

**Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2023**

Volusia County Mobility Management Center
950 Big Tree Road, South Daytona, FL 32119

TDLCB Members Physically Present:

Erin LeDuc
Carmen Hall
DJ Lebo
Renee Gahagan
Patricia Lipovsky, Vice Chairperson
Christy Gillis
Mary Tyson
Doug Hall
Cassandra Jessie
Carlos Colón
Ethan Johnson

Representing:

Association of Community Action
Association of Community Action - Alternate
Children at Risk - Alternate
Citizens Advocate - Alternate
Citizens Advocate, Systems User
Department of Children and Families
Disabled Citizens – Alternate
Elderly Citizens
Elderly Citizens - Alternate
Florida Department of Transportation
Medical Community - Alternate

TDLCB Members Virtually Present:

Sheryl Dick-Stanford
Judy Craig
Emilio Santiago

Representing:

Agency for Persons with Disabilities
Disabled Citizens
Health Care Administration

TDLCB Members Absent:

Jean Cerullo (excused)
Beverly Johnson (excused)
Ellen Labadie
Steve Jack
Bill Hinkle, Jr.
Robert Watson
Susan Pauley
Matt Reinhart, Chairperson (excused)
Kathy Spencer (excused)

Representing:

Citizens Advocate
Children at Risk
Elder Affairs
Private for Profit
Public Education
Veterans Services Group
Vocational Rehab Services
Volusia County Council District 2
Workforce Development Board - Alternate

Others Physically Present:

Debbie Stewart, Recording Secretary
Stephan Harris
Katie Lear
Scott Larsen
Virginia Waeffler
Steven Williamson
Kelvin Miller
Ralf Heseler
Jacob Lunceford
Bobbie King

Representing:

TPO Staff
TPO Staff
Citizen
Citizen
Citizen
Citizen
Votran Staff
Votran Staff
Votran Staff
Volusia County Staff

Others Virtually Present:

Pam Blankenship

Representing:

TPO Staff

I. Call to Order / Roll Call / Determination of Quorum/Pledge of Allegiance

TDLCB Vice Chairperson Patricia Lipovsky called the meeting of the River to Sea Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) to order at 10:00 a.m. The roll was called and

it was determined that a quorum was physically present. Due to the COVID-19 virus, the meeting was held in a hybrid format with nine voting and two non-voting members physically present; and three voting members virtually present.

MOTION: *A motion was made by Ms. Tyson to allow TDLCB members attending remotely due to COVID-19 precautions to participate and vote. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hall and carried unanimously.*

II. Action Items

A. Review and Approval of the October 12, 2022 TDLCB Meeting Minutes

MOTION: *A motion was made by Ms. Jessie to approve the October 12, 2022 TDLCB meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gahagan and carried unanimously.*

III. Public Comment/Participation

**Public comment was addressed at this point in the meeting.*

Ms. Virginia Waeffler stated when she calls Votran to schedule a trip, she is on hold for long periods of time; sometimes when she calls she is caller number 17 or even 20. She asked that they improve on that.

Ms. Katie Lear, resident of Port Orange, stated she has been using Votran since 1979 and it has been a wonderful service which affords her independence; however, there have been many problems over the last year or two with pick-ups and drop-offs. They have been consistently late; she has had doctor appointments that she missed because she was late arriving for her appointments. It is anxiety provoking when you do not know when the bus will show up or how long she will be riding on it; some trips can take up to an hour and a half. She is concerned that she is unable to get picked up and dropped off in a timely manner.

Mr. Steven Williamson, resident of South Daytona, stated he has been using Votran since the mid 1980's; it has been a great service but in the past few years, the service has had issues with being on time. He recently began working at Embry Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU) and he has to schedule his trips earlier than needed because Votran tends to pick him up late. He is supposed to be there by 4:30 pm so he will schedule a 3:00 pm pick-up but Votran may not show up until 5:00 pm. This makes it hard for the disabled to get and keep jobs; it makes him look like a bad employee as his timecard is reviewed in Minnesota and they do not understand the situation here. They have him as an employee with frequent tardiness which puts his job in jeopardy. It is not just Votran; their contractors are not good. When he inquires about the service, he is only told that they do not have enough drivers and they do not answer his questions. He appreciates the service but it is putting his job at risk as he cannot keep his job if he is not able to be reliable and on time. This needs to be looked into. He noted that some of the contractor drivers come from Orlando and are not familiar with the Daytona Beach area and some of their vehicles are not equipped for wheelchair passengers and some are hard to get in and out of. The contractor drivers also do not always come to the door to get him.

**The meeting returned to the Action Items at this time.*

B. Review and Approval of the October 12, 2022 TD Public Hearing Minutes

MOTION: *A motion was made by Mr. Hall to approve the October 12, 2022 TD Public Hearing minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Gahagan and carried unanimously.*

C. Review and Approval of the Community Transportation Coordinator's (CTC) Monthly Paratransit Reports

Mr. Heseler reviewed the monthly paratransit reports for September, October, and November 2022; trips are still down but they are increasing. He noted that the public comments today are heard and respected; Votran is trying to meet the trip demands as much as possible. He referred to the comparison report for pre-COVID numbers and asked if this information is still relevant to the board. We are three years past COVID and things

are not going to be the same as before COVID; the world has changed dramatically. If the information is no longer relevant, they will discontinue this comparison report.

Ms. Jessie asked if trips are down during the holidays.

Mr. Heseler replied, yes; that applies to any holiday throughout the year.

Ms. Gahagan asked if Votran is in touch with the health department regarding COVID in Volusia County; the numbers are up again with a new strain. She asked if they talk to the health department when making decisions.

Mr. Heseler replied that they interact with all of Volusia County's departments that are relevant to the service Votran provides; if questions arise or if they are trying to make decisions on the service they provide and how it could impact them; they are in tune with each other.

Mr. Johnson commented that the pre-COVID terminology is relevant but post-COVID is where the debate is and no one is comfortable with that terminology yet.

Ms. Lebo asked if Mr. Heseler is asking if the board still wants to see the pre-COVID numbers.

Mr. Heseler replied yes; he asked if the board still want that comparison.

Mr. Johnson replied we are not yet post-COVID but for the purpose of the comparison report, he does not know if anything will be the same as before COVID. We are in a new normal and he does not think that report is relevant any longer.

Ms. Lebo commented that she would think they would compare year over year.

Mr. Heseler replied they will always provide the comparison to the previous year.

MOTION: *A motion was made by Ms. Gahagan to approve the Community Transportation Coordinator's (CTC) Paratransit Reports and to discontinue the pre-COVID comparison report. The motion was seconded by Ms. Lebo and carried unanimously.*

D. Review and Approval of Votran's FY 2021/22 Evaluation

Mr. Harris explained this annual evaluation is for fiscal year 2022/23 and not 2021/22; there was an error on the agenda. The evaluation began after the October 12, 2022 TDLCB meeting and was completed this month. The TDLCB Bylaws state that the agenda must be distributed one week prior to the meeting date; however, at the time the agenda was distributed, the evaluation was still being worked on so a link with the updated evaluation was sent via email to members for review on Friday. He reviewed the differences in the updated evaluation. He, Mr. Colón and Ms. Gahagan conducted an onsite observation of the system on November 28, 2022; they rode on a paratransit vehicle; and inspected the vehicle, the driver, and the service provided that day. That information is included in the report starting on page 45. The manifest for that day was also provided and it verifies the TD rider had an acceptable TD application on file. The report found that Votran is in compliance with the required sections. The last evaluation was conducted in 2021 and from a service standpoint, Votran is in a very different place now; COVID-19 has changed the environment completely. Ridership is down, the service level is down, fewer drivers are available and trips are down; it is a very challenging operating environment. Votran provided excellent service prior to COVID-19 but we had to acknowledge a different operating environment with this report. His comments on the previous report were relatively short because Votran was providing excellent service; this time, he had to look at the reality of today's operating environment and how Votran is meeting those challenges. His comments are on pages 10 and 11; which he reviewed. One comment is in regards to implementing a Mobility on Demand (MOD) transit system; he reminded members that the TDLCB provided a resolution supporting MOD and Votran in partnering with Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) to improve service. Other than those comments, most of the information was carried over from the previous report.

Ms. Lebo asked if with the MOD service, using Uber or Lyft, do they have the resources to help those that are disadvantaged or have special needs; if they have the ability to help them when they call.

Mr. Harris explained that right now, there is no coordination with Uber and Lyft; the service is not in place yet.

Ms. King stated that she will be giving a presentation on the MOD service next and she will address that in her presentation.

Ms. Lebo commented that a public/private partnership is a great idea and an excellent use of resources; she wants to know that it can be used effectively.

Mr. Harris noted that the board approved a resolution at the last TDLCB meeting to enhance Votran service with MOD service.

Ms. Gahagan asked how people would access Uber or Lyft; if they would call them or Votran to schedule a trip.

Ms. King replied that they do not yet have a contract with Uber or Lyft now; for now, customers would need to download their app on their own.

Vice Chairperson Lipovsky added that Uber and Lyft are now providing phone numbers for customers to use to schedule trips for those that do not have smartphones or otherwise cannot access the app.

MOTION: *A motion was made by Ms. Jessie to approve Votran's FY 2022/23 Evaluation. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hall and carried unanimously.*

IV. Presentations and Discussion Items

A. Presentation and Discussion of Votran's Service Changes and Mobility on Demand Project

Ms. Bobbie King, Volusia County, gave a PowerPoint presentation on Votran service changes and the mobility-on-demand (MOD) project; this was also presented to the Volusia County Council in August. Last year, Votran completed a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) with a consultant who reviewed all Votran routes to see where changes or adjustments were needed in order to be more efficient and cost-effective; Votran staff reviewed their suggested changes very thoroughly and modified the consultant's recommendations to be viable options. She reviewed the service change updates. She reviewed Votran Gold's service and the major upcoming projects' details for mobility-on-demand. There are options for different tiers of the MOD service. She continued the presentation and showed operating assumptions of the MOD service and how Votran will see savings of approximately \$1 million per year for the west side. In concert with the MOD service, they intend to implement software to allow customers to pay online with an app. Votran has applied for a grant for mobile payment and scheduling software; they will also update the onboard technology and dispatch equipment as well with that grant. Future plans include propane paratransit vehicles and electric fixed-route buses as well as an intermodal transfer station in the Orange City/Deltona area.

Members discussed the presentation and the MOD project; they also discussed improvements in communication when there are delayed pick-ups. They discussed the problems with trying to reach someone at Votran after 7:00 pm if there is a delayed pick-up. It was explained that dispatchers are there until midnight or later and customer service until 8:00 pm but at times they are having to do other duties; Votran's staffing shortage was reiterated.

Ms. King stated there is a meeting next week to discuss the solicitation of the Request for Proposal (RFP); very detailed information must be included and it requires the coordination of many people. They hope to have it out by the end of the month and have a progress update by the summer. Votran is continuing to bring on new staff that will help alleviate delayed pick-ups and drop-offs.

Members discussed the MOD service and what type of vehicles would be needed. It was also explained that the contractor for MOD may or not be Uber and/or Lyft; all services like them are viable options. They are looking

for a certain type of service; contractors will have to be able to provide what Votran requires. Anyone that responds to the solicitation will be considered. She will provide more information as the project progresses.

B. Presentation and Discussion of the Transportation Disadvantaged Program

Mr. Harris gave a presentation on the annual TDLCB member training and an overview of the statewide coordinated transportation system. The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) designates the official local planning agency which is the River to Sea TPO. The TPO appoints and staffs the TDLCB. The TDLCB oversees the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) which is Votran. He explained the purpose of the TDLCB is to identify local service needs, provide information, advice and direction to Votran, serve as an advisory body to the CTD and advocate for represented groups. He reviewed the duties of the TDLCB including assisting Votran in establishing eligibility guidelines, designating the CTC every five years, appointing the Grievance Committee and Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), reviewing TD funding applications, annually developing and updating the TDLCB Bylaws and Grievance Procedures. The TDLCB meets quarterly and conducts an annual public hearing. He reviewed the TDLCB structure and membership. He announced the new TDLCB Chairperson is Volusia County Council Member Matt Reinhart; he was unable to attend today due to a scheduling conflict. He also introduced the new Community Assistance representative, Ms. Erin LeDuc. The TDLCB handles the TD services on the local level for the CTD and coordinates on a statewide level.

Vice Chairperson Lipovsky asked if alternates are able to vote if both they and the primary representative are in attendance.

Mr. Harris replied if both are in attendance, only the primary representative votes.

C. Presentation and Discussion of Parliamentary Procedures

Ms. Blankenship gave a PowerPoint presentation on Parliamentary Procedures and Robert's Rules of Order and stated their purpose is to conduct meetings that allow everyone to be heard and make decisions without confusion. She reviewed the different types of motions, amendments to motions, the steps to a motion and how to withdraw a motion. She explained a quorum is the majority of committee members; however, the TDLCB bylaws define a quorum as six voting members. A quorum must be met in order to take action. She explained the only reason members may abstain from voting is when there is a conflict of interest; an economic benefit or harm that affects a member or their relative personally or monetarily. Members must complete an abstention form within 15 days of abstaining from a vote. It was asked if a second to a motion to adjourn is needed; yes, it is.

V. Staff Comments

→ 2023 Public Transportation & TD Awareness Day

Mr. Harris announced the 2023 Public Transportation and TD Day will be held on March 16, 2023; this event during the legislative session gives TDLCB members the opportunity to talk to the state legislators, explain their situation, concerns and discuss what is needed. In the past, he along with TDLCB members have attended via a Votran paratransit vehicle; however, with the ongoing bus driver shortage, we are not in a position to take members this year to TD Day. This was the case last year and it was held virtually in 2021 due to COVID.

Vice Chairperson Lipovsky asked if they are going to offer it virtually.

Mr. Harris replied no; it is an in-person event only.

Ms. Jessie asked if members could attend on their own.

Mr. Harris replied yes; if members choose to go on their own, he will look at providing assistance; the TPO could perhaps provide assistance for a hotel and food.

Mr. Hall asked if there was a way to partner with another agency such as Uber or Lyft; or with another county.

Mr. Harris replied he is not sure what could be done at this point; he is not hopeful that anything can be done this year.

VI. TDLCB Chairperson Comments

There were no Chairperson comments.

VII. TDLCB Member Comments

(Handout)

Ms. Jessie referred to the handout which includes a cover letter and resolution from the Halifax Council of the Blind and a resolution from the Florida Council of the Blind; she asked Mr. Harris to read the cover letter to members.

Mr. Harris read the cover letter which addresses the need to have MOD services and same-day services and the concerns regarding Votran's late pick-ups and drop-offs. It also addresses the need for collaboration and cooperation.

Ms. Jessie stated that they do appreciate Votran and the hard work they have done regarding the influx of late pick-ups and drop-offs due to COVID; however, the riders of Votran have jobs too and employers are only so tolerant of tardiness. They want to reiterate this resolution that was given to Votran and the Volusia County Council. They want to figure out the best way to partner with or help Votran to come to a resolution to get back to the level of service Votran had prior to COVID.

Ms. Hall introduced Ms. Erin LeDuc, Community Services Manager, Ms. LeDuc will be the primary representative to the TDLCB and she will return to being the alternate.

Ms. Gahagan commented that she would like to have a new TDLCB member orientation; there are a lot of confusing components to this board. Mr. Harris does a wonderful job but in order for members to truly understand the TDLCB, she would like to have a board member orientation where they could ask questions after each slide of the presentation so members have a better understanding of their role.


Mr. Heseler stated that he appreciates the comments made during the meeting and members' concerns; he explained that it is not just a driver shortage that Votran is experiencing, but an overall staffing shortage. They have five employees who schedule trips and two of them are having to drive a bus so there are not enough staff to answer the phones. Votran is doing their very best but they now have drivers calling in sick with COVID. They are moving staff around to try and cover all the bases and trying to provide the best service they can under the circumstances. They are very aware of customers' frustrations and issues and they are doing their best to rectify the situation. It is not for lack of trying.

VIII. Information Items

- River to Sea TPO Board Meeting Summaries
- River to Sea TPO Outreach & Activities
- River to Sea TPO Planning Grant Quarterly Progress Report
- TDLCB Attendance Record
- TDLCB Interest Form
- TDLCB Membership List
- 2023 R2CTPO Meeting Schedule

IX. Adjournment


The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 a.m.



VOLUSIA COUNTY COUNCIL MEMBER MATT REINHART, CHAIRPERSON
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED LOCAL COORDINATING BOARD

CERTIFICATE:

The undersigned, duly qualified and acting Recording Secretary of the River to Sea TPO certifies that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the minutes of the January 11, 2023 regular meeting of the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB), approved and duly signed this 12th day of April 2023.



PAMELA BLANKENSHIP, RECORDING SECRETARY
RIVER TO SEA TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION



**HALIFAX COUNCIL OF THE BLIND
AN AFFILIATE OF FLORIDA
COUNCIL OF THE BLIND
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE
BLIND
P.O. BOX 214215
DAYTONA BEACH, FL 32121-4215**

January 9, 2023

To The Director of Votran and Members of Volusia County Council:

Several members of the Halifax Council of the Blind are members of various transit advisory committees. We have worked since the inception of paratransit services in Volusia County to develop a relationship that fosters cooperation and collaboration to improve service delivery for all Votran users.

Earlier this year you were presented with a resolution passed by the Florida Council of the Blind, a copy of which is attached. Also attached is a copy of a resolution created by the Board of Directors of the Halifax Council of the Blind. The resolution highlights same day services and the use of ride share vehicles. It is believed that the use of such services would substantially decrease the instances of late pick-ups and drop offs which have significantly increased.

We have always been able to work together and wish to continue to have a productive relationship going forward. We would like to thank the county, its various committees and Votran for the cooperation that has characterized our relationship.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors,
Halifax Council of the Blind



**HALIFAX COUNCIL OF THE BLIND
AN AFFILIATE OF FLORIDA
COUNCIL OF THE BLIND
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE
BLIND
P.O. BOX 214215
DAYTONA BEACH, FL 32121-4215**

Halifax Council of the Blind
Board of Directors Resolution concerning Paratransit Changes in Volusia
County

WHEREAS, the Halifax Council of the Blind has already submitted a resolution concerning the use of ride sharing and other innovative approaches already implemented in other jurisdictions that can be taken in Volusia County; and

Whereas, the issues raised in this resolution constitute significant issues that require immediate attention as well as changes in the long range planning of paratransit services in Volusia County;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Directors of the Halifax Council of the Blind meeting via Zoom on this the eighth day of January 2023 that this organization demands that a clear policy be developed that sets out or clarifies rules regarding late pick-ups and drop offs to assure that all rules are being properly enforced. and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Votran and the County Council work together to develop approaches that will allow for the use of ride sharing services and will enable the provision of same day services which have already been implemented in some areas of the county. and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Council authorize an independent study to explore late pick-ups and drop-offs in the most populated areas of the county which will be used to make changes that will improve equitable service provisions. and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) for Volusia County, to the River To Sea Transportation Planning Organization (R2CTPO), to the Volusia County Council and the Director of VOTRAN.



FLORIDA COUNCIL OF THE BLIND, INC.
708 KRISTINA COURT
PORT ORANGE, FL 32127-4907
P.O. BOX 214235
DAYTONA BEACH, FL 32121
(386) 763-3836 (800) 267-4448
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June 13, 2022

Florida Council of the Blind

Resolution 2022-02

Innovative Paratransit Approaches

WHEREAS, every paratransit system in the state of Florida is experiencing difficulty recruiting and retaining drivers; and

WHEREAS, during the pandemic many services either provided less service or operated with increased wait times and decreased passenger capacity; and

WHEREAS, the net result throughout the state has been a tendency to see service delivery characterized by long wait times and sometimes even an inability to provide trips; and

WHEREAS, several transit authorities within the state of Florida and around the country have utilized ride sharing companies to supplement the services delivered through paratransit vehicles; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the potential to save dollars this approach provides, it also allows for same day reservations which significantly increases the value of the service to its users.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Florida Council of the Blind in convention assembled at the Sheraton Orlando North Hotel in Maitland Florida on this the fifth day of June 2022 that this organization urges local transit agencies and local transit boards to immediately implement the use of ride sharing as a way to substantially improve service delivery to its users; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Transportation Disadvantaged Commission is hereby urged to immediately begin gathering information on ride share vehicle usage which the commission can make available to interested individuals and entities throughout Florida. and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Florida Council of the Blind wishes to particularly commend Pinellas, Broward and Duval counties for their innovative implementation of same day trips.

This resolution was adopted.