

**CHARLOTTE COUNTY TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED  
LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD (LCB)  
MEETING  
May 2, 2024**

Minutes of a regular meeting held in a hybrid format on May 2, 2024, utilizing TEAMS remotely and in-person at the Transit Facility, 545 Theresa Boulevard in Port Charlotte, FL 33954.

**MEMBERS PRESENT IN-PERSON**

**Commissioner Ken Doherty**, *Charlotte County Commissioner (LCB Chair)*  
**M. Suzanne Roberts**, *Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic - Medical Community Representative (LCB Vice Chair)*  
**Lynn Dohler**, *Children-at-Risk Representative*  
**Lynda Faieta**, *Public Education-School Transportation (alternate)*  
**Donna Fain**, *Agency for Persons with Disabilities*  
**Jocene Henderson**, *Veterans Affairs*  
**Carmen Henry**, *Regional Workforce Development*  
**Michelle Peronto**, *FDOT, District One Modal Development Office*  
**Shery Stahnke**, *Goodwill, Economically Disadvantaged Representative (alternate)*  
**Cheryl Sytsma**, *Disabled Interests Representative*

**MEMBERS PRESENT REMOTELY**

**Dottie Fulton**, *Citizen Advocate-User*  
**Joseph Sabatino**, *Citizen Advocate*  
**Michael Stahler**, *Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA)*

**ABSENT MEMBERS**

**Vacant**, *Local Private-for-Profit Transportation Industry Representative*  
**Leigh Ann Bellamy**, *Division of Blind Services - excused*  
**Pamela Jordan**, *Representative for Elderly Interests*  
**Tabitha Larrauri**, *Department of Children & Families*  
**Maricela Morado**, *Area Agency on Aging-Florida Department of Elder Affairs - excused*

**STAFF AND OTHERS PRESENT**

**Laks Gurram**, *MPO Principal Planner*  
**Wendy Scott**, *MPO Planner*  
**Shirley Ciampi**, *Charlotte County Transit*  
**Heidi Maddox**, *Charlotte County Transit*  
**Betty-Ann Sherer**, *Charlotte County Transit*  
**Eva Tomszak**, *Charlotte County Fiscal (remotely)*

**1. Call to Order & Roll Call**

LCB Chair Ken Doherty called the regular LCB Meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. An in-person quorum was present.

**2. Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**3. Public Comments on Agenda Items**

There were no public comments on agenda items.

**4. Consent Agenda**

- A. [Approval of Minutes: January 4, 2024 LCB Public Meeting Minutes](#)
- B. [Approval of Minutes: January 4, 2024 Regular LCB Meeting Minutes](#)
- C. **Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Annual Planning Grant to the MPO (FY 2024/2025 is \$26,437)**

*Suzanne Roberts made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Jocey Henderson seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.*

**5. Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF) Trip and Equipment Grant**

Each year, a portion of the State Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund (TDTF) is allocated to each Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) to provide trips and equipment for non-sponsored TD service.

The funding amount for the FY 2024/2025 Trip and Equipment Grant plus Voluntary Dollar funding (commencing July 1, 2024) is provided below:

Trip & Equipment Grant allocation	\$ 551,969
Local Match	<u>\$ 61,329</u>
Total Funding	\$ 613,298
Voluntary Dollar	\$ 94
Local Match	<u>\$ 10</u>
Total	104
Grand Total	\$ 613,402

Wendy Scott mentioned the opportunity to contribute to the Voluntary Dollar program at vehicle registration renewal time.

**6. FY 2021/2022-FY 2025/2026 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan/Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (TDSP/CPT-HSTP) Second Annual Update Including Rate Model Calculations**

On March 30, 2021, the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) designated the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Charlotte County for a five-year period commencing July 1, 2021. A new Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) was approved by the LCB on September 9, 2021. This document also serves as the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) for purposes of Federal transportation legislation requirements. The attached change pages will serve as the second annual update to the current document and requires approval by the LCB prior to submission to the CTD. Staff will revise Table of Contents page numbering if needed once updated materials are approved.

#### Update Actions:

- Revision of Cover Page with date of second annual update
- Change in grant used (from Section 5339 to Section 5307 CARES funding), pg. 11
- Change in vehicle information, pg. 12
- Mention of TDP currently under development, pg. 13
- Mention of the LRTP currently under development, pg. 14
- Revision to Public Participation (CTC Survey 2023 and 2024), pg. 16
- Note regarding graphic update upon 2025 TDP completion, pg. 17
- Mention of Hurricane Ian and Sunseeker Resort opening, pg. 21
- Trip Attractor corrections in Table I-1, pgs. 22-23 and 25
- Insertion of new 2024 Bus Transit System Annual Safety and Security Certification, (letter dated February 8, 2024), pg. 44
- Most recent CTC Evaluation date, pg. 58
- Insertion of new Transit brochure in Appendix A, pg. 61-62
- Insertion of new Transit Organizational Chart in Appendix B, pg. 63
- Insertion of new Missed Trips Policy to replace current No-Show Policy in Appendix C, pgs. 64-66
- Insertion of new Bus Inventory as Appendix G, pg. 77
- Insertion of new TD Rate Model 5-Year Comparison and Rate Model Calculations in Appendix H, pgs. 78-86
- Change MPO website address on the Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Evaluation/Comment Form in Appendix I, pg. 87
- Insertion of Appendix J, 2024 CTC Evaluation, pgs 89-98

(Note: The entire draft document will be available upon request and will be posted on the MPO website post-meeting approval.)

Wendy Scott noted some examples of the proposed minor changes to the TDSP document. Heidi Maddox and Eva Tomszak reviewed some slight decreases to the rate model calculations that were recently agreed upon with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged staff following their review. Changes to the rates per trip and some financials were discussed. LCB Chair Doherty asked if the reduction to approximately 46,000 projected passenger trips was reflective of a more conservative approach. Heidi Maddox answered that he was correct. Eva Tomszak noted that a figure of roughly \$80,000 for salary and benefits had been removed from the calculations. Michelle Peronto pointed out for the sake of new members (since a question

had arisen at a meeting in Lee County the day prior) that the amount shown for trips was what the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged reimbursed as a trip cost and did not reflect the amount that passengers are charged for their rides.

Carmen Henry requested that a new address for the CareerSource location be included in the TDSP second annual update and agreed to send the information to MPO staff.

*Suzanne Roberts made a motion to approve the FY 2021/2022-FY 2025/2026 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan/Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (TDSP/CPT-HSTP) Second Annual Update Including Rate Model Calculations; allowing Transit staff to make minor technical adjustments to the rate model and other items per CTD staff guidance. Jocey Henderson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.*

## **7. 2024 CTC Evaluation**

Pursuant to Florida Statutes, Chapter 427, and Florida Administrative Code, Rule 41-2, the Local Coordinating Board (LCB), with the assistance of the Official Planning Agency (OPA), conducts an annual performance evaluation of the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). In Charlotte County, the designated CTC is the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (BCC), the governing board of the County Transit Division. This year, the CTC Evaluation was conducted on February 5-7, 2024.

The CTC Evaluation document was developed utilizing sections of the CTC Evaluation Workbook and sample materials provided by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). This year's review involved a bus inspection and ride-along, as well as examination of documentation provided by Transit Division staff. Additionally, surveys of riders and a vendor were conducted.

Wendy Scott briefly discussed the results of the CTC Evaluation including her experience on the ride along and comments received from passengers who were surveyed.

*Suzanne Roberts made a motion to approve the 2024 CTC Evaluation. Jocey Henderson seconded the motion. The item was approved unanimously.*

## **8. Community Transportation Coordinator Quarterly Reports for October-December 2023 and January-March 2024**

Given the timing of the holiday period and a very short turnaround time, the CTC Quarterly Report covering the October-December 2023 timeframe were not available for the January 4, 2024, LCB meeting. It was reviewed along with the January-March 2024 report at the May 2, 2024, LCB meeting.

Heidi Maddox discussed increased passenger ride figures compared to the prior year. LCB Chair Doherty observed that there was an increase of 15,000 rides over the 6-month period. Heidi Maddox attributed this increase to the implementation of new transit software in October 2023

and well as increased public outreach performed by the Transit staff. The number of drivers was 15-17 per day.

Heidi Maddox noted that it had been a slow start for coordinated partners, and two more CARE drivers were trained. The Veterans Van group was now handling its own dispatch and trips in-house. A new CTC partnership had commenced with Hope Hospice which had received its own vehicle. Medical and employment trips account for the highest numbers. Unmet trips are unchanged, and call volume is up 62%. Betty-Ann Sherer is developing a tracking mechanism for unmet trip analysis. Suzanne Roberts inquired about how sudden medical appointment changes are handled. Betty-Ann Sherer is working to track compliments and concerns, including how to resolve these in the same business day and documenting how they are resolved. On page 6 of the report, Heidi Maddox described recent safety complaints and noted that a CTC driver was no longer driving for Charlotte County Transit due to concerns.

Suzanne Roberts asked about the new Missed Trip policy which would take effect June 1, 2024. Heidi Maddox described the procedure:

- 1<sup>st</sup> violation – passenger receives a postcard.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> violation – passenger receives a yellow postcard.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> violation – passenger receives a red postcard.
- 4<sup>th</sup> violation – passenger receives a suspension.

## **9. Transit Development Plan (TDP) Update**

Transit Development Plans (TDPs) are required for transit grant program recipients in Section 341.052, F.S. A TDP is the provider's planning, development, and operational guidance document, based on a ten-year planning horizon and covers the year for which funding is sought and the nine subsequent years. Florida Administrative Code 14-73.001 Public Transportation further details TDP requirements. The transit element of the upcoming MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will draw heavily upon the results of Charlotte County Transit's TDP.

Kayla Huetten of Benesch was unable to participate, so Heidi Maddox gave LCB Members a PowerPoint presentation regarding recent progress with Charlotte County Transit's ongoing Transit Development Plan (TDP). The plan is updated every five years, due to FDOT by September 1, 2024, and covers FY 2025-2034. Recent achievements were reviewed. The next TDP development actions are:

- Conduct demand assessment
- Develop draft 10-year transit needs.
- Conduct Phase II outreach (May - June 2024)
- Prepare implementation & financial plans.

Present draft TDP report to the Charlotte County Board of County Commissioners (July)  
Regarding the project schedule, LCB Chair Doherty inquired about the need for the document to go before the MPO Board. Wendy Scott noted that the situation had changed historically over

time. Long ago, the MPO Board had funded the TDP document development, so the TDP had gone to the MPO Board for approval prior to the BCC. On one TDP, costs were shared between the County and the MPO. The current and upcoming TDPs were now fully funded by Charlotte County Transit. In the recent past, the TDP had been provided to the MPO Board as a report received. Commissioner Doherty noted that three of five County Commissioners sit on the MPO Board, so there is some knowledge overlap.

LCB Chair Doherty inquired if the TDP was integrated with the METRO forecasting being used by the County. He noted that by 2030, the County would only achieve 50% of buildout population. Laks Gurram stated that the MPO coordinates with the County by relying upon the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) medium high population estimates. These figures are utilized by the MPO's LRTP consultant. Recently, the MPO staff coordinated the provision of new socioeconomic (SE) data that will be used in the MPO's upcoming 2050 LRTP by providing it to the Charlotte County Transit's TDP consultant, Benesch, for use in new TDP calculations. Laks Gurram explained how the LRTP uses the TDP figures to extrapolate out 25 years. Increases in population and ridership are anticipated in the post-Covid era. Commissioner Doherty stated that at buildout the County population is expected to be just under 500,000. Michelle Peronto noted that Charlotte County currently did not utilize transit fixed route service. Discussion followed regarding the use of community circulators. Commissioner Doherty noted that he likes the County's current model, but perhaps circulators could be used in certain areas of the County. He stated that technology is the answer for transit.

Betty-Ann Sherer noted that the TDP survey is open until May. There was a request for LCB Members and their constituents to please take the survey and share the link to it. Materials were provided to interested parties. Transit staff is interested in addressing various upcoming group events regarding the TDP, so LCB Members were invited to provide notice of any such gatherings.

#### **10. Citizen Comments**

No public comments were given.

#### **11. Staff Comments**

Wendy Scott gave the following report:

(1) Thanks to everyone for participating in our LCB Meeting today. Welcome to our newest member: Ms. Cheryl Sytsma who represents individuals with disabilities and uses the transit system. Also, welcome to Mr. Lynn Dohler from the Boys and Girls Club representing Children-at-Risk. The only LCB vacancy is the one for a representative for the Private-For-Profit industry.

(2) MPO Staff participated in a TD planners' training on Changing Demographics and Mobility Management Transformation held on the previous Monday (as a makeup session due to Hurricane Idalia's conference impact).

(3) The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged and their staff had been incredibly busy, partially because of new laws that had been implemented. Following the end of the legislative session, Commission staff together with staff from the Florida Public Transit Association hosted a statewide 2024 Post-Session Summary Zoom call. A Commission Business Meeting (like the one hosted locally last year) was held on March 20, 2024 at FDOT's SunTrax facility in Auburndale in Polk County (where in 2023, the most growth of any County in the nation occurred/2009 sq miles along the I-4 corridor/includes Lakeland, Bartow and Winter Haven). Again, at this Business Meeting, all of the legislative changes impacting both the TD program and transit agencies statewide were discussed. Highlights included: (1) legislative appropriations (both the CC-PG MPO and Charlotte County Transit experienced some increase in funding), (2) changes to the composition of the TD Commission (changing their commission structure from 7 to 11 members (with some agency advisors made voting members). Now represented will be FDOT/Agency for Persons with Disabilities/Elderly Affairs/Division of Blind Services/two County administrators (one rural & one urban 150,000 population and above)/5 members who have experience in transportation, work force development, transit services, management, insurance or service of persons with disabilities or who have disabilities and use the TD system). The current eight agency advisors were eliminated (with some given voting status). Other legislative changes centered on many new requirements for paratransit services with many reporting, performance measure and contract requirements. Additionally, there were operational requirements on everything from bus wraps and paint jobs to window tinting and administrative costs. Also at the meeting, an employee of Thomas, Howell, Ferguson reported on ongoing changes to the Annual Operating Report (AOR) with a prototype website already developed for transit agencies to upload disaggregated data. The goal is to improve and drill down into available information.

(4) Despite a busy schedule, three TD Commission staff members drove from Auburndale after their business meeting to stay in Port Charlotte, so that they could attend the March 21 Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Board Meeting the next morning. Two awards were presented by Executive Director David Darm (1) to LCB Chair Ken Doherty as the 2023 Elected Official of the Year for his dedication to serving Charlotte County's TD population for more than a decade, and (2) the CC-PG MPO as the 2023 Planning Agency of the Year. These awards were given in this manner because Hurricane Idalia resulted in the cancellation of last year's Conference Awards Banquet. The MPO staff appreciated the CTD staff delaying their journey home to return to the local area to present these awards. (Item 6 - [Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting \(granicus.com\)](#))

(5) Wendy Scott thanked Charlotte County Transit for their new brochure which stresses that current rides are fare free. This action had been recommended as part of the CTC Evaluation. Transit brochures were provided to LCB members for distribution to their contacts.

(6) Farewells: Jocey Henderson (retirement) and Betty-Ann Sherer (Transit)

Laks Gurrum discussed recent Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) progress. He noted that upcoming event dates would be forthcoming soon.

Heidi Maddox thanked the Transit Staff for their recent undertakings as the Public Outreach Team. As part of this group, Jennifer Gregoire (recently promoted to Program Coordinator), Shirley Ciampi (Mobility Manager) and Betty-Ann Sherer (Department Data Coordinator) had conducted many recent public outreach efforts. Shirley Ciampi was absent from the meeting due to her attendance at the morning's food distribution event at the Family Services Center. The Transit mobile cell phone app was still under development with programming adjustments in progress which should be completed in May. Heidi Maddox noted that at the September LCB meeting, trip tracking efforts under development would provide many graphs and raw data for LCB Members to review.

## 12. Member Comments

Michelle Peronto gave the following FDOT Report:

### **Topics:**

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**Agenda topic** *Federal Grants for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 23 / State Fiscal Year 2023/2024*

**FTA Section 5310, 5311, and 5339 applications** – Public Transportation Grant Agreements have been sent to all Agencies who are receiving awards and will be executed by June 30, end of State Fiscal Year.

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**Agenda topic** *Federal Grants for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 24 / State Fiscal Year 2024/2025*

**FTA Section 5310, 5311, and 5339 applications** –The due date for applications was Friday, December 15, 2023, 36 applications were received. An update of the Department award recommendations will be provided when available.

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**Agenda topic** *Training Opportunities*

**2024 Professional Development Workshop & Transit Safety and Operations Summit hosted by FPTA/FDOT/CUTR:** This conference will be held June 3-5, 2024. The registration deadline is May 17th (<https://www.cutr.usf.edu/fpta/>).

**2024 FPTA/CTD Annual Conference & EXPO:** This conference will be held September 22-25 in West Palm Beach. General Registration Opens on Monday, June 3, 2024. <https://floridatransit.org/ac-updates>

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**Agenda topic** *Triennial Reviews*

*Round 3 of the FDOT triennial reviews began in 2024. We began with agencies that receive only FTA Section 5310 funding with the larger agencies to follow. There are currently 29 agencies to review throughout the District.*



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*Agenda topic Staff Updates*

- Stacy Booth began on April 29<sup>th</sup>. She will be the Transit Projects Coordinator for Lee, Charlotte, Hendry, and Glades Counties.
- We still have one (1) vacant position that Todd Engala is covering, which is Sarasota, Manatee, and Collier Counties.

Suzanne Roberts announced that following a successful ribbon cutting event, the Virginia B. Andes Community Clinic's mobile medical clinic vehicle had been in service for four weeks with only a few mechanical issues. She stated that she would forward the May vehicle schedule of stops to LCB Members via the MPO staff.

Shery Stahnke was welcomed as the new alternate for Goodwill in Charlotte County (representing the Economically Disadvantaged community). Cheryl Sytsma accompanied by her service dog, Hero, was greeted as the representative for Individuals with Disabilities.

Carmen Henry, who serves as Navigator/Disability Coordinator at CareerSource Southwest Florida, reported on her organization's Summer Youth Program for 15–18-year-olds. Applications were available on their website for the fully paid program. This was an opportunity for young people to gain foundational skills at an earlier age. The hope was for them to follow on by connecting to Charlotte Technical and other area colleges, thereby encouraging them to remain in the local community.

Jocey Henderson noted that Veteran's Services offices are now located in Port Charlotte at the County's Family Services Center and in Englewood at the West County Annex. Live interviews were currently underway to hire her replacement. She would notify MPO staff of the new LCB representative and alternate for Veterans Affairs once determined. She described a recent encounter with an Army veteran in need of a great deal of assistance to whom she had mentioned transit services and provided a brochure. When next meeting this individual, she observed that his outlook was much improved, and he indicated that he had told all his fellow veterans about transit services. She stressed the importance of sharing and making a difference in someone's life. She appreciated the opportunity to partner with agencies and the knowledge gained at LCB Meetings. She thanked everyone for their good wishes upon her retirement.

Joe Sabatino discussed the need for volunteers at the Saturday, May 11, 2024, Postal Food Drive from 8 am – 6 pm (contact: 941-575-0767/St. Vincent de Paul Society). Michael Stahler stated that he'd enjoyed the meeting. Dottie Fulton noted that it had been good and informative, then told everyone to stay blessed.

Attending his first LCB meeting, Lynn Dohler requested an acronym list (which Transit staff provided). Previously, staff had sent him important MPO weblinks and the member training video. He reported that the Boys and Girls Club summer program was full with 84 students on the waiting list. He appreciated the great facility provided by the County, and noted that they could use another one given population growth.

Lynda Faieta stated that the meeting had been a joy, since it was very upbeat and pleasant. She reported that with recent growth in areas such as West Port, the School Board still needs drivers. She appreciated Tony Conte sending her to the LCB Meetings and enjoys participating.

LCB Chair Doherty agreed that the LCB is a great board, and he appreciates each and everyone's participation. He remains optimistic, and Charlotte County is a great organization. Charlotte County has population challenges, but these could be worked through using growth management. A break in the dangerous weather would be welcomed, however this possibility might be contrary to recent forecasts. He stressed the importance of storm preparation at this time.

**13. Adjournment (Next Meeting – September 5, 2024) at the Charlotte County Transit Facility, 545 Theresa Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33954)**

The next LCB meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 5, 2024, at the Transit Facility located at 545 Theresa Blvd. in Port Charlotte, FL 33954. The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m.