



OKALOOSA TRANSIT COOPERATIVE



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Robert A. "Trey" Goodwin III
Chair

Jean Hood
Vice-Chair

AGENDA

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 @ 1:30 p.m. CST
Okaloosa County Board Chamber
1250 N. Eglin Parkway, Shalimar, FL 32579

I. CALL TO ORDER – *Chairman Trey Goodwin*

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the Attached March 28, 2024 Meeting Minutes

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

For those wishing to speak, please fill out a speaker request form and indicate the agenda item(s) you would like to address. You will be called by the chairman at the appropriate time. If you would like to address an item not on the agenda, there will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting (Item VIII Public Forum) to speak.

V. ACTION ITEMS

1. Enclosure A – Comprehensive Operations Analysis – *Brian Waterman, HDR Inc.*

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. EC Rider Updates – *Tyrone Parker, Okaloosa County*

2. MV Transportation Updates – *Lakeshia Brown, MV Transportation*

Okaloosa Transit Cooperative
Meeting Agenda Continued
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Okaloosa Transit Cooperative
Staffed by the Emerald Coast Regional Council

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

The next Okaloosa Transit Cooperative meetings are scheduled for:

- ***Thursday July 11, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.***
- ***Tuesday, September 10, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.***

in the Okaloosa County Board Chambers – 1250 N. Eglin Parkway, Shalimar, Florida.

VIII. PUBLIC FORUM

1. Public – For those wishing to speak, please fill out a speaker request form.
2. Any additional items for discussion – Co-Op, Okaloosa County Staff, MV Transportation, ECRC Staff

IX. ADJOURNMENT

EC Rider website: ecrider.org

Okaloosa Transit Cooperative information can be found on the ECRC website at:

<http://www.ecrc.org/programs/okaloosa-transit-cooperative>

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations to access meeting, and for limited English proficiency, are available upon request. Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or persons who require translation services should contact our [Marketing Team](#) toll-free at 800-226-8914 or TTY 711, at least 48 hours in advance. Parainformacion en espanol, puede llamar a Ada Clark al 850-332-7976, ext. 278 o TTY 711. Sinecesita acomodaciones especiales, por favor llame 48 horas de antemano.

Participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. Persons who believe they have been discriminated against on these conditions may file a complaint with the [Title VI Coordinator](#), 850-332-7976, ext. 220.



CONSENT AGENDA

OKALOOSA TRANSIT COOPERATIVE *DRAFT MEETING MINUTES*
EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL (Designated staff)
Okaloosa County *Board Chamber*
1250 N. Eglin Parkway, Shalimar, FL 32579
March 28, 2024

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Trey Goodwin, Chair	Commissioner, Okaloosa County
Cynthia Brown	Councilmember, City of Crestview
Jean Hood	Mayor, Cinco Bayou Mayor
Dick Ryneerson	Mayor, City of Fort Walton Beach
Doug Stauffer	Councilmember, City of Niceville

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE

Bobby Wagner	Mayor, City of Destin
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OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bill Schaetzle	Councilmember, City of Niceville
Tyrone Parker	Okaloosa County
Lakeshia Brown	MV Transportation
Tara Jones	MV Transportation
Howard Vanselow	ECRC staff

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Goodwin called the meeting to order.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Goodwin moved for approval of the agenda

Mayor Hood moved to approve the agenda. Mayor Ryneerson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Approval of the November 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes



Mayor Hood moved to approve the minutes. Councilwoman Brown seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

V. ACTION ITEMS

1. By-Laws Review – Howard Vanselow, ECRC

Mr. Vanselow provided an overview of the By-Laws with staff recommended updates. Chairman Goodwin asked for comments/discussion. Chairman Goodwin commented that the wording for request for agenda changes 1.09 (2) may need to be looked at – the board discussed.

Councilman Stauffer moved to change the language to Request for agenda items should be received by Cooperative staff 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting. Councilwoman Brown seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

There was further discussion concerning Cooperative quorum requirements.

Councilwoman moved to change the quorum requirement to 4 Board Members present. Councilman Stauffer seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Chairman Goodwin ask if there was a need for legal advice how would that be handled. The Board discussed options for representation.

Councilwoman Brown motioned If legal advice/representation is needed ECRC attorney would be used for the Cooperative Board and ECRC concerns. Mayor Hood seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

Chairman Goodwin asked for any additional changes or discussion, seeing non he asked for approval of the staff presented updates.

Councilman Doug Stauffer moved to approve the updates. Mayor Hood seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

2. Election of Vice-Chair

Councilwoman Brown nominated Mayor Jean Hood as Vice-Chair. Mayor Rynearson seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

VI. INFORMATION ITEMS:

1. Comprehensive Operation Analysis (COA) – Tyrone Parker, Okaloosa County

- Phase 2 – Public engagement
- Working on moving up Transit Development Plan (TDP) in conjunction with the COA. The TDP is required by the state.
- COA recommendations
 - o Revise but do not delete service – improve efficiency
 - o Route 14 stop at the airport
 - o New route 15 to service Crestview
 - o Extend route 30
 - o Redesign route 32
- Staged changes starting in May 2024.
- Crestview summer 2025, service development grant will be available.
- Other possible changes more evening service, weekend, and mobility on demand.

Mayor Hood asked when the airport route would start.

Mr. Parker said September 2024.

Mayor Hood asked if there will be service in Destin on Commons Drive and not just on highway 98.

Mr. Parker replied that he would follow up with the consultants.

Councilwoman Brown asked if route 15 will originate in Crestview.

Mr. Park stated the route will deadhead to Crestview City Hall.

2. EC Rider Updates – Mr. Tyrone Parker, Okaloosa County

Mr. Parker said the EC Rider updates were covered in the COA report.

3. MV Transportation Updates – Ms. Lakeshia Brown



Mr. Parker introduced the new MV General Manager Ms. Lakeshia Brown

Ms. Brown stated they were fully staffed but have lost some employees but continue to recruit both locally and with corporate. She said they need 6 additional drivers to help support peak season. They are offering sign on bonuses and currently have 3 new hire in class.

Ms. Brown provided a brief background into her experience stating her last position was in St. Lucie, FL where they piloted a Micro Transit program before she was asked to take on her new position here.

Chairman Goodwin asked what is Micro Transit and what vehicles did they use. Ms. Brown explained the drivers had zones, 30 minutes windows, and riders used an app to schedule the same day trips. Minivans were used for the Micro Transit service.

Mr. Parker said the COA is looking at adding Micro Transit service.

Ms. Brown said Micro Transit service complements the fixed route service providing additional avenues for users.

Mr. Parker added that they will continue to move the service forward with better technology, Micro Transit, and striving to improve to the next level.

VII. OTHER BUSINESS

Next meetings will be:

May 14, 2024 at 1:30 pm.

July 11, 2024 at 10:00 am.

VIII. PUBLIC FORUM

None

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Goodwin adjourned the meeting.



Approved by Okaloosa Transit Cooperative

DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____

ENCLOSURE A



Link to Complete Report:

 [EC Rider Final Report_050324.pdf](#)

Executive Summary is included in the agenda
on the preceding pages

Action: Recommended adoption of the COA to the
Okaloosa County Board of County
Commissioners



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



A Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) of the EC Rider Transit System was recently completed to review the agency's network and operations. The goals of the COA included:

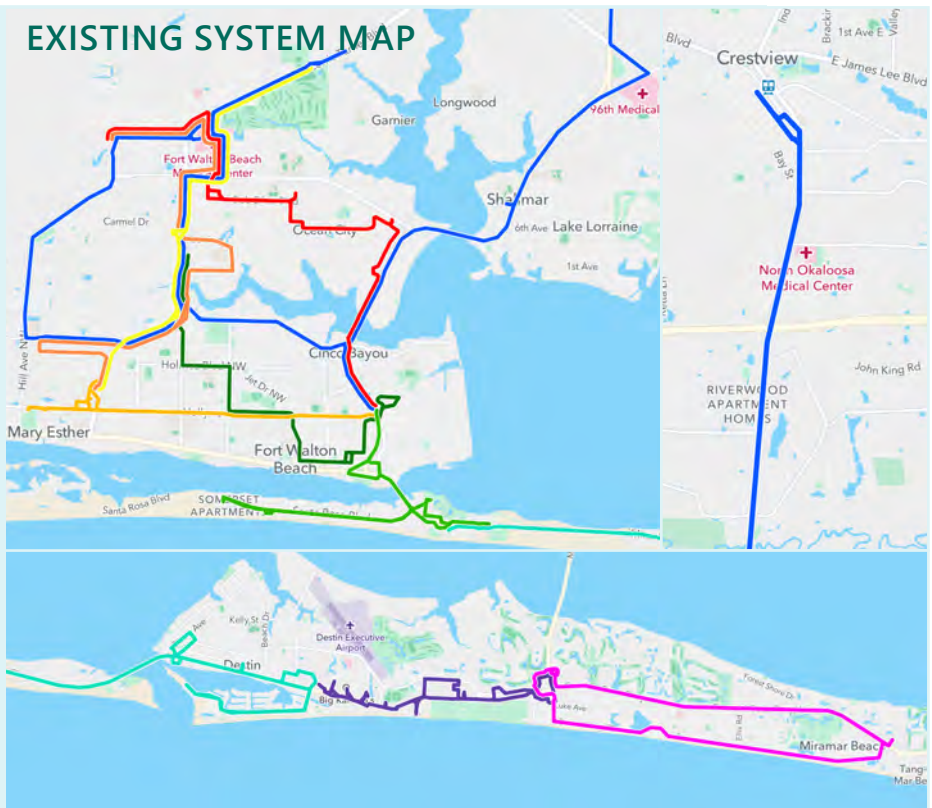
- Determining whether the network has the resources to meet the community's needs.
- Identifying systemic or route-level changes to improve service.
- Identifying opportunities to increase ridership for EC Rider.

The COA Included:

- Quarterly team meetings.
- Field observation & data collection.
- Interviews with transit operators to seek feedback on routes.
- Elected official and stakeholder interviews.
- Public involvement activities including two phases with community surveys.
- Different transit network scenario and modeling.
- Recommended Network Design.

EC Rider is the transit system operating primarily in Okaloosa County, Florida. The transit service area is located on the Gulf of Mexico in Northwest Florida, a region with a significant tourism industry and several military bases. The transit agency service area includes the communities of:

- Fort Walton Beach
- Destin
- Mary Esther
- Crestview
- Niceville
- Miramar Beach



Existing System Key Takeaways

Route Performance

Low ridership equals high per-rider costs.

System Operations

Network delay and safety concerns for routes.

Ridership Experience

Long trips, lack of frequency, limited-service span, no weekend service, regional isolation/disconnection.

Scheduling Efficiency

Inefficient layover & recovery times reduce frequency of service and impact service time efficiency.

COA Goals

The COA established three goals for the EC Rider System:



RIDERSHIP

Provide service to major areas of activity while implementing policies and procedures that increase overall safety and reliability for users.



TECHNOLOGIES/ SERVICES

Form the foundation for all-encompassing system growth through the integration of new modes, funding options, and improving the rider experience.



EFFICIENCY

Prioritize system efficiency by making proper use of both intelligent systems and network design.

Scenario Development

Based upon feedback from representatives from the Okaloosa County Transit Co-Op and public engagement, four scenarios were developed.

Scenario 1 Optimize the existing transit network

Scenario 3 High adoption of Mobility on Demand Zones

Scenario 2 Introduction of Mobility on Demand Zones

Scenario 4 High investment scenario with a complete network redesign

Scenario Results

The results for each scenario have been analyzed and assessed against the current system and each other. This analysis used the following performance metrics:

- Total boardings
- Number of buses required
- Total route cost
- Riders per revenue hour
- Total cost per rider

Based upon the results of the analysis, public engagement, and Okaloosa Transit Co-Op representatives feedback this COA recommends the following changes to the transit network:

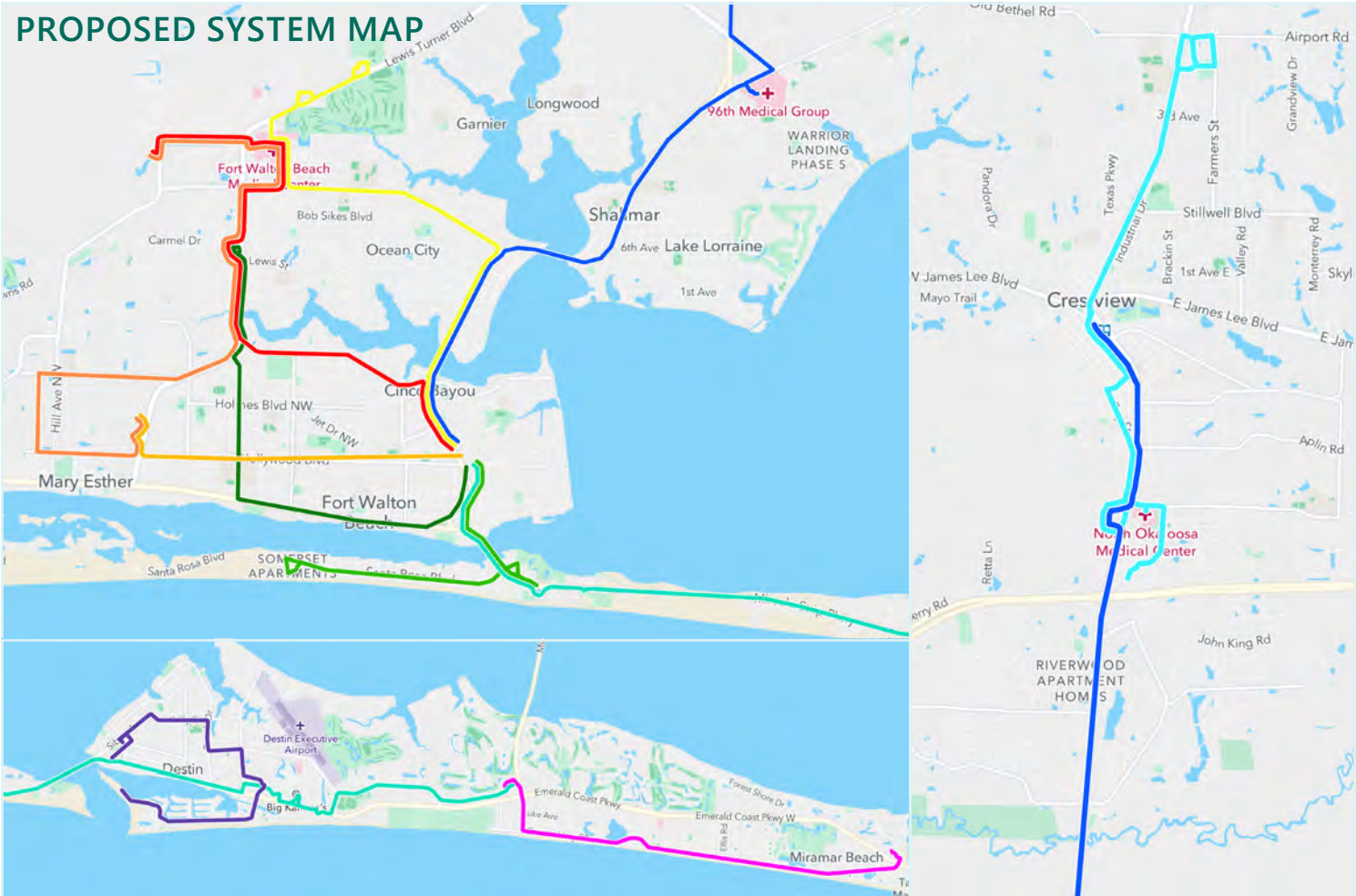
- Scenario 1 is recommended for implementation
- Transit operations should be expanded to provide additional evening and new weekend transit services.
- Mobility on Demand (MoD) should be explored further for potential implementation within Destin and Miramar Beach areas.

HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF RESULTS ILLUSTRATING THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS FOR EACH SCENARIO:

	1	2	3	4
BENEFITS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimized fixed-route network Immediate improvements to Routes 1, 2 & 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased service coverage Improved connections in Crestview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High ridership On-Demand Transit Improved connections in Niceville 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highest service coverage Improved connections in Crestview and Niceville
DRAWBACKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marginal increases in route costs Limited increase in service coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires larger investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires significant investment High costs per rider 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires significant investment Requires purchase of additional buses



Scenario 1 achieves the three goals by streamlining beach service, adding new routes in Crestview, and implementing more efficient connections at transfer centers.



Implementation

With any significant service change, effective public engagement is key. At a minimum, current and potential riders will be notified of when the changes will begin, what the changes are and how it benefits them, what existing stops are affected, where the new stops will be located, what areas are gaining/losing service, and how navigating the system will change.

Tactics for the public engagement strategy include but are not limited to:

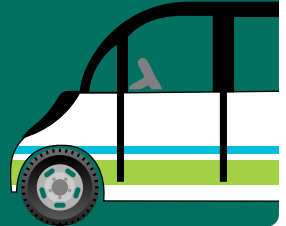
- Establish key messages and public distribution channels to promote the changes.
- Printed route by route “cheat sheets” containing general information about each route.
- One month prior to launch, bus stop notifications to be placed on each of the stops that are being removed with information on the change and where the customer can go to catch the bus.
- Implementation a rider virtual help desk that can respond via phone and email to customer questions and feedback.

MOBILITY ON DEMAND

Several cities across the country including many beach communities in Florida are offering MoD , to extend the reach of the transit system or provide customized service to meet different transportation needs.

MoD can:

- reduce congestion.
- provide alternate travel options for residents and visitors.
- improve service quality and coverage.
- increase ridership.



Relationship with the Transit Development Plan (TDP)

Every five years, transit agencies are required to submit a TDP Major Update to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). EC Rider last submitted their Major Update in August 2021. This TDP presented a growth strategy based on the current transit network and 2019 urban area population. Since then, the area has continued to grow, crossing the Transportation Management Area (TMA) threshold, and the recommended option presents a new network to grow the system. Therefore, it is recommended to start the TDP Major Update after implementing the changes (a year early) to reflect the changes to the system and the financial opportunities provided by being a TMA.

