



**Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Meeting**

Marion County Senior Services  
1101 SW 20<sup>th</sup> Ct., Ocala, FL 34471  
June 5, 2025  
10:00 AM

**MINUTES**

**Members Present:**

Anissa Pieriboni  
Carlos Colon  
Eric Ostanik  
Gisela Ruiz  
Jeannette Estes  
Matthew McClain  
Susan Hanley  
Tiffany McKenzie  
Tom Duncan  
Tracey Sapp  
Casey Griffith

**Members Not Present:**

Andrea Melvin  
Angela Juaristic  
Daisy Diaz  
Donnie Mitchell  
Elizabeth Alacci  
Iris Pozo  
Jim East

**Others Present:**

Liz Mitchell, TPO  
Rob Balmes, TPO

Shakayla Irby, TPO  
Tom Duncan, City of Ocala  
Clayton Murch, Marion Senior Services  
Herman Schultz, Marion Senior Services  
Joseph Bartolomeo, Marion Senior Services  
Chuck Varadin, Marion County  
Ken Odom, Marion County  
James Hilty Sr., City of Ocala

### **Item 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Chairman McClain called the meeting to order at 10:03am and led the board members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Item 2. Roll Call**

Administrative Assistant Shakayla Irby called the roll and a quorum was present.

### **Item 3. Proof of Publication**

Administrative Assistant Shakayla Irby stated that the meeting had been published May 29, 2025 online on the TPO website and Facebook and X pages, the City of Ocala, Belleview, and Dunnellon websites. The meeting was also published to the May 29, 2025 edition of the Ocala Star Banner.

### **Item 4A. Welcome to New Board Members**

Commissioner Matthew McClain introduced Mr. Eric Ostanik, Supervisor of Transportation at Marion County Public Schools.

Ms. Daisy Diaz, newly appointed Director of Marion County Veteran Services, was unable to attend the meeting due to a scheduling conflict.

### **5A. Consent Agenda**

*Mr. Duncan motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Colon seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.*

### **Item 6A. Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Update**

Ms. Liz Mitchell stated that the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) is the annual update for the county's current transportation disadvantaged plan. She explained that the TDSP is a tactical, coordinated plan produced by the TPO, the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), and the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB).

The plan included three primary sections: development, service, and quality assurance.

The development section provided background, demographics, service area information, goals, objectives, and an implementation plan. The service section detailed Marion Transit's operating hours, trip eligibility, processes, procedures, service standards, vehicle inventory, and data on the transportation disadvantaged population. The quality assurance section contained the CTC annual evaluation, cost and revenue allocation, and the rate structure.

Ms. Mitchell noted that all charts, graphs, and percentages in the TDSP were updated to reflect current data. Key updates included a population analysis by ethnicity and age, showing an increase in younger residents between ages 25 and 55, along with projections through 2050. A breakdown of population by municipalities was also included, with the total county population at approximately 410,000.

She highlighted data showing that the transportation disadvantaged (TD) population which includes elderly, low-income, and disabled individuals comprised nearly 192,000 people, or roughly 50% of the county's total population. A visual chart illustrated where these populations overlapped. The critical need population was estimated at 68,000.

Additional updates included revised goals, objectives, strategies, the vehicle inventory sheet, and the rate model calculation spreadsheets, which were presented for approval. The updated TDSP was posted for a 21-day public comment period, during which one comment was received from Marion Transit, requesting a formatting change to their service description on page ten.

Ms. Pieriboni made a motion to approve the TDSP update. Ms. Sapp seconded, a roll-call vote was called and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 6B. Memorandum of Agreement for new Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)**

Ms. Mitchell stated that a five-year contract was currently in place for Transportation Disadvantaged Services in Marion County between the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) and the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), Marion Senior Services, Inc. The contract was set to expire on June 30, 2025.

She explained that the TPO served as the Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA) for the Transportation Disadvantaged Program and, as part of its contractual duties, facilitated the procurement process to recommend a CTC to the Commission for the next five-year term from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2030.

Ms. Mitchell reported that on May 28, the TPO Board authorized staff to work with Marion County Procurement Services to issue a request for a Letter of Interest. The request was issued on May 29, 2024, and remained open through June 12, 2024. The TPO received one response—from Marion Transit—and subsequently recommended Marion Transit to serve as the CTC for the upcoming five-year period.

Ms. Pieriboni made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement for Marion Transit as the new CTC. Ms. McKenzie seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 6C. 2025-2026 Marion Transit Trip Rate Model**

Each year, the TDLCB is required to approve Marion Transit's (MT) proposed trip rates. MT, as required, utilizes the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Trip Rate Calculation process. The Trip Rate Calculation process considers numerous costs items including labor, fringe benefits, and insurance as well as, program income to determine the trip rates. This year, MT proposed an increase in the charge for ambulatory and wheelchair patients.

TPO staff reviewed the Trip Rate Calculation and concurred with the results.

The proposed rates are as follows:

	<b>Current Rate</b>	<b>Proposed Rate</b>
Ambulatory	\$32.69	\$36.31
Wheelchair	\$56.04	\$62.25

Mr. Colon made a motion to approve the 2025-2026 Marion Transit Trip Rate Model. Ms. Sapp seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

#### **Item 7A. Chairman McClain Presentation**

Chairman McClain provided a presentation recognizing Marion Transit, the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), for their dedication and service over the past five years. He noted that Marion Transit had served as the CTC for Marion County since 1982 and had successfully competed for the position during each five-year procurement cycle managed by the Transportation Planning Organization (TPO).

Chairman McClain commended Marion Transit for providing coordinated, door-to-door paratransit services for medical, educational, work-related, and other life-sustaining trips. With a fleet of 47 vehicles, Marion Transit covered over 1,600 square miles and prioritized trips based on guidance from the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) and the TPO.

He praised the organization for its exceptional dedication, reliability, compassion, and overall outstanding service. As a token of appreciation, an award was presented to Marion Transit. Chairman McClain and others expressed their gratitude for the professionalism and personal care shown by the drivers, noting positive rider feedback and the meaningful experiences observed during ride-alongs. He concluded by thanking the team and looking forward to another successful five years of service.

Mr. Murch expressed gratitude for the recognition given to Marion Transit and stated that the team was extremely humbled by it.

He emphasized that their shared mission was to care for those who needed transportation services the most—particularly the elderly, disabled, and transportation disadvantaged. He acknowledged that while the team always strived to do as much as possible, they were continuously looking for ways to improve service and go above and beyond in their efforts.

Mr. Murch thanked the Board and reaffirmed their commitment to serving the community with dedication and compassion.

### **Item 7B. Subcommittee's Update**

#### **Community Affairs Subcommittee**

Ms. Pieriboni reported that the group did not meet during the current quarter but had convened during the two previous quarters. Several action items had been identified, and the group was at a point where more time and space were needed to prioritize those projects and determine alignment on the design moving forward.

She also reminded members of the importance of promoting and supporting events and initiatives from other agencies. She asked that any upcoming events, announcements, or funding opportunities be sent to Ms. Mitchell, who would distribute them in a monthly update.

Ms. Pieriboni encouraged everyone to submit information at least a month in advance to ensure timely communication.

#### **Health Affairs Subcommittee**

Chairman McClain noted that the Health Affairs Subcommittee was still in need of a lead. He invited anyone interested in leading the committee or aware of individuals who might be willing to participate to come forward.

### **Item 8. Comments by TDLCB Members**

Ms. Estes provided an update on recent leadership and structural changes within her agency. She shared that her supervisor had been appointed by the governor as Acting Director, and she herself had also stepped into a new role. The agency was experiencing several high-level vacancies and organizational changes, including changes in technology leadership.

Ms. Estes noted that she was currently serving as the Regional Operations Manager for the Central Region and was temporarily assisting with oversight of the Northeast Region as well. She added that, like many others, the agency was awaiting the outcome of the legislative session and the finalization of the budget before moving forward with additional plans.

### **Item 9. Comments by TPO Staff**

*There were no comments by TPO staff.*

### **Item 10. Comments by Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)**

Mr. Murch provided a detailed operations update on Marion Transit. As of the meeting, the agency had gone 29 days without a crash and 119 days injury-free. The most recent crash involved a side mirror striking a parked vehicle. One driver had recently returned to work after a shoulder injury.

He recognized Brian Cobb as the Transit Star for the first quarter. Mr. Cobb represented Marion Transit at a competition in Gainesville, where he earned the "Yardstick Award" for precise vehicle operation. Year-to-date, Marion Transit maintained a 95.57% on-time performance rate, completing over 36,000 trips.

Mr. Murch reported that the Blue Line and Gold Line continued to perform well. However, the Green Line service remained on hold due to recent driver retirements and staffing shortages. He anticipated that service would resume in the next quarter.

ADA ridership reached a record high of over 2,000 riders in one month, reflecting a 12.2% year-over-year increase. Rural service under the 5311 program also saw a 16.8% increase compared to the same time last year.

He acknowledged that the growing demand, especially among transportation disadvantaged individuals, put a strain on operations. Being a nonprofit agency, Marion Transit must balance growth carefully to remain sustainable.

Mr. Murch announced that the 5310 grant, which supports transportation for seniors and persons with disabilities, had been implemented. It helped offset previous overages under the Transportation Disadvantaged (TDI) program. While TDI funding was down 5%, the 5310 grant helped reduce reliance on those funds, resulting in only a 2% increase in combined program costs from the previous year. He also noted that escalating insurance costs continued to be a challenge but expressed optimism about the steps taken to manage expenses.

Ms. Pieriboni mentioned that several clients had inquired about updates related to microtransit or on-demand transit services. She referred to a system similar to Waze or Bloomberg, possibly called "Volt," that supports microtransit or on-demand ride services.

Mr. Murch responded that he would look into the microtransit topic further. He acknowledged uncertainty about whether the referenced system was Waze or something similar and stated he would conduct research before the next meeting. He planned to follow up and potentially provide an app or resource to share with the group at that time so everyone could be more informed.

### **Item 11. Public Comment**

*There was no public comment.*

**Item 12. Adjournment**

Chairman McClain adjourned the meeting at 10:31 am.

Respectfully Submitted By:

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Shakayla Irby, TPO Administrative Assistant