

BAY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION MEETING MINUTES
EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL (Designated staff)
Bay County Transit Office
1010 Cone Ave, Panama City, FL 32401
January 31, 2024

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Pamn Henderson, CHAIR | City of Callaway |
| Robert Carroll, VICE CHAIR | Bay County Commission |
| William Dozier | Bay County Commission |
| David Griggs | City of Callaway |
| Judy Vandergrift | City of Lynn Haven |
| Pat Perno | City of Lynn Haven |
| Mary Coburn | City of Panama City Beach |
| Cindy Hamre | City of Springfield |
| Brian Grainger | City of Panama City |
| Janice Lucas | City of Panama City |
| Josh Street | City of Panama City |
| <u>Virtual Attendance:</u> | |
| Jenna Flint Haligas | City of Panama City |

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Tommy Hamm | Bay County Commission |
| Doug Moore | Bay County Commission |
| Clair Pease | Bay County Commission |
| Jerry Smith | City of Mexico Beach |
| Michael Jarman | City of Panama City Beach |
| Stacie Galbreath | City of Parker |
| Michael Rohan, Sr. | City of Panama City |

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

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| Bryant Paulk | FDOT |
| Sandy Culbreath | BayWay |
| Lamar Hobbs | BayWay |
| Nicole Austin | BayWay |
| Harrison Neilly | Transdev |
| Brandon Curtis | Transdev |
| Trey Kolmetz | Bay County |
| Tyrone Scorsone | Kittleson |
| W.C. Henry | Burke, Blue, Hutchison, Walters & Smith, P.A. |

Virtual Attendance:

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| Cory Wilkinson | HDR |
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Tanya Branton

FDOT

EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL STAFF:

Austin Mount

Gary Kramer

Leandra Meridith

Tiffany Bates

Howard Vanselow

Angela Bradley

Jill Nobles

Virtual Attendance:

Gabrielle McVoy

Katie Fults

Mary Beth Washnock

CALL TO ORDER / INVOCATION / PLEDGE – Chair Pamn Henderson

The meeting was called to order. Commissioner Dozier led the invocation and Commissioner Carroll led the pledge of allegiance.

Chair Henderson announced that Sandy Culbreath was retiring. Lamar Hobbs and the TPO thanked Sandy Culbreath for her years of service.

Commissioner Lucas moved to approve the agenda with an additional action item to include a request for a lane reduction study on MLK Blvd. from 15th Street to 6th Street. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Street, and it was unanimously approved.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Angela Bradley stated that a request has been made for an add-on item. The request was for a lane reduction study on MLK Blvd. from 15 Street to 6th Street.

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no speakers.

FDOT UPDATE:

1. **FDOT Update - Bryant Paulk, AICP Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Urban Liaisons**

Bryant Paulk stated that the Gulf Coast Parkway project continues to advance, and improvements will begin at the Star Avenue intersection in February and the project should be completed by the fall of 2025.

Bryant Paulk said he was just provided a completion date of April of this year for the Tyndall Flyover project.

Chair Henderson said she sent a letter to Secretary Gainer requesting incremental funding for right-of-way purchase along SR (State Road) 22 project and asked if there is an update on that project. Bryant Paulk said Secretary Gainer has been in touch with his office to coordinate this effort once funding is identified.

There was general discussion about the Gulf Coast Parkway project; however, Bryant Paulk clarified that he did not have any information on the construction schedule beyond the next three months.

PLANNING AND TRANSIT CONSENT AGENDA:

1. ALL COMMITTEES - Approval of November 1, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Carroll moved to approve the November 1, 2023 TPO meeting minutes. Commissioner Dozier seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

PLANNING ACTION ITEMS:

1. ENCLOSURE A - ALL COMMITTEES –Consideration of Resolution BAY 24-01 Approving the Evaluation Criteria for Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) Staff Ranking of Transportation Systems Management (TSM) Projects – *Jill Nobles, ECRC Staff*

Jill Nobles stated that one of the criteria for ranking the TSM criteria, level-of-service, has changed, due to how it is evaluated. The methodology has changed the ten-year estimate to the LRTP-year estimate. Jill Nobles explained how the TSM projects are gathered, ranked, and presented for approval each cycle.

Angela Bradley stated that both advisory committees recommended TPO approval of this item.

Commissioner Dozier moved to authorize the TPO chair to sign Resolution Bay 24-01 approving the evaluation criteria for Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC) staff ranking of Transportation System Management (TSM) Projects. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Grainger and was passed unanimously.

2. ADD-ON ITEM: –Request for FDOT to Conduct a Lane Elimination Study on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. from 15th Street to 6th Street –

Commissioner Lucas stated that this request is being brought forth because the section of MLK Blvd. between 6th and 15th Streets, as it exists today, inhibits economic growth. It is difficult to get in and out of businesses. Commissioner Lucas explained the access challenges with the raised median that currently exists there. It was clarified that the request was for elimination of the raised median that restricts turns. There was discussion among the board about the corridor and in support of this project.

Austin Mount asked Bryant Paulk if a lane-elimination study was the correct terminology for this request. Bryant Paulk said that the request should instead be for an access-management study, which takes less time than a lane-elimination study, which typically involves removal of a through lane and can take much longer to study. Bryant Paulk noted that FDOT does not construct typical five-lane sections with a center turn lane anymore due to safety concerns, but that individual access points can be addressed to fill the need and agreed to discuss the issue with the City of Panama City.

Commissioner Lucas moved to request FDOT conduct an access-management study for the section of Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. between 6th and 15th Streets and provide the results to the TPO. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dozier, and it was unanimously approved.

PLANNING PRESENTATIONS ITEMS:

1. **ENCLOSURE B - ALL COMMITTEES – Schedule for Development of the Bay County TPO FY 2026-2030 Project Priorities – *Gary Kramer, ECRC Staff***

Gary Kramer presented the schedule for development of the upcoming Project Priorities cycle, as included in the agenda package. The item will be on the June agenda for consideration of adoption.

PLANNING INFORMATION ITEMS (no presentation necessary):

1. TCC and CAC November 2023 Meeting Minutes
2. Bay TPO Actions Report – November 2023
3. Signed Florida Commerce TIP Letter
4. Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Application Review Workshop Meeting
5. 2024 Bay County TPO Meeting Schedule

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES – *Tiffany Bates, ECRC Community Liaison*

Tiffany Bates provided a list of specific legislative bills that are of interest to the TPO as well as FDOT's legislative priorities. Tiffany Bates highlighted bills that, if passed, would impact

the MPOAC and development of the TPOs' Long Range Transportation Plans. ECRC CEO Austin Mount and Tiffany Bates are in communication with Representative Alex Andrade's office about these bills, as he is among the committee members that will hear them. Staff will keep the TPO updated on developments.

Commissioner Dozier said there was much discussion about these bills at the MPOAC meetings, which he just attended, and MPOAC Executive Director, Mark Reichert, was planning to meet with officials in Tallahassee to discuss the issues further. Commissioner Dozier said the MPOAC Governing Board discussed requesting each TPO to draft a letter stating their position, but decided it was better to wait to see what develops in the coming days during the committee meetings.

TRANSIT AGENDA

TRANSIT ACTION ITEMS:

1. **ENCLOSURE C – ALL COMMITTEES- Consideration of Resolution Bay 24-02 Authorizing the TPO Chair to Sign a Memorandum of Understanding for Funding Implementation of a FY2024 Sunday Schedule for the Fixed Route System - Lamar Hobbs, Bay County Transit**

Angela Bradley stated that the TCC and the CAC both recommended the TPO approve this resolution.

Lamar Hobbs stated that Sunday service was provided last year, and it had good ridership; he provided the ridership data, and associated cost. Today's request of the TPO is to enter a new memorandum of understanding to do the same in FY 2024. Lamar Hobbs then explained the funding amounts.

Commissioner Dozier asked where the route covers. Lamar Hobbs said the service would cover all of Bay County but on a reduced service schedule, meaning headways of every two hours rather than every hour.

Commissioner Carroll moved to authorize the TPO chair to sign Resolution Bay 24-02 authorizing the TPO chair to sign a memorandum of understanding for funding implementation of a FY2024 Sunday schedule for the fixed route system. Commissioner Dozier seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

2. **ENCLOSURE D – ALL COMMITTEES- Consideration of Resolution Bay 24-03 Amending the Agreement for Management and Operations Services of the Fixed Route System - Lamar Hobbs, Bay County Transit**

Angela Bradley said the TCC and the CAC recommended approval of this item as well.

Lamar Hobbs explained that legal and staff review of the new operator RFP submissions found that all qualifications were not met, and some data presented were skewed. It was determined that it would be best to re-issue the RFP with clarification of requirements, and to extend the contract with First Transit in the meantime, for up to twelve months.

There was general discussion about the cost of the service. Lamar Hobbs said that some costs have increased but the cost of the twelve-month extension is less than the original proposal was.

Commissioner Dozier moved to authorize the TPO chair to sign Resolution Bay 24-03 amending the agreement for management and services of the fixed route system. Commissioner Lucas seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

3. **ENCLOSURE E – ALL COMMITTEES- Consideration of Resolution Bay 24-04 Authorizing the TPO Chair to Sign an Agreement with the Panama City Beaches Convention and Visitors’ Bureau to Produce, Install, and Display Beach Safety Flag Advertisement on Transit Buses - Lamar Hobbs, Bay County Transit**

Angela Bradley stated the TCC and CAC’s recommended approval.

Lamar Hobbs explained that part of the agreement with the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau was an arrangement to promote the beach safety flag system on two of the transit buses. This request is to recommend the TPO chair sign an agreement to that effect. Lamar Hobbs noted that there would be a small loss associated with the production costs and advertising revenue loss associated with this request, but the Bureau has provided much more funding to cover the expenses of providing the Sunday service.

Chair Henderson said having the flag system displayed on the buses is more of a public service than advertising, and wholeheartedly agreed with the request. There was general agreement among the board members.

Lamar Hobbs mentioned that the CAC also supported the public service nature of the request and asked if this could be displayed on all buses rather than just the two as agreed to in the request. Lamar Hobbs noted that putting those same displays on all the buses would generate a significant loss of advertising revenue, but that he had agreed to ask the TPO board about the idea of putting a small display on all the buses in the spirit of public safety.

Commissioner Perno supported the request and asked if the system could be

promoted on the message boards. Lamar Hobbs said he would need to research that possibility and bring options back to the board.

Commissioner Dozier moved to authorize the TPO chairman to sign Resolution Bay 24-04 authorizing the TPO chair to sign an agreement with the Panama City Beaches Convention and Visitors' Bureau to produce, install, and display beach safety flag advertisement on transit buses, with the direction to transit staff to explore options to place the safety flag system on all buses in a way that will not reduce revenue. Commissioner Street seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

4. **ENCLOSURE F - ALL COMMITTEES- Consideration of Resolution Bay 24-05 Approving a Request for Proposals (RFP) for an Operator for Deviated Fixed Route, Demand Response, and Micro-Transit Services - Lamar Hobbs, Bay County Transit**

Angela Bradley said the TCC and the CAC also recommended approval of this item.

Lamar Hobbs said this item is a request for the TPO board to authorize staff to proceed with a new RFQ for a permanent operator due to the last RFQ being unsuccessful.

Commissioner Dozier asked if anything is different in this version. Lamar Hobbs stated that the RFQ is the same, but the Bay County Purchasing Department will be managing the process this time.

Chair Henderson asked that the Purchasing Department be aware of the issues that caused problems with the previous proposals and Lamar Hobbs said that they have been made aware.

Commissioner Dozier moved to authorize the TPO chair to sign Resolution Bay 24-05 approving a request for proposals for an operator for deviated fixed route, demand response, and micro-transit services. Commissioner Street seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

TRANSIT UPDATE

Lamar Hobbs said House Bill 1091 pertains to the proposed transit authority for Bay County. Representative Griffiths is sponsoring the bill, but movement is not expected until March.

GOVERNANCE TRANSIT COMMITTEE UPDATE - Chris Cochran, AICP, Madrid CPWG - None

None

LEGAL UPDATE – Burke, Blue, Hutchison, Walters & Smith, P.A. - None

OTHER BUSINESS –

Commissioner Dozier said he spoke to the TPO recently about a bus that was not pulling over completely at a particular location and causing traffic to back up. Commissioner Dozier stated that this has been rectified and he thanked the TPO and Bay County staff for their assistance.

The next Bay County TPO meeting will be held on April 24, 2024, at 3:30 p.m. The TCC will meet at 11:00 a.m. and the CAC will meet at 1:30 p.m. All meetings will be held at the Bayway Public Transit System Administration and Meeting Facility, 1010 Cone Ave., Panama City, Florida 32401.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting was adjourned.