new goals and objectives for the systems that reflect what the community needs are and really take a look at what kinds of services are needed to meet existing demand and projected demands with the growth in population. This will all be wrapped up in a ten-year transit development plan.

Mr. Freeman said that they're also looking at going out to the Gifford Achievement Center. They've had a lot of success in the past with the morning program that they have there and also having a meeting that's open to the general public as well. They're also looking at being at the Up Center.

Mr. Roberson said that some of the current riders they've talked to so far have shown some interest for earlier service in the morning and later service in the evening, some expanded service on Saturdays and there has been some interest pending improvements on the most productive, busiest routes. It is interesting that they've heard that so far from people and we're seeing our ridership growth already occurring. There does appear to be some need in what they've seen and heard so far for some additional services to serve current needs and projected needs. Services on Sundays has also been requested. Often Sunday service is a critical connection. In some systems maybe not, every route but the most productive or core routes but that's something that was drawn to their attention. They will look at all of the options that have been mentioned before and they'll take a look at and spell it out how that might work. How you might phase some of these improvements into the system where it makes sense.

Mr. Freeman indicates that the improvements that have happened in the system over the last 20 plus years have largely come through this process that we've done. Those are just a few examples of all the different changes that have happened incrementally over the years for the transit development plan process. He stated that as the hours expand in the evenings and currently the buses run until 7 p.m. He remembered when he first started working with the Go Line in doing the transit planning he thought the hours were 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday. So, we have gotten to the point where that's their Saturday hours and their Monday through Friday hours are now 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. A bus system just doesn't instantaneously appear as a full fledged fully developed system. The ridership needs to grow, find where the needs are.

Danica David, she had spoken with a gentleman who walks with a cane and is legally blind. He had never heard of Community Coach. She had inquired about advertising the transportation services so that these people are aware of the services at the VA. Ms. Deigl stated she would make sure that something was posted. Ms. David inquired about the forms needed to fill out. Ms. Deigl stated you can complete the on-line forms, fill out the paper forms and can call the Transit System who will either mail the forms to you, walk through it on the form, whatever the need is for that person. Ms. Deigl stated they have a travel training program. They do not have a full volunteer program for that but they have staff that manages that and they will train.

Other New Business – No Action Required

No public comments.

**ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Dalia Dillon,
the Board voted unanimously (12-0) to adjourn the meeting.**

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

The next meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will be held on
May 25, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.