

OKALOOSA – WALTON TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MEETING MINUTES
Chautauqua Hall, 95 Circle Drive, DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435
February 15, 2024

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Amy Jamieson, VICE CHAIR	Fort Walton Beach
Don Cleveland	Holt
Bill Cox	Crestview
Matthew Cox	Niceville
Yvonne Earle	Fort Walton Beach
Robert J. Rennie	Fort Walton Beach
Yvonne Shanklin	Crestview
Doug Tolbert	Niceville
Catherine F. Ward	Okaloosa County

Virtual Attendee:

Wanjiki Jackson	Crestview
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MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Alexander Barthe, CHAIR	Crestview
Gary Adams	Freeport
Steven J. Czonstka	Niceville
Harrison Harsch	Okaloosa County
Megan Harrison	Walton County
Neill O'Connell	Walton County

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Christy Johnson	FDOT
Robert Raymond	Citizen
Rob Schiffer	FuturePlan Consulting

EMERALD COAST REGIONAL COUNCIL STAFF:

Austin Mount
Mary Beth Washnock
Tiffany Bates
Rae Emary
Leandra Meredith
Angela Bradley
Gary Kramer
Jill Nobles
Howard Vanselow
Tammy Neal

Virtual Attendance

Katie Fults

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Vice Chair Jamieson called the meeting to order. The pledge was recited.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Vice Chair Jamieson called on Mary Beth Washnock, who stated that Mr. Bill Cox would like to add an item for the committee's consideration. Bill Cox asked to add an action item to the agenda to request the TPO approve an amendment to its bylaws to not allow nepotism on the TPO board.

Robert Rennie moved to approve the agenda as amended. Yvonne Earle seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC FORUM:

Robert Raymond asked the CAC to support more accessibility to travel guides for tourists in government complexes, etc.

Yvonne Earle notified the committee members that Steve Czonstka, long time CAC member, is in the hospital for surgery and is not doing well. Yvonne Earle asked that Steve be kept in everyone's thoughts and prayers.

FDOT UPDATES:

Christy Johnson updated the board on three upcoming meetings, stating that FDOT will hold a hybrid public alternative meeting Tuesday, Feb. 20 concerning the U.S. 98 "Around the Mound" Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study. The project limits cover State Road 30 (U.S. 98/Miracle Strip Parkway) from S.R. 189 (Beal Parkway) to the west end of the Brooks Bridge in Okaloosa County. Christy Johnson stated that the hybrid meeting will be from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Citizens can attend virtually at www.nwflroads.com/calendar. Those unable to participate online can attend in person, at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, 1250 Miracle Strip Parkway SE. Pre-registration is required for virtual attendance and in-person attendance is encouraged.

Christy Johnson clarified how to navigate the calendar of meetings on the Northwest Florida Roads website.

Christy Johnson reported that there will be a virtual project update meeting on March 6, 2024, to discuss the intersection improvements on US 98 in Destin at Palm Street and Sandprint Drive. A traffic light and safety improvement will take place.

Christy Johnson stated that there will be a virtual project update on March 12, 2024, on the resurfacing project on US 98 from the Santa Rosa/Okaloosa County line, east to Josie Road.

The project will improve turn lanes along the corridor and will construct a westbound turn lane at A21 Road.

A CAC member asked for an update on the intersection of US 90 and PJ Adams/Antioch Road. Christy Johnson had no information on the study for safety updates but would send it to TPO staff to send out to the CAC members when it is ready.

Matthew Cox asked for an update on the I-10 interchange project in Crestview. Christy Johnson agreed to get this information for the CAC members.

Yvonne Shanklin asked about US 90 at Hickory Avenue getting turn lanes, noting that this was discussed at a prior meeting. Christy Johnson agreed to get this information for the CAC members.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. ALL COMMITTEES: Approval of November 2023 Meeting Minutes

Bill Cox moved to approve the November 2023 O-W CAC meeting minutes. Matthew Cox seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. ENCLOSURE A - ALL COMMITTEES - Consideration of Resolution O-W 24-01 Requesting AMTRAK to Restore Stations and Passenger Service in Northwest Florida – Gary Kramer, ECRC Staff

Gary Kramer stated that the MPOAC is accepting applications for rail projects and staff consulted with the MPOAC consultant on a request to restore the AMTRAK service that has been gone since Hurricane Katrina. The TPO's 2008 resolution of support for a return to the service is included in the application package to demonstrate the TPO's long support for this project.

Doug Tolbert asked if there was a preference between having a station stop in Crestview or DeFuniak Springs, as both are noted as the option in the application. Gary Kramer said there was no preference by staff; the decision would be made later.

Yvonne Earle noted that the prior AMTRAK stop in Crestview was at 3 a.m. and asked if this would be the same. Gary Kramer said this information was not known yet.

Yvonne Earle moved to recommend the TPO authorize the TPO chair to sign Resolution O-W 24-01 requesting AMTRAK restore stations and passenger service in Northwest Florida. Bill Cox seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

2. ENCLOSURE B - ALL COMMITTEES – Consideration of Resolution O-W 24-02 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 as per the UPWP, ECRC staff is re-evaluating the adopted evaluation criteria used to rank candidate projects. The Level of Service criterion has been changed from ten-year deficiency data to LRTP year data. Comments will be collected through January 19, 2024.

Doug Tolbert moved to recommend the TPO authorize the TPO chair to sign Resolution O-W 24-02 approving the evaluation criteria for ECRC staff ranking of TSM projects. Matthew Cox seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

3. ENCLOSURE C - ALL COMMITTEES - Request to Proceed with Amending the Okaloosa-Walton 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan to Include (1) Destin Cross-Town Connector in the Cost Feasible Plan, (2) West 98 Collector in the Needs Plan, (3) JW Hollington Connector Road in the Needs Plan, (4) Mack Bayou to Sandestin Lane Connector Road in the Needs Plan, (5) CR 3280 Extension in the Needs Plan, and (6) Freeport Waterfront Improvements in the Needs Plan - *Jill Nobles, ECRC Staff*

Jill Nobles said this request is to proceed with amending the O-W 2045 LRTP to include six new projects and explained the amendment process. Jill Nobles presented the projects and said if approved the amendments will be presented at the April meetings for approval.

There was general discussion about the projects included in this request.

Bill Cox moved to recommend the TPO authorize the TPO staff to proceed with amending the Okaloosa-Walton 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan to include (1) Destin Cross-Town Connector in the Cost Feasible Plan, (2) West 98 Collector in the Needs Plan, (3) JW Hollington Connector Road in the Needs Plan, (4) Mack Bayou to Sandestin Lane Connector Road in the Needs Plan, (5) CR 3280 Extension in the Needs Plan, and (6) Freeport Waterfront Improvements in the Needs Plan. Robert Rennie seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

ADD-ON ITEM – CAC Member Request to the TPO to Amend the TPO Bylaws to Disallow Nepotism on the TPO Board Membership

Bill Cox explained the request and there was brief discussion. Mary Beth Washnock noted that there has been no instance of nepotism on the TPO to her knowledge over the past seventeen years that she has worked for the three TPOs in northwest Florida.

Bill Cox moved to request the TPO to amend its Bylaws to disallow nepotism on the TPO Board. Doug Tolbert seconded the motion. Yvonne Earle said since these are elected officials, she did not see the need for this motion. The motion failed.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. ENCLOSURE D - ALL COMMITTEES – Schedule for Development of the Okaloosa-Walton TPO FY 2026-2030 Project Priorities - *Jill Nobles, ECRC Staff*

Jill Nobles presented and stated that the schedule is included in the agenda package. The first workshop is scheduled for March 21, and it will be virtual. Approval of the Project Priorities will be requested in June.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES -TPO ONLY

INFORMATION ITEMS (no presentation necessary):

Mary Beth Washnock reviewed the following items that are included in the agenda:

1. TCC and CAC November 2023 Meeting Minutes
2. O-W TPO November 2023 Actions Report
3. Amendment to the FY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Letter
4. U.S. 98 "Around the Mound" Project Development and Environment (PD&E) Study
5. City of Destin Request for Inclusion of the "Cross-town Connector" Project in the Long-Range Transportation Plan Letter
6. Florida Commerce Signed Letter for OW TPO TIP for FY 2023/2024 – 2027/2028
7. Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Educational Workshop Agenda
8. 2024 OW TPO Meeting Schedule

OTHER BUSINESS:

Yvonne Earle provided information on the contractor responsible for work on Eglin Parkway.

Yvonne Earle also attended an Okaloosa County Community Transportation Safety Team meeting to bring an issue presented to her by a citizen about the intersection of Hospital Drive at Lewis Turner Blvd. at Liza Jackson School. A study is being performing a study to fine-tune its arrival and departure traffic patterns. There was general discussion about the Community Traffic Safety Team as a valuable resource. Vice Chair Jamieson said she is a member of the team but has not been able to attend lately for personal reasons, and recommended Yvonne Earle join the team. Matthew Cox said the CTST used to make annual presentations to the CAC and asked that they consider doing so again.

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Matthew Cox thanked FDOT for replacing the signal poles that have been peeling since the day they were installed.

Doug Tolbert said cameras are being installed in school zones. Offenders will be fined \$100. Matthew Cox asked if sufficient signage will be put up noting the school zones for drivers. Doug Tolbert said this was a point brought up during the discussions about cameras and said there will be. There was general discussion about the issue.

The next O-W TPO meeting will be held on April 18, 2024, at 3:00 p.m. The CAC will meet at 9:30 a.m. and the TCC will meet at 1:30 p.m. All meetings will be held at the Okaloosa Admin Building, 1250 N. Eglin Pkwy., Shalimar, FL 32579.

The meeting was adjourned.