

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 24, 2022

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) was held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, February 24, 2022, 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/2022.htm>.

Present were: Chairman **Joe Earman**, Commissioner, District 3, Vice Chairman **William Lundy Parden**, Disabled Representative; **Bob McPartlan**, Florida Department of Children and Families (FDCF) Representative; **Marie Dorismond**, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Representative; **Victoria Anderson**, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (FAHCA) Representative; **Amber Young**, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDVR) Representative; **John Birhanzi**, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs 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; **Dr. Harry Hurst**, Citizen Advocate Representative; **Milory Senat**, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Representative and **Darlene Silverstein**, Medical Community Representative.

Absent were: **Jennifer Idlette**, Public Education Representative and **Dale Shepperson**, CSRC Representative.

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

THREE VACANCIES: Advocate and User, Children at Risk and Senior Community Representatives

Call to Order

Chairman Commissioner Joe Earman called the TDLCB meeting to order at 10:16 a.m. at which time it was determined there was a quorum present.

Election of Vice Chair

ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Wendy Grow, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to re-elect Mr. William Lundy Parden as Vice Chairman for 2022.

Approval of Minutes of the November 18, 2021 Meeting – Action Required

Chairman Earman asked if there were any additions or corrections to the TDLCB Meeting minutes of November 18, 2021.

ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Mr. William Lundy Parden, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to approve the minutes of November 18, 2021, as amended.

Dr. Harry Hurst questioned whether the Board's letter to the Board of County Commissioner's Chairperson with reference to having Chairman Earman sit on the Board for another year was approved. Chairman Earman indicated it was approved until November of 2022.

TDLCB Chairman's Report

Chairman Earman stated that there were a couple of things he wanted to speak about. The first was in reference to the Visioning Program. There were two meetings held regarding the Visioning Program for the MPO for the vision of the county, where we're going with land use, transportation, things of that nature. They had the two past meetings at the IG Center. They were both well attended. The second meeting was very well attended and there were good questions and some very good information brought forward by Community Development and by the engineers from Kimley-Horn. There was a presentation to the Planning & Zoning Board at the Planning & Zoning Commission meeting. In April there will be results and the final report will be submitted to the MPO Committee. Ms. Deigl asked if there were any comments about transportation in the Vision Part that she needed to be worried about. Chairman Earman stated that the visioning took in more land use designation agriculture versus rural, zoning and affordable housing. There was a lot of discussion about growth and along with growth, there will be more demand with transportation. Mr. Brian Freeman stated that land use and transportation go hand in hand in how your land use pattern affects how your transportation network can function. One of the things that people emphasized is that they wanted to maintain as a high priority having a transportation system that provided options for mobility. It wasn't just automobile dependent whether it's public transportation, either bicycle or pedestrian trail options.

Chairman Earman stated we still have three vacancies on the Board. The three vacancies are Advocate and User, Children at Risk and Senior Community Representatives.

He wanted to thank everybody for their service and their time for attending the meeting.

Planning Status Report – No Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman echoed what Chairman Earman mentioned of the Visioning presentation at the Planning & Zoning Meeting. He stated that there is a recording of the presentation from the February 3rd workshop on our website. Visit lrmpo.com which is MPO's website to look at the Visioning Plan.

Community Transportation Coordinator Status Report – No Action Required

Mr. Chris Stephenson, Transportation Director, Senior Resource Association presented an overview of the 1st Quarter Transportation Report, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. The status report covers October 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021.

Mr. Stephenson stated that the GoLine ran for 74 days during that period. Their ridership is up 3 percent over that period compared to the same quarter last year. His prediction was that we're only one quarter into the fiscal year and he predicted that this fiscal year they will have the highest GoLine ridership of any GoLine year. He felt that this year was going to show the highest ridership ever. The National Transit Database report was due January 31st. They have a lot of information that SRA staff and the MPO staff have to submit to the Federal Government every year. That report was submitted on time and accepted by the NTD. They use those numbers whenever Congress is coming up with our funding allocation and things like that. The only two ridership changes from route to route from last year to this year were on Route 3 in Gifford and Route 6 in South Vero.

Mr. McPartlan questioned because this year to year it doesn't look like that much had changed. He requested in the future to add a box to the report for a five-year period which will show the percentage change. Mr. Freeman indicated that when we moved into the hub, Route 6 went from going up and down

U.S. 1 to up and down Old Dixie and since that time the ridership on that route has really just continued to increase.

The geographic breakdown showed that Routes 2 and 4 which are the main State Route 6 and Highway 1 get 27 percent of their GoLine ridership. Gifford gets 22 percent of their GoLine ridership. The North County, Sebastian and Fellsmere routes get 18 percent of their GoLine ridership. The South County gets 15 percent and then our routes that go to the far east and the far west of the system get 10 percent and Route 9 that goes in between Vero and Sebastian is about 8 percent of their ridership. During the quarter they did 36,000 trips on Saturdays. The reason why that's slightly down from the year before is because Christmas fell on a Saturday this year so they did not run on that Christmas. So, there was one Saturday that they didn't have any ridership so it's slightly down compared to the previous year's first quarter but he felt that their Saturday numbers are going to be the highest they've ever been by the end of this fiscal year.

95.69 percent of GoLine stops were hit on time. They are trying to get that number as close to 100 as they can but they do have a good way of tracking that so they're trying to be very consistent. The standard for trip per revenue line is .25 trips per revenue mile. That's the standard that they have in the FTA. They only have one route that's not currently meeting that standard but the system as a whole has well exceeded that standard. Their system average is 1.4 trips per revenue mile. The one route that they have that's not meeting that standard was Route 15 and it's a very specific demographic ridership because that's their route that goes from the IG Center down to Indian River State College in Fort Pierce. So, it doesn't get as many riders because its mainly college students getting on and traveling the most miles on their system. For the most part, their system is well within the standard. On Route 2 you can see 4½ trips per revenue mile. That's insanely good which is what they like to see. As a reminder, that Route 15 that is not meeting that standard is 100 percent funded by the State right now. That's what they want them to do with that route is to take students back and forth to Indian River State College. It's actually a really good route that just started up again. It had been paused for about 18 months because of COVID but they just started it up again and ridership has been strong on it. They're happy with it.

Their plans for GoLine bus shelters is they have 11 locations where they're going to put in 15 shelters hopefully in the year 2022. A lot of it has to do with shortages on bus shelters. They ordered the bus shelters back in November and they have still not received them. The company told them not to expect them until the end of the summer and they don't know if there is going to be more supply chain issues. Hopefully they get these 15 shelters. They have the locations picked out. The MPO staff has worked closely with the SRA staff to determine which stops warrant the bus shelter and they're excited about the future of their bus shelter program. This Board was instrumental in directing the SRA staff to get some Simme-Seats which is alternative seating for passengers if they don't have enough right-of-way to put a bus shelter down. They've got nine Simme-Seats out currently in the county and they've got plans to put eight more up in the very near future so those numbers will be changing probably before the next meeting. They'll have more Simme-Seats installed because they want their passengers to have somewhere to sit down even if they don't have enough right-of-way at that stop to put a bus shelter up. Mr. Freeman indicated that the Simme-Seat is like a little bench that wraps around the pole and two people can sit on it, one on each side of the pole. They're really good because they don't need much space to fit one in. For a bus shelter they have to be able to put in a concrete pad which has to be at least certain dimensions. Often, they have to pipe the drainage under the pad and so the Simme-Seat is a really good compact option when there is not room. They placed a special stop at Mangrove Drive and Ocean Drive on October 1st. This is really an example of their passengers that had written in to the MPO requesting a stop there and they realized that a lot of their passengers getting off Route 1 were walking to Jaycee Park and rather than make them do that they were able to stop there so that those passengers don't have to walk as far. They added a stop there on October 1st and it has been very successful. They have Route 1 drop a lot of people off there every single day so they're really happy with that stop.

Mr. Stephenson stated that their Community Coach numbers were up 8.6 percent compared to the same time last year. Most of that growth was through the ADA trips. Their ADA trips went down a lot during COVID. That demographic of people was more likely to catch COVID and have a lot of issues with it, the disabled and elderly and so they stopped tripping with them for a while but they have since

rebounded. They are able to keep track of their ADA trips and their TD trips. Every single trip that they do they know if it's an ADA trip or a TD trip. They're going to spend 100 percent of their TD money this year just like they did last year. Their on-time performance was reported at 90 percent for the first quarter.

Mr. Stephenson stated they did one incident of charter service in the last quarter. SRA helped with the Vero Beach Christmas parade which was the first Saturday in December and they always pay them to do that. They have to report to the Federal Government when they do private transportation.

They had one vehicle that had been totaled last summer when a person ran a red light and hit their bus. That was the only bus that they currently have on their lot that is not being used. They're waiting for it to get auctioned. Mr. Stephenson spoke to the County Purchasing Manager just the other day and they had it up on their website to be auctioned off and that that's going to be off of their parking lot soon. There are two vehicles that they had ordered that they're waiting on. They've already received that truck. It was received just a couple of weeks ago so there is still one Community Coach vehicle that they're waiting on and that's another supply chain issue. They ordered that van with a lift more than a year ago and they're still waiting on it and they keep telling them it's because of a microchip shortage.

SRA has to have a very thorough drug test policy because they have their drivers transporting people and it's important that the feds require it and SRA require it. Mr. Stephenson was happy to say none of their employees that they have to do random drug tests for have tested positive. None of their new hires that they hired when they gave them a drug test before they could come on board tested positive.

Mr. Stephenson stated that their road calls were down 22 percent compared to the same time last year. It was 7 road calls. There are a number of things that cause a road call. That just means that one of their shop attendants had to go out to the vehicle and fix something either while it was at the hub or while it was at one of its stops before it could continue service. It being down 22 percent is good but they have a very low number of roads calls every quarter.

Their complaints were slightly up. They had 7 this quarter compared to 4 last year. That's a 75 percent increase but that means that every .0021 trip results in a complaint so by the number of trips they're doing and the number of complaints they have it is still very, very low. They honestly wish that number was zero but there are occasionally things that happen that will warrant complaints but their percentage of complaints is very, very low. They track what the complaints are about and what service they're on. They try to get those complaints resolved so that it never gets escalated to this Board. Mr. Stephenson said they have some chronic complainers.

Mr. Birhanzi inquired about the scheduled maintenance program. Mr. Stephenson said they have meet with the MPO Staff quarterly and go over those types of things. They have a preventive maintenance schedule that they do on all of their vehicles. It's done every 6,000 miles and then as needed. Their drivers have to do a pre and post trip check on their vehicle every single day. So, before they get in their vehicle they check it to make sure it's going to run well. They run 14 hours a day so occasionally things pop up that causes those 7 road calls. Every 6,000 miles they get brought into the garage and the mechanics change their oil and tires if they need to. If they didn't do that, their number of road calls would be much higher. Their affirmative maintenance plan is a public document. They have to show it to the State and the Feds.

Review of Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #2 for the 2020/21 Planning Grant

- Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman stated that this is done for each quarter. One of the tasks that were accomplished last quarter was the approval of the Bylaws, grievance procedures and annual operating report for the current year. This is just an action item that they need a recommendation of approval and they'll take it to the MPO at their April meeting.

ON MOTION by Mr. Bob McPartlan, SECONDED by Ms. Milory Senat, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to approve the Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #2 for the 2020/21 Planning Grant and to recommend that the MPO approve it so it can be submitted to the State for reimbursement.

Review of Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Annual Evaluation Report for FY 2020/21
– Action Required

Mr. Brian Freeman stated that this is a required task of the TDLCB Board each year to do an evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator which is SRA here in Indian River County. Mr. Jon Howard indicated this is one of our annual tasks required in our Grant Agreement with the State Commission. The TDLCB will assign a subcommittee to evaluate the performance of the Community Transportation Coordinator and provide a recommendation to the designated official planning agency, DOPA, which is the MPO, for continuation or replacement of the CTC. The evaluation was conducted after the last TDLCB meeting on November 18th, 2021. That Committee was comprised of Dr. Hurst, Dahlia Dillion, Wendy Grow, Melissa Arndt and Amber Young. He had taken a look at the Onsite Observation of the system performed by Ms. Arndt. She attended a trip of Mr. & Mrs. Taber. They went from Orchard Grove to the Florida Eye Institute. Mr. Charles Murphy was the driver and it got all shining stars. The attachments to the staff report one being the MPO's evaluation procedure document and then the second is the actual evaluation workbook with some excerpts. They didn't include the whole thing but they included the portions that were required which is the cognitive and cost effectiveness of efficiency and availability of service requirements. He briefly reviewed the MPO's evaluation workbook. They're divided into four sections. They have Coordination & Planning, Operation, Cost and Financial Management and the Utilization of the system. It's an additional resource to ensure things that are being appropriated and meeting the needs of the users. Each evaluation criteria are divided into kind of two separate measures one being a quantitative standard must be met and the quality of the performance raking. As you go through this, you'll see that all of the quantitative standards have been met and all the qualitative performance rankings are 10s or excellent. Mr. Howard just wanted to note that the Committee Members commended SRA on its outstanding performance and reliability and they have recommended that the TDLCB approve the attached documents and retain Senior Resource Association as CTC.

Moving on to Page 2 of the CTC Annual Evaluation he wanted to highlight some of the comments in each of the qualitative measures that the CTC has received marketing awards and uses language align and services. They have a Smart Phone App. There are multiple ways that folks can call in. They can contact them by mail. So, there are multiple ways that the CTC has promoted and marketed their service. Also, the efforts to coordinate inter-county trips so this was a pretty big deal last year the creation of the Advantage Ride Program which helped service our disabled population throughout the Treasure Coast, Indian River, Martin, St. Lucie and Okeechobee. That one has performed really well. They also did an article on their MPO. Another one in this criterion is the CTC's database regarding routes, scheduled facilities, vehicle locations, etc. They have new paratransit software that helps provide up-to-minute updates to users on locations around the time frames. There's also a notification that they get the night before to confirm.

Moving onto the new criteria there's operation which involves the actual delivery of services. He noted the safety standard on the quantitative performance measures is the accidents per mile which is almost doubled what the standard is so it's a very safe system. There's one accident every over 200,000 miles when their standard is about 1 per 100,000 miles. It's a great achievement. He felt we should be very proud of that. A few of the qualitative performance rankings of the CTC the first systems to ensure that all equipment complies with standards. The vehicle preventative maintenance plan and the drivers being responsible for inspection and such. Also, the CTC keeps the proper limits of insurance on all vehicles. On Page 4, it shows the CTC's effort on reducing the client's waiting time with the new transit technology. A lot of the operational metrics have always been good but are even better now. On-time

performance is 95 percent where the national standard is 75 percent. They're exceeding that measure as well. The CTC's efforts to identify unmet needs, new stops being added, whatever feedback they get from users of the system and from the community is considered as well as the Advantage Ride Program was also based off of the needs of the community. Also new software tracks bicycle riders so they're trying to get multi module. In that service area, half of their residents are within a quarter mile which is the general walking distance. It's \$2.72 percent per passenger trip with the state ride average of \$8.93. So that's the lowest in the state. It's a fare free system. The CTC's efforts to raise local funds in the qualitative measures is they go out and they have the advertising program which supplements local match. They try to get developmental to know new trans infrastructure. They're trying to receive donations and then also the funding from St. Lucie County to help with the program.

Lastly, the utilization of the system which again it talks about the effective use of resources and funding and also the user's needs. Quantitative is maintaining a system to review and create an inventory of its organizational services. There haven't been service denials due to lack of equipment so that's really important. All their vehicles are appropriately equipped and ADA compliant. Then onto the qualitative performance the software has improved trip planning and monitors and adapts to any kind of special requests or needs.

The CTC Evaluation Workbook reviewed what the State required in terms of competition, cost effectiveness and ability to do service. This goes a little bit more in depth on the cost per trip type, the number of vehicles, really in more detail. He included the Annual Operating Reports for the State and Indian River. These charts are pretty helpful to kind of understand some of the trends and see how they're performing with the State. He moved the recommendation to retain Senior Resource Associates.

Mr. McPartlan stated that there is nobody else that does it better than Senior Resource Associates. He stated as an elected official he has been on the MPO Board since 2011. They've never gotten less than a perfect score. Every year there is some new improvement on their system. They take any suggestion from the public or anybody to make their system better. It's just phenomenal. When he saw the cost per rider, he asked whether gas was the major factor that's driving that number up? Ms. Deigl stated gas but also wages. Mr. Freeman stated that fuel and salaries are probably the two highest components of that and efficiency. The more people who are on the bus, you're spreading that cost per trip out among more people and it becomes more efficient on a per trip basis. Mr. McPartlan stated that was one of his concerns was the hiring of the drivers. Mr. Stephenson said they are down four GoLine drivers and two Community Coach drivers. It was down to nine drivers not very long ago. Ms. Deigl stated comparative to other transit systems and what they're down they are doing good. They really work with their staff and they try to take care of their employees as best as possible and they do provide benefits and they look at rewarding all of their staff for what they do. Hopefully that will remain that way because that's not too bad. They're able to cover the routes. They do have people that do overtime and they like it because they're making more money and that is a retention situation as well. With the increase in minimum wage going up they did a compression so they actually increased everyone's wages. A certain population of their staff went up \$1.35 an hour so that would work into those numbers as to why the trip cost would have gone up but they have to manage that through to make sure that they're going to be above that minimum of \$15.00 an hour in another few years. So, you'll see there is an increase because of that in the next few years and now it will also increase because of the gas but everybody else will be moving up in the same percentage wise. She felt they should remain in the top 1, 2, 3 hopefully. We also have to look at because Senior Resource Association is the operator on both the transit side and on the senior side they allocate overhead to the systems. Her wage is allocated part to transit and part to Senior Services and so is the CFO so there's some savings there as well that will help with the cost effectiveness. When they took Martin County on they reduced the amount of overhead for the transit system here so they are able to provide more services in Indian River County because allocation of her wage or any overhead will go to Martin County. So, there's a benefit to having it spread out. It gives more dollars into Indian River County from more ridership. Ms. Deigl stated that that was always a concern and she felt that they have managed it. They've improved Martin County but they've also continued to improve Indian River and if they saw that Indian River County was being hurt because of that they would really relook at what they are doing. That's not the point of why they took on Martin County. Dr. Hurst asked what the cost per trip was before this year. Ms. Deigl thought we were down

around \$2.18 or something like that. Mr. Freeman said it was below \$2.72. Ms. Deigl stated that in Gainesville they're running into trouble with people returning using the buses so their higher ridership of course is students and students are now doing on-line so they don't have the ridership that they do and they were getting reimbursed from the state through the Community College System as well for ridership and she thought that has decreased also. They have taken a hit with their ridership and the fares because they're fare based as well. So, between school enrollment being down because they're not receiving the funding they would normally get and the fares being down their cost has gone up. Dr. Hurst indicated he was also interested in looking at our county compared to St. John's County pretty much the same size basically and the cost was quite different. Ms. Deigl stated ridership is the big thing. If we can keep people riding the bus, the more they increase the ridership the actual more dollars that they do get down from the state. Dr. Hurst stated that it surprised him that the cost was as reasonable as it is because of the cost of labor, new payers, insurance all these factors and still you're consistently one of the top two. In looking at it all the only factor he can come up with that makes a difference is leadership. Finding resources and maximizing these resources we could really be proud of the fact that the services they've provided this County is astronomical. Ms. Deigl stated their staff is amazing. What Chris and his team does to make sure that everything is managed. They really take a good look and make sure they find the right price and so it's a good team. Dr. Hurst asked whether they had been hit pretty hard this year with insurance increases? Ms. Deigl stated there had been an increase. They switched from Blue Cross/Blue Shield to United Health. The worker's comp that will be coming up. She is waiting to see what's going to happen with the rates. Dr. Hurst asked what the Board could do to be more supportive. Ms. Deigl indicated the Board could advocate for the dollars if anyone knows the State Reps. Keep an eye on what's happening at the Federal level and the State level because that's where their dollars are coming from. She stated she appreciated all of the people sitting around the table at the meeting and listening to what they do and giving them advice, which is really important. Mr. Stephenson stated that the Commissioner of Transportation Disadvantaged they're trying to get their Animated Service Development Grants back and they were looking for public comment on that. He stated that they could use one of those ISD Grants. Ms. Deigl indicated that what's going on right now is that the Innovated Grants went away because they were part of the M Score Grant which was a huge Federal and probably not really efficient so they scratched that. Well, when they scratched that, so went the dollars for innovated service that they have applied for previously and have been able to provide additional services. What the CTD now wants to do is they have I guess it's about 10 million dollars in the bank that they can spend but they have the authority to spend up to 51 million dollars so what they're doing is they're asking for Legislative support to give them the authority to hand out another 10 million dollars and again they don't have to raise it. They have already got it but they don't have the authority to spend it. Part of that 10 million will be for innovated grants. That's what they're pushing for and that's what Chris just spoke about. If anybody has a listening ear at Legislation to be able to make a comment on that. Mr. Earman mentioned that on the state level we can now do that through our lobbyist. He stated that we have a pretty good group that works for the County called Anfield Consulting that works for the County up in Tallahassee for us. Ms. Deigl stated that David Darn who is the Executive Director of CTD is the one that's pushing this through so they have asked if there is any support to contact him to push it through.

ON MOTION by Mr. Bob McPartlan, SECONDED by Ms. Dorismond, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to approve the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) Annual Evaluation Report for FY 2020/21 and to recommend that the MPO both approve the Evaluation and recommend to the State Commission that SRA be retained as the CTC.

Other New Business – No Action Required

Mr. Freeman thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He appreciated everyone's participation on the Committee. Ms. Deigl thanked everyone for their evaluation.

ON MOTION by Mr. McPartlan, SECONDED by Dr. Hurst, the Board voted

unanimously (13-0) to adjourn the meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

The next meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will be held on **May 26, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**