SunTran
Ocala/Marion County Florida
Transit Development Plan

SunTran
Transit Development Plan

Final Report

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Section 1: Introduction

Since 1998, Marion County has contracted with McDonald Transit to perform the day-to-day operations and management for the SunTran system that is governed by the Ocala/Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). Today, SunTran operates a scheduled fixed-route system consisting of six routes that run six days per week. The fixed-schedule service is mostly centered in Ocala, with one route operating from Ocala to the Silver Springs Shores area southeast of Ocala. The Marion County TPO has separately appointed Marion County Senior Services (dba Marion Transit Services) as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for individuals who are transportation disadvantaged. A major update to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) for the CTC is being developed concurrently with this effort.

This major Transit Development Plan (TDP) update, referred to hereinafter as the *SunTran TDP*, was initiated by the Marion County TPO on behalf of SunTran to complete the major update of Ocala/Marion County's 10-year TDP. The Ocala/Marion County TDP represents the community's vision for public transportation in its service area. A major TDP update also allows transit agencies to outline actions to be taken in the following year and set goals for subsequent years. The most recent major 10-year TDP for Marion County was adopted in September 2012 for Fiscal Years (FY) 2013–2022. The next major update of Marion County's TDP is due by September 1, 2017, and will extend the 10-year planning horizon to include FYs 2018–2027.

Objectives of the Plan

The main purpose of this study is to update the TDP for SunTran services in Marion County, as currently required by State law. Upon completion, the SunTran TDP will provide a 10-year plan for transit and mobility needs, cost and revenue projections, and community transit goals, objectives, and policies.

State Requirements

As a recipient of State Public Transit Block funds, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) requires a major update of the SunTran TDP every five years to ensure that the provision of public transportation is consistent with the mobility needs of the local communities. According to Rule 14-73.001-Public Transportation of the Florida Administrative Code, "The TDP shall be the applicant's planning, development and operational guidance document to be used in developing the Transportation Improvement Program and the Department's Five Year Work Program."
The current TDP requirements were adopted by FDOT on February 20, 2007, and include the following:

- Major updates must be completed at least once every 5 years, covering a 10-year planning horizon.
- A public involvement plan must be developed and approved by FDOT or be consistent with the approved metropolitan/transportation planning organization's (MPO/TPO) public involvement plan. Marion County is within the metropolitan planning area boundaries of the

Ocala/Marion TPO, which includes Marion County and the municipalities of Ocala, Belleview, Reddick, McIntosh, and Dunnellon.

- FDOT, the Regional Workforce Development Board, and the TPO must be advised of all public meetings at which the TDP is presented and discussed, and these entities must be given the opportunity to review and comment on the TDP during the development of the mission, goals, objectives, alternatives, and 10-year implementation program.
- Estimation of the community's demand for transit service (10-year annual projections) must use the planning tools provided by FDOT or a demand estimation technique approved by FDOT.

An additional requirement for the TDP was added by the Florida Legislature in 2007 when it adopted House Bill 985. This legislation amended s. 341.071, Florida Statutes (F.S.), requiring transit agencies to "… specifically address potential enhancements to productivity and performance which would have the effect of increasing farebox recovery ratio." FDOT subsequently issued guidance requiring the TDP and each annual update to include a 1–2-page summary report on the farebox recovery ratio and strategies implemented and planned to improve it as an appendix item. The farebox recovery ratio report is located in Appendix A.

TDP Checklist

This 10-year plan meets the requirements for a TDP Major Update in accordance with Rule Chapter 14-73, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Table 1-1 is a list of TDP requirements from Rule 14-73.001 and indicates whether or not the item was accomplished in this 10-year plan.

Table 1-1: TDP Checklist

Public Involvement Process		TDP Section
√	Public Involvement Plan (PIP) drafted	Section 4, Appendix C
√	PIP approved by FDOT	
√	TDP includes description of Public Involvement Process	
√	Provide notification to FDOT	
√	Provide notification to Regional Workforce Board	
Situation Appraisal		
√	Land use	Section 5, Appendix D
√	State and local transportation plans	Section 5, Appendix D
√	Other governmental actions and policies	Section 5, Appendix D
√	Socioeconomic trends	Section 5
√	Organizational issues	Section 5
√	Technology	Section 5
√	10-year annual projections of transit ridership using approved model	Section 7
√	Assessment of whether land uses and urban design patterns support/hinder transit service provision	Section 5, Appendix D
√	Calculate farebox recovery	Section 3, Appendix A
Mission and Goals		
√	Provider's vision	Section 6
√	Provider's mission	Section 6
√	Provider's goals	Section 6
√	Provider's objectives	Section 6
Alternative Courses of Action		
√	Develop and evaluate alternative strategies and actions	Section 8
√	Benefits and costs of each alternative	Section 8
√	Financial alternatives examined	Section 8, Section 9
Implementation Program		
√	Ten-year implementation program	Section 9
√	Maps indicating areas to be served	Section 8
√	Maps indicating types and levels of service	Section 8
√	Monitoring program to track performance measures	Section 9, Appendix E
√	Ten-year financial plan listing operating and capital expenses	Section 9
√	Capital acquisition or construction schedule	Section 9
√	Anticipated revenues by source	Section 9
Relationship to Other Plans		
√	Consistent with Florida Transportation Plan	Section 5, Appendix D
√	Consistent with local government comprehensive plan	Section 5, Appendix D
√	Consistent with Ocala/Marion TPO long-range transportation plan	Section 5, Appendix D
√	Consistent with regional transportation goals and objectives	Section 5, Appendix D
Submission		
	Adopted by Marion County Board of County Commissioners	N/A
	Submitted to FDOT	N/A

Organization of the Report

Section 2 summarizes the **Baseline Conditions** for Marion County that were completed under Task 2. This includes a review of the existing conditions, including a physical description of the study area and socioeconomic and journey-to-work characteristics. Land use trends, major transit trip generators and attractors, economic factors, major employers, tourism, and existing roadway conditions are also explored.

Section 3 summarizes **Existing Service Review** within the county and the region and reviews the **Trend and Peer Review Analysis** that were completed under Task 4. This section begins with an overview of current and planned public transportation services and facilities provided by SunTran and Marion County Senior Services, including a review of headways, hours of operation, fare structure, ridership trends, planned transit services, a review of the transportation disadvantaged services, and a vehicle inventory. Next the section summarizes the **Trend and Peer Review Analysis** using the most recent National Transit Database (NTD) data. Finally, this section includes a definition of the metrics as well as the peer specification process, followed by a brief summary table of metrics.

Section 4 summarizes the **Public Involvement** activities completed under Task 3. The results of these outreach activities are reviewed in full and leveraged in subsequent efforts in the SunTran TDP that identify, evaluate, and prioritize the public transportation needs for Marion County.

Section 5 includes a **Review of Local Plans and Documents** and presents the **Situation Appraisal**. Selected local plans from the last five years were examined for relevance to current operating conditions. Pertinent regional and State plans were also considered in this process. The assessment of these plans will help to identify and assess applicable federal and State policies as well as local community goals and objectives relating to transit and mobility. The **Situation Appraisal** reviews the current overall planning and policy environment within the county to better understand transit needs. This effort examines the strengths and weaknesses of the system as well as any existing threats to the provision of service in the county and key opportunities for addressing those threats and/or enhancing the transit-friendliness of the operating environment. Included in this section are reviews of existing socioeconomic trends, travel behavior, land use, public involvement, peer review/trend analysis, technology, and funding.

Section 6 sets forth **Goals and Objectives** to serve as a policy guide for implementation of the SunTran TDP. A review and update to the existing service, policy, and financial goals and objectives for the public transit services was completed to match the goals of the local community with respect to transportation and land use.

Section 7 presents the results of a **Transit Demand Analysis**. This section summarizes the various demand and mobility needs assessments conducted as part of the SunTran TDP. The assessment techniques for forecasting ridership using TBEST are summarized, followed by the results of each analysis. Also included is a market assessment that includes an examination of potential service gaps and latent demand using the Transit Orientation Index (TOI) and the Density Threshold Assessment

(DTA) GIS-based analyses. These assessment techniques are summarized, followed by the results of each analysis used to assess demand for transit services in Marion County.

Section 8 discusses the **Alternatives Evaluation** used to development and assess the transit alternatives, or proposed improvements, identified for the SunTran TDP. These proposed alternatives for fixed-route service represent the transit needs for the next 10 years developed without consideration of funding constraints. The identified service improvements are prioritized using the evaluation process developed to evaluation and prioritize the transit service alternatives. The resulting ranking of alternatives is used to develop the 10-year implementation plan presented in Section 9.

Section 9 summarizes the **10-Year Cost Feasible Plan** developed for SunTran's fixed-route bus transit service. The Cost Feasible Plan identifies the funded service and capital improvements as well as the unfunded needs and includes a discussion of the revenue assumptions and capital and operating costs used.

Section 2: Baseline Conditions

This section reviews the baseline conditions of the study area and provides context for the SunTran TDP through the following components:

- Physical description of service area
- Demographic characteristics and trends
- Housing density
- Current and future land use and densities
- Economic conditions including:
- Major activity centers and trip generators
- Employment characteristics and related densities
- Tourist and visitor levels
- Travel behavior and commuting trends
- Roadway and traffic conditions

Discussion of the above are supported by maps and graphics throughout this section. Primary data sources include the US Census Bureau's Decennial Census & American Community Survey (ACS) and the University of Florida's Bureau of Economics and Business Research (BEBR).

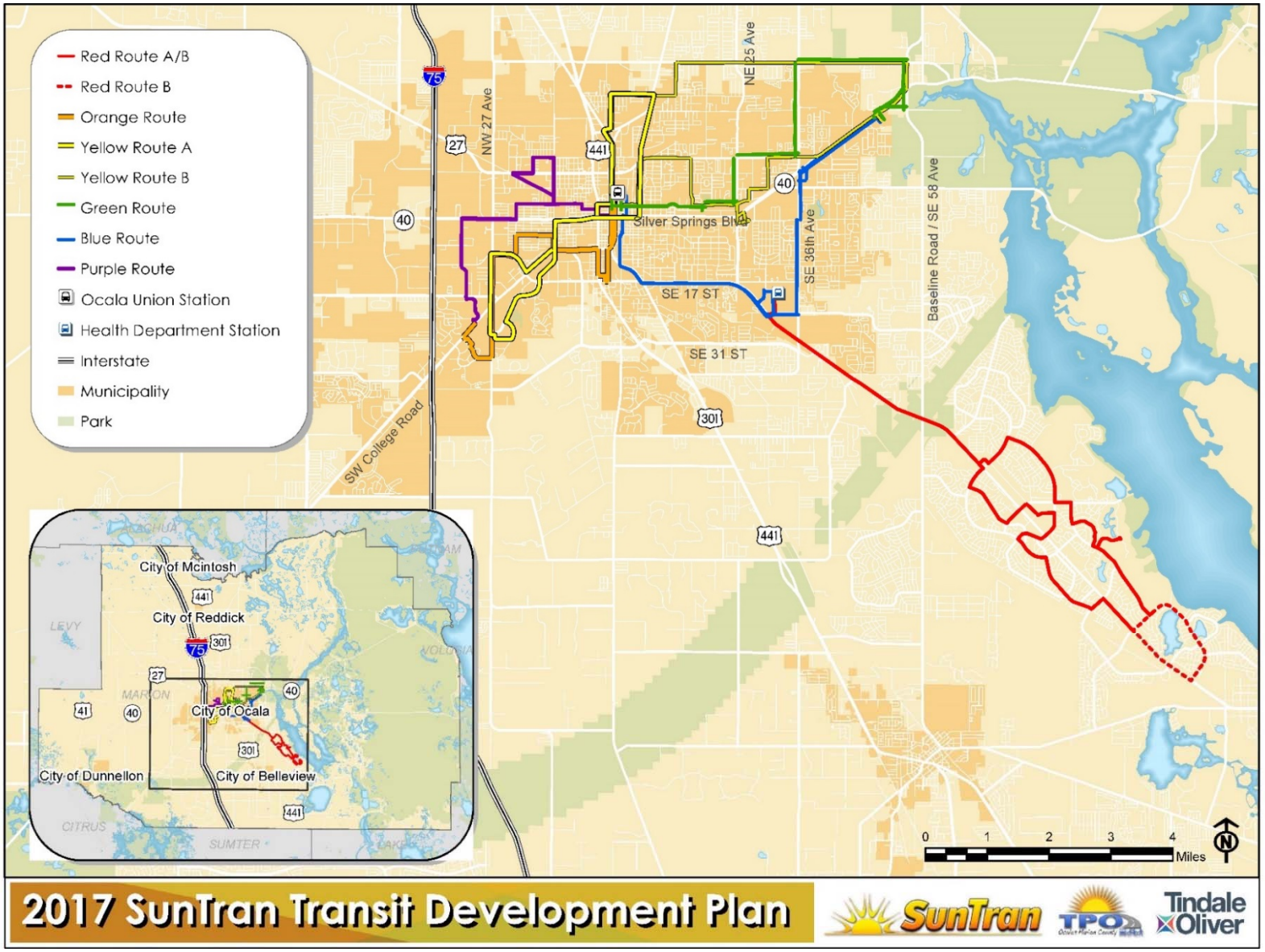
Physical Description of Service Area

Marion County is located in north central Florida and borders seven other counties. The northern border is shared with Alachua and Putnam counties, with Volusia and Lake counties to the east, Sumter and Citrus counties to the south, and Levy County to the west. According to the 2010 Census, the county includes a total area of 1,663 square miles, with 1,585 square miles of land and 78 square miles of water. The population of Marion County is concentrated in the County seat of Ocala, located in the geographic center of the county. The Ocala Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) is entirely contained within Marion County. Two other incorporated cities, Belleview and Dunnellon, are located in south-central and southwestern Marion County, respectively; however, each is much smaller than Ocala by population and by area.

A large retirement community, The Villages, is a Census-designated place partially located in the growing section of south-central Marion County and extends into two adjacent counties on Marion's southern border. This community has experienced one of the highest urban area growth rates nationally in recent years. A sizeable bedroom community, Silver Springs Shores, is located in southeast Marion County and is also a Census-designated place. Sections of these two Census-designated places are in both the Belleview and Ocala Census county divisions. The remainder of the county includes the towns of McIntosh, and Reddick in the northern part of Marion County as well as about a dozen unincorporated communities located in various parts of the county; these unincorporated communities are located predominantly in peripheral Ocala areas along major highways and roads. The eastern side of the county is dominated by the Ocala National Forest.

I-75 runs north and south across central Marion County, with interchanges at major roads including CR 484 (exit 341); SR 200 (exit 350); SR 40, the major east-west road through the center of the county (exit 352); US 27 (exit 354); SR 326 (exit 358); and CR 318 (exit 368). In addition to I- 75, major north-south routes include US 301, US 441, and US 41.

Map 2-1: Study Area



Demographic Characteristics and Trends

Population Profile

Population information from the Census and the American Community Survey (ACS) was used to develop a population profile for the study area. Marion is the 17th most populous county in Florida, with 1.7 percent of Florida's population. As shown in Table 2-1, data show that the population of Marion County increased drastically by 30.1 percent from 2000 to 2015, from 258,916 to 336,811.

Table 2-1: Marion County Population Characteristics, 2000–2014

Characteristic	2000	2010	2015	% Change
Persons	258,916	331,298	336,811	30.1%
Households	106,755	137,726	137,726	29.0%
Number of workers	104,422	137,320	137,320	31.5%
Land area (sq mi)	1,578.86	1,584.55	1,584.55*	0.4%
Water area (sq mi)	84.15	78.06	78.1*	-7.2%
Average household size	2.36	2.35	2.5	3.8%
Workers per household	0.978	1.03	1.0	3.3%
Persons per square mile of land area	163.99	206.26	211.3	28.8%
Workers per square mile of land area	66.14	86.66	84.7	28.0%

* 2010 Census data used, not available for 2015.
Sources: 2000 Census, 2010 Census, 2011–2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Medium population projections prepared by the Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) estimate that the population of Marion County will grow to 401,100 people by 2025, an increase of 17.6 percent, and to 474,400 by 2040, an increase of 39.0 percent compared to 2015.

Table 2-2: Marion County Population Projections

Census	BEBR Projections					
2010	2015*	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040
331,303	336,811	372,300	401,100	427,100	451,100	474,400

*2011–2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates
Sources: 2010 Census, 2011-2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2016 BEBR population projections

A review of population trends for the seven divisions, three municipalities, two towns, and three Census-designated places in Marion County also was conducted. Table 2-3 provides population trends for all subareas and for Marion County for 2000, 2010 and 2015. The vast majority (81.5 %) of the population resides in the unincorporated areas of the county. Ocala has the largest number of residents, with 57,209 in 2015, followed by Belleview with 4,612.

In terms of population growth, The Villages, Belleview and Fellowship were among the fastest growing areas (693.0%, 59.7% and 45.5%, respectively) during the 2000–2015 period. In recent years, Reddick-McIntosh experienced a negative growth of -3.0 percent from 2010 to 2015. Marion County as a whole grew 28.0 percent from 2000–2010 and had slowed growth of 1.7 percent from 2010–2015.

Table 2-3: Marion County Population Trends for Cities and Census-Designated Places

Geographic Area	2000 Population	2010 Population	2015* Population	% Change 2000 –2010	% Change 2010-2015
Marion County	258,916	331,303	336,811	28.0%	30.1%
Belleview Division	68,107	107,445	108,771	57.8%	59.7%
The Villages CDP	8,333	40,341	66,083	384.1%	693.0%
Dunnellon Division	10,484	12,354	12,612	17.8%	20.3%
East Marion Division	18,638	19,413	18,977	4.2%	1.8%
Fellowship Division	18,362	25,232	26,723	37.4%	45.5%
Fort McCoy-Anthony Division	16,465	19,230	19,048	16.8%	15.7%
Ocala Division	114,238	134,984	138,520	18.2%	21.3%
Ocala city	45,943	56,315	57,209	22.6%	24.5%
Silver Springs Shores CDP	6,690	6,873	7,809	2.7%	16.7%
Reddick-McIntosh Division	12,532	12,645	12,160	0.9%	-3.0%

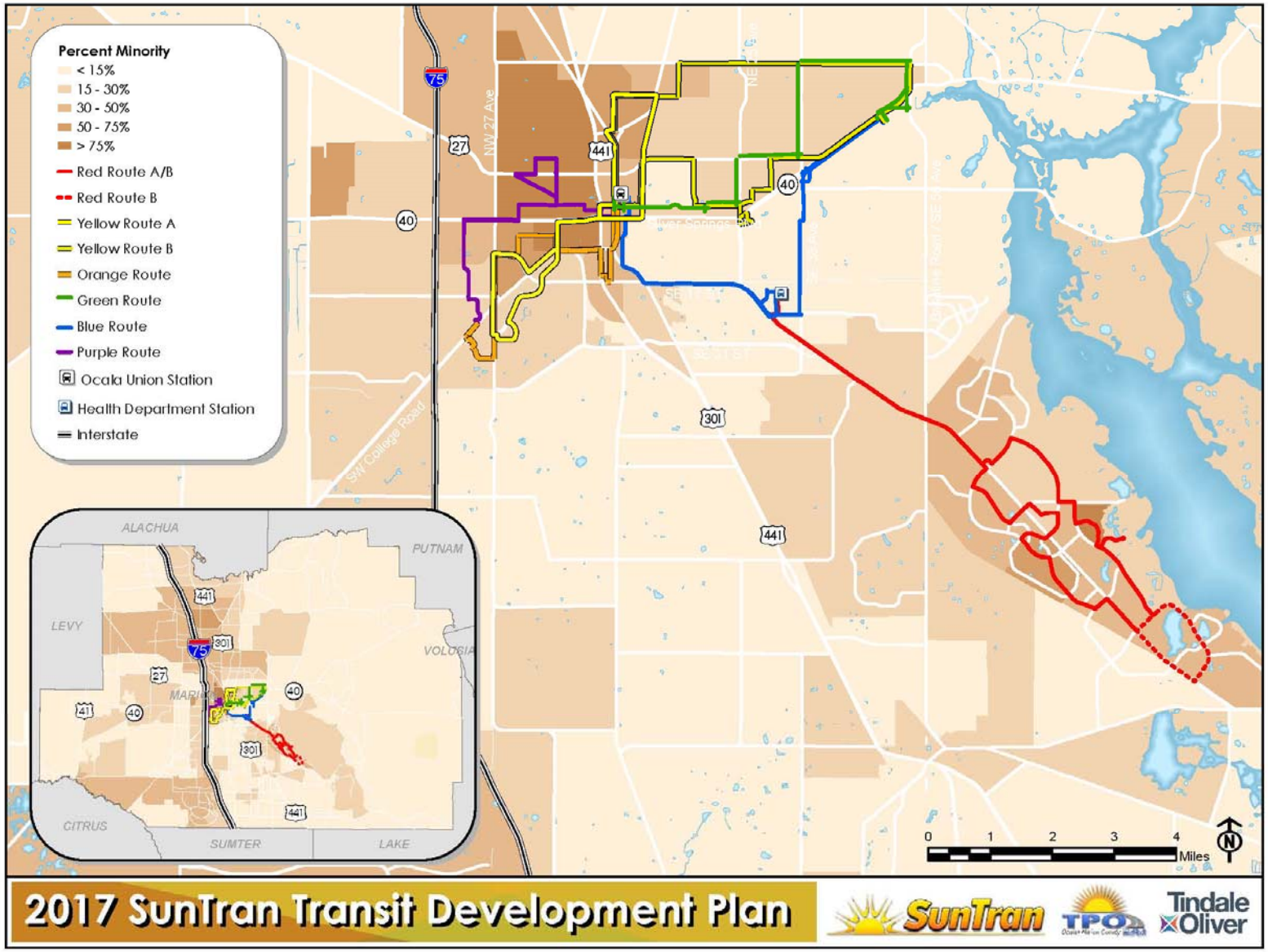
*2011–2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates
Sources: 2000 and 2010 Census

Table 2-4 lists some demographical characteristics of Marion County for 2000, 2010, and 2015. Gender distribution was virtually unchanged during this period. Although Marion County has a relatively small proportion of the population that is considered minority, over time the county has slowly become more ethnically diverse. Since 2000, the percent of the population categorized as White fell by 2.5 percent. In 2015, Black/African American, American Indian, Asian, and other races represented 12.9 percent, 0.3 percent, 1.5 percent, and 1.7 percent of the population, respectively. The percent of Hispanic population nearly doubled, from 6.0 percent in 2000 to 11.7 percent in 2015, and the growth in all other ethnic minorities either grew slightly or remained the same compared to 2000 levels. This growth in minorities represents a potentially growing key market of traditionally transit-dependent populations. Figure 2-1 shows the areas with the highest concentration of minority population in the region by Census Block Group, using 2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates. The western half of Ocala contains areas with high percentages of minority populations (greater than 75%); the northern half of Marion County, in Reddick and near I-75 and US 441; areas to the south of Ocala, in Silver Springs Shores and Marion Oaks, also has a high percentage of minority populations.

Whereas ethnic diversity in Marion County has gradually increased, household vehicle ownership also has experienced small changes in the same period. The percent of households without a vehicle rose from 1.6 percent in 2010 to 3.0 percent in 2015, and households owning three or more vehicles fell slightly, to 26.5 percent. Overall, this drop in the number of personal vehicles in proportion to the growing population indicates another potential transit-dependent population. However, the majority of households within the county have one or two cars, accounting for 25.0 percent and 45.4 percent of the population in 2015, respectively.

The county's population as a whole achieved greater educational attainment over the 2000–2015 period. The portion of the population not completing high school fell by almost 38 percent, and the percent completing some college/achieving an associate's degree or receiving a bachelor's degree or higher grew by over 9 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

Map 2-2: Marion County Minority Population



Source: 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

The impacts of higher rates of educational attainment upon transit use are challenging to predict; however, a hopeful perspective is that by cultivating a greater awareness of the benefits of transit such as its greater environmental sustainability compared to automobile travel, may compel a more educated population to use transit more frequently in Marion County.

Table 2-4: Marion County Demographic Characteristics

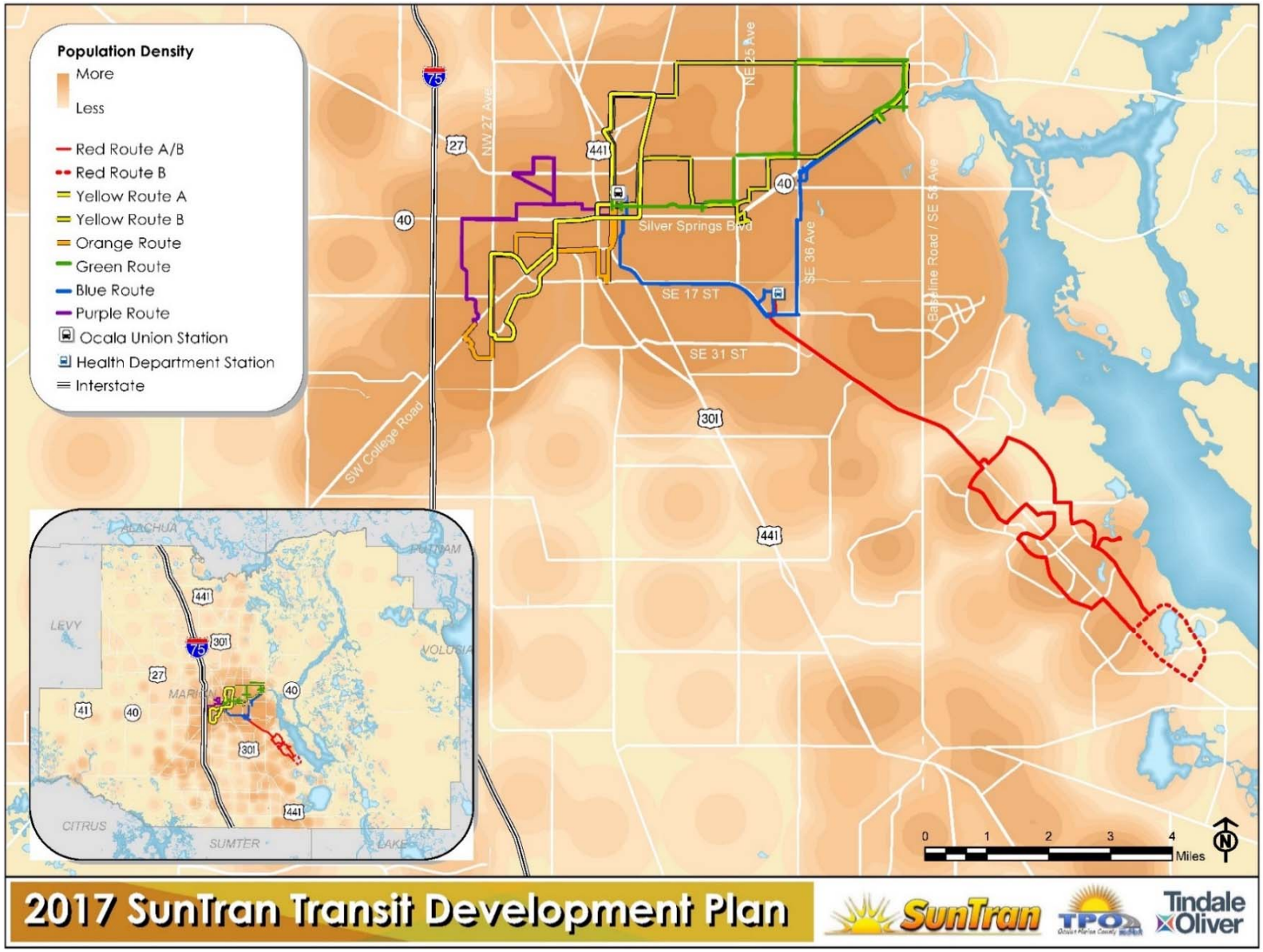
Characteristic	2000	2010	2015
Gender			
Male	48.3%	48.1%	48.0%
Female	51.7%	51.9%	52.0%
Ethnic Origin			
White	84.2%	82.0%	81.7%
Black or African American	11.5%	12.1%	12.9%
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
Asian	0.7%	1.4%	1.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Other	1.7%	2.7%	1.7%
Hispanic Origin			
Not of Hispanic/Latino origin	94.0%	89.8%	88.3%
Hispanic/Latino origin	6.0%	10.2%	11.7%
Educational Level			
< 12th grade	22.6%	15.5%	14.0%
High school grad	77.4%	84.5%	86.2%
Some college or Associate's degree	28.6%	29.9%	31.6%
Bachelor's degree or higher	12.8%	15.9%	14.1%
Families Below Poverty Level (in last 12 months)	9.2%	11.1%	18.4%
Vehicles Available in Household			
None	*	1.6%	3.0%
One	*	23.8%	25.0%
Two	*	45.9%	45.4%
Three or more	*	28.8%	26.5%

*Data not available for 2000
Sources: 2000 Census, 2011–2015 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Population Density

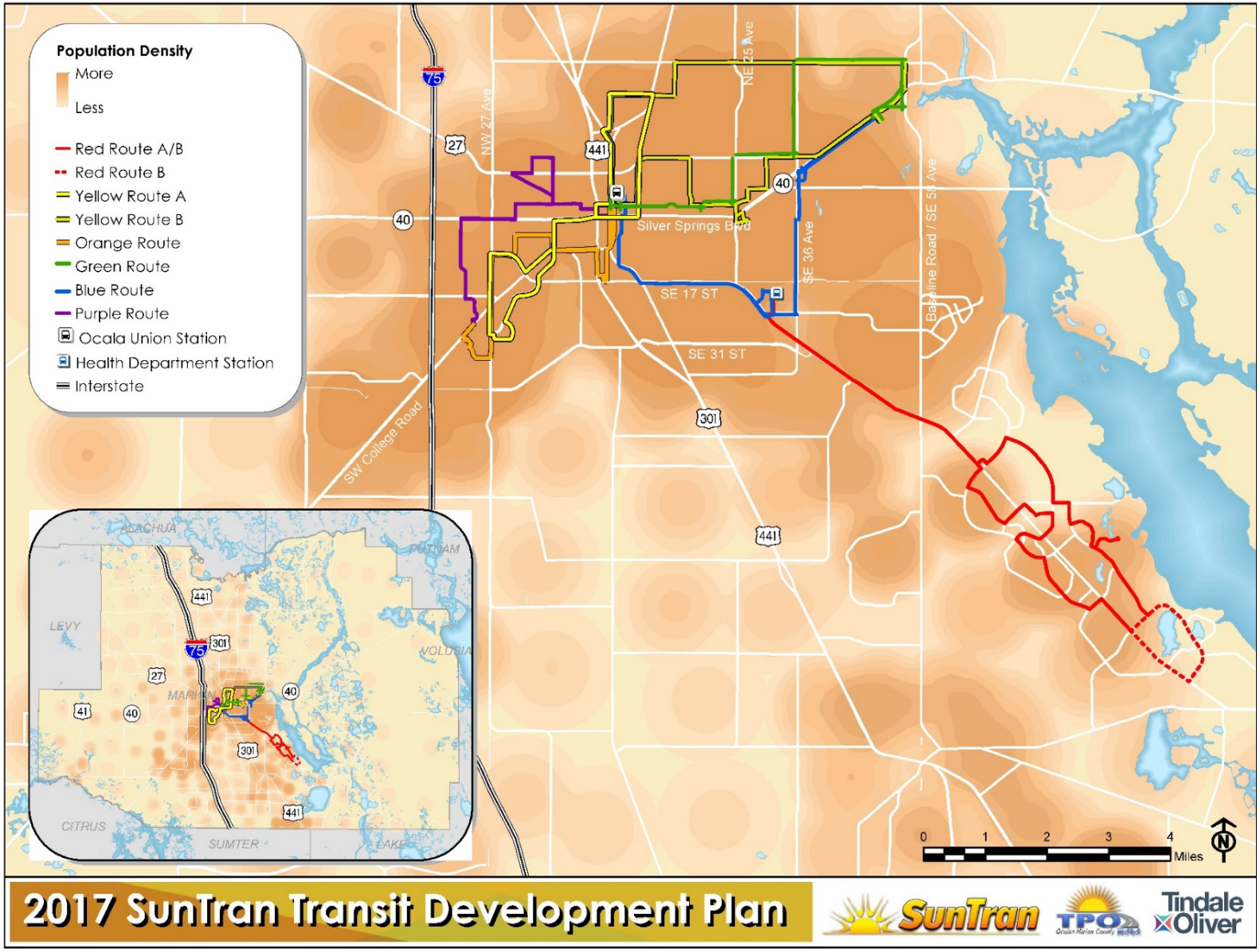
Population density (measured per square mile) is another key factor when assessing potential transit needs, as it reveals the potential in the number of transit riders within a concentrated area. Maps 2-3 and 2-4 provide the 2017 and 2027 population density characteristics for Marion County using socioeconomic data from the Marion County staff. These data are a forecast of population and employment from 2010 to 2040 to estimate needed improvements in transportation infrastructure. The geographies used are Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs). Much of the growth is projected to occur in the outskirts of the Ocala urbanized area and in a few low-density pockets within the core urban area. The area north of the Red route and the area north of SR 200 (west of I-75) in particular are projected to have a substantial increase in growth.

Map 2-3: Marion County Existing Population Density (2017)



Source: Marion County 2010–2040 socioeconomic data

Map 2-4: Marion County Future Population Density (2027)



Source: Marion County 2010–2040 socioeconomic data

Age Distribution

The current and future age distribution of the population of Marion County is a major factor when considering demand for public transportation. Compared to Florida as a whole, Marion County has a smaller portion of younger and teen residents and all adult age groups; conversely, it has a much higher percentage of population comprising older adults age 65 and older.

Table 2-5: Marion County Age Distribution Trends Compared with Florida

Age	2000	2010	2014
14 and under	17.6% (19.0%)	15.9% (17.4%)	15.6% (17.2%)
15–19	6.0% (6.3%)	5.7% (6.5%)	5.4% (6.2%)
20–64	51.9% (56.9%)	52.6% (58.7%)	52.2% (58.8%)
65+	24.5% (17.6%)	25.7% (17.4%)	26.8% (18.2%)

Sources: 2000 Census, 2010–2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2014 BEBR population projections

Persons age 15 or younger are not legally allowed to operate a motor vehicle. Teenagers who are unable to afford or do not have access to their own vehicle may have a higher propensity for using transit or finding a ride (carpool). As seen in Table 2-6, in Marion County, the percent of those aged 15–19 is projected to fluctuate mildly over the next few decades.

Table 2-6: Marion County Population Distribution by Age Group

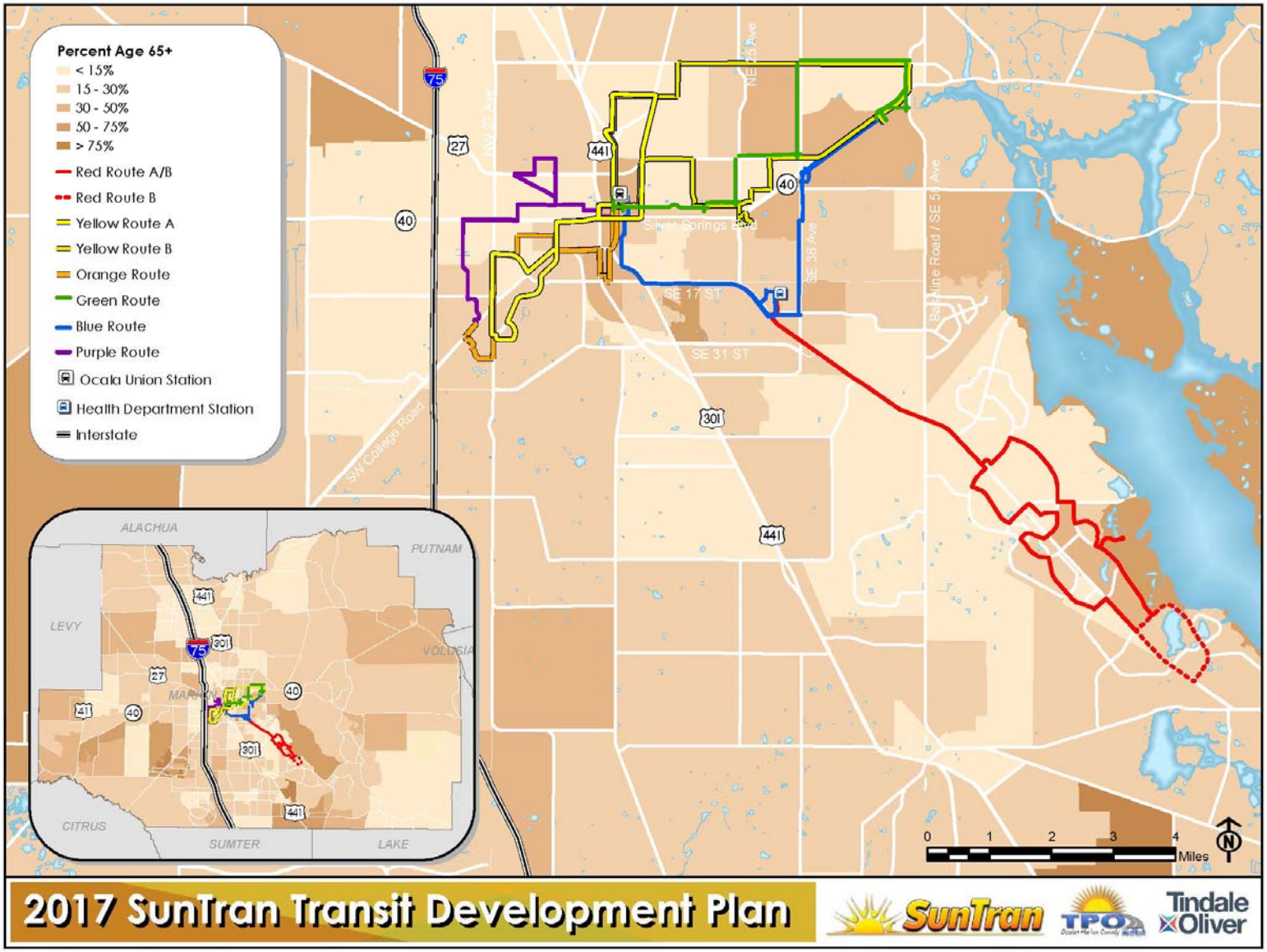
Age Group	Projection Year			
	2015	*2020*	*2025*	*2030*
0–9	10.2%	9.7%	9.9%	9.6%
10–14	5.3%	5.2%	4.7%	4.9%
15–19	4.9%	5.2%	4.7%	4.7%
15–17	3.0%	3.2%	2.9%	2.9%
18–19	1.9%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%
20–44	25.1%	24.3%	25.0%	24.2%
45–64	27.0%	25.4%	24.1%	22.0%
65+	27.5%	30.3%	31.6%	34.6%

Source: 2014 BEBR population projections

Older persons also may be more likely to use public transportation as the aging process begins to limit their ability or preference to drive. Marion County has a larger proportion of older adults compared to the statewide average. Table 2-7 shows the projected older adult population for Marion County and Florida based on data from BEBR's Florida Population Studies Population Projections. In 2025, the older adult population is projected to increase to 31.6 percent (2015 estimate is 27.5%) of the county's total population and will continue to increase to 34.8 percent until 2040. Furthermore, the segment of those ages 45–64, which will be the next wave of retirees, currently represents approximately 27 percent of the total population within the county.

A growing need for public transit within Marion County can be assumed, considering the growing share of age groups that are more likely to use transit.

Map 2-5: Marion County Older Adult Population



Source: 2014 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-7: Marion County Population Distribution for Older Adults (Age 65+)

Geography	BEBR Projections					
	2015	*2020*	*2025*	*2030*	*2035*	*2040*
Marion County	27.5%	30.3%	31.6%	34.6%	34.1%	34.8%
Florida	18.9%	21.0%	22.7%	24.9%	25.2%	25.5%

Source: 2014 BEBR Population Projections

Table 2-8 shows the means of transportation according to age group in Marion County. The 2000–2014 ACS revealed that the majority of transit riders were adults ages 25–44, totaling 72.3 percent of riders. The second largest group of transit riders were older adults ages 60 and over. A few areas of Marion County with higher concentrations of older adults, as shown in Map 2-5, include Silver Springs Shores, Spruce Creek, Marion Woods, On Top of the World, and northwest of US-27.

Table 2-8: Marion County Means of Transportation by Age Group

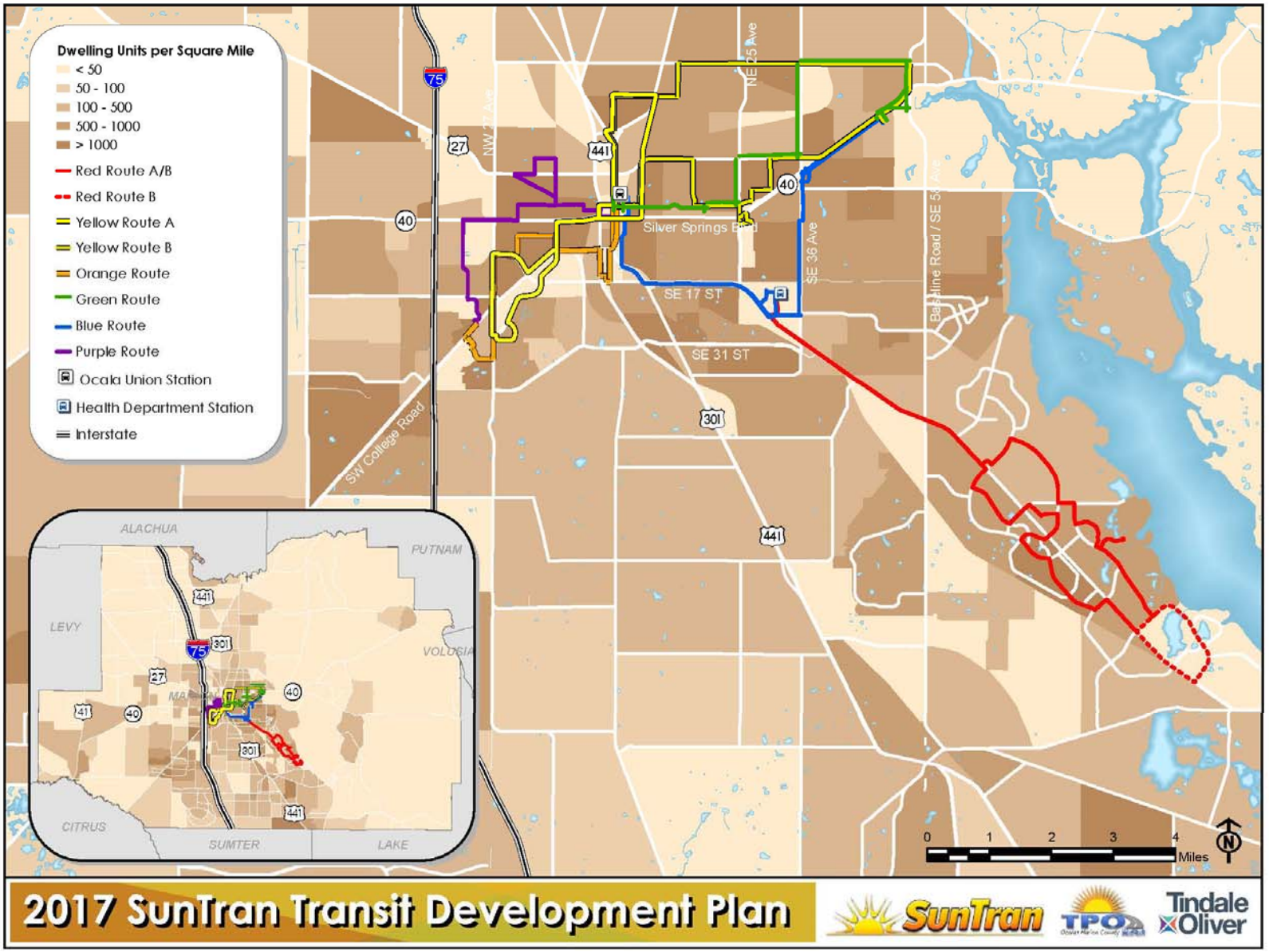
Age	Total	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Public Transit
Workers 16 and over	113,803	91,118	12,152	328
16-19	3.0%	3.0%	3.5%	2.4%
20-24	8.9%	8.7%	12.7%	2.7%
25-44	37.9%	37.5%	45.1%	72.3%
45-54	24.4%	24.8%	21.8%	8.2%
55-59	10.6%	11.0%	7.8%	0.3%
60 and over	15.1%	14.9%	9.0%	14.0%

Source: 2014 ACS 1-Year Estimates

Housing Density

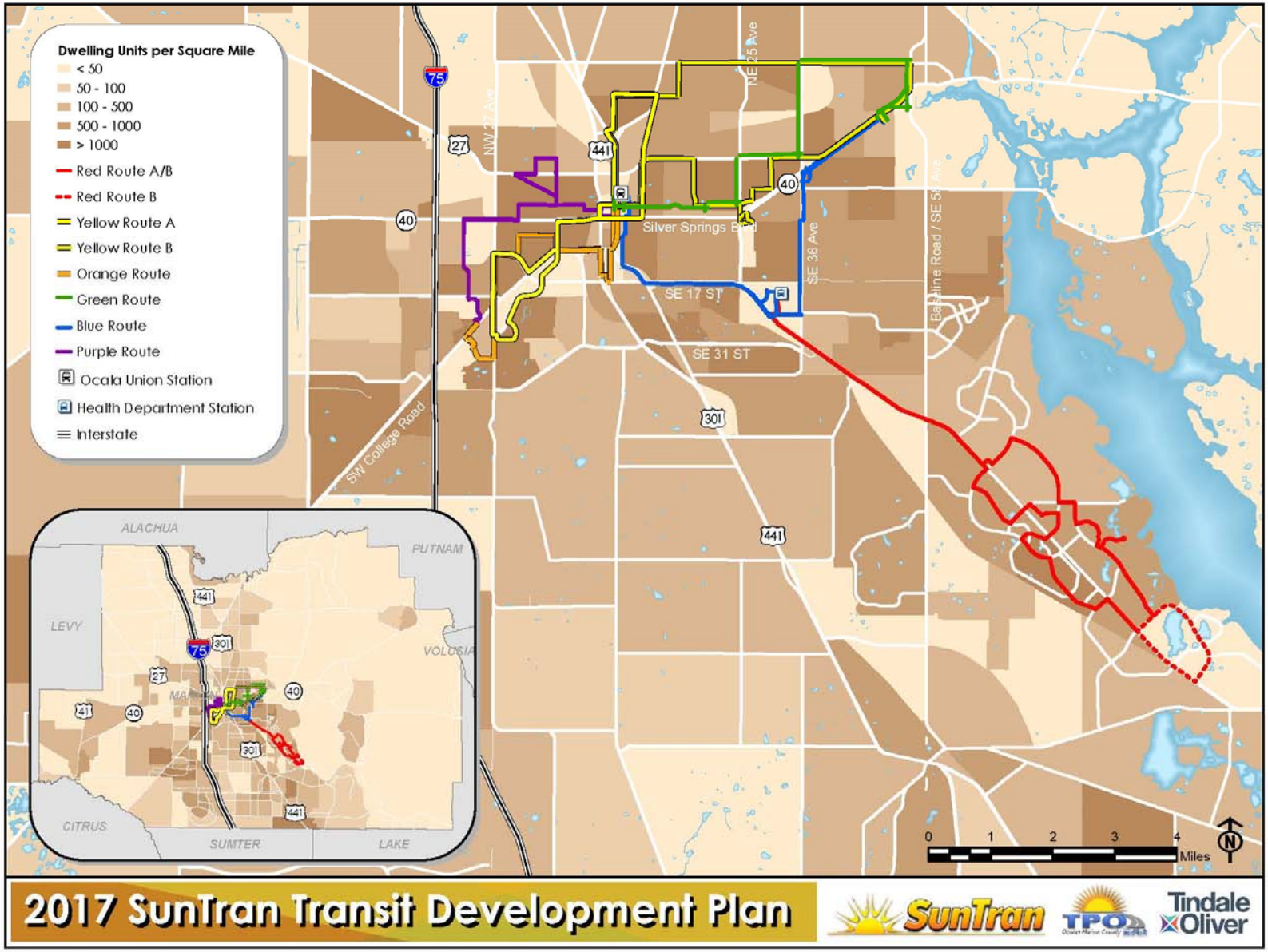
Dwelling-unit densities (measured per square mile) are another set of key factors when assessing potential transit needs, as denser urban areas tend to create a transit supportive environment. Maps 2-6 and 2-7 provide the 2017 and 2027 dwelling-unit density characteristics by TAZ for Marion County using socioeconomic data from the Marion County staff. The areas of highest dwelling-unit densities mirror the areas in which the highest population densities are found—Ocala, The Villages, and the sprawling On Top of the World Development communities off SW 99th Street Road and south of SW 103rd Street Road. Much of the growth in dwelling units between now and 2027 is projected to occur in the southern half of Marion County, especially in the York and Summerfield communities. Growth in also anticipated in a few areas surrounding Yellow A route and the Purple route.

Map 2-6: Marion County Existing Dwelling Unit Density (2017)



Source: Marion County 2010–2040 socioeconomic data

Map 2-7: Marion County Future Dwelling Unit Density (2027)



Source: Marion County 2010–2040 socioeconomic data

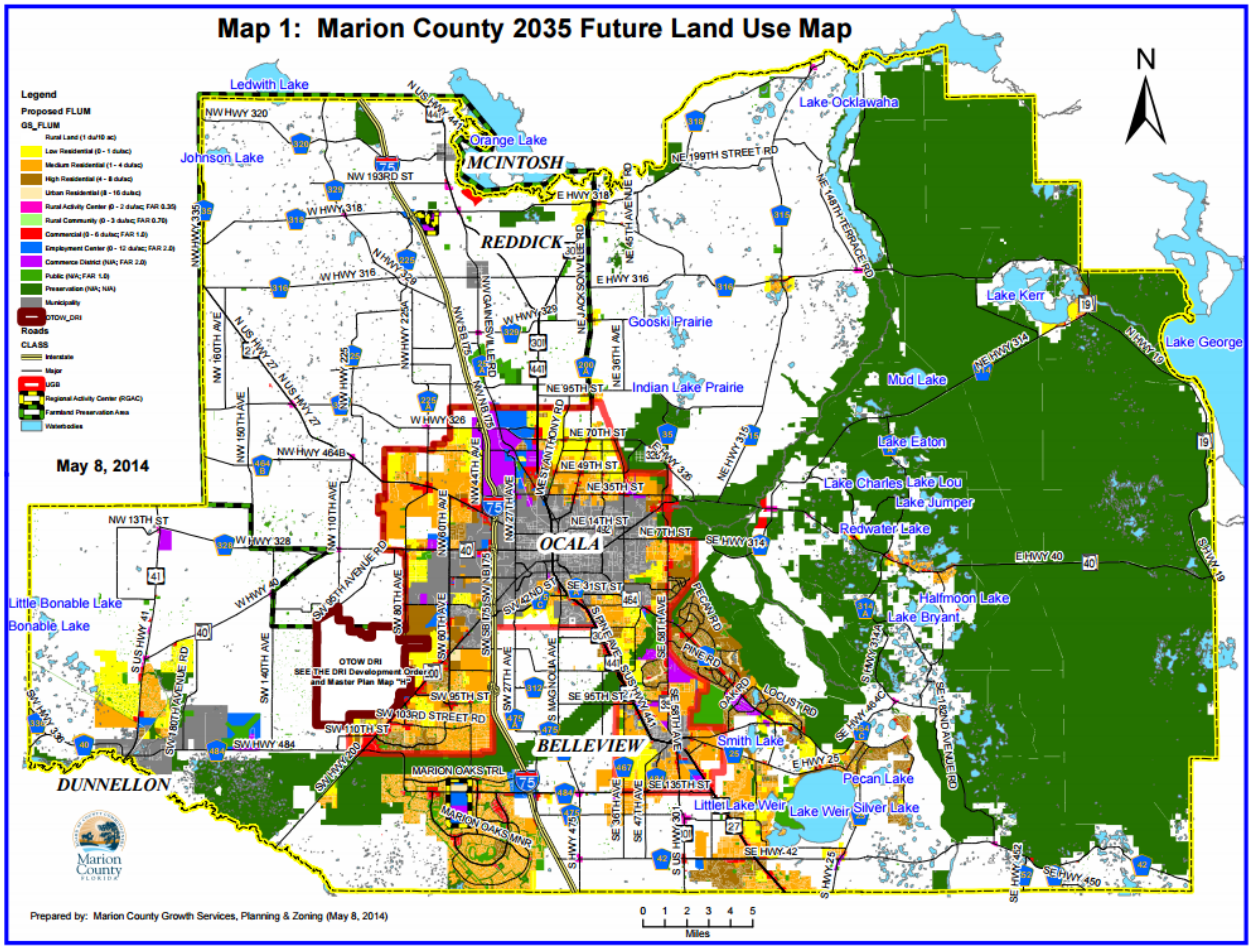
Current and Future Land Use

A review of current and emerging land uses was conducted for the baseline conditions assessment. The future land use maps from the Marion County Comprehensive Plan 2035 and the City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan shown in Maps 2-6 and 2-7 were reviewed. From this review, the following key trends were observed:

- Marion County is centered around the municipality of Ocala; the majority of land use consists of medium-density residential use (orange), with high-density residential use (brown) occurring in pockets of medium-density areas, such as the area surrounding Pine Road, and low-density residential use (yellow) areas along the periphery of the medium-density areas.
- Within Ocala, the High-Intensity/Central Core areas are immediately surrounded by a mix of Low Intensity as well as Neighborhood areas. Southwest of the city along SR 200, most of the land is zoned for Low Intensity and Medium Intensity/Special District use.
- There are only a few scattered parcels of urban-density residential areas in Marion County and only in selected parcels along SR 200 southwest of Ocala and in the Marion Oaks regional activity center south of Ocala.
- The Marion Oaks regional activity center, in addition to the high urban-density residential area, is considered an employment center (blue) and commerce district (purple). This activity center is surrounded predominantly by medium-density residential use areas.
- West of this activity center, Dunnellon is north of some preservation lands (dark green), and the northern suburbs are split between low- and medium-density residential areas with a few scattered commerce districts, commercial areas (red), and rural activity centers (pink).
- Southeast of Ocala lies Belleview, which is surrounded by mostly medium-density residential use areas. Due to Belleview's greater proximity to Ocala and location on US 301, there are a variety of land uses between the two municipalities and extending east towards Silver Springs Shores. Common non-residential land uses include employment centers, commerce districts, and commercial areas.
- Beyond the medium-density areas surrounding Belleview are pockets of low-density communities south of the city and north towards Ocala. Belleview's northern suburbs include a high-density residential area, and it directly borders the high-density residential areas of Silver Springs Shores. The area is primarily residential with a few commercial areas and commerce districts.
- In the southeastern part of the county beyond Belleview and Silver Springs are low-, medium-, and high-density residential areas close to Lake Weir and other lakes as well as the northern portion of The Villages community that extends into Lake and Sumter counties.
- Most of the northern and western portions (beyond Dunnellon's suburbs) of Marion County are considered rural land; the northeastern quadrant of the county is considered Farmland Preservation Area for the Ocala National Forest

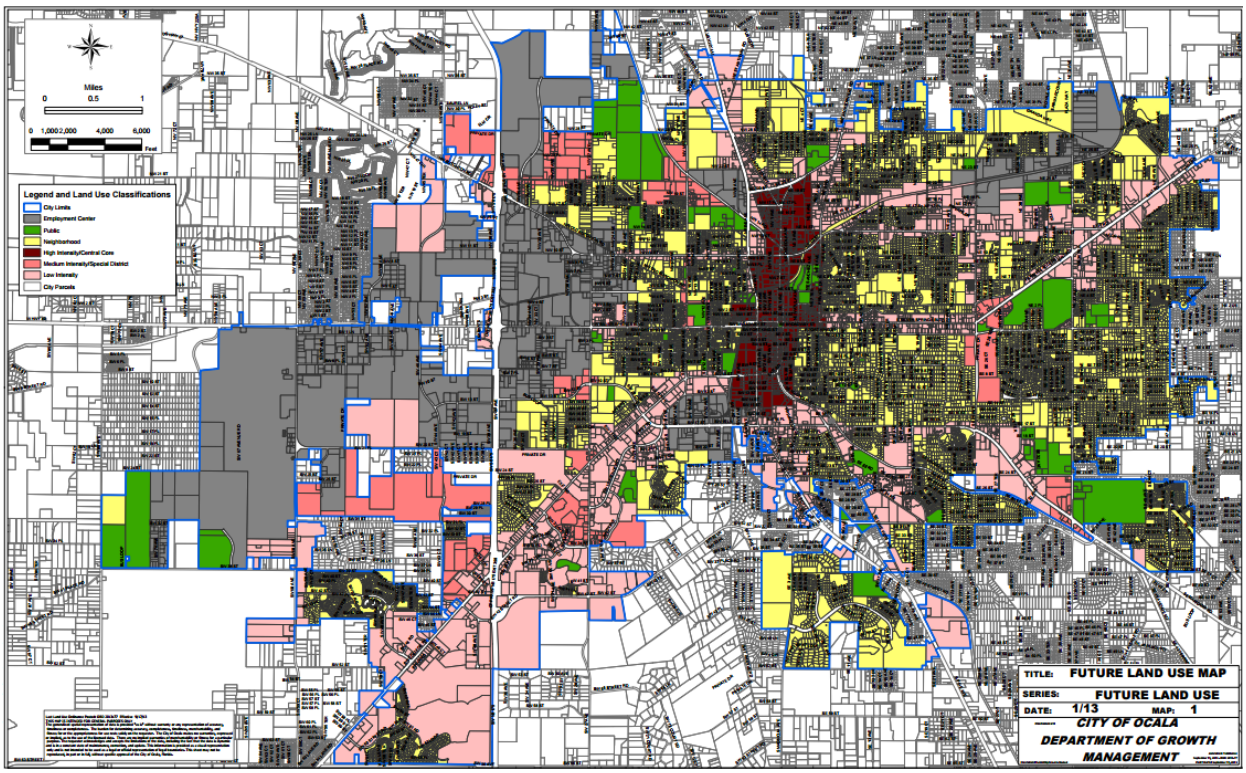
- The majority of the eastern third of the county is preservation lands, trisected by Hwy 40 and CR 314 and including a few small residential pockets of low and medium density.
    - The On Top of the World Development of Regional Impact (DRI) will create a sprawling pattern southwest of Ocala.
    - Within Marion County, the Rural Activity Center and Rural Community as well as Commercial and Employment Center land use codes are considered mixed use land designations.

Figure 2-1: Marion County 2035 Future Land Use



Source: Marion County Comprehensive Plan

Figure 2-2: Ocala 2035 Future Land Use



Source: City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan

Economic Conditions

A 2013 FDOT study titled "Florida's Future Corridors: Tampa Bay to Northeast Florida Study Area Concept Report" identifies Marion County as a regional business center. The report cites that Marion County's various business development successes and ongoing efforts have made it an important center in the corridor extending from Tampa to the Jacksonville area. As Ocala and Marion County continue to target growth in logistics and distribution, including the development of an airport industrial park and intermodal logistics center, this regional business center status will only be strengthened. The Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership has active business attraction and recruitment efforts ongoing for these sectors that would stand to benefit from Marion County's prime location along major roadways and rails, proximity to additional routes and major ports, large availability of sites, and a labor pool with relevant skills.

Additionally, a budding innovation cluster is growing in Marion County, centered in Ocala, in which the Institute for Human and Machine Cognition recently located its second Florida campus. The Chamber & Economic Partnership also is focusing on aviation and aerospace production, back office operations, and equine-related activities. These trends and business attraction campaigns are testaments to Marion County's growing regional economic role in the developing Tampa Bay to northeast Florida corridor.

The attractiveness of a strong transit system to potential employers looking to locate in Marion County cannot be understated. Transit can provide a key means for employees and customers to travel to these establishments and improve their viability as enterprises. As the growth of the area continues, future funding can continue to enhance the modal connectivity of Marion County to the transit systems of neighboring cities, counties, and other regional operators.

Major Activity Centers and Trip Generators

Major trip attractors are places that have a great need for residents to travel to them either for employment or patronage purposes. These centers can be medical facilities, educational establishments, shopping centers, government offices, or business offices. Within Marion County, the major activity centers include the Ocala Central Business District (CBD), three hospitals, employers outside the CBD, and education-related destinations (i.e., College of Central Florida, local schools, and libraries). Two hospitals are located in the Ocala CBD, and the community hospital is located along SR 200 southwest of the city. Table 2-9 lists the major education institutions in Marion County.

Table 2-9: Marion County Educational Institutions

Company Name	Enrollment*	Location
College of Central Florida	8,766	3001 SW College Rd, Ocala (main campus)
Taylor College	441	5190 SE 125th St, Belleview
Marion Co. Community Technical/Adult Education Ctr.	381	1014 SW 7th Rd, Ocala
Rasmussen College	2,484	4755 SW 46th Ct, Ocala
Marion County Schools**	41,936	Varies

*Figures are approximate.
**Includes 48 public, 3 charter, 14 special needs.
Sources: Marion County School District, individual college websites

The majority of social services facilities in Marion County are located in Ocala or immediately outside the municipality's borders and include the Department of Children and Families, Ocala Housing Authority, NAACP of Marion County, Marion County Senior Services, YMCA, and Department of Elder Affairs, among others. Additionally, major public facilities are located in Ocala, including the courthouse, Sheriff's Office complex, and Ocala City Hall.

Additional trip generators include shopping centers, Silver Springs State Park, and Ocala Civic Theater and other performing arts centers in the Ocala CBD, as well as a variety of historic sites and museums such as the Appleton Museum of Art (northeast of the CBD). The shopping centers are located both within the CBD and around the city, primarily south along US 27 and SR 200, with a minor center northeast along SR 40. A secondary CBD of Marion County is located in Dunnellon and includes smaller shopping centers, schools, libraries and major retailers such as Walmart.

Employment Characteristics

Employment and labor characteristics also help to explain land use and travel patterns that affect transit service. In 2014, there were more than 6,800 employer establishments. Almost 45 percent of persons ages 16 and up were in the civilian labor force, also listed in Table 2-10.

Table 2-10: Marion County Labor Characteristics

Characteristic	#
Total employer establishments, 2014	6,842
Total employment, 2014	76,032
Percent of population in civilian labor force, 2010–2014	44.6%

Source: Census Quick Facts for Marion County

Top Employers

Major industries in Marion County include government, healthcare, education, manufacturing, construction, and leisure/hospitality. Major employment centers include healthcare centers such as Munroe Regional Medical Center and Ocala Regional Medical Center, which employ nearly 5,000 persons overall. Manufacturing facilities include Lockheed Martin and E-ONE, Inc., and employ 981 and 800 persons, respectively. AT&T and Sitel are major employers in the customer support business, employing a combined 1,700 jobs. Other growing distribution and transport companies such as Cheney Brothers, Inc., have a large presence in Marion County as part of the county's targeted growth in this sector. Retail centers also employ a large percentage of workers in Marion County. Tables 2-11 and 2-12 list the top private sector employers and major government employers in Marion County.

Table 2-11: Marion County Top Private Employers

Employer	Total Employees*
Munroe Regional Medical Center	2,648
Walmart	2,370
Ocala Health System	2,200
Publix Supermarkets	1,488
AT&T	1,000
Lockheed Martin	981
E-ONE, Inc.	800
Sitel	700
Cheney Brothers, Inc.	645
The Centers	568
Total	**13,400**

*Data as of September 30, 2015, from most recent completed report.
Source: Ocala 2014–2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Table 2-12: Marion County Education/Government/Public Service Employers

Employer	Total Employees*
Marion County School Board	6,070
State of Florida	2,600
Marion County Board of Commissioners	1,462
City of Ocala	942
US Government	700
Marion County Sheriff's Office	658
College of Central Florida	456
Total	**12,887**

*Data as of September 30 2015, from most recent completed report.
Source: Ocala 2014–2015 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

Table 2-13 lists employment by industry in Marion County. Educational services, retail trade, professional and business services, and leisure and hospitality constitute the largest sources of employment in Marion County.

Table 2-13: Marion County Employment by Industry

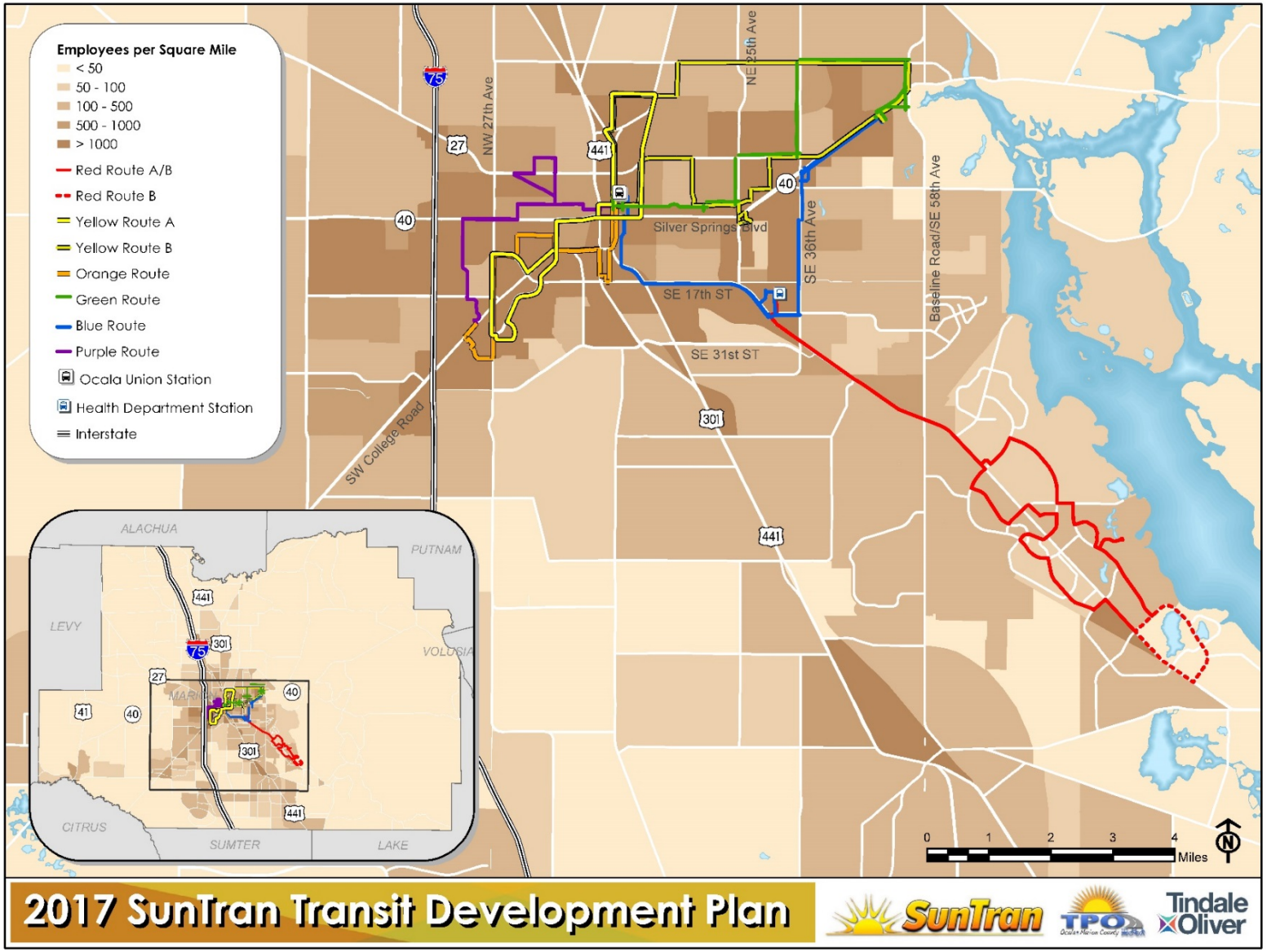
Category	% Employees
All Industries Total	**116,660**
Natural Resource & Mining	2.6%
Construction	7.5%
Manufacturing	6.8%
Wholesale trade	2.7%
Retail trade	15.6%
Transportation and Utilities	4.4%
Information	2.1%
Financial Activities	5.1%
Professional & Business Services	10.3%
Education & Health Services	21.6%
Leisure and Hospitality	11.1%
Other Services	5.2%
Public Administration	4.9%

Source: 2010–2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Employment/Labor Density

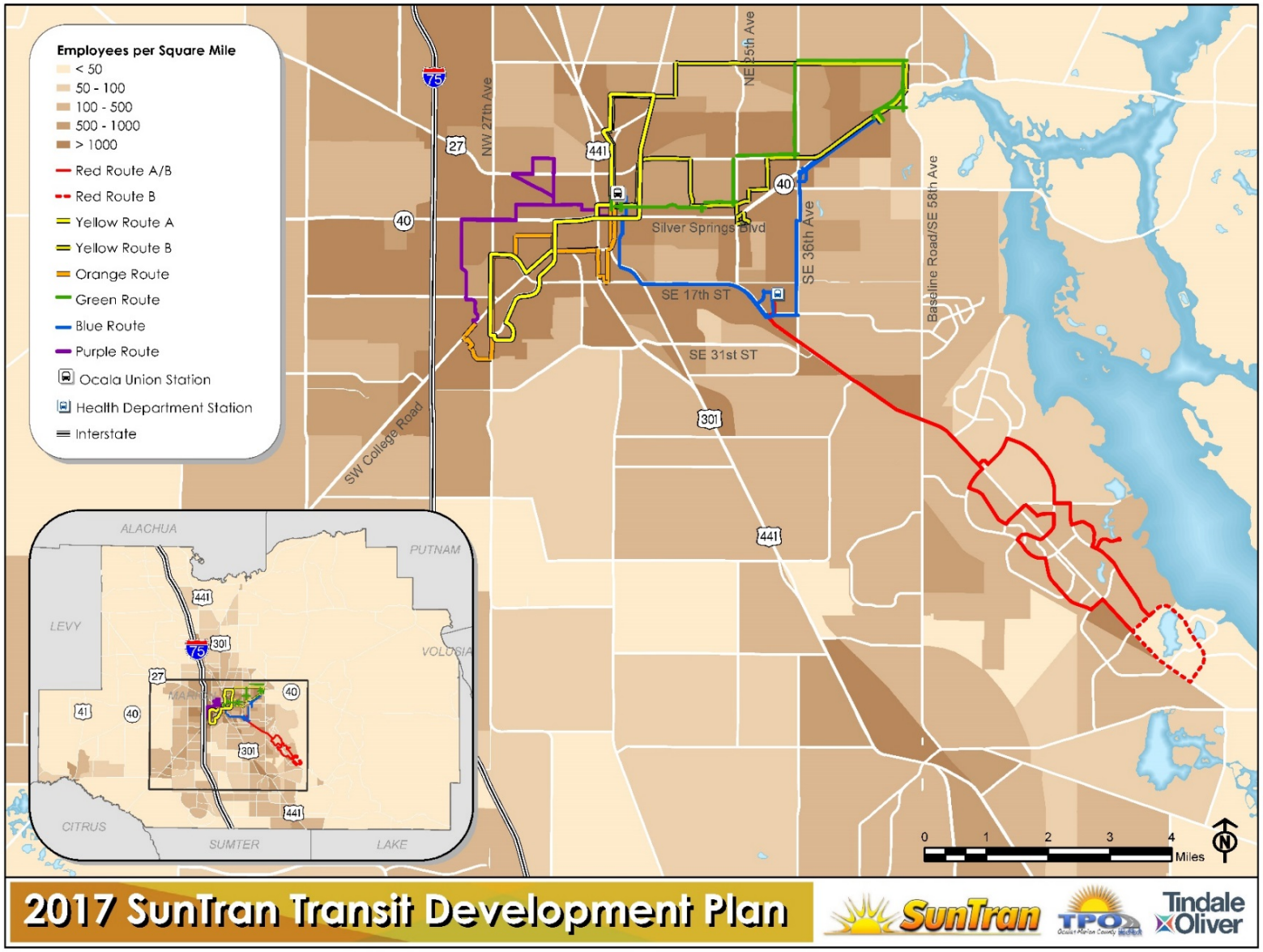
Maps 2-8 and 2-9 illustrate the employment density by Traffic Analysis zone (TAZ) for 2017 and 2027. Employment data are based on socioeconomic data obtained from Marion County. Like population density, employment density is concentrated throughout the central Ocala area. Beyond the central Ocala CBD, notable areas of high density, in contrast to adjacent TAZs, include the Walmart Supercenter in Dunnellon, shopping centers in the On Top of the World DRI (including another Walmart Supercenter) along SR 200 southwest of Ocala, the Belleview area along US 301 southeast of Ocala, and west of I-75 where there is a cluster of transportation/distribution and equine-focused companies adjacent to the Ocala International Airport. Employment density is more centralized than the general population density along major arterials, and, for the most part, employment is projected to grow in the TAZs where it already exists through 2027. The few exceptions are both north and south of Ocala between I-75 and US-301.

Map 2-8: Marion County Existing Employment Density (2017)



Source: Marion County 2010–2040 socioeconomic data

Map 2-9: Marion County Projected Employment Density (2027)



Source: Marion County 2010–2040 socioeconomic data

Tourist and Visitor Levels

Marion County has a variety of attractions and accommodations for vacationers and conference attendees. The Tourist Development Department of Marion County was founded in 2004 and leads efforts to market and grow the county's tourism industry. A study commissioned by the Marion County Visitor and Convention Bureau examined the economic impacts of tourism from April 2014 to March 2015 that reported details on how tourists spend their time and money while in Marion County. Frequent activities included horse shows and events, general leisure, biking/hiking/trail use, shopping, and restaurants. According to the study, the tourism industry supported more than $245 million in wages to employees serving visitors and more than 10,500 jobs during the study period from just over $600 million in direct tourist expenditures.

Defined as a non-resident who pays to stay at least one night in the county, visitor levels continue to rise, according to the Marion County Visitor and Convention Bureau study, with 1,768,528 visitors to Marion County who spent $600,207,348 and reserved a total of 914,097 room nights during the study period. The Bureau also monitors accommodation occupancy rates, average travel party size, and average length of stay and solicits feedback from visitors on their preferences to return to Marion County, all of which are trending positively.

Equestrian activities remain a significant attractor of visitors for recreation and business purposes, as there are riding opportunities, shows, races, tours, and many farms. Many visitors come to Marion County for general rest and relaxation as well as light outdoor activities such as walking/bike trail use, kayaking, and water activities. This variety of in- and out-of-state visitors has been supported by the growth in the types of accommodations available to visitors, including hotels, bed & breakfasts, cabins, and campgrounds.

Travel Behavior and Commuting Trends

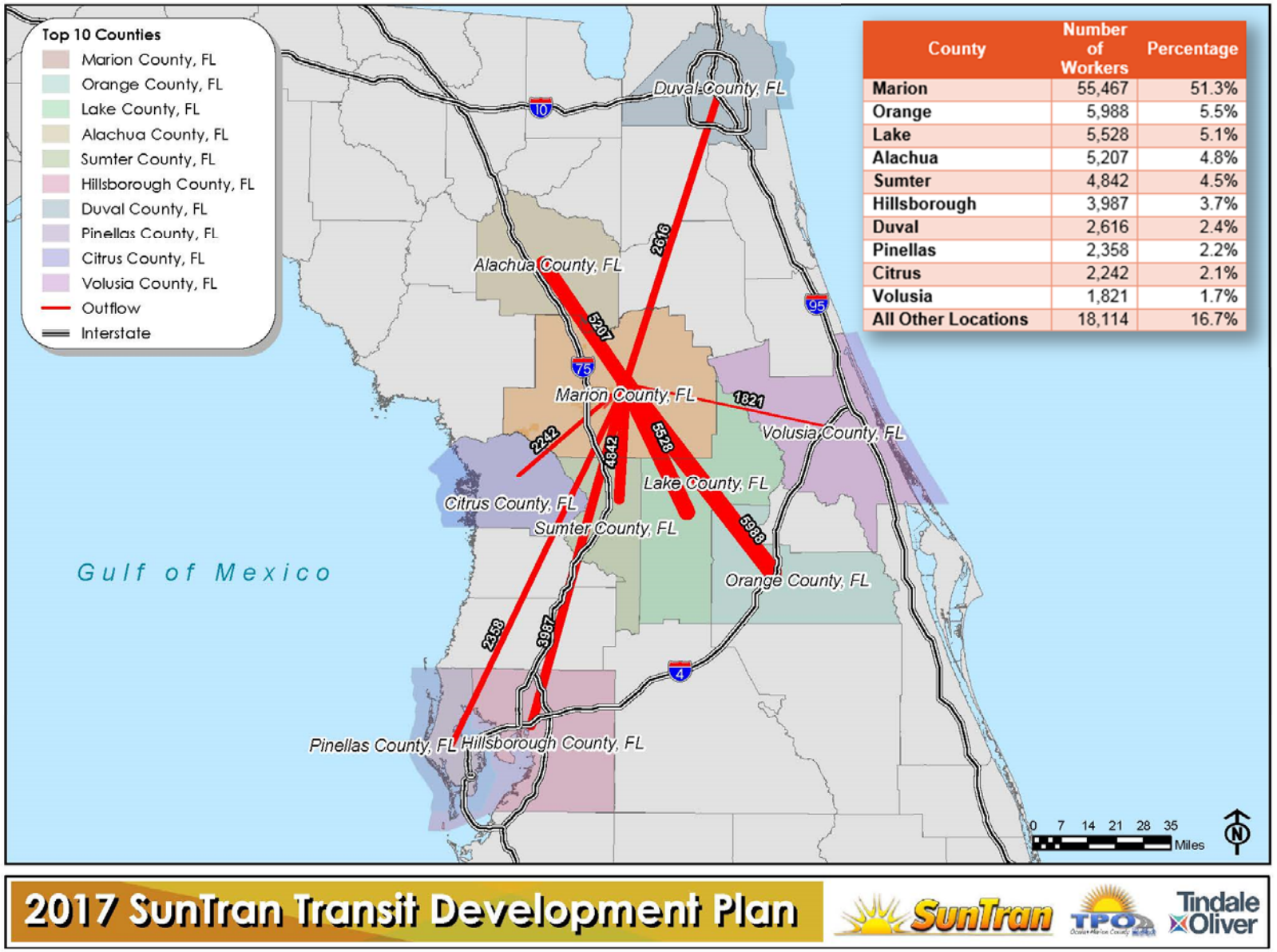
To assess current commuter trends and patterns, an analysis was conducted using 2014 Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data, alsoknown as "On the Map," provided by the US Census Bureau. The information for geographic patterns of jobs by their employment locations and residential locations is based on composite information of local unemployment insurance earnings data, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data concerning where workers live and work, and firm characteristics such as industry, Census, and survey data.

Maps 2-10 and 2-11 show Marion County commuter outflows and inflows by the top 10 counties using 2014 LODES data. Map 2-10 shows the number of outflow commuters traveling from Marion County who commute to work elsewhere, and Map 2-11 shows the number of inflow commuters traveling to Marion County for work. Based on Map 2-10, almost half of the residents in Marion County commute outside of the county, almost evenly dispersing to the nearby counties. Orange and Lake counties are the top two destinations, accounting for 5.5 percent and 5.1 percent of commuter trips, respectively.

Most of these commuters drive to Orlando, The Villages, or Lady Lake. The map also shows that commuters in Marion County travel as far north as Duval County and as far south as Pinellas and Hillsborough counties to work.

Map 2-11 shows commuter inflow data for the 10 counties having the most commuters traveling to Marion County for work. Citrus County had the highest percent of commuter inflow into Marion County in 2041 at 4.1 percent, followed by Lake County at 2.9 percent. It is shown that commuters travel from as far south as Hillsborough County and as far north from Duval County for work-related purposes.

Map 2-10: Marion County Commuter Outflow

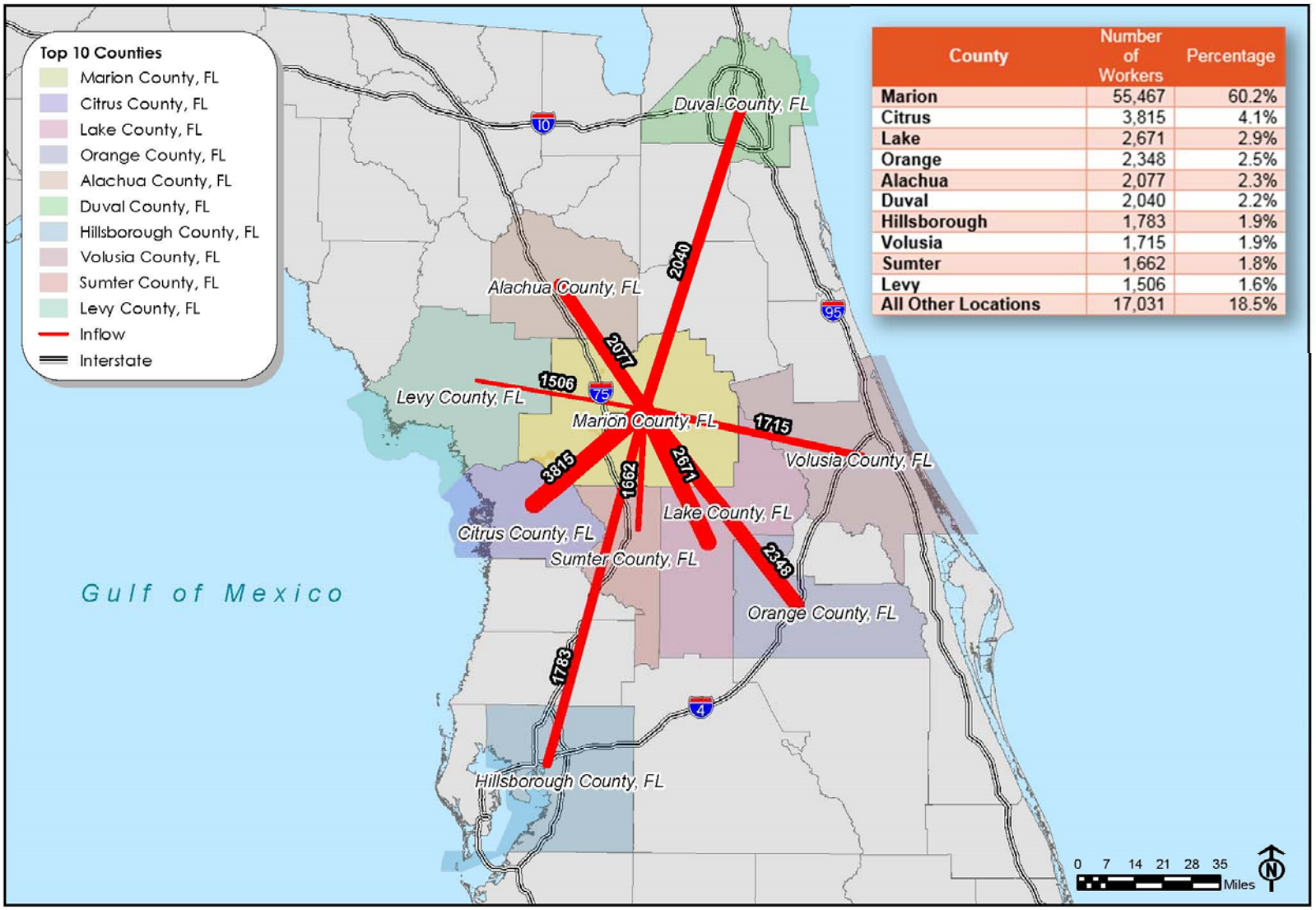


County	Number of Workers	Percentage
Marion	55,467	51.3%
Orange	5,988	5.5%
Lake	5,528	5.1%
Alachua	5,207	4.8%
Sumter	4,842	4.5%
Hillsborough	3,987	3.7%
Duval	2,616	2.4%
Pinellas	2,358	2.2%
Citrus	2,242	2.1%
Volusia	1,821	1.7%
All Other Locations	18,114	16.7%

2017 SunTran Transit Development Plan

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), 2014

Map 2-11: Marion County Commuter Inflow



County	Number of Workers	Percentage
Marion	55,467	60.2%
Citrus	3,815	4.1%
Lake	2,671	2.9%
Orange	2,348	2.5%
Alachua	2,077	2.3%
Duval	2,040	2.2%
Hillsborough	1,783	1.9%
Volusia	1,715	1.9%
Sumter	1,662	1.8%
Levy	1,506	1.6%
All Other Locations	17,031	18.5%

2017 SunTran Transit Development Plan

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), 2014

Journey-to-Work Characteristics

Journey-to-work characteristics for Marion County were compiled from the ACS and are shown in Table 2-14. The characteristics analyzed in the tables are presumed to be typically conducive to transit use and include mode of transportation to work, travel time to work, departure time to work, mode of transportation by occupation type, and destination of work trip.

Table 2-14: Marion County Commuting Characteristics

Characteristic	2014
Mode to Work	
Drove alone	80.1%
Carpooled	10.7%
2-person carpool	8.9%
3-person carpool	1.0%
4+-person carpool	0.7%
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.1%
Public transit	0.3%
Walked	1.4%
Bicycle	0.3%
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.7%
Worked at home	5.5%
Travel Time to Work	
<10 minutes	9.6%
10–19 minutes	31.8%
20–29 minutes	25.1%
30–44 minutes	21.6%
45+ minutes	11.9%
Departure Time to Work	
Before 6:00 AM	13.1%
6:00–6:59 AM	21.0%
7:00–7:59 AM	29.8%
8:00–8:59 AM	14.3%
9:00 AM–12:00 PM	21.7%

Source: 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

As is typical in most Florida communities, the primary mode of commuting to work is driving alone. Only 0.3 percent of commuters travel to work using public transportation in Marion County, an important consideration when determining the potential market of choice riders for transit. More than 40 percent of commutes are less than 20 minutes, with most commute times 10–19 minutes, indicating that commuters must travel a moderate distance (outside of the typical walking distance) between work and home. Another sizeable number of commutes fall within the 20–29-minute range, further supporting this conjecture. The majority of commuters leave for work during the traditional peak period between 6:00–8:00 AM (more than 50% of commutes), which is consistent with the typical commuting patterns throughout the state.

With respect to occupation, transit riders who work in service and management/business/science/arts occupations make up the majority of transit riders, consisting of about 35.4 percent and 31.1 percent of

transit riders, respectively. Natural resources/construction/maintenance occupations make up the next highest percentage of occupation types, representing 15.9 percent of transit riders.

Table 2-15: Marion County Commuting Characteristics by Labor Type

Occupation	Total Estimate	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Used Public Transit
Total	**116,660**	**91,118**	**12,152**	**328**
Management, business, science, arts	31,557	28.2%	21.3%	31.1%
Service	28,532	23.6%	28.8%	35.4%
Sales and office	32,890	29.0%	22.5%	14.6%
Natural resources, construction, maintenance	11,948	9.3%	15.6%	15.9%
Production, transportation, and material moving	11,733	9.8%	11.7%	0.6%
Military specific	2,857	0.1%	0.1%	2.4%

Source: 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-16 summarizes the employment location of Marion County residents. Based on 2014 ACS data, Marion County had 113,803 employed residents (excluding those with military specific occupations), of which 83.1 percent lived and worked within the county, indicating a high demand for employment-based trips. In addition, 15.8 percent of employed residents commuted to other counties.

Table 2-16: Marion County Employment by Location

Place of Work	Estimated #
Total	**113,803**
Worked in Marion County	51.3%
Worked outside of Marion County	48.7%

Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), 2014

Roadway and Traffic Conditions

Existing Roadway Conditions

Existing roadway conditions and needs are considered for the baseline conditions assessment. The Ocala/Marion County TPO's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) sets forth a vision to address transportation system needs and cost feasible improvements, based on factors such as congestion. The LRTP also outlines the county's Congestion Management Process. The TPO identified three tiers of congestion levels for prioritizing roadway projects in the LRTP:

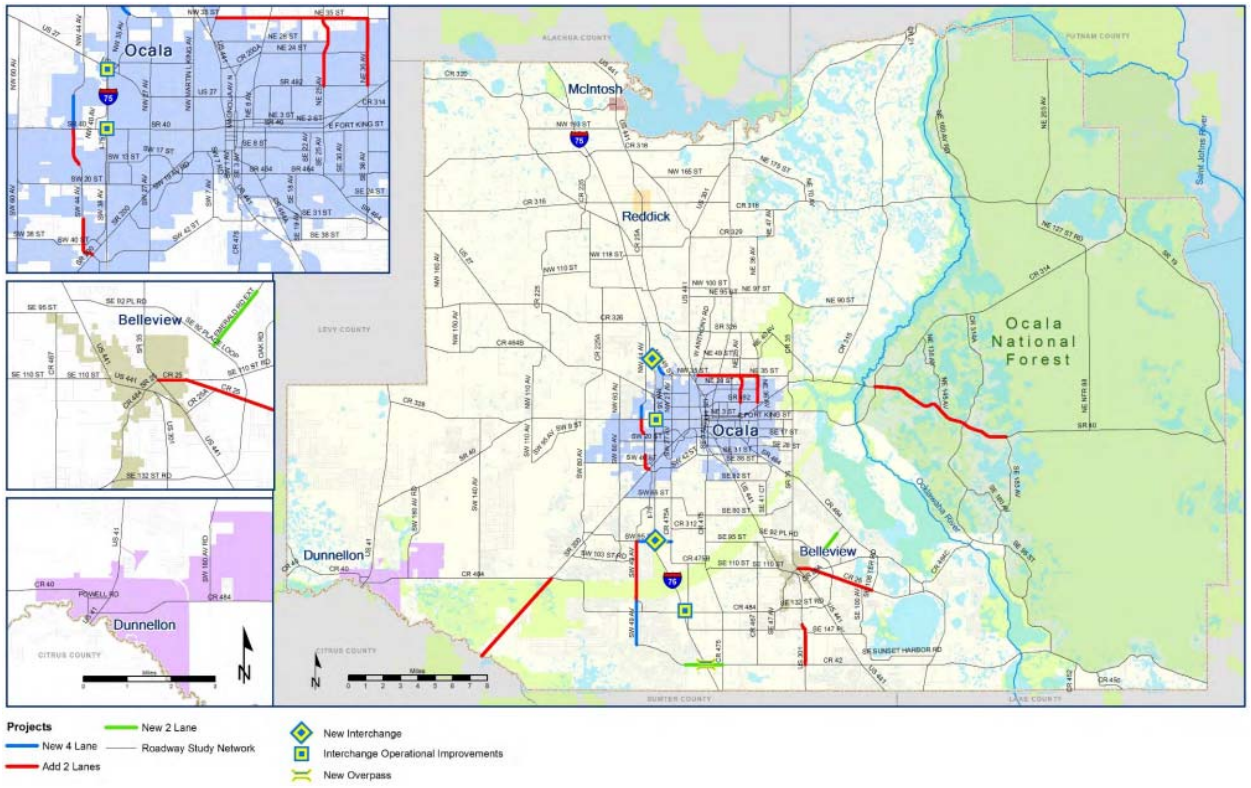
- Low Congestion: V/C ratio less than 0.85
- High Congestion: V/C ratio between 0.85 and 1.25
- Severe Congestion: V/C ratio greater than 1.25

Future Roadway Conditions

The Marion/Ocala TPO estimates that the county's population will increase by 51 percent and employment growth by 75 percent over 2010 levels in 2040, both of which will add to existing congestion levels over time. The 2040 LRTP highlights a needs plan for highway projects (roadway expansions, grade separations, mobility improvements), transit projects (bus lanes and service expansions), and pedestrian/bicycle/ multi-use projects (expansion of multi-use trail networks on existing roads and planned constructions). Identified needs include the need to expand the most-congested corridors. These expansions could temporarily relieve current congestion levels if no additional growth occurs as a result of the improved roadways. Figure 2-3 illustrates the 2021–2040 Cost Feasible Plan for road improvements. Highlights of these roadway improvements are listed in Table 2-17. Potential project locations identified by the LRTP needs assessment that are projected to experience "Severe Congestion" are listed below in order of priority:

- State Roads
    - SR 200: Citrus County Line to CR 484
    - US 301: CR 42 to SE 143rd Place
    - I-75: SR 326 to CR 318
    - I-75: CR 318 to Alachua County Line
    - US 441: Sumter County Line to CR 42
    - US 41: SR 40 to Levy County Line
- Local Roads
    - NE 36th Avenue: NE 14th Street to NE 20th Place
    - NE 25th Avenue: NE 14th Street to NE 24th Street

Figure 2-3: 2021–2040 Cost Feasible Plan – Roadway Projects



Source: Ocala/Marion County TPO's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

Table 2-17: Marion County Major Roadway Capacity Projects

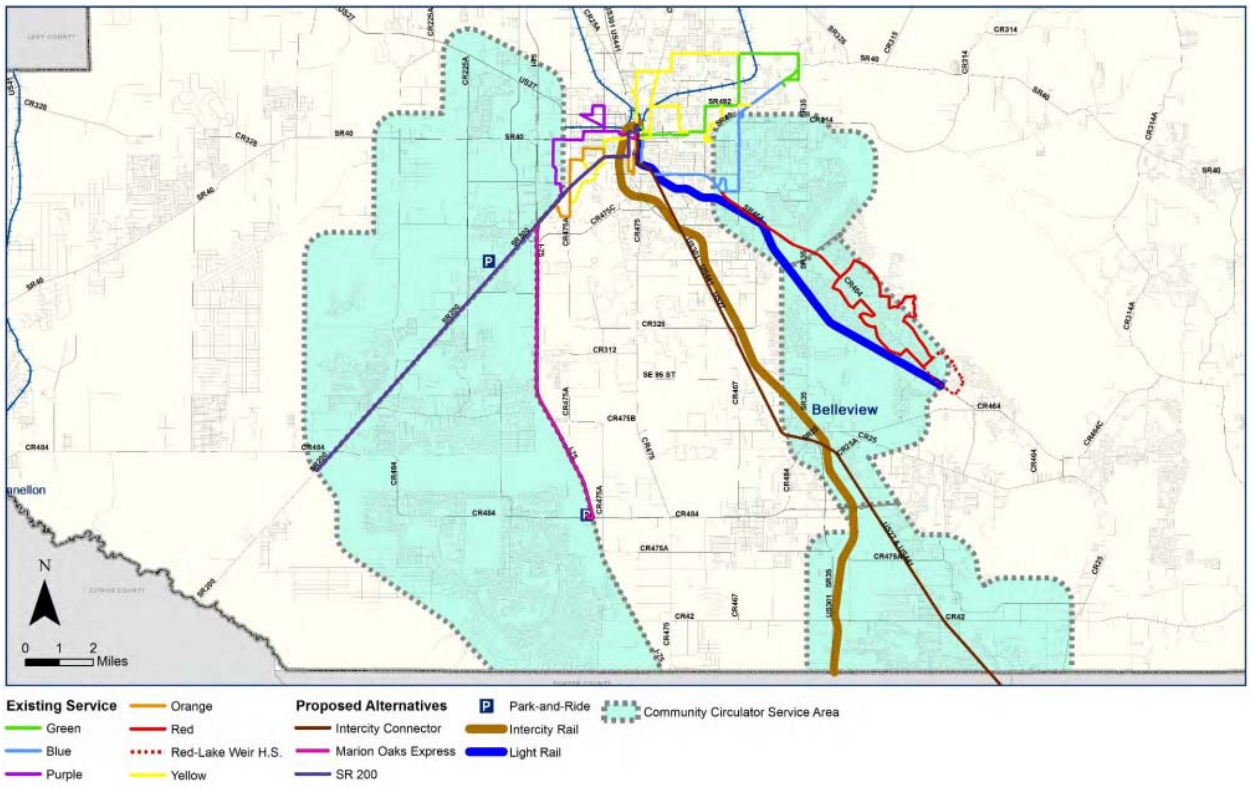
Project Roadway	Description
NE 25th Avenue and NE 36th Avenue	Widening of these two north/south roads between NE 14th Street and NE 35th Street from 2 to 4 lanes will provide additional north to south capacity. These projects also include grade separated crossings of the CSX line.
SR 40	As part of the Emerging SIS east of SR 326, the widening of SR 40 east of CR 314 will improve regional access from Central Florida to I-95 and Florida's East Coast.
NW 49th Street	This new east/west connection will extend from NW 35th Avenue across I-75 to NW 44th Avenue. Providing connectivity to the commercial and industrial land uses, this project along with the new interchange at I-75 will allow quicker and easier access for freight and businesses.
NW/SW 44th Avenue	Filling in the gaps of the 44th Avenue corridor between SR 200 to US 27 will provide a continuous parallel corridor to I-75.
Marion Oaks Manor Ext	Constructing a new East/West connection with an overpass over I-75 will provide additional travel options for the Marion Oaks Community and relieves congestion on CR 484.
SR 200	Widening the remainder of SR 200 south of CR 484 will provide for a better regional connection between Ocala and Inverness.
US 301	Widened to four lanes between CR 42 to SE 143rd Pl, this completes the final two lane gap between Wildwood and Belleview.

Source: Ocala/Marion County TPO 2040 LRTP

Several potential cost feasible areas of expansion of public transportation services were identified, including bus and rail, as shown in Figure 2-4. Expanded bus service is proposed for east and west Ocala

and in southern parts of the county, including Belleview. Dedicated bus lanes are proposed on US 441 and SR/CR 464. Also included in the Needs Plan are light rail and commuter rail services. Commuter rail is proposed on the existing railway along US 301 from Sumter County to Downtown Ocala and would provide enhanced regional access to Marion County. The proposed light rail line is also on an existing railway alignment along SR/CR 464.

Figure 2-4: 2040 Cost Feasible Plan – Transit Needs Assessment



Source: Ocala/Marion County TPO's 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

Marion County Public Transportation

The Ocala/Marion TPO is the administrative agency for SunTran and has contracted with McDonald Transit to perform day-to-day operations and management for the system. SunTran provides fixed-schedule service on six routes in Marion County, mostly centered in Ocala, with one route operating from Ocala to the Silver Springs Shores area southeast of Ocala. SunTran current services, fares, and ridership trends will be reviewed in more detail in Section 3.

Transportation Disadvantaged Population

In addition to the fixed-route bus services, Marion County provides public transportation to the transportation disadvantaged (TD) populations living in the county. Marion County Senior Services (Marion Transit Services) is the local Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and coordinates medical and non-medical transportation services for the TD population. Priority for service is given to those who do not own or drive their own vehicle and do not have family or friends to assist them in traveling to and from destinations. TD service also is provided based on needs; medical needs and life-sustaining activities are given higher priority than business or recreation trips.

Table 2-18 shows the trend in the potential TD population compared to TD passengers served between 2012 and 2015 in Marion County. During this period, the TD population increased by 8.48 percent, from 158,738 in 2012 to 172,192 persons in 2015. The number of TD passengers served as part of the CTD funding and reporting process has fluctuated and reached a low rate of 1.78 percent in 2015, likely as a result of the phased removal of the Medicaid transportation services from the CTD system during the 2014 and 2015 fiscal years.

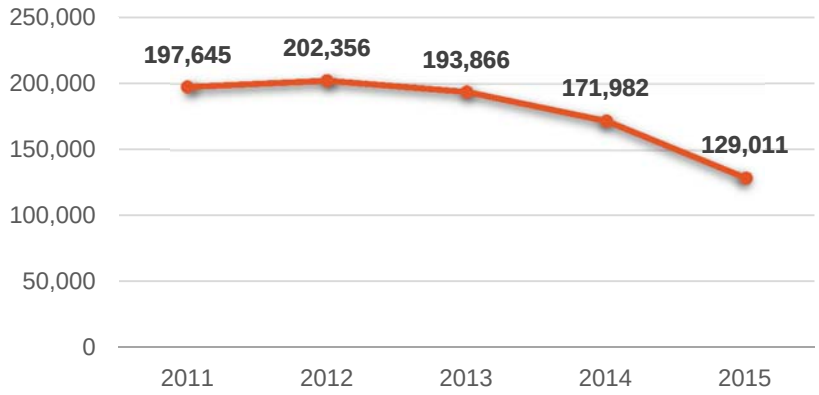
Table 2-18: Marion County TD Population and Passenger Trends, 2012–2015

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Change
Potential TD population	158,738	158,738	163,090	172,192	8.48%
TD passengers served	7,747	7,258	6,788	3,063	-60.46%
Percent of potential TD population served	4.88%	4.57%	4.16%	1.78%	-63.55%

Source: Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) annual operating reports

Figure 2-5 depicts the total number of TDP trips made between 2011 and 2015. TD passenger trips decreased annually from 2010 to 2015 by 60.46 percent, primarily due to Medicaid funding cuts.

Figure 2-5: Total Number of TD Trips, 2011–2015, Marion County



Source: Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Annual Operating Reports

As shown in Table 2-19, the majority of TD trips in FY 2015 were made by older adults (86,695), followed by children (19,545) and persons with disabilities (11,007).

Table 2-19: Transportation Disadvantaged Trips by Passenger Type, FY 2015, Marion County

Passenger Type	Trips
Older adults	86,695
Persons with disabilities	11,007
Low-income	4,885
Other	4,845
Low-income/with disabilities	2,034
Total	**129,011**

Source: Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) 2015 Annual Operating Report

Section 3: Existing Service Review

This section begins with an overview of public transportation services and facilities provided by SunTran and Marion County Senior Services (MCSS). Additionally, a vehicle inventory and information on other transportation services in Marion County are summarized as part of the existing service review.

Existing public transportation services in Marion County include both fixed-route and paratransit services. SunTran, the fixed-route bus system, is governed by the Ocala/Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). Marion Transit Services (MTS), the paratransit (demand-response) service in Marion County, is managed by MCSS. A summary of SunTran and MTS services are provided separately in the next section.

To assess how efficiently SunTran supplies fixed-route transit service and how effectively those services meet the needs of the area, a trend and peer analysis of critical performance indicators is presented to provide a starting point for understanding the existing system's level of performance.

Overview of Marion County Public Transportation

SunTran

The Ocala/Marion TPO is the administrative agency for SunTran and has contracted with McDonald Transit to perform day-to-day operations and management for the system. SunTran has been operating since 1998 and currently operates a scheduled fixed-route system six days per week. The service is marketed to riders of all age groups. The regular full cash fare is $1.50, with discounts offered for youth, students, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and, as of recently, veterans. In addition, a monthly pass is offered at a rate of $45 per month; reduced rate passes are available for youth, older adults, and individuals with disabilities as well.

SunTran provides fixed-schedule service on six routes in Marion County, mostly centered in Ocala, with one route operating from Ocala to the Silver Springs Shores area southeast of Ocala. Most routes operate 5:00 AM–10:00 PM on weekdays and Saturdays. Headways run between 60 and 120 minutes. The Downtown Transfer Station serves as the central stop for five of the six routes. The Ocala Health Department serves as the transfer location that connects a route running from the Downtown Transfer Station and another route running to Silver Springs Shores. The Downtown Transfer Station also serves as an intermodal station, connecting the Amtrak bus collector service to bring its patrons to its train station.

SunTran currently has one maintenance facility, located in northeast Ocala near the intersection of Northeast 36th Avenue and Northeast 21st Street within the Ocala Municipal Complex area.

Marion Transit Services

MTS began serving the transportation needs of older adults in Marion County in 1976, and service has since expanded to include TD and Medicaid clients. Since 1983, MTS has been designated by the MPO as

the Marion County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for all non-emergency medical transportation and for those needing wheelchairs or other assistance in the Ocala/Marion County area. As the CTC, MTS is responsible for ensuring coordination of local paratransit services to the maximum extent feasible. The Ocala/Marion County TPO accepted the responsibilities of being the Designated Official Planning Agency for the transportation disadvantaged program and established the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) in 1990 to assist MTS in the pursuit of providing services for transportation -disadvantaged patrons.

MTS provides door-to-door paratransit services to meet numerous transportation needs for medical, life-sustaining, educational, work, business, and recreational activities for Marion County's TD citizens as well as members of other program recipients in Marion County. Trip prioritization is established by the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB), a subcommittee of the MPO.

MTS services must be reserved at least 72 hours prior to a trip, and appointments should be made between 9:00 AM and 2:00 PM Monday through Friday, with certain exceptions made for patients with eligible medical conditions. Appointments for persons living in outlying areas should be made between 10:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Fares range from $2.00 to $5.00 for a one-way trip, depending on location and eligibility, and fare waivers are available for qualified individuals. The Ocala/Marion TPO also contracts with MTS to provide complementary ADA service to fixed-route riders traveling from and to locations within ¾ mile of existing fixed bus routes.

Drivers are able to assist passengers from their doorway into the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance of their destination. All buses are Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible; however, drivers cannot assist passengers with wheelchairs traveling over more than one step or curb. Accommodations can be made for Certified Service Animals; however, MTS must be notified when a reservation is made. Additionally, an escort accompanying a passenger due to a medical necessity can be accommodated if details are provided at the time of reservation.

SunTran Services

SunTran has continued to grow and expand its services since its inception in 1998. SunTran is a cooperative effort among the Ocala/Marion County TPO, Marion County, the City of Ocala, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA). This section provides an overview of the existing public transportation services provided by SunTran, a detailed description of all routes, current fare policy, and planned services, followed by a brief summary of ridership trends for the transportation disadvantaged services provided by MTS.

SunTran currently provides six fixed-routes of bus service in Marion County, including two locations operating on pick-up requests only (Trinity Villas – Blue route, Post Office – Red route), a few instances of special requests servicing Silver Springs State Park, and an extended portion of the Red route (B sub-route) where buses service Lake Weir High School before and after school during the August–May school year.

In addition to the sometimes differing final waypoints of the Red route sub-routes, the A and B sub-routes bifurcate around the Silver Springs Shores neighborhood at Pine Road, and each sub-route heads around the full loop of the Red route in differing directions, so service to each stop in this loop occurs in an alternating order for the A and B designated buses. The Yellow Route is divided into sub-routes A and B, which overlap in a shared Downtown section. Most of the fixed-route bus service is located in Ocala, but service also reaches Silver Springs northeast of Ocala (Yellow and Green routes) as well as the Silver Springs Shores southeast of Ocala (Red route).

The majority of SunTran routes run Monday through Saturday 5:00 AM–10:00 PM. Service is not available on Sundays and certain holidays. SunTran meets the requirements of the ADA for accommodating passengers reasonably. Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4 operate with 60–70-minute headways during the week and on Saturdays. Routes 5 and 6 and their respective sub-routes operate with 120–140-minute headways individually during the week and on Saturdays; however, each route's A and B sub-routes alternate departures at a 60–70-minute headway from their respective transfer stations. As a result, individual stops on route 5 experience 60–70-minute headways from alternating A and B designated buses, whereas all but a few overlapping individual stops on Route 6 experience 120–140-minute headways.

Map 3-1 illustrates the bus routes operated by SunTran. Also included on the map are the ¼-mile and ¾-mile buffer service areas. The ¼-mile buffer represents the maximum distance that riders typically are willing to walk to get on the bus, and the ¾-mile buffer indicates the service area where complementary ADA paratransit service must be provided. Table 3-1 shows characteristics of routes currently operated by SunTran.

Two hubs serve as major transfer stations for the fixed-route services, including the Downtown/Central Transfer Station (Ocala Union Station or Union Station Plaza) and the Marion County Health Department Transfer Station. The Downtown Station is a registered historic site serving passenger trains since 1917 and presently includes two daily Amtrak bus collector services to bring passengers to the trains, the first running to Lakeland and the second to Jacksonville. Until late 2014, the station also served as a hub for Greyhound Lines, which has since moved its service just north of Ocala at the Pilot Travel Center off County Road 326 in Marion County. This transfer station connects the Green, Blue, Purple, Orange and Yellow routes. Finally, a limo/van service, the Shuttleliner, offers several trips daily to Orlando International Airport from this station. The second transfer station is located at the Florida Department of Health's Marion County offices. This location is also next to Jervey Gantt Park and Publix Super Market and connects the Blue and Red routes.

Map 3-1: Existing Transit Service Area

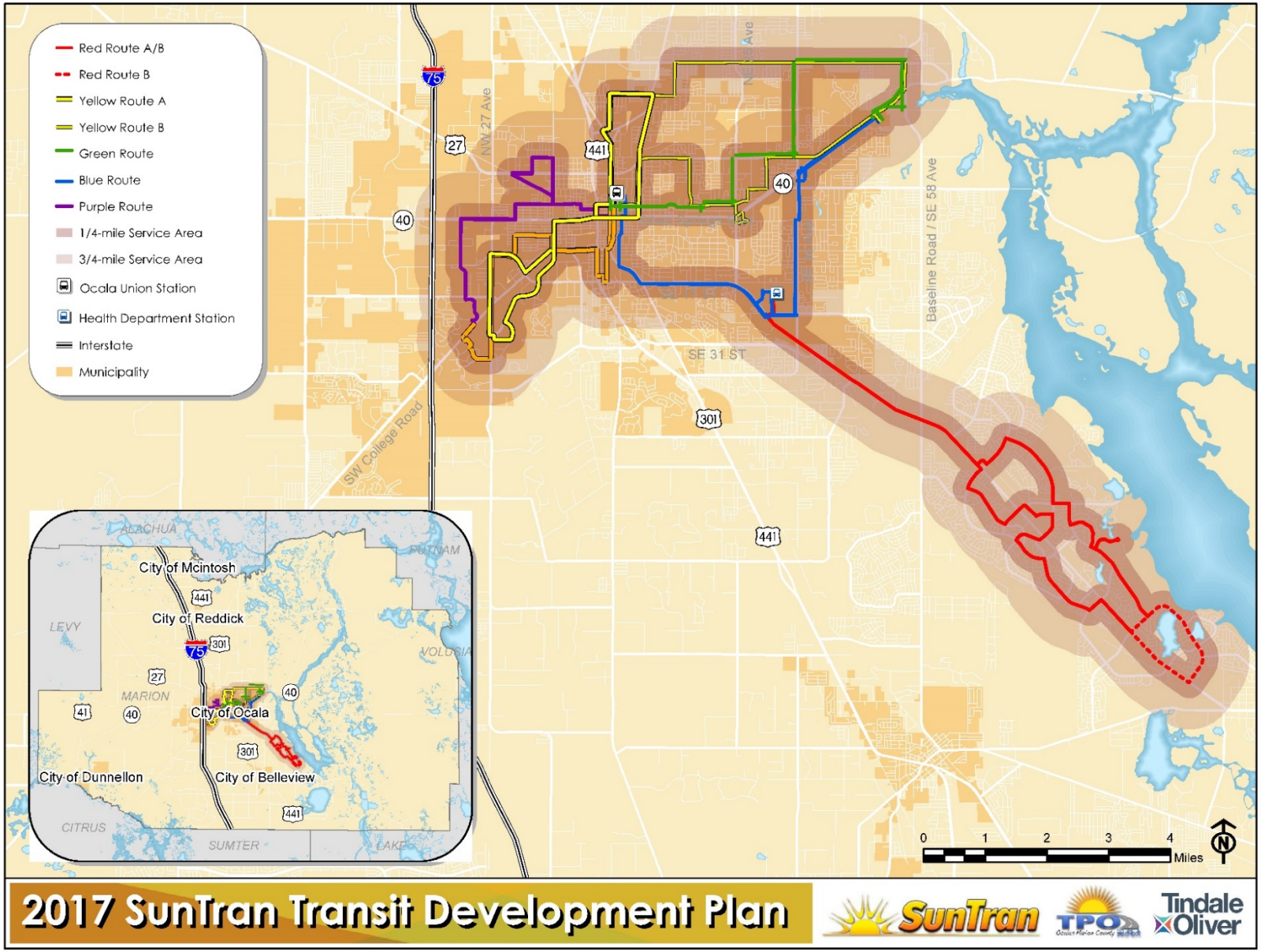


Table 3-1: SunTran Fixed-Route Service Description

Route #	Route Color	Key Location/Corridors Served	Frequency (min)	Hours
1	Green	Silver Springs Walmart, Coehadjoe Park, Booster Stadium, 36th Avenue KMart, One-Stop Work Force Center, Skylark Plaza, Elite Gymnastics, Ocala Shopping Center, MTI High School, Cascades Office Complex, **Downtown Transfer Station**. *(Silver Springs State Park only on request)*	60–70	5:00 AM–10:00 PM
2	Blue	Silver Springs Walmart, Shoppes of Silver Springs Plaza, Appleton Museum, Too Your Health Spa, 40 East Shopping Center, YMCA and Jervey Gantt Park, **Marion County Health Department Transfer Station**, **Downtown Transfer Station**. *(Silver Springs State Park and Trinity Villas only on request)*	60–70	5:00 AM–10:00 PM
3	Purple	Central Florida Community College, Balcony Gymnastics, Cheney Brothers and Golden Flake, Capris Furniture, Too Your Health Spa II, Ocala Housing Authority, Lillian Bryant Park, Howard Middle School, Hampton Aquatic Fun Center, Howard Academy, Court House, and **Downtown Transfer Station**.	60–70	5:00 AM–10:00 PM
4	Orange	Paddock Mall, Publix shopping center, Easy Street, Walmart, KMart Shopping Center, Gateway Plaza, Ocala Police Department, Marion County Adult Education Center, Compass Health & Fitness, Munroe Regional and Ocala Regional Medical Centers, Downtown Square, **Downtown Transfer Station**	60–70	5:00 AM–10:00 PM
5	Red	Lockheed Martin, Ralph Russell Field, Heather Island Plaza, Silver Springs Shores Walmart, Shores Landing Shopping Center, Spring Shores Plaza, Silver Springs Shores Community Center, Crystal Square Shopping Center, Baseline Road Trailhead, Skate Mania, Rotary Sportsplex, Forest High School, Cedar Shores Shopping Center, Dayco, **Marion County Health Department Transfer Station**. *(Silver Springs Shores Post Office only on request. B sub-route - Lake Weir High School Mon-Fri, August-May at 9:28 AM and 4:05 PM only)*	120–140 (alternating at 60–70)	A: 5:45 AM–10:00 PM B: 4:45 AM–8:47 PM
6	Yellow	A – Vanguard High School, Shady Oaks Mall, Easy Street Walmart, Target, **Downtown Transfer Station** B – Vanguard High School, Pearl Britain Plaza, Coehadjoe Park, Silver Springs Walmart, Six Gun Plaza, Appleton Museum, 36th Avenue KMart, library, Veterans Memorial Park, McPherson Government Complex, DMV, Tuscawilla Park, **Downtown Transfer Station**	120–140 (overlap at 60–70)	A: 5:00 AM–9:25 PM B: 6:00 AM–10:00 PM

Source: SunTran website

Fares

The base fare for most SunTran passengers along all routes is $1.50. Discounts are available for youth/students, older adults, individuals with disabilities, Medicare cardholders, veterans, and children ages 5 and younger. Veterans are eligible for the reduced fare starting June 1, 2015, and must show a valid military or Veterans Administration ID card to receive the discount. Youth and students must be ages 6–19 and hold a current Marion County student ID card or proof of age to receive a discount. Older adults must be at least age 65 to receive a discount. Medicare cardholders must present their cards as proof to receive a discount. Children ages 5 and younger ride for free when accompanied by a paying adult. Monthly passes are available for regular riders, youth/students, older adults, and individuals with disabilities. Table 3-2 lists the fare structure for SunTran services.

Table 3-2: SunTran Fares and Passes

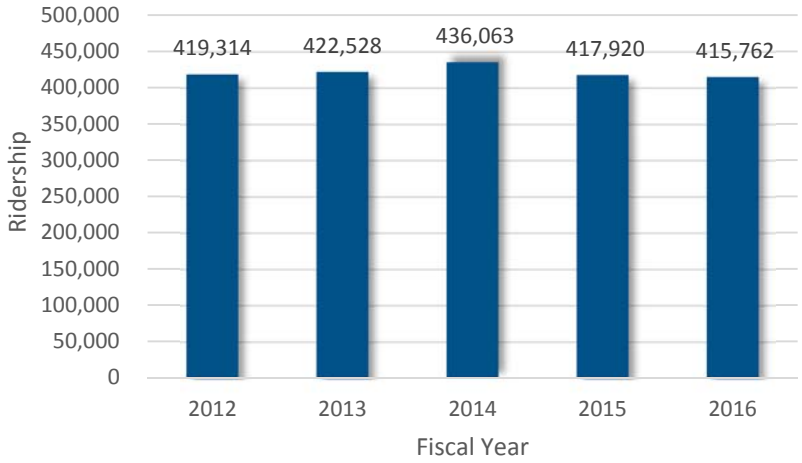
Category	Fare	Monthly Pass
Regular Fare	$1.50	$45
Youth/Student Fare (w/ valid ID)	$1.10	$34
Senior/Disabled Fare	$0.75	$23
Medicare Card Holders (w/ valid card)	$0.75	-
Veteran Fare (w/ valid ID)	$0.75	-
Children 5 & Younger (accompanied w/ adult)	FREE	-

Source: SunTran website

Ridership Trends

SunTran ridership decreased by less than 1 percent between 2012 and 2016, peaking in 2014 with more than 436,000 passenger trips (see Figure 3-1). Seasonally, ridership tends to peak during the summer and fall, especially from August to October. In examining ridership data from 2014 (listed in Table 3-3), the routes with the highest service levels also had the highest ridership. The Green route had approximately 385 boardings per day, followed by the Orange and Blue routes with 315 and 312, respectively, and the Purple route with 265. The weekday system average was 210 boardings per day. The Green route had the highest productivity, with almost 23 boardings per hour, followed by the Orange and Blue routes, each with approximately 17 per hour. The Purple and Yellow A routes each had approximately 15 boardings per hour, and the remaining routes all had approximately 10 boardings per hour.

Figure 3-1: SunTran Passenger Trips 2012–2016



Source: SunTran 2014 data

Table 3-3: Weekday Performance Statistics by Route

Route	Weekday Service Hours	Average Weekday Boardings	Weekday Boardings per Hour
Green Route	17	384.8	22.6
Orange Route	18.1	314.9	17.4
Blue Route	18.7	312.4	16.7
Purple Route	17.8	264.9	14.9
Yellow Route A	8.5	125.3	14.8
Yellow Route B	9.1	93.9	10.4
Red Route A	9.5	96.4	10.2
Red Route B	8.8	88.4	10.0

Source: SunTran 2014 data

Planned Transit Services

In 2015, public meetings were held to discuss potential improvements to multimodal facilities on SR 40 just northeast of the Ocala CBD. The impetus for this discussion was the broader study by the Ocala/Marion County TPO to develop potential solutions to convert a 1.5-mile section of SR 40 (Silver Springs Boulevard) into a livable and walkable thoroughfare and provide better access to the State park and surrounding land uses. The study kicked off in June 2015, and in December 2015 a public alternatives meeting was held to provide an update on the results. The study is in the process of further analyzing the alternatives, reviewing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) redevelopment plans for the State park, and public, and stakeholder and government agency inputs. Depending on the final alternative chosen, the routes of the Yellow or Blue fixed-bus routes may be affected or potentially may include service expansions.

In the Ocala/Marion County TPO's 2035 LRTP, the transit needs plan proposes several areas of service expansions for both bus and rail transit. For bus transit, expansions in bus service are identified for both the eastern and western areas of Ocala and the southern parts of Marion County. Additionally, dedicated bus lanes are proposed on US 441 and SR/CR 464. For rail transit, proposed service includes

both light rail and commuter rail services. Specifically, light rail is proposed along SR/CR 464 and commuter rail is proposed along US 301 from Sumter County to Downtown Ocala.

Transit Vehicles

To operate fixed-route services, SunTran maintains a fleet of 10 buses. All buses are fully accessible for patrons in wheelchairs. SunTran also has two ADA-accessible vans, which are used to provide demand-response service. These vans, however, are not a part of the dedicated fleet. An inventory of vehicles for fixed-route services is provided in Table 3-4.

Table 3-4: SunTran Vehicle Inventory (2015)

Bus #	Make	Year	Length	Seating Capacity	Standing Capacity
1	Gillig Low Floor 29	2002	29	28	15
2	Gillig Low Floor 29	2002	29	28	15
3	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
4	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
5	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
6	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
7	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
8	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
9	Gillig Low Floor 34	2007	34	32	15
10	Gillig Flow Floor 34	2013	34	32	15

Source: 2015 NTD report

Other Transportation Service Providers

Other private and public agencies offer transportation services for specific client groups, as shown in Table 3-5. These private transportation providers were contacted for general information about the services offered, and the information provided is summarized in the table.

Table 3-5 Other Transportation Service Providers

Name	Type	Ownership	Service Area	County Agrmt?	Service Period	Service Frequency/ Availability	Address & Phone	Vehicles	Seating Capacity	Wheel Chair Equipped?	Reg. Fare
Amtrak	Fixed-route bus shuttle	Intercity bus/train	All US		365 days	2 set trips per day	531 NE 1st Ave, Ocala, FL 34470 (352) 629-9863	2 bus shuttles	55	No	Must be booked to destinations beyond immediate connection cities
Greyhound Bus Lines	Fixed-route bus	Intercity bus	All US		365 days	Few set trips daily	4032 Hwy 326, W Ocala, FL 34470 (352) 732-2677	5 buses	55	No	Varies; $12+
Marion County Fire Rescue*	Emergency ambulance svcs	Dept. of county govt.	Marion Co.	Yes	365 days	24/7	2631 SE Third St, Ocala, FL 34471 (352) 291-8000	177 ALS vehicles, 23 ambulances	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lake Limo Shuttle LLC	Livery svcs, airport transp.	Private	SW Marion Co., Central Fla.		365 days	N/A	Eustis, FL 32726 (352) 742-2808	Varies	Varies	N/A	Varies
Leopard Medical Transport	Non-emergency medical transport	Private	Central Fla.		365 days	N/A	1848 NE Jacksonville Rd. Ocala, FL 34470 (352) 732-6484	N/A	N/A	Yes	Varies
Pronto Limousine Service	Livery svcs, airport transp.	Private	Marion Co.		365 days	24/7	3331 SW 9th Ave, Ocala, FL 34471 (352) 427-2942	8 varied vehicles	1-32 passengers, depends on vehicle		Varies
Stagecoach Transp.	Livery svcs, airport transp.	Private	Central Fla.		365 days	24/7	8377 SW 56th Terr, Ocala, FL 34476 (352) 854-6642	Varies	1-7 passengers, depends on vehicle		Varies
Uber	Taxi/ rideshare	Private	Ocala + radius around city		365 days, subject to availability	Subject to availability	301 Vermont St, San Francisco, CA 94103 (800) 353-UBER	Varies, typically passenger cars	Varies, typically 4-7		Varies, estimated $35 for SW Ocala to NE Ocala

*Marion County Fire Rescue became the countywide ambulance transport provider on Oct. 1, 2008, when the former ambulance service, known as the Emergency Medical Services Alliance dissolved.

Trend and Peer System Review

To assess how efficiently SunTran supplies fixed-route transit service and how effective those services meet the needs of the area, a trend analysis of critical performance indicators was conducted to examine the performance of its fixed-route services over a four-year period. To complete this trend analysis, data from the Florida Transit Information System (FTIS) were used, which includes validated NTD data for fiscal years 2012–2015 (data prior to 2012 were not available). Using the same measures, the peer system review analysis was conducted to compare various SunTran fixed-route performance characteristics to a group of transit peers using the most recent data at the time of the analysis, 2014 NTD data. Various performance measures were used to present the data that relate to overall system performance. Three categories of indicators and performance measures were analyzed for the trend and peer analysis of the existing transit service:

- **General performance measures** indicate the quantity of service supply, passenger and fare revenue generation, and resource input.
- **Effectiveness measures** indicate the extent to which the service is effectively provided; can be used to implement goals towards improving the quality of service and customer satisfaction and increasing the market share of transit.
- **Efficiency measures** indicate the extent to which cost efficiency is achieved, i.e., costs in relation to benefit; can be used to implement goals towards long-term viability and stability of the service.

The trend and peer system review analyses are organized by the type of measure or indicator and include statistics, figures, and tables to illustrate SunTran's performance over the past five years and how SunTran compares to selected peers. The selection process for the peer system review is described first, followed by a summary of highlights from the trend and peer review analyses. More complete details of the performance review by performance measure can be found in Appendix B.

Peer System Selection

The fixed-route peer system selection was conducted using 2014 NTD data available in the FTIS database. The 2014 data for all systems reported in NTD were then compared with 2014 data for SunTran. The pool of possible peers was assessed and subsequently scored through an objective assessment of nine standard variables in the NTD:

- Geography (southeastern US)
- Average speed (RM/RH)
- Passenger trips
- Revenue miles
- Service area population
- Service area population density
- Total operating expense

- Vehicles operated in maximum service
- Revenue hours

First, the peer group selection was based on geographic location (southeastern states), which include Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Fixed-route systems operating in these states were added to the pool of possible peers and then were analyzed based on the eight remaining criteria.

A potential peer received 1.0 point when one of the eight criteria was within 1 standard deviation of SunTran's performance value. In addition, a peer received 0.5 point for each criteria that fell within 2 standard deviations of SunTran's value. Table 3-6 lists the selected peer systems for the peer system review analysis.

Table 3-6: Selected Peer Systems for SunTran Peer Review Analysis

Agency Name	Location
Albany Transit System	Albany, GA
Johnson City Transit System	Johnson City, TN
Jackson Transit Authority	Jackson, TN
City of Rome Transit Department	Rome, GA
Kingsport Area Transit System	Kingsport, TN
Broward County Community Bus Service	Plantation, FL
Jonesboro Economical Transportation System	Jonesboro, AR

Selected Performance Measures

Table 3-7 lists the 23 performance measures by category used in the peer and trend analysis. A review of SunTran trends and how SunTran compares to its peers is presented by performance measure type, beginning with General Performance Measures and followed by Efficiency Performance Measures and Effectiveness Performance Measures. Some performance measures were eliminated from this analysis due to gaps in data.

Table 3-7: Performance Measures by Category

General Performance Measures
Service Area Population
Passenger Trips
Passenger Miles
Vehicle Miles
Revenue Miles
Total Operating Expense
Vehicles Available in Maximum Service
Total Gallons Consumed
Effectiveness
Vehicle Miles per Capita
Passenger Trips per Capita
Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour
Vehicle System Failures
Revenue Miles between Failures
Efficiency
Operating Expense per Capita
Operating Expense per Passenger Trip
Operating Expense per Passenger Mile
Operating Expense per Revenue Mile
Operating Expenses per Revenue Hour
Farebox Recovery Ratio (%)
Revenue Miles per Vehicle Mile
Revenue Miles per Total Vehicles
Vehicle Miles per Gallon
Average Fare

Summary Results of Fixed-Route Trend and Peer Analysis

As previously discussed, an analysis of SunTran's fixed-route bus service from 2012 through 2015 was conducted using the most recent four-year NTD data available. Although the trend analysis is only one aspect of an overall transit performance evaluation, when combined with the peer review analysis, the results provide a starting point for understanding the efficiency and effectiveness of a transit system.

Trend Analysis Summary

- **Service Supply** – Vehicle miles per capita (service supply) increased by more than 96 percent as of 2014, indicating that SunTran's services increased during the analysis period. This corresponded with mixed levels of consumption rates as highlighted in service consumption.
- **Service Consumption** – Passenger trips per capita rose more than 75 percent over the 4-year period. However, passenger trips computed per revenue mile and revenue hour fell by more than 12 percent and 13 percent, respectively, indicating that SunTran is supplying more service but may have room for improved efficiency.

- **Quality of Service** – Although the number of system vehicle failures increased over the six-year period, the revenue miles between failures increased. This indicates that the system's service quality experienced a slight improvement during this period.
- **Cost Efficiency** – All cost-related metrics increased for SunTran over the four-year period, suggesting an overall increase in operation costs.

Table 3-8 summarizes the trend analysis of SunTran's existing fixed-route system in terms of the percent that each performance measure changed between 2012 and 2015.

Table 3-8: Summary of SunTran Trends

Indicators/Measures by Type	% Change 2012–2015
General Performance Measures	
Service Area Population	-27.9%*
Passenger Trips	-1.1%
Passenger Miles	8.6%
Vehicle Miles	10.7%
Revenue Miles	12.5%
Total Operating Expense	34.9%
Vehicles Available in Maximum Service	11.1%
Total Gallons Consumed	11.6%
Effectiveness Measures	
Service Supply	
Vehicle Miles per Capita	96.9%
Service Consumption	
Passenger Trips per Capita	75.9%
Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile	-12.1%
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	-13.15 %
Quality of Service	
Vehicle System Failures	25.68 %
Revenue Miles between Failures	-10.49 %
Efficiency Measures	
Cost Efficiency	
Operating Expense per Capita	99.5%
Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	13.4%
Operating Expense per Passenger Mile	3.7%
Operating Expense per Revenue Mile	-0.3%
Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	-1.5%
Operating Ratios	
Farebox Recovery Ratio (%)	-16.9%
Vehicle Utilization	
Revenue Miles per Vehicle Miles	1.6%
Revenue Miles per Total Vehicles	1.2%
Energy Utilization	
Vehicle Miles per Gallon	-0.9%
Fare	
Average Fare	3.5%

* 2009-2015 data, -43.78% from 2012-2015.

Peer System Analysis Summary

The following summarizes the peer review analysis of performance indicators prepared for SunTran.

- **General Performance Measures** – SunTran placed below the peer mean for most general performance measures with three exceptions—revenue miles, total operating expense, and total gallons consumed). When below the peer mean, SunTran placed varying distances from the mean, with an average difference of 21.6 percent below the mean; however, these variances ranged widely from 6.36 percent below (vehicle miles) to 76.95 percent below (service area population). The measures with the largest distance from the peer mean can likely be attributed to a lower service area population/density, either fewer passenger trips or shorter passenger trips, as well as a smaller vehicle fleet.
- **Effectiveness Measures** – SunTran placed consistently below the peer mean for most effectiveness measures except for the two using distance in the numerator (vehicle miles per capita and revenue miles between failures). Higher vehicle miles per capita indicates that the supply of service is more than typically experienced in other similar areas, and higher-than-average vehicle miles between failures may be a product greater service supply, a greater distance traveled in the system overall, better road conditions, or just simply better vehicle care. This is in line with the lower than the peer average for the number of vehicle failures. The three remaining service consumption measures were all between 23 percent and 28 percent below the peer mean, indicating that SunTran services a less transit-dependent area, as well as fewer passengers onboard at a given time suggesting there is room for improvement for ridership levels.
- **Efficiency Measures** – The cost efficiency measures provide varying indications of areas of comparative strength and others needing improvement. For each of the operating expense measures examined, SunTran placed higher than the peer means by at least 12 percent (per capita) and as much as 40 percent (per passenger mile). However, SunTran's farebox recovery is approximately 11 percent above the mean, indicating that fares cover a comparably larger portion of operating expenses that the peer systems. This may be partially due to higher average fares, which are 71.15 percent higher in SunTran's system than the peer mean. As for vehicle utilization, SunTran is practically on par with the peer mean for revenue miles per vehicle mile, yet their revenue miles per total vehicles is more than 50 percent above the peer mean suggesting that their already identified smaller fleet size is resulting in higher than average use per vehicle.

Table 3-9: Peer System Analysis

Indicators/Measures	% from Peer Mean
General Performance Measures	
Service Area Population	-77.0%
Passenger Trips	-22.2%
Passenger Miles	-40.6%
Vehicle Miles	-6.4%
Revenue Miles	11.9 %
Total Operating Expense	6.6%
Vehicles Available in Maximum Service	-59.1%
Total Gallons Consumed	14.1%
Effectiveness Measures	
Service Supply	
Vehicle Miles per Capita	43.4%
Service Consumption	
Passenger Trips per Capita	-27.3%
Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile	-25.5%
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	-23.1%
Quality of Service	
Vehicle System Failures	-11.2%
Revenue Miles between Failures	2.8%
Efficiency Measures	
Cost Efficiency	
Operating Expense per Capita	12.3%
Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	31.3%
Operating Expense per Passenger Mile	40.3%
Operating Expense per Revenue Mile	13.6%
Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	14.2%
Operating Ratios	
Farebox Recovery Ratio (%)	11.2%
Vehicle Utilization	
Revenue Miles per Vehicle Mile	-0.3%
Revenue Miles per Total Vehicles	54.6%
Energy Utilization	
Vehicle Miles per Gallon	-22.7%
Fare	
Average Fare	71.2%

Section 4: Public Involvement

Public involvement is an ongoing process that consists of continuously receiving and accumulating feedback about transit in Marion County. One of the first activities in this process was to prepare a PIP to plan all public outreach activities to be undertaken during the development of the SunTran TDP. The PIP provides numerous opportunities for involvement by the general public and representatives of local agencies and organizations. A copy of the PIP developed for the TDP is included in Appendix C.

The remainder of this section outlines the public involvement activities that have been conducted for the TDP and summarizes the input received. The results of all public involvement activities are later consulted in the situation appraisal and used to develop and evaluate the 10-year strategic transit plan for Marion County.

Direct and Information Distribution Public Involvement Techniques

Several public involvement techniques are documented in the SunTran PIP to ensure the opportunity for a range of community stakeholders to actively participate in the plan development process. The public involvement techniques used in developing the SunTran TDP are identified by two major categories:

- **Direct involvement techniques** include activities that directly engage the public and stakeholders in "hands-on" workshops and/or discussions about the project.
- **Information distribution techniques** include the use of materials or methods used to inform the general public and stakeholders about the project.

The direct involvement and information distribution techniques included in the development of the SunTran TDP PIP are summarized in Table 4-1. Table 4-2 summarizes the public involvement activities that took place.

Table 4-1: Summary of Direct Involvement and Information Distribution Techniques

Direct Involvement Techniques	Information Distribution Techniques
• TDP Review Committee meetings • TPO Board visioning workshop • On-board bus survey • Stakeholder interviews • Discussion group workshops • Non-rider discussion group workshops • Bus operator interviews/survey • Public workshops • Public listening sessions • Public input survey (2 Phases) • Presentations to boards and organizations	• Project website, continuously updated to provide information and materials during development of SunTran TDP • Email blast campaigns • Social media, including Facebook, Twitter

Table 4-2: Public Involvement Activities Summary

Task	Date	Status	Attendance/Outreach
Committees and Board Transit Workshops			
TDP Review Committee	12/2016-6/2017	Completed	6
TPO Board Visioning Workshop	2/28/2017	Completed	7
Discussion Group Workshops			
Social Services and Education	2/1/2017	Completed	7
Government and Business Leaders	2/1/2017	Completed	9
Bus Riders	2/1/2017	Completed	12
Grassroots Events			
Poinciana Heights Neighborhood Meeting	3/21/2017	Completed	30
Ocala 2035 Leadership Group Meeting	3/23/2017	Completed	18
SR 200 Coalition	5/8/2017	Completed	75
Stakeholder Interviews	12/2016-2/2017	Completed	10
Bus Operator Workshop	2/1/2017	Completed	11
Phase I Public Workshops			
Walmart Super Center	2/21/2017	Completed	25
Ed Croskey Recreational Center	2/21/2017	Completed	8
Phase II Public Workshops			
Easy Street	5/17/2017	Completed	18
Walmart Super Center	5/17/2017	Completed	33
Public Input Surveys			
Public Input Survey Phase I	12/2016-2/2017	Completed	315
Public Input Survey Phase II	5/2017-6/2017	Completed	218
On-Board Bus Surveys	12/2-7/2016	Completed	538
Email Blast	12/2016-6/2017	Completed	97*
TDP Website Hits	11/2016-6/2017	Completed	562
Twitter Tweets	11/2016-6/2017	Completed	29
Facebook Engagements	11/2016-6/2017	Completed	1,585
Total			**3,613**

*Number of direct email contacts; some organizations forwarded blasts to their entire organization, resulting in a significantly higher number of persons receiving email.

Summary of Phase I Public Involvement Activities

TDP Review Committee Meetings

A TDP Review Committee was established to help guide the overall TDP update effort. To meet FDOT requirements, representatives from the Ocala/Marion TPO, Marion Transit Services, City of Ocala, Marion County Board of County Commissioners, and SunTran were invited to participate on the Review Committee. The Review Committee held meetings throughout the project to review and discuss key TDP objectives, the public involvement schedule, project material, and TPO Board workshop format/strategy and review TDP draft material.

On-Board Bus Survey

An on-board bus survey was conducted in December 2016 to collect information on socio-demographics, travel behavior, and service needs of current bus riders. The method used for surveying

bus riders was an in-person, 24-question Android tablet-based survey instrument administered to passengers aboard SunTran bus routes. The survey app was programmed with directed branching to account for prior responses so that questions were geared to the patron. A Spanish version of the survey also was used for riders with limited English proficiency. In addition, paper surveys were made available for passengers. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix C. The on-board survey was distributed by a team of trained survey personnel who completed an orientation session prior to the survey to instruct them on duties and responsibilities and to discuss possible issues or concerns they might have while conducting the survey.

A total of 538 SunTran passengers responded to the survey, with approximately 25 completed using the Spanish version of the survey instrument. The survey was administered in short form and long form, which were completed by 538 and 221 passengers, respectively. The long form was administered by default to any passenger who wanted to participate (which included all questions on the short form). The long survey consisted of questions to identify passenger travel characteristics, rider socio-demographics, and customer service satisfaction. Passenger travel characteristics and behaviors were identified by questions that included:

- Current reason for riding bus
- Current method for reaching bus
- Current method for reaching final destination
- If a wheelchair was used to board bus
- List of bus routes used when taking a one-way trip
- Number of days a week that include bus trips
- Most important reason for riding bus
- History of SunTran use
- Fare type used
- Access to other modes of transportation
- Duration of residence in Marion County

Socio-demographic information was identified by questions that included:

- Possession of driver's license
- Household vehicle availability
- Age
- Gender
- Race/ethnic origin
- Household income
- ZIP code of primary residence

Customer service information was identified by questions that included:

- Preference for receiving information about SunTran services

- Bus service experience
- Recommendations for service improvements
- Use of wireless internet services
- Satisfaction with overall SunTran bus service

The remaining questions on the long form ask passengers to consider their use of the SunTran system as a whole, unless specifically noted. The short form was administered if a passenger had already completed the long-form survey on a prior SunTran trip. The short-form survey (first five questions of the long form) asked passengers to specifically respond in the context of their current, one-way trip.

Tables 4-3 through 4-5 represent the response rate by question, form type, and day of week. As shown in Table 3-3, on average, 479 passengers responded using the long form, for an average completion rate of 94 percent, and 207 responded using the short form, for an average completion rate of 89. In total, 343 surveys (63.8%) were completed on a weekday (57% long form), and 195 surveys (36.2%) were completed on Saturdays (68% short form).

Table 4-3: Rate of Responses Received by Question

Question	Responses Received	
1	490	91.1%
2	482	89.6%
3	467	86.8%
4	484	90.0%
5	478	88.9%
6	220	99.6%
7	216	97.7%
8	219	99.1%
9	219	99.1%
10	219	99.1%
11	218	98.6%
12	219	99.1%
13	216	97.7%
14	213	96.4%
15	212	95.9%
16	210	95.0%
17	209	94.5%
18	131	59.3%
22	209	94.6%
23	209	94.6%
24	209	94.6%
25	198	89.6%
26	201	91.0%
27	186	84.2%

Table 4-4: Survey Responses by Survey Type

Survey Forms Completed	Responses Received	
Long	221	n/a
Short	317	n/a
Total	538	n/a
Response Rate by Survey Type		
Long	479	93.7%
Short	207	89.1%

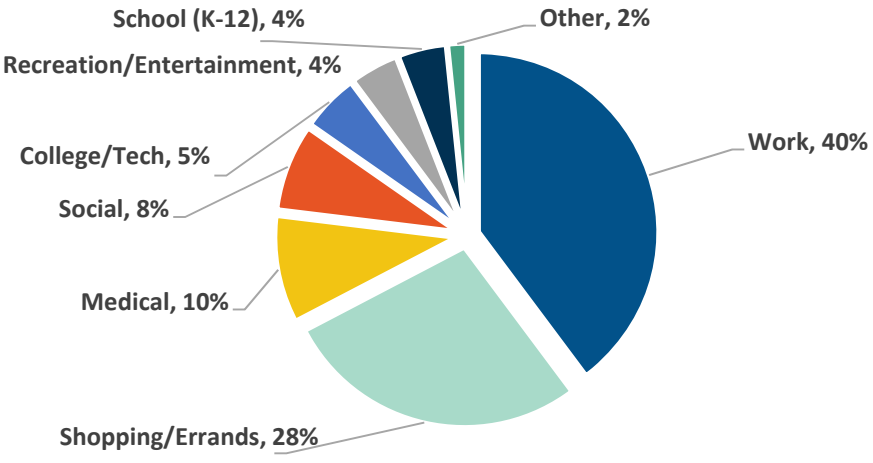
Table 4-5: Completed Surveys by Day of Week

Day	Number Completed	Percent
Saturday	195	36.2%
Weekday	343	63.8%
Total	538	100.0%

Passenger Travel Characteristics and Behaviors

This section identifies characteristics of passenger travel habits, trip origin and destination, and history of using SunTran bus services. Passengers were asked to choose from a list of seven options that describe their current reason for using SunTran bus services (Figure 4-1). A total of 195 passengers (40%) responded that they were using the bus to travel to or from work; 135 passengers (28%) responded that their current use of SunTran bus services was to shop or complete errands. Other common reasons for current trips included travel to medical appointments (10%) and social reasons (8%).

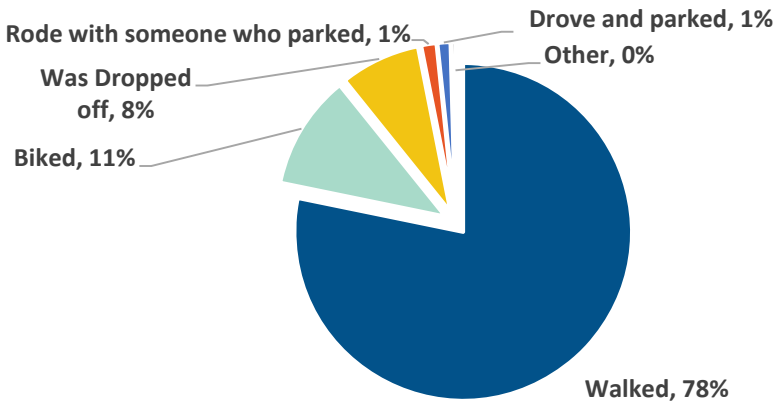
Figure 4-1: What is the main purpose for this trip?



Passengers were asked to identify how they arrived at the bus stop for their current trip (Figure 4-2). A total of 377 passengers (78%) said they walked or used wheelchairs to reach the bus stop; 53 (11%) biked to get to the bus stop; 37 (8%) were dropped off at the bus stop; and 7 (1%) and 6 (1%) rode with someone who parked or drove and parked themselves at the bus stop, respectively.

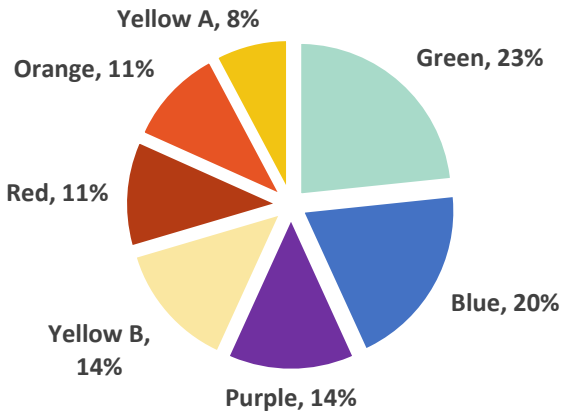
This question also asked passengers to describe how far they had to travel to reach the stop for this current trip if they walked, bicycled, or drove themselves. For the walkers and bicyclists, 295 (75%) traveled 3 blocks or less; more specifically, 30 percent traveled 1 block or less, 31 percent traveled 2 blocks, and 14 percent traveled 3 blocks. For respondents who drove themselves and parked at the bus stop, all reported driving 3 miles or less, with the majority traveling 2 miles (60%).

Figure 4-2: How did you get to the bus, and how far did you travel to get there?



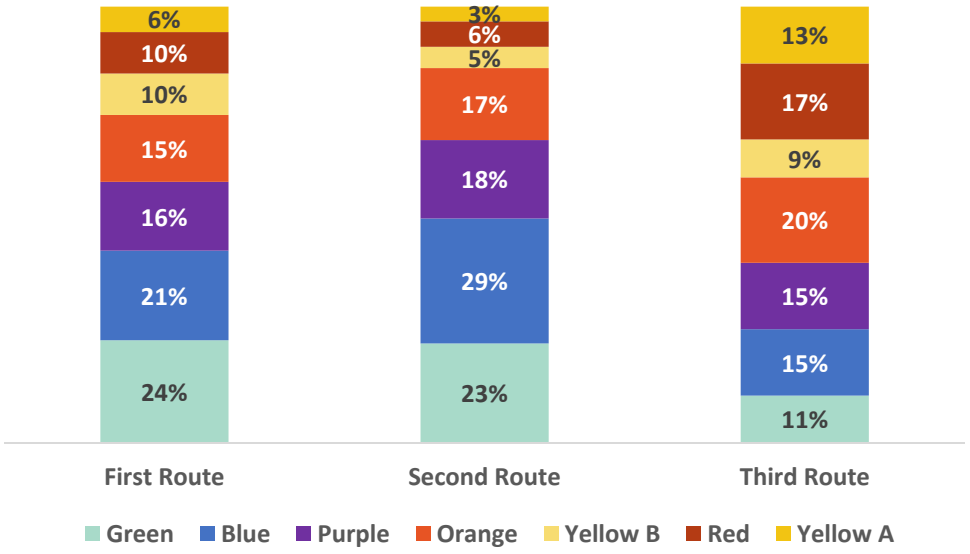
Passengers were asked to list all bus routes in the exact order they would be using them for their current trip. Figure 4-3 summarizes the trips consisting of only one bus route. Of the 463 responses to this question, 257 passengers (56%) reported that they were using only one bus route for their current one-way trip.

Figure 4-3: Summary of trips consisting of only one bus route



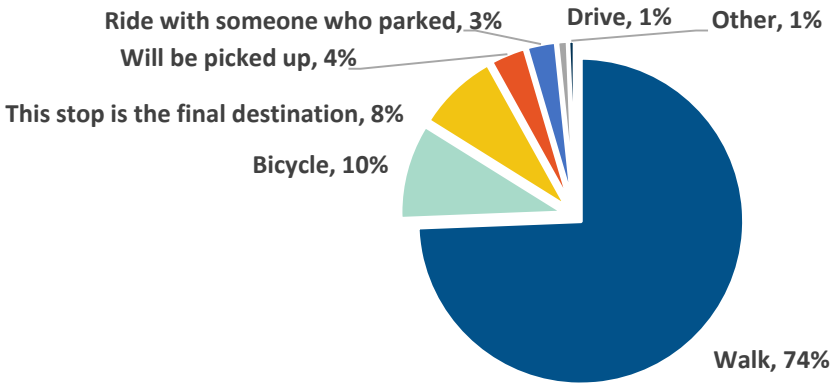
Among the respondents who transferred buses, the Green Route was most frequently the first leg of a one-way trip and the second most common second leg of a one-way trip. The Blue Route was the second most common first leg and most common second leg of a trip. The results are summarized further in Figure 4-4.

Figure 4-4: List all bus routes in the exact order you will use them to make this one-way trip.



Passengers were asked to identify how they intended to get to their final destination after reaching their point of egress (Figure 4-5). A total of 360 passengers (74%) said they would walk or use wheelchairs to reach their final destination, 46 (10%) said they would bike, 39 (8%) said the bus stop was the final destination, and 17 (4%) and 14 (3%) said they would be picked up or get a ride with someone who parked, respectively. This question also asked passengers how far they would have to travel to reach their final destination for this trip if they walked, biked, or drove themselves. For walkers and bicyclists, 271 (74%) would travel 3 blocks or less; more specifically, 119 (34%) said they would travel 1 block or less. Another 26 percent said they would travel 2 blocks, and 13 percent would travel 3 blocks to reach their final destination. For the respondents that would drive themselves, all passengers reported driving 3 miles or less, with the majority traveling 1 or 2 miles (40% each).

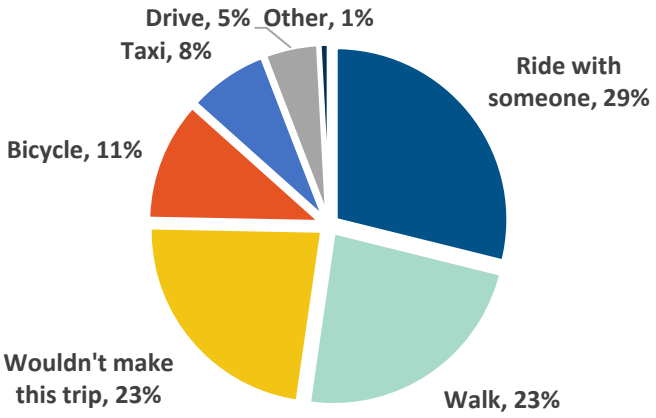
Figure 4-5: When you exit the bus, how will you get to your final destination?



Passengers were asked how they would be making their current one-way trip if not by bus (Figure 4-6). A total of 138 passengers (29%) responded that they would ride with someone instead of using the bus.

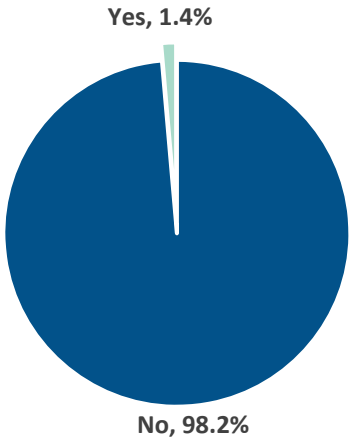
Another 112 passengers (23%) responded that they would walk, and 110 (23%) would not have made the trip; 54 (11%) would bike, and 36 (8%) said they would take a taxi instead. Only 5 percent (24 respondents) responded that they would drive to make this current one-way trip, suggesting that the majority of respondents were highly transit-dependent, at least for this particular trip.

Figure 4-6: How would you make this one-way trip if not by bus?



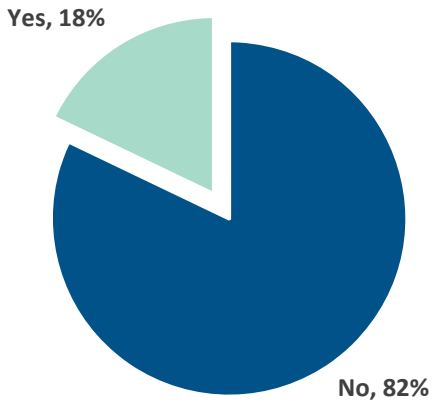
The remaining questions were asked of respondents completing the long-form survey. The next two pertain specifically to the passenger's current trip. Passengers were asked if they used a wheelchair ramp to board the bus for their current trip; 215 (98%) responded that they did not (Figure 4-7).

Figure 4-7: Did you use a wheelchair ramp to board the bus for this trip?



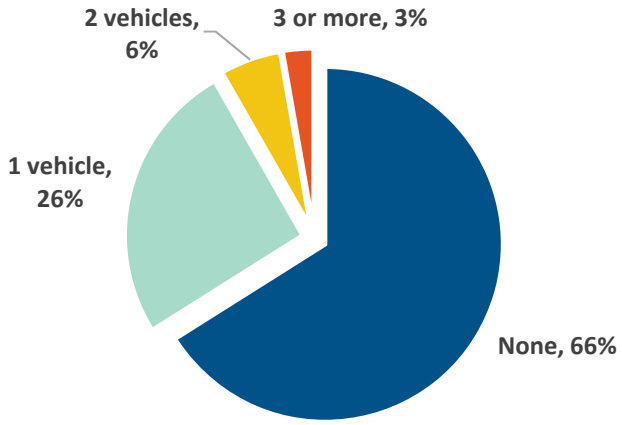
Passengers were asked if they had access to a car that they could have used to make their current trip; 179 (82%) responded that they did not (Figure 4-8).

Figure 4-8: Do you have access to a car or other personal vehicle that you could have used to make this trip?



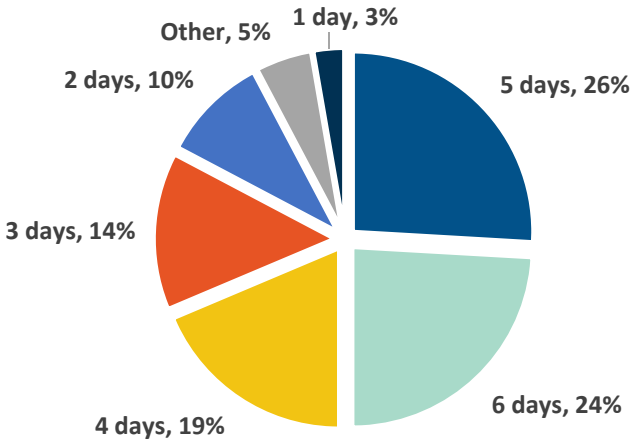
Passengers were asked how many working vehicles their household currently possessed (Figure 4-9). A majority (66%) responded that there were no working vehicles (144), 26 percent (56) reported 1 vehicle, 6 percent (12) reported 2 vehicles, and 3 percent (6) reported 3 or more working vehicles.

Figure 4-9: How many working vehicles (cars, motorcycles, trucks, and vans) are at your home?



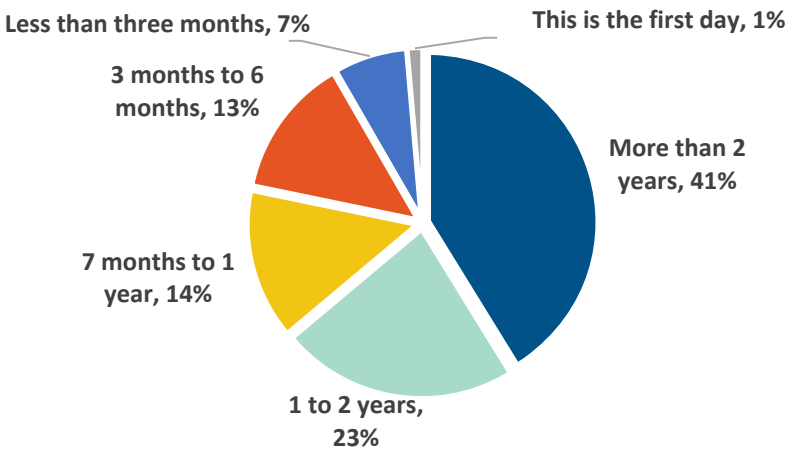
Passengers were asked how many days per week they use SunTran bus services (Figure 4-10). Responses indicate that most passengers use the bus on a regular basis, with 50 percent (110) indicating that they use the bus 5 or more days per week and about one third using it at least 4 or 3 days per week (19% and 14%, respectively). Only 12 percent of respondents (27) used the bus 2 days or less in an average week.

Figure 4-10: On average, how many days a week do you ride the bus?



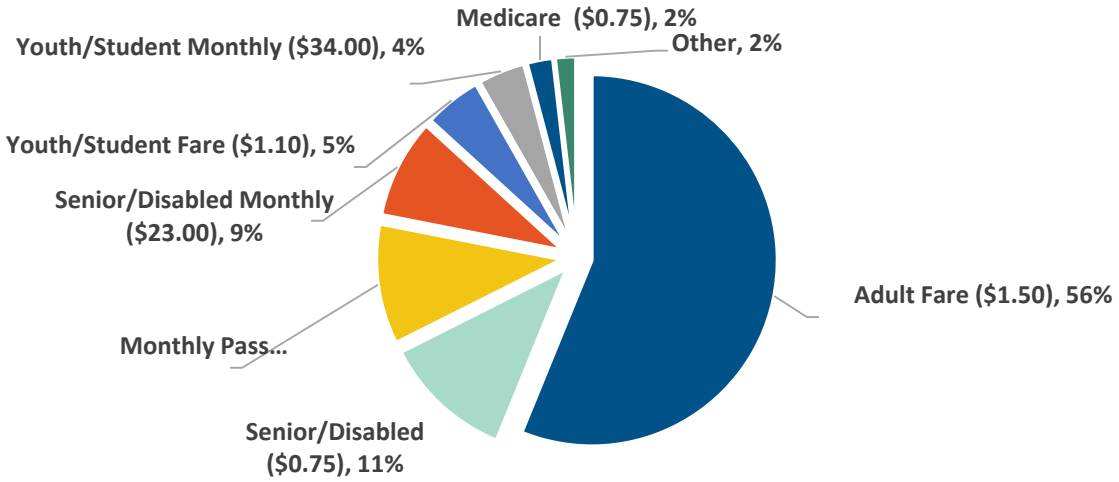
When asked how long they have been using SunTran services, most passengers were long-time users (Figure 4-11). Specifically, 89 passengers (41%) reported using the service for more than 2 years, 49 (23%) reported 1 to 2 years, 31 (14%) reported 7 months to 1 year, and 29 (13%) reported using the service for 3 to 6 months.

Figure 4-11: How long have you been using SunTran bus service?



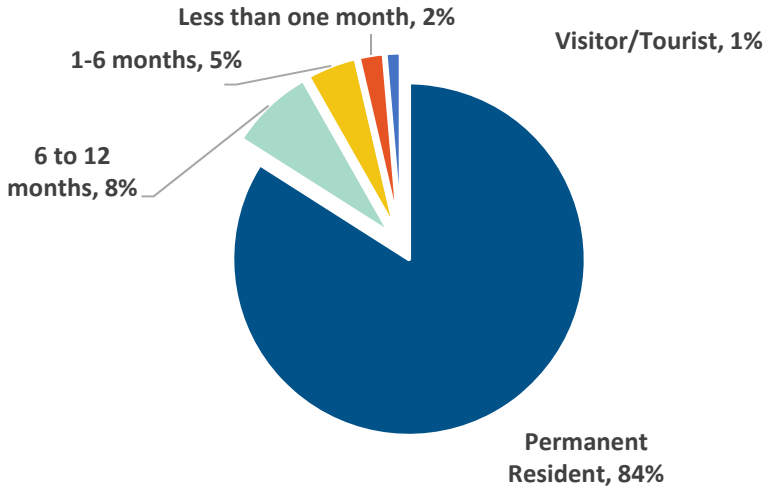
Passengers were asked about the type of fare they typically pay when they ride the bus (Figure 4-12). A total of 123 passengers (56%) typically paid the regular adult, single-ride fare; 25 (11%) paid the senior/disabled fare; 23 (11%) paid with a regular monthly pass; and 19 (9%) paid with a senior/disabled monthly pass. A cumulative 87 percent of fares were regularly paid in adult or senior/disabled regular fares or monthly passes by the surveyed respondents.

Figure 4-12: What type of fare do you usually pay when you ride the bus?



The final question related to passenger travel characteristics and trip behaviors asked passengers how many months of the year they reside in Marion County (Figure 4-13). A total of 184 (84%) of passengers responded that they were permanent and full-year residents; 17 (8%) said 6–12 months; 10 (5%) said 1-6 months; and less than a combined 3 percent said less than 1 month or that they were visitors/tourists.

Figure 4-13: How many months out of the year do you reside in Marion County?



Passenger Socio-Demographic Information

This section identifies socio-demographic characteristics of passengers that use SunTran services, including ethnicity, household income, ZIP code of primary residence, and possession of a driver's license. These types of questions enable SunTran to construct a profile of a typical passenger.

Passengers were asked if they possess a valid driver's license (Figure 4-14). A total of 115 passengers (57%) did not have a valid driver's license, and 86 (43%) did.

Figure 4-14: Do you have a valid driver's license?

Figure 4-15 shows the age profile of SunTran passengers. Most passengers were ages 55–64 years (42 passengers, 20%); 40 (19%) were ages 25–34; 40 (19%) were ages 45-54; 36 (17%) were ages 18–24; and 24 (11%) were ages 35–44.

Figure 4-15: Your age is?

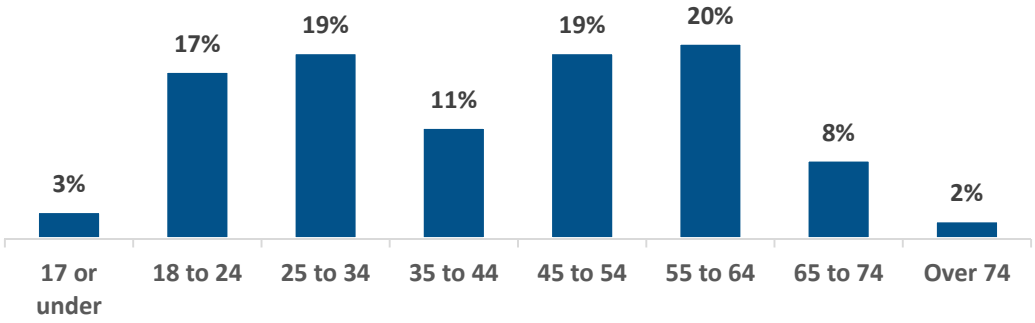
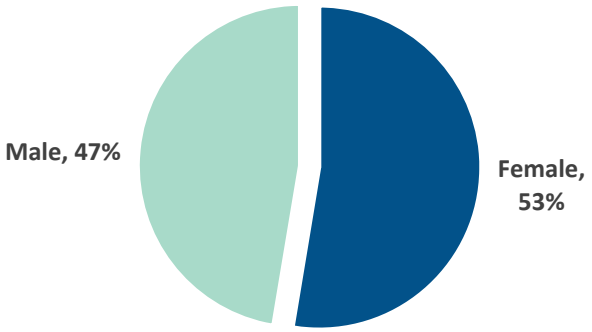


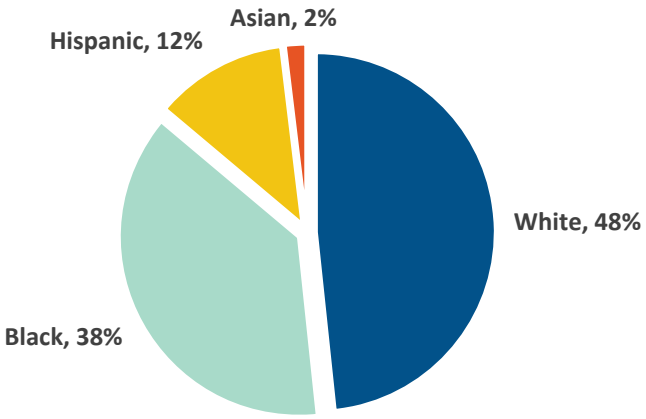
Figure 4-16 shows the gender profile of the SunTran passengers. Most passengers were female 53 percent (110); the remainder were male 47 percent (99).

Figure 4-16: What is your gender?



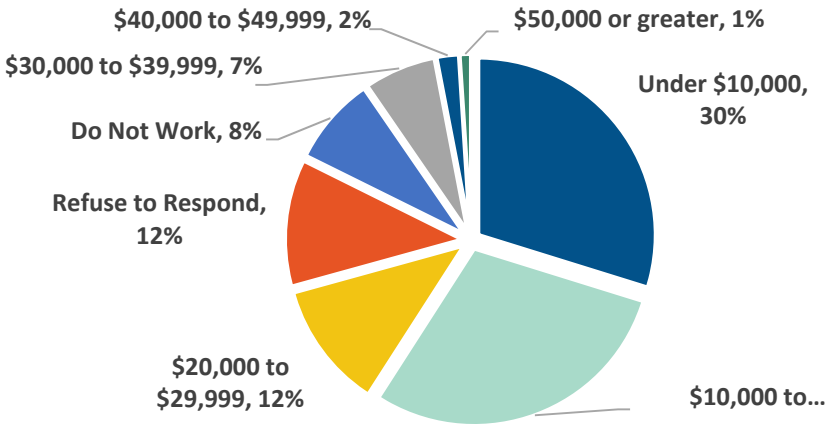
Related to ethnicity, the survey's results indicated that about half (48%) of passengers identify as White, 38 percent as Black, 12 percent as Hispanic, and 2 percent as Asian. Results are shown in Figure 4-17.

Figure 4-17: What is your race or ethnic heritage?



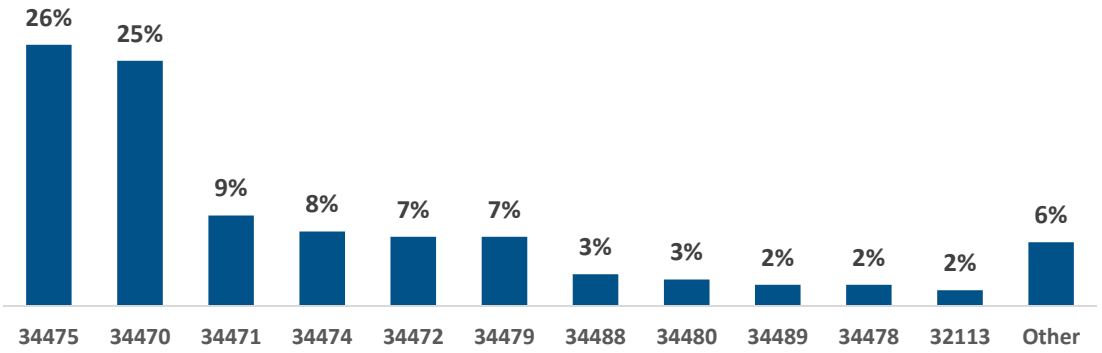
The survey identified the 2015 household income levels of SunTran passengers. Figure 4-18 shows that 59 passengers (30%) had a 2015 household income of less than $10,000, 29 percent (58) had an income of $10,000–$19,000, and 23 (12%) had an income of $20,000–$29,000 in 2015. Approximately 12 percent selected the option of refusing to respond to this question, and 8 percent said they did not have an income in 2015. The remaining 10 percent reported incomes in excess of $30,000 in 2015.

Figure 4-18: What was the range of your total household income for 2015?



On the final question of passenger socio-demographic information, passengers were asked to indicate the ZIP code of their permanent residence (Figure 4-19). Most passengers live in the Ocala area, with a smaller number living further outside the city and some in Silver Springs Shores.

Figure 4-19: What is the ZIP code of your permanent residence?

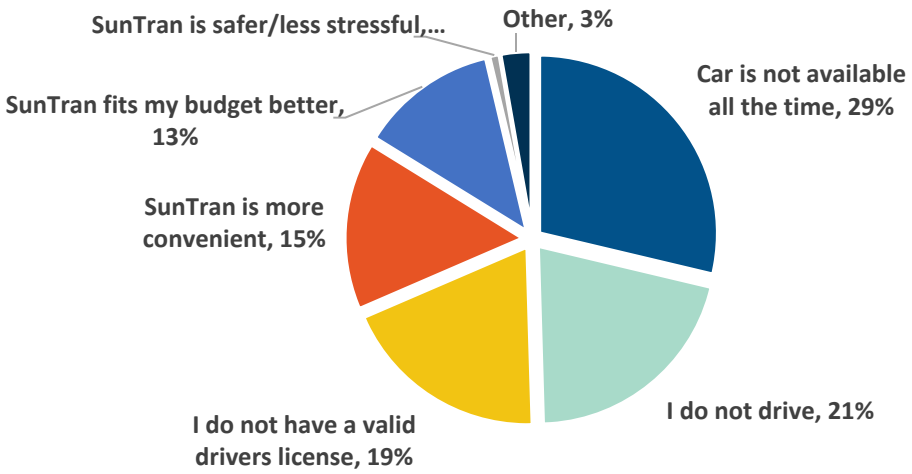


Customer Satisfaction

Customer service and general satisfaction questions identified passenger satisfaction levels, recommendations for service improvements, and overall perception of SunTran services.

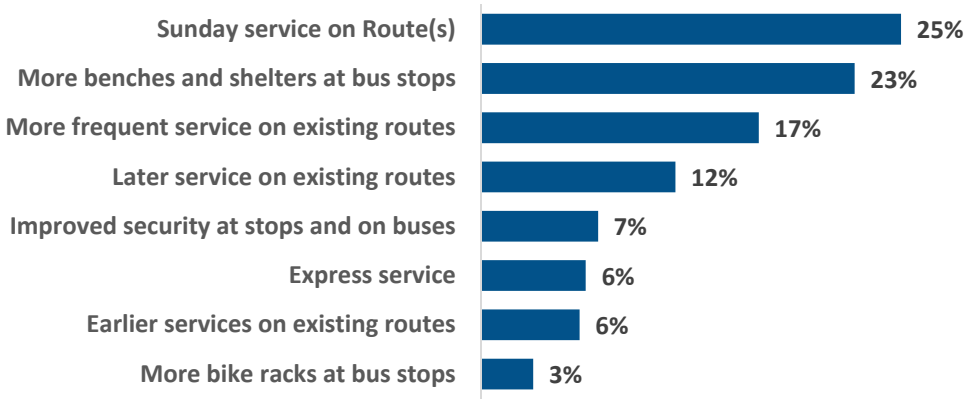
To understand the key reason that many passengers ride the bus, respondents were asked about their primary reason for riding the bus (Figure 4-20). A total of 62 passengers (29%) responded that a car was not always available as their primary reason for riding the bus; 45 (21%) responded that they did not drive; 41 (19%) responded that they did not have a driver's license; 33 (15%) responded that SunTran is more convenient for them; and 27 (13%) responded that SunTran fits their budget better.

Figure 4-20: What is the most important reason you ride the bus?



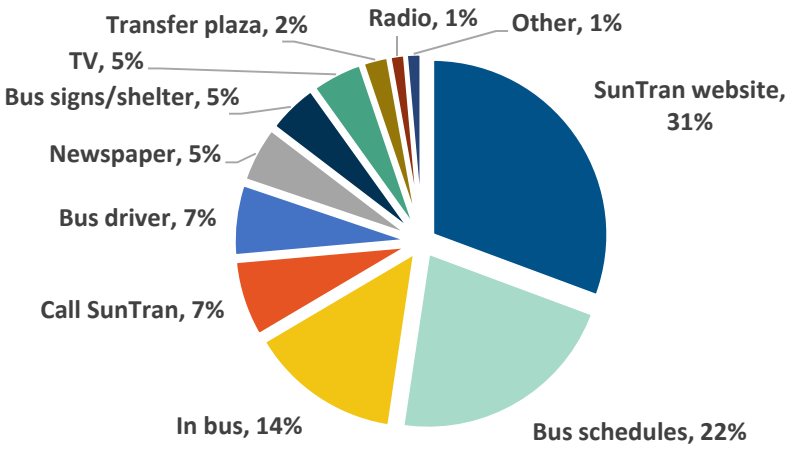
Passengers were asked to indicate three improvements to the current SunTran bus system (Figure 3-21). A total of 136 passengers (25%) mentioned the improvement of offering Sunday service, 121 (23%) mentioned more benches and shelters at bus stops, 90 (17%) mentioned more frequent service, and 63 (12%) mentioned later service on existing routes could be offered as an improvement.

Figure 4-21: Which three of the following improvements do you think is most important?



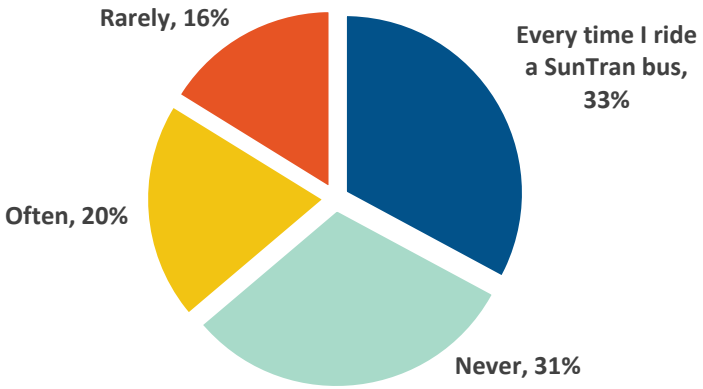
Passengers were asked about their preference for receiving information and alerts from SunTran (Figure 4-22). A total of 65 passengers (31%) responded that they prefer the SunTran website, 46 (22%) said bus schedules, 30 (14%) said in the bus, 15 (7%) preferred calling SunTran, and 14 (7%) preferred the bus driver to provide them information and alerts.

Figure 4-22: How do you prefer to receive information about SunTran services, schedules, and changes?



Passengers were polled to understand how often the wireless internet services were used on SunTran buses (Figure 4-23). A total of 69 passengers (33%) said they used the service every time they rode SunTran; in contrast, 65 (31%) responded that they never use internet service, 42 (20%) said they use it often, and the remaining 34 (16%) said they use the service rarely.

Figure 4-23: How often do you use the wireless internet service available on SunTran buses?



Passengers were asked to rank their satisfaction with SunTran's bus services from a variety of facets (Figure 4-24). Five of the areas scored indicated that at least 80 percent of passengers were satisfied or very satisfied with the service—ease of transfer between buses, time of day earliest buses run on weekdays, overall satisfaction with SunTran, dependability of the buses, and the user friendliness of the bus information. The remainder of the results are summarized in Figure 4-24 and in Table 4-6, which includes the numeric distribution by satisfaction score. In an open field on this question, passengers were allowed to express satisfaction or dissatisfaction of an element of their choice. The factors passengers mentioned they were dissatisfied with or would like to see considered include extending the geographic limits of SunTran services, offering Sunday service, the addition of new bus stops, or minor alterations of existing routes.

Figure 4-24: How satisfied are you with each of the following?

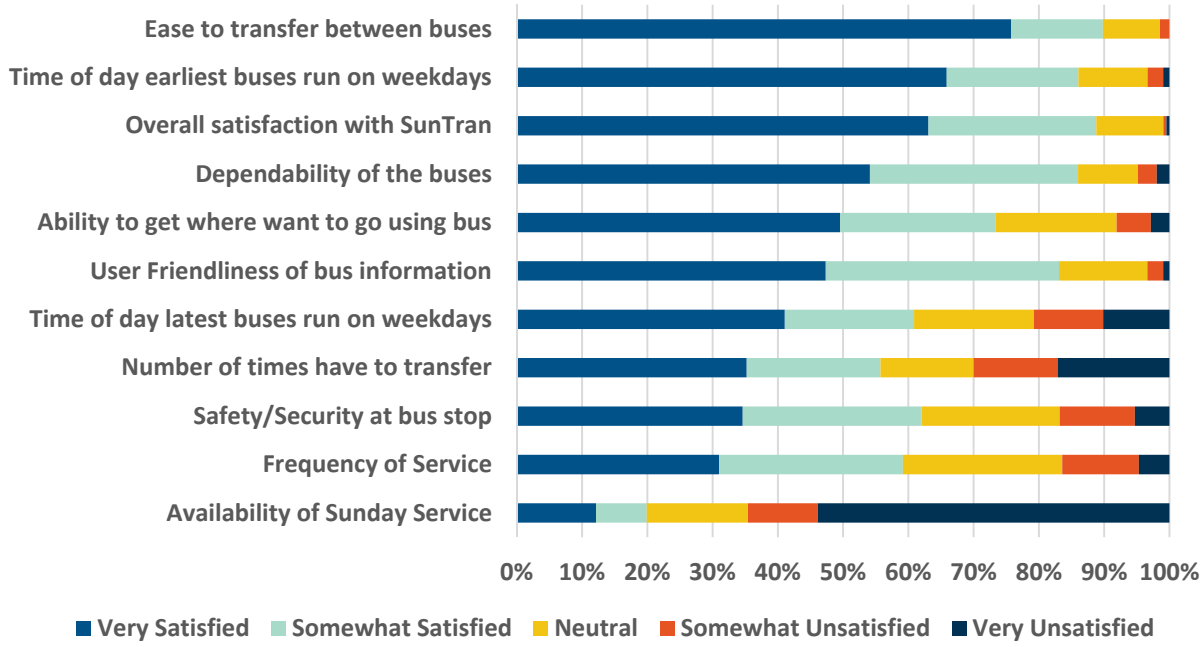
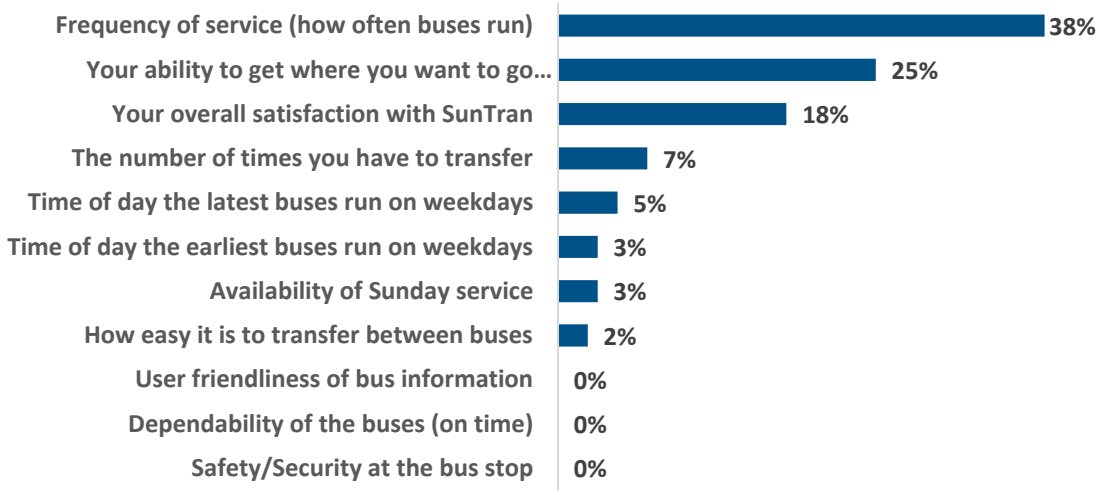


Table 4-6: Satisfaction Scores

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
Ease to transfer between buses	75.7%	14.1%	8.7%	1.5%	0.0%
Time of day earliest buses run on weekdays	65.9%	20.2%	10.6%	2.4%	1.0%
Overall satisfaction with SunTran	63.1%	25.7%	10.3%	0.5%	0.5%
Dependability of the buses	54.1%	31.9%	9.2%	2.9%	1.9%
Ability to get where want to go using bus	49.5%	23.8%	18.6%	5.2%	2.9%
User-friendliness of bus information	47.3%	35.7%	13.5%	2.4%	1.0%
Time of day latest buses run on weekdays	41.1%	19.8%	18.4%	10.6%	10.1%
Number of times have to transfer	35.2%	20.5%	14.3%	12.9%	17.1%
Safety/Security at bus stop	34.6%	27.4%	21.2%	11.5%	5.3%
Frequency of Service	31.0%	28.2%	24.4%	11.7%	4.7%
Availability of Sunday Service	12.1%	7.8%	15.5%	10.7%	53.9%

To put these satisfaction scores into perspective, passengers were asked to list the three that were the most important to them (Figure 4-25). A total of 49 passengers (38%) mentioned that the frequency of bus services was among the most important, 32 (25%) said the ability to get to where they need to go, and 23 (18%) said their overall satisfaction with SunTran.

Figure 4-25: Most Important Satisfaction Categories



On-Board Survey General Conclusions

Results from the on-board survey provided insight into various aspects of SunTran bus service. Conclusions drawn from the on-board survey analysis are summarized as follows:

- Overall, most SunTran passenger rated various aspects of SunTran services as “very satisfied” or “satisfied” and provided an overall average rating of 3.91. The single exception was the general dissatisfaction with the lack of Sunday services; without this question, the average rating would rise to 4.09. Three other areas received low rankings, including number of transfers required when traveling, frequency of the service, and service stop time on

weekdays. Ease of transferring between buses, overall satisfaction with SunTran, and time of day service begins on weekdays were the areas rated the highest.

- Service on Sundays, more benches and shelters at bus stops, and more frequent service were indicated as the most desirable service improvements for SunTran.
- Approximately 85 percent of passengers used the bus three or more days per week.
- A lack of access to a working vehicle or valid driver's license were noted as primary reasons why many passengers used SunTran for their transportation needs. Without SunTran, passengers indicated that they likely would ride with someone else, walk, or not make their trip, emphasizing the importance of SunTran's service. Approximately 23 percent of passengers indicated they were transit-dependent and would not be able to make this trip if not for the bus.
- Regular base fare was paid by approximately 56 percent of respondents, and 11 percent paid the senior/disabled fare. Another 20 percent used a regular or senior/disabled monthly pass. Less than 10 percent of fares were paid using the student fare or pass.

Paratransit Rider Survey

Concurrent with the above efforts, a robodial survey was conducted during the first phase of public outreach. The results of that survey and the perspectives collected on behalf of the 9 respondents is presented and summarized in the Ocala/Marion TDSP report.

Public Input Survey (Phase I)

The first phase of the public input surveys was initiated in December 2016 when the survey link was made available to the general public via social media platforms created for the TDP (discussed later in this section), email blasts, and the TDP website. The survey also was administered during the February 2017 discussion groups and public workshops to continue gathering public input. SunTran and the TPO also posted information about completing the survey to their social media and online platforms beginning in January 2017.

In total, 15 questions were used to determine willingness to use public transit and the community's transit needs, gauge public awareness of transit issues in Marion County, and gather socio-economic information of survey respondents. A total of 315 completed forms were submitted during the course of this TDP.

Summary of Public Input Survey Results

Most survey respondents felt that awareness of public transportation services in Marion County was strong, with more than 75 percent believing that there was moderate-to-high awareness of public transportation in the community (Figure 4-26). When asked what they thought about SunTran's transit service, almost 95 percent indicated that it must be provided or might be useful (Figure 4-27).

Figure 4-26: How much awareness is there in the community about transit/public transportation?

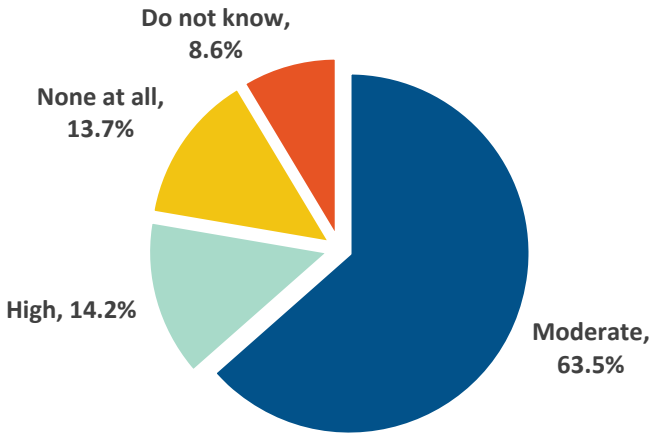
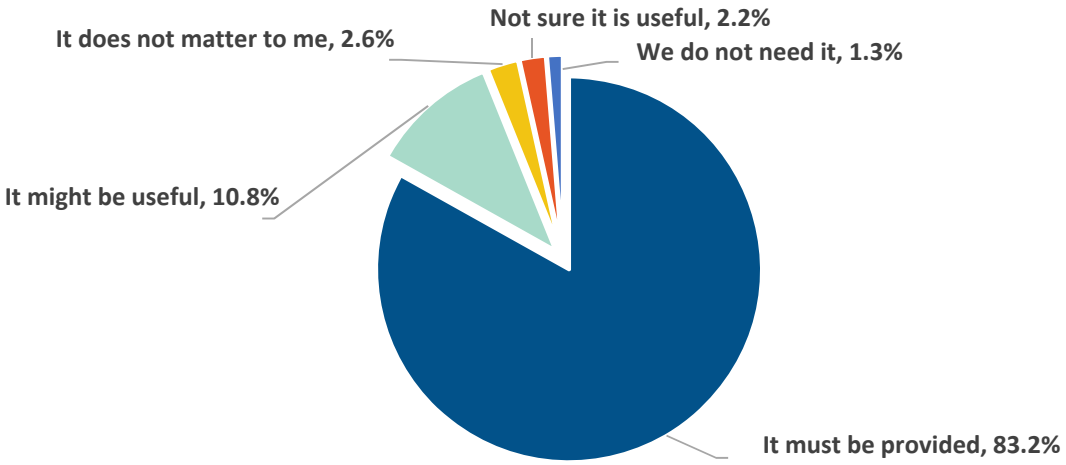
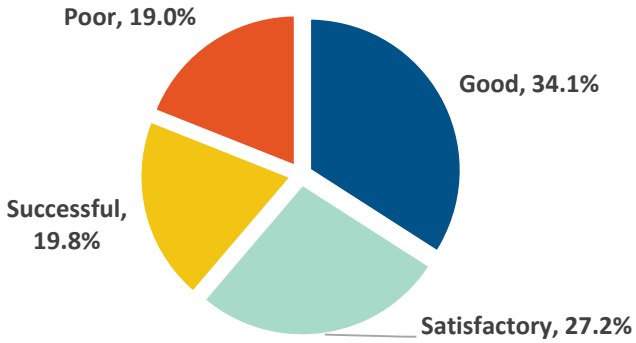


Figure 4-27: What do you think of SunTran's transit service?



However, when asked about their current perception of the role of transit in the community, the responses suggested that there are varying levels of satisfaction in terms of whether SunTran's services are meeting the previously-expressed needs. Approximately one third perceived the role as good, one quarter perceived the role of transit as satisfactory, and the remaining two-fifths evenly perceived the role as successful and poor (Figure 4-28).

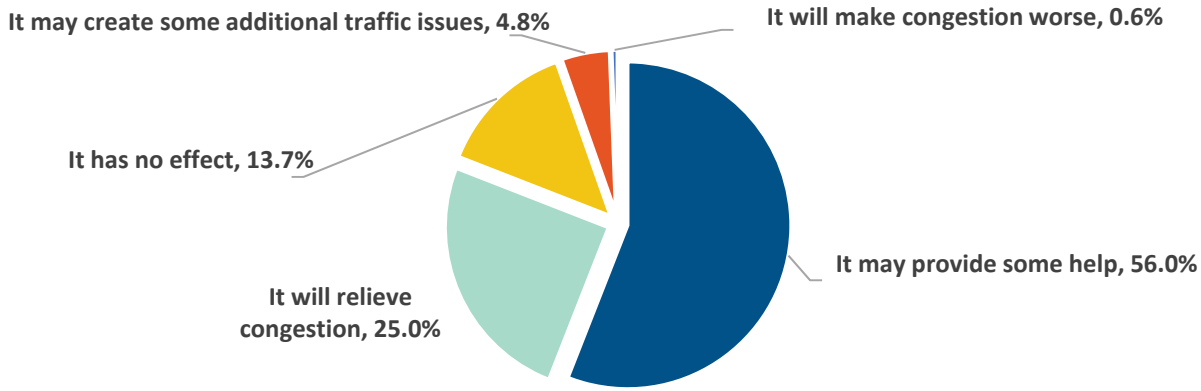
Figure 4-28: Rate your perception of transit's role in the community?



A majority of respondents (61%) agreed that congestion was a problem in Marion County (Figure 4-29). Of those, 76 percent indicated that transit would relieve or may provide some help in relieving congestion, and 13.7 percent indicated that transit would have no effect (Figure 4-30).

Figure 4-29: Is traffic congestion a problem in Marion County?

Figure 4-30: What role do you see transit playing in alleviating the situation?



Although just over two-thirds of participants had not used SunTran's transit services (Figure 4-31), the majority (95%) believed that there was a need for additional transit service throughout the county (Figure 4-32).

Figure 4-31: Have you used the SunTran fixed-route bus service?

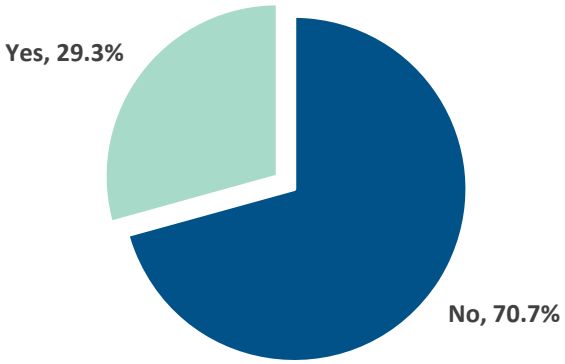
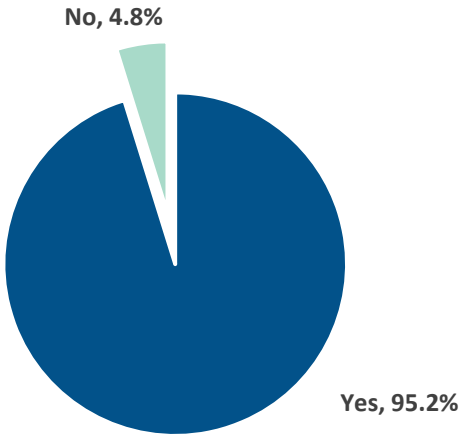


Figure 4-32: Do you think there is a need for additional transit service in Marion County?



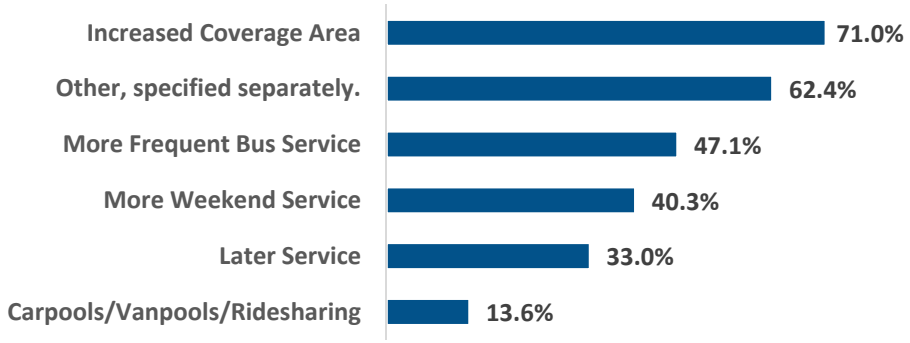
When asked which services should be added to the transit network, 71 percent of respondents said an increased coverage area, 62 percent said "Other," 47 percent said more frequent bus service, and 40 percent said more weekend service. Noted areas in which additional service was needed—either more coverage areas or other comments include:

- SR 200 (most frequent comment)
- New service coverage should also be expanded in the following corridors/areas:
  - Silver Springs Boulevard
  - Marion Oaks
  - West of I-75

- US 27
- SR 40
- The Centers
- Silver Springs Shores
- Belleview via US 441
- Baseline Road
- Circulator or ride-hailing service for On Top of the World and more rural areas outside of Ocala such as The Forest and Oklawaha

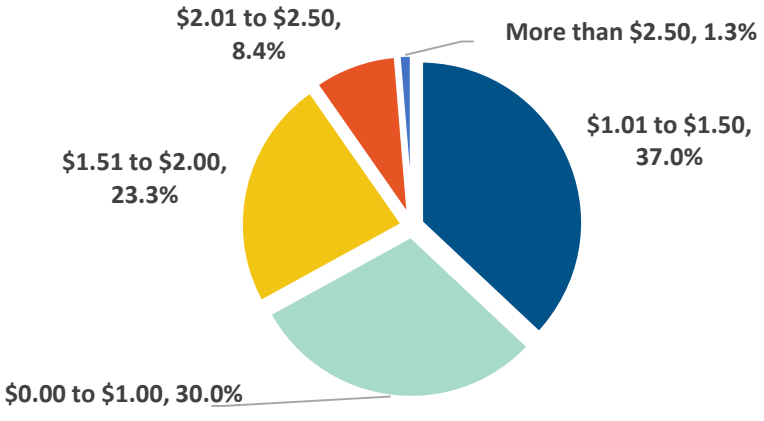
Service should be focused on serving major employers, grocery stores and medical facilities.

Figure 4-33: What type of service you would most like to see?



Survey respondent opinions varied regarding the reasonable cost for a one-way fare. As shown in Figure 4-34, the majority (37%) thought that a one-way fare of $1.01–$1.50 was reasonable, 30 percent said $0.00–$1.00, and 23 percent said $1.51–$2.00. Only about 10 percent indicated that a fare of $2.01 or more was reasonable.

Figure 4-34: What do you think is a reasonable one-way fare to pay for transit service?



There was varied support for financing transit through local taxes (Figure 4-35). Approximately 32 percent of respondents believed that the community was somewhat willing to pay for transit services,

27.5 percent believed there was definitely community support, and 6 percent believed there was no community support at all; 34 percent of respondents were not sure.

Related to respondent willingness to finance public transit through additional local taxes, the level of support decreased some (Figure 4-36). Approximately 39 percent of respondents were somewhat willing to pay additional taxes to fund transit, and 34 percent were definitely willing; however, 13 percent indicated they were not willing at all to fund transit service through additional taxes. The remaining 14 percent were unsure of their level of support to fund public transit through local taxes.

Figure 4-35: Is there a willingness in the community to consider additional local funding for transit?

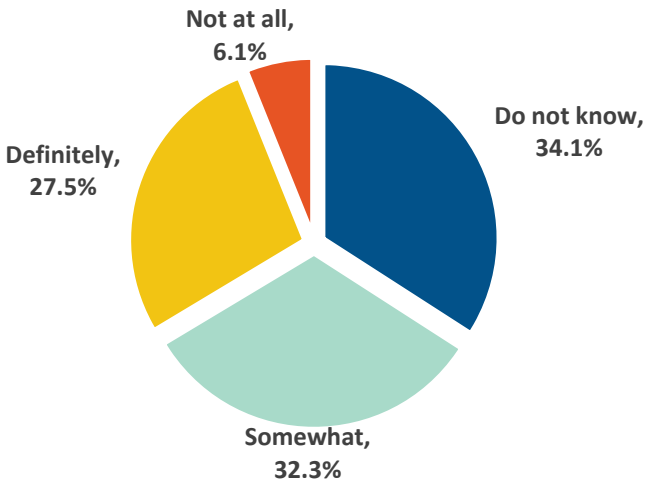
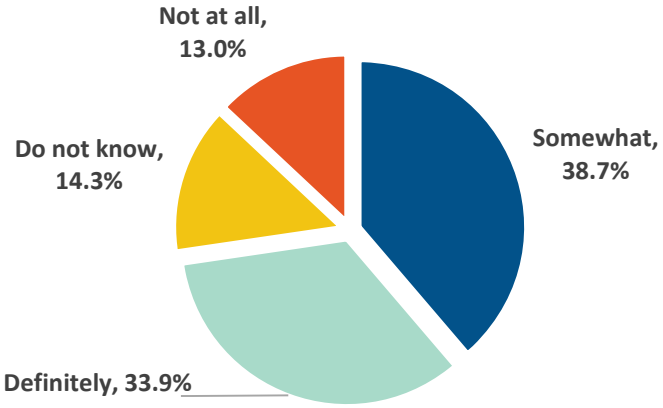
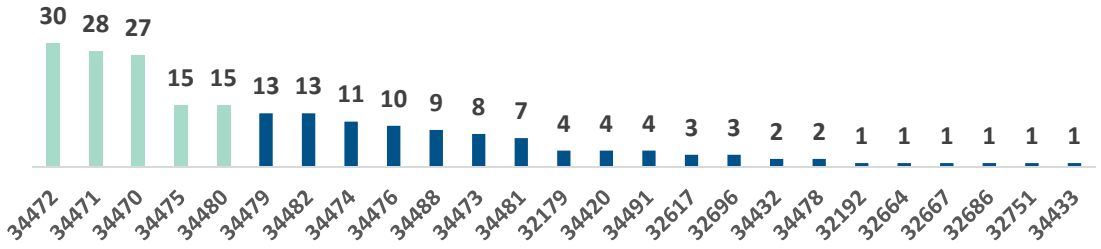


Figure 4-36: Are you willing to pay additional local taxes for an expanded transit system?



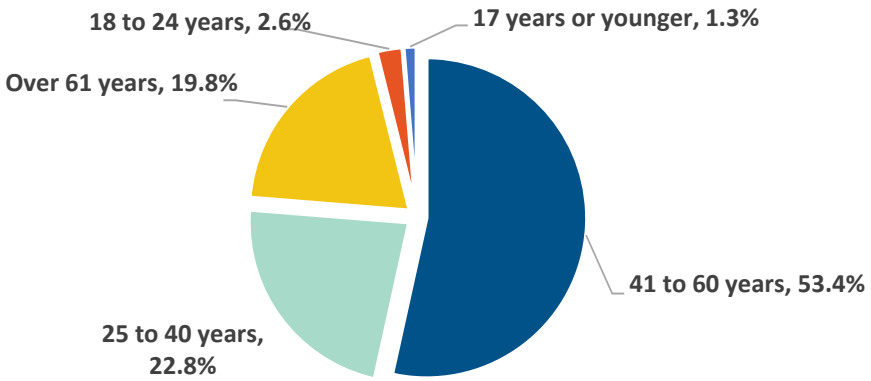
Socio-demographic information of participants is shown in Figures 3-37, 3-38, 3-39. As shown in Figure 4-37, the top five most frequently cited home ZIP codes include the areas directly north, south, and east of the CBD in Ocala and two others further southeast, including The Villages and towards, but not including, Belleview.

Figure 4-37: ZIP Code



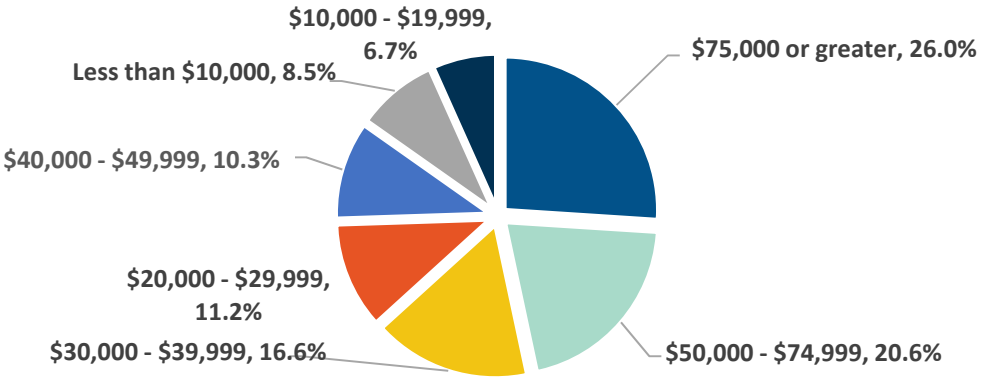
As shown in Figure 4-38, a disproportionate amount of respondents were in older age groups. The most frequent (53%) was ages 41–60, with 23 percent of respondents ages 25–40 and 20 percent ages 61 and older. Approximately 4 percent of respondents were under age 24.

Figure 4-38: Age



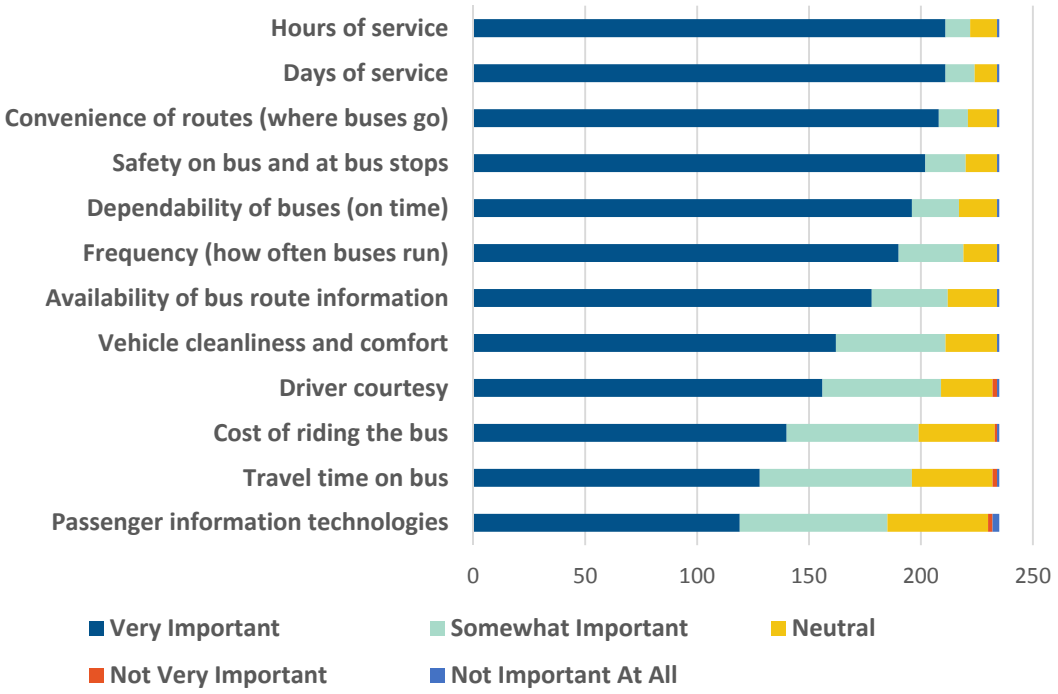
The distribution of respondent total household annual income was fairly even (Figure 4-39). The most frequently noted annual income category was $75,000 or greater (26%) and the least was $10,000–$19,999 (6.7%).

Figure 4-39: What was the range of your total household income for 2015?



Participants were asked to rate which aspects of transit were the most important to them. Based on the responses summarized in Figure 4-40, hours and days of service, convenience of bus routes, safety on bus and at bus stops, and dependability of buses to being on-time were the top five responses receiving the highest percentage of those who responded "very important." The lowest percent of respondents noted that travel time on the buses as well as passenger information technologies were "very important."

Figure 4-40: Ranking of transit characteristics



Following the questions, survey respondents were asked to provide other comments or input related to SunTran services for consideration in the development of this TDP. The following is a summary of the major categories/themes of comments received:

- Higher frequency (30-minute headways)
- Sunday service
- Longer hours for workers
- Sheltered stops with adequate lighting
- More bike racks on buses (are always full)
- Schedules available at bus stations
- Passes available at stations
- Free transfers at locations such as Walmart
- Resident training on how to use bus

- Extended coverage to more destinations including:
  - Walmart at On Top of the World
  - Department of Children and Families
  - West of I-75
  - Marion Oaks
  - Belleview
- SunTran services needed and important for residents to access community centers such as The Centers

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews provide a one-on-one forum to gather input from policy and agency or community leaders concerning the vision for public transportation in their community. Ten interviews were conducted from December 2016 to February 2017 with the following stakeholders:

- Scott Hackmyer, Board Member, Community with a Heart
- Anissa Brescia, Executive Director, Florida Center for the Blind
- Steve Blank, Senior Executive Assistant, The Centers
- Meaghan Crowley, Health Education Program Manager, Marion County Health Department
- Tom Wilder, Executive Director, Marion Transit Services
- Gennie Garcia, General Manager, SunTran
- Scott Quintell, President, United Way
- Patrick Gilman, Executive Director, Marion County Health Alliance
- Jim Hilty, City Councilman, City of Ocala
- Tedd Schatt, Principal/Owner, The Schatt Law Firm

A list of 17 questions was developed for the interviews, and each stakeholder was asked the same questions. The input received during these interviews was reviewed and major themes identified are summarized below:

- **Ease of use** – The knowledge of existing transit service is generally limited to the users who depend on it. Transit does a minimal job of meeting the needs of those in the community who, by necessity, must use it. The system is circuitous, and travel times are long. It is not perceived as reducing congestion or providing an alternate means of transportation to people to the general public. The bus schedule and map need to be easier to read. The timing of transfers is another issue that creates unacceptable travel times for many travelers.
- **Awareness** – More marketing and campaigning is needed to increase awareness. The service is not attractive enough for choice riders. The routes should go to more destinations instead of “forcing” you to go Downtown. Travel times when transfers are considered are unacceptable.

- **Rider markets** – The service is generally used by low-income, older, and student populations. Vulnerable populations such as those that rely on mental health services and those with limited sight were repeatedly mentioned as populations that need access to transit. The Centers, the largest community substance abuse and mental health support in the area, identified a lack of transportation as the leading reason for their high "no show" rates. The need to ensure their clients attend their appointments is important to prevent them "ending up back into hospitals," which inherently costs taxpayers more money. It was noted that appointments for paratransit services are not reliable for those trying to get to the Centers.
- **Access to fares** – Additional opportunities to purchase fares are needed. Monthly fares can be purchased in locations such as Publix, but these supermarkets are generally located in areas of higher socioeconomic status, creating a burden for those who do not live nearby. The cost and expiration date of passes pose another burden, as a pass that is purchased mid-month will expire at the end of the month. The fare cost for a low-income family with several children might not be affordable. A monthly pass should be good for 30 days from the date of activation.
- **More direct connections to**:
  - The Centers
  - Industrial area west of I-75
  - NW area of Ocala
  - College of Central Florida
  - Department of Children and Families
  - Silver Shores
  - Marion Oaks
  - SR 200
  - Airport Road
  - The Villages
  - SE portion of town and baseline road
  - West Ocala and Marion Oaks
  - One stakeholder noted that Ocklawaha and the Wiersdale areas are "food deserts" that need connections to grocery stores.
- **Multimodal facilities** – The sidewalks in Marion County do not promote a walkable environment. The use of the bicycle racks on the SunTran buses appears to be very popular, indicating the need for more multimodal facilities in the county. According to one stakeholder, "Most of the roads don't have safe sidewalks or bike lanes. Some of the worst cases are bike accidents. Someone on a bike on the road has no shoulder. I have to swerve to avoid them."
- **Regional travel** – The Villages in Citrus County and the Shands Hospital/Veteran Affairs Medical Center in Gainesville may not be significant enough to warrant transit; however, there is a need to access them. There are doctors with satellite offices in The Villages that residents in Marion County need to access.

- **Transit and health** – It was noted that access to transit is important to achieve community health objectives. Access to grocery stores, medical, and specialized facilities such as The Centers are all linked to health.
- **Economic development** – Accessible transportation to employment is a basic component of economic development. The County needs to consider how to provide cost-effective transportation to employers, educational institutions, and low-income areas. Effective public transit should be a given in a well-functioning economy.
- **Areas with high traffic congestion** – SR 200, SR 40, SR 44, and Maricamp Road/SE 17th Street were noted as areas of high traffic congestion during certain times. Traffic congestion is a problem only during specific hours. Transit could have a minor impact in mitigating congestion.
- **Level of public support for transit** – In general, transit is necessary, but there is not much public support for it among non-users. Expanding funding source such as the gas tax or sales tax might be suitable funding sources, but could be difficult considering the politically-conservative environment in Marion County.
- **Overall perception** – The service provided by SunTran is appreciated by most stakeholders and their clients, who acknowledge that SunTran is doing the best that it can to given its funding constraints. It was also noted that customer service is generally excellent and responsive to their client's needs.

Bus Operator Interviews and Survey

SunTran bus operators were asked to participate in a discussion group workshop that took place at the Ocala Union Station on February 1, 2017. The workshop had multiple opportunities for operator input, including a survey, a discussion period, and an interactive exercise using a map of existing transit routes. Surveys were administered during the workshop as well as distributed to bus operators that were unable to attend during the coming days, the results of which are summarized below.

Perspective of Passengers

Operators were asked to identify the three most commonly-heard passenger complaints from a list of over a dozen options. The top complaints heard by operators were, in descending order, a need for more frequent bus services, that the buses do not go where riders need/buses do not go out far enough, and that the bus schedule is difficult to understand. As a follow-up question, operators were asked their opinions of whether these were valid concerns, and the responses were in the affirmative for the statements that the buses do not go where riders need as well as the schedule is difficult to understand. Specifically, operators mentioned that the routes could travel further out to meet this complaint and that the schedule is complicated and difficult to read (small print) for many riders.

Additional passenger complaints, as reported by the operators, include a need for Sunday service and more bus shelters/benches; the operators did not specifically substantiate whether they considered these valid concerns. However, a few operators did comment more generally that rider perspectives are

valid because rider input is what will benefit them as riders, so it is not up to the bus operators to validate. Conversely, an operator noted that many passenger complaints would be more valid if SunTran operated in a larger city with a larger budget.

Operators reported that passengers appreciated that buses regularly run on-time. Additionally, bus operators have repeatedly heard that the buses are very comfortable and clean. Bus operators were pleased to report that riders occasionally compliment their friendliness, that they are helpful with directions, and that they succeed in creating a welcoming environment on the bus (i.e., climate, music). Two operators mentioned that passengers have remarked on their appreciation for the late service span.

Safety Concerns

A majority of bus operators reported no safety concerns on the routes. A few operators reported that there are some roads within the service area that are too dark, suggesting a lack of streetlights on the routes; two operators mentioned that there was a lack of sufficient light at some bus stops, signifying that a lack of light may be a multi-dimensional safety concern. Two operators mentioned that some roads were too narrow to safely operate a bus while oncoming traffic shared the road.

Another operator concern was a lack of time scheduled for certain route segments, which may suggest that operators are being forced to rush or drive unsafely to meet the route's time points. In the general comments section of the survey, some bus operators identified that there is not a lot of time to complete the routes according to the posted schedules, particularly during rush hours, and that pitting this race against the clock with the needs of serving patrons can become very stressful. A schedule with more time per trip segment or more buses were identified as possible solutions. Finally, a safety concern was mentioned regarding the need for routes to extend further because some passengers will walk up to three miles to reach a bus stop, potentially traveling over unsafe walking areas in the process.

Route Improvements

Operators provided suggestions on which SunTran routes need improvements:

- Yellow B – should extend out past NE 28th Street
- Yellow B – should allow passengers to transfer to the Blue line at Walmart instead of traveling Downtown
- Yellow B – should be able to find an alternative route around 3:00 PM when the local schools let out to avoid delays
- Purple – should extend to W SR 40 to the industrial park areas, west of I-75
- Purple & Orange – the afternoon routes do not need to cut trip segments down to 10 minutes
- Orange – should extend further out on 17th Street or further south on S Pine Avenue
- Proposed new route running along US 441 and into Belleview

Job Satisfaction

Operators were asked to identify what they liked the most about their jobs, and the overwhelming response was interacting with people. Most operators said they enjoyed meeting passengers; some also remarked that they enjoyed their managers, other operators, and dispatchers. They appreciated the close-knit feeling of their relationships afforded by the size of their transit system and that every day offered new challenges and situations, as well as new ways to help people get to where they need to go.

Map Exercise

During the operator discussion group, participants were shown a large map of the SunTran bus system and asked to identify areas in which they perceive service weaknesses. Identified were locations where safety or operational issues exist as well as locations that need more or new bus service:

- Along SR 200/SW College Road to SW 66th Street, bounded to the north by SW 40th Street and to the west by SW 60th Avenue. Operators highlighted Dillard Plaza, West Marion Community Hospital, restaurants, doctors' offices, and jobs were located in this area.
- Industrial Park area, bounded by I-75 to the east and SW 60th Avenue to the west, as well as SR40 to the north and SW 20th Street to the south. Operators highlighted that the K-Mart Distribution Center, AT&T call center, and many other jobs are located within this area that could benefit from transit service.
- FedEx Ground facility on NE 35th Avenue Road, just east of I-75, identified as a common trip destination for passengers.
- Gap identified between the northern section of the Yellow B route and Highway 326; many riders will walk the distance between NE 28th Street and Highway SR 326 (3+ miles) to get to Downtown areas.
- Gap identified between southern portion of Orange route at SR 464 and westward towards Easy Street/SW 12th Street.
- Gap identified along US 27 where it intersects with NW 30th Avenue before it heads south.

Discussion Group Workshops

Workshop #1 – Social Service/Workforce Agency Discussion Group

As part of the public involvement efforts, a discussion group workshop was held to gauge existing and future public transportation needs in Marion County. The meeting was held on February 1, 2017, from 12:00–2:00 PM at the Ocala Electric Utility Building Citizen Service Center in the second floor training room. Attendees from education, social service, workforce, religious, public safety, and public sector organizations participated in a discussion so the Ocala/Marion TPO could learn more about the public transportation needs and issues of the people and organizations they represent in Marion County and the region. There were seven attendees at this workshop, and five surveys were collected. Each attendee was provided with the following:

- Fact sheet summarizing SunTran's ridership trend and the TDP process

- Discussion group agenda
- Map of existing transit services
- Paper copy of the survey

Input received from the workshop attendees and results of the map exercise are summarized below.

Respondent Profiles

Most survey respondents were ages 41–60; one was age 61. All had annual household incomes over $50,000, with most over $75,000.

Role of SunTran

During the course of the discussion group, the role of SunTran was described by all as good, generally positive, necessary, and critical. Those who perceived SunTran's role in Marion County to be generally positive believed that for its current riders, bus services were a great means of getting around and provided other benefits not directly borne by riders. Two benefits to riders included a safe means of transportation and flexibility afforded by the route network. Some benefits not borne by riders included general congestion relief, reduction in traffic (specifically from college students), and aid to law enforcement (e.g., bicycle officers).

Workshop attendees who perceived SunTran's role to be necessary and critical named a variety of factors supported by SunTran services. Riders needing services included college students, older adults, and low-income individuals. Trip purposes served included travel to jobs, social services, grocery stores, school, evening events, homeless shelters, and park-and-ride facilities. Some expressed that even if riders do not always use SunTran's services, it is important for the option to be available; one attendee likened it to Uber services–the option to use the service provides peace of mind that is valuable even if the service is not used.

All attendees who completed a survey indicated that SunTran services were a necessity, and most indicated a positive perception of SunTran's role in the community as well as a moderate to high awareness in the community about SunTran services. All respondents agreed that transit can play a small role in alleviating traffic, but that it is not a complete solution; however, just under two-thirds of respondents noted that traffic is a problem in Marion County and regarded transit to be a potential traffic abatement.

Awareness of Services

Discussion group attendees remarked that most riders had heard of the SunTran system. Additionally, they mentioned that riders often had additional questions on the bus system even though they were aware of the routes. A few attendees noted that many of these questions stemmed from a high perceived rate of illiteracy in the community and rider inability to understand bus maps.

Use of Services

When asked about their use of SunTran services, 60 percent of survey respondents indicated they did not use them, although all said they believe that there is a need for transit service in the county, including increased coverage in areas like SR 200 past the Paddock Mall and further to the west towards 60th Street, The Centers, West Marion Medical facilities, and US 27. A few noted that later service, more weekend service, more frequent service, and carpools/ridesharing would be additional services they would like to see.

Workshop attendees suggested several ways that SunTran could better serve the needs of its riders, ranging from service coverage to financial considerations. Most agreed that the SunTran system could better serve the needs of its riders by increasing the system's service area to destinations as far away from Downtown as Marion Oaks and as close as the Food Stamp office not currently on the route network. Also mentioned was providing more comfort in the form of bus shelters for bus stops at the extremities of the existing service area. When asked about the balance of local and regional destinations, attendees generally agreed that local destinations were more common, but noted a greater need for growing regional centers. Local destinations mentioned include The Centers, SR 200, SW 60 Avenue, and Belleview; specific business locations included FedEx Ground, AutoZone, and the future Chewy.com facility.

To construct a profile of current system users, attendees remarked that many riders (or potential riders) they represent face constraints such as their employment location not being on the SunTran route network. Attendees also noted the rider frustration that transfers are complex and inconvenient and that simplifying these junctions could help save time for many riders.

Related to new technologies impacting SunTran bus service, some attendees mentioned the new SunTran smartphone app and that there should be a campaign to inform riders of its existence and to educate them on how to use it. Others noted the impact of Uber in Ocala and how it may potentially complement or compete with SunTran's existing routes.

Financial Considerations

Some workshop attendees expressed that the cost per ride was high for many current riders, including the homeless population, and some offered the idea of additional trip discounts for certain rider groups. Most survey respondents agreed that $1.50 was a reasonable fare to charge for a single one-way ride, with a minority accepting $2.00 as a maximum fare. Among the perceived willingness for the community to consider additional transit funding, the responses were fairly split. One workshop attendee felt that the community was definitely willing, but the majority was split that the community was somewhat or not at all willing to consider additional funding.

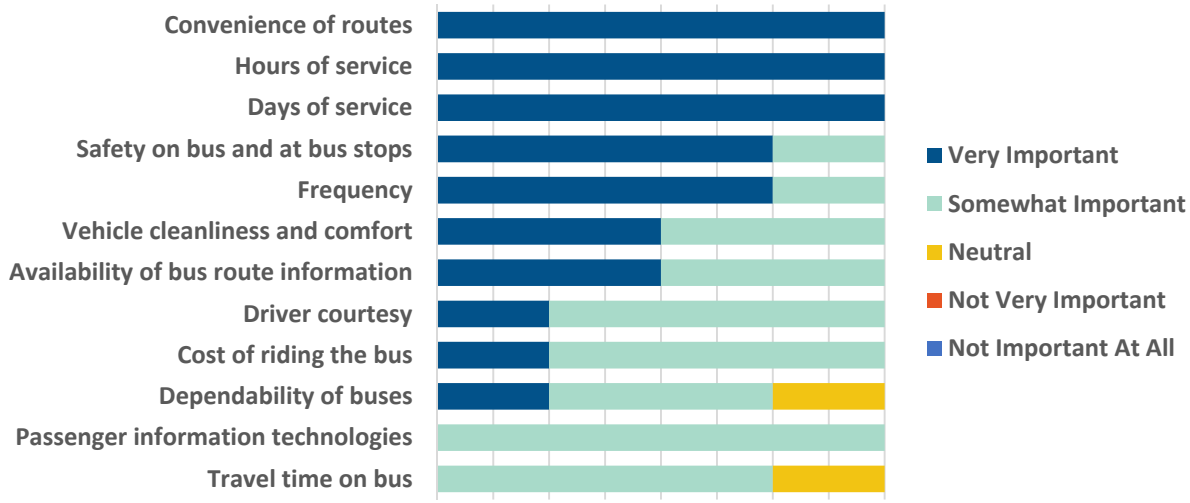
Attendees weighed the pros and cons of a monthly pass and a 30-day pass, with consensus that either pass was equally as beneficial as long as the cost to purchase one was pro-rated based on its potential expiration date.

Map Activity

Workshop attendees were provided with a map of the current transit route network set in a larger view of Marion County and asked to identify the areas of need for new or expanded services. The attendees identified a wide range of corridors and destinations that covered various parts of the county; the more commonly-identified corridors included along SR 200 southwest of Ocala, between SR 200 and SW 60th Avenue, along 60th Avenue north to US 27, SR 40 west of I-75, Marion Oaks and CR 484, and Baseline Road/SE 58th Avenue. Commonly-identified destinations, sometimes along the above corridors, included The Centers, Belleview, Department of Children and Families, Dunnellon, Kmart Distribution Center, and FedEx Ground location. The majority of these highlighted corridors and destinations would require an increased service area, predominately west and southwest of Ocala.

Figure 4-41 displays the relative priority of transit service aspects that survey respondents would consider before choosing to use SunTran services.

Figure 4-41: Importance of Transit Characteristics – Workshop #1



Workshop #2 – Business/Industry/Civic Leader Discussion Group

A discussion group workshop was held to gauge existing and future public transportation needs in Marion County on February 1, 2017, from 3:00–5:00 PM at the Ocala Electric Utility Building Citizen Service Center in the second floor training room. Attendees from the City of Ocala, the Ocala Chamber of Commerce, private employers, and public sector organizations participated so the Ocala/Marion TPO could learn more about the public transportation needs and issues of the people and organizations they represented in Marion County and the region. There were eight attendees at this workshop. Each attendee was provided with materials similar to those used in Workshop #1. Input received from the attendees and results of the map exercise are summarized below.

Respondent Profiles

Most survey respondents were ages 41–60, two were 61 or older, and one was 25-40. All had annual household incomes over $75,000.

Role of SunTran

Workshop attendees noted that they perceived SunTran as having a growing role within the city and county and a role that is growing in importance. Most attendees who completed the survey indicated that SunTran must be provided; one responded that it did not matter. About half of the responses indicated that there is a good perception of SunTran's role in the community; the other half rated the role as poor. The survey respondents were split when gauging the awareness of public transportation in the community: three said there was moderate awareness, two said none at all, and two did not know. All respondents agreed that transit could play a small role in alleviating traffic, but that it is not a complete solution; just over half noted that traffic is not a problem in Marion County, so although they do not consider traffic to be a current issue, they still regard transit to be a potential traffic abatement.

Use of Services

When asked about their use of SunTran's services, over 85 percent of survey respondents said they did not use the services, although all expressed that they believe that there was additional need for transit service in the county. Just over half expressed a desire for an increased coverage area, including SR 200, The Centers, west of I-75, the industrial parks, and Marion Oaks. Other mentioned locations included Rolling Greens at Baseline Road, Ocala Regional Medical Center, Ocala Midtown Holiday Inn Express, courthouse, Juniper Springs Recreation Area, Belleview, The Villages, and SW 49th Avenue toward Marion Oaks. A minority of respondents felt that more frequent service and carpools/ridesharing would also be additional services they would like to see. Attendees debated about which group of riders they felt SunTran should prioritize in serving; among these rider groups were shoppers, individuals running errands, college students, and employees.

During the discussion, attendees mentioned a few areas that SunTran should pay attention to going forward and seek to provide the services to meet these needs, including the Chamber of Commerce targeting large employers (i.e., Chewy.com), later evening services, sidewalk networks, and enhanced communication channels for those with and without internet access.

Financial Considerations

Survey respondents were evenly split on their preference for a reasonable fare for a single one-way ride between $1.00, $1.50, and $2.00 fare options. Among the perceived willingness for the community to consider additional transit funding, most respondents replied that they did not know about the community's willingness, and a minority suggested that the community was somewhat willing.

Workshop attendees also discussed some innovative ideas that may improve the ease of use for riders and the financial recovery rates for SunTran, including allowing bus passes for easy and no-cost transfers

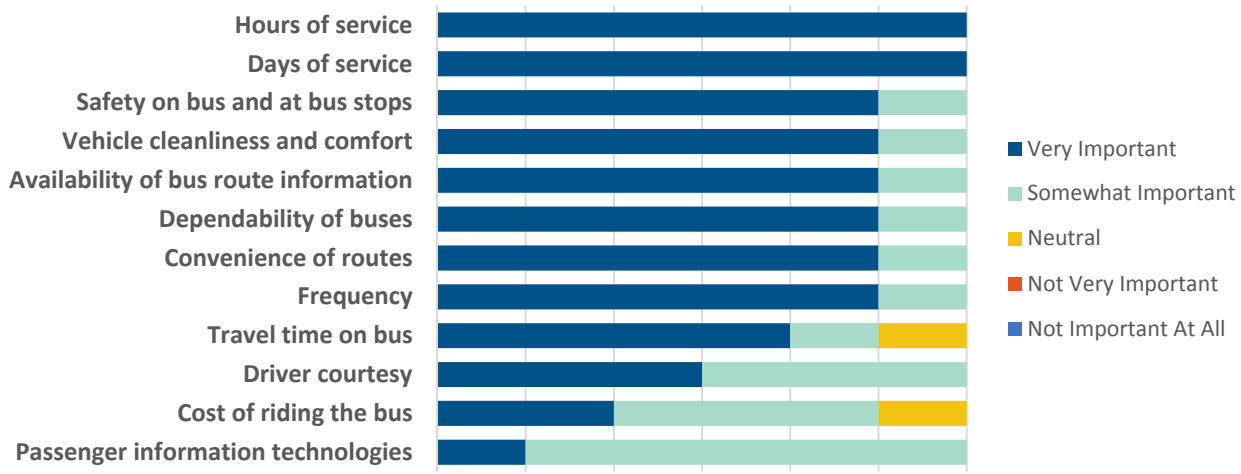
at high-use transfer locations, creating subscription services for employers or employees to save time in purchasing fares, and seeking private sources for funding (i.e., employers).

Map Activity

Attendees were provided with a map of the current transit route network set in a larger view of Marion County and asked to identify areas of need for new or expanded services. Identified was a wide range of corridors and destinations that covered various parts of the county; the most commonly-identified corridors included along SR 200 southwest of Ocala, between SR 200 and SW 60th and 70th Avenues, along 60th and 70th Avenues north to US 27, SR 40 west of I-75, Baseline Road/SE 58th Avenue south to Belleview, along NW 27th Avenue to NW 35th Street, and SW 38th Street between SR 200 and SW 70th Avenue. Other commonly-identified destinations, sometimes along the above corridors, included The Centers, Marion Oaks, and destinations slightly north of Silver Springs Shores, the majority of which would require an increased service area, predominately west of Ocala.

Figure 4-42 displays the relative priority of transit service aspects that survey respondents would consider before choosing to use SunTran services.

Figure 4-42: Importance of Transit Characteristics – Workshop #2



Workshop #3 – Transit User Discussion Group

A discussion group workshop was held to gauge existing and future public transportation needs in Marion County on February 1, 2017, from 3:00–5:00 PM at the Marion County Health Department's Ocala facility. All attendees were residents of Marion County, predominately from Ocala, and participated in a discussion so the Ocala/Marion TPO could learn more about the public transportation needs and issues facing riders. There were 12 attendees at this workshop. Each attendee was provided materials similar to those in the prior workshops. Input received from the attendees and results of the map exercise are summarized below.

Respondent Profiles

About half of survey respondents were ages 41–60, and half were older than 61; one was 25–40. All had annual household incomes below $30,000; the majority had annual household incomes below $10,000, and the next largest group had incomes of $10,000–$19,999 per year.

Role of SunTran

All attendees who completed a survey indicated that SunTran services must be provided. Perceptions of the role of transit were all favorable, and more than half of the responses indicated that there is an excellent perception of SunTran's role in the community; the remaining responses rated the perceived role of SunTran as good. The majority of respondents estimated the awareness of public transportation in the community to be high or moderate; one respondent replied none at all, and another did not know. About two-thirds of respondents agreed that transit can relieve congestion altogether or play a small role in alleviating traffic, but two replied that it has no effect. Three-quarters of respondents expressed that traffic was a problem in Marion County, so unlike the prior two discussion groups, traffic was considered an issue by these riders.

Use of Services

When asked about their use of SunTran's services, all survey respondents replied that they have used the services, and three-quarters expressed that they believe that there is additional need for transit service in the county. For additional service they would most like to see, about two-thirds said more frequent bus service and half said more weekend service. One-quarter expressed the need for an increased coverage area, including SR 200 (including past the Paddock Mall), Marion Oaks, Belleview, and the Greyhound station.

Financial Considerations

Three-quarters of survey respondents expressed that a reasonable fare to charge for a single one-way ride was $1.00–$2.00; one respondent said it should be less than $1.00, and another said more than $2.50 per one-way ride. Among the perceived willingness within the community to consider additional transit funding, three-quarters said that there was a definite or somewhat willingness within the community.

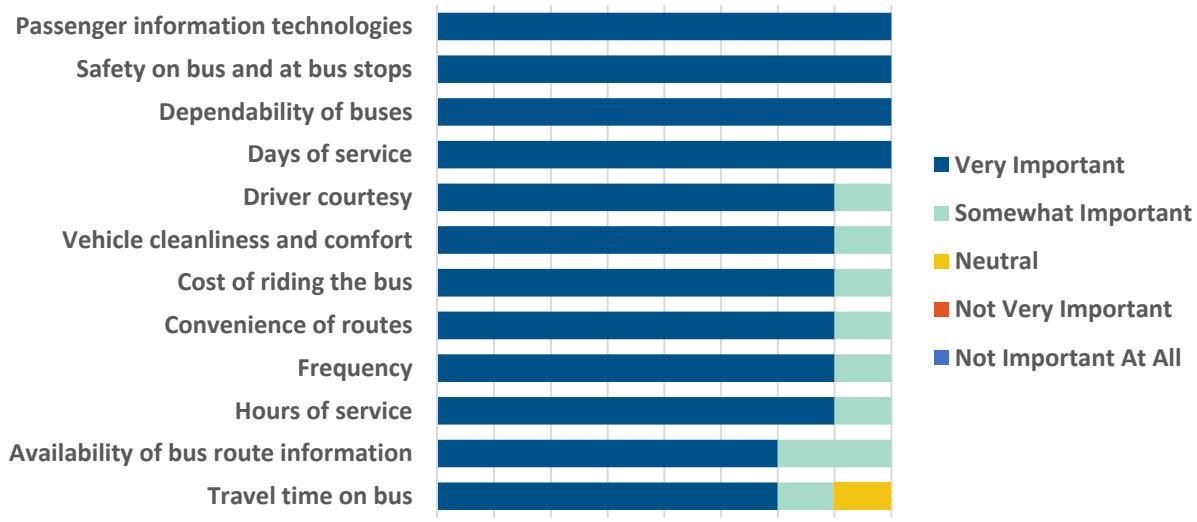
Map Activity

Workshop attendees were provided with a map of the current transit route network set in a larger view of Marion County and asked to identify their common locations of trip origins and destinations. Nine origin locations were identified on the map, four of which were part of the current route network and five slightly beyond the current route network but within the quarter-mile service area buffer. Nineteen destination locations were identified on the map, five of which were locations that were part of the current route network. Five other locations were identified that were beyond the current network but within the ¼-mile service area buffer. Nine destinations were not part of the current route network

within the quarter-mile service area; all were along SR 200 southwest of the Paddock Mall or west of I-75 along SR40.

Figure 4-43 shows the relative priority of transit service aspects that survey respondents would consider before choosing to use SunTran services.

Figure 4-43: Importance of Transit Characteristics – Workshop #3



Public Workshops (Phase I)

Two public workshops were held during the initial months of the Ocala/Marion TDP development process, both on February 21, 2017, one at the Walmart Supercenter on E. Silver Springs Boulevard and one at the Ed Croskey Recreation Center on NW 4th Street. The flyer used to advertise the workshops is provided in Appendix C.

For both events, several display boards demonstrating the population and employment densities for Marion County and an overview of existing transit services were provided. A survey was distributed at both events, with 33 completed surveys collected. Input from these surveys was combined with the online survey input in the aforementioned Public (Non-Rider) Survey subsection. Generally speaking, survey respondents were strong proponents of the SunTran system, and most were current riders who wanted to see service expand (in geography rather than frequency) to activity centers and corridors further detailed below.

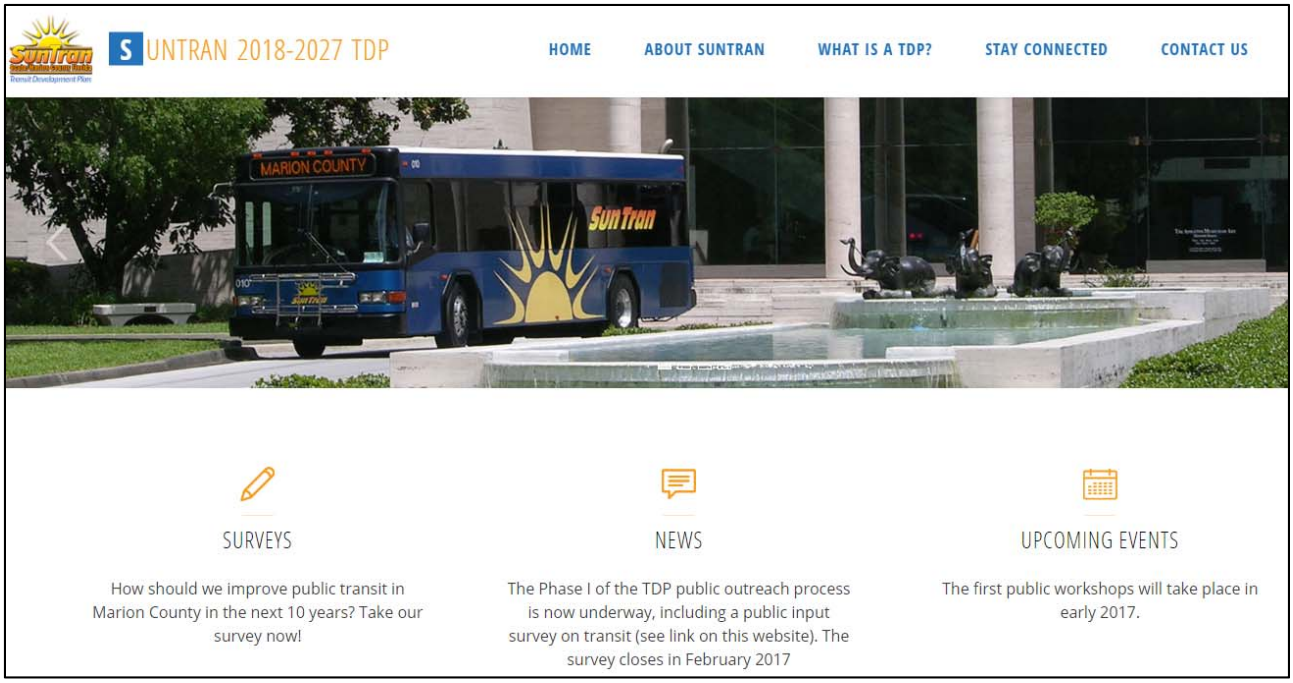
At the workshops, participants were asked to include their thoughts on origins and destinations needed to be served by transit in Marion County by placing a green dot for origins and a red dot for destinations on a large map of the county. From this exercise, several trends and commonly-noted origins and

destinations emerged. Key needs mentioned included expanded coverage, better frequency, routes that are coordinated with worker shifts, and expanded service to SR 200, Marion Oaks, Department of Child and Family Services, West Ocala, and The Centers.

TDP Website and Social Media

A website for the SunTran TDP (http://www.suntran2017tdp.com) was developed early in the project and launched in December 2016 to serve as a principal information portal for citizens and stakeholder agencies. In addition to hosting project-related information and documents, the website provided access to an online survey, comment/questions could be sent to the Project Team, and links were provided to Facebook and Twitter pages established for the SunTran TDP for TDP-related information. As of July 21, 2017, there were 562 total TDP website visits and 1,585 Facebook engagements. Figure 4-44 shows snapshots of the SunTran TDP website and the Facebook home page.

Figure 4-44: SunTran TDP Online Outreach Tools: TDP Website



URL: www.suntran2017tdp.com

Figure 4-45: SunTran TDP Twitter Website

Source: https://twitter.com/suntrantdp2017

Figure 4-46: SunTran TDP Facebook Website

Source: https://www.facebook.com/SunTranTDP2017/

TPO Board Visioning Presentation

A presentation to the TPO Board was held on February 28, 2017. Seven board members were present. The meeting consisted of a presentation followed by a discussion and interactive polling exercise. A multiple-choice format electronic polling exercise was conducted with the Steering Committee, the results of which are presented in Figures 4-46 through 4-52. Highlights from the exercise and discussion include the following:

- More than half of respondents (57%) believed that more public transportation is needed in Marion County. Of those, the majority believed that ridership should increase by 50 percent.
- Most (71%) believe that transit services promote economic growth in Marion County. One respondent mentioned the need for residents in Belleview to access jobs.
- An overwhelming majority (86%) felt that SunTran's role has been primarily to service low-income persons. One respondent believed that public transit services should create economic opportunities.
- Results for transit service improvements needed most to attract more riders varied. Adding new service to local areas and adding Sunday service were the top responses.

Figure 4-47: Is more transportation needed in Marion County?

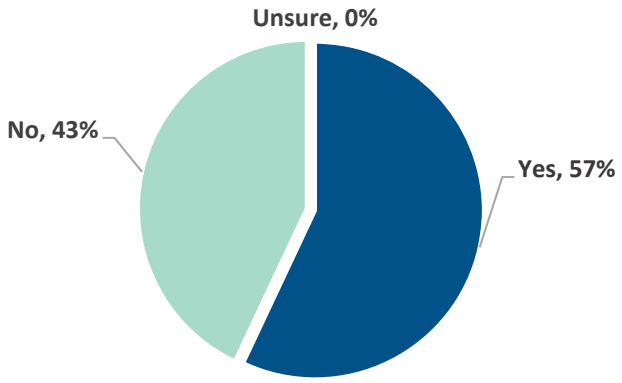


Figure 4-48: If yes, how much growth should there be?

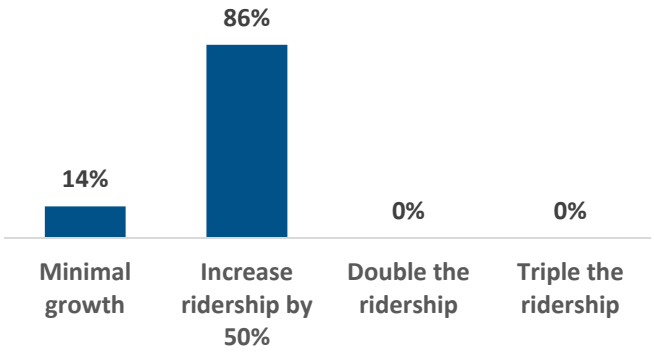


Figure 4-49: Do you think transit services promote economic growth in Marion County?

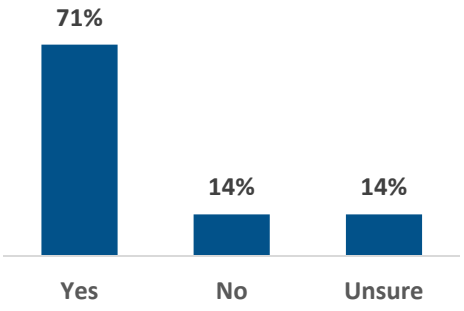


Figure 4-50: In your opinion, what has been the role of public transit in Marion County?

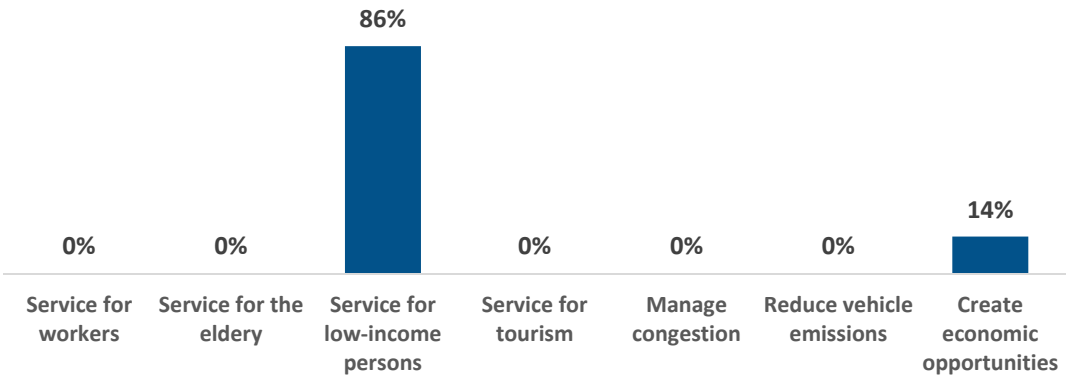


Figure 4-51: Do you think the current system should serve additional employers?

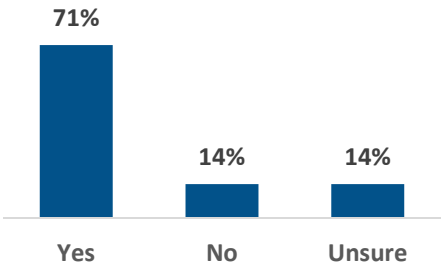
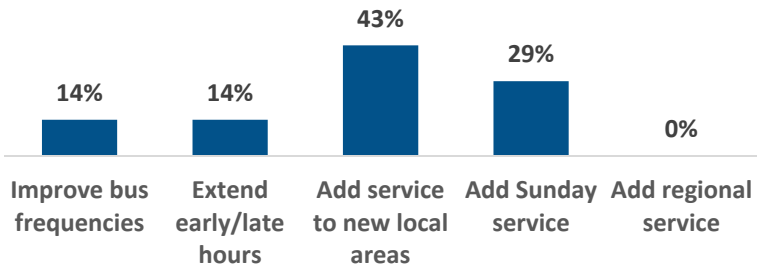


Figure 4-52: What improvement is most important to attract more riders?



Summary of Phase II Public Involvement Activities

The goal of the second phase of public involvement is to gather feedback from the public on the proposed service improvements and expansions. The results of this public input is later used during the alternatives evaluation process so that the proposed alternatives can be ranked appropriately. Two workshops we held as well as a survey was made available to workshop attendees and the general public to collect this critical feedback.

Public Workshops (Phase II)

The workshops during the second phase of the public involvement process took place on Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at SW 27 Avenue & Easy Street (9:00–11:00 AM) and Walmart Super Center 4980 E. Silver Springs Blvd (12:00–2:00 PM). At these workshops, participants were asked to comment on the proposed transit alternatives and identify any additional areas of need.

Downtown Ocala, SR 200, the Industrial Park, and On Top of the World were the top areas and corridors identified as needing more transit service improvements. Most respondents voted favorably for all of the service expansions proposed, such as adding Sunday service, doubling frequency on selected routes, establishing more locations to purchase passes, improving sidewalk connections to bus stops, and adding more bus shelters and benches. However, all of the service improvements received an average score of 4.00 or greater.

The Ocala West Connector was the most favored of the proposed local services. Furthermore the Downtown Circulator was also a highly favored service addition. The most favored proposed flex areas were the SR 200 Flex service and Baseline Road Flex service. The proposed southern county additions which would serve Marion Oaks, Villages-Belleview, and On Top of the World were ranked the least favorably.

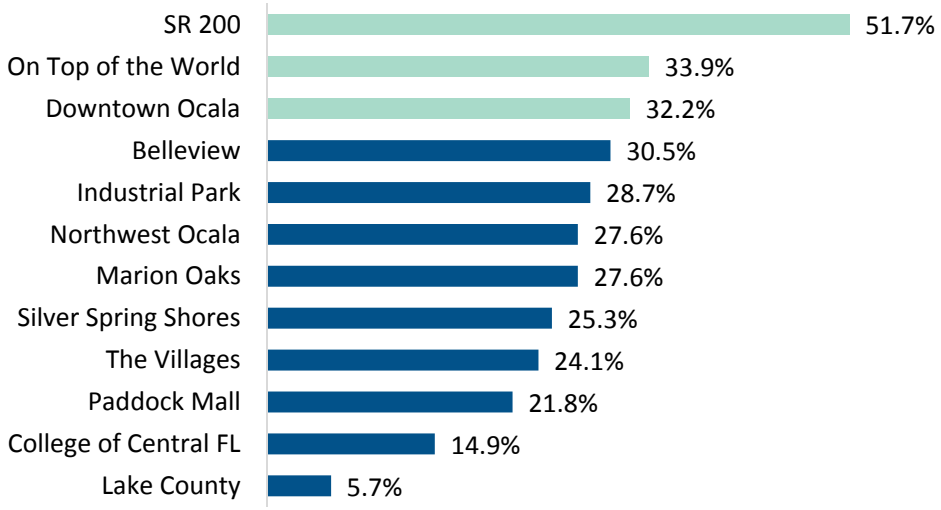
Notable comments include a need for better sidewalk connections, prioritizing bus shelters to locations that need them, greater service frequencies, and the ability to request bus stops on demand to reduce walking distances. The Silver Springs Walmart, Belleview, and On Top of the World were noted as places needing more effective transit service.

Public Input Survey (Phase II)

During the period starting after the workshops held on May 17, 2017 until June 18, 2017, a survey was available to the general public to gather feedback on the proposed transit alternatives and identify any additional areas of need. A total of 218 surveys were completed.

Choosing from a list of areas and corridors, SR 200, On Top of the World, and Downtown Ocala were the three options that received the most votes for needing transit service improvements. Summarized in Figure 4-53, SR 200 took the top spot with nearly 52 percent of respondents voting for expanded transit service, and the latter top options received closer to 30 percent of respondent votes (33.9% and 32.2%, respectively).

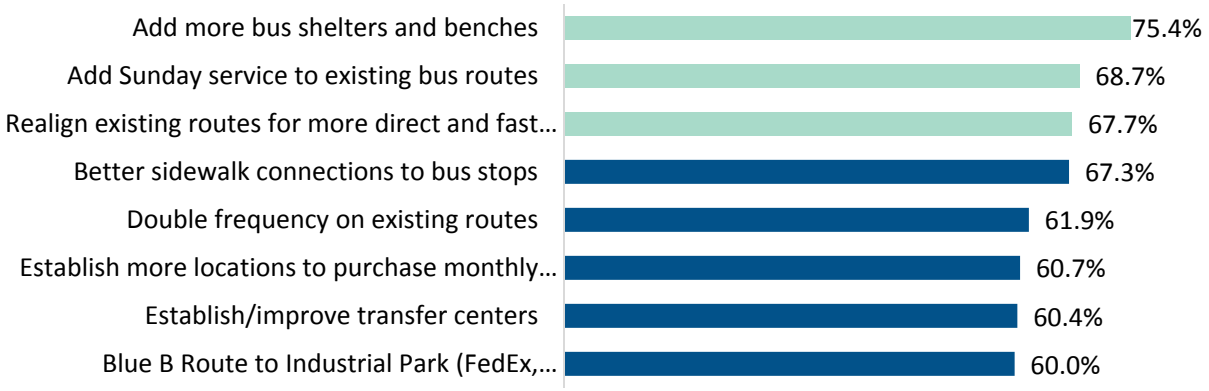
Figure 4-53: Top Areas or Roadways that Need More or Improved Transit Service



Respondents also identified the improvements they desired be made to these roads/areas. In a free-form response field, the most commonly listed improvements include adding sidewalks, adding benches, increasing the service coverage area, increasing the service frequency, and adding shelters. Some locations mentioned that were not part of the provided list include Baseline Road, Belleview, SR 200, Citra and US 27.

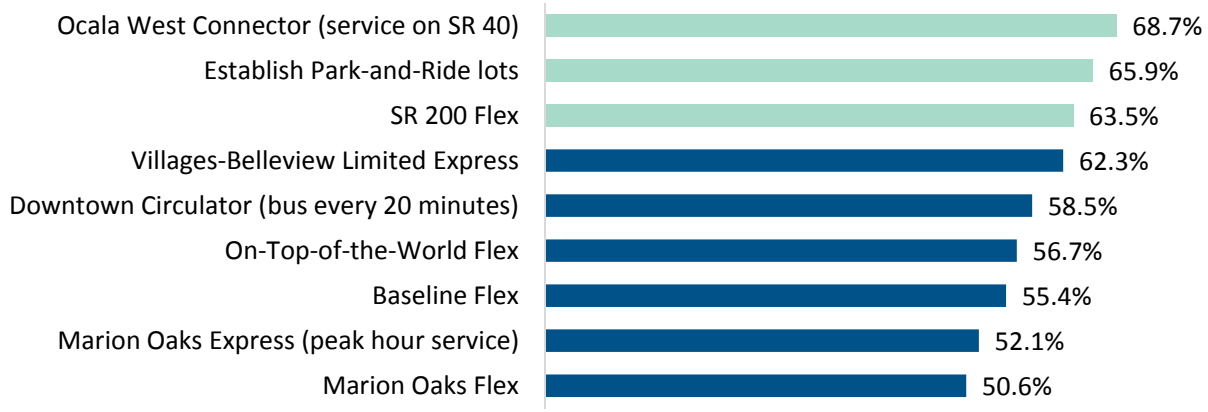
Summarized in Figure 4-54, most respondents voted favorably for all of the service expansions proposed, such as adding more bus shelters and benches, adding Sunday service to existing routes, and realigning existing routes for more direct and fast access.

Figure 4-54: Priorities for Improving Existing Transit Service



The Ocala West Connector was the most favored proposed local service, receiving over 68 percent of respondent top priority votes (Figure 4-55). Establishing park-and-ride lots was identified as the next top priority, receiving approximately 66 percent of votes. The flex service which received the most votes was the SR 200 Flex service (63.5%). The express route viewed most favorably was the Villages-Belleview Limited Express which received approximately 62 percent of top priority votes.

Figure 4-55: Priorities for Expanding Transit Service



In addition to reviewing the proposed service improvements and additions, survey respondents also provided free-form response field which was subsequently categorized to identify themes. Key points of emphasis among respondents, in addition to or further support of prior questions on the survey, included increasing the frequency of the bus service, adding service on SR 200 and to On Top of the World, adding Sunday service, and adding service to Ocala Park Estates and Belleview.

Section 5: Situation Appraisal

Transit systems function best in an environment in which the regulatory, geographic, environmental, land use, developmental, political, and other factors that can and do impact the provision of their services are understood. To this end, a plans review and situation appraisal for Marion County and SunTran was completed to help assess and document the key aspects of the transit agency's operating environment. First, the plans review summarizes a range of pertinent studies and programs administered by a variety of agencies and governments. Second, the situation appraisal examines the strengths and weaknesses of the system as well as any existing barriers to the provision of service in the county and key opportunities for enhancing the transit-friendliness of the operating environment.

Review of Plans, Programs, and Studies

A supportive component of the TDP Update is a review of recent transit policies and programs. This section reviews transit policies at the federal level and relevant statewide and local planning activities conducted by FDOT, Marion County, the City of Ocala, and the Ocala/Marion TPO. Various transportation planning and programming documents are summarized, with an emphasis on issues that may have implications for public transportation in Marion County. These implications are discussed in more detail subsequently in Appendix D.

The following local plans were reviewed to understand current transit policies and plans with potential implications for SunTran's services and to help the TDP become a plan that will guide local transportation decision making:

- SunTran Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)
- Ocala/Marion County 2013–2022 TDP Update
- Ocala/Marion County 2013 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Update
- Ocala/Marion TPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Ocala/Marion TPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Ocala 2035 Vision
- Marion County Comprehensive Plan
- City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan

In addition, the following state and federal plans also were reviewed:

- FAST Act
- Grow America Act
- 2060 Florida Transportation Plan
- State of Florida TD Five-Year/Twenty-Year Plan
- State Growth Management Legislation (House Bill 7207)

Tables 5-1 and 5-2 summarize the federal and local plans reviewed. Appendix D provides a detailed review of the plans and programs.

Table 5-1: Federal Programs and State Plans

Plan/Program/ Study Reviewed	Most Recent Update	Geography & Responsible/ Partner Agencies	Overview	Key Consideration for Situation Appraisal
Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) ACT	October 2015	USDOT	Five-year funding for nation's surface transportation infrastructure, including transit systems and rail transportation network. Provides long-term certainty and more flexibility for states and local governments, streamlines project approval processes, and maintains a strong commitment to safety.	• Increases dedicated bus funding by 89 percent over life of bill. • Provides both stable formula funding and competitive grant program to address bus and bus facility needs. • Reforms public transportation procurement to make federal investment more cost effective and competitive. • Consolidates and refocuses transit research activities to increase efficiency and accountability. • Establishes pilot program for communities to expand transit through use of public-private partnerships. • Provides flexibility for recipients to use federal funds to meet their state of good repair needs. • Provides for coordination of public transportation services with other federally-assisted transportation services to aid in mobility of older adults and individuals with disabilities.
State of Florida Transportation Disadvantaged 5-Year/20-Year Plan	November 2007	FL Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD)	Purpose is to accomplish cost-effective, efficient, unduplicated, cohesive transportation disadvantaged services within its service area.	• Develop and field-test model community transportation system for TD persons; create strategy for Florida CTD to support development of a universal transportation system.
Florida Transportation Plan: Horizon 2060 (FTP)	2005	FDOT	Required under Florida Statutes, plan is to make Florida's economy more competitive, communities more livable. Looks at 50-year transportation planning horizon, calls for fundamental change in how and where State investments in transportation are made.	• Supports development of state, regional, and local transit services through series of related goals and objectives, emphasizing new and innovative approaches by all modes to meet needs today and in future.

Table 5-2: Local Plans and Programs

Plan/Program/ Study Reviewed	Most Recent Update	Geography & Responsible/ Partner Agencies	Overview	Key Consideration for Situation Appraisal
SunTran Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)	2016	Ocala/Marion TPO	Assessment designed to identify opportunities for improving productivity and efficiency of transit agency's public transportation services.	• In addition to route alignment changes, recommendations to improve service in form of short-term and long-term implementation plans. • Short-term recommendations: o Increase Green Route and Orange Route frequencies to two buses per hour o Adjust current/proposed Purple Route alignment for one-way loop o Focus on ADA connections between stops and medical uses o Discontinue last Red Route trip • Long-term recommendation: • Convert Red Route to Flex Zone
Ocala/Marion 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	2015	Ocala/Marion TPO	20-year guide for transportation improvements within urbanized area, updated every 5 years. Provides year-by-year methods to reach goals; must be consistent with State/federal requirements to maintain funding.	Service improvements considered for all existing SunTran routes that would reduce headway to 30 minutes. Due to limited funding, service improvements included in Cost Feasible Plan limited to reducing frequency to 45 minutes on Blue, Green, Orange, and Purple routes. Plan also includes continued operation of existing fixed route and ADA service and $2.41 million for ADA bus shelter accessibility improvements.
Marion County Comprehensive Plan	2014	Marion County	Guides development, land use decisions, preservation of existing transportation infrastructure, and transportation improvements.	Regarding transit, plan states Marion County must coordinate with TPO to undertake action to serve transportation disadvantaged persons with an efficient transit system; provide for development of rational and integrated multimodal transportation system; preserve options to promote development of long-range transit alternatives. Marion County created urban growth boundary and density bonus incentive program to promote more transit supportive environment.

Table 5-2: Local Plans and Programs

Plan/Program/ Study Reviewed	Most Recent Update	Geography & Responsible/ Partner Agencies	Overview	Key Consideration for Situation Appraisal
Ocala/Marion County 2013 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP)	2013	Ocala/ Marion TPO	Federally-required program, annually updated tactical plan jointly developed by designated Planning Agency and local Community Transportation Coordinator; contains development, service, and quality assurance components to address the needs of the TD persons.	Goals: • Provide increased mobility and ridership using Marion County Senior Services, contract providers and SunTran to meet demand and mobility needs of TD persons • Maximize coordination and efficiency of TD services with SunTran fixed-route services and private providers • Provide for most cost-effective transportation services possible • Provide for most comprehensive transportation services possible to service all TD residents • Deliver safe and high quality transit experience to customer • Investigate and pursue available funding opportunities at federal, state, and local levels and from private sources for programs or projects that serve TD
Ocala/Marion County 2013-2022 Transit Development Plan (TDP)	2012	Ocala/Marion TPO	Strategic assessment and planning document for SunTran transit service, updated every 5 years.	Presented four goals of County's 10-year vision for transit: • Increase ridership/accessibility for current and potential users • Maximize coordination and efficiency of transportation services to better serve population • Provide for most cost-effective transportation services possible • Promote and provide for necessary expansion of coordinated transportation system necessary to meet future needs of general public, including transportation disadvantaged
Ocala/Marion County 2035 LRTP	2010	Ocala/Marion TPO	20-year guide for transportation improvements within urbanized area, updated every 5 years. Provides year-by-year methods to reach goals; must be consistent with State and federal requirements to maintain funding.	Transit projects included in Needs Assessment for 25-year plan: • Expand bus service to west of Ocala to CR 484 and SR 200 intersection and south to Sumter County line • Expand bus service to east of Ocala past SR 35 and south to Belleview and Sumter County line • Dedicated bus lane along US 27/US 441 • Dedicated bus land along CR 464 • Passenger rail from Ocala to Sumter County line • Light rail from Ocala to CR 464 (east of Belleview)

Table 5-2: Local Plans and Programs

Plan/Program/ Study Reviewed	Most Recent Update	Geography & Responsible/ Partner Agencies	Overview	Key Consideration for Situation Appraisal
Ocala Vision 2035	2010	City of Ocala	Guide developed to describe how the community wants the city to look and function in the future.	Transit and mobility related strategies split among four different design topics: • *General* – community redevelopment • *Urban Form & Open Space* – identify and acquire open spaces around the city • *Building & Site Design* – create incentive program to encourage infill, development, or redevelopment • *Mobility & Connectivity* – develop Streetscape Master Plans, Complete Street evaluations, establish citywide sidewalk improvement program
City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan	2009	City of Ocala	Primary policy document concerning land use, transportation, and other planning matters for Ocala.	Goals that may impact transit services and/or planning: • Create and maintain safe, efficient, and aesthetic transportation system that encourages multimodal transportation (Goal 1) • Provide efficient and safe public transit system accessible to all citizens (Goal 3) • Direct growth to Transportation Concurrency Exception Area/Urban Redevelopment Area to discourage urban sprawl; reduce development pressure on rural lands; maximize use of existing public facilities; centralize commercial, governmental, retail, residential, and cultural activities (Goal 4) • City implemented parking exemption in central business district and allows for alternative transportation programs to mitigate deficient road conditions including but not limited to transit systems, carpools, vanpools, limited parking, and staggered work hours (subject to approval).

Situation Appraisal

Requirements for a 10-year TDP in Florida include the need for a situation appraisal of the environment in which the transit agency operates. The purpose of this appraisal is to help develop an understanding of the transit operating environment in Marion County in the context of the following elements:

- Socioeconomic trends
- Travel behavior
- Regional transit issues
- Land use
- Public involvement
- Organizational attributes
- Technology
- Funding

The assessment and resulting implications are drawn from the following sources:

- Results of technical evaluation performed as part of the SunTran TDP planning process.
- Review of relevant plans, studies, and programs prepared at all levels of government.
- Outcomes of public outreach activities.

Issues, trends, and implications are summarized for each of the major elements in the remainder of this section.

Socioeconomic Trends

To better assess the impact of the growth in population on public transportation needs, it is important to understand the trends and markets that could be impacted or may benefit from public transportation services. Key findings from an assessment of socioeconomic trends are summarized as follows:

- Much of the growth is projected to occur in the outskirts of the Ocala urbanized area and in a few low-density pockets within the core urban area.
- The Villages Census Designated Place (CDP) is the fastest-growing area in the county.
- The On Top of the World development is another rapidly-growing area. This area also has a high concentration of older adult and zero-car households.
- Much of the growth in dwelling units between now and 2027 is projected to occur in the western and southern areas of Marion County, especially in the York and Summerfield communities. Growth is also anticipated in a few areas surrounding Yellow A route and the Purple route.
- The percent of households without a vehicle rose from 1.6 in 2010 to 2.7 in 2014.
- Minority populations are concentrated in the areas west and northwest of Ocala and in Silver Springs Shores. These areas are also contain the highest poverty levels in the county.

- The area north of the Red route, and the area north of SR 200 (west of I-75), in particular, are projected to have a substantial increase in growth.
- Marion County has a larger proportion of older persons compared to the statewide average. In 2025, the older adult population is projected to increase to 31.6 percent (2015 estimate is 27.5%) of the county's total population and will continue to increase to 34.8 percent until 2040. A growing need for public transit within Marion County can be assumed, considering the growing share of age groups that are more likely to use transit.
- Employment density is more centralized than the general population density along major arterials, and, for the most part, employment is projected to grow in the TAZs where it already exists through 2027.
- Based on 2014 ACS data, Marion County had 6,842 employer establishments and 76,032 employees.
- Only 44.6 percent of the civilian labor force is employed.
- The Munroe Regional Medical Center, Walmart, and the Ocala Health System are the top private employers.
- According to the forecast ridership projections, overall average annual ridership is expected to increase by 8.2 percent by 2027, an annual growth rate of about 0.82 percent. The model results show that the most significant ridership growth in the existing SunTran network will occur on the Purple, Red A and Red B routes.
- The 2017 Density Threshold Assessment (DTA) analysis indicates that the discretionary transit market is principally employment-based, with "high" and "very high" employment density thresholds primarily in along SR 200 southwest of the Ocala CBD, between SR 200 and SR 464, along US 301 north and south of the CBD, and along SR 40 Silver Springs Boulevard.
- Based on the TOI analysis, the areas between the Ocala CBD and I-75 are among the areas with the highest transit orientation. These areas are characterized as areas with a high index of households living under the poverty level and zero-vehicle households.
- The area northwest of NW 110th Ave/SR 40 and the southernmost area of the county between US 301 and I-75 also have areas of very high TOI. These area are characterized by low-density residential areas outside of the urbanized area with a high presence of households living under the poverty level. The very high transit-oriented area between SE Lake Weir Ave and US 301 near Camp Roosevelt has a combination of youth, older adults, households living under the poverty level, and zero-vehicle households.

Implications *– In general, SunTran routes currently service major TOI and DTA areas in the central Ocala area. Transit service should incrementally expand as population and employment increases; however, current socioeconomic data indicate an existing need to expand service in key areas to capture markets such as those along SR 200/SW College Road, east of SE Lake Weir Ave, and Oak Road. The On Top of the World development has emerged as an area potentially needing new transit services. Although the overall county population is not projected to increase dramatically, growing areas, especially along SR 200 west of I-75, should be prioritized when expanding transit services.*

Growing traditional rider markets such as older adults and zero-car households may indicate that the county is becoming more transit-supportive. Marion County should continue to maintain and expand its current services by targeting traditional markets and areas with high density, especially since poverty rates and older adult populations are projected to increase.

SunTran should continue efforts to increase its share of discretionary riders, particularly young adults and those who work in the service, sales, and office occupations. Occupations such as those in the service industry that may work outside of traditional office hours may require extended service hours to meet the demands of their work schedule.

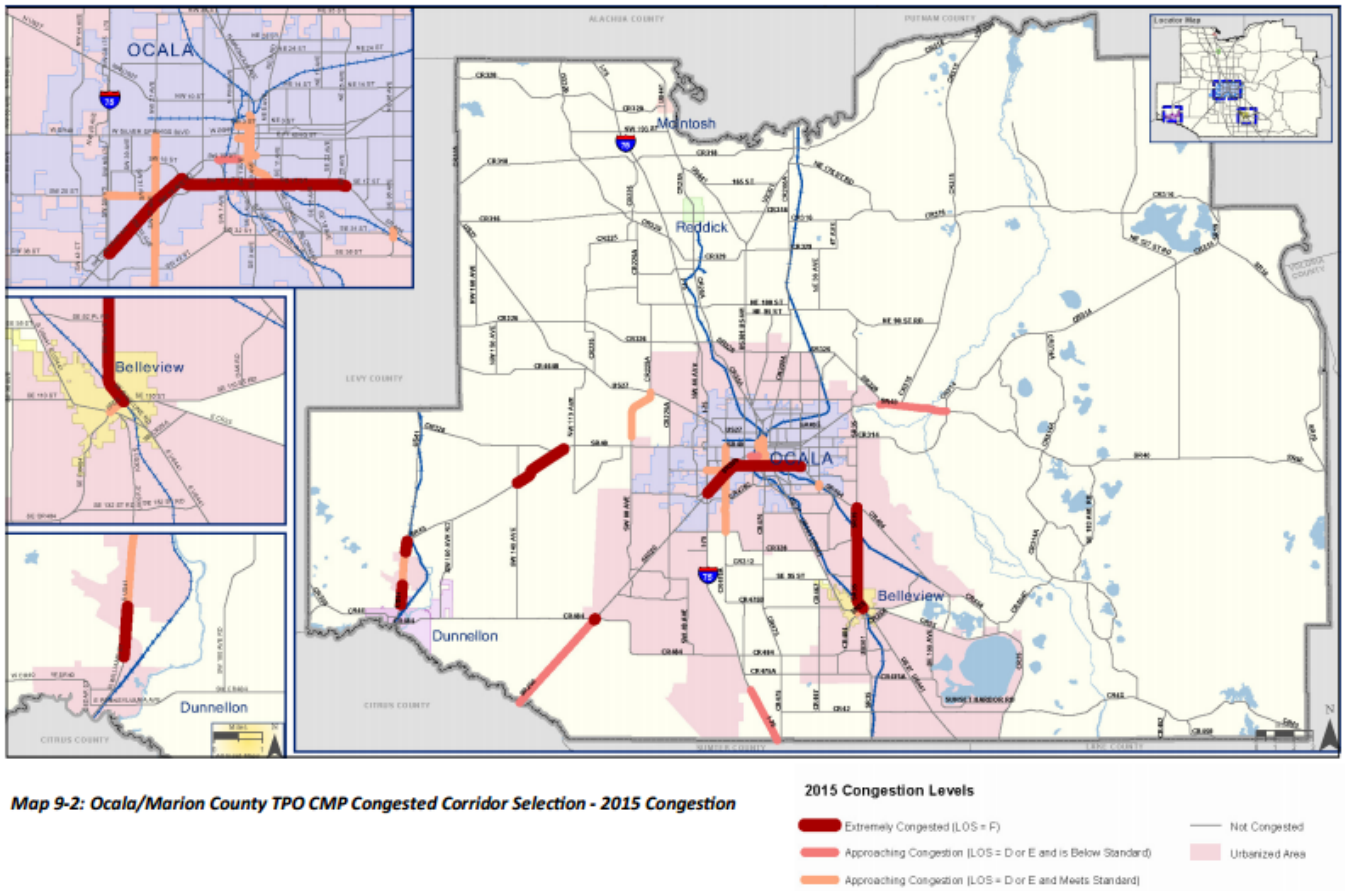
Travel Behavior

- The COA completed in 2016 identified several short-term opportunities for improving the productivity and efficiency of SunTran's services, including:
  - Increasing the Green and Orange route frequencies to two buses per hour
  - Adjusting current/proposed Purple Route alignment for one-way loop
  - Focusing on ADA connections between stops and medical uses
  - Discontinuing last Red route trip
- Long-term recommendation identified in the COA is to convert the Red route to a flex zone
- As illustrated in Figure 5-1, the most congested corridors operating at LOS F are:
  - Along SR 200 from I-75 to SW 17th Street
  - Along SW 17th Street, SE 58th Ave north of Belleview
  - SR 40 between SW 140th Ave and W Highway 328
  - N Williams Street/US 41 north of CR 484 in Dunnellon
- The primary mode of commuting to work is driving alone.
- Currently, only 0.3 percent of commuters travel to work using public transportation in Marion County.
- More than 40 percent of commutes are less than 20 minutes, with most commute times ranging from 10–19 minutes, indicating that commuters must travel a moderately short distance but still outside the typical walking distance between work and home.
- The majority of commuters leave for work during the traditional peak period between 6:00–8:00 am (more than 50% of commutes).
- The majority of transit riders (66.5%) work in the management, business, science, arts and service occupations.
- The 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) has programed frequency improvements for the Blue, Green, Orange and Purple routes to 45-minute headways 2031 and ongoing ADA bus shelter accessibility improvements.
- The 2040 LRTP identified several transit needs that servicing Marion County and the adjacent counties south of the county: community circulator service in the areas southeast and southwest of Ocala, a Marion Oaks Express route, light rail connecting Downtown Ocala to

Silver Springs Shores, and an intercity rail line. Figure 5-2 illustrates the needs identified in the 2040 LRTP.

Implications *– SunTran and the Ocala/Marion TPO should work to immediately implement the recommended service improvements identified in the recent COA. SunTran already serves many major trip generators and attractors, with plans to increase frequencies on high performing routes. As funds become available, SunTran and the Ocala/Marion County TPO should consider expanding services to high-volume locations, such as CR 484 and SR 200 within the City of Ocala, in addition to identified needs in the 2040 LRTP. As the county gradually grows, Marion County should continue to modify its services to capture new riders and new transit markets, such as "choice" riders. In the future, dedicated bus lanes in key corridors during peak travel hours on congested roadways should be considered to decrease travel times for commuters and increase safety, making transit more attractive, particularly when combined with other transportation demand management (TDM) strategies.*

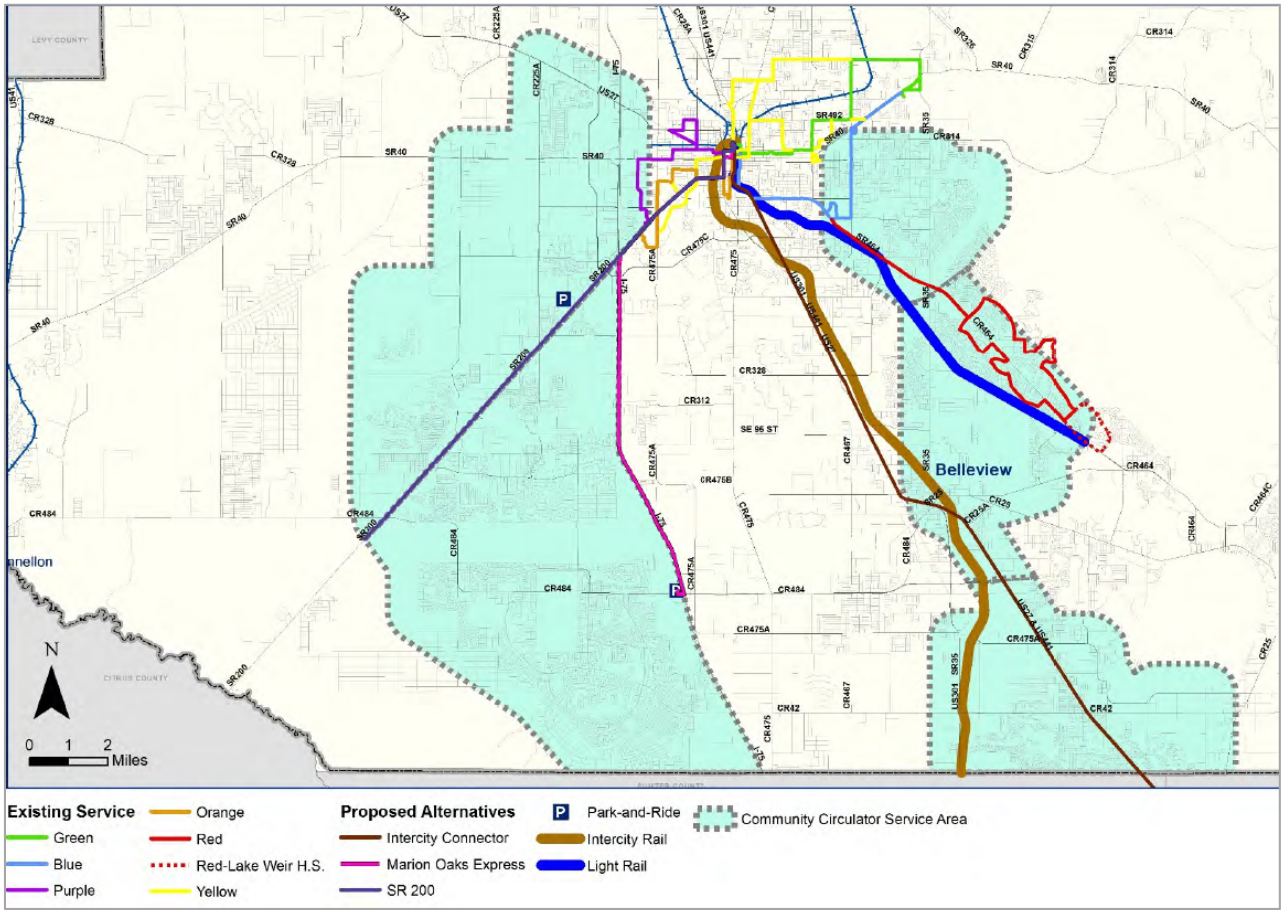
Figure 5-1: 2015 Congestion Levels



Map 9-2: Ocala/Marion County TPO CMP Congested Corridor Selection - 2015 Congestion

Source: Ocala/Marion County TPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Figure 5-2: 2040 LRTP Transit Needs Assessment



Source: Ocala/Marion County TPO's 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

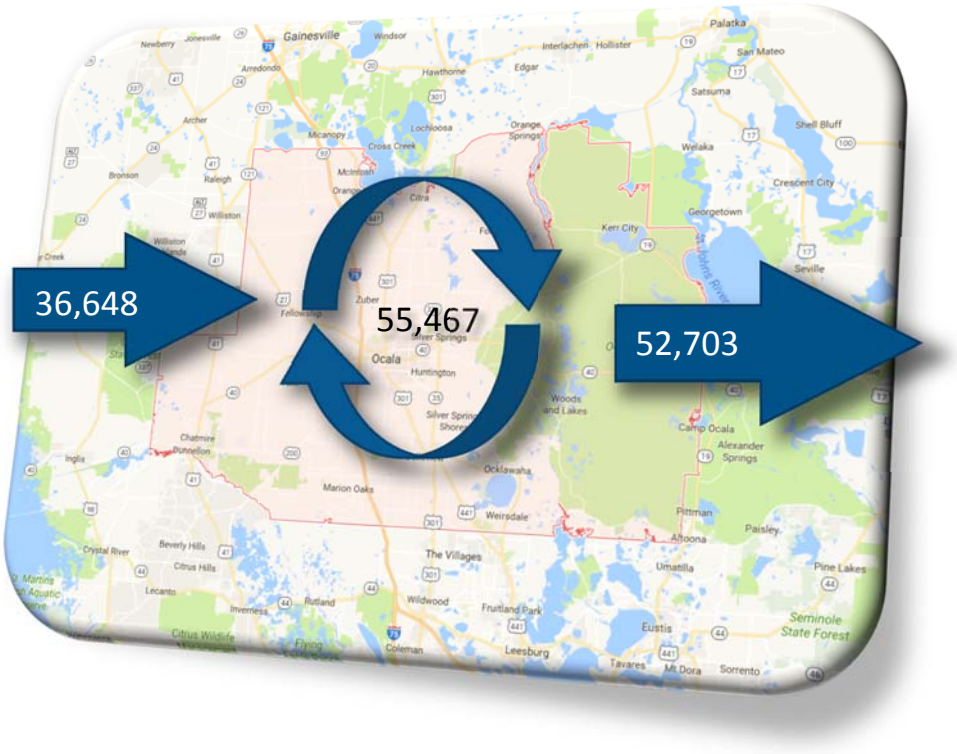
Regional Transit Issues

- There are almost as many workers who live and work within the county (55,467 workers) as those who live within but work outside the county (52,467 workers).
- An influx of 36,648 workers living outside the county work in Marion County.
- Citrus County will have the highest percent of commuter inflow into Marion County in 2041, at 4.1 percent, followed by Lake County at 2.9 percent.
- Commuters travel from as far south as Hillsborough County and as far north as Duval County for work-related purposes.
- The Villages extends from southern Marion County to northern Lake County and has a high population of older adults, as evidenced by the high TOI. Many residents in this area need to access medical appointments in Ocala. Additionally, there are many low-income workers who live in Ocala and need transportation to their jobsite in the Villages.

Implications *– Because commuters flowing into and out of the county disperse to several counties throughout central Florida, as far north as Jacksonville and as far south of Hillsborough, it is difficult to create an efficient route that would serve one major regional origin/destination. There is a need for*

residents and workers to travel to and from The Villages, as evidenced by feedback from public involvement, the existing residential and employment densities, and the high TOI with older adults. Although no plans or programs have identified the need to connect the region by transit, consideration for a regional connection to Lake County should be given to fill the transportation needs of these populations. As growth in the region continues, the issue should be revisited and coordinated with neighboring MPOs.

Figure 5-3: Worker Inflow and Outflow



Source: LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), 2014

Land Use

The City of Ocala and Marion County each have adopted a vision plan for future integration with their comprehensive plans. The County also has adopted an urban growth boundary to create a more dense land use pattern, particularly within the city of Ocala. The Marion County vision plan establishes a "complete streets" policy, with efforts to review and create a Master Plan that includes landscape and hardscape details. This plan also will address retrofitting existing roads and the development of new roads to include mobility features for transit, bicycle, pedestrians, and automobiles. An additional strategy identified by the 2035 Vision includes establishing minimum residential densities and commercial intensities to support the use of public transportation along identified complete streets and transit corridors. The Ocala 2035 Vision outlines the community's desire to continue developing the transit system to connect to outlying communities and other counties with complete streets on major corridors and transit corridors such as SR 200, US 441, SR 40, and SE 31st Street.

The following summarizes notable land use patterns:

- Ocala consists of medium-density residential use, with high-density residential use occurring in pockets of the medium-density areas of the city and county, such as the area surrounding Pine Road, and low-density residential use areas along the periphery of the medium-density areas.
- Within Ocala, the High-Intensity/Central Core areas are immediately surrounded by a mix of Low Intensity and Neighborhood areas. Southwest of the city along SR 200, most of the land is zoned for Low Intensity and Medium Intensity/Special District use.
- There are only a few scattered parcels of urban-density residential areas in Marion County, which are in parcels along SR 200 southwest of Ocala and in the Marion Oaks regional activity center south of Ocala.
- The Marion Oaks regional activity center, in addition to the high urban-density residential area, is considered an Employment Center (blue) and Commerce District (purple). This activity center is surrounded predominantly by medium-density residential use areas.
- The majority of the developed areas of the county are low to medium residential uses.
- The majority of the eastern third of the county are preservation lands, trisected by Hwy 40 and CR 314, and include a few small residential pockets of low and medium density.
- Marion County has designated an Urban Neighborhood District and Urban Commerce Districts that allow for mixed-use development between 8–16 dwelling units/acre. The Urban Neighborhood District is designated in a parcel southeast of S 60th Avenue and SR 200 in Zuber. The largest Urban Commerce District is located in the area surrounding I-75 immediately north of Ocala, and several more can be found between S Pine Avenue/US 441 and Pine Road.
- Marion County has implemented a density bonus program to incentivize smart growth patterns.
- The City of Ocala has designated the CBD (B-3) as a parking exempt zone.
- The City of Ocala allows for alternative transportation programs to mitigate deficient road conditions, including but not limited to transit systems, carpools, vanpools, limited parking, and staggered work hours (subject to approval).

Implications *– Mixed-use and high-density land use promote a dense and transit-supportive environment. The land use and parking exemptions of the CBD of Ocala could continue to create a more transit-supportive environment. Currently, no large-scale mixed-use land designations exist within unincorporated areas of Marion County. The sprawling development pattern characterized by low- to medium-density residential in areas such as the unincorporated community of Marion Oaks, Silver Spring Shores, The Villages, and the On Top of the World DRI undermine the urban growth boundary and can create a barrier to establishing efficient transit service.*

Creating a multimodal system will require efforts from the County in modifying land. The Ocala/Marion TPO must continue to participate in and coordinate with ongoing efforts that encourage transit-

supportive development throughout Marion County. The County has created an urban growth boundary and a density bonus incentive program that could promote a more transit-supportive environment. The Ocala/Marion County TPO should work to ensure that land development policies and land development codes require transit infrastructure to support adequate levels of transit service, increase their maximum *development intensities, reduce minimum parking requirements, and expand the parking-exempt district. The City of Ocala and Marion County both have prioritized a multimodal transit system, so the Ocala/Marion TPO should be poised to leverage this investment to the best of its ability, particularly in coordination with the Ocala 2035 Vision plan.*

Public Involvement

As a part of the TDP effort, in collaboration with the Ocala/Marion TPO, an extensive outreach process was conducted to garner public input. An on-board bus survey was conducted in December 2016 to collect rider input on current transit services and provide direction for future improvements, marketing, and policies. In February 2017, two public workshops and three discussion group workshops were conducted. Additionally, a series of meetings with elected officials, planning review committees, stakeholders, and bus operators was conducted to discuss existing and future service characteristics and needs. Email blasts and social media channels also were used to reach and inform the public.
General conclusions drawn from public involvement efforts conducted for the TDP as well as other efforts include the following:

- **Transit is essential** – In total, 83 percent of public input survey respondents indicated that SunTran services must be provided, and 95 percent agreed that there is a need for additional services, despite the majority of respondents (71%) reporting that they had never used transit. Approximately 85 percent of SunTran riders used the bus three or more days per week, and 23 percent indicated that they would not have made the trip if transit was not available, highlighting the importance of SunTran's service to these transit-dependent individuals. Several participants indicated the need to improve transit to improve the overall health of the community by accessing essential destinations such as medical offices, grocery stores, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and The Centers.
- **Expand service coverage** – Feedback from participants expressed a desire for SunTran to expand its service coverage. When asked which services should be added to the transit network, increased coverage was the top response. Frequently-cited areas and locations needing new service included:
  - Silver Springs Boulevard
  - Marion Oaks
  - West of I-75
  - US 27
  - SR 40
  - The Centers
  - DCF

- Silver Springs Shores
- Belleview via US 441
- Baseline Road
- On Top of the World
- Industrial area west of I-75
- Northwest area of Ocala
- Silver Springs Shores
- Airport Road
- Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park
- The Villages

- **Sunday service** – The need for Sunday service was a commonly-noted need identified by riders, the general public, stakeholders, and bus operators. Other noted comments and general themes from the survey included the need for higher frequencies and longer hours of service to accommodate late worker shifts.
- **Amenities** – Participants indicated a need for sheltered stops and benches, more on-bus bicycle accommodations, and bus schedules at stations.
- **Fare access** – Feedback emphasized the need to make monthly fares easier to purchase. Fares currently are available for purchase at three Publix Supermarkets and at the College of Central Florida, which could be difficult for low-income riders who do not live in those areas to access. Also mentioned was an improved monthly fare system that does not expire at the end of the month, but instead expires after a month of activation. One user indicated that passes should be available for purchase at major bus stations.
- **Route gaps** – Operators were asked to provide suggestions on which SunTran routes need improvements. It was suggested that the Yellow B route extend out past NE 28th Street and should allow passengers to transfer to the Blue line at Walmart instead of traveling Downtown. It was also suggested that the Purple route extend to W SR 40 to the industrial park areas west of I-75 and that the Orange route extend further out on 17th Street or further south on S Pine Avenue. One operator proposed a new route running along US 441 and into Belleview. Operators noted a gap in service between the northern section of the Yellow B route and SR 326. Operators mentioned that many riders will walk the distance between NE 28th Street and SR 326 (3+ miles) to get to the Downtown areas. Another gap was identified between the southern portion of the Orange route at SR 464 and westward towards Easy Street/SW 12th Street and along US 27, specifically where it intersects with NW 30th Avenue before heading south. Public feedback indicated that routes are circuitous and go in a "figure 8," making travel times unacceptably long. A few participants indicated that they did not like one-way alignments of some of the routes.

Implications *– SunTran service is vital to the community, as most users use it three or more times per week, and 23 percent indicated that they would not be able to make their trip if not for the service. In addition to the needs and recommendations presented in the COA, Ocala Vision 2035, and the LRTP,*

SunTran should take into account the public input received when prioritizing service improvements for Marion County. Several improvements and needs were identified across all public involvement efforts, including modification to the existing structure of the SunTran fixed-route bus network, new routes, Sunday service, infrastructure upgrades, and changes to fare policy. Important to SunTran will be the need to balance the allocation of limited resources and the prioritization of these improvements if and when they are implemented. A major strategic planning consideration for Marion County is whether to enhance public transportation by extending service to new areas, anticipating that new ridership will be generated, or improving service and service delivery in the existing service areas.

SunTran should work to improve its bus schedules to make them more user-friendly on their ride guides and their website. In addition to more frequent service, consideration should to given to expanded service on Sundays and adding more benches and shelters at bus stops.

Organizational Attributes

The Ocala/Marion TPO is the administrative agency for SunTran and has contracted with McDonald Transit to perform day-to-day operations and management for the system for the last 15 years. SunTran is currently the only fixed-route public transit provider in Marion County. TPO has the role of coordinating with the County and Cities to locate, permit, and build bus stops and other transit infrastructure/amenities within the right-of-way of the roadways along SunTran routes.

Marion County Senior Services is a non-profit, charitable social agency whose mission is to provide supportive care services to older adults, persons with disabilities, and otherwise disadvantaged residents of Marion County. It is funded by several non-profit and government agencies, including FDOT, CTD, and the Marion County Commission. Marion County Senior Services has contracted with Marion Transit Services to provide paratransit service to riders who qualify under the ADA; certification of ADA riders is performed by The Center for Independent Living.

SunTran completed a COA in 2016 to identify opportunities for improving the productivity and efficiency of a transit agency's public transportation service. In addition to route alignment changes, recommendations were presented to improve the service in the form of short-term and long-term implementation plans.

***Implications** – The current structure of Ocala/Marion TPO as the administrative agency for SunTran and contracting with a vendor (currently McDonald Transit) to perform day-to-day operations and management for the fixed-route bus system should continue. As part of this structure, the TPO should work with the County and Cities to develop a plan to improve bus stop infrastructure/amenities and access to them as well as modifying land development regulations that would promote the implementation of the Ocala 2035 Vision.*

Technology

SunTran is responsible for implementing the Bus Technology Improvements Program and has implemented wireless technology on all buses. This technology provides in-vehicle service to all

passengers and improves the customer service experience. At the end of 2013, SunTran equipped all its buses with automatic passenger counters (APCs) and automatic vehicle locator (AVL) devices. The data from these units are used to analyze and refine bus routes, refine the location and need for transit stops, and maximize the system. This will enhance the rider experiences, which has the potential to attract new discretionary riders.

SunTran has incorporated it General Transit Specification Feed (GTFS) with the Google Maps trip planning tool to enable riders to access route information and travel times.

According to the 2013 TDP Annual Update, as a part of the FY 2022 Implementation Plan goals, SunTran will investigate live electronic updates to personal data devices such as cell phones, etc.

In the past, the TPO has considered implementing queue jump lane technologies at selected intersections in Ocala. These lanes provide priority treatment to transit by allowing buses to bypass long queues at congested intersections. The technology uses special priority lanes, often right-hand turn lanes, and often is combined with a priority signal for buses that permit transit through movements at intersections. However, the 2040 LRTP did not identify the exploration of queue jump lane technologies.

SunTran anticipates purchasing seven buses in the next few years and will explore the purchase of electric buses.

***Implications** – Although wireless technology is provided on a system-wide basis, many respondents in the on-board survey were unaware that it existed and suggested it as a service improvement. Stakeholders also suggested implementing wireless service on buses to attract additional youth and choice riders. SunTran should consider advertising this service availability on buses so riders and potential riders are aware of its existence. The use of APCs on SunTran buses will enhance ridership data collection and performance monitoring efforts.*

Several routes avoid major corridors to improve on-time performance, such that the service loses significant visibility and awareness in the community. The Ocala/Marion TPO and SunTran should work together to use technology as a tool to improve visibility by enhancing their websites, modifying them to be more user-friendly and easier to navigate with mobile devices. The Ocala/Marion TPO also should consider linking the Google Maps trip planning tool to the SunTran website.

The purchase of electric buses has the potential to attract discretionary riders concerned with eco-footprints. In addition to being a greener technology, the reductions in exhaust and dramatic noise could help to improve the perception of transit in the community. In addition, the Ocala/Marion TPO should continue to review the possibilities of implementing queue jump lane technologies at selected locations in Ocala as the need arises.

Funding

Securing a dedicated long-term funding source for public transportation services is a goal that many providers of transit aspire to achieve. To date, such efforts have not been in the forefront in Marion

County, and SunTran continues to be funded by a mix of federal, State, and local funds allocated on a year-by-year basis, including gas tax funds from the City of Ocala and ad valorem tax revenues from Marion County.

As the County works to balance its budget under the current economic climate, the TPO will need to continue to complete with the City and County departments to maintain/increase existing funding levels. The prospects of identifying another funding source in the near future may prove to be challenging, as several stakeholders noted that securing new funding sources could meet resistance from the community. Stakeholders suggested public-private partnerships, advertising, and fare increases as alternative methods to raise additional funds. In the past, the TPO explored the possibility of funding with the City of Belleview to provide new services to the city, but no agreement was reached. Consequently, the ability to expand services and meet the transit demand and mobility needs throughout the county will be limited unless the City's and County's shares of the budgets grows.

Implications *– To expand service, funding levels will need to increase. Despite the community's desire to have complete streets and new transit services, the current economic climate has made the ability to create new revenue streams more difficult. The TPO will need to work cooperatively with ongoing efforts throughout the county to expand public transportation in the county.*

In addition, the potential benefits to the business community from expanded and more frequent transit service need to be emphasized. An awareness of the economic returns on transit investment may positively influence any funding discussions with the private sector and may aid in forming public-private partnerships to fund transit in Ocala.

The Ocala/Marion TPO should explore a partnership with educational institutions such as Marion Technical College, Marion County Community Technical and Adult Education Center, Rasmussen College, and the College of Central Florida that will offer students free fares in exchange for a secure funding source that can be in the form of a transportation fee as a part of their tuition. Students could show their student IDs to ride the bus for free. This could simplify the fare payment process, encourage new users of the system, and improve on-time performance.

Section 6: Goals and Objectives

Goals and objectives are an integral part of any transportation plan because they provide the policy direction to achieve the community's vision. The goals and objectives presented here were prepared/updated based on review and assessment of existing conditions, feedback received during the public involvement process, and review of local and State transportation planning documents and policies. In addition, the situation appraisal conducted as part of this TDP also was reviewed to gain a better understanding of community goals and objectives relating to transit and mobility.

The goals and objectives for this TDP were developed to be consistent with the goals and objectives found in the adopted Ocala/Marion County TDP as well as other key plans such as the Ocala/Marion County 2040 LRTP and the Ocala 2035 Vision plan.

Mission Statement

The mission statement governing transit in the Ocala/Marion County area is as follows:

> *To ensure the operation of a safe, efficient, and cost-effective transportation system that meets the needs of Marion County's general public, including its transportation disadvantaged, while providing a system that is integrated with other modes of travel, including pedestrian, bicycle, and automobiles, as well as with the county's existing and future land uses.*

Goals and Objectives

To follow the mission statement, the goals and objectives listed below were established.

Goal 1: Increase ridership and accessibility for current and potential transit users.

- **Objective 1.1:** Increase ridership by 50 percent by 2027.
- **Objective 1.2:** Increase the fixed-route service area by 25 percent by 2027.
- **Objective 1.3:** Decrease passenger fixed-route access time by 25 percent by 2027.
- **Objective 1.4:** Increase bus pass sales by 100 percent by 2027.
  - **Initiative 1.1:** Add new local and express services to new areas connecting major employment, shopping, education, and service centers to high density residential neighborhoods.
  - **Initiative 1.2:** Help promote the adoption of Complete Streets policies that include public transit as a means to pursuing more sustainable travel habits and interconnected street network.
  - **Initiative 1.3**: Continue coordinating with Lake and Sumter counties on potential inter-county connections.
  - **Initiative 1.4:** Work with private organizations to implement area circulators linking outlying residences and businesses to SunTran services.
  - **Initiative 1.5:** Partner with educational institutions to secure new funding contributions by implementing a student transportation fee in exchange for free fares for students.
  - **Initiative 1.6:** Increase average frequency to at least one bus every 30 minutes in core corridors.

Initiative 1.7: Develop/update performance monitoring program that uses performance standards to assess fixed-route services.

Initiative 1.8: Evaluate fare structure to analyze opportunities for instituting additional passes.

Initiative 1.9: Add 10 new pass sales outlets along transit routes, including an outlet at the Central Transfer Station, malls, and retail outlets.

Initiative 1.10: Work with local governments to offer organization-sponsored passes.

Initiative 1.11: Work with local governments to assess, develop, and implement a plan to improve access to/at SunTran bus stops and stations, ensuring compliance with ADA and Florida minimum accessibility standards.

Initiative 1.12: Design, implement, and maintain a comprehensive survey program to assess the community need for transit services.

Initiative 1.13: Maintain a reliable and adequate fleet of vehicles for fixed-route and demand-responsive services.

Initiative 1.14: Post SunTran routes and schedules on the SunTran and TPO websites.

Initiative 1.15: Participate in school and community events to increase public awareness of public transportation.

Initiative 1.16: Market transportation services to diverse population groups.

Initiative 1.17: Market existing transit services as a travel option to potential users and as a community asset.

Initiative 1.18: Consider the potential for development-sponsored transportation services, especially for developments targeting older adults.

Initiative 1.19: Assist the City of Ocala identify, reserve, and/or acquire transit corridor right-of-way for regional transit system connections to Belleview, Silver Springs Shores, Dunnellon, and the Villages.

Initiative 1.20: Assist the City of Ocala identify, reserve, and or acquire transit corridor right of way for transit system connections in the urban core.

Goal 2: Maximize coordination and efficiency of transportation services to better serve the entire population of Marion County, including the transportation-disadvantaged, and regional commuters.

Objective 2.1: Assess Marion Transit Services ridership every five years for areas of possible transfers to fixed-route services.

Objective 2.2: Ensure seamless coordination between SunTran services and private transportation systems by 2027.

Objective 2.3: Ensure coordination with land use policies and local jurisdictions.

Objective 2.4: Provide regional connections to at least one neighboring county by 2027.

Initiative 2.1: Target population segments considered to be transit-dependent.

Initiative 2.1: Identify and address any actual or perceived barriers to coordination in Marion County.

Initiative 2.2: Comply with the applicable requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Initiative 2.3: Provide the ADA-eligible population with paratransit service that is comparable to the service provided by the fixed-route system.

Initiative 2.4: Provide rider training for fixed-route services to transportation disadvantaged service users.

Initiative 2.5: Bring the appropriate social service organizations that provide transportation into the coordinated system either through purchase of service contracts, coordination of contracts, or joint use agreements to reduce the duplication of transportation services provided in the county and outside the county.

Initiative 2.6: Coordinate with the County Planning Department and Transportation Planning Organization in developing transit friendly land development regulations.

Initiative 2.7: Develop an administration system that will handle the training, operations, and maintenance of different vehicles, as well as pay scales, etc.

Initiative 2.8: Ensure consistency with local, County, and municipal plans.

Initiative 2.9: Meet annually with transit staffing neighboring counties to better understand existing and future transit services and to identify coordination requirements associated with public transit services across county lines.

Initiative 2.10: Solicit funding from neighboring county transit agencies to assist in running inter-county connector services.

Initiative 2.11: Identify and accommodate opportunities for private sector participation in funding the coordinated transportation system.

Initiative 2.12: Identify and accommodate opportunities for establishment or coordination of privately sponsored transportation services in meeting transportation needs.

Initiative 2.13: Expand on development review procedures requiring consideration of multimodal transportation system impacts.

Initiative 2.14: Incorporate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies into the transportation planning process to reduce travel demand.

Initiative 2.15: Enable new development and existing businesses to participate in TDM strategies by supporting carpooling, vanpooling, parking management, telecommuting, flexible work hours, bicycle, and mass transit provisions.

Goal 3: Provide for the most cost-effective transportation services possible.

Objective 3.1: Hold maintenance costs at less than 20 percent of total system costs. Minimize costs required to operate and administer transportation services.

Objective 3.2: Achieve annual operating cost per revenue mile of $1.00.

Objective 3.3: Maintain a farebox ratio (farebox revenues/total operating expenses) of at least 15 percent for fixed-route and demand-responsive service.

Objective 3.4: Maintain financial support of transit services consistent with the financial plan in the Major Update for the TDP (2018–2027).

Objective 3.5: Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of transit service delivery every five years.

Initiative 3.1: Maximize the multi-loading of vehicle trips on ADA services to reduce the cost per trip and maximize efficiency.

Initiative 3.2: Determine most cost-effective service type on all major corridors, given demand, routings, and coverage areas.

Initiative 3.3: Identify the costs associated with transit services and secure the required funding.

Initiative 3.4: Submit grant applications/requests for funding available through federal, state, and local sources.

Initiative 3.5: Perform scheduled maintenance activities for all transit vehicles.

Initiative 3.6: Implement a comprehensive operational analysis process that assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of transit services at least every five years.

Initiative 3.7: Revise as necessary and implement recommendations from the most recent comprehensive operational analysis.

Initiative 3.8: Identify opportunities for transit projects to be incorporated with other multimodal infrastructure to enhance interconnectivity of the county.

Goal 4: Promote and provide for the necessary expansion of the fixed-route transit services necessary to meet the future needs of the general public, including the transportation disadvantaged.

Objective 4.1: Annually review the opportunities for additional services for future implementation including the following:

- Explore opportunities for implementing express bus service along high density corridors in suburban areas.
- Study the demand for inter-county transit.
- Determine the feasibility of implementing a park-and-ride program in Marion County.
- Study the feasibility of growth in transit services to meet the needs of the general public, including:
  1. Identifying transit needs for the general public.
  2. Identifying potential transit demand.
  3. Comparing needs, demand, service costs, and potential funding to determine feasibility.

Objective 4.2: Explore the possibility of adding transit facilities or transit-friendly design elements as part of roadway design proposals for the expansion of arterials or collectors.

Objective 4.3: Meet the future needs and demand of users for both services and amenities described in the Major Update to the TDP (2018–2027).

Initiative 4.1: Provide the needed vehicle capacity to meet demand and identified needs.

Initiative 4.2: Provide the needed personnel to operate, maintain, and administer the coordinated system to meet demand and identified needs.

Initiative 4.3: Maintain or establish the necessary organizational structures and institutional arrangements necessary for the coordinated system to meet demand and identified needs.

Initiative 4.4: Identify and secure the necessary federal, state, local, and private funding to support the coordinated system required to meet demand and identified needs.

Initiative 4.5: Increase passenger comfort through the provision of passenger shelters and benches.

Initiative 4.6: Improve passenger safety and accessibility by ensuring SunTran bus stops meet minimum ADA accessibility requirements.

Initiative 4.7: Develop, finance, and maintain a capital infrastructure improvement program.

Initiative 4.8: Make customer comment cards available to patrons of the fixed-route and demand-responsive services.

Initiative 4.9: Coordinate with the County Planning Department and Transportation Planning Organization in developing transit friendly land development regulations.

Initiative 4.10: Annually review and evaluate Automatic Passenger Count (APC) data to optimize route efficiency**.**

Section 7: Transit Demand Analysis

This section summarizes the demand and mobility needs assessment conducted as part of the SunTran TDP development process. The assessment techniques are summarized, followed by the results of each analysis used to assess the demand for transit services in Marion County.

Transit demand and mobility needs were assessed using the following assessment techniques:

- **Forecast ridership analysis** – Projected ridership demand for existing fixed-route transit services over the next 10 years was analyzed assuming the maintenance of existing transit service levels and facilities. The projections were prepared using T-BEST (Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool) Version 4.2.2, an FDOT-approved ridership estimation software.
- **Market assessment** – Two market assessment tools were used to assess demand for transit services for the next 10 years. The tools assessed traditional and discretionary transit user markets in Marion County for various time periods.

Forecast Ridership Analysis

T-BEST is a comprehensive transit analysis and ridership-forecasting model that can simulate travel demand at the individual route level. The software was designed to provide near- and mid-term forecasts of transit ridership consistent with the needs of transit operational planning and TDP development. In producing model outputs, T-BEST also considers the following:

- **Transit network connectivity** – The level of connectivity between routes within a bus network; the greater the connectivity between bus routes, the more efficient the bus service becomes.
- **Spatial and temporal accessibility** – Service frequency and distance between stops; the larger the physical distance between potential bus riders and bus stops, the lower the level of service utilization. Similarly, less frequent service is perceived as less reliable and, in turn, utilization decreases.
- **Time-of-day variations** – Peak-period travel patterns are accommodated by rewarding peak service periods with greater service utilization forecasts.
- **Route competition and route complementarities** – Competition between routes is considered. Routes connecting to the same destinations or anchor points or that travel on common corridors experience decreases in service utilization. Conversely, routes that are synchronized and support each other in terms of service to major destinations or transfer locations and schedule benefit from that complementary relationship.

The following section outlines the model input and assumptions, describes the T-BEST scenario performed using the model, and summarizes the ridership forecasts produced by T-BEST.

Model Inputs / Assumptions and Limitations

T-BEST uses various demographic and transit network data as model inputs. The inputs and the assumptions made in modeling the SunTran system in T-BEST are presented below. The SunTran model used the recently-released T-BEST Land Use Model structure (TBEST Land Use Model 2016), which is supported by parcel-level data developed from the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR) statewide tax database. The DOR parcel data contains land use designations and supporting attributes that allow the application of Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)-based trip generation rates at the parcel level as an indicator of travel activity.

It should be noted, however, that the model is not interactive with roadway network conditions. Therefore, ridership forecasts will not show direct sensitivity to changes in roadway traffic conditions, speeds, or roadway connectivity.

Transit Network

The transit route network for all existing SunTran routes was created to reflect 2014 conditions, the validation year for the model. General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data for SunTran covering the period of 7/1/2015–7/1/2016 was obtained from the Florida Transit Data Exchange (FTDE) as the base transit system. Data include:

- Route alignments
- Route patterns
- Bus stop locations
- Service spans
- Existing headways during off-peak season (frequency at which a bus arrives at a stop—e.g., one bus every 60 minutes)

The GTFS data were verified to ensure the most recent bus service spans and headways; edits were made as needed.

Demographic Data

The demographics used as the base input for the T-BEST model were derived from Census 2010 geography and population characteristics, American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates (2010–2014), 2015 InfoUSA employment data, and 2015 parcel-level land use data from the Florida DOR. Using the data inputs listed above, the model captures market demand (population, demographics, employment, and land use characteristics) within ¼ mile of each stop.

Population and Employment Growth Rates

T-BEST uses a socioeconomic data growth function to project population and employment data. A population growth rate and an employment growth rate were calculated using the socioeconomic data forecasts developed for the latest Marion County socioeconomic data. As indicated previously,

population and employment data are hard-coded into the model and cannot be modified by end-users. As applied, the growth rates do not reflect fluctuating economic conditions as experienced in real time.

Special Generators

Special generators were identified and coded into T-BEST to evaluate the opportunity for generating high ridership. Marion County special generators include the following:

- Downtown Transfer Station (transfer hub)
- Marion County Health Department (transfer hub)
- Ocala Regional Medical Center (hospital)
- College of Central Florida (university)
- Paddock Mall (shopping mall)
- Shady Oaks Shopping Plaza (shopping mall)

T-BEST Model Limitations

It has long been a desire of FDOT to have a standard modeling tool for transit demand that could be standardized across the state, similar to the Florida Standard Urban Transportation Model Structure (FSUTMS) model used by metropolitan planning organizations in developing LRTPs. However, whereas T-BEST is an important tool for evaluating improvements to existing and future transit services, model outputs do not account for latent demand for transit that could yield significantly higher ridership, In addition, T-BEST cannot display sensitivities to external factors such as an improved marketing and advertising program, changes in fare service for customers, fuel prices, parking supply, walkability and other local conditions and, correspondingly, model outputs may over-estimate demand in isolated cases.

Although T-BEST provides ridership projections at the route and bus stop levels, its strength lies more in its ability to facilitate relative comparisons of ridership productivity. As a result, model outputs are not absolute ridership projections, but, rather, are comparative for evaluation in actual service implementation decisions. T-BEST has generated interest from departments of transportation in other states and continues to be a work in progress that will become more useful as its capabilities are enhanced in future updates to the model. Consequently, it is important for SunTran to integrate sound planning judgment and experience when interpreting T-BEST results.

Ridership Forecast

Using these inputs, assumptions, and actual route level ridership data obtained from SunTran, the T-BEST model was validated. Using the validation model as the base model, T-BEST ridership forecasts for this TDP major update planning starting year (2018) and horizon year (2027) were developed. The generated annual ridership forecasts reflect the estimated level of service utilization if no changes were to be made to any of the fixed-route services.

Table 7-1 shows the projected number of annual riders by route in 2018 and 2027 as well as average annual ridership growth rates from 2018 to 2027 derived from T-BEST.

Table 7-1: SunTran Rider Annualized Ridership and Growth Rates with No Improvements, 2018–2027*

Route	Average Annual Ridership, 2018	Average Annual Ridership, 2027	Absolute Change, 2018–2027	Average 10-Year Growth Rate, 2018–2027
Green	117,267	126,238	8,971	7.7%
Orange	95,671	102,676	7,005	7.3%
Blue	94,350	101,181	6,831	7.2%
Purple	80,317	88,955	8,638	10.8%
Red A and B	55,432	61,857	6,425	11.6%
Yellow A	38,527	40,799	2,272	5.9%
Yellow B	29,091	30,781	1,690	5.8%
Total All Routes	**510,655**	**552,487**	**41,832**	**8.2%**

* Based on T-BEST model

Forecast Ridership Analysis

Based on the T-BEST model results shown in Table 7-1, maintaining the status quo will result in a moderate increase in SunTran transit ridership for all routes over time. According to the projections, overall average annual ridership is expected to increase by 8.2 percent by 2027, an annual growth rate of about 0.82 percent. The model results show that the most significant ridership growth in the existing SunTran network will occur on the following routes within the next 10 years:

- Purple Route
- Red A/B

For SunTran to increase its market share for transit, service expansion will need to strategically occur in growing areas. The service improvements identified in this plan, in other transit planning efforts, and from the public feedback received combined will provide better transit services for the service area.

Market Assessment

The SunTran TDP market assessment includes an evaluation from two different perspectives: the discretionary market and the traditional market, the two predominant rider markets for bus transit service. Analytical tools for conducting each market analysis include a Density Threshold Assessment (DTA) for the discretionary marketing and a Transit Orientation Index (TOI) for the traditional market. These tools can be used to determine whether existing transit routes are serving areas of the county considered to be transit-supportive for the corresponding transit market. The transit markets and the corresponding market assessment tool used to measure each are described below.

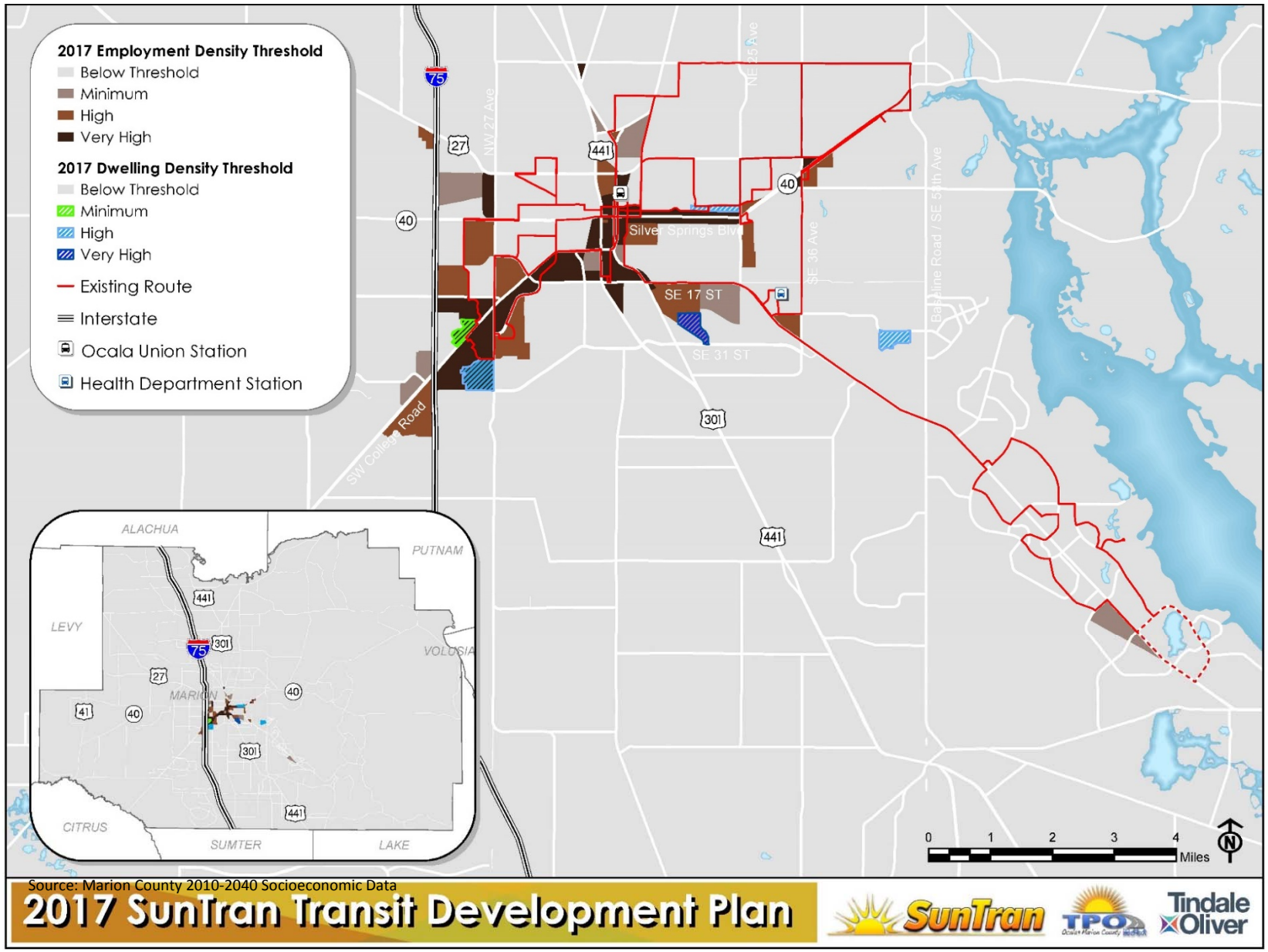
Discretionary Market (DTA)

The discretionary market refers to potential riders living in higher-density areas of the county that may choose to use transit as a commuting or transportation alternative. The DTA conducted used industry-standard relationships to identify the areas within Marion County that experience transit-supportive

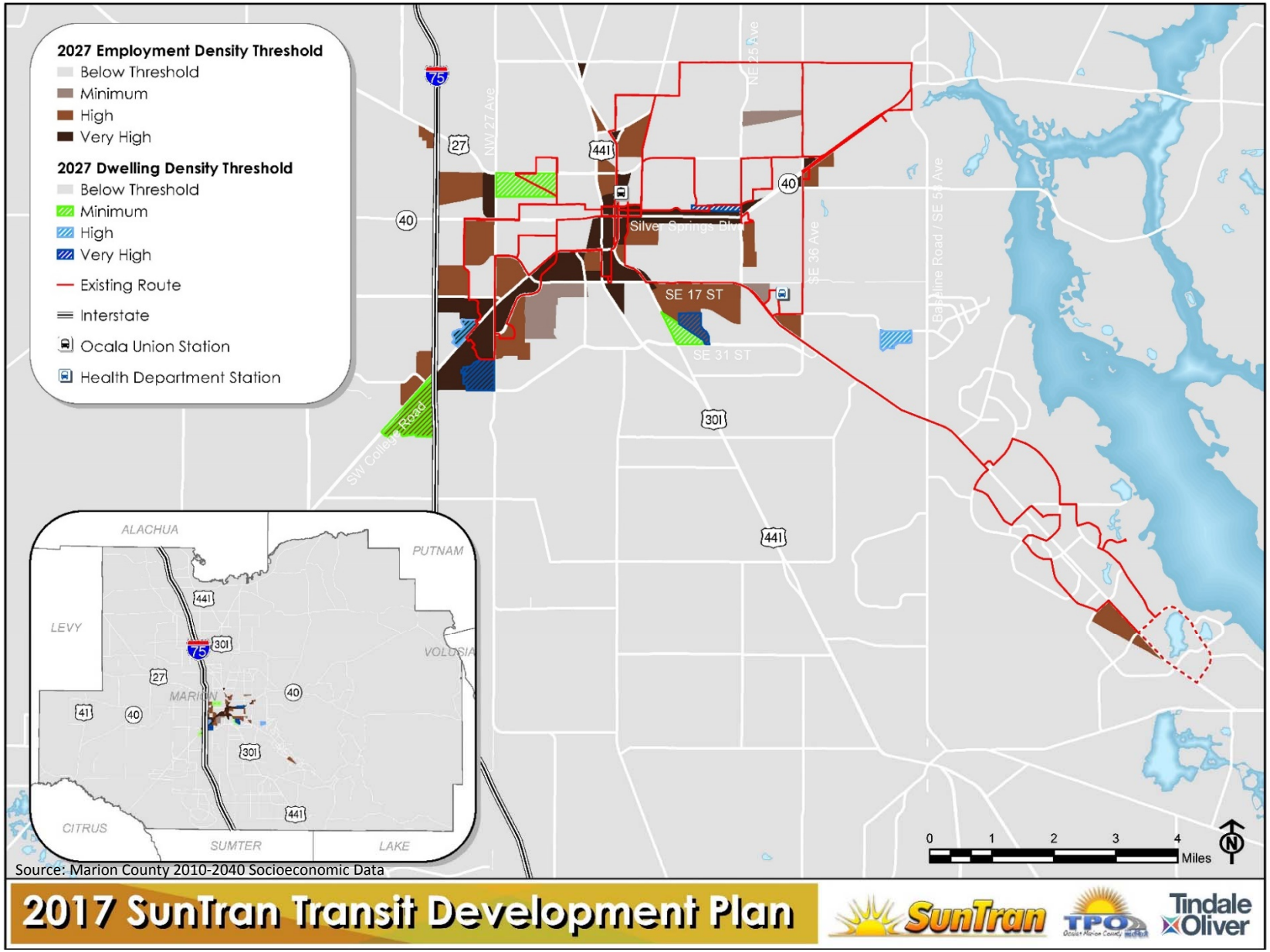
residential and employee density levels today as well as in the future. Marion County socioeconomic dwelling unit and employment data developed as part of the adopted 2040 LRTP were used to conduct the DTA. Map 7-1 and Map 7-2 illustrate the 2017 and 2027 DTAs, respectively, and show the existing SunTran transit route network to illustrate how well SunTran covers the areas of the county that are considered transit-supportive, i.e., areas supporting at least a minimum investment in transit. One limitation is due to unavailable data in informal employment, in which workers are paid "under the table" or where their job sites change on a daily basis.

The 2017 DTA analysis indicates that the discretionary transit market is principally employment-based, with "High" and "Very High" employment density thresholds primarily in along SR 200 southwest of the Ocala Central Business District, between SR 200 and SR 464, along US 301 north and south of the CBD, and along SR40 Silver Springs Boulevard. In reviewing the 2017 DTA, the locations of the discretionary market are not anticipated to change drastically, but a shift towards residential-driven ridership could occur, as "Very High" dwelling unit densities are anticipated in the area southeast of SR 200 at SW 42nd Street and SW 27th Avenue by 2027. Additionally, three other areas outside the Ocala CBD will reach the "Minimum" dwelling unit density threshold by 2027. As shown in these two maps, the existing "High" and "Very High" employment-based thresholds align well with the existing route structure. However, the projected "Very High" and "Minimum" residential thresholds will be at the limits or entirely beyond the existing route service area.

Map 7-1: 2017 Density Threshold Assessment



Map 7-2: 2027 Density Threshold Assessment



Traditional Market Assessment (TOI)

A traditional transit market refers to population segments that historically have had a higher propensity to use transit and are dependent on public transit for their transportation needs. Traditional transit users include older adults, youth, and households that are low-income and/or have no vehicles.

A TOI assists in identifying areas of the county where a traditional transit market exists. To create the TOI for this analysis, demographic data from the ACS Five-Year Estimates (2010–2014) estimates were compiled at the block group level and categorized according to each tract's relative ability to support transit based on the prevalence of specific demographic characteristics. Five population and demographic characteristics that are traditionally associated with the propensity to use transit were used to develop the TOI and include:

- Population density (persons per square mile)
- Proportion of population age 65 and over (older adults)
- Proportion of population ages 10–14 (youth)
- Proportion of population below poverty level ($25,000 for family of 4)
- Proportion of households with no vehicles (zero-vehicle households)

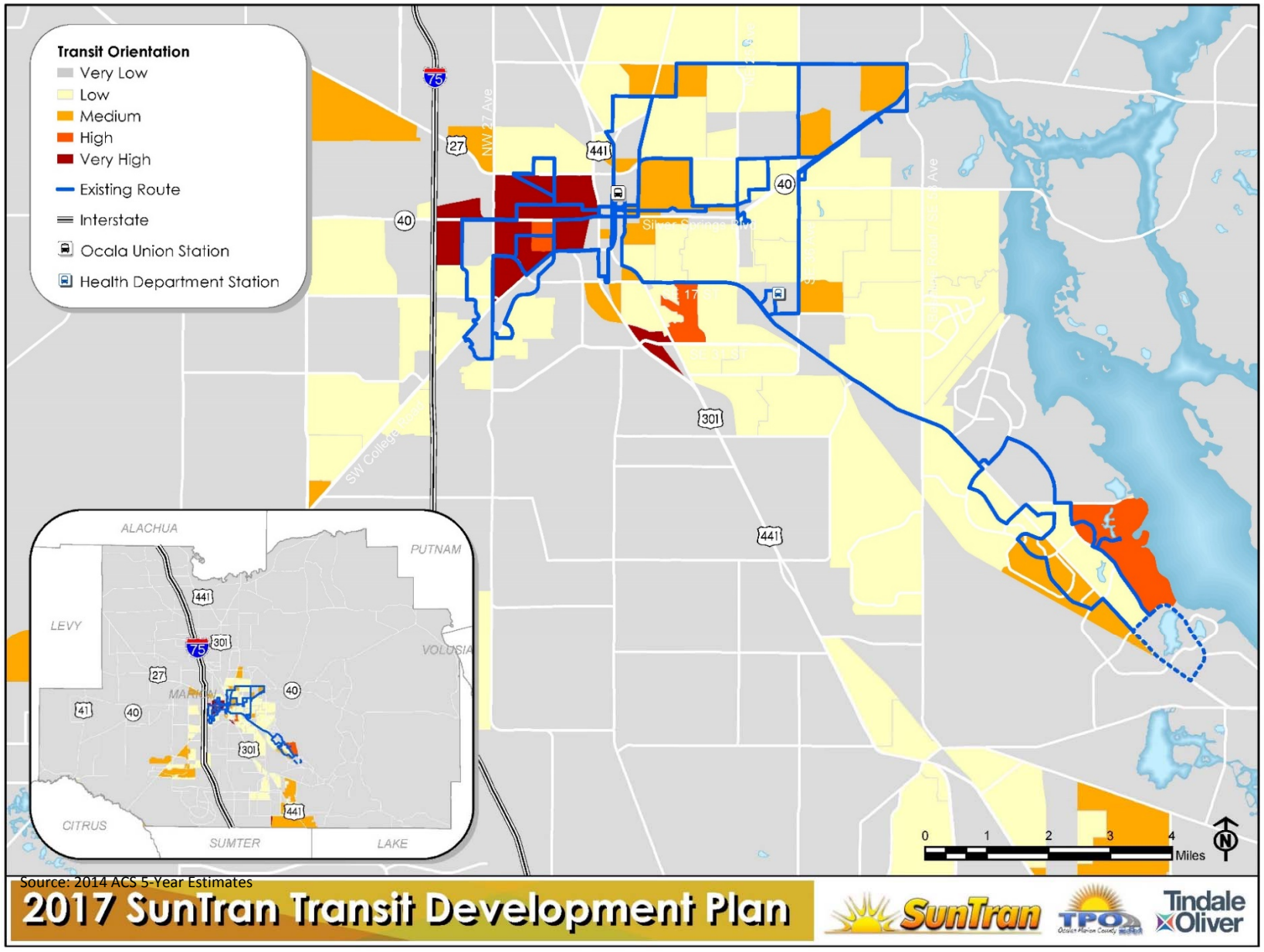
Using data for these characteristics and developing a composite ranking for each census tract, each area was ranked as "Very High," "High," "Medium," "Low," or "Very Low" in their respective levels of transit orientation. Map 7-3 illustrates the 2017 TOI, reflecting areas throughout the county with varying market potential. Also shown is the existing transit network to show how SunTran covers those areas.

Based on this analysis, the areas between the Ocala CBD and I-75 are among the areas with the highest transit orientation (depicted in dark orange). These areas are characterized as areas with a high index of households living under the poverty level and zero-vehicle households. The area northwest of NW 110th Ave/SR 40 and the southernmost area of the county between US 301 and I-75 with a very high transit orientation index are low-density residential areas outside of the urbanized area with a high presence of households living under the poverty level. The very high transit-oriented area between SE Lake Weir Avenue and US 301 near Camp Roosevelt has a combination of youth, older-adult households living under the poverty level, and zero-vehicle households.

The Silver Springs Shores area that lies south of SE Maricamp Road has areas of high transit orientation (depicted in light orange) due to the high presence of youth and zero-vehicle households. The high transit orientation area that lies in the eastern side of Silver Springs Shores is characterized by a high presence of youth and older adults. The high TOI in the Belleview area is characterized by a high presence of youth and zero-vehicle households.

The existing bus routes align fairly well with the highest transit orientation areas west of the Ocala central business district (CBD), except for the northwestern portion of this area and the small area of high transit orientation SE Lake Weir Avenue and US 27 that are currently not directly served by the existing transit network.

Map 7-3 Transit Orientation Index



Section 8: Alternatives Development & Evaluation

This section identifies the potential transit improvements for the 10-year transit plan for SunTran. The proposed improvements, or alternatives, for fixed-route service represent the transit needs for the next 10 years and were developed without consideration of funding constraints.

Once the identified service improvements are prioritized using an evaluation process discussed in this section, the resulting prioritized list of improvements is used to aid the development of the 10-year implementation and financial plans, which will be presented in the following section. As Ocala and Marion County continue to grow, the prioritized transit needs will assist the Ocala/Marion TPO, Marion County, and SunTran in selecting and implementing service improvements as funding becomes available.

Development of Alternatives

The SunTran 2018–2027 TDP transit alternatives consist of improvements to enhance existing SunTran services and improvements that expand transit services to new areas. The alternatives reflect the transit needs of the community and have been developed based on information gathered through the following methods:

- **Public workshops and stakeholder discussions** – These have been an effective technique for obtaining substantive public input on transit needs throughout the SunTran 2018–2027 TDP planning process. Several well-attended public workshops and discussion groups were held to gather input from the public, stakeholders, and bus operators regarding what alternatives should be considered for the next 10 years.
- **Transit surveys** – Three surveys were conducted as part of the SunTran 2018–2027 TDP planning process to obtain additional input from riders and non-riders in the community. An on-board bus survey targeted bus passengers, and a survey that targeted non-users was used at the public workshops and discussion groups and was sent in an email blast. In addition, SunTran bus operators were surveyed to gather input on rider and operator comments/concerns.
- **Transit demand assessment** – As presented in Section 2, an assessment of transit demand and needs was conducted for Marion County. The assessment included the use of various GIS-based analysis tools. These technical analyses, together with the baseline conditions assessment and performance reviews conducted previously, also were used in developing the list of transit alternatives by identifying areas that have characteristics shown to be supportive of transit.
- **Situation appraisal** – Requirements for a 10-year TDP in Florida include the need for a situation appraisal of the environment in which the transit agency operates. The purpose of this appraisal is to help develop an understanding of the transit operating environment in Marion County in the context of the following elements:
  - Socioeconomic trends
  - Travel behavior

- Land use
- Public involvement
- Organizational attributes
- Technology
- Regional transit issues
- Assessment of the plans reviewed including the recently completed Comprehensive Operational Analysis

From the above, several improvement alternatives were developed and grouped into the following three main categories:

- Service
- Capital/Infrastructure
- Policy/Other

Specific improvements identified within each of these categories are summarized below.

Service Improvements

Service improvements include enhancements to existing routes related to frequency and general operating network efficiencies. This also includes service expansion, including new routes for operating in areas not currently served by SunTran.

Improvements to Existing Routes

Increasing frequencies and improving the efficiency of existing bus routes are significant needs identified through the public involvement efforts performed as part of the development of the SunTran 2018–2027 TDP. Needed improvements to existing fixed routes include the following:

- **Realign existing system** – To maximize the efficiency of the SunTran network, the proposed route alignments from the SunTran COA, finalized in February 2016, with some neccesary modifications, are assumed to be the base network to the existing system. The revised network takes the current funding environment into account. The following summarizes the modifications to the route alignments:
  - **Blue A and B Routes** – The proposed alignment of Blue A route would provide one-way service on the majority of the route, including a one-way loop along Blitchton Road that is currently serviced by the Purple route with 60-minute headways. Optionally, Blue B would alternate with Blue A to provide service to the Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park, which is a growing employment center for Fed Ex Ground, Chewy.com, and Autozone (see Figure 8-1). Blue B could be coordinated to run during employee shift changes. The alignment would provide a more direct travel path between several important anchors: the Health Department, the Ocala Regional Medical Center, SW 17th Street, Downtown, and the northwest area identified as an important transit market. The alignment would benefit ridership due to the directness of travel between major anchor points and the

available transfers at the Downtown Transfer Station. This would also make service more efficient in the northwest, as it would provide a transfer opportunity to all other routes serving the Downtown Station before continuing to the Health Department.

Figure 8-1: Major Employees Connected by Blue B in Ocala/Marion County

Source: Ocala/Marion County Chamber and Economic Partnership

- **Yellow Route** – The proposed alignment operates similar to the current Yellow B route, with some segments with two-way service and a loop in the northeast. This route was redesigned to reduce out-of-direction travel, provide coverage service in the northeast, and provide more premium two-way service in the area. This route alignment provides two-way service on NW 35th Street that previously only had one-way service every other hour by removing the out-of-direction travel that had served some very low ridership segments in close proximity to the current and proposed Green routes. This alignment maintains a substantial level of coverage in the northeast, increases efficiencies in service, and improves the frequency of the Yellow route.
- **Green Route** – The proposed alignment operates similar to the current Green Route with a minor exception of expanding to provide service directly to the Marion County Library and removing a segment northeast of the Silver Springs Walmart by continuing on SR 40. The alignment then continues the current inbound alignment, returning to Downtown. This alignment has the effect of providing counter-clockwise loop service (opposite the Yellow route) on a few roadways, providing two-way transit service on those routes. This alignment reduces overall out-of-direction travel on the outbound trip by adding service

where the current Blue route alignment had provided service on. Additionally, this alignment provides coverage to a significant portion of the northeast that was modified to increase efficiencies for the Yellow route.

- **Orange Route** – The proposed alignment is a combination of the Orange and Yellow A routes, with extended service past the I-75 corridor. This alignment uses N Magnolia/1st Avenue (one-way pairs) to exit/enter the Downtown area and station. This alignment removes some difficult turning movements from the current Orange alignment near the medical centers south of Downtown that are served by the Blue route in this recommendation, without the need to complete the difficult turn. This has the effect of reducing out-of-direction travel and providing two-way service along portions of the route. The newly-added service area along SR 200 was a top request of current and potential riders and was identified as a sizeable transit market due to the employment density in the area. This alignment may also assist in attracting paratransit trips to fixed-route service in an area with an already high number of paratransit trips.
- **Purple Route** – The proposed alignment is a combination of the current Purple, Orange, and Yellow A routes. It provides more direct service to the southwest and a second route option to the northwest, both important coverage areas. This alignment also provides coverage in the southwest where the Orange and Yellow A routes were assessed as being too close to each other. This alignment extends route service to Paddock Mall before returning to Downtown. This new alignment would serve several high-ridership stops in coverage areas while providing access to several key anchor points in the southwest.
- **Red Route with Flex Service** – The proposed alignment preserves the western portion of the existing route from the Health Department as it continues east but would connect directly to Winn-Dixie and Walmart using SE Maricamp Road and not bifurcate into A and B branches at the Winn-Dixie. The remainder of the existing service area of the route would operate as a Flex service, within the general area served by the existing Red Routes. The Red route is presently the lowest ridership route and has the highest operating cost per passenger trip. It is proposed to eliminate the last trip of day due to low ridership.

- **Double frequency on realigned existing routes** – Input from the public involvement process identified the need for higher frequencies in general as one of their highest priorities. The enhanced service could be provided on all existing routes, including the Green, Blue A/B, Purple, Orange, Red, and Yellow routes, using the improved alignments. Headways on the proposed network are 60 minutes for all routes, except Blue B that will operate at 75 minutes. Reducing headways to 30 minutes on almost all routes would constitute a substantial improvement to existing and potential riders.
- **Implement Sunday service on all existing routes** – Sunday service could be implemented on all existing routes but would be at a reduced span of service with only 8 hours of service.

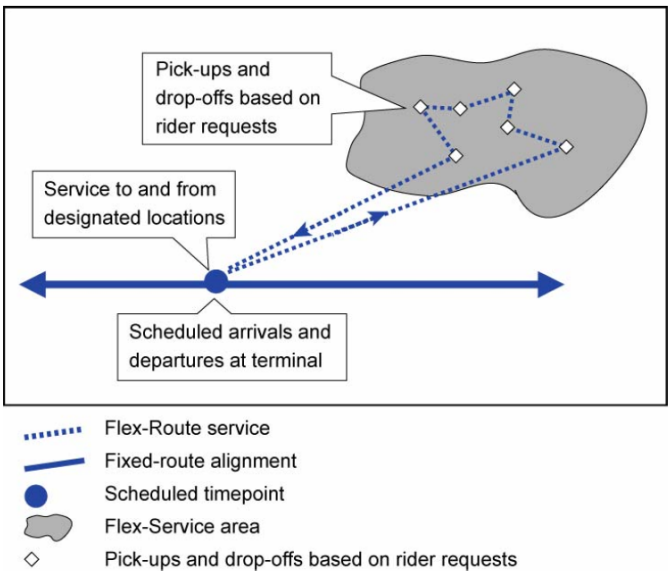
New Service Expansions

Service improvements also could include the provision of new service as follows:

- **Ocala West Connector** – Input from the public involvement activities conducted as a part of the SunTran 2018–2027 TDP indicated the need for a bus route to service west of I-75 using W Silver Springs Boulevard, a key commercial corridor. The growing area west of I-75 includes two major employers, the K-Mart Distribution Center and AT&T Call Center, as well as the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Implementing a route will provide workers more commute options that connect to Downtown Ocala as well also residents who need transportation to the DCF. The proposed service would operate Monday–Saturday 5:00 AM–10:00 PM, with 60-minute headways, similar to the existing network.
- **Downtown Circulator** – The proposed service is designed to operate in the Downtown core and increase mobility for residents and patrons in the area as well as improve connections between the existing routes via SE Magnolia Avenue and SE 1st Avenue. The proposed alignment connects major trip attractors, including Citizen's Circle, Ocala Downtown Market, Kindred Hospital, and Ocala Regional Medical Center. The route provides transfer opportunities for the Yellow, Green, Blue, Purple, Ocala West Connector (if implemented), and proposed express/limited express routes (described below). The route also provides a transfer opportunity for riders wishing to go northbound on the SW 1st Avenue section of the proposed Blue route that travels only southbound. To provide quick connectivity and increased availability, this proposed service would operate every 20 minutes from Monday–Saturday 7:00 AM– 10:00 PM.
- **The Villages/Belleview Limited Express** – The need for a regional connection was identified during the public outreach phases of this TDP. The proposed service is designed to connect The Villages community in Lake County as well as the City of Belleview in southeastern Marion County to Downtown Ocala via US 441/S Pine Avenue. The proposed service would spread out at 2-hour headways, operating Monday–Friday 8:00 AM–8:00 PM.
- **Marion Oaks Express** – The proposed service is designed to connect the residential areas and growing employment centers in southern Marion County to Downtown Ocala via I-75. The need for a commuter service was identified during the public outreach phases of this TDP, and the proposed service would operate every 60 minutes headways from Monday through Saturday.
- **Flex Service** – Flex-route service is a hybrid service that combines the predictability of fixed-route bus service with the flexibility of demand-response service. This service generally operates in low-density suburban areas in which the street and pedestrian networks are not conducive to fixed-route bus service. As shown in Figure 8-2, flex-route service originates from a fixed point such as a major stop or transit center where it connects with local or express fixed-route bus service. Passengers transferring from a fixed-route bus to flex-route service simply board the vehicle and tell the driver their destination within the designated flex service area. Passengers traveling from the designated flex service area to connect to a fixed-route

bus must call and make a reservation for the trip they desire based on its arrival time at the fixed transfer point. The service areas of flex-route services are usually about seven square miles, in which one vehicle can offer service once per hour. Smaller, wheelchair-accessible buses are typically used for flex services.

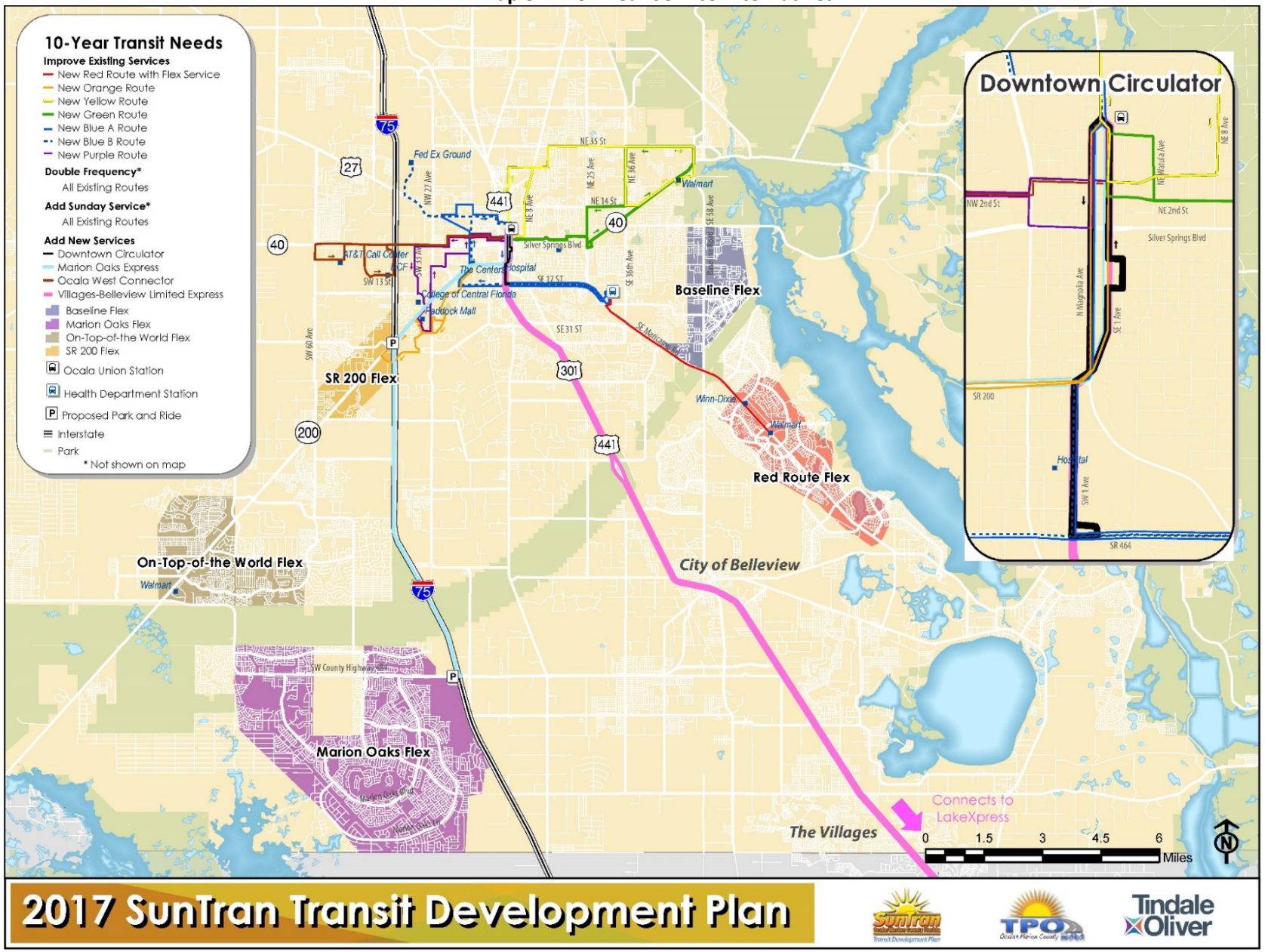
Figure 8-2: Flex Route Transit Service



- **SR 200 Flex** – This flex route would serve the SR 200 corridor from I-75 to SW 60th Avenue, connecting riders to the revised Orange route, which would serve areas north and just south of I-75. The need to provide service along SR 200 west of I-75 has been clearly identified in the previous TDP and was emphasized again during this public outreach process involvement process. The route would operate with 30-minute headways, Monday through Saturday.
- **Marion Oaks Flex** – This route would service the sprawling residential area in southern Marion County and, more importantly, connect the area to Downtown Ocala through the proposed Marion Oaks Express via I-75. The service would operate with 60-minute headways using two buses, Monday through Saturday.
- **On-Top-of-the-World Flex** – This residential retirement community was identified as an area in southwestern Marion County with a high population of older adults. The route would cover the community along SR 200 and north of the Cross Florida Greenway. The service would operate with 60-minute headways, Monday through Saturday.
- **Baseline Flex** – Baseline Road was identified as a key corridor needing transit service. This service would cover the residential area in east Ocala along Baseline Road, bounded on the south and east by the Cross Florida Greenway and on the north by NE 7th Street. Service would connect to the Red Route and operate with 60-minute headways, Monday through Saturday.

Map 8-1 presents the proposed SunTran 2018–2027 TDP service improvements for the next 10 years.

Map 8-1: Ten-Year Service Alternatives



Capital/Infrastructure Improvements

Potential capital/infrastructure improvements include the following:

- **Expand and improve bus stop infrastructure** – The TPO and SunTran should continue to improve infrastructure at bus stops, including benches, shelters, bicycle storage facilities, and other infrastructure needed to improve the rider experience at bus stops and the potential for attracting new riders. Enhancing bus stop infrastructure will also provide greater awareness to the community regarding SunTran services, especially along major roadways like SR 200.
- **Improve bus stop safety and ADA accessibility** – The TPO and SunTran should continue to work together to improve bus stop safety and accessibility for existing and future bus stops.
- **Establish shared park-and-ride lots** – Park-and-ride facilities provide collection points for travelers to transfer from auto to transit or between autos (from a single-occupant vehicle to a carpool or vanpool). When conveniently located and carefully planned and implemented, park-and-ride facilities are integrated into the overall transportation network and can encourage a shift from single-occupant vehicles to transit or other alternative modes. Shared parking lot agreements in underutilized private lots are a cost effective way to provide park-and-ride facilities. This TDP needs plan recommends establishing two shared park-and-ride facilities at the following general locations:
  - I-75 and SR 200
  - I-75 and SW County Highway 484
- **Improve/establish transfer facilities** – The TPO and SunTran should explore the possibility of improving its main transfer center at the Union Station in Downtown or establishing a new transit center for SunTran at a more central location in Downtown. In addition, SunTran should also explore improving other existing transfer locations and/or establishing new transfer facilities that may be needed with an improved route network is implemented, as discussed previously.

Technology Improvements

- **Traffic signal preemption** – Signal preemption is any operational strategy that interrupts a normal signal cycle, often used to accommodate special events. Signal preemption can be achieved with a green indication on the approach of a vehicle requesting preemption, such as a transit signal. This strategy could be implemented in the most congested corridors to improve on-time performance for buses, particularly the Orange route. Intersections that are being considered by the Ocala/Marion TPO for potential implementation include:
  - SW 43rd Street Road and SR 200
  - SW 38th Court and SR 200
  - I-75 South and SR 200
  - I-75 North and SR 200
  - SW 34th Avenue and SR 200

- SW 32nd Avenue and SR 200

Policy/Other Improvements

Policy/other potential improvements include various general improvements that are not necessarily route-specific or capital-related. These improvements are drawn primarily from input on public involvement efforts performed as part of the development of the SunTran 2018–2027 TDP. Other needed improvements identified for the next 10 years are as follows:

- **SunTran rebranding and marketing program expansion** – SunTran's visibility to the community is key to increasing awareness, especially for discretionary riders. SunTran bus alignments often avoid major roadways to improve travel times and safety, but they may have the unintended effect of making the system "invisible." For example, drivers may not see bus stop signs because they are too small or because they drive the same routes as transit. This is especially true for bus routes such as the Orange and Green, whose alignments purposely avoid congested corridors such as Silver Springs Boulevard and SR 200.

  A new marketing/awareness program expansion should be conducted in conjunction with a rebranding effort for SunTran. Based on public input, 77 percent of survey respondents indicated that there was moderate or no awareness about public transit in the community. Current branding and marketing seem to reinforce SunTran as a service only for individuals with no other transportation alternative. A rebranding effort should help to attract new discretionary transit riders as well as older adults who may not be familiar with how to use transit with a more user-friendly and appealing image and advertising. In addition, other marketing efforts should include:
  - website dedicated to SunTran
  - new user-friendly schedule
  - social media outreach

- **Transportation demand management (TDM)** – *reThink Your Commute* is an FDOT-sponsored program that provides ride-matching services throughout Florida, including Marion County. TDM strategies strive to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips or redistribute them to other transportation alternatives. In the past, *reThink Your Commute* had approximately 300 registered commuters who lived and/or worked in Marion County and held a series of events promoting alternative modes of transportation such as transit. Registered commuters have an emergency ride home option, in which users can get reimbursed for taxi, rental car, or rideshare expenses such as Uber. The Ocala/Marion TPO, a partner with *reThink Your Commute*, should continue to promote the region's TDM programs.
- **Employer outreach program** – The *reThink Your Commute* program in the past has reached out the employers in the area, but has not garnered much interest. Despite past challenges, a renewed effort should be made to focus on new and growing employers such employers in

the Ocala/Marion County Commerce Park and the AT&T Call Center if new services like the Ocala West Connector are implemented.

- **Land development regulations** – Land development patterns currently challenge the ability to develop effective TDM policies. Land use and transportation, when planned for concurrently, can lead to more efficient land use and transportation networks. The Ocala/Marion County TPO should encourage and guide other local governments in modifying their policies and regulations by adopting more multimodal supportive land uses and land development regulations to enhance the overall transportation network and connectivity within the county. If local governments are on board to participate in a transit-supportive framework, this will help Marion County make rapid and significant progress in integrating transit into such major developments. Land development regulations can drastically shape the walkability of an urbanized area, which, in turn, can promote higher transit ridership. For instance, minimum parking requirements and road design standards that are automobile-oriented can negatively impact walkability, thereby negatively impacting a transit-supportive environment. Therefore, the Ocala/Marion County TPO should engage with the City of Ocala and Marion County to ensure that land development policies and land development codes require transit infrastructure that foster transit services and create a more balanced transportation system
- **Explore the possibility of converting proposed Downtown Circulator to Autonomous Vehicle (AV) circulator** – To ensure that SunTran remains on the leading edge of transit technology, namely the emerging sector of AV technology, the conversion of the Downtown Circulator to be operated with an AV such as local Motors' Olli would be a strong step towards adopting AV technology as soon as 2027 or beyond. The proposed alignment for the Downtown Circulator is one that is suitable for the operation of AVs. In anticipation of an AV pilot, it is recommended for the Downtown Circulator to operate with a rubber-tire trolley initially and then, once the service is established, an AV pilot can be pursued for implantation prior to or beyond 2027.

The suggested AV Olli is equipped with more than 30 sensors and Cloud-based cognitive computing abilities that enable the vehicle to analyze and learn from transportation data used to guide routes and interact with passengers, all by leveraging IBM's Watson computing system. Presently, there are a handful of pilots programs that are planned or concluded with AV, including at Miami-Dade Transit, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, and the City of Las Vegas. In addition, communities, such as Babcock Ranch, are also exploring the application of AVs for use as circulators and neighborhood shuttles. In the long term, the pursuit of these vehicles can help to moderate against rising operational costs for transit agencies by avoiding additional labor costs as SunTran's services expand.

Evaluation of Alternatives

The remainder of this section summarizes the evaluation process for service alternatives developed for the SunTran TDP. Because many alternatives are identified, ranging from expansion of existing routes to implementation of new routes, it is important for the Ocala/Marion TPO to prioritize these improvements to effectively plan and implement them within the next 10 years using existing and/or new funding sources.

Alternatives Evaluation Methodology

A methodology was developed to evaluate and prioritize the transit alternatives presented in the previous section. To prioritize and program these service improvements, it is important to weigh the benefits of each service improvement against the others. By conducting an alternatives evaluation, the Ocala/Marion TPO can better prioritize projects and allocate funding using an objective service implementation process. The remainder of this section identifies and defines the evaluation criteria to be used in prioritizing the service improvements developed for the SunTran TDP and the methodology by which those criteria should be applied.

Three evaluation categories are identified for determining criteria for the evaluation:

- Public Outreach
- Transit Markets
- Productivity and Efficiency

Table 8-1 lists these evaluation categories and their corresponding criteria, the associated measure of effectiveness, and the assigned weighting for each criterion. A description of the elements in the table follows.

Table 8-1: Alternative Evaluation Measures

Category	Criteria	Measure of Effectiveness	Relative Weighting	Overall Category Weight
Public Outreach	Public Input	Level of interest in specific alternatives (High, Moderate, Low)	30%	30%
Transit Markets	Traditional Market	Percent of corridor in “High” or “Very High” Transit Orientation Index (TOI)	15%	40%
	Discretionary Market	Percent of corridor area that meet the “minimum” Density Threshold Assessment (DTA) tier for employment or dwelling unit density	15%	
	Regional Market	Connectivity to adjacent counties	10%	
Productivity & Efficiency	Productivity	Trips per hour (T-BEST generated trips and revenue hours of service)	15%	30%
	Cost Efficiency	Cost per trip (including new trips)	15%	
Total			**100%**	**100%**

Public Outreach

An extensive public outreach process was conducted for the SunTran TDP 10-year planning effort and resulted in numerous opinions and suggestions on transit services from transit users, nonusers, operators, and business, academic, social, and medical organizations. In addition, the public outreach process included discussions with policy leaders and the technical review committee to gauge their views on transit services. Based on an in-depth review of input from this public outreach effort, interest in a particular route or type of service was categorized as "None," "Moderate," or "High" in the alternatives evaluation process.

Transit Markets

For the evaluation of alternatives, three transit markets were identified, including the traditional market (which uses TOI data), the choice market (which uses DTA data), and the regional market:

- **Traditional Market** – existing population segments that historically have had a higher propensity to use transit and/or are dependent on public transit for their transportation needs. For the alternatives evaluation, the proportion of each corridor operating within a "High" or "Very High" TOI area was calculated.
- **Discretionary Market** – potential riders living in higher-density areas of the county that may choose to use transit as a commuting or transportation alternative. The proportion of each corridor meeting at least the "Minimum" dwelling unit or employment density threshold in the 2014 DTA was calculated and used for the alternatives evaluation.
- **Regional Market** – each potential route was assessed for potential regional connectivity. Routes serving key areas outside of Marion County were considered. Inter-county routes having connections to adjacent counties were scored higher than those limited to serving just Marion County. Based on conclusions drawn from public involvement input, regional service to adjacent counties is a desired attribute for future SunTran routes.

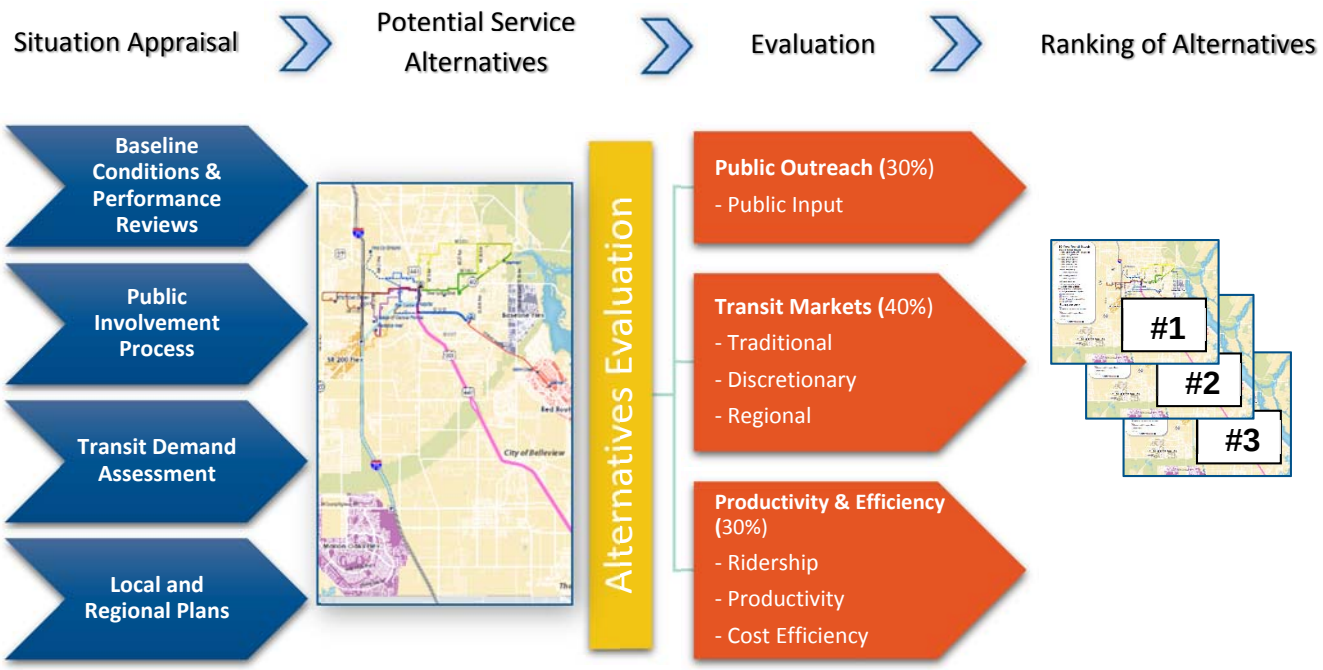
Productivity and Efficiency

Productivity is generally measured in terms of ridership. Service efficiency is used by transit agencies to gauge how well they are using their existing resources. Each measure is critical to the success of the agency, and services performing well in terms of their productivity and efficiency should receive a higher priority. Forecast ridership, revenue hours, and operating cost figures for each individual alternative are used in this measure.

- **Ridership productivity** is measured in terms of annual passenger trips per revenue hour of service. To provide for an equal comparison between alternatives, passenger trips and revenue hours of service were generated using output from T-BEST 2027 ridership data.
- **Cost efficiency** is evaluated for each alternative using a standard transit industry efficiency measure, operating cost per passenger trip. Operating costs used are calculated using operating cost per trip based on SunTran performance data and T-BEST 2027 ridership data.

Figure 8-3 shows the 10-year transit service alternatives evaluation process, including criteria, measures, and weights used for each category. A summary of various criteria and measures used in each tier, as well as the alternatives scoring thresholds, are presented in the remainder of this section.

Figure 8-3: Transit Service Alternatives Evaluation Process



Alternatives Scoring Thresholds

As noted, each criterion is assigned a weight. Weighting the criteria affords the opportunity to measure the relative importance of each among the group of criteria to be applied. For each transit alternative, a score was determined either through the computation of the selected measure of effectiveness or through the educated judgment of the analyst. Potential scores were assigned depending on the relative comparison of a given transit alternative with other transit alternatives as it relates to a given criterion. A higher score is consistent with a higher ranking for a given alternative for the criterion being evaluated.

The thresholds for computation-based criteria (traditional market, choice market, trips per hour, operating cost per trip) were determined using the average of the entire data set and one standard deviation above or below the average. Table 8-2 shows the thresholds and scoring for each criterion used in the alternatives evaluation.

Table 8-2: Alternatives Evaluation – Scoring Thresholds

Criteria	Range	Score
Public Input – Interest in Improvement	None	1
	Moderate	3
	High	5
	Very High	7
Traditional Market Potential (% Serving Traditional Market)	Less than (Average – 1 STDEV)	1
	Between (Average – 1 STDEV) to Average	3
	More than Average to (Average + 1 STDEV)	5
	More than (Average + 1 STDEV)	7
Choice Market Potential (% Serving Choice Market)	Less than (Average – 1 STDEV)	1
	Between (Average – 1 STDEV) to Average	3
	More than Average to (Average + 1 STDEV)	5
	More than (Average + 1 STDEV)	7
Regional Connectivity	No	0
	Yes	5
Trips per Hour	Less than (Average – 1 STDEV)	1
	Between (Average – 1 STDEV) to Average	3
	More than Average to (Average + 1 STDEV)	5
	More than (Average + 1 STDEV)	7
Operating Cost per Trip	More than (Average + 1 STDEV)	1
	More than Average to (Average + 1 STDEV)	3
	Between (Average – 1 STDEV) to Average	5
	Less than (Average – 1 STDEV)	7

Note: STDEV = statistical standard deviation.

Alternatives Evaluation Results Summary

Each alternative was evaluated using the process summarized above, and the detailed results of the evaluation are presented in Table 8-3. From this process, each alternative received a score. The alternatives were then ranked based on their respective score. Table 8-4 presents the prioritized list of improvements based on this process.

Table 8-3: Results of Alternatives Evaluation

Evaluation Criteria		Improve Existing Services (realign existing routes)	Double Frequency on all Existing Routes	Add Sunday Services on all Existing Routes	Downtown Circulator	Marion Oaks Express	Ocala West Connector	Villages-Belleview Limited Express	Baseline Flex	Marion Oaks Flex	On-Top-of-the-World Flex	SR 200 Flex
Public Involvement	Interest	High	Moderate	High	High	Moderate	Very High	High	Moderate	Moderate	High	High
	Score	7	5	7	5	3	7	5	3	3	5	7
	Weight	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%	30%
Traditional Market	% in Trad. Market	3.19%	3.19%	3.19%	0.14%	0.39%	0.83%	0.32%	0.16%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
	Score	7	7	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Weight	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Choice Market	% in Choice Market	3.38%	3.38%	3.38%	0.36%	1.00%	0.43%	0.39%	0.03%	0.00%	0.00%	0.33%
	Score	7	7	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Weight	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Urban/Regional Market	Regional Yes/No?	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
	Score	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0
	Weight	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Boardings per Hour	Trip/Hr	22.50	39.40	49.70	16.10	2.00	18.70	1.80	3.00	1.40	4.60	4.80
	Score	5	5	7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
	Weight	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Operating Cost per Trip	Cost /Trip	($1.22)	$9.81	$2.86	$6.63	$58.75	$6.56	$53.60	$33.15	$80.58	$21.50	$23.48
	Score	7	5	5	5	1	5	3	3	1	5	5
	Weight	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%	15%
Total Score		**6.00**	**5.10**	**6.00**	**3.60**	**2.40**	**4.20**	**4.00**	**2.70**	**2.40**	**3.60**	**4.20**

Note: FDOT's T-BEST modeling software overestimates Sunday ridership so Sunday ridership should be used/interpreted with caution

Table 8-4: 10-Year Transit Service Alternatives Ranking

Rank	Proposed Improvement Reordered by Rank	Annual Trips Generated	Score
1	Improve existing services (realign existing routes)	600,261	**6.00**
1	Add Sunday services on all existing routes	155,143	**6.00**
3	Double frequency on all existing routes	265,908	**5.10**
4	SR 200 Flex	13,133	**4.20**
4	Ocala West Connector	66,603	**4.20**
6	Villages-Belleview Limited Express	5,753	**4.00**
7	Downtown Circulator	58,150	**3.60**
7	On-Top-of-the-World Flex	14,343	**3.60**
9	Baseline Flex	9,302	**2.70**
10	Marion Oaks Express	5,249	**2.40**
10	Marion Oaks Flex	7,654	**2.40**

*Elimination of last trip on Red Route due to lack of productivity represents cost savings

Section 9: Ten-Year Transit Development Plan

This section presents the 10-year implementation program and finance plan for SunTran's fixed-route bus transit service. First, the recommended transit services and capital plan to support the funded service plan (Cost Feasible Plan) for the next 10 years are summarized. Thereafter, a summary of the assumptions for capital and operating costs used in developing the 10-year costs and revenues for the recommended plan are presented. Finally, the financial and implementation plans for the recommended 10-year period are presented and unfunded needs are identified.

10-Year Cost Feasible Transit Improvements

The funded improvements included in the SunTran TDP were determined after an extensive public outreach program and an evaluation of costs and anticipated ridership. Improvements were identified for both transit service improvements and capital improvements, which are described further below.

Service Improvements

- **Realign existing routes** − The Cost Feasible Plan improves existing services by realigning existing routes beginning in 2018. It is proposed to eliminate the last trip on the Red route due to a lack of productivity.
- **Add Sunday service on all existing routes** – Sunday service would be implemented on all existing routes using the new alignments. Service would run hourly, but for only eight hours.
- **Villages-Belleview Limited Express** – This proposed service is designed to connect to transit services in The Villages residential community in Lake County, Belleview, and Downtown Ocala via US 441/S Pine Avenue. The proposed service would spread out at two-hour headways, operating Monday–Friday 8:00 AM–8:00 PM.
- **Ocala West Connector** – This proposed service would operate Monday–Saturday 5:00 AM–10:00 PM, with 60-minute headways, similar to the existing network. This service could begin in 2026.
- **SR 200 Flex** –This flex route could service the SR 200 corridor from I-75 to SW 60th Avenue. Service would connect to the Orange route and operate with 30-minute headways Monday−Saturday.

Capital/Infrastructure Improvements

- **Expand and improve bus stop infrastructure** – Improved infrastructure at bus stops, including benches, shelters, bicycle storage facilities, and other infrastructure, is included in the Cost Feasible Plan to enhance the rider experience while waiting for a bus and potentially attract new riders.
- **Improve bus stop safety and ADA accessibility** – Ensuring the safety all riders while accessing bus stops and waiting for a bus and guaranteeing that ADA requirements are fulfilled for all transit facilities are important to the overall safety and accessibility of the transit system.

- **Establish shared park-and-ride lots** — To provide cost-effective collection points for travelers, shared park-and-ride lots (assuming no costs, as already-available and underutilized lots are through an agreement with land/property owners) are proposed on SR 200, west of I-75, and along SW County Highway 484 and I-75 pending implementation of the realigned Orange route and the Marion Oaks Express.
- **Replace/add new vehicles** – Continued replacement of the existing vehicle fleet, based on information provided by SunTran, and the addition of new vehicles to serve the proposed service improvements and new routes is included in the Cost Feasible Plan.

Cost and Revenue Assumptions

This section presents the capital and operating cost assumptions and the costs and revenues associated with the 10-year Cost Feasible Plan.

Operating Cost Assumptions

Numerous cost assumptions were made to forecast transit costs for 2018 through 2027. These assumptions are based on a variety of factors, including service performance data from SunTran and information from other recent Florida TDPs. These assumptions are summarized as follows:

- Annual operating costs for fixed-route and paratransit services are based on the most recent validated NTD data.
- A conservative annual inflation rate of two percent was used for all operating cost projections, based on the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) historical data from 2007–2016.
- Annual operating costs for future service enhancements are based on the projected annual service hours and cost per revenue hour of $83.98 for fixed-route service and $62.71 for paratransit service (both in 2018$). The cost per hour was derived using historical and current cost per revenue hour data for existing services. The operating cost per hours figures are inflated annually using a two percent factor.
- As previously noted, implementing the new route alignments represents an operating cost savings due to the elimination of the last daily trip on the Red route.
- The operating cost of the new Villages-Belleview Express is to be 100 percent funded by an FDOT Urban Grants Corridor.
- As ADA paratransit service is not required for express or flex routes, it is assumed that any express, limited express, and flex routes, including the Villages-Belleview Express or the SR 200 Flex, would not require complementary ADA paratransit services if implemented.

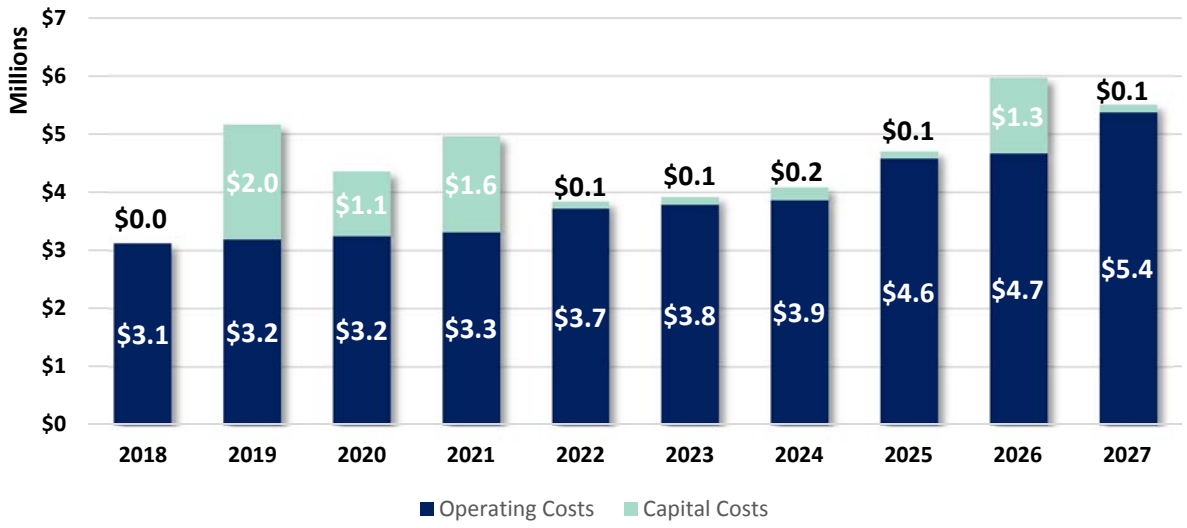
Capital Cost Assumptions

Several assumptions were developed to project the costs for capital needs identified previously. These capital cost assumptions are summarized as follows:

- New vehicles planned to be purchased under this Cost Feasible Plan include those necessary to replace vehicles within the existing fleet that have reached the end of their useful life and vehicles to implement the new service.
- Vehicles are assumed to cost $465,000 for fixed-route bus and $80,000 for paratransit cutaway vehicles. The vehicle unit costs are based on information provided by the Ocala/Marion TPO.
- An annual growth rate of two percent was used for capital cost projections, based on average CPI historical data from 2007 to 2016.
- The SunTran FY 2016/17 budget estimates ADA improvements, bus stop infrastructure, and SunTran facility maintenance to be $75,000, $75,000 and $25,000, respectively. However, annual costs for ADA improvements, bus stop infrastructure, and facility maintenance were assumed at $50,000, $50,000 and $25,000, respectively, for the purposes of this plan. Allocation begins 2019.
- A 20 percent spare ratio was factored into the vehicle replacement and expansion schedule.

Figure 9-1 illustrates the operating and capital costs included in the 10-year TDP.

Figure 9-1: Annual Operating and Capital Costs (millions)



Revenue Assumptions

Revenues for fixed-route service are based on information from a number of State and local agencies and assumptions for different revenue sources, including the following.

Annual operating revenues from existing federal, State, and local sources are based on SunTran's FY 2016–2017 budget and discussions with Ocala/Marion TPO staff. The distribution of 10-year operating revenues included in the 10-year Cost Feasible Plan are shown in Figure 9-2.

Figure 9-2: Ten-Year Operating Revenues

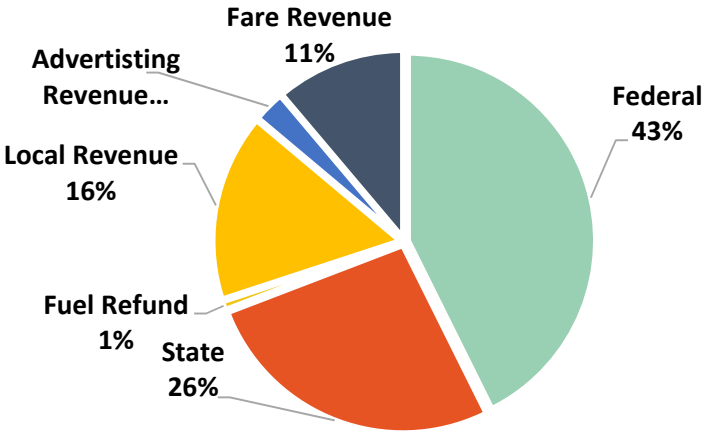
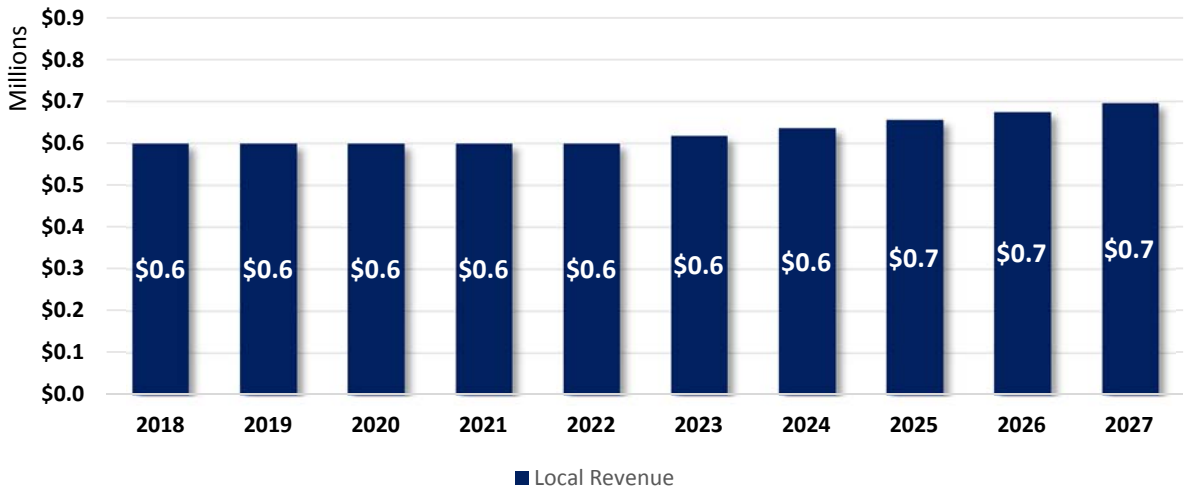


Figure 9-3 illustrates the total local revenue included in the 10-year Cost Feasible Plan. Local revenues for SunTran are anticipated to increase at a moderate rate of three percent annually starting in the year 2023. Under this Plan, no new SunTran operating revenues are assumed for the next 10 years.

Figure 9-3: Existing Local Revenues for 10-Year TDP (millions)



- Federal 5307 Grant for Operating for 2018 was based on actual receipts of this grant for the last two years. An annual growth rate of three percent was used thereafter to increase this revenue source beyond 2018.
- Projected FDOT Block Grants revenues for the years 2018–2022 were provided by the Ocala/Marion TPO. An annual growth rate of four percent was used to increase these revenues thereafter, based on the growth rate of the projected revenues provided.
- Projected fare revenues for existing services are based on the FY 2016/2017 budget with a three percent annual growth rate applied.
- Projected fare revenue for new services are based on the average fixed-route farebox recovery ratio from 2013–2015.
- The fuel refund is based on the FY 2016/2017 budget and a review of historical data from 2012–2016 provided by the Ocala/Marion TPO. No growth rate was applied.
- Projected local contributions of $600,000 for 2018 was provided by the Ocala/Marion TPO. A three percent annual growth rate was applied for 2023−2027.
- Annual advertising revenue projections were provided by the Ocala/Marion TPO.
- The Belleview-Villages Express is assumed to be 100 percent funded by the FDOT Urban Corridor Grant.
- FDOT Service Development Grants are assumed to fund the implementation of SR 200 Flex and Ocala West Connector routes. This program provides 50 percent operating funding for up to three years. Matching funds will include local and other eligible existing sources.
- Based on information provided by TPO staff, a total of $3.6 million in capital funds are assumed in 2019 to fund the vehicle program and other capital items included in the plan.
- In addition, a total of $3.16 million in new federal grants is assumed to fund the unfunded capital expenses, beginning in 2021. It is assumed that the TPO will pursue potential revenue sources including State of the Good Repair, Section 5309, and Section 5339 funds as well as possibly transferring XU funds to fund the capital program.

The detailed 10-year Cost Feasible Finance Plan is presented in Table 9-1.

Table 9-1: 10-Year Costs and Revenues

Cost/Revenue	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	10-Year Total
Operating											
Operating Cost											
Maintain Existing Fixed-Route	$2,617,117	$2,669,460	$2,722,849	$2,777,306	$2,832,852	$2,889,509	$2,947,299	$3,006,245	$3,066,370	$3,127,697	$28,656,703
Maintain Existing Service - Paratransit	$531,052	$541,673	$552,506	$563,556	$574,828	$586,324	$598,051	$610,012	$622,212	$634,656	$5,814,869
Improve Existing Services (realign existing routes)	($25,698)	($26,211)	($26,736)	($27,270)	($27,816)	($28,372)	($28,940)	($29,518)	($30,109)	($30,711)	-$281,381
Add Sunday Service on all Existing Routes	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$240,777	$245,593	$250,505	$736,875
New Local/Flex/Express Service	$0	$0	$0	$0	$333,790	$340,466	$347,275	$708,441	$722,610	$1,259,148	$3,711,729
Complementary ADA Paratransit for New Fixed-Route Services	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$42,055	$42,896	$134,943	$219,894
Total Operating Cost	**$3,122,472**	**$3,184,921**	**$3,248,619**	**$3,313,592**	**$3,713,654**	**$3,787,927**	**$3,863,685**	**$4,578,012**	**$4,669,572**	**$5,376,238**	**$38,858,691**
Operating Revenues											
Federal 5307 for Operating	$1,482,105	$1,508,136	$1,527,747	$1,573,579	$1,620,787	$1,669,410	$1,719,493	$1,771,077	$1,824,210	$1,878,936	$16,575,480
FDOT Block Grant Funds	$607,437	$627,491	$658,866	$691,809	$726,399	$755,455	$785,673	$817,100	$849,784	$883,775	$7,403,790
FDOT Urban Corridor for Belleview-Villages Express	$0	$0	$0	$0	$333,790	$340,466	$347,275	$354,221	$361,305	$368,531	$2,105,587
FDOT Service Development Grant for SR 200 Flex	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$177,110	$180,652	$184,266	$542,028
FDOT Service Development Grant for Ocala West Connector	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$261,043	$261,043
Existing Local	$600,000	$600,000	$600,000	$600,000	$600,000	$618,000	$636,540	$655,636	$675,305	$695,564	$6,281,046
Fare Revenue from Existing Services	$338,130	$344,893	$351,790	$358,826	$366,003	$373,323	$380,789	$388,405	$396,173	$404,097	$3,702,429
Fare Revenue from New Services	$0	$0	$0	$0	$47,843	$48,800	$49,776	$136,055	$138,776	$216,384	$637,633
Fuel Refund	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$30,000	$300,000
Advertising Revenue	$64,800	$74,400	$110,400	$115,200	$115,200	$115,200	$115,200	$115,200	$115,200	$115,200	$1,056,000
Total Operating Revenue	**$3,122,472**	**$3,184,920**	**$3,278,803**	**$3,369,415**	**$3,840,022**	**$3,950,654**	**$4,064,746**	**$4,444,804**	**$4,571,405**	**$5,037,795**	**$38,865,037**
Annual Revenues Minus Costs	**$0**	**($1)**	**$30,184**	**$55,823**	**$126,368**	**$162,727**	**$201,061**	**($133,207)**	**($98,166)**	**($338,443)**	**$6,346**
Rollover from Previous Year	**$0**	**$0**	**($0)**	**$30,184**	**$86,006**	**$212,375**	**$375,102**	**$576,163**	**$442,956**	**$344,789**	
Operating Surplus/Shortfall (Cumulative)	**$0**	**($0)**	**$30,184**	**$86,006**	**$212,375**	**$375,102**	**$576,163**	**$442,956**	**$344,789**	**$6,346**	**$6,346**
Capital											
Costs											
Vehicles	***$0***	***$1,848,850***	***$986,637***	***$1,524,354***	***$0***	***$0***	***$95,524***	***$0***	***$1,178,096***	***$0***	***$5,633,462***
Replacement Fixed Route Buses - Maintain Existing Service	$0	$1,436,850	$986,637	$1,016,236	$0	$0	$0	$0	$589,048	$0	$4,028,771
Replacement Buses - Maintain Existing Paratransit Services	$0	$412,000	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$412,000
Add New Transit Service (Local/Express + ADA Paratransit)	$0	$0	$0	$508,118	$0	$0	$95,524	$0	$589,048	$0	$1,192,690
Other Capital/Infrastructure	***$0***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$125,000***	***$1,125,000***
Bus Stop Infrastructure Program - Annual Allocation	$0	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$450,000
ADA Improvements Annual Allocation	$0	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$50,000	$450,000
Facility Maintenance - Annual Allocation	$0	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$25,000	$225,000
Total Costs	**$0**	**$1,973,850**	**$1,111,637**	**$1,649,354**	**$125,000**	**$125,000**	**$220,524**	**$125,000**	**$1,303,096**	**$125,000**	**$6,758,462**
Revenues											
XU - from TIP		$3,600,000									$3,600,000
New Federal Revenues				$1,134,841	$125,000	$125,000	$220,524	$696,892	$734,070	$122,135	$3,158,462
Total Capital Revenues	**$0**	**$3,600,000**	**$0**	**$1,134,841**	**$125,000**	**$125,000**	**$220,524**	**$696,892**	**$734,070**	**$122,135**	$6,758,462
Annual Revenues Minus Costs	**$0**	**$1,626,150**	**($1,111,637)**	**($514,513)**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$571,892**	**-$569,026**	**($2,865)**	**$0**
Rollover from Previous Year	**$0**	**$0**	**$1,626,150**	**$514,513**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$571,892**	**$2,865**	
Capital Surplus/Shortfall (Cumulative)	**$0**	**$1,626,150**	**$514,513**	**($0)**	**($0)**	**($0)**	**($0)**	**$571,892**	**$2,865**	**$0**	**$0**

10-Year Implementation Plan and Unfunded Needs

The implementation plan in Table 9-2 outlines improvements that are included in the Cost-Feasible Plan from 2018 through 2027, as well as unfunded needs for FDOT's transportation deficiency assessments. The table also shows implementation years, operating and capital costs associated with each improvement, and whether existing or new revenues are anticipated to fund the improvement. It is important to emphasize that the schedule shown in the table does not preclude the opportunity to delay or advance any projects. As priorities change, funding assumptions do not materialize, or more funding becomes available, this project implementation schedule should be adjusted.

Table 9-2: SunTran TDP 2018–2027 Implementation Plan

Improvement	Implementation Year	Annual Operating Cost (2018$)	Total Capital Cost (2018$)	Existing or New Revenues
Maintain Existing Service				
Maintain Realigned Existing Fixed-Route Service	2018	$ 2,591,420	$ 3,720,000	Existing
Maintain Existing Paratransit Service	2018	$ 531,052	$ 400,000	Existing
Improvements to Existing Routes				
Add Sunday Service on all Existing Routes	2025	$ 209,611	N/A	Existing
Double Frequency on all Existing Routes (using new alignments)	Unfunded	$ 2,608,299	$ 2,790,000	N/A
New Service Expansion				
Fixed-Routes				
Villages-Belleview Limited Express	2022	$ 308,370	$ 465,000	FDOT Urban Cor.
Ocala West Connector	2027	$ 436,858	$ 465,000	FDOT Service Dev.
Downtown Circulator	Unfunded	$ 385,463	$ 465,000	N/A
Marion Oaks Express	Unfunded	$ 308,370	$ 465,000	N/A
Flex Routes				
SR 200 Flex	2025	$ 308,370	$ 80,000	FDOT Service Dev.
Baseline Flex	Unfunded	$ 308,370	$ 80,000	N/A
Marion Oaks Flex	Unfunded	$ 616,741	$ 465,000	N/A
On-Top-of the World Flex	Unfunded	$ 308,370	$ 80,000	N/A
Capital/Infrastructure Improvements				
Technology Improvements	2018-2027	TBD	TBD	N/A
Shared Park-and-Rides Lots	2019-2027	N/A	No Cost	N/A
Bus Stop Infrastructure Program - Annual Allocation	2019-2027	N/A	$ 50,000	Existing
ADA Improvements Annual Allocation	2019-2027	N/A	$ 50,000	Existing
Facility Maintenance - Annual Allocation	2019-2027	N/A	$ 25,000	Existing
New/Improved Transfer Facility	Unfunded	TBD	TBD	N/A
Other Improvements				
SunTran Rebranding and Marketing Program Expansion	2018-2027	TBD		N/A
Transportation Demand Management	2018-2027	TBD		N/A
Employer Outreach Program	2018-2027	TBD		N/A
Land Development Regulations	2018-2027	TBD		N/A
Explore Implementing AV Circulator in Downtown	TBD	TBD		N/A

Appendix A:

Annual Farebox Recovery Ratio Report

Annual Farebox Recovery Ratio Report

SunTran Fixed-Route Bus System, Marion County, Florida

August 2017

CURRENT FAREBOX RECOVERY RATIO

Farebox recovery (ratio) refers to the percent of the transit system's total operating expenses that are funded with fares paid by passengers and is calculated by dividing the total fare revenue collected by the total operating expenses. This value is reported by transit agencies to the National Transit Database using a standardized equation, as required for FTA grant recipients. The farebox recovery ratio for SunTran, the public transportation provider for Marion County, was 13.65 percent FY 2015. The background with regards to the farebox recovery ratio includes the following.

PRIOR YEAR FARE STUDIES AND CHANGES

SunTran fares were last increased in January 2009 based upon recommendations included in the 2008 Transit Development Plan Update. The base fare was increased to $1.50, the student fare was increased to $1.10 and the senior/disabled fare was increased to 75¢. Children 5 and under are free when accompanying a paying adult.

PROPOSED FARE CHANGES FOR THE UPCOMING YEARS

Since the fare increase in 2008, no additional fare increases have been proposed.

STRATEGIES THAT WILL AFFECT THE FAREBOX RECOVERY RATIO

The following is a list of strategies SunTran will employ to improve the farebox recovery ratio:

1. Monitor key performance measures for existing fixed route corridors.
2. Increase ridership while maintaining costs to operate and administer transportation services.
3. Evaluate fare structure to analyze opportunities for instituting additional passes.
4. Work with key employers, community-based contacts and homeowner associations with enhanced marketing concepts to continue increasing ridership and revenue for the fixed route system.
5. Improve fare collection options by exploring media outlets such as app-driven technology and exploring new locations for pass sale outlets.
6. Partner with educational institutions to secure new funding contributions by implementing a student transportation fee in exchange for free fares for students.
7. Continue to monitor and evaluate major activity centers to determine cost feasibility for expansion of transit services to these areas.
8. Determine the most cost-effective service type for any expansion areas.
9. Consider van-pooling, smaller vehicles, etc. in expansion projects like flex service.
10. Hold maintenance costs at less than 20% of total system costs by performing scheduled maintenance activities for all transit vehicles.

Appendix B:

Peer and Trend Review

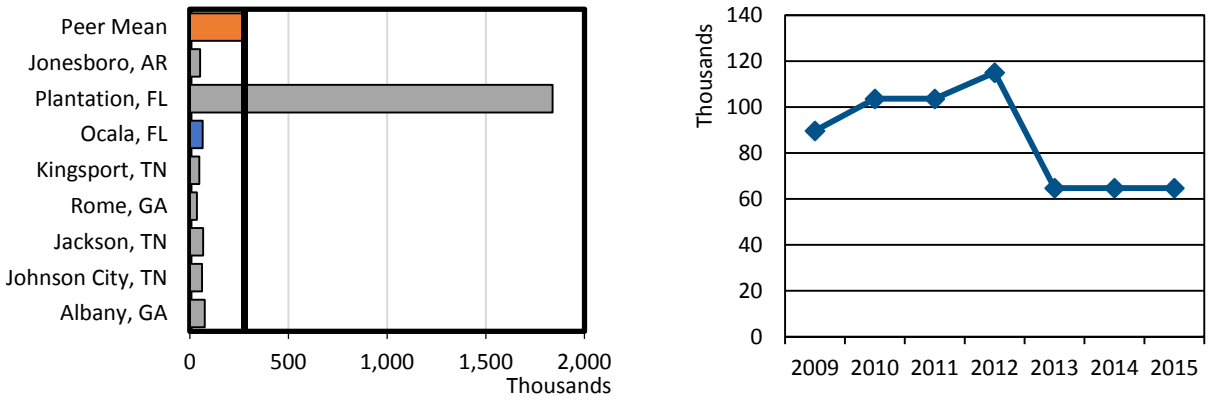
General Performance Measures

General performance indicators are used to gauge the overall system operating performance. Figures B-1 through B-8 present the performance indicators of SunTran at minimum inclusive of FY 2012 through FY 2015 (trend analysis) as well its performance relative to the selected peer systems using 2014 system-specific data (peer analysis). Performance measures with missing data listed in Table 3-7 of Section 3 were excluded from this review.

Service Area Population

Service area population is a measure of potential demand for transit service and is determined by looking at the population residing within a 3/4-mile buffer from any part of the service. Based on the NTD data, the Marion County service area population dropped significantly in 2013 and has remained flat since, suggesting that there are errors in the data reporting. The Marion County service area population is more than 75 percent below the peer group mean. This value is largely skewed by the high service area population reported by the Broward County Transit in Plantation, Florida. When this outlier is excluded, Marion County's service area population is just over 11 percent above the peer group mean.

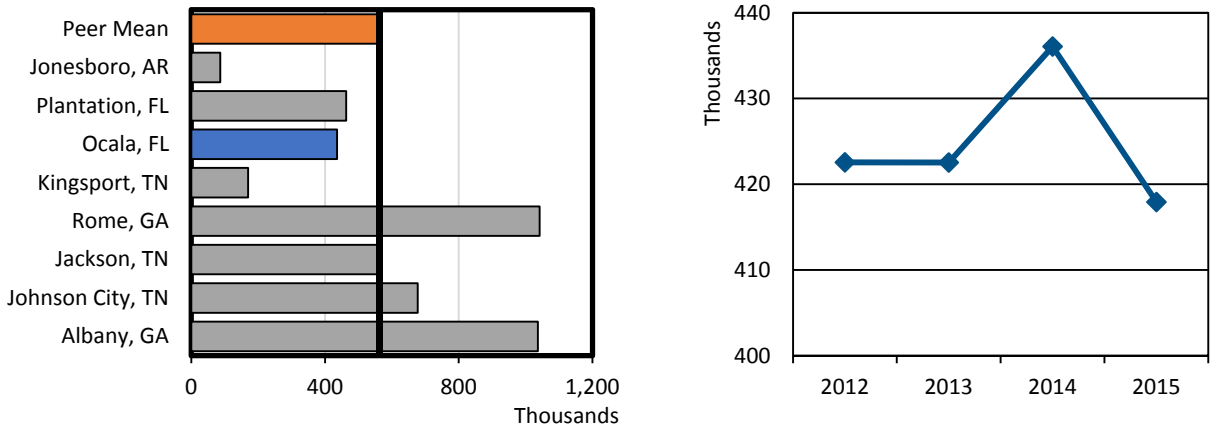
Figure B-1: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Service Area Population



Passenger Trips

Passenger trips, also known as ridership, is the number of passengers who board the public transit vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board a vehicle, no matter how many transfers they may take. Therefore one "trip" in the mind of a passenger can be counted as multiple passenger trips in this metric if transfers are part of the passenger's travel. This measure, including the counting of transfers as separate passenger trips allows us to tally the full market demand for the service. The total number of passenger trips in Marion County rose drastically in 2014, and in 2015 trip levels dropped below the total number of trips recorded in 2013. SunTran placed 22.2 percent below the peer mean of 560,178 passenger trips.

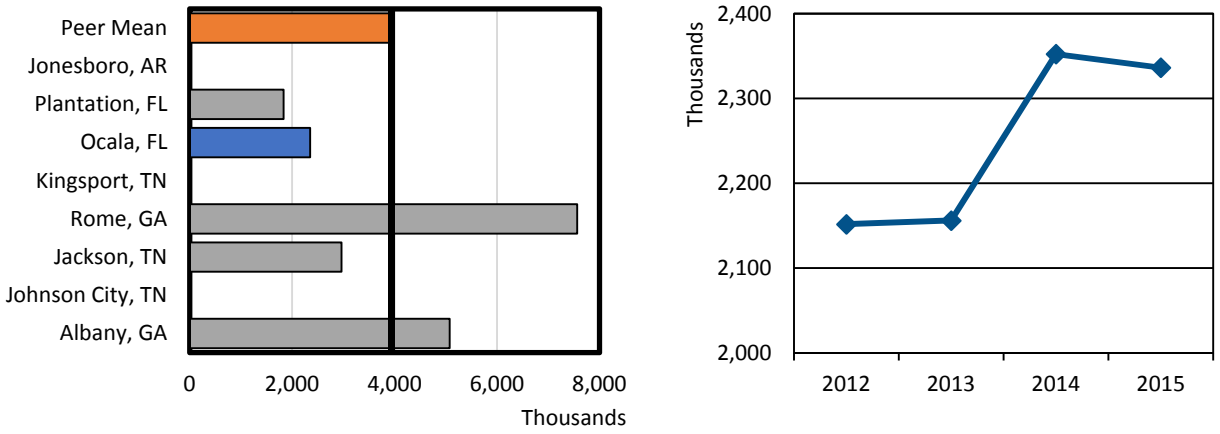
Figure B-2: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Passenger Trips



Passenger Miles

Passenger miles are a measure that multiplies the number of passenger trips by the average passenger trip length to estimate the total number of passenger miles traveled by passengers. The average trip length is usually determined by survey sampling. For SunTran, passenger miles increased noticeably from 2013 to 2014 and declined only slightly from this peak during 2015. SunTran is more than 40 percent below the peer group mean in terms of passenger miles.

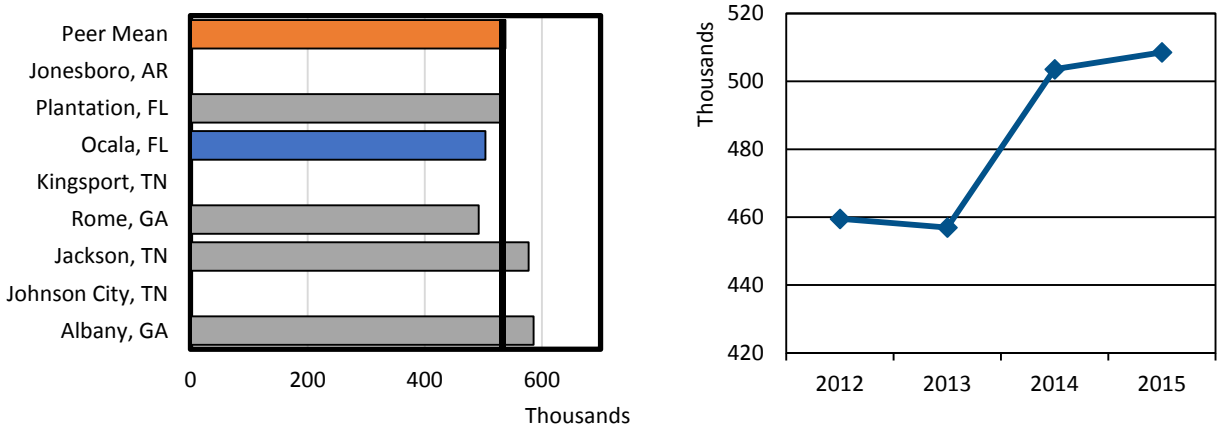
Figure B-3: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Passenger Miles



Vehicle Miles

Vehicle miles are the miles that transit vehicles travel while in revenue service plus when passengers are not on board (deadhead miles). This is a measure of how much service coverage is provided, also called supply of service. SunTran's total vehicle miles rose significantly from 2013 to 2014 and continued to increase, yet at a slower rate, during 2015. SunTran stands at just 6.36 percent below the peer group mean.

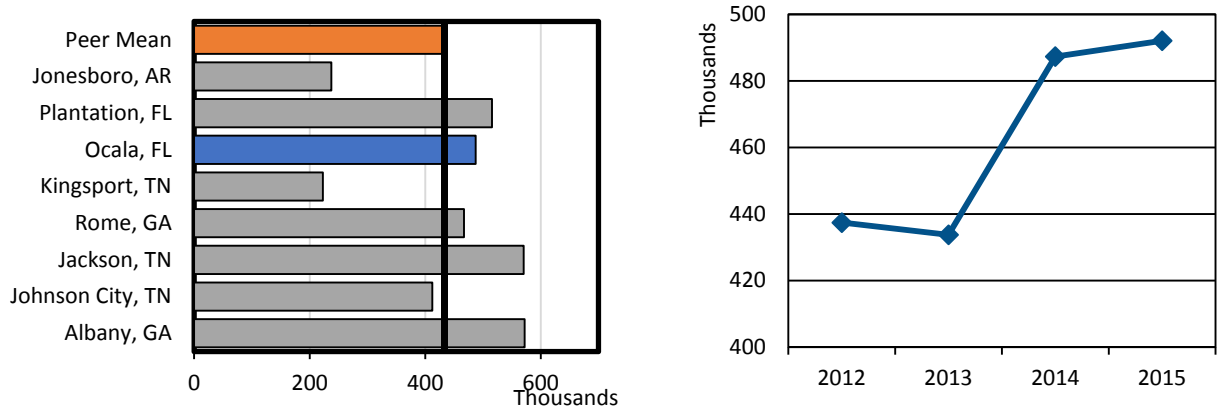
Figure B-4: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Vehicle Miles



Revenue Miles

Revenue miles are the total number of miles that the public transit service is scheduled for or actually operated while in revenue service (able to pick up passengers). They exclude miles traveled when passengers are not on board (deadhead travel), training operations, and charter services. Revenue miles increasing faster than total vehicle miles generally indicates a positive operational trend and points to a decreasing proportion of deadhead miles over time relative to total miles. SunTran experienced a growth in revenue miles at a rate similar to the growth of vehicles miles over the corresponding period and stands 11.85 percent above the peer group mean.

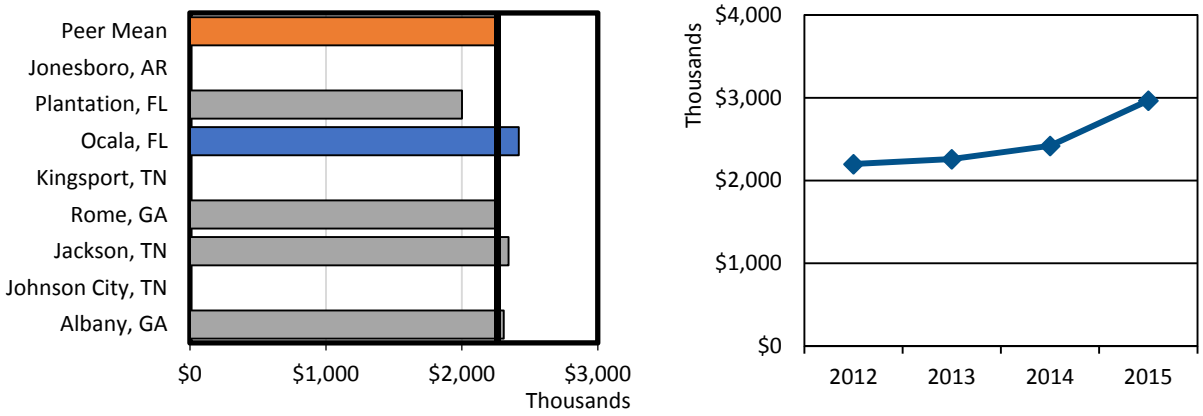
Figure B-5: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Revenue Miles



Total Operating Expense

Total operating expense includes all costs associated with operating the transit agency (i.e., vehicle operations, maintenance, and administrative costs). These costs are not normalized to a base year and are instead listed in then-year dollars. SunTran's total operating expenses grew slowly over the 2012–2014 period and grew faster in the most recent fiscal year. The total operating expense for SunTran was approximately 6 percent more than the peer group mean.

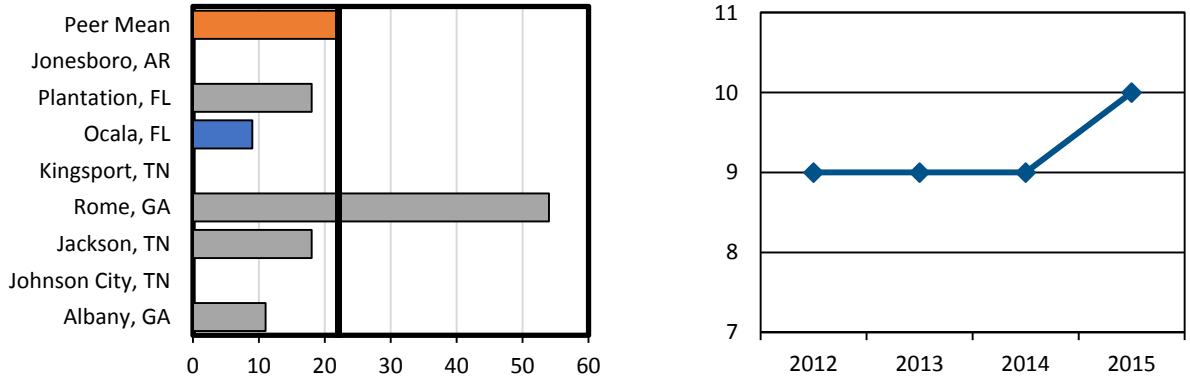
Figure B-6: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Total Operating Expense



Vehicles Available in Maximum Service

Vehicles available for maximum service is an indication of the supply of service and is defined as the number of vehicles for use to meet the annual maximum service requirement. This total number can include spares, out-of-service vehicles, and vehicles in or awaiting maintenance, but excludes vehicles awaiting sale and emergency contingency vehicles. SunTran made an addition to its available vehicle fleet in 2015. SunTran is approximately 60 percent below the peer mean of 22 vehicles.

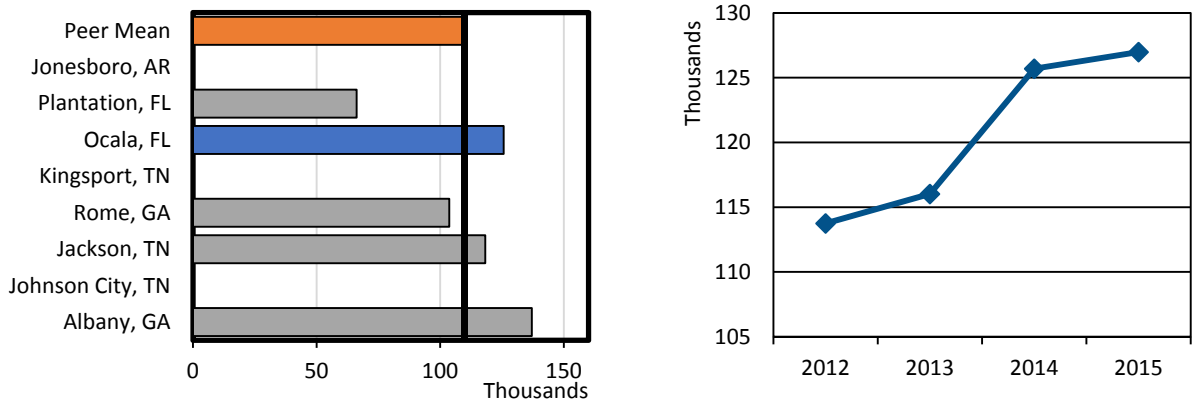
Figure B-7: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Vehicles Available in Maximum Service



Total Gallons Consumed

SunTran's gas consumption rose alongside the increase in vehicle miles traveled over the past four years, and gas consumption continued to rise each year. Sun Tran stands above the peer group mean by almost 15 percent.

Figure B-8: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Total Gallons Consumed



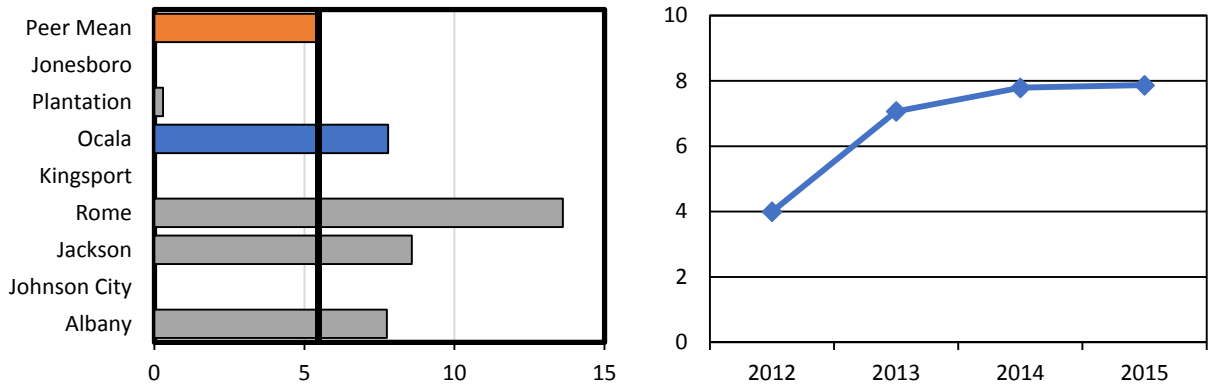
Effectiveness Measures

Effectiveness measures indicate the extent to which service-related goals are being met and include service supply, service consumption, and quality of service and are represented by variables such as vehicle miles per capita, passenger trips per revenue hour, and vehicle system failures. Figures B-9 through B-14 present the trend and the peer analysis for these effectiveness performance indicators. Performance measures with missing data listed in Table 3-7 of Section 3 were excluded from this section.

Vehicle Miles per Capita

Vehicle miles per capita is derived from the total system miles and service area population within a ¾-mile distance of service provided. It measures the supply of service provided based on the demand with the service area and can also be interpreted as the extensiveness of service provided in the service area. For SunTran, vehicle miles per capita rose substantially from 2012 to 2013 and continued to increase, although only slightly in each subsequent year. Compared to the peer group mean, SunTran is 43.4 percent above the mean of 5.43 vehicle miles per capita.

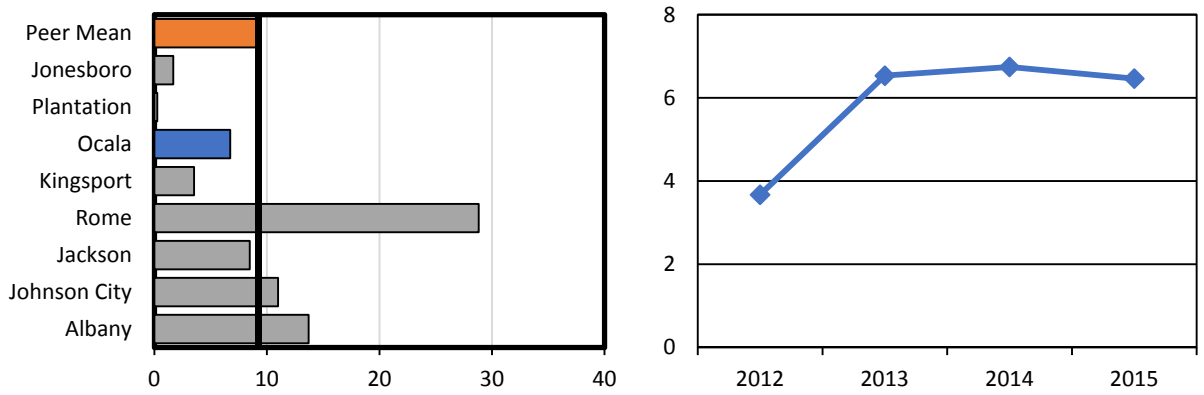
Figure B-9: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Vehicle Miles per Capita



Passenger Trips per Capita

Passenger trips per capita is calculated by dividing the total transit boardings by the service area population. This measure of service effectiveness quantifies transit utilization within the service area and is typically higher when public transportation is emphasized and/or there are large transit-dependent populations in the service area. Passenger trips per capita in Marion County followed a similar pattern of change to the vehicle miles per capita; however, trips per capita experienced a small decline during 2015. SunTran ranks more than 27 percent below the peer group mean.

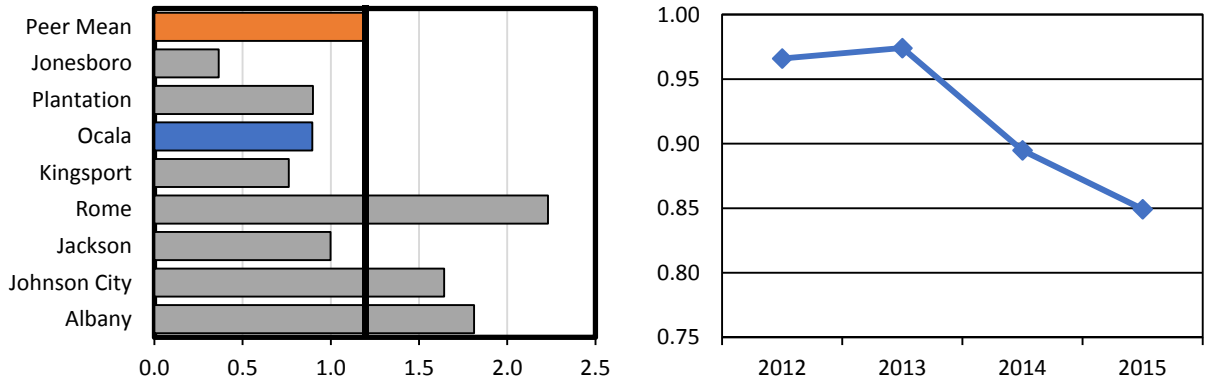
Figure B-10: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Passenger Trips per Capita



Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile

Passenger trips per revenue mile is calculated by dividing transit boardings by revenue miles. It is a measure of the supply of revenue service provided based on the level of demand. In Marion County, passenger trips per revenue mile fell substantially in the last two years. Compared to its peer systems and similar to the passenger trips per capita measure, SunTran ranks more than 25 percent below the peer group mean.

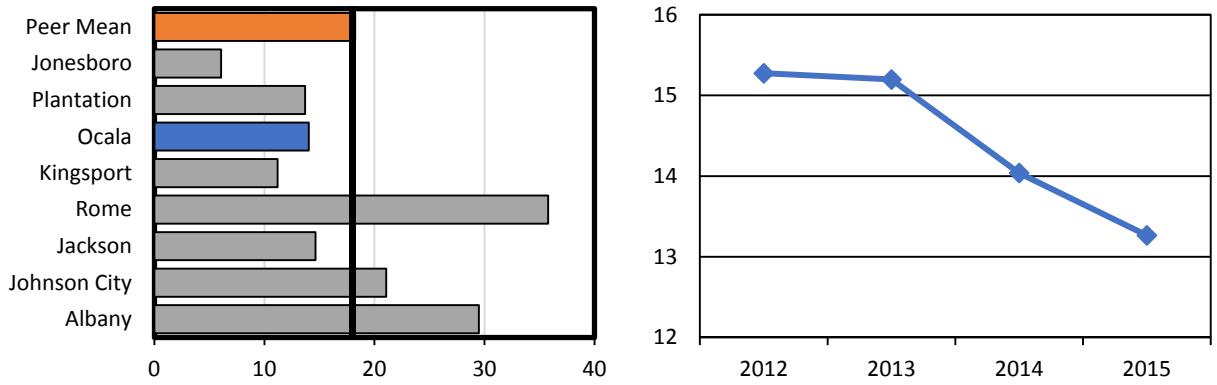
Figure B-11: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile



Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour

Passenger trips per revenue hour is a measure used to quantify service consumption and can help evaluate the amount of resources consumed in providing service. This metric and Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile both measure service effectiveness; however, service hours are a better representation of the resources consumed when providing service. SunTran's trips per revenue hour fell in a manner mirroring the changes in revenue miles since 2012. SunTran ranks third to last among its peer systems, at more than 23 percent below the peer mean.

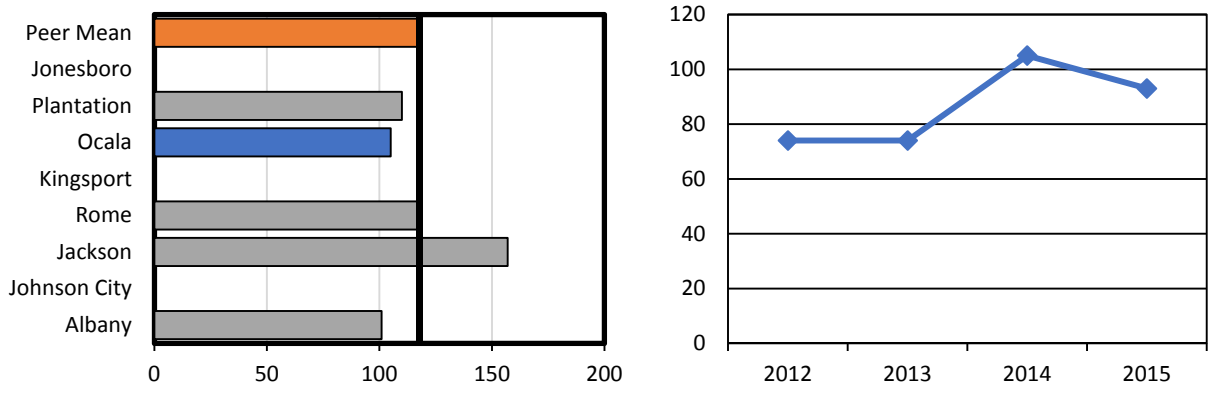
Figure B-12: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour



Vehicle System Failures

A vehicle system failure is a measure used to quantify the number of instances that a mechanical failure on a revenue vehicle prevents the vehicle from completing a scheduled trip or starting the next trip either due to safety concerns or local agency policy. A low number of vehicle system failures helps to ensure the long-term viability and stability of the service and reduces overall cost in terms of both maintenance and the number of spare vehicles required. SunTran's history of vehicle failure was flat until 2014, but decreased somewhat in 2015. SunTran ranks favorably among its peers, at more than 11 percent below the peer group mean of 118.2 failures.

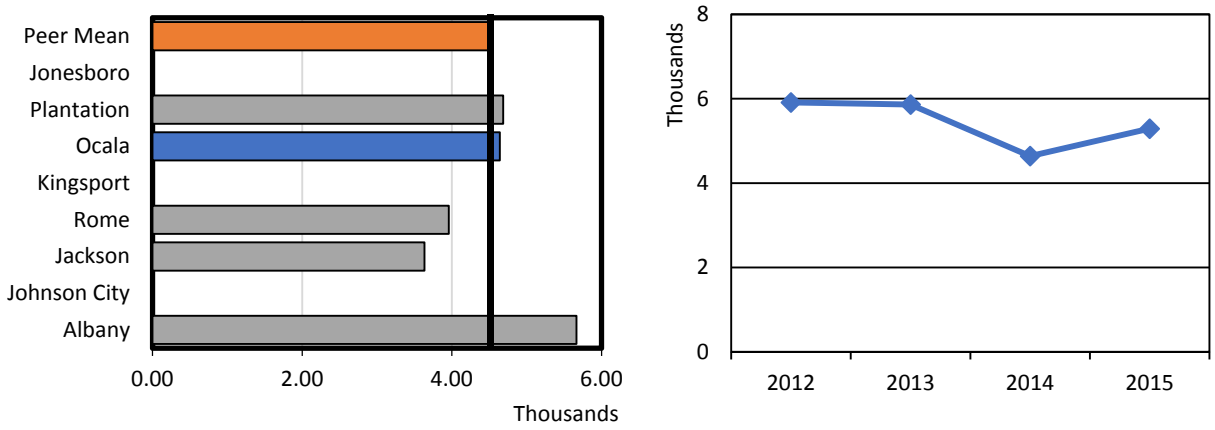
Figure B-13: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Vehicle System Failures



Revenue Miles between Failures

Revenue miles between vehicle failures reflects the quality of maintenance as well as loss in revenue due to vehicle operational failures and service shortages. A higher number of revenue miles between system failures can indicate a higher quality of passenger service. For SunTran, the number of miles between failures decreased during 2014 along with the large spike in failures, yet returned to a level above the peer mean during 2015. Compared to the peer group systems, SunTran's revenue miles between vehicle failures statistic places it just above the peer mean by 2.75 percent.

Figure B-14: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Revenue Miles between Failures



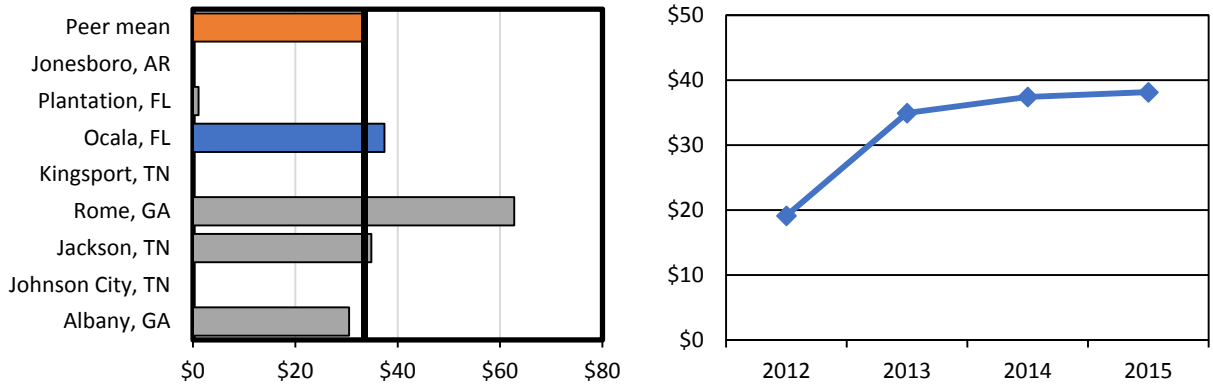
Efficiency Measures

Efficiency measures are used to evaluate and monitor the use of resources and how the system is performing based on the full costs. Figures B-15 through B-23 present the efficiency measures for SunTran's trend analysis and peer review. The following summarizes the trend and peer analysis by efficiency measure type.

Operating Expense per Capita

Operating expense per capita reflects the efficiency of the operating costs of the transit system per person within the service area. This is a measure of the resource commitment to transit by the community. SunTran's operating expense per capita rose in each of the past few years, and to a lesser degree since 2013, which may be attributable to the same service area population being reported since 2012. As of 2014, SunTran stands at 12.27 percent above the peer group mean of $33.33 per capita.

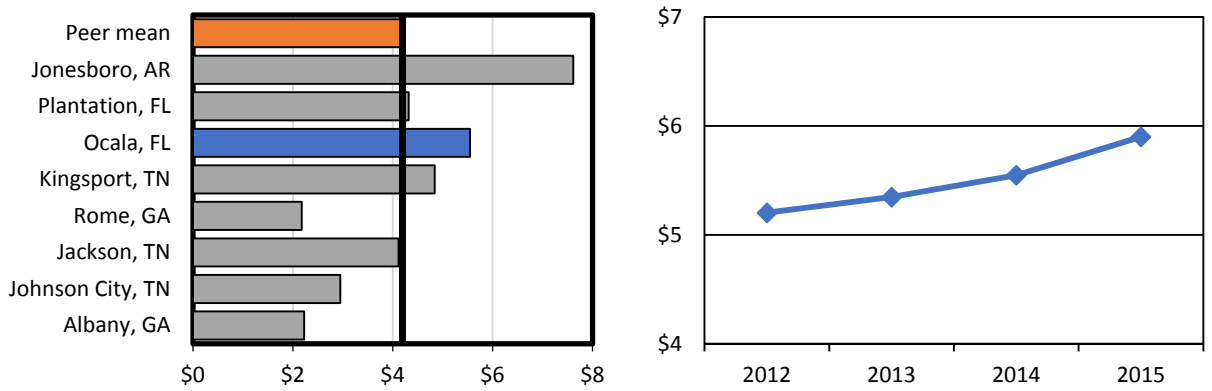
Figure B-15: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Operating Expense per Capita



Operating Expense per Passenger Trip

Operating expense per passenger trip measures the efficiency of transporting riders, both on how service is delivered and the market demands for the service. This measure is often considered a key indicator of comparative performance since it reflects both the efficiency with which service is delivered and the market demands for the service. The operating expense per passenger trip in Marion County grew in recent years and in a manner consistent with the slow growth in trips per capita as well as the increase in operating expenses. SunTran stands at 31.42 percent over the peer group mean of $4.22 per passenger trip.

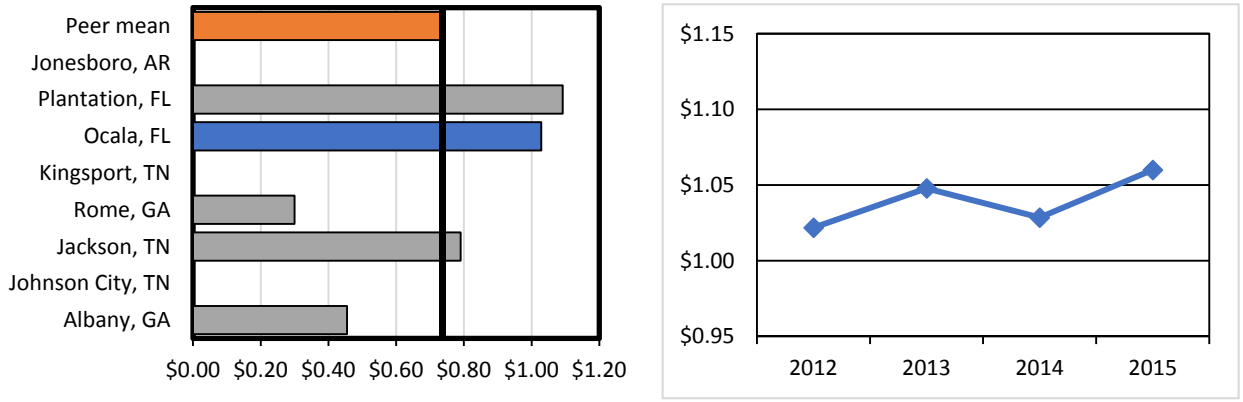
Figure B-16: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Operating Expense per Passenger Trip



Operating Expense per Passenger Mile

Operating expense per passenger mile measures the impact of trip length on the system's performance since operators provide trips of differing lengths. SunTran's operating expense per passenger mile experienced a slowly rising trend at a rate similar to the operating expense per passenger trip trend, and dipped slightly in 2014. Again, SunTran ranks above the peer group by just over 40 percent of the mean of $0.73 per passenger mile.

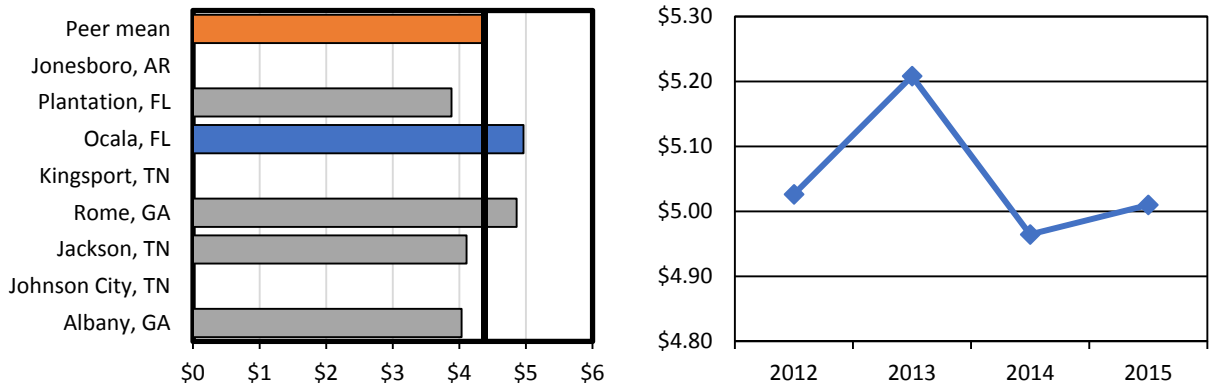
Figure B-17: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Operating Expense per Passenger Mile



Operating Expense per Revenue Mile

Operating expense per revenue mile can indicate how efficiently a transit service is delivered. SunTran's operating expense per revenue mile increased in 2013 before falling the next year and rose slightly in 2015. In comparison to the peer systems, the operating expense per revenue mile is 13.61 percent above the mean.

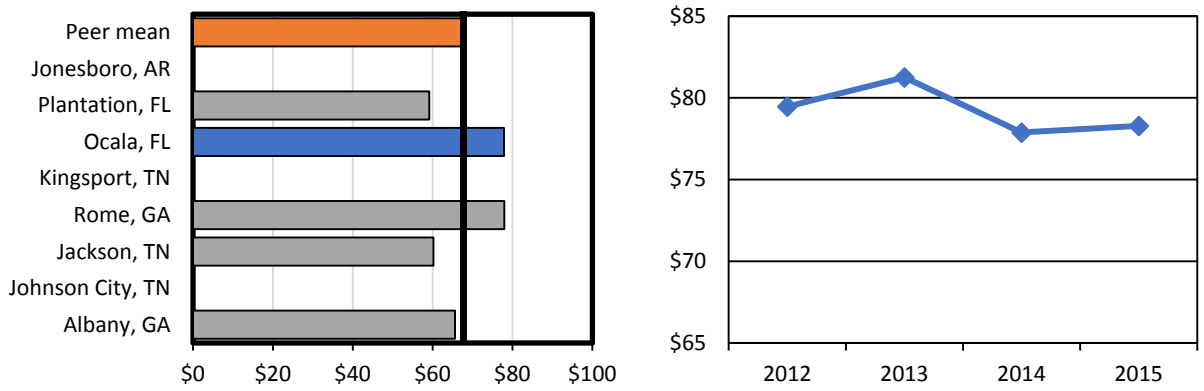
Figure B-18: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Operating Expense per Revenue Mile



Operating Expense per Revenue Hour

Operating expense per revenue hour can also indicate how efficiently a transit service is delivered. SunTran's operating expense per revenue hour remained mostly flat from 2012 to 2015, falling slightly overall after peaking in 2013. In comparison to the peer systems, the operating expense per revenue mile is 14.24 percent above the mean.

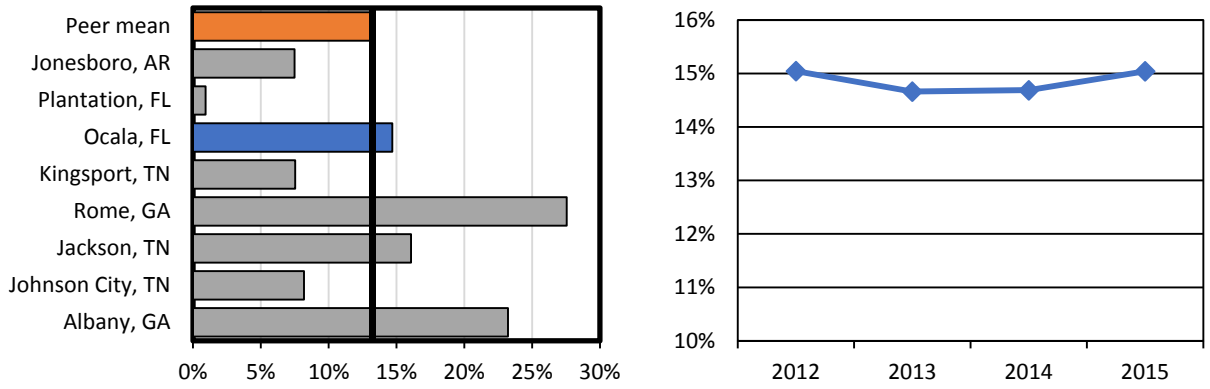
Figure B-19: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Operating Expense per Revenue Hour



Farebox Recovery Ratio (%)

Farebox recovery refers to the percent of the transit system's total operating expenses that are funded with fares paid by passengers and is calculated by dividing the total fare revenue collected by the total operating expenses. SunTran's farebox recovery has remained relatively flat since 2012. The farebox recovery for SunTran is just over 11 percent above the peer group mean, indicating a greater level of fare recovery that the peer group.

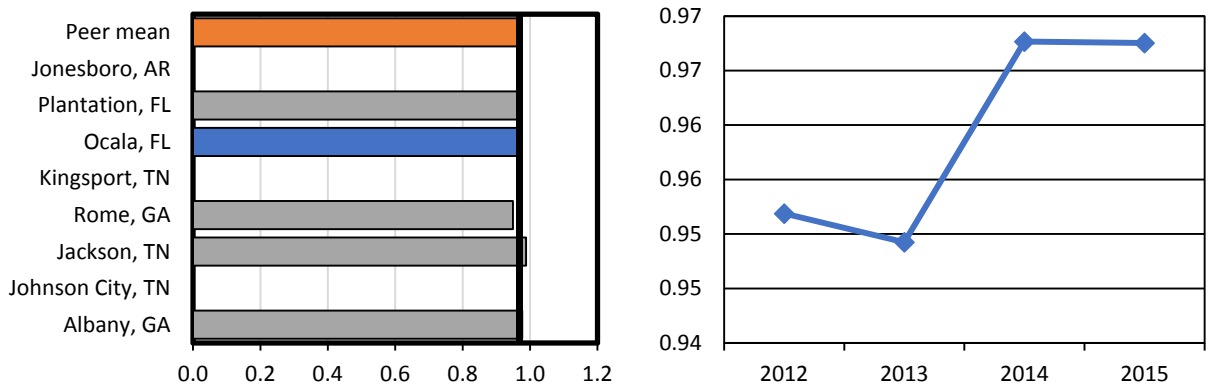
Figure B-20: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Farebox Recovery Ratio (%)



Revenue Miles per Vehicle Mile

Revenue miles per vehicle mile is a measure of vehicle utilization. A higher ratio of revenue miles traveled to total vehicle miles generally indicates higher system productivity; however, garage location, training needs, and other considerations influence this ratio. Revenue miles per vehicle mile for SunTran is virtually on par with the peer group mean of 0.97, indicating an average use of fixed-route bus vehicles. For SunTran, the revenue per vehicle mile rose significantly between 2013 and 2014 but then leveled out, suggesting SunTran was farther below the peer mean until recently.

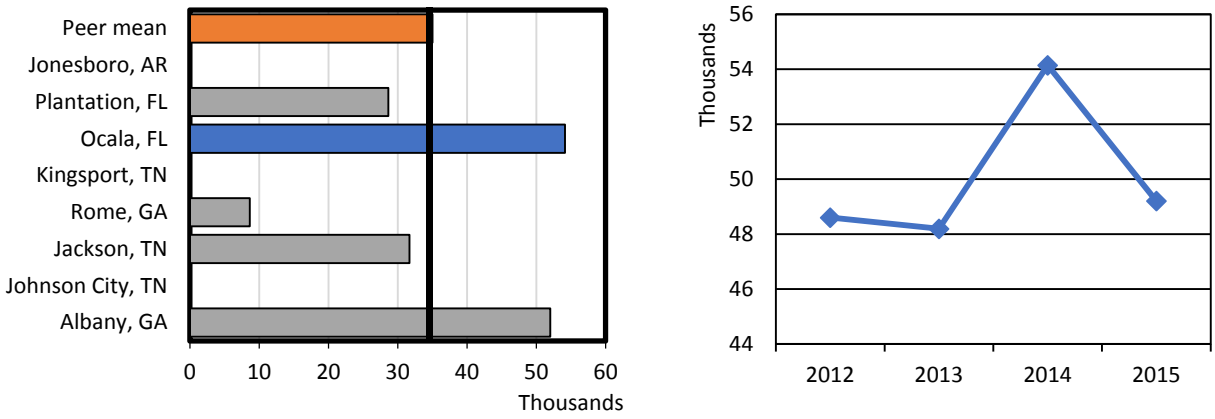
Figure B-21: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Revenue Miles per Vehicle Mile



Revenue Miles per Total Vehicles

Revenue miles per total vehicles is another measure of vehicle utilization. SunTran experienced a sharp increase in revenue miles per total vehicles between 2013 and 2014 due to the increase in revenue miles and would have remained as high in 2015 had the total vehicle count not grown. SunTran stands far above the peer group mean of 35,026 miles on this measure by almost 55 percent and is the highest among the peer group.

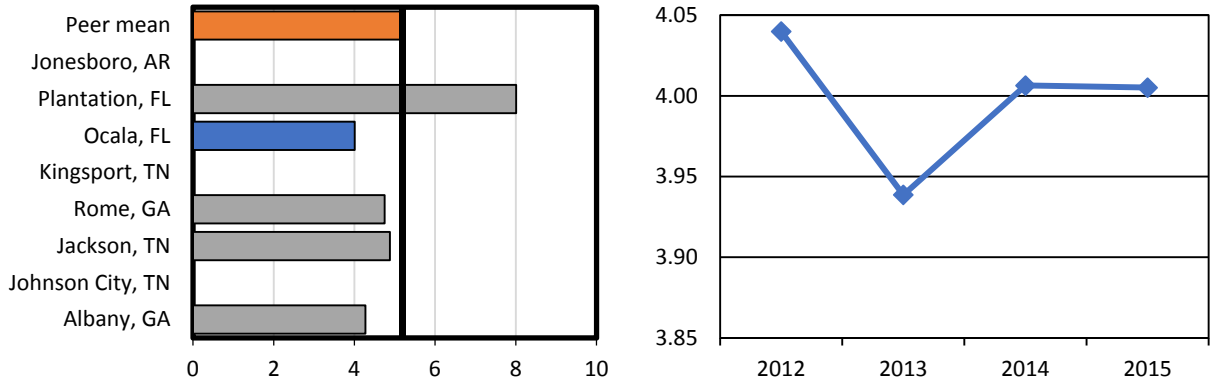
Figure B-22: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Revenue Miles per Total Vehicles



Vehicle Miles per Gallon

Vehicle miles per gallon, or the ratio between fuel consumed and distance traveled, is an indication of fuel efficiency and applies only to diesel- and gasoline-powered vehicles. SunTran's vehicle miles per gallon reached a relative peak of efficiency in 2013 and have yet to replicate that level since. Compared to the peer systems, SunTran stands almost 23 percent below the mean of 5.18 vehicle miles per gallon.

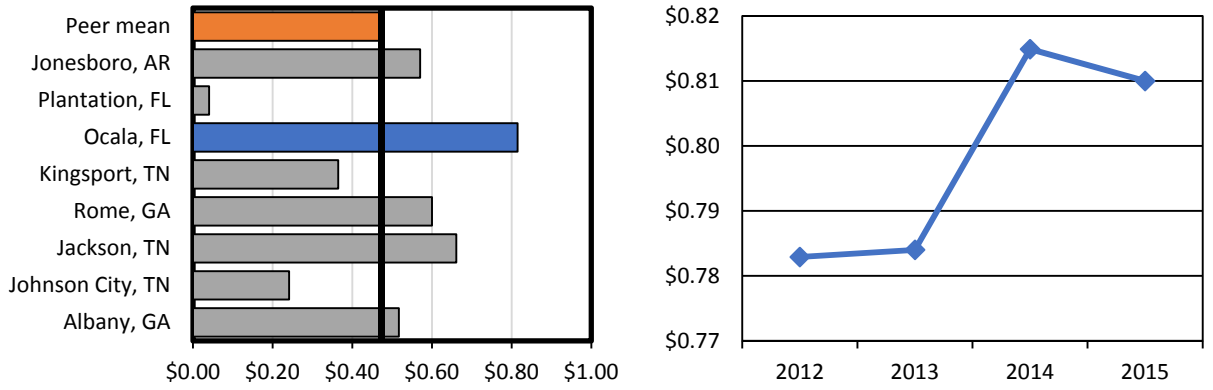
Figure B-23: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Vehicle Miles per Gallon



Average Fare

Average fare is calculated by dividing total passenger fare revenue collected by total passenger trips. The average can be lowered by systems such that at SunTran that offer discounted/free rides as well as free transfers. SunTran's average fare rose modestly, growing about $0.03 per ride during the 2012–2015 period. The mean for the peer group is $0.48, which rank's SunTran's average fare of $0.81 as the highest compared to its peers and more than 71 percent higher than the mean.

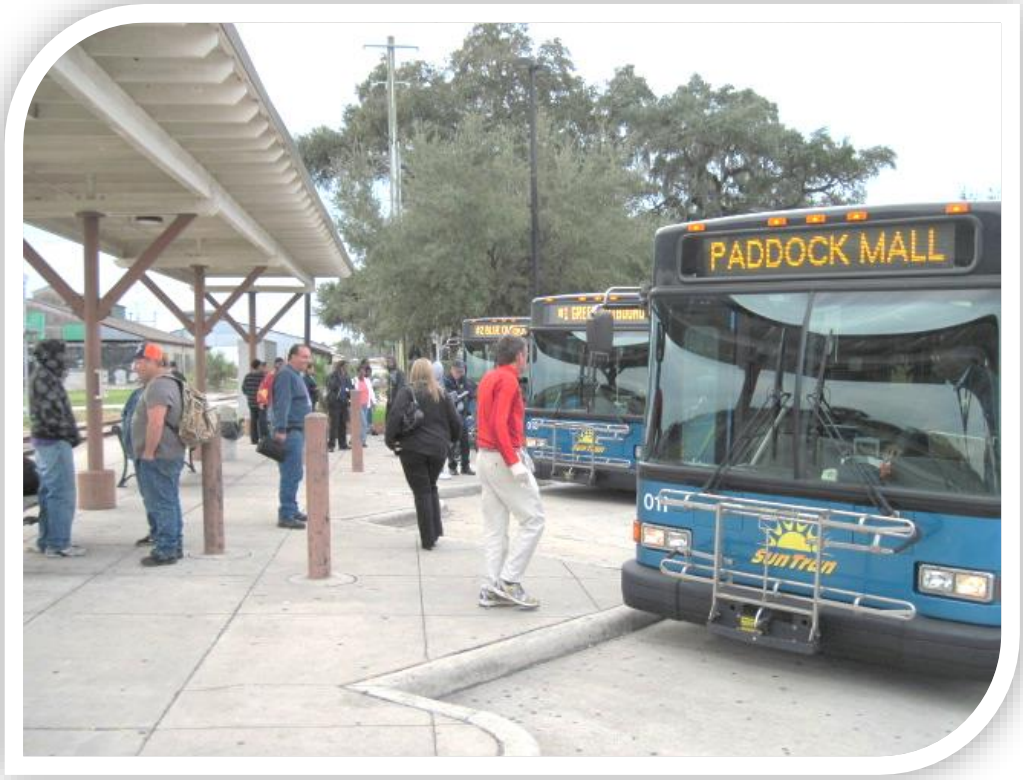
Figure B-24: SunTran Trend and Peer Comparison for Average Fare



Appendix C:

Public Involvement Plan and Support Materials

Ocala/Marion TPO
Transit Development Plan



Public Involvement Plan

Draft

October 2016

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) serves as the administrative and managing entity for public transportation services in Marion County. The system is operated under the name of SunTran and was initiated in 1999. Under current legislation that became effective February 20, 2007, the TPO must submit a Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update every five years. The TPO is currently undertaking this process. The 10-year TDP is a strategic guide for public transportation in the community over the next 10 years and represents the TPO and SunTran's vision for public transportation during the 10-year time period.

Current legislation requires that the TPO document its public involvement plan to be used in the TDP development process. Pertinent language from the TDP rule is as follows:

> *The TDP preparation process shall include opportunities for public involvement as outlined in a TDP public involvement plan, approved by the Department, or the local Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) Public Involvement Plan, approved by both the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration.*
>
> —Florida Rule 14-73.001

Public involvement is an ongoing process that involves continuously receiving and accumulating feedback about service. The TPO has developed this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) to be used during the FY 2018–2027 TDP update process to formally document all planned public outreach activities. This plan provides numerous opportunities for public involvement as well as involvement on the part of local agencies and organizations. Activities proposed within this PIP include coordination with the TDP Review Committee, stakeholder interviews, public workshops, rider- and non-rider surveys, discussion group workshops, and public listening sessions. In accordance with current Florida Rule 14-73.001, this plan was developed to be consistent with the TPO's public involvement activities. The results of the public involvement activities will be used in the development of the SunTran FY 2018–2027 TDP Major Update.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

The TPO is committed to ensuring that no person, on the basis of race, color or national origin, sex, age, disability, family, or religious status, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and the Florida Civil Rights Act of 1992, will be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination or retaliation under any TPO and SunTran program or activity.

Environmental Justice

Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1994 U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Order on Environmental Justice requires that the transportation planning process seek to identify the needs of low-income and minority populations. The TPO is committed to enhancing public

involvement activities to identify and address the needs of minority and low-income populations in making transportation decisions.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Public transportation providers receiving federal funding from the U.S. DOT have a responsibility, under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to benefits, services, information, and other important programs and activities. Persons with LEP include individuals who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English. The TPO is committed to creating a positive environment for persons with LEP and ensuring that they have an opportunity for full participation in public involvement activities.

Special Accommodations

Persons who require special accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or persons who require translation service to participate in public meeting activities are requested to notify the TPO/SunTran at least 48 hours prior to workshops or meetings. Requests for alternative format materials or translation should be made in advance to accommodate the development and provision of these materials. SunTran public meeting notices will include the contact number for TPO staff and the deadline date for requesting special accommodations at workshops or meetings.

2. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Several public involvement techniques were selected for inclusion in the PIP to ensure the active participation of citizens in the community. Each of them is discussed in this section. The techniques have been placed into two major categories: direct involvement techniques and information distribution techniques. Direct involvement techniques refer to activities that engage the public in "hands on" workshops and/or discussion about the project. Information distribution techniques refer to public information materials that are used to inform the general public of issues regarding the project.

Direct Involvement Techniques

Direct involvement techniques for the Ocala–Marion TDP have been expanded to include a large public outreach effort and are described below. The number of times each activity is programmed to be performed is noted where appropriate.

- ***Project Kick-Off Meeting*** – A Review Committee will be established at the outset of the project to monitor and provide input throughout the study and to evaluate the deliverables produced by the project team. The composition of the Review Committee may include the Ocala/Marion TPO, SunTran, and representatives from the Ocala City Council, the City of Ocala Planning Division, the Workforce Connection, and Marion Transit Services. After the committee has been established, a kick-off meeting for the project will be scheduled and conducted.

- ***Review Committee*** **Meetings** – Applicable project deliverables will be distributed to the Review Committee for review and comment. Most of the communication with the committee will be via e-mail and telephone; however, three on-site meetings will be held during the course of the TDP update effort.

- ***TPO Board Visioning Workshop*** –One TPO Board workshop dedicated to the education and discussion of transit issues in Ocala/Marion County will be conducted. The workshop will seek to assess political leaders' views on transit's current and future role in the community, transit finance, and other issues relevant to the transit plan.

- ***On-Board Survey*** – A system-wide on-board survey of fixed-route bus patrons will be conducted to assess passenger demographics, travel behavior, satisfaction, needs, and issues. A survey instrument will be developed with input from the TPO and SunTran staff. A total of 100 percent of all scheduled weekday and Saturday bus trips will be sampled. The survey will be available in both English and Spanish.

- ***Paratransit Survey*** - As a part of the survey process, a supplementary survey of paratransit patrons will be developed with input from the TPO and SunTran staff. This survey will be conducted by telephone. It is anticipated that, based on manifest information, a sufficient number of patrons will be contacted to ensure the completion of up to 50 total paratransit patron telephone surveys.

- ***Bus Operator Interviews and Survey*** - As ambassadors of the transit agency, bus operators have the most opportunity for and the greatest depth of contact with SunTran's public transportation existing patrons on a day-to-day basis. This fact makes them a valuable asset both for vetting rider input and for providing important insights into route-level and system network issues related to operations, safety, scheduling, etc. The project team will make use of this asset by spending time in the bus operator break room and informally interviewing SunTran bus operators about existing services, potential enhancements, and often-heard rider needs and complaints. In addition, an operator survey also will be developed and distributed to bus operators to collect static responses and ensure all operators have an opportunity to participate.

- ***Stakeholder Interviews*** – Up to 10 stakeholder interviews will be conducted to assess the attitudes of key local officials and community leaders regarding current transit service. The interviews will seek to assess political leaders' views on transit's current and future role in the community, transit finance and governance, and other issues relevant to transit planning for the TDP Major Update. At least five interviews will be conducted in person, but all stakeholders will have the option of participating via a telephone interview. A brief questionnaire will be developed to include several open-ended questions pertaining to the stakeholder's perceptions of existing transit services, as well as his/her opinions regarding the future of public transportation in the community.

- ***Discussion Group Workshops*** – Four discussion group workshops will be held to identify and assess general community perceptions of transit, which will assist in identifying issues and opportunities for SunTran. A discussion group is an excellent tool for revealing the attitudes of a particular group because of the open-ended nature of group discussions. Potential workshop candidates may include members from the business, health, social services, and education communities, as well as local chambers of commerce, and other active stakeholder groups. Current SunTran patrons will also be invited to a riders-only discussion to understand the "user" perspective.

- ***Public Workshops*** – Two public workshops to further support for the TDP public participation will be conducted. It is anticipated that one workshop will occurs early in the TDP process to gather information on transit needed and the other later to gather input on potential alternative improvements and the implementation plan. The workshop locations will be selected to ensure geographic coverage and, to the extent possible, piggyback on other community events to maximize participation. TPO staff will be responsible for securing any sites for the events and for advertising and promoting workshops.

- ***Public Listening*** **Sessions** – Two public listening sessions are also planned at events or locations where people gather, such as shopping malls***.*** These sessions will include displays and interactive information exchange, public surveys, and enlistment for social media. They will be designed to capture information from seasonal and permanent residents about community values, needs, and priorities.

- ***Website/Social Media Campaign*** – A website will be developed to include links to public surveys, project information, meeting dates, and highlights about the SunTran system. Emailing news and information blasts via email lists maintained by the TPO, SunTran, Marion Senior Services and other sources, will provide additional information and outreach to stakeholders, citizens, and riders. Additionally, a Facebook and/or Twitter page will be developed, to assist in getting the word out about meetings while educating people about transit services and development.

- ***Project Presentations –*** A number of project presentations will be conducted as part of the public outreach process. For this purpose, the project team will develop a user-friendly, graphical presentation to support the communication and adoption of the TDP. The presentation file will also be available for use by TPO staff beyond the adoption of the TDP. The forums for the presentations may include the following:

    - TPO Board
    - TPO Technical Advisory Committee
    - TPO Citizens Advisory Committee

- ***Peer Review and Involvement*** – In addition to the TPO and SunTran staff, the public involvement process for the TDP Major Update will also include the involvement of other entities, such as FDOT, the regional workforce board, and other interested parties, as

appropriate. These parties will be invited to/notified of all public participation events and provided with an opportunity to review and comment on the draft TDP.

Information Distribution Techniques

The information distribution techniques used for the TDP Major Update are described below.

- ***Project Website*** - Project website will be developed to inform transit users and the general public about the 10-year transit plan and information on the upcoming public workshops. The website will also be used to host online surveys.
- ***Social Media Outreach*** - Social networking opportunities for the project will be provided using Facebook and Twitter accounts. Links to existing social media accounts will be integrated into the TDP website.
- ***Notification of General Public*** – The general public will be notified about public meetings through legal advertisements, project and TPO websites, flyers and social media.
- ***Notification of State and Local Agencies*** – The Regional Workforce Development Board, the TPO, and FDOT will be advised of all public meetings via email/workshop flyers/project website. In addition, project deliverables will be submitted to them to solicit feedback and comments.
- ***Reports and Information for TPO Website*** – Technical reports, workshop materials, and other information will be provided to the TPO staff for posting on their websites as necessary.
- ***Mailing/Contact List*** – Email blasts will be sent to an email list maintained by the TPO, SunTran, and other sources to solicit opinions, ideas and Plan information. These email blasts will include workshop and other public participation event information as well as opportunities and reminders to complete surveys and questionnaires integral to the Plan. As necessary, the content for these e-mail blasts will be distributed two additional times as reminders to the distribution list.

  A tentative project schedule has been developed for the public participation portions of the TDP Major Update, as shown in Figure 2-1. Please note that the dates for specific meetings and public involvement activities are approximate and subject to change pending guidance from the TDP Review Committee.

Figure 2-1
Tentative Public Involvement Schedule

2017 Transit Development Plan		
1	Project Kick-Off Meeting	November 2016
2	Project Website	November 2016 - August 2017
3	Social Media Networking	November 2016 - August 2017
4	Email Blasts	November 2016 - August 2017
5	Stakeholder Interviews	November/December 2016
6	Bus Operator Interviews/Survey	November/December 2016
7	Review Committee Meetings	December 2016 - June 2017
8	TPO Visioning Workshop	January/February 2017
9	On-Board Survey	January/February 2017
10	Public Listening Sessions	January/February & June/July 2017
11	Public Workshops	January/February & June/July 2017
12	Discussion Group Workshops	January/February 2017
13	Paratransit Survey	February / March 2017
14	TPO Board & Committee Presentations	March - August 2017

SunTran Public Transit Survey
2018-2027 Ocala/Marion County
Transit Development Plan

Please take a minute to help us plan for transit needs in Marion County!

(1) How much awareness is there in the community about transit/public transportation?

- ☐ High
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ None at all
- ☐ Do not know

(2) What do you think of SunTran transit service?

- ☐ It must be provided
- ☐ It might be useful
- ☐ It does not matter to me
- ☐ Not sure it is useful
- ☐ We do not need it

(3) Rate your perception of transit's role in the community?

- ☐ Successful
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Satisfactory
- ☐ Poor

(4) Is traffic congestion a problem in Marion County?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(5) If yes to question 4, what role do you see transit playing in alleviating the situation?

- ☐ It will relieve congestion
- ☐ It may provide some help
- ☐ It has no effect
- ☐ It may create some additional traffic issues
- ☐ It will make congestion worse

(6) Have you used the SunTran fixed-route bus service?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(7) Do you think there is a need for additional transit service in Marion County?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

(8) If you answered yes to Question 7, select the type of service you would most like to see.

- ☐ More Frequent Bus Service
- ☐ More Weekend Service
- ☐ Later Service
- ☐ Increased Coverage Area
  where? _____
- ☐ Carpools/Vanpools/Ridesharing
- ☐ Other, specify_____

(9) What do you think is a reasonable one-way fare to pay for transit service?

- ☐ $0.00 to $1.00
- ☐ $1.01 to $1.50
- ☐ $1.51 to $2.00
- ☐ $2.01 to $2.50
- ☐ More than $2.50

(10) Is there a willingness in the community to consider additional local funding for transit?

- ☐ Definitely
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Do not know

(11) Are you willing to pay additional local taxes for an expanded transit system?

- ☐ Definitely
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Do not know

(12) Your age is…

- ☐ 17 years or under
- ☐ 18 to 24 years
- ☐ 25 to 40 years
- ☐ 41 to 60 years
- ☐ Over 60 years

(13) What was the range of your total household income for 2015?

- ☐ Less than $10,000
- ☐ $10,000 - $19,999
- ☐ $20,000 - $29,999
- ☐ $30,000 - $39,999
- ☐ $40,000 - $49,999
- ☐ $50,000 - $74,999
- ☐ $75,000 or greater

(14) What is the zip code of your residence?

_____

Please continue survey on the other side of this page!

(15) If you were going to consider using SunTran transit services, please rate how important each of the following aspects of transit service would be in your decision-making process.

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not Important At All
a. Days of service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Hours of service	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Frequency (how often buses run)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Convenience of routes (where buses go)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Dependability of buses (on time)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Travel time on bus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Cost of riding the bus	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. Availability of bus route information	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. Vehicle cleanliness and comfort	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. Driver courtesy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. Safety on bus and at bus stops	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. Passenger information technologies	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Comments and Suggestions

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

10-YEAR TRANSIT NEEDS SURVEY

Ocala/Marion County 2018-2027 Transit Development Plan (TDP)

Please take a minute to help us prioritize the transit needs in Ocala/Marion County!

1) Please tell us how you rate each of the following potential service improvements.

	Very Favorable		Neutral		Not Very Favorable
Improve Existing Transit Service					
Double frequency to existing routes	5	4	3	2	1
Add Sunday service to existing bus routes	5	4	3	2	1
Realign existing routes for more direct and fast access	5	4	3	2	1
Blue B Route to Industrial Park (FedEx, Autozone, etc.)	5	4	3	2	1
Establish/improve transfer centers	5	4	3	2	1
Add more bus shelters and benches	5	4	3	2	1
Better sidewalk connections to bus stops	5	4	3	2	1
Establish more locations to purchase monthly passes	5	4	3	2	1
Add New Transit Service					
Ocala West Connector (service on SR 40)	5	4	3	2	1
Downtown Circulator (bus every 20 minutes)	5	4	3	2	1
Marion Oaks Express (peak hour service)	5	4	3	2	1
Villages-Belleview Limited Express	5	4	3	2	1
Baseline Flex	5	4	3	2	1
Marion Oaks Flex	5	4	3	2	1
On-Top-of-the-World Flex	5	4	3	2	1
SR 200 Flex	5	4	3	2	1
Establish Park-and-Ride lots	5	4	3	2	1

2) Please circle the top three (3) areas or major roadways that need more transit service improvements.

Belleview	The Villages	SR 200	Lake County
Industrial Park	Paddock Mall	College of Central FL	Downtown Ocala
Marion Oaks	On Top of the World	Northwest Ocala	Silver Spring Shores
Other (please identify)			

Please explain what improvements are needed to the roads/areas you identified above.

General Comments and Suggestions

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
PLEASE RETURN YOUR SURVEY TO THE PUBLIC WORKSHOP ATTENDANTS WHEN YOU ARE FINISHED.

SunTran On-Board Survey

SunTran is planning for the future and needs your feedback to help improve transit services. Your participation in this survey is anonymous and voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank form to the surveyor. If you choose to fill out a survey, please check (✓) the correct item, write out, or circle your answers. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

This survey is about the ONE-WAY transit trip you are making now!

Example of ONE-WAY Bus Trip

1. What **TYPE OF PLACE** are you **COMING FROM NOW?** (Please ✓ the starting place of this **ONE-WAY TRIP**) (Please ✓ only one)

1__ Work
2__ Medical
3__ Social/Personal
4__ School (K-12)
5__ College/Tech
6__ Recreation
7__ Shopping/Errands
8__ Home
9__ Other (specify)_____

2. What is the **ADDRESS OR NAME** of the **PLACE, BUSINESS, OR BUILDING** you are **COMING FROM NOW**?

Address or Intersection (e.g., 1700 West International Speedway Boulevard)

Place, Business, or Building Name (e.g., Volusia Mall)

City State Zip

3. How did you get to the first bus stop for this **ONE-WAY TRIP**? (Please ✓ only **ONE**)

1__ Walked ➡ *# blocks?* ____
2__ Bicycled ➡ *# blocks?* ____
3__ Drove & parked ➡ *# miles?*____
4__ Was dropped off
5__ Rode with someone who parked
6__ Other (specify) _____

4. **LIST ALL** of the **BUS ROUTES** in the **EXACT ORDER** you will use to make **THIS ONE-WAY TRIP**:

FIRST Bus ➡ **SECOND** Bus ➡ **THIRD** Bus Route

5. What **TYPE OF PLACE** are you **GOING TO NOW** on this **ONE-WAY TRIP**? (Please ✓ the ending place of this **ONE-WAY TRIP**) (Please ✓ only ONE)

1__ Work
2__ Medical
3__ Social/Personal
4__ School (K-12)
5__ College/Tech
6__ Recreation
7__ Shopping/Errands
8__ Home
9__ Other (specify)_____

6. What is the **NAME OR ADDRESS** of the **PLACE, BUSINESS, OR BUILDING** you are **GOING TO NOW**?

Address or Intersection (e.g., 1700 West International Speedway Boulevard)

Place, Business, or Building Name (e.g., Volusia Mall)

City State Zip

7. After you get off the last bus you will use to complete this **ONE-WAY TRIP**, how will you get to your **FINAL DESTINATION** ? (Please ✓ only ONE)

1__ Walk ➡ *# blocks?* ____
2__ Bicycle ➡ *# blocks?* ____
3__ Drive ➡ *# miles?*____
4__ This stop is the final destination
5__ Will be picked up
6__ Ride with someone who parked
7__ Other (specify) _____

8. How would you make this one-way trip if not by bus? (Please ✓ only ONE)

1__ Drive
2__ Taxi
3__ Walk
4__ Wouldn't make trip
5__ Bicycle
6__ Ride with someone
7__ Other (Specify)_____

9. On average, how many days a week do you ride the bus?

1__ 1 2__ 2 3__ 3 4__ 4 5__ 5 6__ 6
7__ Once a month or less
8__ First time riding

10. How long have you been using SunTran bus service?

1__ This is the first day
2__ Less than three months
3__ 3 months to 6 months
4__ 7 months to 1 year
5__ 1 to 2 years
6__ More than 2 years

PLEASE CONTINUE ON BACK OF SURVEY ➡

11. What type of fare do you usually pay when you ride the bus?

1__ Adult Fare ($1.50)
2__ Youth/Student Fare ($1.10)
3__ Senior/Disabled (75¢)
4__ Medicare (75¢)
5__ Monthly Pass ($45.00)
6__ Youth/Student Monthly ($34.00)
7__ Senior/Disabled Monthly ($23.00)
8__ Other _____

12. Did you use a wheelchair ramp to board the bus for this trip?

1 ___ Yes 2 ___ No

13. Do you own a smart phone and/or tablet? 1__ Yes 2__ No

14. How many working vehicles (cars, motorcycles, trucks, vans) are at your home? (✓only **ONE**)

1__ 1 2__ 2 3__ 3 or more 4__ None

15. How many months out of the year do you reside in Marion County?

1__ Less than one month 3__ 1-6 months 5__ 6 to 12 months

16. What is the most important reason you ride the bus? (Please ✓ only ONE)

1__ I do not have a valid driver's license
2__ Car is not available all the time
3__ Parking is too expensive/difficult
4__ I do not drive
5__ SunTran is more convenient
6__ SunTran fits my budget better
7__ SunTran is safer/less stressful
8__ Other _____

17. Which three of the following improvements do you think is most important? (✓ **THREE**)

1 ___ More benches and shelters at bus stops
2 ___ More bike racks at bus stops
3 ___ Earlier service on existing routes
4 ___ Improved security at stops and on buses
5 ___ Sunday service on Route(s) _____
6 ___ Later service on existing routes
7 ___ More frequent service on existing routes
8 ___ Express service. Where? _____
9 ___ Other (Specify) _____

18. How do you prefer to receive information about SunTran service, schedules, and changes?

1__ SunTran website
2__ Newspaper
3__ Bus signs/shelters
4__ TV
5__ Bus schedules
6__ Bus driver
7__ Call SunTran
8__ Other _____
9__ In bus
10__ Transfer plaza
11__ Radio

19. How often do you use the wireless internet service available on SunTran buses?

1__ Never 2__ Rarely 3__ Often 4__ Every time I ride a SunTran bus

20. How satisfied are you with each of the following? Circle a score for each characteristic.

Please indicate	Very Satisfied		Neutral		Very Unsatisfied
a. Your overall satisfaction with SunTran	5	4	3	2	1
b. Frequency of service (how often buses run)	5	4	3	2	1
c. Your ability to get where you want to go using the bus	5	4	3	2	1
d. The number of times you have to transfer	5	4	3	2	1
e. How easy it is to transfer between buses	5	4	3	2	1
f. Time of day the *earliest* buses run on **weekdays**	5	4	3	2	1
g. Time of day the *latest* buses run on **weekdays**	5	4	3	2	1
h. Availability of Sunday service	5	4	3	2	1
i. Safety/Security at the bus stop	5	4	3	2	1
j. Dependability of the buses (on time)	5	4	3	2	1
k. User friendliness of bus information	5	4	3	2	1
l. Other, please specify_____	5	4	3	2	1

21. Considering Question 20 above, list the three areas that are most important to you when riding the bus: _____, _____, and _____

22. Your age is?

1__ 17 or under
2__ 18 to 24
3__ 25 to 34
4__ 35 to 44
5__ 45 to 54
6__ 55 to 64
7__ 65 to 74
8__ Over 74

23. What is your gender? 1__ Male 2__ Female

24. What is your race or ethnic heritage? (Please ✓ only ONE)

1__ White 2__ Black 3__ Hispanic 4__ Asian 5__ Other_____

25. What was the range of your total household income for 2011?

1__ Under $10,000
2__ $10,000 to $19,999
3__ $20,000 to $29,999
4__ $30,000 to $39,999
5__ $40,000 to $49,999
6__ $50,000 or greater
7__ Do Not Work
8__ Refuse to Respond

26. Do you have a valid driver's license? 1__ Yes 2__ No

27. What is the zip code of your permanent residence? _____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY!

SunTran
Ocala/Marion County Florida
Transit Development Plan

SUNTRAN WANTS YOUR INPUT!

SunTran 10-Year Transit Development Plan
Public Transit Workshops

SunTran is planning for its future, and we want your input! Please stop by any time during the following two public workshops and let us know how you think SunTran should grow.

Public Workshop #1

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 (1 PM - 3 PM)

Walmart Super Center
Outside near the west entrance door
4980 East Silver Springs Boulevard (SR 40)
Ocala, FL 34470
SunTran Bus Routes: Green, Yellow and Blue

Public Workshop #2

Tuesday, February 21, 2017 (4 PM - 6 PM)

Ed Croskey Recreation Center
Main conference room on east side of gymnasium building
1510 NW 4th St
Ocala, FL 34475
SunTran Bus Route: Purple

You can also visit www.suntran2017tdp.com for more information on this important plan developed by the Ocala/Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and SunTran.

If you are unable to attend one of the workshops, written comments will be accepted through March 31, 2017 and may be sent to:

Ocala/Marion TPO
Attn: SunTran TDP Project Manager
121 SE Watula Ave
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 629-8297
KOdom@ocalafl.org

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS
Any person requiring special accommodations to attend or participate, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact SunTran within at least three (3) business days before the meeting at (352) 401-6999

For additional SunTran route and schedule information, please contact SunTran at (352) 401-6999 or *SunTran@ocalafl.org*

SunTran
TPO Ocala Marion County
City of Ocala — God Be With Us — Marion County, Florida

MEADOWBROOK
CHURCH

July 11, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Sean Forte and I am the Community Life Pastor at Meadowbrook Church in Ocala, Florida. I would like to say thank you for helping provide quality transportation to our community. It is very evident your service is helping people live a better life.

I have two request:

1). That bus transportation be extended to the west side of I-75 on SW 20th Street.

2). That transportation be available on Sundays with either a full or shortened schedule.

If these requests are approved, I am confident that our Meadowbrook Church family will utilize the transportation on Sunday mornings and throughout the week for activities, small groups and events. Not only would this benefit our church family, it will also benefit the thousands of people that live and work in our community.

Thank you for your consideration and for helping to make Marion County a great place to live!

Sean Forte
Community Life Pastor
Meadowbrook Church

4741 SW 20TH STREET, OCALA, FL 34474 • P 352.873.3767 • F 352.873.0626
CONTACT@MBCOCALA.ORG • MBCOCALA.COM

Carlton Arms of Ocala

Executive Director
Laura L. Smith

5001 SW 20th Street

Suite 100

Ocala, FL 34474

352-861-9222

Fax 352-861-9979

cao34474@aol.com

07/07/17

To Whom It May Concern:

We have 860 apartments located at 5001 SW 20th Street. It would be an advantage and very helpful for our residents to have the opportunity to ride the bus. Having a bus route to our area would be very beneficial.

Thank you for the consideration.

Carlton Arms Management

Carlton Arms of Ocala

Laura L. Smith
Executive Director

5001 SW 20th Street, Suite 100
Ocala, FL 34474
352-861-9222
Fax 352-861-9979
lsmith@carltonarmsofocala.com

Appendix D:

Review of Plans and Documents

Review of Plans and Documents

A supportive component of the TDP Update is the review of recent transit policies and programs. This section reviews transit policies at the federal level as well as relevant statewide and local planning activities conducted by FDOT, Marion County, the City of Ocala, and the Ocala/Marion County TPO. Various transportation planning and programming documents are summarized, with an emphasis on issues that may have implications for public transportation in Marion County. These implications will be discussed in more detail subsequently in the Situation Appraisal component of the TDP.

The following local plans were reviewed to understand current transit policies and plans with potential implications for SunTran's services and to help the TDP become a plan that will guide local transportation decision making:

- SunTran Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)
- Ocala/Marion County 2013–2022 TDP Update
- Ocala/Marion County 2013 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Update
- Ocala/Marion TPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Ocala/Marion TPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan
- Ocala 2035 Vision
- Marion County Comprehensive Plan
- City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan

In addition, the following state and federal plans also were reviewed:

- FAST Act
- Grow America Act
- 2060 Florida Transportation Plan
- State of Florida TD Five-Year/Twenty-Year Plan
- State Growth Management Legislation (House Bill 7207)

Federal Programs

FAST Act

The Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, passed on December 4, 2015, replaces the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) federal transportation legislation that expired on May 31, 2015. It is the first federal law in more than a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes $305 billion over fiscal years 2016–2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. FAST focuses on safety, keeps intact the established structure of various highway-related programs, continues efforts to streamline project delivery, and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects.

Among the impacts to transit are the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Bus and Bus Facilities program, which received an increase in funding of $268 million over FY 2015 levels, for a total of $696 million for FY 2016. This program helps transit agencies fund new buses and replace aging fleets and facilities and adds a new eligibility to deploy low- or no-emission vehicles. FAST also re-established a Bus Discretionary Program that allows states to apply for project-specific funding via a competitive process. Many of the grants are expected to fund replacements for aging fleets or facilities. In FY 2016, $268 million in funding will be available under this program. Of that amount, $55 million has been designated for Low- or No- Emission Bus Deployment projects. Other key items of note include the following:

- Funds the Bus and Bus facilities Program pilot program for Cost-Effective Capital Investment, which encourages states to share bus funding resources among a partnership of recipients.
- Increases dedicated bus funding by 89 percent over the life of the bill.
- Provides both stable formula funding and a competitive grant program to address bus and bus facility needs.
- Reforms public transportation procurement to make federal investment more cost-effective and competitive.
- Consolidates and refocuses transit research activities to increase efficiency and accountability.
- Establishes a pilot program for communities to expand transit through the use of public-private partnerships.
- Provides flexibility for recipients to use federal funds to meet their state of good repair (SGR) needs.
- Provides for the coordination of public transportation services with other federally assisted transportation services to aid in the mobility of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Grow America Act

The Grow America Act was proposed in federal FY 2016 with a budget of $478 billion as a six-year surface transportation reauthorization proposal focused on modernizing transportation infrastructure. This bill included a $115 billion for transit investments and expanded transportation options. The funding bill also included funds for transit improvements aimed at reducing fleet breakdowns in an effort to reduce delays and increase customer reliability. The Grow America Act also included language to strengthen regional coordination and decision making. For the state of Florida, specifically the Grow America Act included approximately $2.3 billion in highway funding and $538 million in transit funding, which were significant increases over transportation bills with flat funding.

State Plan and Policies

2060 Florida Transportation Plan

The 2060 Florida Transportation Plan (FTP) was finalized in December 2010 with a 50-year horizon and is currently being updated. This document creates a shared vision for the future of transportation in

Florida and its goals, objectives, and strategies to achieve the vision during the 50-year timeframe. The plan calls for a profoundly different transportation system from today's system, including the following:

- A statewide, multimodal transportation system that supports Florida's economic and livability goals by providing better connectivity to both urban and rural areas.
- Greater reliance on public transportation systems for moving people, including statewide passenger rail network and enhanced transit systems in Florida's major urban areas.
- A statewide, multimodal system of trade gateways, logistics centers, and transportation corridors to position Florida as a global hub for commerce and investment.
- An evolving air and space transportation system enabling Florida to remain a global leader for moving people and cargo between Florida and destinations in other states, nations, and orbit.
- A new generation of infrastructure, vehicles, fuels, and technologies to enable travel with fewer crashes, reduced delay, and fewer emissions.

Based on these core values of the 2060 FTP, public transportation plays an important role in shaping the Florida's transportation systems in the future. This implicates the necessities for SunTran to comply with the 2060 FTP by implementing more rigorous public transportation development approach.

State of Florida Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) 5-Year/20-Year Plan

Developed by the CTD, this plan is required under the Florida Statutes and includes the following elements:

- Explanation of the Florida Coordinated Transportation System
- Five-Year Report Card
- Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability Review
- Strategic Vision and Goals, Objectives, and Measures

The five-year and long-range strategic visions were reviewed and used for guidance and are indicated below.

Long-Range Strategic Vision

The long-range strategic vision seeks to create a strategy for the Florida CTD to support the development of a universal transportation system with the following features:

- A coordinated, cost-effective multimodal transportation system delivered through public-private partnerships.
- A single, uniform funding system with a single eligibility determination process.
- A sliding scale of fare payment based on a person's ability to pay.
- Use of electronic fare media for all passengers.
- Services that are designed and implemented regionally (both inter-county and inter-city) throughout the state.

Five-Year Strategic Vision

The five-year strategic vision seeks to develop and field-test a model community transportation system for persons who are transportation disadvantaged by incorporating the following features:

- Statewide coordination of community transportation services using Advanced Public Transportation Systems including Smart Traveler Technology, Smart Vehicle Technology, and Smart Intermodal Systems.
- Statewide coordination and consolidation of community transportation funding sources.
- A statewide information management system for tracking passenger eligibility determination.
- Integration of Smart Vehicle Technology on a statewide multimodal basis to improve vehicle and fleet planning, scheduling, and operations. This effort includes vehicle and ridership data collection, electronic fare media, and geographic information system (GIS) applications.
- Development of a multimodal transportation network to optimize the transportation system as a whole using Smart Intermodal Systems. This feature would be available in all areas of the state via electronic access.

State Growth Management Legislation (House Bill 7207) (June 2011)

HB 7207, the Community Planning Act, was signed into law on June 2, 2011. The bill is intended to stimulate Florida's economic development and economic recovery by taking state government out of the development business and giving the responsibility of community planning back to local communities. The landmark legislation is the biggest change to growth management laws in many years, repealing most of the State-mandated growth management planning laws that have governed development activities within Florida since the original Growth Management Act of 1975. As of June 3, 2011, the role of State and regional agencies in the review of comprehensive plan amendments and the time needed to process the majority of plan amendments has been significantly reduced, and many development and plan amendment hurdles have been modified throughout the state, transportation concurrency being one of the main hurdles. State-mandated concurrency requirements have been repealed and, consequently, a large share of growth management responsibility has shifted to cities and counties.

The new legislation also supersedes SB 360, the Community Renewal Act, which required the preparation of mobility plans within dense urban land areas (DULAs) and Transportation Concurrency Exemption Areas (TCEAs). Instead, a local jurisdiction interested in implementing its own concurrency ordinance or mobility plan can still do so, but will have limitations on how to implement and enforce the ordinance. HB 7207 strengthens legislative language that supports multimodal approaches to transportation by stating that Comprehensive Plan Transportation Elements "shall provide for a safe, convenient multimodal transportation system" (F.S. Section 163.3177 [6b]).

SunTran Comprehensive Operations Analysis (2016)

An assessment of the SunTran's service was necessary to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of the community as the city grows and changes around it. A COA is designed to identify opportunities for improving the productivity and efficiency of a transit agency's public transportation services. The COA performs detailed analysis of specific operating characteristics of the transit service, including ridership by stop and time of day, among others.

The COA established and evaluated a set of system alternatives. In addition to route alignment changes, recommendations to improve the service in the form of short-term and long-term implementation plans were also presented. These recommendations are listed below.

Short-Term Implementation

- Increase Green route and Orange route frequencies to two buses per hour.
- Adjust current/proposed Purple route alignment for one-way loop.
- Focus on ADA connections between stops and medical uses.
- Discontinue last Red route trip.

Long-Term Implementation

- Convert Red route to flex zone.

Ocala/Marion County 2013–2022 TDP Update

As part of the system's transit planning process, the TPO is required to complete a major update of its TDP every five years. The most recent major update of the TDP was completed in 2012, providing a strategic guide for public transportation in Marion County for a 10-year period, from FY 2013 through FY 2022. This TDP assessed the performance of existing services, reviewed demographic and travel behavior characteristics of the service area, summarized local transit policies, developed proposed transit enhancements, and prepared a 10-year implementation plan for fixed-route transit services. The TDP concluded a 10-year financial plan (projected costs and revenue through FY 2016 that provided guidance for SunTran during and beyond the 10-year planning horizon, along with the capital and operating costs and revenues required to successfully execute the implementation plan.

The TDP was developed to meet the TDP requirements and plan for Marion County's 10-year vision for transit. The goals and objectives that were developed to guide transit service in Marion County over the 10-year planning period are presented below.

Goal 1: Increase ridership and accessibility for current and potential transit users.

Objective 1.1: Increase the fixed-route service by 25 percent by 2017.

Objective 1.2: Decrease passenger fixed-route access time by 25 percent by 2017.

Objective 1.3: Increase bus pass sales by 100 percent by 2020.

Objective 1.4: Increase ridership by 50 percent by 2020.

Goal 2: Maximize coordination and efficiency of transportation services to better serve the entire population of Marion County, including the transportation-disadvantaged, social service organizations, Medicaid-sponsored transportation service, and inter-county commuters.

Objective 2.1: Assess Marion Transit Services ridership every five years for areas of possible transfers to fixed-route services.

Objective 2.2: Ensure seamless coordination between SunTran services and private transportation systems by 2017.

Objective 2.3: Ensure coordination with land use policies and local jurisdictions.

Objective 2.4: Provide connections to neighboring counties by 2019. Work with Lake and Sumter counties to coordinate inter-county service.

Goal 3: Provide for the most cost-effective transportation services possible.

Objective 3.1: Hold maintenance costs at FY 2011 levels, or reduce costs over time. Minimize any increase in maintenance costs. Minimize costs required to operate and administer transportation services.

Objective 3.2: Reduce annual operating costs per revenue mile by 15 percent.

Objective 3.3: Maintain an operation ratio (farebox/total operating expense) of at least 15 percent for fixed-route and demand response service.

Objective 3.4: Maintain financial support of transit services consistent with the financial plan in the Major Update for the TDP (2013-2022).

Objective 3.5: Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of transit service delivery every five years.

Goal 4: Promote and provide for the necessary expansion of the coordinated transportation system necessary to meet the future needs of the general public, including the transportation disadvantaged.

Objective 4.1: Annually review the opportunities for additional services for future implementation including the following:

- Explore opportunities for implementing express bus service along high-density corridors in suburban areas.
- Study the demand for inter-county transit.
- Determine the feasibility of implementing a park-and-ride program in Marion County.
- Study the feasibility of growth in transit services to meet the needs of the general public, including:
    1. Identify transit needs for the general public.
    2. Identify potential transit demand.
    3. Compare needs, demand, service costs, and potential funding to determine feasibility.

Objective 4.2: Meet the future needs and demand of users for both services and amenities described in the Major Update to the TDP (2013-2022).

Ocala/Marion County 2013 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) Update

The Ocala/Marion 2013 TDSP update was completed previously in 2013. The TDSP is used by the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) and the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) to maintain and/or improve transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged and to serve as a framework for performance evaluation. The TDSP is updated annually and submitted to the Florida CTD for final approval. Marion County services under the TD program are provided funding from state TD funds, local revenues, and private sources.

Marion County Senior Services (MCSS) has been designated as the Marion County CTC for all non-emergency medical transportation and for those needing wheelchairs or other assistance. MCSS operates transportation services under the name Marion Transit Services (MTS). MTS provides door-to-door paratransit services to meet numerous transportation needs for medical, life sustaining, educational, work, business, and recreational activities for Marion County's TD citizens as well as members of other program recipients in Marion County.

The goals and objectives that were developed as part of the TDSP are described below.

Goal 1: Provide increased mobility and ridership using Marion County Senior Services, contract providers, and SunTran to meet the demand and mobility needs of the transportation disadvantaged in Marion County.

- Objective 1.1: Provide transit or demand response services to 10 percent of the transportation disadvantaged population by 2017.
- Objective 1.2: Provide the transportation disadvantaged population with paratransit service that is comparable to the service provided by the fixed-route system.
- Objective 1.3: Comply with all applicable ADA requirements.
- Objective 1.4: Never decline service to any transportation disadvantaged individual due to lack of availability of ADA-accessible vehicles.

Goal 2: Maximize coordination and efficiency of transportation disadvantaged services with SunTran fixed-route services and private transportation providers to better serve the entire population of Marion County.

- Objective 2.1: Assess Marion Transit Services ridership every five years for potential transfers to fixed-route services.
- Objective 2.2: Ensure seamless coordination between Marion Transit Services and private transportation systems by 2017 to eliminate duplication or fragmentation of services for in county and out of county transportation.
- Objective 2.3: Comply with 2010 ADA Standards for Association Design.

Goal 3: Provide for the most cost-effective transportation services possible.

- Objective 3.1: Hold maintenance costs at less than 20 percent of total system costs. Minimize costs required to operate and administer transportation services.

Objective 3.2: Maintain annual operating cost per passenger mile of under $18.00.

Objective 3.3: Achieve an operation ratio (farebox revenues/total operating expenses) of at least 15 percent for fixed-route and demand response service.

Objective 3.4: Maintain financial support of transportation disadvantaged services consistent with the financial plan in the 2013–2022 Major Update for the TDP.

Objective 3.5: Assess the effectiveness and efficiency of transit service delivery every five years.

Objective 3.6: Reduce the duplication of transportation disadvantaged services provided within the county.

Goal 4: Provide for the most comprehensive transportation services possible to serve all transportation disadvantaged residents of Marion County.

Objective 4.1: Meet the future needs and demand of users for both services and amenities described in the Major Update to the TDP (2013-2022).

Objective 4.2: Reevaluate transit services for the transportation disadvantaged annually.

Goal 5: Deliver a safe and high quality transit experience to the customer.

Objective 5.1: Monitor service quality and meet or exceed 90 percent on-time performance goal for both paratransit and fixed-route service.

Objective 5.2: Maintain a no-show/same day cancellation standard of fewer than 10 percent of all trips.

Objective 5.3: Develop a performance monitoring program that addresses performance standards for fixed-route and paratransit services.

Goal 6: Investigate and pursue available funding opportunities at the federal, state, and local levels and from private sources for programs or projects that serve the transportation disadvantaged.

An implementation plan also was developed to phase potential service improvements over the five-year period.

Ocala/Marion TPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan

The 2040 LRTP is the fundamental planning document for the long-range transportation system development in Marion County. The project included in the LRTP will use federal and State funds and may be pursued by the TPO over the next 25 years. The plan must be “cost feasible”; therefore, financial resources that will cover the cost of the projects must be identified. The TPO has assumed local gas tax collections and transportation impact fees as a portion of the projected revenues included in the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan.

Service improvements were considered for all existing SunTran routes that would reduce the headway to 30 minutes. However, due to limited funding, service improvements included in the Cost Feasible Plan are limited to reducing the frequency to 45 minutes on the Blue, Green, Orange, and Purple routes. The plan also includes continued operation of the existing fixed route and ADA service and $2.41 million for ADA bus shelter accessibility improvements.

Ocala/Marion County 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update

The 2035 LRTP is the fundamental planning document for long-range transportation system development in Marion County. The projects included in the LRTP will use federal and State funds and may be pursued by the TPO over the next 25 years. The plan must be "cost feasible"; therefore, financial resources that will cover the cost of the projects must be identified. The TPO has assumed local gas tax collections and impact fees as a portion of the projected revenues included in the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan.

The LRTP update had an extensive public involvement process, which included a program called "Strings and Ribbons." The Strings and Ribbons program offered citizens an opportunity to learn about the transportation planning process and how projects are developed and funded. The process included interactive, hands-on activities in which participants purchase transportation improvements that they thought were important to the overall transportation system over the next 25 years:

- Expanded bus service to west of the City of Ocala to the CR 484 and SR 200 intersection and south to the Sumter County line.
- Expanded bus service to the east of Ocala passed SR 35 and south to Belleview and the Sumter County line.
- Dedicated bus lane along US 27/US 441.
- Dedicated bus lane along CR 464.
- Passenger rail from Ocala to the Sumter County line.
- Light rail from Ocala to CR 464 (east of Belleview).

Ocala 2035 Vision

The Ocala 2035 Vision was developed to describe how the community wants the city to look and function in the future. As part of the development process and to achieve greater public participation, the City of Ocala formed the Community Form & Design Visioning Leadership Group. The group comprised a diverse group of citizens who were responsible for actively encouraging other citizens to participate in the vision process. The group also evaluated all public comments and feedback received during the public meetings and prepared the final Ocala 2035 Vision recommendations and implementation strategies.

The Ocala 2035 Vision provides a roadmap for the future, built upon community consensus to promote continued support and implementation over time. The recommendations of the Ocala 2035 Vision will be used to establish priorities for future decision making. Transit and mobility-related strategies from the Ocala 2035 Vision are listed below by design topic.

General Strategies

- Conduct a study to evaluate redevelopment potential of the West Ocala area (Downtown to I-75, SR 200 north to City limits).

- Create Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) and/or other programs to promote revitalization of sub-areas within West Ocala. (Year 2011)

- Redevelop the west side of Pine Avenue as High Intensity to visually, physically, socially, and economically connect east and west. (Years 2012 and ongoing)
- Conduct a study to evaluate redevelopment potential of the Tuscawilla Park area.
  - Create CRAs and/or other programs to promote revitalization. (Year 2011)
- Establish joint planning areas with Marion County to promote the Vision as it relates to areas adjacent to the City limits and implementation of regional mobility efforts. (Year 2011)

Urban Form & Open Space Strategies

- Implement recommendations of the Recreation and Parks Master Plan to identify, acquire, and program new parks, trails, and open spaces in the City. Identify, reserve, and/or acquire right-of-way needed to create a connected park system. (Year 2011 and ongoing)
- Maintain an inventory of vacant or underutilized properties with existing zoning or future land use classifications that will support mixed use development. (Year 2012 and ongoing)
- Maintain an inventory of vacant or underutilized properties with development potential adjacent to or within one-quarter mile of a transit corridor depicted on the vision plan. (Year 2012 and ongoing)

Building & Site Design Strategies

- Create an incentive program to encourage infill, development, or redevelopment. (Year 2011–2015)

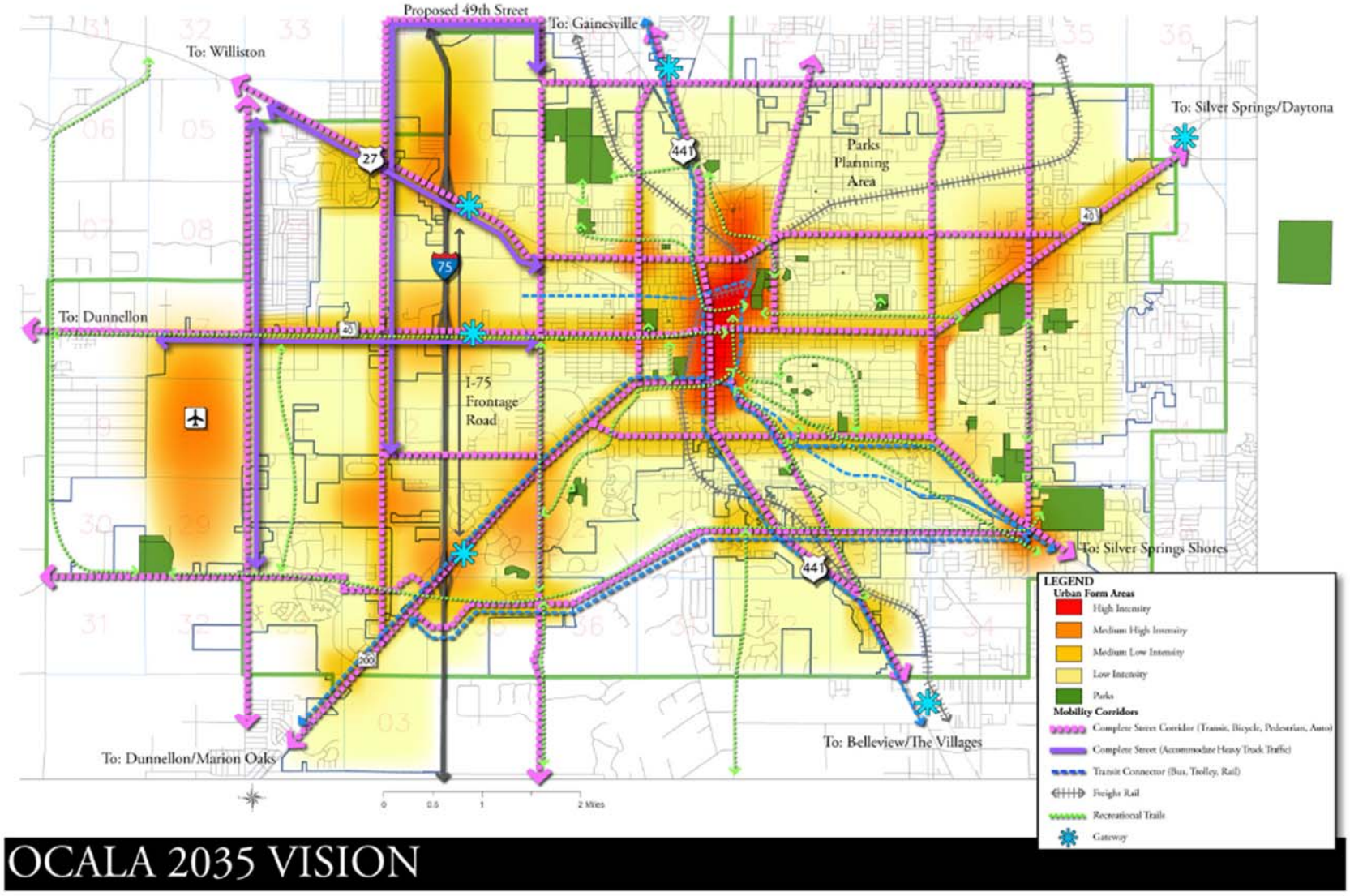
Mobility & Connectivity Strategies

- Develop Streetscape Master Plans, including landscape and hardscape details, to improve visual aesthetics of City gateway corridors, including SR 200, SR 40, US 27, and US 441. Coordinate with FDOT and Marion County to ensure that all applicable transportation design criteria are met. (Years 2012–2015)
- Provide for an interconnected street system to relieve and distribute traffic volumes as an alternative to roadway widening. (Year 2011 and ongoing)
- Require Complete Street evaluations for the viability of multimodal transportation and desirable visual aesthetics. (Year 2011)
- Establish a citywide sidewalk improvement program to provide the pedestrian connectivity desired in the vision.
  - Identify areas of the city that do not have sidewalks or have disconnected sidewalk links. (Years 2011–2015)
  - Prioritize sidewalk program to maximize connectivity and support neighborhood sub-area plans and Parks Master Plan. (Years 2011–2015)
  - Acquire easements for sidewalks where they do not exist. (Years 2011–2015)

- Include sidewalk improvements in the annual Capital Improvement Program. (Years 2011–2015)

- Identify, reserve, and/or acquire transit corridor right-of-way for regional transit system connections to Belleview, Silver Springs Shores, Dunnellon, the Villages, Gainesville, Orlando, and Jacksonville. (Years 2011–2035)
- Identify, reserve, and/or acquire transit corridor right-of-way for transit system connections in the urban core. (Years 2011–2015)
- Provide trolley service that connects the North Magnolia area, Downtown, and the hospital district. (Years 2016–2035)
- Provide trolley service that connects West Ocala to Downtown. (Years 2016–2035)
- Establish minimum residential densities and commercial intensities to support the use of public transportation along Complete Streets and Transit Corridors depicted on the Vision map below. Incorporate with future mobility plans. (Year 2011)
- Evaluate opportunities to reestablish passenger rail service connected to the national Amtrak rail network. (Years 2011–2016)

The 2035 Vision Plan provides a map with an overview of the ideas presented by public input and the Leadership Group. The map below shows Urban Form Areas and Mobility Corridors.



OCALA 2035 VISION

Marion County Comprehensive Plan

Marion County has goals, objectives, and policies within its Transportation and Land Use Elements of the county comprehensive plan that promote and support transit use. The goals of the Transportation Element are to develop a balanced and sustainable transportation system improving access and travel choices through the enhancement of roads, public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian systems, aviation and multimodal facilities. Mixed-use projects and development patterns that promote shorter trip lengths and generate fewer vehicle miles traveled shall be encouraged and promoted by the County through the Future Land Use Element.

To ensure a balanced and efficient transportation system within the Urban Growth Boundary, Marion County aims to encourage the development of interconnected multi-modal transportation infrastructure that serves residential neighborhoods, commercial development, and commerce/employment centers. Furthermore, transportation improvement projects that are located within the specified boundary are given higher priority.

Goal 6 as part of the Transportation Element states that it is the objective of Marion County to have all areas within the Urban Growth Boundary served by transit. In order to accomplish this goal, the County intends to establish transit supportive land use patterns and requires the provision of transit facilities where appropriate. For example, plans for expanding existing or adding new regional activity centers are required to address access management and minimization of impacts on existing roadways, coordination of multi-modal networks, dedication of park-and-ride facilities, and pursuit of travel demand reduction strategies (for single-occupant vehicles).

In support of Goal 6, Marion County has approved policies that require transit facility designs to be considered in all roadway expansion proposals, building site designs to be coordinated with multi-modal facilities, and transportation demand management programs to be implemented to understand employee travel flows to support transit ridership and multi-modal connectivity. Finally Marion County encourages the use of Complete Street principles to provide transportation facilities for all transportation modes, and accommodate the needs of the elderly and school children.

Objective 6.2 encourages compact development and clustering which should facilitate future development of an integrated multi-modal transportation network. The discouragement of inefficient development patterns, review processes that consider multi-modal system impacts, as well as the consideration of non-automobile network improvements as mitigation for new development impacts are all policies that Marion County has established to encourage compact development.

Policy 6.2.7 specifically encourages multi-modal connections that be made within and between land uses in order to improve pedestrian mobility and transit accessibility where financially feasible. Using FDOT Quality/Level of Service standards, Marion County is required to implement short (5 year) and long term (6+ year) connectivity strategies which are highlighted below:

Short Term:

- Evaluate and improve neighborhood connectivity
- Increase existing service levels
- Improve transit connectivity to sidewalk network
- Improve sidewalk circulation paths beyond entrance/exit access and to surrounding developments and land uses
- Provide bicycle lanes on all new and rebuilt collector/arterial roads
- Minimize gated communities

Long Term:

- New transit facilities such as BRT
- Creation of parallel transit facilities
- Enhance and provide sidewalk and bicycle facilities when feasible to enhance connectivity

Policy 2.3.4 requires new residential and non-residential development/redevelopment projects generating more than 100 peak hour trips on arterial or collector roadways to increase connectivity and minimize trips on major roadways through the provision of the following facilities:

Residential Development

- Sidewalk connections from the development to existing and planned public sidewalks along the development frontage.
- Deeding of land or conveyance of required easements generally parallel to a property's frontage of residential development located on arterial or collector roadways to the County, as needed, for the construction of public sidewalks, bus turn-out facilities, and/or bus shelters.
- Interconnected local streets, drive accesses, pedestrian networks and bicycle networks that provide access between land uses (including non-residential uses) and direct routes to transit to reduce congestion. These projects include, but are not limited to State and County arterials and collectors. Developers may deed land for right-of-way and/or construct roadway extensions to County specifications.

Non-Residential Development

- Sidewalk connections along the frontage, cross-access connections/easements where cost-feasible, closure of excessive or unsafe curbs, and ensuring safe circulation areas such as sidewalks connecting buildings and parking to the development site.
- Deeding of land or conveyance of required easements generally parallel to a property's frontage of non-residential development located on arterial or collector roadways to the County, as needed, for the construction of public sidewalks, bus turn-out facilities, and/or bus shelters.
- Development of, or participation in, a transportation demand management (TDM) program that provides funding or incentives for transportation modes other than single occupant

vehicle to reduce VMT. Such TDM programs shall utilize a methodology approved by the County and may require performance monitoring and reporting.

The County's comprehensive plan focuses on the provision of future transit service for new development and redevelopment through the Land Development Code to develop a balanced and sustainable transportation system. Strategies have also been included to encourage multimodal opportunities and the availability of transit services within the Urban Growth Boundary.

City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan

The City of Ocala's adopted Comprehensive Plan was last updated in the winter of 2009 and has several goals, objectives, and policies that may impact transit services and/or planning. In the Transportation Element, the following goals, objectives, and policies are specific to transit and are therefore pertinent to SunTran and transportation disadvantaged services.

Goal 1: To create and maintain a safe, efficient, and aesthetic transportation system that encourages multimodal transportation.

Objective 8: Incorporate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies into the land use and transportation planning process to reduce travel demand.

Policy 8.1: Develop a Commuter Assistance Program through coordination with FDOT, TPO, and the TDM clearinghouse at the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR).

Policy 8.2: Encourage new development and existing businesses to participate in TDM strategies such as carpooling, vanpooling, parking management, telecommuting, flexible work hours, bicycle, and mass transit provisions.

Objective 9: Design roads to accommodate alternative transportation modes, aesthetics and safety.

Objective 10: Develop and maintain adequate access routes to the airport and rail service that is properly integrated with the transportation system shown on the transportation map series.

Policy 10.3: Coordinate intermodal management of surface transportation within airports, rail service, and related facilities.

Objective 11: Preserve the potential expansion of the airport to accommodate future growth in quantitative and qualitative terms.

Policy 11.6: Establish a transit stop at the airport at such time that commercial service becomes available.

Policy 11.9: As an integral component of the airport master planning process, the City shall make provisions for regional transportation facilities for the efficient use and operation of the Airport.

Objective 12: Provide Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) for the city service area that will increase mobility while increasing safety.

Goal 3: Provide an efficient and safe public transit system that is accessible to all citizens.

Objective 1: Provide safe and efficient public transit services based upon existing and proposed major trip generators and attractors.

Policy 1.1: All development and redevelopment projects will be required to address transit amenities such as bus stops and accessibility, where appropriate.

Policy 1.2: Identify future transit needs by participating in the Ocala/Marion County TPO TDP updates.

Policy 1.3: By the year 2003, the City will determine the feasibility of implementing a park and ride program in conjunction with the SunTran bus system through coordination with the Ocala/Marion TPO.

Policy 1.4: Construct sidewalks, wheelchair ramps, and improve access to bus stops at appropriate locations.

Goal 4: Direct growth to the Transportation Concurrency Exception Area/Urban Redevelopment Area, as shown on Map 5 of the Future Land Use Map Series, in order to discourage urban sprawl; reduce development pressures on rural lands; maximize the use of existing public facilities; and centralize commercial, governmental, retail, residential, and cultural activities.

Policy 1.2.3:The City shall adopt the following development standards as a means of encouraging alternative modes of transportation within the TCEA:

b. Construction of bus shelters or bus lighting using solar technology, built to City specifications.

c. Construction of bus turn-out facilities.

d. Payments to SunTran bus system, which either increase service frequency or add additional bus services.

Policy 2.3: All new developments within the TCEA that meet or exceed 200 linear feet of property frontage shall include sidewalks with benches. All new developments with the TCEA shall provide lighting either by way of solar powered lighting on covered benches or street lamps and shade trees, if applicable. If shade trees are not applicable to that area, covered benches with solar lighting are required. These covered benches can be used as bus transportation stops promoting multimodal transportation.

The review of transit planning documents was conducted to enhance the understanding of existing plans and programs that are relevant to public transportation in Marion County. In addition to providing guidance for the goals and objectives, the background review also helped identify relevant data and information available from existing sources. The guidance and information were used to support the development of this TDP.

Appendix E:

Recommended SunTran Monitoring Program

Performance Measures and Indicators

Once the recommended transit services are implemented, the following fixed- and flex-route performance indicators and measures should be monitored by SunTran on a quarterly basis as part of the recommended performance monitoring program:

- **Passenger Trips** – Annual number of passenger boardings on the transit vehicles.
- **Revenue Miles** – Number of annual miles of vehicle operation while in active service (available to pick up revenue passengers).
- **Revenue Hours** – Total hours of operation by revenue service in active revenue service.
- **Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile** –Ratio of passenger trips to revenue miles of service. This is the key indicator of service effectiveness that is influenced by the levels of demand and the supply of service provided.
- **Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour** –Ratio of passenger trips to revenue hours of operation.

However, as fixed-route-type services typically take up to three years to become established and productive, the performance data up to that point should be reviewed and interpreted cautiously. Although adjustments/modifications may occur, outright discontinuations based on performance monitoring data alone are discouraged.

Evaluation Methodology and Process

This process is based on two measures, trips per mile and trips per hour, which are weighted equally to derive an overall route score. A route's score for a particular measure is based on a comparison of the measure as a percentage of the system average for that particular measure. These individual measure scores are added together and divided by 2 to get a final aggregate score. This final composite performance score is an indication of a route's performance for all three measures when compared to the system average for those measures. A higher score represents better overall performance when compared to other routes.

The noted comparative performance evaluation can be beneficial, but care should be taken when using the final scores and rankings, because these figures are comparing routes to one another and may not reflect the specific goals established for a particular route (i.e., geographic coverage vs. ridership performance). The process is particularly useful, however, in highlighting those routes that may have performance-related issues. These routes can then be singled out for closer observation in future years to determine specific changes that may help mitigate any performance issues.
Once a route score is determined, routes can be ranked to show the highest performing and lowest performing routes. The rankings are a useful proxy for determining the comparative performance of any route, as well as highlighting changes in performance over time. To track the performance variation over time, three performance levels have been developed:

- **Level I – Good (≥ 75%)** – Transit routes in this category are performing efficiently compared with the average level of all the agency's routes.
- **Level II – Monitor (30–74%)** – Routes in this category exhibit varying levels of performance problems and need more detailed analysis (e.g., ridechecks, on-board surveys, increased marketing efforts, etc.) to aid in identifying specific changes that can be made to help improve the route's performance.
- **Level III – Route Modification or Discontinuation (≤ 29%)** – Routes in this category exhibit poor performance and low efficiency. Recommendations for these routes may include truncation of the route, reduction in the route's number of revenue hours, or discontinuation of the route.

Figure D-1 illustrates the three evaluation levels and notes the recommended thresholds for each level.

Figure D-1: Route Performance Evaluation Levels