TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD
MINUTES FOR AUGUST 28, 2025

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) was held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, August 28th, 2025, 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/2025.htm.

Present were: Chairman **Deryl Loar,** Commissioner, District 4, Vice Chairman **William Lundy Parden**, Disabled Representative; **Jennifer Idlette**, Public Education Representative, **Bob McPartlan**, Florida Department of Children and Families (FDCF) Representative; **Modeline Acreus,** Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Representative; **Yvelouse Augustin-Leow,** Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (FAHCA) Representative; **Laura Koursaris**, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDVR) Representative; **Dalia Dillon,** Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Representative; **Wendy Grow,** Florida Association for Community Action (FACA) / Economic Opportunities Council (EOC) Representative; **Milory Senat**, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Representative **Dale Shepperson**, Career Source Resource Center Representative and; **Dr. Harry Hurst**, Citizen Advocate Representative. and **Danica David**, Citizen's Advocate.

Absent were: **Melissa Arndt,** Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Representative.

Present were IRC staff: **Brian Freeman**, MPO Staff Director; **Mark Vietze,** MPO GIS Planner; **Patti Johnson,** Recording Secretary. Also present were **Karen Deigl**, Executive Director, Senior Resource Association and **Chris Stephenson,** Transportation Director.

THREE VACANCIES: Children at Risk, Senior Community Representative and Medical Representative.

Call to Order

Chairman Deryl Loar called the TDLCB meeting to order at 10:00 a.m.

Approval of Meeting Minutes and Annual Public Workshop Minutes – *Action Required*

Chairman Loar asked if there were any additions or corrections to the TDLCB Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2025.

> **ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Mr. Bob McPartlan, the Board voted unanimously (10-0) to approve the Annual Public Workshop and Regular Meeting Minutes of May 22, 2025, minutes, with the correction of District 3 to District 4.**

At 10:02 a.m. Yvelouse Augustin-Leow, Gisela Ruiz and Milory Senat appeared.

Planning Status Report – *No Action Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman conducted a presentation on the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan Cost Feasible Draft. One of the most activities that the MPO does is update the Long-Range Transportation Plan every five years and we're pretty far along in the development of what's called "the cost feasible Plan" which is where we look at what we need over the 25-year planning horizon. What kind of revenues are going to be available to do road widening, new road construction projects, what's our project we can work with. Then looking at the costs of the individual projects try to fit what we can afford into a 25-year plan. This is what we currently have put together. This will be coming in October as a draft of the overall plan. It includes the widening of 510 which is about to begin the first phase of it out by Sebastian River High School. Also widening U.S. 1 in the central part of the County from 53rd Street to 510. The whole 26th Street Aviation Boulevard corridor widening it from two lanes to four lanes all the way from 66th Avenue by the mall over to U.S. 1. Then extending Aviation Boulevard as a two-lane road east of U.S. 1 over to the hospital so we can provide another access route into the hospital. Eventually later the plan would be some widening to 512 in the northern part of the County and eventually building 82nd Avenue as another north/south road that goes from State Road 60 all the way up to 510. Also, the 43rd Avenue widening is partially funded in the plan. There was discussion regarding new developments in Fellsmere. Already ridership in Fellsmere is pretty high. It has been pretty high ever since it really started way back in 2008. He could see that putting even more riders on Go Line Route 10. Mr. Loar stated that Oslo Road soon will become a state road and 510 in the future will become a state road so they will no longer be county roads. Someone asked them why you would give up your county roads and state roads. Well, it's pretty simple the overall maintenance and upkeep so to speak. We're on track for Oslo and 95. We get regular reports. He thought we may be a little ahead of schedule. That is going to change a lot of the patterns.

<u>Community Transportation Coordinator Status Report</u> – *No Action Required*

Mr. Chris Stephenson, Transportation Director, Senior Resource Association presented an overview of the Quarter which ended on June 30th, 2025, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office.

Mr. Stephenson stated we will start with the Community Coach service that we provide. The quarterly ridership for the quarter that ended June 30th was 12,993 passengers, which is a 6 percent increase from last quarter and a 2 percent increase from this time last year. We always like to see the ridership improved there. On-time performance is 92 percent in the month of June. The total number of active Community Coach riders that we have right now was 4,008. It's a good chunk of individual riders that we have. Same day ridership continues to increase. That's something that they started offering back in 2021. They're trying to offer more same day trips to passengers so they can call them when they need them not having to book their trips in advance. Along with that on the same day ridership you also see an increase in ridership trips booked through the mobile application that they offer. A lot of their Community Coach passengers have that app on their phone and they don't have to call their call center. They can just pull out their app and request their trip that way. They're always happy to see the number of mobile application trips increasing as well. Most of those passengers are people who either get sick, and they need a ride to the doctor or to the pharmacy or its people who pick up an extra shift at work, and they use them because they were able to pick up a shift. Mr. Stephenson stated they have strong ridership numbers to the college. They trip a lot of the project stage kids to Indian River State College with their Advantage Ride Program. The charter school is really high. They don't have a public school at the Charter High School and so they use the Go Line pretty much exclusively for their high schoolers.

The applications received have hovered between 40 and 50 applications received every month and the number approved really depends on a lot of factors. In April and May 37 were approved. In June 29 were approved. It really just depends on whether people meet all the eligibility requirements. They also have a third party who helps us evaluate certain people's conditions so that they make sure only the people who really need the service are the ones receiving the service that they get.

The call volume they always get is between 4,000 and 5,000 calls a month. You can see there that a lot of the call numbers are decreased this year compared to last year and that's what they would expect whenever you see people using the mobile app to book trips and people don't have to call them to book a trip and they can just book the trip on the app. You would expect to see the number of calls go down. The same thing with the wait time. Obviously, they have less calls so the wait time on the phones has been less, so they always like to see that as well because they're always trying to make sure their passengers have a good experience with them.

The Advantage Ride Program 36,000 trips have been made on the Treasure Coast with the Advantage Ride Program this year. They are very proud of that program. All of their ridership numbers have slightly decreased compared to last year and that's because the amount of money they got from the Commission for Transportation Disadvantage was a little less this last year. It was 9.2 percent less, so they made about 9.2 percent fewer trips. But for the upcoming fiscal year that we're currently in started on July 1st they bumped their funding up to where it was two years ago. So, they expect their Advantage Ridership to rebound to where it was two years ago.

The local businesses that advertise on the sides of the Go Line and Community Coach buses they always like to give those companies a shout out because that's local funding that helps their system.

The Go Line had 370,000 passengers last quarter and that's an 8 percent increase from this time last year. They've seen some ridership growth over the last year, as much as 20 percent because of their expanded hours. They always like to see that every month on the Go Line has been higher than the same time last year. They've seen some really positive growth on the Go Line since they expanded their hours. 94 percent of their Go Line stops are hit on time, only 2 percent were early and only 4 percent were late so they're always trying to make sure their buses are timely because the conditions on the Go Line are so important. The 8 percent ridership growth by route shows that the Charter School on Route 13 has had 12 percent ridership growth. Fellsmere has had 8 percent ridership growth compared to last year. Their really busy routes have always been, historically, Routes 2 and Route 4. Route 2, 62,000 riders last quarter and Route 4 39,000. They're just really happy to see positive growth all across the board, all 14 routes and you can see Route 15 that goes down to Indian River State College in Fort Pierce had as much as 20 percent growth on Route 15. Their Saturday ridership has also increased so 56,000 passengers in the third quarter rode on Saturday which is the highest Saturday numbers they've had in a quarter in the last three years. When they expanded their hours on Saturday it definitely has caused more people to want to ride the Go Line on Saturdays as well. Routes 2 and Route 4 accounts for about 27 percent of all of their ridership and then Gifford accounts for about 22 percent and the North County 17 percent. The South County is 16 percent. The areas to the far east and far west of our service area are 12 percent and then Route 9 that goes in between Vero and Sebastian accounts for about 6 percent of their ridership. They really are getting a return on investment since they got the service development group through FDOT, and the local Board of County Commissioners also are helping fund that. They've had tremendous ridership growth because of the expansion of hours that began on May 6th of last year. 134,000 trips in the last 12 months because of the expanded hours.

Their trips for revenue mile are 1.3 trips per revenue mile. The industry standard is .25 trips, so they are well above the industry standard. They like everyone to see that the number of trips that they're doing per mile on the bus is really high.

They're happy to see that the number of road calls has slightly increased but it went from 4 last year to 6 this year so that's a really low number of road calls. They're really proud of their maintenance program for the buses so they like to see a really low number of road calls.

They are really proud of their shelter program, which they have put in 15 new shelters in the last year and so the total number of shelters they have now is 73 if you include the ones at the hubs that they have. Every route has at least one shelter on it and then some routes like Fellsmere have as many as 7 shelters on them. They've got the semi-seats as well on some of the routes that don't have enough right-of-way for a shelter. The shelter program is still doing very well.

They're doing more riders but they're getting less complaints so this time last year they had 13 complaints and this year they only had 6 in the third quarter. That's a 53 percent decrease. The cost per trip is $3.41. They're still Number one in the State. They've been Number one for nine of the last ten years but consistently it's been six years they've been number one on the list. The weekend service that they offer, the extended hours that were done through a Service Development Grant that they got last year. It was a three-year service development grand so they're in the second year of it. We got the Service Development Grant for this year and for sure next year. Ms. Diegel stated the Advantage Ride

Program they were able to secure the $1.5 million this year again, however, they were not sure that was going to happen again next year. They have started already doing some advocacy for those funds to see if they can get something more sustainable. The one that they were receiving is through the Innovative Service Grant through the CTD, Commission for Transportation Disadvantage and because its Innovative Service Development Grant is limited time. They were able to have it extended last year to do the fifth year. They could only do four and were successful in getting for the fifth and the additional funding. However, she thought it was going to sunset next year so they're going to working hard this year to find other funding. They're working with the Legislatures now and working with the associations at the state level. The counselors in the Vero Beach Office heavily rely on that program to get their participants to work and back. There are over 4,000 riders in the four counties that they do. Mr. Stephenson stated the annual report said 36,000 trips and 91 percent of those are taking people to work. They have had dozens and dozens of organizations, employers and families that have given them letters of support as they were trying to get that fifth year of funding and it was successful this last year. Hopefully they can make something work.

Mr. Stephenson stated at the ending points of their routes, they make the riders get off of the bus for a few minutes. It really cuts down on people falling asleep on the bus and spending long periods of time just riding around. Ms. Diegel stated it's a safety issue, but it has made a big difference in the safety and wellbeing of all of their riders.

Mr. Stephenson stated they will hit the 1.5 million rider celebration on the Go Line this year for the first time ever for an annual ridership. Ms. Diegel stated the big concerns would be the CTD dollars and then the Advantage Ride dollars. Those are the two concerns that she has and what she has been working on this year. Aspirations continuing to provide as much service as they possibly can. They're hoping to maybe expand if they have additional funding with the Go Line and aspirations continue to get some sustainable funding for the IDD Program and hopefully look at the formula that the Commission for Transportation of Disadvantaged and have them take a look at the formula because it's not working. She stated seeing a need for Sunday service. In the TDP it proposed when Sunday service gets implemented, having it run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Ms. Diegel stated they are ahead of schedule because they were able to check a few of the first ones. With any luck and maybe some kindness from the Commission additional funding might be able to improve.

Ms. JoAnn Pagano, Indian River State College thanked everyone very much for allowing their students who have cognitive disabilities to attend college classes. They would not be able to do that if it weren't for the progressive thinking of Ms. Stephenson and Ms. Diegel, who worked diligently with her five years ago to establish the transportation program. This has led to employment for their students. Most of their students do not have driver's licenses so for them this is their lifeline. Ms. Diegel stated that they are hoping that they can somehow find sustainable funding because this year to year is just not going to happen. It's not just here on the Treasure Coast. This kind of program is needed. It's necessary in the State of Florida and she thought it needed to be looked at as a State program rather than just local. Chairman Loar stated a 134,000 increase. Mr. Stephenson stated they have passenger counters on the buses. There is a forward-facing camera so there's an infrared beam that once they pass that infrared beam the camera picks up if it's a person or if it's like a bus, so they know they have accurate counts. Every month and every year they have do a lot of verification to make sure their counters are all working correctly.

<u>Review of Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #4 for the 2024/25 Planning Grant</u>

- *Action Not Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman stated this was the planning grant that the MPO receives for the activities for the fourth quarter that ended June 30th, 2024, and that was the fourth and final quarter of last state fiscal year and because that was required to be submitted to the Commission prior to this meeting they went on and submitted that already which they typically have to do for that fourth quarter invoice. The activities were the running of these meetings and the workshop they did back in May and also the update through the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan. This is not an action item since it has already been submitted.

<u>Consideration of the Actual Expenditure Report (AER)</u> - *Action Required*

Mr. Freeman indicated what they have to report to the State Commission are the amount of local dollars that were used as a match for the Trip and Equipment Grant, which is something they're actually going to be discussing with the next item and then the number of trips that were provided. Last year the local funding was $41,165.66 and the number of trips was 9,668. After this is approved by this Committee they do submit it to the State Commission.

ON MOTION by Mr. Bob McPartlan, SECONDED by Ms. Dalia Dillon, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to approve the Actual Expenditure Report (AER), as presented.

<u>Consideration of an Amendment to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) for FY 2025/26</u> - *Action Required*

Mr. Freeman stated they do a big update to the TDSP every five years and every year in between one of the items that they have to update is the trip rates. These are reimbursement rates that are paid to SRA by the State Commission for all of the TD trips that they provide. There's a rate for ambulatory passengers and a rate for wheelchair passengers. There was a change to the State formula which has negatively impacted Indian River County in the last years. They are going to be doing a midyear revision to the rates as a strategy to increase how much the County gets awarded through this grant program.

Mr. Stephenson stated there is a formula that was in 2021 when the new formula came out. Right now, they take the County's TD eligible population that accounts for 5 percent of the formula. The total number of roads in the County is 5 percent of the formula. Then 30 percent is based off the number of trips and miles that they did the previous year. Then there's a based funding amount. They're trying to get some clarification about what based funding looks like because it seems to vary from year to year. It doesn't seem very consistent but that was the way they changed the formula in 2021. It has not been very beneficial for us. The ridership that they've been able to offer through the Trip & Equipment Grant Program has gone down every year since that happened and the amount of money that they've gotten every year has gone down since that formula changed. This year is their lowest amount they've had in a long time, $381,000, whereas four years ago they were at $419,000. That's paid to the CTCs like Senior Resource Association through trip rates. The trip rates are approved by this body every year and they send their trip rates to the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged and the number of rides that they do every year affects how much money they get the next year. They tried to come up with a strategy for a way that they could report more trips to the Trip & Equipment Grant this year so that their funding goes up next year. One of their strategies that they came up with was that if they add local funds to the TD Program, they could reduce the Trip & Equipment rate that they're charging the state so that they can report more trips to it this year. Ms. Stephenson stated the only trips that they're allowed to report to TD are those that are paid for by TD so if there is extra local funding and it's not part of that formula; those trips cannot be counted. So, if they have trips that are paid, if there is local funding they cannot put that as a report so what they want to do is if we take some local funding, lower the wrap amount and add to it subsidize is then they can count it.

Mr. Stephenson said this year they got the $343,000 from Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged. They're charging $37.59 for an ambulatory trip and $64.44 for a wheelchair trip. With that amount of money, they're going to be able to provide 8,500 trips this year for the fiscal year that we're currently in for the Trip & Equipment Grant. What they are proposing is that they take some of the local funds that they get from the advertising that they do on the vehicles and give that to the TD Program.

That total amount would be $76,304 and that would reduce the amount they're charging the State rather than $37.59 for a trip, it would be $30.45 per trip and for a wheelchair trip it would be $52.20 rather than $64.44. That way they'll be able to charge more trips to that grant this year so rather than 8,500 trips they would be able to charge 9,700 trips to it this year and they believe it would raise the amount of money they would get next year. Ms. Diegel stated it would help us. They're not sure it would help but they're anticipating because trips are 30 percent of the formula. In other words, they're still charging. It still costs them $37.59 for an ambulatory trip but they're going to do the share cost $30.45 from the TD dollars and then $7.14 they'll subsidize to make it the $37.59. Mr. Stephenson stated if we change our rates and reduce their rates to the Commission a little bit, they'll be able to provide 9,700 trips this year and if they don't, it's just going to continue to go down. That was the strategy that they came up with. It's being done in several other places in the state where they're taking local money and supplementing their trip rate with local money so that they can charge more trips to the Trip & Equipment Grant to bring down more money from the State in subsequent years. He hoped that the Board would approve them lowering their trip rate that they charge to the Commission. That money they already have it. It's in the advertising money. They normally put that towards certain things with the entire running of the Transit System, but they wanted to designate it specifically for the CTD Program. This year they're going to get $80,000 from advertising. That is state law that went into effect last summer that's going to complicate some things down the line. Ms. Diegel stated the recommendation is going to have to be that the CTD have approval for ambulatory rate of $30.45 and a wheelchair rate of $52.20. Mr. Stephenson stated the number of road miles in the County is already a very small part of the formula. It's only 5 percent of the formula but the more roads they build in the County, the better it would be for the formula. It doesn't matter if it's a State road or County road. Ms. Diegel stated State and County roads count. Private roads do not. That's in the formula. Mr. Freeman stated that the main goal is because the number of trips provided the previous year is 30 percent. It's trying to stop this downward spiral. It's reenforcing in a negative way that every year as that number goes down, it causes the funding to go down which then drives the number down. Ms. Deigl stated this is what's happening on the State level, they have recognized that 82 percent of the CTCs in the State have had decreased funding so it's a big concern. At the last two Commission meetings she has requested that the Commission take a look at the formula. It's been five years. She just had meetings with the CTD Staff. She did a lot of graphs, a lot of analogy of numbers from systems that have increased, systems that have had their numbers up and down and systems that have decreased and to try and come up with a rhyme or reason. The next step is they're going to take it to FDOT and speak to the Florida Department of Transportation because they are under FDOT and then she is also wanting to meet with the Chair of the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged and lay everything out and have that person see what's going on and probably also because the CTD is directly by the Governor's Office through legislation to have meetings with the Governor staff. There is something in place that they're working on to have a look at the whole formula. They're trying to hopefully do a little quick fix for Indian River County. She didn't know how successful it's going to be. They won't know until next year, but they need to give it a try and hopefully they will hear them and take a look at the formula and see if there are any issues and concerns and what should be done about it.

ON MOTION by Mr. McPartlan, SECONDED by Ms. Wendy Grow, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to amend the Trip and Equipment Grant rates for the Ambulatory Rate to $30.45 and the Wheelchair Rate to $52.20.

Assign Community Transportation Coordinator Evaluation Subcommittee - *Action Required*

Mr. Freeman stated what they're looking for are some volunteers who are willing to stay after the next meeting which is on November 20th, 2025. That's the third Thursday of November and that's when they conduct their annual evaluation review. Four or five volunteers would be a great number to have at that meeting and then they'll present that evaluation to the full Committee in February and then that goes to the MPO Board following the February approval by this full committee. He knew several people had served on the Evaluation Subcommittee in the past.

<u>Other New Business</u> – *No Action Required*

None.

<u>Adjournment</u>

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:46 a.m.

The next meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will be held on **November 20, 2025, at 10:00 a.m.**