

LEE COUNTY
LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD FOR THE TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED

Staff services provided by Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization -- TD Planning Program
 1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers FL 33901; (239) 338-2550-extension 211; fax (239) 338-2560
E-mail: braimondo@swfrpc.org TD web page: <http://www.mpo-swfl.org/TD.shtml>.

Minutes of the Quarterly Meeting
Friday, March 13, 2009; 1:30 PM
 Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council offices
 1926 Victoria Avenue, Fort Myers, FL 33901

A Representative of:	Voting Member	Agency	Alternate Member	Agency
The MPO shall appoint one elected official to serve as the official Chairperson for all Coordinating Board meetings.	Commissioner Brian Bigelow (PRESENT)	Lee County Board of County Commissioners	No alternate	
A. A local representative of the Florida Department of Transportation (DOT)	Julia B. Davis (PRESENT)	Florida Department of Transportation	Richard Shine	Florida Department of Transportation
B. A local representative of the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF)	Vacant		Jon Seehawer (ABSENT)	Dept. of Children & Families
C. A local representative of the Public Education Community which could include, but not be limited to, a representative of the District School Board, School Board Transportation Office, or Headstart Program in areas where the School District is responsible	Donna Ramirez (PRESENT)	Early Childhood Learning Services/Head Start	Vacant	
D. In areas where they exist, a local representative of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services or the Division of Blind Services, representing the Department of Education	Mary Wafford (ABSENT)	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation	Flora Gonzalez (PRESENT)	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
E. A person recommended by the local Veterans Service Office, representing Veterans of the county	Vacant		Vacant	

F. A person recognized by the Florida Association for Community Action representing the economically disadvantaged	Kim Hustad (PRESENT)	Lee County Dept. of Human Services	Robin Jewett	Lee County Dept. of Human Services
G. A person representing the Elderly in the county	Virginia Kraft (PRESENT)		Fran Theberge	
H. A person with a disability representing the disabled in the county	Brian Powers (PRESENT)		Linda Carter (PRESENT)	
I—1. [One of Two] Citizen Advocates in the County	Michael Pierce	Center for Independent Living	Vacant	
I--2. [One of two] Citizen Advocates this one must be a person who uses the transportation service(s) of the system as their primary means of transportation.	David Lane (EXCUSED)		Vacant	
J. A local representative for children at risk	Vacant		Vacant	
K. In areas where they exist, the Chairperson or designee of the local Mass Transit or Public Transit System=s Board, except in cases where they are also the Community Transportation Coordinator.	Steve Myers (PRESENT)	Lee Tran	Peter Gajdjis (PRESENT)	Lee Tran
L. A local representative of the Florida Department of Elder Affairs	Cyndy Cooper (ABSENT)	Florida Dept. of Elder Affairs	Rita Zimmer (PRESENT)	Florida Dept. of Elder Affairs
M. An experienced representative of the local private for profit transportation industry. In areas where such representative is not available, a local private non-profit representative will be appointed, except where said representative is also the Community Transportation Coordinator	Kitty Sayers (PRESENT)	Cape Coral Minibus	Mildred Hammer	Cape Coral Minibus

N. A local representative of the Florida Agency for Health Care Administration	Joe Martinez (PRESENT)	Agency for Health Care Administration	Claude Herrington	Agency for Health Care Administration
O. A representative of the Regional Workforce Development Board established in Chapter 445, <i>Florida Statutes</i> .	Jim Wall (ABSENT)	Regional Workforce Development Board	Deborah Reardon (PRESENT)	Regional Workforce Development Board
P. A representative of the local medical community, which may include, but not be limited to, kidney dialysis centers, long term care facilities, hospitals, local health department or other home and community based services, etc.	(VACANT)	Children's Medical Services	Dr. June Rose, PhD (ABSENT)	DaVita Cape Coral Dialysis

Other People Attending:

Gary Bryant	Good Wheels, Inc.
Deborah Kooi	SWFRPC
Rosalie Berlin	Citizen
David Hutchinson	SWFRPC
Don Scott	Lee County MPO
Meghan Marion	Lee County MPO
Brian Raimondo	Lee County MPO
Nancy Doyle	SWFRPC

Agenda Item #1 – Call to Order and Introductions

Chairman Bigelow called the meeting to order at 1:46 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Introductions were made.

Rita Zimmer from the Florida Department of Elder Affairs arrived at 1:50 p.m.

Chairman Bigelow recognized Ms. Berlin.

Agenda Item #2 – Public Hearing

Chairman Bigelow opened the floor for public comment. There being none, the public hearing was closed.

Agenda Item #3 – Minutes of December 19, 2008

Chairman Bigelow asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes.

Ms. Davis said that on pages 4 and 5, there was quite a bit of discussion on the economic stimulus projects that the Lee County MPO was developing, and I raised the topic of writing a letter that would go to the MPO and up to the legislature pointing out the need for operating

funds be eligible under the economic stimulus fund. I asked that the letter be transmitted. These minutes do not reflect that.

Ms. Kooi said that a letter had been sent to the respective members of the legislature.

Ms. Davis said that the minutes on the top of Page 5 should say “a letter be sent to the MPO and legislature indicating that jobs are in jeopardy and request that operating funds be considered an eligible expense under the economic stimulus.”

Mr. Gajdjis said that on Page 1, he was listed as attending the meeting. Jill Brown attended as a non-voting member. She is the operations manager of Lee Tran.

Ms. Hustad said that she was not listed as being in attendance, but that she was in attendance.

Chairman Bigelow asked for a motion to approve the minutes as amended.

MOTION BY MS. CARTER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH AMENDMENTS. MOTION SECONDED BY MS. DAVIS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Chairman Bigelow asked the members to pull out the first page of the minutes to be discussed under Agenda Item #8 – Announcements and Comments.

Agenda Item #4 – Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Update

Chairman Bigelow asked Ms. Kooi to give the staff report on this agenda item. Ms. Kooi said that the revised draft had been sent to the board in the agenda package and that staff was requesting comments from the LCB board.

MS. DAVIS MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE TDSP AS PRESENTED FOR PURPOSES OF DISCUSSION. SECONDED BY MS. CARTER.

Ms. Davis said that she had several comments.

Chairman Bigelow asked that Ms. Kooi give her report and then comments would be taken from the board.

Ms. Kooi said that a draft of the TDSP had been sent to the board members and that staff was requesting comments from the board today which will be implemented into the draft and brought back as a final document at the April 10th LCB meeting. The final TDSP must be submitted to the TD Commission by April 30th for their review. Planning Agency staff had received comments from Lee Tran, Good Wheels and Ms. Carter.

Chairman Bigelow asked for comments from the board which would then be followed by comments from the public.

Ms. Davis stated that normally she would transcribe the notes with her changes, but due to her workload, she had not had the chance to do so. She stated that the draft TDSP looked much better and complimented the Planning Agency staff and the TDSP Review Committee for their efforts. Ms. Davis stated that there needed to be maps inserted into this draft.

Mr. Scott said that the document had been reviewed and changed by the NCFRPC TD Planner and that she had done the work to get the document in the format presented to the board today. Staff looked at the previous comments received to make sure that every comment was addressed or still need to be addressed. The NCFRPC had taken out references to the Human Services Plan

Ms. Davis said that staff might want to expand the Public Participation section on Page 12. The Human Services Plan needs to be included.

Mr. Scott said there was a paragraph in the document before.

Ms. Davis said that the Human Services Plan was developed this past summer and there are formatting details which need to be addressed on the charts on Pages 5 and 6. One must be the certification list which must be an original. Page 6 must show who is actually here and voted the day the LCB actually adopts this document.

Mr. Gajdjis said that he wanted to talk about the timeline and that they also received questions from MPO staff. He sent comments to staff here and the TAC committee.

Mr. Scott said that the TDSP would be presented to the TAC and CAC the first week of April and the MPO on the April 17th.

Mr. Gajdjis said he had sent comments to all to make sure everyone received it.

Ms. Davis said that for purposes of sunshine law, these comments should go to Ms. Kooi to distribute. If people start responding, it becomes a sunshine issue. With respect to Barriers to Coordination on Page 22 – is that really what we want to say as a board?

Ms. Davis read this section into the record.

“The barriers to coordination are the Medicaid and Agency for Persons with Disabilities funding restrictions. The only true barriers to coordination are those caused by the separation by agencies, including the provision of funds, trips or reporting activities. Another big example of a barrier to coordination is the duplicative nature of reports, monitoring efforts and evaluations. If these practices were rolled together and streamlined, then the Community Transportation Coordinator could devote more of its resources to the day to day job of getting the trips done. The Lee County Local Coordinating Board recommends that the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged re-examine this issue.”

Ms. Davis suggested that the board see if this is what they wanted to say, but that she did not have any suggested language. We normally check with Good Wheels for insight and suggestions.

Chairman Bigelow asked Ms. Davis if she had any further comments. Ms. Davis replied that she had no additional comments. Chairman Bigelow asked if any other board members had comments.

Mr. Gajdjis said that Lee Tran had comments on Barriers of Coordination and read his comments into the record as it kind of mirrored Ms. Davis’ comments.

The Barriers to Coordination section does not emphasize the responsibility for the various social service agencies (both federally and state of FL. Funded) to coordinate and purchase their transportation through the CTC, Good Wheels. If funding is an issue, the social service agencies should have enough funding to ensure that transportation is properly included in their cost for the agency sponsored program. Lee County can assist with working with these agencies to make sure this issue is presented to the State level (Legislature, Transportation Disadvantaged Commission) for review. Transportation for agency programs should not be shifted to the County ADA Program or TD non-sponsored system. This shifting degrades the efficiency of the overall community transportation system. While it is important it ties into because we just did the Human Services program. The number one problems is that agencies set up programs and then they don't have enough money to pay for all the services they want to include. Last year, APD took a 7.2% cut. Needs to be priority to the TD Commission and the legislature.

The TDSP does not include or mention the recently completed and required Human Services Coordination Plan. This would help to emphasize coordination.

Ms. Davis suggested using this wording.

Chairman Bigelow asked that a cover sheet with discussion points and points of contention be brought back on April 10th before forwarding the TDSP to the state. Staff will summarize comments.

Chairman Bigelow said that on Page 6 under votes there should be no problem with this. On Page 5, the Certification form needed to be added. The Human Service Plan that Lee Tran is required to develop should also be addressed.

Ms. Davis said that the Human Services Plan should be referred to and the extracted list of priorities identified should be included. There was a procurement process as the plan it relates to another stream of funding. This whole process should be summarized in the Human Services Plan. She offered to help pull this information together and it should be about a page. It goes inside Public Participation section.

Chairman Bigelow asked if it should be an appendix.

Ms. Davis stated that this would not be necessary. She said a lot of information in the Public Participation is missing. The Human Services transportation advocates and partners also are missing.

Chairman Bigelow asked that her comments be sent to Ms. Kooi regarding the Public Participation missing elements and that the LCB will revisit this on April 10th.

Chairman Bigelow clarified that the maps will be addressed.

Ms. Carter said that Exhibit D ("Annual Safety Certification") should be a signed copy.

Ms. Davis said that the copy was a signed copy and that the confusion resulted from a blank signature page also being included.

Ms. Carter asked that in the back under Appendix D (State Statute 14-90) near the bottom it says "definitions". In the beginning of the document there are a lot of acronyms listed that we should have in the back of the document with their definitions.

Chairman Bigelow said that to include all statutes would constitute a lot of paper.

Ms. Carter said it was important to know how to find these statutes as it would be extremely helpful.

Ms. Davis stated that she had two suggestions. The first is that there is a definition and acronym list on the CTD website which is about 12 pages. Perhaps staff could insert this. As far as applicable statutes and rules, the two main ones are Chapter 427 F.S. and Rule 41-2 F.A.C. that support the TD program. The other statutes, because every agency has statutes that they work with, isn't necessary or fair for this document to contain all these statutes. Perhaps a note "for assistance obtaining these other statutes, please contact planning staff" can help them navigate through this.

Mr. Scott said that the MPO website could reference the statutes and the acronyms could be added to the document.

Chairman Bigelow suggested that perhaps footnotes could be added, but that planning agency staff should deal with this matter.

Ms. Hustad said that as a general comment, on Page 13-14 where the document talks about demographics, she felt that the document needed to state that unemployment is at a national all-time high. Transportation does play a factor in that. Because of funding issues, the issue of transportation for the economically disadvantaged doesn't hit the radar screen and that we have to focus funding on people with disability and that there is a whole population that we can't get to because of funding restraints. She commented that she will send written comments to planning agency staff.

Ms. Davis asked if Lee County had been designated as an area of critical federal concern. When the President was here, she thought that there was some point where the county would be designated.

Mr. Scott said that the City of Cape Coral wrote to the President and Department of Commerce about this. If you look at the rate, it has to be 1% over the average. It was based on an 18 months timeframe and all the counties identified were rural and asked them to look closer at what the conditions are.

Ms. Davis said that this information is so important and it wasn't on the radar screen 8 months ago.

Ms. Davis said she had state memo that designated Hendry and Glades counties, but not Lee. This information is important that in the past two or three months a lot of things have been happening. The folks in Tallahassee don't realize how bad it is in our county.

Ms. Sayers said that if you look at Cape Coral and the population numbers, there are 11% out of work. That is a lot of people. People trying to get a job and transportation to work is critical. Numbers need to be changed. In the last quarter, these numbers have changed. The volume of people that need help is very high. Cape Coral Minibus can only transport within city limits. There is no bus access to large part of the city (northwest) – no Lee Tran service. There are large segments of the city that have no service. We provide door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities and transport a handful to jobs. I think there are no services for anyone outside if you do not live within a certain distance to a route.

Chairman Bigelow said we are embarking on request of staff to do a lot of work to give us a snapshot about what we look like as a result of the crisis. Are we sure we want to put this on the staff?

Ms. Carter said that we need to show how dire our situation is. If we are not giving accurate figures, we are doing a disservice to persons with disabilities.

Chairman Bigelow suggested that the incorporated areas should be asked to address and describe their economic situation and area currently Lee County should describe unincorporated areas. That way this task will not all be on Ms. Kooi to compile.

Mr. Pierce said a couple of months ago, an agency was here with a presentation with the figures that were already outdated. It is the situation that is causing this voluminous information.

Chairman Bigelow said that a summarization of this should be provided by staff and assistance should be obtained from other agencies.

Ms. Hustad said she suggested a paragraph and that the 11% figure only included those getting unemployment benefits and doesn't reflect people not getting 40 hours. Due to funding restrictions, our transportation for people with disabilities are not able to address two issues: 1) Help people that are economically disadvantaged to get services they need or employment and 2) Jobs and transportation go together and we are in a critical situation.

Mr. Pierce said that he heard transportation for persons with disabilities unemployed is 70%.

Ms. Carter said that this might mean people that are visually impaired might start driving to get to medical and work. We want to get them to medical appointments and to have quality of life.

Mr. Pierce said they have a program that helps people with disabilities find employment and improve quality of life. Crucial part is getting transportation for people with disabilities is a life giving change.

Mr. Bryant said that everyone would agree that we need more funding. This document won't get you more funding. This states conditions. The AOR shows number of denied trips. Cards, letters and phone calls to Congressmen will help the most.

Ms. Davis said that a paragraph that stated that overall Lee County unemployment rate as of March 2009 was "x" and then go back to Ms. Hustad's two comments and place these between Table 2 and 3.

Mr. Martinez said to use April or May figures when tourist season has ended.

Ms. Davis said that have to get this document to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged before the end of April.

Chairman Bigelow suggested putting this statement near the top under Development Plan (Background of Transportation Disadvantaged Program) to have a better impact reflecting that this is our service area which is in dire straits.

Ms. Hustad said to keep general comments to get this on the radar screen.

Chairman Bigelow said that Jim Moore of Lee County's Economic Development office would have current statistics.

Mr. Gajdjis said that #4 (priority system on TD trips) is now medical only. He suggested that this be revisited as the grant only pays for "x" amount of trips. At one time, shopping trips were offered. Mr. Bryant said that there is such an overload on medical.

Ms. Davis said that there used to be a Prioritization Chart that should be included. Medical is first priority.

Mr. Bryant said that nutritional is under medical. He replied that this board could change the prioritization.

Ms. Davis asked staff to get copy of old TDSP to get this prioritization chart. Ms. Davis said there is limited amount of money.

Chairman Bigelow asked the board to agree that all these items that have been discussed will be brought back for discussion on April 10th.

Ms. Davis said that Mr. Gajdjis' comments on #3 and #5 had not been addressed yet.

Mr. Gajdjis stated that #3 is an old item. It looked like leftover material from previous TDSP with respect to Medicaid and ADA ¾ mile. We kept Medicaid trips to the end of the year and then they went back to Good Wheels.

Ms. Davis asked how he would change Page 34. Mr. Gajdjis said to strike second paragraph under Public Transit Utilization with respect to #3. They are two different programs and we don't control TD and TD doesn't control ADA.

Mr. Bryant said that this paragraph should be struck.

Mr. Gajdjis said that with reference to #5, we have transit agency doing door to door and the CTC with the TD program and people come in and ask about both programs. People sometimes don't know about program. Lee Tran staff often hears from people that they were told they can't get Medicaid trips because there is no funding. Staff has to explain programs to them and that there is daily allocation that Good Wheels can negotiate with the people on their trips. We have noticed this coming up quite often.

Chairman Bigelow said to perhaps include a description of the problem.

Mr. Bryant said that on January 1st, anyone eligible for Medicaid transportation will get it if Medicaid eligible. They may not get time and day they want, but will get it. If they are TD non-sponsored eligible and want medical transportation, the only medical transportation is standing reservations to recurring dialysis, oncology treatment and physical therapy. There are no demand response individual trips. If Medicaid qualified, they go.

Ms. Carter said need to live in fixed bus route or otherwise quality of life will suffer.

Discussion continued.

Ms. Davis said that staff should take the standardization policy 2.07 and place it between pages 49 and 50. Ms. Davis said there is no funding in the stimulus for buffering shortfalls and no operating dollars for transit.

Discussion continued.

Chairman Bigelow asked if there were any other comments.

MOTION BY MS. DAVIS TO APPROVE AS SUBMITTED CONCEPTUALLY WITH DISCUSSION POINTS TO BE BROUGHT BACK TO THE APRIL 10TH MEETING. MOTION SECONDED BY MS. CARTER AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED.

Agenda Item #5 – Florida Coordinated Transportation Program Issues & Distribution Items

Mr. Bryant said that there is good news. The TD Commission signed a new 5 to 6 year contract with AHCA that went into effect January 1st. The TD system as we know (Medicaid system) it will stay intact with the coordinated system. It keeps coordinated system intact even with low funding level. At the special legislative session in January, our funding did not get reduced any lower. It looks like current regular session will probably not lower our funding either.

The legislature is fighting to maintain what we have with respect to funding.

The Executive Director position for the TD Commission is currently open. Interviews will be conducted soon. We expect to have in the next six to eight months a new Director. Dr. Harding told him that it will take awhile to fill this position.

He announced that TD day at the legislature is April 16 in Tallahassee. If want to be heard, they will listen to you in Tallahassee.

Agenda Item #6 – Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) News and Reports

Mr. Bryant said that not so much in Lee County which is primarily urban, but in Glades & Hendry counties, the FDOT has worked with us and it appears there will be capital improvements available. Good Wheels was very excited about this.

We have taken cost cutting measures at Good Wheels as we have frozen salaries, reduced health care and retirement benefits. We will be able to operate through June 30, 2009. We are working hard to offset loss of funds. Good Wheels receives \$106,000 in Medicaid and spends about \$150,000. Our costs have risen about 50%.

Ms. Davis asked staff to send out the bill asking the legislature to increase the tag fee for the TD trip fund.

Agenda Item #7 – Report on the Annual Evaluation of the CTC

Ms. Kooi said that the Evaluation Committee will conduct the evaluation at Good Wheels offices on March 18th.

Ms. Carter said that the entire process will be easier this year. Ms. Kooi said that the form will be in PDF format and the evaluation form will be filled out during the evaluation which will result in minimal staff time to fully complete the report.

Agenda Item #8 – Members’ Announcements and Comments

Mr. Martinez asked about a joint meeting with Collier County.

Mr. Scott said that it would be no earlier than June.

Ms. Davis reviewed the history of joint meetings between the LCB’s.

Mr. Bryant said he inquired as to the purpose. The two LCBs would talk about enhancing transportation between county lines. If there is no funding to pay for it, why do we need to get together?

Ms. Davis said this came up because of trips crossing county lines.

Mr. Scott said Collier requested joint meeting. Ms. Davis said that almost all the committees meet jointly.

Ms. Carter said that we are expanding communities and asked how do people get to their doctors. There has to be some transportation to get around.

Mr. Bryant said that they transport patients across county lines if provider is closer. Restrictions on who is responsible for initial pickup. If the meeting would be for a purpose other than providing additional service, that would be good.

Mr. Scott said that he did not have any agenda items at the present and that was why it was pushed out to a later date.

Chairman Bigelow asked if any board members would want a joint meeting.

Ms. Davis suggested a meet and greet through telephonic or videoconferencing. Collier County would like to meet face to face, but that until have agenda items, she saw no need to meet.

Ms. Hustad said that we have more priorities now but that we should think in context of ways to coordinate and not additional money.

Ms. Carter had distributed an Easter Seals report with a CD which had information on transportation services in small urban communities to all the board members.

Chairman Bigelow said that in the future, he would find it helpful to list the actual representative in a column. There are a few vacancies and any assistance would help.

Chairman Bigelow said that we have a system that people have to make living choices. It may sound like an unfair proposition. We have to make decisions and it might be a good thing that folks who need the services will locate geographically.

Ms. Davis that in a perfect world, they would move closer to a bus stop. People can’t or shouldn’t drive and can’t afford to move where they can get transportation.

Ms. Sayers said it would be best to empower individuals by educating them.

Mr. Pierce said that he has many clients forced to relocate and they need ADA service. Many have had to contact Jill Brown of Lee Tran who checks to see if they are in a corridor for transportation.

Ms. Carter said we want to empower them and be independent.

Ms. Sayers said that coordination between Cape Coral Mini Bus and Lee Tran to get from transfer station to home is important.

Discussion ensued on getting realtors involved who would know what would qualify them for services.

Mr. Bryant said that there are four distinctive funding sources. He suggested that the three agencies work together to make a trifold document which would be very worthwhile. Mr. Bryant was willing to commit time but has no resources to pay for it.

**MOTION BY MS. CARTER FOR LEE TRAN, CAPE CORAL MINIBUS
AND GOOD WHEELS TO COORDINATE THE MAKING OF A TRI-
FOLD DOCUMENT.**

Ms. Sayers said she would be willing to help.

Mr. Myers suggested this document should also be on the organization's websites.

Agenda Item #9 – Date and Time for Next Meeting

Chairman Bigelow announced that the next meeting would be on April 10, 2009 at 1:30 p.m.

Agenda Item #10 - Adjournment

**MOTION TO ADJOURN AT 3:30 P.M. BY MR. MARTINEZ AND
SECONDED BY MS. CARTER. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**