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## 2017 Transportation Task Force Meeting Minutes

August 2, 2017  
9:00am  
Meeting  
Senate Office Building  
404 South Monroe Street, Room 401  
Tallahassee, FL 32301

### **Attendance of Task Force Members:**

Barbara Palmer, Director, Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)  
Valerie Breen, Executive Director, Florida Developmental Disabilities Council  
Mary Smith, Chair, Family Care Council  
Edward Griffin, MV Transportation, Inc. (Alachua County Community Transportation Coordinator) - CTC contact  
Sharon Peeler, JTrans (Jackson County) - CTC contact  
Robert Villar, (Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners) - CTC contact  
Danielle McGill, Self-Advocate appointed by APD  
Ross Silvers, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (Pinellas County) - CTC Contact  
David Darm, Self-Advocate appointed by Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged  
Karen Somerset (on behalf of Steve Holmes), Assistant Executive Director, Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged

### **Task Force Members Not Present:**

Steve Holmes, Executive Director, Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged

### **Opening Comments:**

Chair Palmer thanked everyone for attending the meeting and indicated it will be a learning day. She mentioned the Florida Channel is here and the meeting is being recorded. Chair Palmer stated the CUTR contract may be executed on August 7, 2017. Chair Palmer mentioned there will be quite a few presentations in this meeting and that CUTR will be doing the real research and analysis. Chair Palmer asked Grendy Henry to make the roll call and to discuss the draft minutes from the July 6, 2017 Conference Call.

### **Minutes:**

Draft minutes were reviewed from the July 6<sup>th</sup> conference call. Robert Villar stated that his last name was misspelled twice in the draft minutes on page four. Chair Palmer made a motion to accept the draft minutes as amended. Valerie Breen seconded the motion. None opposed.

**Presentations:**

***Danielle McGill—Self-Advocate Appointed by APD:***

Danielle made a brief introduction as to her history and education. She interned with Senator Rene Garcia during the last Florida legislative session. She wanted to bring awareness to the public about the difficulties with the transportation system for people with developmental disabilities. She discussed the challenges with Senator Garcia and both wanted to implement legislation for essential changes to the transportation system. Some of her negative transit experiences involved providers showing up late, drivers stating she was on the bus but was not (this happened to her three times last week), her being dropped off at wrong locations, and her being left behind by the bus and then her mom had to take time to drive her to her destination. Her transportation solutions include having a uniform payment system, having a system that allows riders to cross county lines, the need for travel training so people can learn about all of the transit options that may be available which can help them navigate the transportation system, creating rider identification cards to include addresses and pictures, having a universal card scanning system across the state, having a safety application to check the status of the bus in real time, and having a button on the bus or code to press if the bus is not on the route expected by the rider. Danielle provided an overview of the Ann Storck Center to include their Mobility Management Facilitation Program for transportation disadvantaged individuals. She wants people to be safe when using the transportation system.

- Chair Palmer asked Danielle to explain how someone could be taken to the wrong place. Danielle said it was mainly due to dispatch or the manifest being wrong.
- Valerie Breen asked Danielle at the end of her presentation to provide written solutions to Chair Palmer. Chair Palmer stated the Task Force members will receive copies of them.
- David Darm asked her about the mobility management program and is this tied to employment for the transportation disadvantaged (TD). Danielle said they are trying to incorporate this into their program.
- Ross Silvers asked about TD trips her agency is providing and do the trips cross county lines. She said they only provide trips within one county.

***Karen Somerset—Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged:***

She discussed the main purpose of the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged, which is ensuring and providing cost effective transportation for the community. Coordination with community transportation coordinators (CTCs) is important and helps reduce transportation costs. Serious issues within the transportation system identified by CTCs include the relationship and communication with support coordinators, high turnover of support coordinators, challenges keeping current contact information for the rider accurate, need for additional training, lack of adequate transportation funding for the individual service plans, and low transportation and reimbursement rates. Karen said that CTCs also stated that APD is not

paying the true cost of transportation and that CTCs want to accept customers from APD but cannot due to low rates.

- Chair Palmer stated she realizes rates need to be addressed by the Task Force and that training is always a good idea.
- Chair Palmer mentioned there are significant challenges the Task Force faces and this is why we are going to have CUTR help us work through some of them.

***Edward Griffin—MV Transportation, Inc.:***

Edward discussed multiple transportation services in several different counties to include Alachua, Hardee, Highlands, Okeechobee, and Desoto counties. He talked about the partnership with community transportation coordinators (CTCs) and the system operating models. It is important to have good relationships with the Local Coordinating Board. Safety is there number one priority. It is vital to maintain relationships with the Florida Department of Transportation, other providers and CTCs. There are issues dealing with funding and the fragmented system with Medicaid HMO provided by contracted providers outside of the CTC system. Solutions include dismantling the Medicaid HMO brokerage model and simplifying the process for the funding of transportation for ADA eligible and TD eligible consumers. He also recommended simplifying APD administrative requirements and briefly touched on their discontinued relationship with APD clientele. The discontinued relationship was based on the funding not always being guaranteed and some funding only covering certain trips.

- David Darm confirmed with Edward that for Alachua and south central counties, Edward's organization is not a Medicaid waiver provider.
- Danielle McGill asked Edward about their process for transfers in his counties. Edward said if you are a resident in their three-county area, his organization does the trips with no transfers.
- Valerie Breen confirmed with Edward that a person can be both ADA eligible and TD eligible.

***Sharon Peeler—Jackson County Community Transportation Coordinator Agency (JTrans):***

JTrans is Jackson County's coordinated transportation provider and is operated as a private nonprofit organization. Sharon gave an overview of their transportation system. Some barriers include breakdowns in communication, less than ideal relationships with support coordinators, limited knowledge of the staffing structure, limited verbal and written or electronic communication with decision makers, and the present brokerage system fragments the lack of communication between the broker and the consumer resulting in a break of service and leading to unmet needs. The broker is at a disadvantage in their transportation system and rate increases are not available. Another issue involves trips by riders without prior authorization and the provider not being paid for the cost of the trip. She mentioned this should be the fiscal responsibility of the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Sharon said the brokerage system is

broken, horrible and has a high turnover rate. JTrans faces lots of challenges and they want to be part of the solution.

- Ross Silvers asked Sharon if they can have one vehicle that has one passenger riding on it that is funded by one source and another passenger in the same vehicle who may be going to the same place that is funded by a different source. Sharon said yes and that they multiload their passengers.
- Ross Silvers asked Sharon if they have an ADA paratransit service in her county. Sharon said they do partner with the city of Marianna to provide a deviated fixed route that runs two days a week for 15-20 riders per day.
- Chair Palmer said it is important to know how APD funds transportation and it is complicated. Waiver Support Coordinators work with families to determine transportation needs. Transportation rates vary in Florida and are based on the county a person lives in. Every county is unique and has different tax systems. Chair Palmer wants the transportation system in Florida simplified to include a rider only having to call one telephone number for any trip they need.

**Ross Silvers—Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA):**

He covered transportation options in Pinellas County. He mentioned PSTA's first direct partnership with ~~Uber~~<sup>Uber</sup>. He talked about the paratransit real time information bus system and some free applications for customer smart phones. Ross spoke of Connector DART (ADA Paratransit) and on demand services for the transportation disadvantaged (TD). ~~DART~~<sup>DART</sup> ~~on Demand~~ Services have a 99% on time performance rate. TD on demand ~~and they offer~~ 25 free rides for late night trips on choice of ~~Pinellas County offers additional services to TD eligible customers such as~~ Care Rider, Taxi company, ~~and~~ Uber. These TD customers programs register with PSTA with the program and there are \$20 caps on taxi rides and the passenger pays any additional amounts. He mentioned Direct Connect, which has a PSTA trip option on Uber and it took riders to a predesignated PSTA bus stop. ~~There is a PSTA code for direct connect with Uber and it took riders to a predesignated PSTA area.~~ There will be a new program for ADA on demand paratransit trips funded by ~~FTA~~<sup>PSTA</sup> ~~with~~ and Lyft beginning in January 2018. He suggested using natural supports for paratransit in the rural areas as a volunteer base transportation. He stated that transportation barriers of people with developmental disabilities using Uber or Lyft is the curb to curb service. Door to door service is what is necessary for ADA. Ross mentioned that PSTA is expanding travel training and they have ideas on how to educate the public to the different transportation related services by putting out news, flyers, and using twitter.

- Sharon Peeler asked Ross if his contracted Uber and Lyft drivers are trained like his other drivers are to include background screenings and drug and alcohol testing. Ross said no. He did say these companies have their own tests.
- Chair Palmer asked Ross if there are any plans to require Uber and Lyft drivers to do background screenings. Ross said they currently do not have plans to do this.

- Danielle McGill asked Ross how he informs customers about all the PTSA programs. Ross said it is not important a rider understand every possible option in the community. The most important thing is for them to learn about the options that gets them to where they want to go. Ross said to use media and talk with support coordinators to get the word out.
- Chair Palmer asked if there is an age requirement to use Uber. Ross said he has not heard of one to his knowledge. Ross did say Uber and Lyft do have vehicle age criteria.
- Chair Palmer asked Ross if he has concerns with APD waiver support coordinators. Ross said they rarely interact with APD waiver support coordinators. They are not an APD provider.

**Lunch 11:45 A.M.- 1:00 P.M**

***Kent Carroll—APD Transportation Coordinator:***

Kent provided an overview of the transportation services provided to APD clients on the waiver. APD works in partnership with families and services and serves over 50,000 people with developmental disabilities. APD purchases customer sponsored trips within and outside of the coordinated transportation system and most of the transportation APD purchases for its customers is through alternative transportation providers. The consumers choose transportation and other service providers based on their health and safety needs~~all their provider support, health and transportation~~. All transportation rates are negotiated usually with the provider. There is no rate structure for transportation. Some transportation challenges include dealing with multiple funding sources, the system is complicated, there are limited mobility options and limited providers especially in rural areas, and there are limited inter-county and inter-city options. Solutions include mainstreaming the process to make it easier for the consumer, mobility management, having a single point of contact for customers, educating customers, creating regional voucher systems, increasing mobility options and scheduling flexibility, developing more providers, incentivizing providers, innovative funding, and partnering with the business community.

- Ross Silvers asked Kent a question relating to the Home and Community-Based Services waiver. He gave this example: If a local Arc operates both a residential program and day program and an individual is participating in both, is that local Arc required by APD rules to provide transportation between these two services. Kent said they can provide transportation between those two services if the transportation service is not an integral part of that service. For instance, if the residential program is located on one side of town and the day program is on another side, then that provider can bill for the transportation.

- David Darm asked a follow up question regarding transportation rates. Kent said all alternative transportation rates are negotiated.
- Chair Palmer stated when APD was looking at ways to remove a large APD deficit several years ago, transportation was removed as a legitimate service for a person's cost plan. That is probably when things got confusing and that was not the right decision. It was quickly determined that everyone needs transportation and transportation funding was put back into the waiver.
- Valerie Breen wanted to confirm whether mostly urban areas were not providing [transportation trips](#) for APD's waiver clients. Kent's response was that community transportation coordinators ([CTCs](#)) are not providing waiver transportation for APD's clients. Chair Palmer then said [to Valerie that](#) it is probably mostly [CTCs in](#) urban areas not providing [trips for APD's waiver clients. the services and](#) However, Chair Palmer [said](#) that the biggest transportation challenge [for APD's waiver clients](#) is in rural areas.

**Robert Villar—Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners:**

Robert covered the transportation systems in the metropolitan Miami-Dade area. The Metrorail system covers 25 miles and has 23 accessible stations. There are over 96 Metrobus routes. There is a complementary paratransit service and a Special Transportation Service (STS). He mentioned transportation disadvantaged (TD) card based programs, monthly passes auto loaded up to one year, completion of applications, income and residency requirements, and unlimited use of fixed routes for customers. There are about 3.1 million riders on the fixed route system. A not-for-profit program also provides Easy Ticket that covers an array of customers including people with developmental disabilities. He discussed the sponsored resources Golden Passport, which involves a half cent tax to pay for seniors over 65 years of age to ride for free. Some challenges include unmet needs continuing to grow for the transportation disadvantaged, there is no credit for locally sponsored transportations programs that serve the TD community, there is no additional funding to assist the unmet needs of the TD population in Miami-Dade County, and technology is still a little behind. Some initiatives include developing applications for Easy-pay and Trip Planner applications. They will also integrate Uber and Lyft into their transportation systems, add GPS on paratransit vehicles resulting in the ability to track people while they are driving, and the GPS will provide a trip memory for the rider to specific routes to personalize the trip for the rider.

- Ross Silvers asked Robert if their TD monthly customers can get free rides on the Tri-Rail system for intercounty connections. Robert said no but they could add this service on to their cards.
- Danielle McGill suggested [adopting the high technology card system Robert discussed along with other transportation processes that work well from every county as resources to develop a newer way of doing things. the Task Force using technology Robert discussed in his presentation.](#) Chair Palmer said that's exactly what CUTR will be doing. CUTR will be looking at best practices in the State of Florida and in the United States.

***Sheila Gritz-Swift—Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC)***

Sheila discussed FDDC and the Florida Department of Transportation working together on implementing transportation pilot voucher projects. Vouchers would focus on unmet needs. She also talked about FDDC investing in a research project looking at transportation options. FDDC’s major research goals will focus on mobility management, travel training, and addressing data collection of unmet needs. There are five critical need categories: (1) reliable and adequate funding, (2) access and expansion of transportation services, (3) transportation cost, quality and collaboration, (4) rider awareness and understanding, and (5) other accessibility issues. There is a need to invest in paratransit vehicles and maintenance, improve the uniformity in match/faster reimbursement, and invest in hiring and retaining qualified drivers. Some transportation issues include availability in rural areas, limited hours/schedules, availability of specialized vehicles, on-time transportation, travel times too long, and poorly trained employees. Sheila hopes that FDDC’s research will be used to educate key stakeholders in Florida who can make changes to improve transportation services in Florida.

- Chair Palmer stated that CUTR may find the same things in their research that FDDC did, which will underscore the need for some very specific things.

***Rob Gregg & Jay Goodwill—Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR)***

Rob and Jay discussed looking for solutions in two categories: (1) coordination and (2) customer service. There needs to be a coordinated transportation system and customer provided service in Florida. The state has various types of customers and only a portion can be universally serviced. CUTR will use its resources to complete the transportation study. Samples of best practices include the use of taxis, travel training, operator training, technology, fare incentive programs, regional call centers, mobility management and education (for operators, users and the public). There is a limit to transportation disadvantaged funds. The urban areas have more local funds and technology available than rural areas do in Florida. CUTR will start to layout the various transportation networks in Florida and will analyze all of the issues that came up from the other presentations today. CUTR is extremely honored to be a part of this initiative.

- Chair Palmer said the Task Force is looking forward to working with CUTR on this study.

**Public Comments:**

Barbara Palmer opened the discussion for public comment. Lisa Bacot, the Executive Director for the Florida Public Transportation Association, wanted to speak. She talked about the struggles for the transportation disadvantaged (TD) and stated the money from the federal

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level is just not right. Florida is doing a bad job pulling federal money to the Florida Transportation System. Right now, Florida is only getting 18.4 cents from a gas tax. It has been 18.4 cents for 10 years. For over 20 years our systems have not been getting the level of funds from the federal government. For every \$1.00 that is spent in transportation we only get 61% for transportation. ADA is not funded. Our citizens are paying and getting nothing back. Our state is highly underfunded by the federal government and the State of Florida. TD office just had a reallocation of funding and limited the dollars used in different counties. When TD was first created, it was county by county. Maybe it needs to go regional instead of county by county. Medicaid and APD dollars were pulled. Maybe we can do a pilot program for the funding to come back to see if that could be a possible solution.

### **Next Steps:**

1. Signing the CUTR contract.
2. Providing Task Force members copies of Danielle McGill's written solutions.
3. Next Task Force meeting will be on September 20, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. This meeting will involve CUTR's progress report to the Task Force and will provide analysis of the information and include an easy to read executive summary. Task Force member Robert Villar is going to participate in this meeting by phone.
4. Barbara Crosier will tentatively reserve conference room 401 in the Senate Office Building for the September 20, 2017 meeting.

**Adjournment time:** 3:30 p.m.