

## TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

### MINUTES FOR AUGUST 25, 2022

A meeting of the Indian River County (IRC) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) was held at 10:00 AM on Thursday, August 25, 2022, in the County Administration Building "B", Room B1-501, 1800 27<sup>th</sup> 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; **Marie Dorismond**, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Representative; **Glorybee Perez**, Florida Agency for Health Care Administration (FAHCA) Representative; **Melissa Arndt**, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Representative **Amber Young**, Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (FDVR) 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 **Danica David**, Citizen's Advocate and **Dalia Dillon**, Area Agency on Aging of Palm Beach/Treasure Coast Representative.

Absent were: **Darlene Silverstein**, Medical Community Representative, **Dale Shepperson**, CSRC Representative, **Jennifer Idlette**, Public Education Representative, and **Bob McPartlan**, Florida Department of Children and Families (FDCF) 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.

**TWO VACANCIES:** Children at Risk and Senior Community Representatives.

#### Call to Order

Chairman Commissioner Joe Earman called the TDLCB meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. He wanted to thank everybody for attending the meeting at which time it was determined there was a quorum present. He introduced Danica David to her first official meeting as Citizen Advocate. Ms. David stated she is a professional dog groomer here in Vero Beach. She has two kids that attend the Willow School. She wanted to get more involved within the community and to learn as much as she can about the County. Chairman Earman stated that she took one of the Citizen Advocate positions. Ms. Glorybee Perez introduced herself. She is the alternate for Victoria Anderson and represents the Agency for Healthcare Administration.

#### Approval of Minutes of the May 26, 2022 Regular Meeting – Action Required

Chairman Earman asked if there were any additions or corrections to the TDLCB Meeting minutes of May 26, 2022.

**ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Dalia Dillon, the Board voted unanimously (11-0) to approve the February 24, 2022 as presented.**

Dr. Harry Hurst indicated the minutes were very complete and very well done.

Chairman Earman stated that Ms. Moirano does a good job. He praised the staff in the BOCC office.

Milory Senat arrived at 10:03 a.m.

### **TDLCB Chairman's Report**

Chairman Earman thanked Ms. David and Ms. Perez for being here attending their first meeting.

He discussed the Oslo Interchange project which is Oslo Road and I-95. They went to a meeting that the FDOT sponsored last week. Mr. Brian Freeman was there, himself and Rich Szpyrka, our Public Works Director along with a group of FDOT folks and citizens especially that live in that area around Oslo and maybe even west of I-95. It looks like it is going to be a great project and a great asset to the County. It will give us a center, a middle and a northern exit for the County. It will give room for development out there. It will also help in case we have an emergency and we need to evacuate. The project is going to start beginning in August of 2023. Mr. Freeman indicated that the plan is to have the contractor immobilized by the end of the summer of next year. The construction of the project will be three years. They are going to be building a new interchange which will include replacing the existing bridge for Oslo Road over I-95 but also Oslo Road is going to be widened to four lanes from the interstate to 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue where currently that's where the four-lane section of Oslo Road ends. All of that is completed under one construction contract. The Oslo Road widening and the interchange are projects that have been top priorities of the MPO for many years. Actually, the advancing in the construction schedule up to next year was actually something that was able to happen with the funding of the American Rescue Plan funds that FDOT programmed and it was approved by the State Legislature this Spring. Chairman Earman indicated that we're looking forward to that. He thought it would be a great project. There will be some changes on some of the side roads out in that area but they will be paved and it will all be in pretty good shape. He felt that it will be a great project and it's probably long overdue but also speaking with some of the other FDOT folks there they hardly do interchanges anymore especially on I-95. Every place has it so this is kind of a unique project for them they said right now that they're actually doing the full interchange along the interstate. They do upgrades, turning lanes and stuff to accommodate more traffic but they haven't done a full-fledged interchange in a while on an existing road.

Chairman Earman stated that Kimley-Horn, the consulting team is finalizing the Visioning Report that the County has done. Visioning is where the County is going to go, how we're going to manage growth, what we're going to do with our roadways, our infrastructure, our water and sewer and all that sort of stuff. The Visioning Report on how the County is going to look in the next 10 to 20 years is going to come out fairly soon. Mr. Freeman stated that the Visioning Study kicked off about a year ago and the main purpose of it was to look at the community as it was growing. We have gone through a period of a lot of new construction in the last few years. For the MPO their next long-range plan update which will be planned for the year 2050 they will actually be kicking that off in a couple of years but also the Cities and the County have their own plans that they will be implementing and so this is something that will be useful for them as well. They had a lot of public meetings since last Fall and had a lot of meetings in the Spring. They did seven meetings back in May all over the community, at different times of the day just trying to reach as many different people as they could. The Consultant is going to be having their final report which should be available on the MPO website next week and they will be presenting it to the MPO Board at the MPO's meeting on September 14<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. in B-501. One thing that has already been implemented by the County was identified through the Visioning Study and also through the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. He thought that we're all kind of aware of the need for more affordable housing in the Community. He felt it was going to take a look of different strategies to kind of address that.

One of the recommendations was opening up the rules for what are called accessory dwelling units. Really for maybe an individual or maybe a two-person household where there is a mother-in-law suite or a garage apartment and modifying the County's rules where they were already allowed but they had some limitations on them just to make it a more viable option for housing. The Board of County

Commissioners approved that new Ordinance back in July. That is something that has been put into place and Mr. Freeman thought that there will be a lot more stuff that's coming in the months of ahead. Chairman Earman stated as a Commission, we're looking forward to seeing what the consultant says and working with it because we are growing as a County. A lot of people have moved down here recently or moved up here recently from whatever direction and we need to make sure that we manage our growth correctly. To make sure we don't turn into a place where everybody is really tight against each other and traffic is horrendous.

Chairman Earman stated we had a good turn out today but we still have two vacancies on the Committee. We have a vacancy for Children at Risk Representative and then Senior Community Representatives. So, if you know of anybody out there that would like to serve on this board please let Mr. Freeman know and we can talk to them and see if they're interested and go from there.

### **Planning Status Report** – *No Action Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman indicated that he had two things he wanted to provide an update on. First of all, he mentioned every five years the MPO goes through what's called a "CTC Selection Process". CTC is the Community Transportation Coordinator which is the agency that's actually responsible for providing the transportation in the community. Mr. Chris Stephenson is a representative from SRA and has been serving that role as long as we've had a TD System here in Indian River County. Every five years we do have to send out a solicitation to see what agencies or businesses might be interested in providing that service and then making a recommendation to the State Commission for who they should contract with. They will be sending out a request for letters of interest in October. He has been told that SRA is interested. Depending on the response they get from that request, the letters of interest will kind of dictate the process that they follow but they do kind of anticipate coming back to this committee in February with a recommendation of who will serve that role for the next five years and then that goes to the MPO Board for their approval or recommendation before we send it to the State Commission sometime next Spring.

Mr. Freeman indicated the second announcement he wanted to mention is that next week is the Annual Transportation Disadvantaged Training Workshop and Expo that's been put on by the State Commission. It will be held in Orlando at the Renaissance Resort which is the hotel that's next to Sea World across the parking lot from the main entrance into Sea World. As you can see there's all kinds of different sessions on the Agenda for that workshop. He just wanted to call everyone's attention to one of the items that's at the end of the Agenda for those several days. There is an awards banquet and dinner on Wednesday, August 31<sup>st</sup> at 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m. Mr. Freeman had been told that there is a good reason to have some people there from Indian River County for this dinner. He couldn't give any more details than that. He informed everyone to let Patti know if they wanted to attend. Dr. Hurst questioned whether they were recognizing an individual or an agency here. Mr. Freeman indicated that it was not a specific individual but it is a collection of individuals. Mr. Freeman stated it is a very good workshop and is held annually.

### **Community Transportation Coordinator Status Report** – *No Action Required*

Mr. Chris Stephenson, Transportation Director, Senior Resource Association presented an overview of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Transportation Report, a copy of which is on file in the Commission Office. The status report covers April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022.

Mr. Stephenson stated that the Community Coach ridership is up from last year and up from two years ago. They continue to see a lot of passengers using Community Coach both on the ADA side, the Americans with Disabilities side and the Transportation Disadvantage's side. They are on pace to have ridership by the end of this fiscal year to be one of their higher years than in the past. They do more ADA trips than TD trips. Their ADA corridor is so expansive in Indian River County.

Their on-time performance for Community Coach was 92 percent in the third quarter. They're

always trying to get as close to 100 percent. The FTA standard for them is anything over 75 percent but they have a higher standard than the FTA does on that. They're always trying to get that number up as high as they can. They had received a number of applications and had approved 116 of them. Something that might cause someone's application to get rejected is if they don't have enough information on there or they might live right next to a Go Line bus stop and it might be determined that this person can easily go out to the bus stop and get on. They don't need to use the door-to-door service which they're trying to make sure the resources get allocated correctly, so that the County's most vulnerable are the ones that are using their door-to-door service, the Community Coach. They want the general public to be using the Go Line as much as possible. There's a lot of independence that can be gained by using the Go Line and so they're always trying to push people to their fixed route service if they can physically and cognitively handle it. They are required to get an answer to someone within 21 days. They do it in less than 10. It really depends on how much information they need from them. If someone is blind and they cannot see, that's a pretty quick one that they can get processed pretty quickly. If someone just says, well, I'm elderly, that kind of takes more steps because they have a third-party assessor. They use Treasure Coast Community Health that will send someone to TCCH and they kind of put them through a physical assessment to see if this person is physically able to ride the Go Line or do they need to ride the Community Coach. This Board suggested that they do something because what was happening is they were kind of disapproving anyone whose doctors filled out a letter for them and their ADA numbers were going through the roof. So, this Board suggested that they have a third-party assessor come and go through and look at everyone uniquely to determine if they need to be riding the Go Line or Community Coach. So, they've been doing that for the last few years and it's worked really well for their system. They have relationships with different agencies in the community. If they refer people to them, they definitely take that into consideration. What was happening was people were taking their applications to their doctors and saying hey, sign this so I can get a door-to-door trip and their doctors would sign it. Mr. Brian Freeman stated that we can't charge any fee or fare for the ADA Service because the federal regulations are that your ADA fare cannot be more than double your rate or fixed route fare but we're on a free system to ride so when you multiply zero by two you still get zero. The way the ADA Regulations are different than the TD Regulations is they can't prioritize trip purposes over others so for TD they put an emphasis on providing medical trips first and then what are called, by life-sustaining trips, for groceries and other essential needs. For ADA trips it can be for any purpose and you cannot refuse to provide the trip so it can provide a strain on the overall system where on the ADA side if people can't be refused service then sometimes the really critical population it gets harder to make sure those that really need it are being served. They said the key there is to make sure that you're only certifying people that truly are eligible for ADA service. Mr. Freeman indicated that every Go Line is equipped with a wheelchair ramp or lift. Mr. Stephenson stated that they're just trying to make sure that the County's most vulnerable are getting the resources that they need to get around the community. They have fully accessible ADA vehicles on the Go Line side that handle a very high number of people in wheelchairs and walkers every day and the Community Coach is really reserved for the people who really are physically and cognitively unable to get to Go Line bus stops.

For the year, they have received 537 Applications and approved 371 of them so that's an almost 70 percent approval rate so they have a good system in place for evaluating those Applicants. Total riders on the Community Coach is 2,100 this year and the total unduplicated that have taken a ride in the last three years is 4,900. They keep track of those things and purge their system every month of people who might have become inactive or who have become deceased or maybe someone broke both their legs in an accident and they had to use them temporarily and now they're back to being able bodied and able to use the fixed route service. They have eligibility specialists on their staff who really spend a lot of time in their database making sure that they have these numbers available. They have to report these numbers to the State every year. At our meeting they will talk about the annual operating reports which is something that SRA and the County have to submit to the State every single year by the end of September. We will talk about that at our next meeting.

For Go Line, their third quarter ridership was about 1,300 riders more than this time last year. It's just about one percent more than this time last year. They are still on pace by the end of this fiscal year. Three months from now, he expects to be reporting that their Go Line had the highest ridership ever to date. So, they are still on pace to hit about 1.2 million riders this year. For a County this size having

ridership that high is just really unprecedented in Florida. They see that trend and they expect that to continue. They like to see consistency on all of their routes for what the ridership looks like. 24 percent of their riders take Routes 2 and 4 which go through the main corridor as U.S. 1 and State Road 60. That's where most of the trip generators are in this County. They've got about 22 percent of their ridership that comes from the Gifford area. They've got 18 percent of their ridership that comes from the North County either Fellsmere or Sebastian and then 16 percent that comes from the South County south of 17<sup>th</sup> Street and South Oslo Road. They have Route 15 that goes down to Indian River State College in Ft. Pierce. Routes 1 and 13, far west of the County, does about 13 percent of their ridership. Route 9 that goes in between Vero Beach and Sebastian that does about 7 percent of their ridership. They like to keep track of that for consistency so they know where their riders are trying to go so they can have a service that serves people and the destinations they're trying to get to. 95.7 percent of all of their Go Line stops were hit on time last quarter. They're always trying to get that number as close to 100 percent if possible. Things that might change that could be traffic or accidents.

Their number of road calls went down this year compared to last year and their number of accidents stayed the same at zero. They have to keep track of that number and report that to the State and the Feds every year. They like to know that there are more people riding their service and it's still just as safe as when they've had lesser ridership. At some point they have had as many as 30 vehicles on the road at one time. So, only having 7 road calls for a 3-month period they consider that very successful.

MBV Engineering has completed the plans for their new bus shelter locations. They have 11 locations that are going to be receiving a total of 15 new shelters here in the very new future. They have 504 bus stops in the community and 78 of those bus stops are served by bus shelters and 15 of those stops are served by Simme-Seats.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council mobility grant that they gave SRA that is all on the Treasure Coast that they do. That's something that the FDDC asked SRA to do back in October of 2020. It is specifically designed for individuals with developmental disabilities. In order for someone to use that service they have to have a developmental disability. That program is by far the most popular program on the Treasure Coast. They've done over 52,000 trips in that program in the last year and a half. They're really pleased. The Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged gave them a 1.2 million dollar grant to continue that program this year. The FDDC was going to let the funding run out at the end of September and the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged is funding that. They're very thankful to their partners in Tallahassee for doing that. St. Lucie County where most of these trips have taken place has paid the local match for it. That is going to continue to be a really successful program for people with developmental disabilities. It is really geared towards employment so there's a lot of people who might have Downs Syndrome that work at maybe the Mets Stadium. Their service runs from 5:00 in the morning to 11:00 at night taking those people to work.

Their complaints were slightly up last quarter. Compared to last year they had 15 complaints compared to 10 the year before. That's still a really low number but they do keep track of that and they do want there to be transparency between them and the Board. They did receive 15 complaints last quarter. 1 was about reckless driving, 7 was about poor customer service and 7 were about timeliness. Whenever they're not doing something someone in the Community will let them know about it. Mr. Stephenson stated that the Board had suggested that if SRA didn't have enough drivers and vehicles to do the trips themselves that they outsource it to transportation vendors in the community. They do have a very thorough vetting process for those vendors. You might have seen, like, Skytop, E-net or Stellar Transportation vans driving around. A lot of them do work for SRA whenever they can't fit the trips on their buses and if they get a complaint about any vendor they do note that and they put them through a really vigorous audit every single year to make sure that they're going to continue using them in the future because they want people to feel like getting on a transportation vendor like that would be the same as if they were riding the Community Coach.

Mr. Stephenson wanted to let the Committee aware of who has partnered with SRA to advertise their business on the side of their vehicles. Mr. Brian Freeman stated the revenue that comes in from

those companies that advertise or agencies that advertise on the buses whether GoLine or Community Coach goes into the local master haulers that they use to get State and Federal grants to run the system. It's just one more way to provide funding into the system so they can keep it going and provide as much service as possible. Dr. Hurst inquired about stormy weather if an organization needs to move a great number of people, do they make plans for how that is done. Mr. Stephenson indicated that as the CTC in Indian River County, they are contractually in an agreement with Indian River County that in the event there needs to be evacuations happen, they will do that during hurricanes. They help take people to the Special Needs Shelter. The School District handles a lot of the general population evacuations with their school buses but SRA are the ones who go to the people who have special needs, like, they're on dialysis or oxygen machines and they need electricity. They are the ones that are responsible for tripping them to the Special Needs shelter which is at Treasure Coast Elementary on State Road 510. They've been mobilized six times in the last ten years to do that whenever the County has activated the shelters. Also, in the event that something was to happen like with the nuclear power plant in St. Lucie County, they would be utilized to move high numbers of people. They just recently had conversations with the sheriff's office about how they could assist in the event of a mass shooting if there was an issue at the schools and they needed to help evacuate the schools. They have agreements with a lot of community partners to see how they can be helpful in those types of horrible situations. Dr. Harry Hurst inquired about the in-kind service. He stated that several years ago, the Board had asked the City for some money to help them along. They said we don't give you any money. We give you free parking and don't charge you for it. He wanted to know if we were doing that. Mr. Freeman stated from time to time they've used in-kind as a match. That's where you provide either staff resources or land or a building as a match. Many years ago, when we were trying to expand service in Fellsmere and Sebastian both of the cities offered some kind of like seed match money to get grants that expanded service in those communities. Also, the City of Vero Beach leases the land near the high school by the railroad tracks where the Main Transit Hub is located on 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> Street. That's a 40-year-lease where it's one dollar per year. It was used as in-kind for the grant to get the funding for that facility. They got over a million dollars from FTA and also FDOT provided some funding for the construction of the Main Transit hub. It's 1.6 acres of land that the City has provided long term for it. Dr. Hurst asked with the tax increases we've received that means this property should be at a higher level, therefore, it gives us a higher number of in-kind monies. Mr. Freeman stated that potential may be there. He didn't think we've ever tried to utilize that but they're definitely willing to be creative when it comes to finding a local match. Dr. Hurst stated we are looking for ways of maximizing all the things that are coming in.

Chairman Earman stated before he came here he was also reading another thing from the DOT in reference to the 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue improvement. The one that runs across Sebastian, 510 basically. It runs in front of Sebastian River High School. When that project starts some time in 2024, he wanted to know if the bus stop for Go Line whether that is being integrated in. Mr. Freeman indicated that yes, it had been.

Ms. Danika David inquired about the age requirement to be able to ride the Go Line by themselves. Mr. Stephenson stated it was 12 years old. Ms. David asked whether SRA does anything with the local schools to help educate the kids. Mr. Stephenson stated that they go out and do a lot of travel training. They go to the high schools. They've talked to the Boys & Girls Club. They try and make sure that the community knows how they can use their service because they'll even go out and ride with people for the first time. They've had high school freshmen classes where the teacher has asked whether SRA could ride the bus with the entire class because she was trying to show the Community how they can ride the bus. A lot of students use the bus. It is right down the street from the high school. If they have band practice or football practice after school and they don't have a way to get home, a lot of them will walk down to the Main Transit Hub and catch the bus. They try and have a really good educational program that they do at the school so the students know how to use them.

#### **Review of Progress Report and Reimbursement Invoice #4 for the 2021/22 Planning Grant**

*– No Action Required*

Mr. Brian Freeman stated that this is their fourth quarterly progress report and reimbursement invoice for the Planning Grant. The one thing that is different with the fourth quarter each year is they

have to submit it to the State by August 15<sup>th</sup> for reimbursement. Usually they bring it to the Board before they submit it to the State but because of that deadline to get reimbursed it has already been submitted to the State and they have already paid them. This was for the things that were done back in the Spring with the approval of the TDSP annual update and also wrapping up the CTC evaluations that they did last year.

#### **Review of the Actual Expenditures Report for FY 2021/2022 – Action Required**

Mr. Freeman stated that at the MPO they do many different reports and some of them are quite lengthy and this one is actually the shortest report that they do every year and it's one page with just two numbers on that page. They are required to report this every year by September 15<sup>th</sup>. It is the amount of local dollars that were provided as a funding match for TD Services and the number of trips that were provided with those dollars. For the last fiscal year, it was just over \$41,000 of money from the County's General Fund and that was for 13,834 trips that were under Transportation Disadvantaged trips.

**ON MOTION by Dr. Harry Hurst, SECONDED by Ms. Wendy Grow, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to approve the Actual Expenditures Report for 2021/2022.**

#### **Consideration of the 2022 Transportation Development Plan (TDP) Annual Update – No Action Required**

They do a transit development plan major update every five years and actually they're just now starting to kick off for a major update that will be wrapping up by this time next year but this is the annual update that they do. In the intervening years they do an annual update. Jon Howard presented a PowerPoint presentation. They reviewed the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan at their last meeting and approved that annual update. The last major update was in 2018 for the TDP. Every five years they are currently under a contract with the Center of Urban Transportation Research to start their update for their major TDP due next Fall. They've also asked them to do some of the TDSP components with that. They will do them in conjunction at the same time. Mr. Howard indicated that they were going to review the annual update which is just kind of a snapshot of the TDP with a list of minor updates. It is required by the Florida Administrative Codes who receive block grant funds which they use to match with their block grant funds which they use to match for their operation money for the program. It's a major vehicle for how they analyze the system. In the update there's significant public involvement so they do all sorts of surveys, on line ridership surveys. It is very important to do rider surveys. They do system analysis of vendors and peer comparison. They have a status report which they update every year. Last year with their TDP Annual Update they had talked about COVID and the discontinuation of Route 11 because it was underperforming. It had been suspended over a year. In this year, they focused on the recovery from COVID and all the great performance measures despite some of their peer systems and some of their struggles. He discussed the financial plan. The annual update is prepared in house. Based on their prior TDP recommendations which have actually been implemented from their last major update. They've expanded three additional hours from 6 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the Go Line fixed route. Saturday hours increased. Route 15 has been fully funded through a Court Ordered Service Grant. Brian Freeman stated the FDOT provides for that route that goes to the College in Fort Pierce. Mr. Howard stated that it had been temporarily suspended but it restarted last August when they resumed in-person classes. They are happy to report a 6 percent total increase from last year's number. As Mr. Stephenson said, this year we may get back to that 1.2 million riders that we had before COVID.

In review, between the year prior and last year's ridership there was a huge increase on Route 1. Mr. Stephenson stated this is comparing their numbers last year to the numbers that we had during COVID so Route 1 got hit probably the hardest because of COVID. There were less people going over to the shops on the ocean side. There were less people at the marina which is one of their big trip generators. There was a big growth in the last year and a half on Route 1 compared to when they were

really hit because of COVID. That is encouraging to see that we had a big decrease in ridership on that route and now people are starting to go out and ride their route again. Mr. Howard stated that the Go Line driver of the year was on Route 1. Chairman Earman stated he would never have thought that in Indian River County we would see a million riders on the public transportation system. Dr. Hurst questioned regarding the decrease on Route 8. Mr. Stephen indicated that Route 8 serves primarily the Gifford Middle School. They used to have a lot of riders on it and then after COVID a lot of those students either found their own way to get to school or they started on-line classes. The numbers of riders riding Route 8 is still fairly consistent with what it used to be but that's one of the reasons why Route 8 ridership hasn't completely rebounded because a lot of their students found alternative means to get to school and a lot of them are taking on-line options. On Route 10 a lot of students from Fellsmere would take the Go Line in to get to the Sebastian River High School and so two years ago whenever the school was shut down they didn't have any of those students riding the bus. Mr. Freeman stated that Route 10, the 70,000 riders that was below the historical trend for the route today. He thought what we were seeing is Route 10 getting back to its numbers of what ridership was before COVID. Mr. Stephenson stated that Route 15 is the one that they suspended for almost the entire year. That is the one that goes down to Indian River State College when they suspended their classes. The 677 trips in that entire fiscal year is because it only ran for a month and a half before they shut it down. Mr. Freeman indicated that you can see that the ridership numbers are much lower on Route 15 compared to the other routes in the system and that's because it's really known as an express route. It starts at the IG Center on Oslo Road and goes down to the main College in Fort Pierce and so the riders are travelling between Vero Beach and Fort Pierce on that route. It was almost two years, three and a half where they were not doing any in-person classes at the main campus. Most of the riders on the system that's why they were using it so they had also suspended that route during that time. Mr. Stephenson stated they didn't start it up again until last spring. It was down for 20 months. The State College in Indian River County, Route 13 and so they've seen that before where there's some swings from Route 15 to Route 13 because the students that normally would take Route 15 down to the college but a class is now being offered in Indian River County and so then they stop riding Route 15 and they start riding Route 13. They have a very good relationship with the college. There was a while where they were putting tutors on the bus to tutor students while the bus was in service because they had done a study with them to show them what classes the students riding the bus were in and so they invested in having some tutors ride the bus with their passengers because they were in the bus for 30 minutes so they thought it would be a good opportunity to do that. They have really good communication with them about what classes they're offering at which campus so they are prepared for the ridership swings. Mr. Stephenson stated the college has requested and they're actually trying to work with them about how they could set this up about some type of service that goes from the college in Vero Beach to the College in Fort Pierce because they said that would be helpful because they have some students that take a couple of classes in Indian River County and they need to get down to St. Lucie County. That would be for a longer period of time than our current services and so they're actually in conversation with the College about seeing what they can do to maybe do something like that for them in the future. They're trying to find some funding in their own coffers that could help pay for that. Route 15 doesn't currently run on Saturdays. It is one of the only routes that doesn't run on Saturdays. Dr. Hurst asked if they had received requests for services on Sunday. Mr. Stephenson indicated that they do. That is one of the suggestions that their TDP has made in the past is look at Sunday service. They would be thrilled to offer Sunday service but it's going to come down to can they afford to operate on Sundays and in the past the answer has been no. They get a lot of Community Coach clients that call and ask if they will be able to take them on Sundays and right now they're not able to do that. Back when they had Route 16 which was a route that ran on the island that was a seven-day week route and with that came an attached Sunday service on the Community Coach because they're required to run the Community Coach if they're running a fixed route. They had figured out that in order for them to just be in the black they would have to do at least 16 Community Coach trips a day on Sunday in order for it to be manageable and they never got that many. Even when they did offer Sunday service which was only for a couple of years, they didn't have a whole lot of people take advantage of it but they do occasionally get some requests for it. There are people today that they take to mass on Thursdays and Fridays and it's very hard to tie them up when they're going to get there and when they're going to get out because sometimes mass can take an hour and sometimes it can take three hours.

Mr. Howard stated that they are one of the top performing systems in the State in terms of operating expense per passenger trip at \$2.72 per passenger trip with their closest competitor, St. Lucie County at \$4.33. It's just attesting it to how well run the service is, how also the grid line system that we have here that we can enjoy and also just the route system design that has been recommended through years of transit development planning. Also, the top of the list for operating expense per passenger mile, last year they were like .58 cents so it has gone up slightly for every one in the state. Mr. Freeman indicated what's really important about these are providing the most service possible with the funding that's provided to the system. It's tops in the state when you look at all of the systems all over the State of Florida. The fixed route system in Indian River County provides the most service on a cost efficiency standpoint so they're really taking what limited funding they can get together to provide the most service to the most people. He felt that was wonderful for the service and it reflects the excellent services provided by SRA in running the system. Dr. Hurst indicated we've been in that one and two slots consistently for years and he felt that really speaks very well for providing all the services and for the Board working very closely together. Mr. Freeman indicated that it's usually Gainesville that they're kind of neck and neck with. He noted that St. Lucie County when they were looking at their system a few years ago and looking at why they had so much more service and usage than what was being offered in St. Lucie County which has twice as many people as Indian River County they implemented a lot of changes to their system based on the Go Line and he thought a key to that was converting it to a fare free system. They've seen their ridership quadruple in recent years and on an efficiency standpoint now they're the second lowest in the state. They still haven't quite reached where we are here in Indian River County.

Service modifications that are still ongoing include bus cleanings. Some of them have been rolled back meaning there are no more mask mandates anymore. It is still a very safe service. Last year there was a new technology request for proposals that went out. They went through three different providers and they chose Transload for their fixed route service. It's kind of like a navigation service for the drivers. It has automatic passenger counters. It provides a wealth of data. It has enunciators for each stop so now they don't have to look out the window and always worry about whether you're going to miss your stop. It now has a display and an automatic enunciator for each stop. There's also a paratransit software system that helps with scheduling trips for Community Coach. Organizing those trips there's all sorts of cool mapping technologies that shows how to plan for them efficiently. This is available on the website and also on your mobile phone through the app stores. Mr. Freeman stated that the app is called "Transload" which can be used on Google or an Apple phone. It will zoom right into your location and show where the stops are and even where the bus is on the route that will be coming to your stop so you can kind of get an idea of how away the bus might be, how much longer the wait is going to be. The same thing is also available on the website. The Indian River Mall bus is the busiest route on the whole system. There are GPS tracking devices that are on the buses themselves showing their actual real time locations. It is very helpful for riders on the system and you can get the same information on your phone.

There were improvements at 58 locations within the county. Simi Seats are a new option and there are total of 15. They have also gotten one recently installed at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue due to the kindness of Danika David. They are permitting for 15 new bus shelters. They have about eight of those designs that are done which are currently in permitting. Mr. Freeman indicated that he saw that permits were issued for two of them yesterday so those will probably be started soon.

Chairman Earman stated that 510 from U.S. 1 all way to 512 will be widened starting in 2024 and the project is supposed to be a five-year project. Mr. Freeman indicated this will be in the first phase. Chairman Earman stated that they're actually starting from 512 going south to the curb and then work east to U.S. 1. He indicated this is the area right in front of the Sebastian River High School. This is the 510 90<sup>th</sup> Avenue section from 512 to the curb at Vero Lake Estates which is the first portion of this project.

He requested everyone review the TDLB annual update and give him recommendations. Mr. Freeman discussed that we will be kicking off the major update. The public involvement component of that is significant. The team that was working on the kick off the last time they did over 700 passenger interviews while riding along with people on Go Line getting their thoughts about the system, you know, any kind of changes they might want to see but also just getting kind of some information about them,

like, how far they might have had to walk to get to the bus, how far they were going to have to walk when they got off the bus. Did they have other options besides riding the bus just so they have a good profile of the riders and why people are using the system and how they can keep on improving it.

**Other New Business** – *No Action Required*

Mr. Freeman introduced Mark Vietze who has become a member of the MPO staff. He has been with the County in the Planning Department for the last two years.

**ON MOTION by Ms. Wendy Grow, SECONDED by Ms. Melissa Arndt, the Board voted unanimously (13-0) to adjourn the meeting.**

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:07 a.m.

The next meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will be held on **November 17, 2022 at 10:00 a.m.**