

**TRANSIT COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 21, 2017– 9:00 A.M.
COMMISSION CHAMBERS
JAMES S. PAGE GOVERNMENTAL COMPLEX, YULEE, FLORIDA**

A meeting of the Transit Committee was held this 21st day of March 2017 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commission Chambers, James S. Page Governmental Complex, Yulee, Florida. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and consider the subcommittee's report and recommendations regarding NassauTRANSIT.

Transit Committee members present were:

- Janice Ancrum, Council on Aging and NassauTRANSIT;
- Liz Peak, Regional Transportation Commission;
- Regina Duncan, Amelia Island/Fernandina Beach/Yulee Chambers of Commerce;
- Scott Herring, Nassau County Public Works Director;
- Taco Pope, Interim Director of Planning and Economic Opportunity;
- Kelly Gibson, Planner, City of Fernandina Beach;
- Joe Stephenson, Regional Transportation Commission;
- Mike Hays, COA NassauTRANSIT;
- Brad Thoburn, Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) arriving 9:16 a.m.; and
- Janell Damato, Florida Department of Transportation.

Also present was Peggy Snyder, recording secretary. Absent were committee members Daniel Leeper, Chair, Board of County Commissioners; and Len Kreger, Commissioner, City of Fernandina Beach.

In the absence of Chair Leeper, Vice Chair Ancrum assumed the duties of Chair and called the meeting to order at 9:12 a.m.

It was moved by Mr. Herring, seconded by Mr. Stephenson and unanimously carried to approve the minutes from the November 15, 2016 meeting as presented.

Following introductions, Vice Chair Ancrum explained that this is the final meeting of the Transit Committee Working Group before recommendations are presented to the Board of County Commissioners. The discussion item on the agenda is the subcommittee's report. She pointed out that the Transit subcommittee was tasked to craft a transit report to present to the Board of County Commissioners. She stressed the importance of the group asking their questions now while Mr. Hays provides the presentation prior to the report being approved and presented to the Board of County Commissioners.

Mr. Hays came forward to provide a PowerPoint presentation of the subcommittee's report and their recommendations. He thanked and recognized Mr. Stephenson for his contributions in developing the report particularly in the area of regional transit and wished him all the best in his retirement.

Mr. Hays explained that the subcommittee had been tasked with four priorities at the August 16, 2016 Transit Committee Working Group meeting as follows: 1) Establish priorities, projects and estimated costs for improving public transit in Nassau County; 2) Bring vision and goals from the 2015 Transit Study conducted by England-Thims and Miller to a local level; 3) Incorporate the aspects of regional transit; and 4) Recommend action steps that will make the priorities happen.

Mr. Hays recalled that at the first meeting of the subcommittee held on August 25, 2016, the following statement was on the white board in the room: *"Think big and for the long term. You must be careful not to limit what can be accomplished later on."* This statement had an impact on the subcommittee and was used throughout the meetings as a guide to provide context for their work. Mr. Hays explained that the subcommittee met four times as a committee as well as four public meetings attended by members of organizations, agencies, and different constituencies across the county representing the areas of employment, economic development, healthcare and wellness, human services, education, government services, worship, recreation, shopping and entertainment. In his opinion, the subcommittee received a wide variety of input from throughout the county in terms of public transportation wants and needs. This will develop a public transportation system for Nassau County by Nassau County. In addition to public input, Mr. Hays praised the countless hours the team and the Regional Transportation Commission devoted to summarizing the results in the report and the presentation. There were 23 contributors from the general public throughout the four community meetings.

Mr. Hays pointed out that the recommendations of the subcommittee are located on page five of the report; however, these recommendations are not meant to be all encompassing. The recommendations cover the following areas: service types, transfer hubs, transit stops, planning funding, marketing, travel training, and next steps. As Nassau County is officially designated a rural county with funding limitations and operating constraints, the subcommittee decided that this rules out a traditional fixed route service and concentrate of the flex route and commuter express services. The flex route service would have prescribed routes, multiple schedules, and multiple stops with short deviations upon request. The other recommended service would be commuter express which would have prescribed routes, limited schedules and limited stops. The flex service would enhance frequency and bus stop locations in Fernandina Beach and along A1A/SR200 in Yulee. The commuter express priorities could implement as soon as feasible a bi-directional express route between Amelia Island, Fernandina Beach, Yulee, and Jacksonville. There could be plans for a future express route servicing Hilliard, Callahan, and the Crawford Diamond Industrial Park.

Mr. Hays mentioned the recommended transfer hubs at SR200/A1A and Amelia Concourse, East Nassau Community Planning Area (ENCPA) near I-95 and downtown Jacksonville between NassauTRANSIT and JTA. Another priority is to plan for future express routes serving the west side of Nassau County. Transit stops are recommended by the subcommittee for the Full Service School in Yulee, FSCJ Nassau Center, shopping centers along SR200/A1A, Peck Center in Fernandina Beach and Lime and 14th Streets; Omni Amelia Island Plantation and Ritz Carlton Hotel, Fernandina Beach Historic District, and Sadler Road/Walmart area.

Regarding planning, the subcommittee recommends that the county revise their mobility plan and mobility fees by taking the same approach as Fernandina Beach has by applying funding for transit capital needs. In addition, the subcommittee recommends that the county coordinate planning activities with the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) where transportation has been identified as a major issue on the west side.

Mr. Hays continued to explain that the subcommittee recommended that the county encourage advertising support from the business community for funding. In addition, the county could apply for non-traditional grant opportunities through partnerships; dedicate portions of Fuel Tax funding for transit operations; and negotiate cost sharing opportunities for regional transit services. Regarding marketing, the subcommittee recommended implementing marketing strategies as the funding becomes available. In addition, they could partner with existing agencies and also create a PowerPoint slide show and television announcement that could be displayed on the monitors at the Tax Collector's office and other locations. Mr. Hays also explained that the subcommittee recommends taking advantage of the free Travel Training

program funded by JTA and FDOT to educate potential riders how to use transit. These services could be advertised on the NassauTRANSIT website or other governmental websites or channels.

Mr. Hays highlighted that the next steps will be to collect feedback for amenities for bus stop locations. A bus stop without a bus bench is a sidewalk; therefore, amenity needs should be explored. In addition, it was suggested to approve and conduct a community-wide commuter and park-and-ride survey. He explained that the presentation also includes information regarding regional travel and trends as well as maps which indicate current transit routes, population and employment density as well as various future transit route options.

Mr. Herring requested clarification of who will be handling the transit implementation once the report is presented to the Board of County Commissioners. He pointed out that the report was excellent; however, there must be someone external to champion the implementation. Vice Chair Ancrum suggested recommending that someone from the county and NassauTRANSIT partner take the lead on the implementation since the next steps indicate a survey of bus stops and a park and ride. She felt that a representative from the county and NassauTRANSIT could represent the committee and provide regular progress reports to the Board of County Commissioners. In reference to a representative from the county, Mr. Herring questioned whether Vice Chair Ancrum was considering a county commissioner or a staff member. Vice Chair Ancrum responded that she would recommend Mr. Herring. Mr. Herring suggested consideration of Mr. Pope in addition to him as they work closely together on such issues. His recommendation was a group of three including representatives from the Planning and Economic Opportunity Department, NassauTRANSIT and the Public Works Department. Mr. Pope agreed that the implementation of transit would fit into the day to day planning such as the ENCPA and other developments proposed along SR200 as well the expansion of northwest Jacksonville once the Crawford Diamond is implemented.

It was moved by Vice Chair Ancrum that Scott Herring, Taco Pope and Mike Hays serve as representatives for the Transit Committee's implementation plan. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stephenson with an amendment to include a representative from the Chamber of Commerce such as Regina Duncan. He felt that the Chamber of Commerce and businesses will be vital in obtaining transit related funding from the Board of County Commissioners. Vice Chair Ancrum amended her motion to include Regina Duncan from the Chamber of Commerce in this group. The vote was all in favor to have Mr. Herring, Mr. Pope, Mr. Hays and Ms. Duncan as champions for the transit plan implementation.

Ms. Duncan expressed her desire to see this document more turnkey than it currently is. Mr. Thoburn explained that the regional express services did not need to be included in the implementation; however, JTA would be available as a resource. Ms. Duncan felt that before the report is presented to the Board, the surveys should be completed and the funding element further identified. Vice Chair Ancrum felt it would be best to have the County Commissioners approve the report prior to moving forward with surveys and funding options. She pointed out that Chair Leeper was aware of the funding requests for transit. She felt that four representatives could meet together and make presentation to the Board of County Commissioners of what is required going forward. Regarding the report, she felt that the Board needs to see something before it loses its steam; it has been almost a year since this process began. Mr. Stephenson mentioned that Nassau County is currently working on their 2018 Fiscal Year budget and will consider what incomes will be available. Mr. Herring understood that there would be two bonds expiring. Mr. Stephenson pointed out that if one of those bonds expires and retires in the spring of 2019, this would place this funding in the middle of the fiscal year 2019 budget. Mr. Stephenson mentioned that the committee has two clear items they wish to accomplish: flex and commuter express route services. The Board of County Commissioners must be focused on what they can do and ensure that amount is placed in the 2018 budget. He explained that conducting another survey to determine riders is important in allocating those resources; but identifying those resources in order to use them effectively for those two

major objectives is where the champions need to be focused going forward. He explained that the Regional Transportation Commission and JTA will offer their support for this group with transit operations. Vice Chair Ancrum suggested that Mr. Herring, Mr. Pope, Mr. Hays and Ms. Duncan meet with Justin Stankiewicz of the Office of Management and Budget to determine what funding will be available.

The group discussed the time frame to present this report to the Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Herring explained that the next Board of County Commission meeting is April 10, 2017; however, he would be out of town. He suggested the meetings on April 19 or April 24, 2017 for this presentation. Vice Chair Ancrum suggested placing this item on the Board's April 24, 2017 agenda. Mr. Herring explained that the Board will require a copy of the presentation to accompany the agenda request and requested that Mr. Hays provide a copy to him by April 17, 2017.

Ms. Duncan inquired as to what the cost would be for implementation. Vice Chair Ancrum hoped that by the Board of County Commissioners meeting, the group will have met and arrived at an approximate cost for transit.

Mr. Herring pointed out a different route for Lem Turner as opposed to New Kings Road and a tie-in for the express route. Mr. Thoburn explained that there should be some connection there. He will have JTA modify the maps. Mr. Pope requested the GIS data once the maps are updated.

Vice Chair Ancrum thanked Ms. Peak for her leadership and support with the subcommittee and everyone who contributed.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.