



Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Meeting

Marion County Growth Services - Training Room
2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470

December 12th, 2024 - 10:00 AM

AGENDA

- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- 2. ROLL CALL**
- 3. PROOF OF PUBLICATION**
- 4. PRESENTATIONS**
 - A. Welcome New Board Member
- 5. ACTION ITEMS**
 - A. [Grievance Procedures](#) (Page #3)
 - B. [Election of 2025 Vice-Chair](#) (Page #14)
 - C. [Election of Grievance Sub-Committee Members](#) (Page #15)
 - D. [2025 Meeting Schedule](#) (Page #16)
- 6. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. [Minutes September Meeting](#) (Page #18)
- 7. DISCUSSION ITEMS**
 - A. Subcommittee's Update
 - Community Affairs Subcommittee
 - Health Affairs Subcommittee
- 8. COMMENTS BY TDLCB MEMBERS**
- 9. COMMENTS BY TPO STAFF**
- 10. COMMENTS BY TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR (CTC)**

11. PUBLIC COMMENT – (Limited to two (2) minutes)

12. ADJOURNMENT

All meetings are open to the public, the TPO does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability and family status. Anyone requiring special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), or requiring language assistance (free of charge) should contact Liz Mitchell, Title VI/Nondiscrimination Coordinator at (352) 438-2634 or liz.mitchell@marioncountyfl.org forty-eight (48) hours in advance, so proper accommodations can be made.

Pursuant to Chapter 286.0105, Florida Statutes, please be advised that if any person wishes to appeal any decision made by the Board with respect to any matter considered at the above meeting, they will need a record of the proceedings, and that, for such purpose, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

The next regular meeting of the Ocala Marion Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board will be held on March 6th, 2025.



TO: TDLCB Board Members

FROM: Liz Mitchell, Grants Coordinator/Fiscal Planner

RE: Grievance Procedures

Summary

TPO staff regularly reviews and/or amends the TDLCB Grievance Procedures to ensure that all elements of the Grievance Procedures are in alignment with Florida statutes, regulations and codes.

Attachment(s)

Grievance Procedures document
Grievance Procedures Certification Page for signature

Action Requested

Approval of Grievance Procedures and Chair Certification Page

Any additional comments and/or suggestions please contact Liz Mitchell,
liz.mitchell@marionfl.org.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

OCALA MARION TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

Article 1: Preamble

The following will set forth the grievance procedures which shall serve to guide the Ocala Marion TPO Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB). The Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) will receive and attempt to satisfy any concerns by any person(s). If for any reason the complainant is not satisfied with the resolution determined by the CTC then the procedures herein will assist in acquiring a satisfactory resolution. This will provide procedures and policies for fulfilling the requirements of chapter 427, Florida Statutes, Rule 41-2 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC), and subsequent laws setting forth requirements for the establishment of grievance procedures.

Article II: Name and Purpose

Name: The Grievance Committee is a Subcommittee of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board, but will hereinafter be referred to as the Grievance Subcommittee.

Purpose: The primary purpose of the Grievance Subcommittee is to process, investigate and make recommendations to any and all unresolved grievances and/or complaints. To provide a formal grievance process by the TDLCB to address concerns by any person or agency including but not limited to, users, potential users, agencies, and other interested parties. The Grievance Subcommittee will provide a mechanism for issues to be brought before the committee which shall meet as often as necessary to address unresolved complaints in a timely manner.

Article III: Definitions

1. Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC): An entity and or person appointed to ensure that coordinated transportation services are provided to the transportation disadvantaged population in a designated service area.
2. A Grievance is defined as any ongoing service problem that interferes with accessing a major life activity, such as work, healthcare, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life sustaining activities.
3. Service Complaint: Any routine incidents and/or dissatisfaction that occur, are reported to the driver, dispatcher, or other individuals involved with the daily operations, and are

resolved within the course of a reasonable time period suitable to the complainant. Service complaints may include but are not limited to:

- a. Late trips (late pickup, late drop off, and/or late returns)
 - b. No-show by Transportation Operator
 - c. No-show by client
 - d. Client Behavior
 - e. Driver Behavior
 - f. Passenger discomfort
 - g. Refusal of service to client for any reason
4. Formal Grievances: A written complaint to document any concerns or an unresolved service complaint regarding the operation or administration of TD services by the Transportation Operator, Community Transportation Coordinator, agencies, or Local Coordinating Board. Formal Grievances may include, but are not limited to:
- a. Chronic or unresolved service complaints
 - b. Violation of specific laws governing the provision of Transportation Disadvantaged Services (i.e., Chapter 427 of Florida Statutes, Chapter 41-2 of Florida Administrative Code and accompanying documents, Sunshine Law and/or ADA violations)
 - c. Contract disputes (Agencies/Operators)
 - d. Bidding disputes
 - e. Agency compliance
 - f. Conflicts of interest
 - g. Supplanting of funds
 - h. Billing and/or accounting procedure violation
 - i. Denials of applications for paratransit services

Article IV: Membership

1. Members of the Grievance Subcommittee shall serve on a voluntary basis and shall consist of at least five (5) voting members.
2. Each member of the Grievance Subcommittee shall serve at the discretion of the TDLCB.
3. The CTC shall not serve on the Grievance Subcommittee.
4. Grievance Subcommittee members will meet if a grievance is brought before the committee.

5. When a meeting of the Grievance Subcommittee is necessary, staff to the TPO shall schedule the meeting. Meetings shall be held at the time and place as the Grievance Subcommittee may determine.
6. The Members shall serve a term of one year, with allowances for multiple terms.
7. The Grievance Subcommittee shall elect a Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.
8. A simple majority shall be present in any official action.
9. No voting member will have a vote on an issue that is deemed a conflict of interest.

Article V: Filing Complaints and Grievances – STEP 1

10. All formal grievances must contain the following:
 - a. Must submit in writing
 - b. Name and address of complainant
 - A clear and concise statement of the grounds for the grievance and supplemented by supporting documentation
 - Exact date and time of incident
 - Exact location of incident
 - Any witnesses to incident (including name and address)
 - Vehicle unit number, license number, color and type
 - Any other information affiliated with the complaint
 - c. An explanation by the complainant of the improvements needed to address the complaint

All written complaints can be sent to:

Marion Senior Services	and/or	Ocala Marion TPO
1101 SW 20 th Court		2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, Florida 34471		Ocala, Florida 34470

A complaint form has been created (see page 8) indicating all of the above-mentioned items.

11. The CTC must post the contact person and telephone number for access to information regarding reporting service complaints or filing a formal grievance in each of their vehicles in plain view of riders.
12. The CTC will have ten (10) working days from the date of notification of the complaint to address or investigate the problem.

13. The CTC will investigate the problem and respond in writing, within ten (10) working days of notification to the complainant as to what action was taken. Such action will contain an explanation of the facts that lead to the CTC's decision and provide a method or ways to bring about a resolution.
14. The Grievance Subcommittee and TDLCB Board will receive a copy of all grievances and responses.

Article VI: Appeal Process – STEP 2

1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the CTC's response and/or recommendation they may file an appeal with the Grievance Subcommittee.
2. The complainant may only file after they have sought satisfaction directly from the CTC and received a response. Complainant must demonstrate that they have unsuccessfully attempted to resolve the issue with the CTC. Every effort will be made by the CTC to resolve service problems. However, if unable to resolve the problem and/or the complainant wishes to take further action, then the CTC will provide the complainant with assistance in following the Grievance Procedures.
3. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) days from the date of notification of final decision from the CTC.

The appeal must be in writing and addressed to:

Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization
ATTN: TDLCB Grievance Subcommittee
2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, Florida 34470

4. Once an appeal has been received, the Grievance Subcommittee shall meet and render its recommendation within thirty (30) working days of the date the appeal was filed.
5. The complainant shall be notified in writing of the mutually agreed upon date, time and place where the appeal shall be heard. This written notice shall be mailed at least ten (10) working days in advance of the meeting.

6. A written recommendation will be rendered to all parties involved within ten (10) working days from the date of the recommendation and will include the following, in writing:
 - a. Statement that a meeting was held and the involved parties were given an opportunity to present their position(s).
 - b. The issues discussed and clearly defined
 - c. Reason(s) for the recommendation based on the information provided
7. Grievance Subcommittee must report all grievances and recommendations to the full Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board.

Article VII: Appeal to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board – STEP 3

1. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the Grievance Subcommittee he/she may continue the appeal process with the TDLCB as follows.
2. The appeal must be in writing and filed within ten (10) working days from the date of final recommendation from the Grievance Subcommittee.
3. Appeal to the TDLCB can only be filed after the complainant has sought satisfaction directly from the Grievance Subcommittee.
4. The appeal should demonstrate a clear violation of a specific law, regulation, contractual agreement, or circumstance.

Address all appeals to:

Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization
ATTN: TDLCB
2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
Ocala, Florida 34470

5. Once an appeal has been received, the TDLCB shall meet and render its recommendation within sixty (60) working days of the date the appeal was filed.
6. The complainant shall be notified in writing of the mutually agreed upon date, time and place where the appeal shall be heard. This written notice shall be mailed at least ten (10) working days in advance of the meeting.

7. A written recommendation will be rendered to all parties involved within ten (10) working days from the date of the recommendation and will include the following, in writing:
 - a. Statement that a meeting was held and the involved parties were given an opportunity to present their position(s).
 - b. The issues discussed and clearly defined
 - c. Reason(s) for the recommendation based on the information provided

Article VIII: Appeal to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged – STEP 4

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the recommendation of the TDLCB, he/she may continue the process with the TD Ombudsman Program by calling the following number(s): 1-800-983-2435. For hearing and speech impaired customers call, 711 (Florida Only) Florida Relay System or (850) 410-5708 for TTY via written correspondence to:

Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged
Attn: Ombudsman Program
605 Suwannee Street, MS-49
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0450

Article IX: General

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board Grievance Procedures may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of members present, if a quorum exists, and all Members have been notified of proposed changes at least seven (7) working days in advance of the meeting.

The implementation of these rules and procedures will ensure quality control and the ability to provide an impartial body to hear complaints and submit recommendations regarding the grievance as indicated.

Apart from this grievance/appeal process, aggrieved parties with proper standing may also have recourse through Chapter 120, Florida Statutes Administrative Hearing Process, or the judicial court system.

CERTIFICATION

The undersigned hereby certifies that he/she is the Chairperson of the Ocala Marion TPO Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board and that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Grievance Procedures of this Local Coordinating Board as adopted by the Ocala Marion TPO Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board on the 12th day of December 2024.

Commissioner Matthew McClain, TDLCB Chairperson

Robert Balmes, TPO Director

COMPLAINT FORM

OCALA MARION TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

Complainant(s) Name:	Complainant(s) Address:
Complainant(s) Phone Number:	Complainant(s) Email:
Complainant(s) Representative's Name, Address, Phone Number and Relationship (e.g. friend, attorney, parent, etc.):	
Names of the Individual(s) Whom You Allege a Complaint Against (If Known):	
Name and Address of Agency, Institution, or Department Whom You Allege a Complaint Against:	

Date of incident:	Vehicle Unit/License No.-Color-Type	Time of Incident:
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Please list the name(s) and phone number(s) of any person, if known, that can be contacted for additional information to support or clarify your allegation(s):

Please explain as clearly as possible HOW, WHY, WHEN and WHERE is your alleged complaint. Include as much information as possible. Additional pages may be attached if needed.

Please indicate what would be an acceptable resolution:

Complainant(s) or Complainant(s) Representatives Signature:	Date of Signature:
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Please submit to: Address in the step process

Additional Pages are attached.

TDLCB COMPLAINT TRACKING FORM

Name of Complainant: _____

COMPLAINT TO THE CTC –STEP 1

File Number _____

Date of 1st. Complaint: _____

Date of 1st. Resolution: _____

Action Taken (including date of letter): _____

APPEAL = COMPLAINT TO THE TDLCB GRIEVANCE SUBCOMMITTEE – STEP 2

Date of 2nd Complaint: _____

Date of 2nd Resolution: _____

Date of Subcommittee Hearing: _____

Action Taken (including date of letter): _____

APPEAL = COMPLAINT TO THE TDLCB – STEP 3

Date of 3rd Complaint: _____

Date of 3rd Resolution: _____

Date of TDLCB Hearing: _____

Action Taken (including date of letter): _____

APPEAL = TO THE COMMISSION FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED – STEP 4

Date sent: _____



TO: Committee Members

FROM: Liz Mitchell, Grants Coordinator/Fiscal Planner

RE: Election of Vice-Chair for 2025

Summary

Per the TDLCB Bylaws, a Vice-Chair shall be elected at the last regular meeting of the calendar year. This Officer may be elected by a majority of the present voting members. The term shall be for one full calendar year. However, the Vice-chairperson may serve more than one term.

The current Vice-Chair is:

Andrea Melvin, Center for Independent Living.

Attachment(s)

None

Action Requested

Elect a Vice-Chair for 2025

Any additional comments and/or suggestions please contact Liz Mitchell, liz.mitchell@marionfl.org.



TO: TDLCB Board Members

FROM: Liz Mitchell, Grants Coordinator/Fiscal Planner

RE: Grievance Subcommittee Elections for 2025

Summary

The Grievance Procedures serve to guide the TDLCB in satisfying any concerns or issues by any person(s) with regard to the services provided by Marion Transit in its role as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC).

As part of the Grievance procedures a Grievance Subcommittee is formed with volunteers from the TDLCB Board members to oversee and resolve any complaints and/or issues that may arise. The Grievance Subcommittee's current members are as follows:

- Jeffrey Askew
- Steven Neal
- Keith Fair
- Anissa Pieriboni
- Carlos Colon

Attachment(s)

Grievance Procedures document

Action Requested

Volunteers for Subcommittee consisting of 5 members

Any additional comments and/or suggestions please contact Liz Mitchell, liz.mitchell@marionfl.org.



TO: TDLCB Committee Members

FROM: Liz Mitchell, Grants Coordinator/Fiscal Planner

RE: 2025 Proposed Meeting Time and Schedule

Summary

It is required that TDLCB members meet quarterly, at a minimum. A total of four (4) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Committee meetings are proposed during calendar year 2024. Meetings will take place quarterly on the first Thursday of the coordinating month at 10:00 AM. A draft meeting schedule is included with this memo.

Attachment(s)

Proposed 2025 Meeting Schedule

Action Requested

Approve meeting schedule and time.

If you have any questions, please contact me at: (352) 438-2634.



Proposed 2025 TDLCB Meeting Schedule

Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)
 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd., Ocala, FL 34470
 Ocalamariontpo.org
 (352) 438-2630

Visit the Ocala Marion TPO website at Ocalamariontpo.org to view meeting updates.

Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)
Meetings are held Quarterly at 10:00 a.m.
 All TDLCB Meetings are held quarterly on the first Thursday of the corresponding month.

March 6, 2025	June 5, 2025 Meeting & Workshop	September 4, 2025	December 4, 2025
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Meetings will be held at: Marion County Growth Services Training Room
 2710 E. Silver Springs Blvd.
 Ocala, Florida 34470

Meeting Deadlines and Public Notices:

The Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) meetings take place quarterly on the 1st Thursday of the month when scheduled.

Agenda Item Submission Deadlines:

To TPO by Monday 5:00 PM, prior to the Thursday 7-day public notice (11 days in advance of meeting).

Agenda and Public Notices:

Public notices and agendas are sent 7-days prior to the meeting per Florida Sunshine Law and the TPO’s adopted Public Participation Plan (PPP).

<u>Contacts for Agenda Items:</u>	
Liz Mitchell	Liz.mitchell@marionfl.org
Shakayla Irby	Shakayla.Irby@marionfl.org



Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) Meeting

Marion County Growth Services Training Room

1101 SW 20th Ct., Ocala, FL 34471

September 12, 2024

10:00 AM

MINUTES

Members Present:

Matthew McClain

Jeffrey Askew

Gisela Ruiz

Tiffany McKenzie

Tracey Sapp (*Nicole Brickhouse attended on behalf of Tracey*)

Susan Hanley (*arrived at 10:05am*)

Jeannette Estes (*Elizabeth Watson attended on behalf of Jeannette*)

Andrea Melvin

Anissa Pieriboni

Steven Neal (*Tom Duncan attended on behalf of Steven*)

Donnie Mitchell

Carlos Colon

Christopher Carlisle

Members Not Present:

Iris Pozo

Angela Juaristic

Elizabeth Alacci

Others Present:

Liz Mitchell, TPO

Rob Balmes, TPO

Shakayla Irby, TPO

Sara Brown, TPO

Tom Duncan, City of Ocala
Clayton Murch, Marion Senior Services
Herman Schultz, Marion Senior Services
Karen Williams, Marion Senior Services
Joseph Bartolomeo, Marion Senior Services
Councilman James Hilty, City of Ocala
Commissioner Michelle Stone, Marion County
Jim East
Barbara Gilbert
Joseph Lopez
Other attendees not signed in.

Item 1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Matthew McClain called the meeting to order at 10:08am and led the board members in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 2. Roll Call

Secretary Shakayla Irby called the roll and a quorum was present.

Item 3. Proof of Publication

Secretary Shakayla Irby stated that the meeting had been published September 5, 2024 online on the TPO website and Facebook and Twitter pages, the City of Ocala, Belleview, and Dunnellon websites. The meeting was also published to the September 5, 2024 edition of the Ocala Star Banner.

Item 4A. Commissioner Stone Award

Before proceeding with the agenda, Chairman McClain presented an award to former Chair Commissioner Michelle Stone. Commissioner Stone had served as chair of the board for six years, guiding the board with dedication and passion. The award recognized her significant contributions and thanked her for her service to the board.

Commissioner Stone expressed her gratitude for the award and thanked Commissioner McClain for his leadership. She reflected on her time with the board, noting how much she enjoyed the meaningful work and emphasized that there is still much to be done. Commissioner Stone highlighted the importance of the board's ongoing efforts to improve Marion County, acknowledging the dedication of everyone involved. She also praised Commissioner McClain for his commitment to understanding the community's needs as he continues his role.

In closing, Commissioner Stone offered her support to the board and thanked everyone for the recognition, stating she was touched by the gesture and would proudly display the award.

Item 4B. SunTran Annual Report

Tom Duncan, the new Transit Administrator for the City of Ocala, presented an overview of the transit system's annual report and key projects.

Key Points:

1. TDP Goals and Implementation Plan:

- Focus on environment, equity, accessibility, usability, and efficiency.
- Projects include:
 - Downtown circulator with an electric trolley.
 - Low-emission grant project.
 - Building renovation and triennial review.
 - Downtown transfer station and bus stop shelter improvements.
 - Enhancements to route efficiency and service extension to Marion Oaks.
 - Micro transit implementation, akin to Uber/Lyft but with shared rides.

2. Low-Emission Project:

- Secured \$16.2 million for 26 electric vans and 5 electric buses.
- Infrastructure and maintenance facility upgrades to support new vehicles.
- Initial focus on Sunday micro transit as a pilot program.

3. Facility and Maintenance Improvements:

- Rehabilitation of existing maintenance facility.
- Added bays for electric vehicle maintenance.
- FTA and FDOT reviews completed with recommendations addressed.

4. Downtown Transfer Station Improvements:

- Addition of restroom facilities and a ticketing kiosk.
- Construction expected to start late this year or early next year.
- Installation of 23 new bus stop shelters at high-volume stops.

5. Performance Indicators:

- Noted past ridership declines and recent improvements following route realignment.
- Ongoing efforts to improve headways and service frequency.

6. Next Steps:

- Continued work on downtown circulator, bus shelter projects, and federal and state funding grants.

Tom Duncan's presentation highlighted ongoing and upcoming projects aimed at improving public transit in Ocala, focusing on sustainability, efficiency, and user experience.

Ms. Barbara Gilbert expressed appreciation for the presentation, mentioning that while areas like Pinellas County, Hillsborough County, and the Tampa Bay region rely heavily on public transportation, she recently visited Saint Petersburg and observed that despite heavy interstate traffic, the city streets were clean, safe, and traffic-free.

Mr. Duncan acknowledged the citizen's concerns and emphasized that as Ocala and Marion County continue to grow, the plan will expand to include more improvements for handicapped transportation. He highlighted the partnership with Marion Senior Services to meet ADA

requirements and ensure accessibility for all new bus shelters being installed. He also noted that this development was a key focus for SunTran, the local transit system.

The citizen pointed out that in many areas within the city limits where she resides, there are no sidewalks to provide access to bus stops for people like her, raising concerns about pedestrian accessibility for those with disabilities.

Mr. Duncan acknowledged the concern and stated that the city is aware of the challenge regarding sidewalk accessibility. He mentioned that improvements are being made in that area. He also noted that building codes now require sidewalks to be included as part of any new construction or significant property improvements, ensuring better pedestrian access in the future.

The citizen recounted a conversation with a city engineer approximately three to four years ago regarding the addition of a lane to 36th Avenue. The engineer had promised that a sidewalk would be built extending from 21st Street to Silver Springs Boulevard. However, this sidewalk was never constructed. The citizen highlighted the absence of sidewalks in her development and the surrounding areas, despite them being within walking distance to Silver Springs Boulevard. She had anticipated using a \$3,000 handicap scooter on this sidewalk, which remains unused in her garage due to the lack of infrastructure.

Mr. Duncan acknowledged the challenge of connectivity and mentioned that the TPO has a multi-use plan, which includes provisions for bicycles and pedestrians. He noted that this plan is open to the public and that they are always seeking input on it. He offered that the TPO could provide additional information on the plan.

She noted that Marion Senior Services is currently partnered for ADA requirements and bus shelters are being made accessible. However, she raised concerns about the lack of sidewalks in many city areas, particularly in her own neighborhood. She recounted a conversation with a city engineer from a few years ago, who had promised a sidewalk along 36th Avenue from 21st Street to Silver Springs Boulevard, which has yet to be built. The lack of sidewalks prevents her from using a handicap scooter she purchased, which remains unused in her garage.

The citizen emphasized the need for long-term planning, suggesting that transportation infrastructure should consider future needs over the next 50 years. She highlighted the projected increase in blindness among Americans due to various blinding diseases, with a significant rise expected in the coming decades. She shared personal experiences about the lack of adequate transportation for blind individuals, including her own step-grandsons and the broader blind community in Ocala, which covers eight counties. The citizen noted that the local transportation system, Marion Transit, has limited services for blind individuals, often only providing transportation once every seven weeks, which is insufficient for regular support group meetings. She stressed the importance of improving transportation to better serve those who are blind and to support their emotional well-being.

Item 5A. Annual Operating Report (AOR)

The TPO staff regularly reviews and approves the Annual Operating Report (AOR) to ensure compliance with State of Florida regulations related to the operations of the Florida Coordinated

Transportation System. The Commission uses these forms to gather information necessary to accurately reflect each CTC's operating data, provide a statewide operational profile of the Florida Coordinated Transportation System, and evaluate specific performance aspects of the coordinated systems both individually and collectively.

Mr. Clayton Murch, Marion Transit Transportation Director and Community Transportation Coordinator, presented the Annual Operating Report, which assesses Marion Senior Services, Marion Transit, and related coordination contracts. He highlighted that the report includes data on both deviated fixed routes and paratransit services.

He noted a general increase in service usage, reflecting growing needs and changing client circumstances. However, challenges remain due to limited bus availability and funding, impacting the ability to meet all transportation demands. The report also detailed the distribution of trips for various purposes, including medical, educational, and daily living needs, emphasizing ongoing efforts to balance these services effectively.

Chairman McClain inquired about the significant increase in the "life sustaining" trips category. He noted the large jump in that specific area and asked if there was an explanation or any particular factors contributing to this change.

Mr. Murch explained that the increase in the "life sustaining" trips category is part of a comprehensive accounting process that includes all coordination contractors and Bridge to Hope. He attributed the rise to growth and shifting dynamics but did not have a more detailed explanation at that time. He also noted that Bridge to Hope had influenced the overall trip data.

Mr. Murch provided insights into the sources of funding for trips, including contributions from the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged and other sources. He detailed the increases in trips handled by Marion Transit and coordination contractors, as well as the impact of expanded service areas and population growth on mileage.

He discussed the current vehicle and driver statistics, including the addition of staff from Bridge to Hope. Performance improvements were noted, with reductions in accidents and costs per trip, despite increases in expenses related to fuel and vehicle maintenance. The adjustments in service areas and proximity to SunTran routes have influenced overall costs.

Mr. Askew inquired about Bridge to Hope, asking for clarification on how to recognize their vehicles and understand their role. He sought information on how these vehicles are managed and what scheduling processes are in place for their services.

Mr. Murch explained that Bridge to Hope handles its own scheduling independently from Marion Transit. Marion Transit oversees their operations in the role of the Community Transportation Coordinator. Bridge to Hope is an independent entity, operating as an adult day training facility. Their vehicles are distinguished by their purple and green colors with their name Bridge of Hope on them. Recently, they were awarded additional funding for new buses through the 5310 funding through the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).

Ms. Melvin made a motion to approve the Annual Operating Report (AOR). Mr. Askew seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 5B. Bylaws Update

Ms. Mitchell stated that the TPO staff annually reviews and, if necessary, amends the TDLCB Bylaws to ensure alignment with Florida statutes, regulations, and codes. These Bylaws help guide the TDLCB in supporting Marion Transit as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) in delivering quality service to the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) community. After reviewing the Bylaws, it was determined that no changes were needed. Therefore, a request was made to approve them as they currently stand.

Ms. Pieriboni made a motion to approve the Bylaws. Mr. Mitchell seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 6. Consent Agenda

Ms. Melvin motioned to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Watson seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Item 7. Subcommittee's Future Plans

Ms. Mitchell explained that, in the previous meeting, the decision had been made to reassess and reorganize the subcommittees for clarity and efficiency. The proposal included forming two new subcommittees: The Health Affairs Subcommittee and the Community Affairs Subcommittee. Below is a summary of their purposes and roles:

Health Affairs Subcommittee:

- Focused on health and well-being issues within the County, including challenges related to accessibility, equity, and the environment.
- Advocated for others and brought issues to the committee for consideration or solutions.
- Provided informative materials such as articles, speakers, or flyers.
- Suggested ideas for educational projects.

The Health Affairs Subcommittee would include the following agencies:

Agency for Healthcare Administration
Florida Department of Health
Florida Department of Elder Affairs
Department of Children and Families
Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Marion County Veterans Services
Center for Independent Living
Center for the Blind

Community Affairs Subcommittee

- Addressed transit issues for disadvantaged and underserved communities, including challenges related to lighting, curbs, environmental obstructions, and bus shelters.
- Identified and resolved accessibility challenges.
- Kept the community informed about local events and opportunities to participate, volunteer, or show support.
- Suggested improvements and organizational changes for current and future issues.

The Community Affairs Subcommittee would include the following agencies:

Central Florida Community Action Agency
Housing Finance Authority
Ocala Housing Authority
CareerSource Citrus, Levy and Marion
Marion County Public Schools
Florida Department of Transportation
SunTran Bus Services

Each subcommittee was to select a leader to oversee progress and guide meetings, which could be held in-person or virtually based on the group's preference. Subcommittee members were expected to meet quarterly before the TDLCB meetings to report findings, issues, and suggestions.

The goal was to advocate for the disadvantaged community, improving their quality of life and addressing their needs. The insights and information gathered were intended to contribute to the development of the 2025 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP), creating a more accurate and comprehensive representation of the TD community.

Ms. Mitchell emphasized the importance of each member's role in gathering and communicating information to keep the committee informed and effective. With only four meetings a year, active participation was crucial for ensuring meaningful and impactful results.

Ms. McKenzie asked about the appointment of chairpersons for the committees.

Ms. Mitchell responded that the committees should convene to select a chairperson or leader, whether meeting in person or virtually, based on the members' convenience.

Ms. Mitchell also noted that at the meeting, a single person could report back on behalf of the committee.

The board members decided to meet briefly after the meeting to organize the subcommittee groups.

Item 8. Comments by TDLCB Members

There were no comments by the TDLCB members.

Item 9. Comments by TPO Staff

Rob Balmes, TPO Director shared progress on the 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), noting that a community workshop had been scheduled for September 18th at the C.F. Weber Center. The workshop, held from 5:00 to 7:30 PM, was open to the public and featured an open house format with brief presentations. Feedback from citizens and partners was deemed crucial at this stage, and individual meetings with stakeholders were conducted. Input on additional groups to engage was welcomed.

Mr. Balmes also discussed the "Safety Matters" education and awareness video series. He explained that the series, developed in collaboration with Marion County Public Relations Team and partner agencies, features testimonial-style videos highlighting the impacts of distracted driving. The goal is to create multiple videos on various topics. A video specifically addressing fatalities and serious injuries was played for the board and had be shared on the Marion County Facebook page. Mr. Balmes told the board to be on the lookout for more videos to follow.

Item 10. Comments by Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC)

Mr. Murch provided the following updates:

- **Incident Report:** There had been 31 days without vehicle incidents and 167 days injury free. The fleet consisted of 44 buses, with two new buses arriving the following week and three more soon after. A total of 15 new buses was expected by mid-next year.
- **Bus Condition:** Many buses had nearly 120,000 miles on them and were experiencing reliability issues. Increased maintenance costs were required to keep them operational.
- **Demand and Service:** Transportation disadvantaged trips had increased by almost 2,000 compared to the previous year, reflecting a rapid rise in demand. Efforts were ongoing to meet the growing service requests.
- **Funding and Grants:** A contract renewal with SunTran resulted in a slight increase in expenses. Additional grant funding was sought due to the finite nature of the TD fund, which had not seen an increase despite rising demand. An application for a 5310 grant had been submitted to help cover some of the additional trips, with a decision expected in October.
- **Challenges:** The organization faced challenges in keeping up with the increasing demand for transportation, particularly for dialysis clients and doctor's appointments, and worked to address these issues as effectively as possible.

Item 11. Public Comment

Jim East, a resident of Citra introduced himself as a semi-retired professional with experience on multiple boards and expressed his hope to join the TDLCB soon.

He expressed interest in adopting practices from neighboring counties, such as allowing return trip scheduling and advance reservations, to enhance services. Mr. East acknowledged the board's long history and noted a lack of significant changes in the transportation model during his time in the county. He expressed a strong desire to collaborate with the board to improve the transportation system.

Ms. Barbara Gilbert, a resident of Ocala shared her experience, stating she moved to the area five years ago for better access to shopping but found it difficult due to the lack of sidewalks and safe transportation options for those with disabilities. As a client of the Florida Center for the Blind, she used to regularly attend meetings until transportation was cut off. She expressed disappointment in the community's failure to meet the needs of the handicapped, noting that she had felt trapped in her home for five years, only able to leave for medical appointments.

Ms. Gilbert also shared that her 83-year-old husband, who recently became disabled and had to quit his job, would now rely on public transportation. She expressed her deep love for Ocala but announced that she and her husband were planning to move to St. Petersburg due to its more robust public transportation system for the disabled. She highlighted the need for Marion Transit to receive more funding, drivers, and buses.

Ms. Gilbert spoke about the broader issues in Ocala, such as increasing traffic deaths and inadequate transportation services, making it unsafe and challenging for the handicapped to navigate. She emphasized the disparity in services between Ocala and places like St. Petersburg, where transportation for seniors and disabled individuals is far more accessible.

She concluded by discussing her ongoing work with blindness organizations and her personal experiences with the lack of insurance coverage for essential aids for the blind, despite her extensive medical background and involvement in the community. She stressed the need for empathy and more support for disabled individuals and urged the community to take action.

Mr. Joseph Lopez, a resident of Ocala, shared a negative experience with Marion Transit. He recounted an incident where a driver accidentally ran him into a mirror while he was on his way to the dentist, nearly damaging the mirror. Mr. Lopez, who moved from California three years ago, expressed concern that if no improvements are made, Marion Transit might face serious consequences. He emphasized that changes are necessary to prevent the service from deteriorating.

Chairman McClain expressed regret for his experience and thanked him for sharing his comments.

A citizen whose name was inaudible expressed concerns about Marion Transit. She suggested that Marion Transit gather passengers from SR 200 and transport them to a central location before continuing their trips. The citizen believed this approach would be more efficient, reduce unnecessary driving, and help alleviate traffic.

Item 12. Adjournment

Chairman McClain adjourned the meeting at 11:17 am.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Shakayla Irby, TPO Administrative Assistant