

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

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Scott Bitterman, CHAIR	Okaloosa County
Chris Wallace	City of DeFuniak Springs
Scott Davidson	Hurlburt Field
Kristen Shell	City of Niceville
Anna Hudson	Walton County
Michelle Dogget	Walton County School District

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Latilda Hughes-Neel, VICE CHAIR	City of Freeport
Jayce Vanderford	City of Crestview
Kyle Lusk	City of Crestview
Jeff Cozadd	City of Destin
Chris Frasseti	City of Fort Walton Beach
Tim Gibson	City of Fort Walton Beach
Robert Herbsteith	City of Mary Esther
Johnathan Laird	City of Niceville
Joel Paul	Tri-County Community Council
Beckie Williams	FL Dept. of Children and Families
Van Fuller	Mid-Bay Bridge Authority
Bill Smith	Okaloosa County School District
Abra McGill	Okaloosa County
Tracy Stage	Okaloosa County Airports
Roger C. Rogers	Okaloosa County Airports
Dennis "DJ" Fields	Okaloosa County
Joseph Preston	Walton County
Chance Powell	Walton County
Jim Hicks	Walton County School District

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Bryant Paulk	FDOT
Cory Wilkinson	HDR Engineering

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

Chair Bitterman called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chris Wallace moved to approve the agenda as amended. Kristen Shell seconded, and the motion was unanimously approved.

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no speakers.

FDOT UPDATES:

Bryant Paulk updated the board on three upcoming projects, 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. Bryant Paulk stated that the hybrid meeting will be from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Citizens can attend virtually at www.nwflroads.com/virtualmeetings. Those unable to participate online can attend in person, at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Convention Center, 1250 Miracle Strip Parkway SE. Preregistration is required for virtual attendance and in-person attendance is encouraged.

Bryant Paulk 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.

Bryant Paulk 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.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. **ALL COMMITTEES: Approval of November 2023 Meeting Minutes**

Anna Hudson moved to approve the November 2023 O-W TCC meeting minutes.

Chris Wallace 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.

Chair Bitterman asked where the stops would be within the Okaloosa-Walton area. Gary Kramer stated that there would be one stop, either in Crestview or DeFuniak Springs.

Kristen Shell 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. Michelle Doggett 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.

There was general discussion about the types of projects that are considered for this list.

Chris Wallace 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. Anna Hudson 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 stated that 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.

Chair Bitterman noted that the US98 project is funded through design; right-of-way and construction are unfunded. There was also discussion about the status of the Destin Crosstown Connector phases of development.

Chris Wallace 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. Kristen Shell seconded the motion, and it was unanimously approved.

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

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7. Transportation Alternatives (TA) Set-Aside Educational Workshop Agenda
8. 2024 OW TPO Meeting Schedule

OTHER BUSINESS: 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.