

OCALA/MARION COUNTY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN 2015 – UPDATE



December 2015

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TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICE PLAN-2015 UPDATE

I. DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A. Introduction and Background

The mission statement of the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged is, “to enhance mobility, uniformity and coordination to transportation services for the state’s transportation disadvantaged in conformity with applicable law”. The Transportation Disadvantaged Commission was created by the 1989 Florida Legislature to coordinate the provision of transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged citizens. Transportation disadvantaged is defined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, and Rule 41-2, Florida Code as “those persons who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age and are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation and are, therefore, dependent upon others to obtain access to health care, employment, education, shopping, social activities, or other life sustaining activities, or children who are handicapped or high-risk or at-risk as defined in statute 411.202”. The amended Chapter 427, F.S. and Rule 41-2 FAC provide the guidelines for the Transportation Disadvantaged program and its legislative responsibilities. The responsibilities of the Commission are carried out with the cooperation of state, regional and local agencies. The Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) has the responsibility for transportation disadvantaged planning. They recommend to the Commission the Community Transportation Coordinator to service their specific area.

1. The Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) accepted the responsibilities of Designated Official Planning Agency for the transportation disadvantaged program, and established the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board in 1990. The TPO, based upon recommendations the Local Coordinating Board, unanimously endorse the appointment of Marion County Senior Services, Inc. (MCSS) as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Marion County.

Marion County Senior Services d/b/a Marion Transit, a non-profit agency began servicing the transportation needs of the elderly in 1976. Pursuant to Chapter 427, F.S. and Rule 41-2 FAC, the Ocala/Marion County TPO, on September 1982 designated MCSS as the CTC provider for the Ocala/Marion County area. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Agreement was executed between MCSS and the Florida Department of Transportation on January 5, 1983.

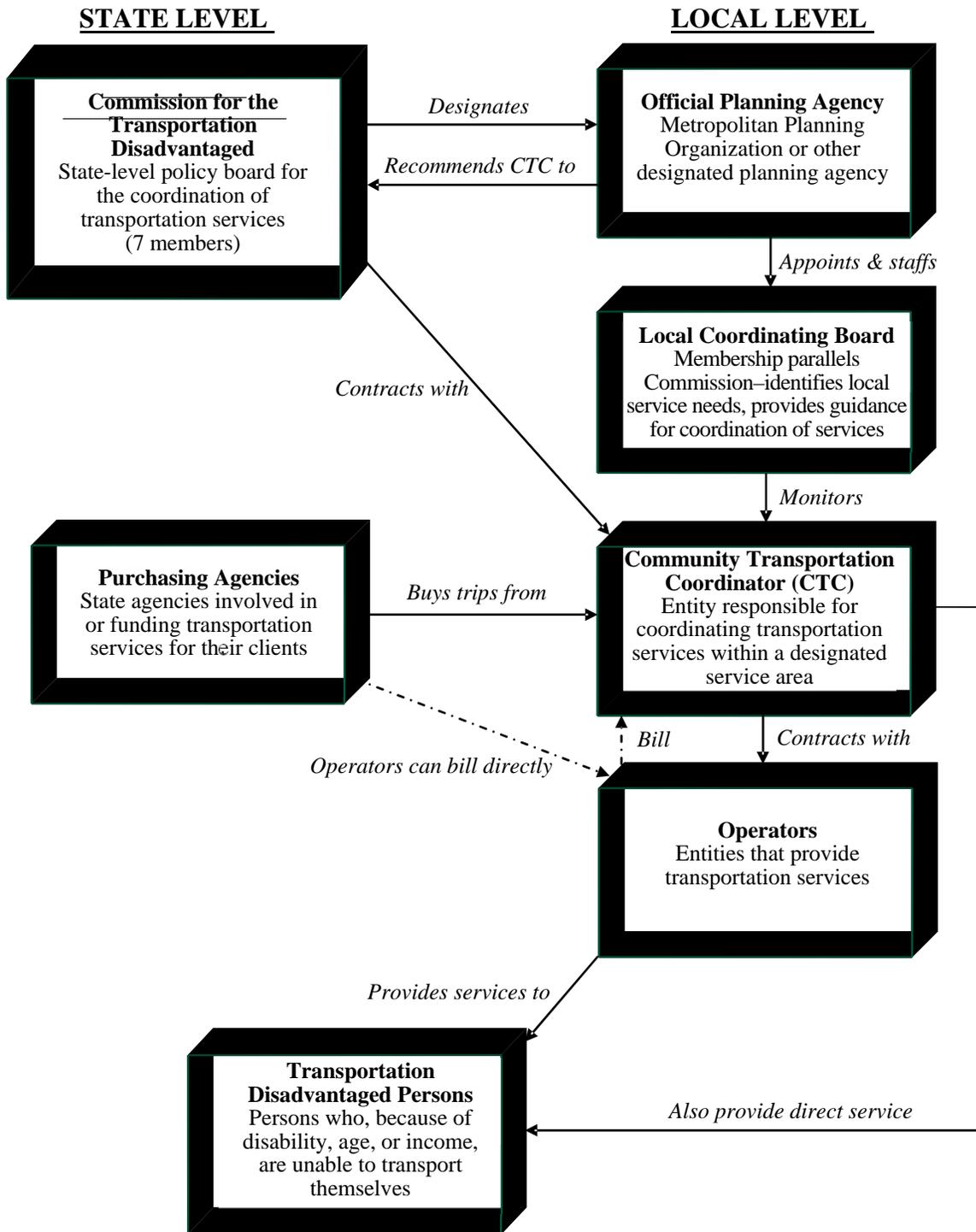


Figure 1-1
Florida's Transportation Disadvantaged Program Organization Chart

3. The Service Plan is consistent, to the maximum extent feasible, with the locally adopted Comprehensive Plans, the Ocala/Marion County Transit Development plan, the Ocala/Marion County 2040 Long Range Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

B. County Profile/Demographics

1. Service area description

The service area as well as the planning area for Ocala/Marion County TPO incorporates all of Marion County. Located in north central Florida, Marion County contains 1,579 square miles of rolling woodlands, lakes and more than 430,000 acres of national forest. Marion County includes the municipalities of Ocala, Belleview, Dunnellon, Reddick and McIntosh. The county includes a number of major highways including Interstate 75, U.S. Routes 441, 41, 301 and 27 in the north-south direction and State Routes 40 and 200 in the east-west direction.

The Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) explores the current and future transportation disadvantaged population, demand, service provided, quality of service, cost/revenue and rate structure. The TDSP is revised annually or earlier as needed.

2. Demographics

a. Population/Composition

The demand forecast for Marion County's specialized transportation services was estimated based on the 2010 census total population results and the population distribution estimated in the Ocala/Marion Transit Development Plan (2012). The feasibility of using other forecasting methods is limited to the availability of data to model demand.

The starting point of the population and paratransit demand estimate in Marion County is the 2010 total population results reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. Table 3-1 provides a quick overview of the population growth from 2000 to 2010 and includes the segment breakdown between elderly and non-elderly.

Table 3-1: Marion County Population		
Year	Population	Percent
2010	331,298	
2015 Estimated	341,205	
Growth 9,907		2.9%
Estimated Annual Growth*		0.59%
2010 Population Description		
Under 65 years	246,009	72.1%
65 years and over	95,196	27.9%
Median age (years)	47.3	
Source: U.S. Census Bureau.		
* Annual growth estimated using a exponential population growth		

The population in Marion County has increased by 9,907 from 2010 to 2015. The population over 65 years of age represents 27.9 percent of the 2015 population. The 2010 Census detailed demographic characteristics of the population in Marion County was released in 2012 by the Census Bureau. The 2013 and beyond estimates were calculated using the demand methodology approach and are widely accepted as a reliable estimate.

b. Economy and Employment

The per capita income in Marion County in 2013 was \$21,992, ranking 36th of the 67 counties in the State of Florida. The median household income in 1993 was \$39,453, in the same year, 18.1 percent of families had an income below the poverty level. Along with senior citizens, low income persons constitute a strong market for transit services.

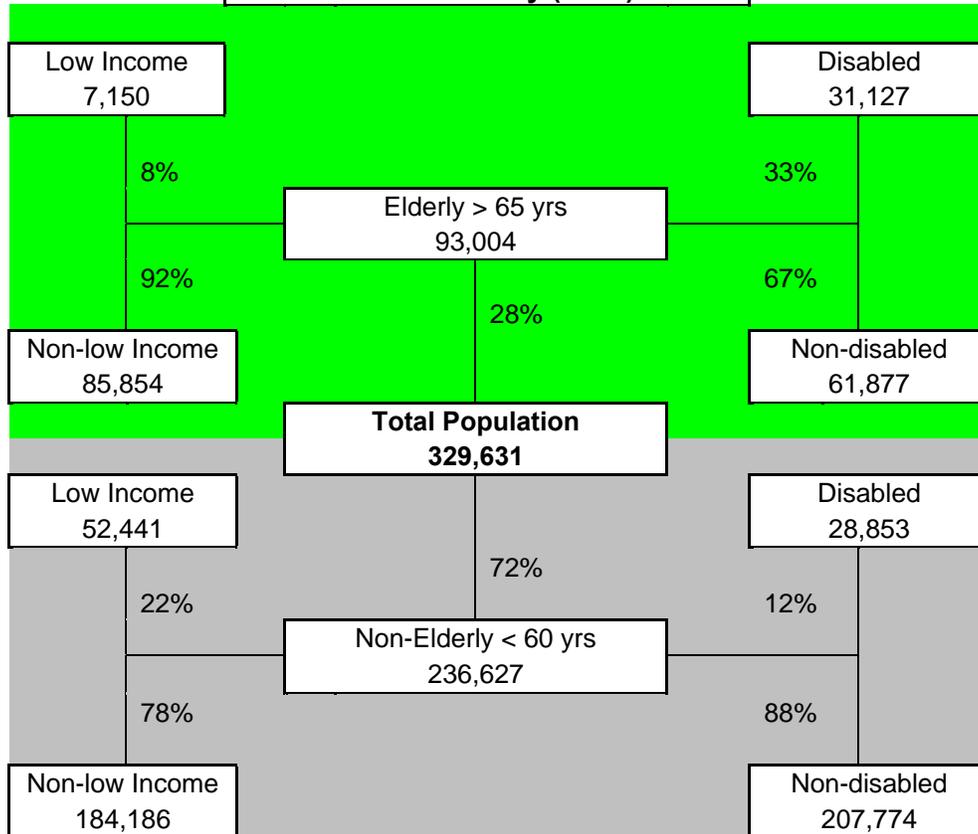
In 2013, the median value of a single-family home in Marion County was \$119,400.

In 2013, 85.0 percent were high school graduates in Marion County.

In 2013, the highest employment in Marion County was in retail trade and services.

The leading employers in the retail trade sector were restaurants/bars and food stores.

**Figure 3-1
Category I population Distribution
Marion County (2014)**



Historical population estimates from 2011 to 2014 and census population from 2010 are summarized in Table 3-2. The subsets—disabled and low income—are estimated based on the breakdown of rates shown in Figure 3-1.

c. Major Attractions and Traffic Generators

Most of the major activity centers fall within the Ocala city limits. Existing SunTran bus routes penetrate these areas, though there are some gaps in serving the northeast area of Ocala. Some of the major activity centers and attractions in Ocala and Marion County are described below.

- 1) Shopping centers are always major attractions:

In Marion County, most major shopping centers are concentrated around downtown Ocala and often follow the

major highways. For example, along SR 200 (from southwest to northeast) are the following shopping centers: Kingsland Plaza, Dillen Plaza, 103rd Street Square Plaza, 103rd Street Square Shopping Center, Steeplechase Plaza, Friendship Center, Circle Square Shopping Center, Jasmine Plaza, Jasmine Square, Sam's Club, Park Centre Commons Shopping Center, Lowes, Home Depot, Colours Plaza, Paddock Park Village Shopping Center, Paddock Mall, College Park Plaza Shopping Center, Gaitway Plaza, Ocala West Shopping Center, Shady Oaks Shopping Center, Wal-Mart, Target, and Flechbilt Plaza. Northeast of downtown Ocala is another concentration of shopping centers, including Skylark Plaza, Oakbrook Plaza, Spring Hill Shopping Center, Hillside Center, Ocala Shopping Center, Forty East Shopping Center, Chelsea Square, Kmart Plaza, Forty East, Shoppes at Silver Springs, and Wal-Mart.

There are also eight shopping centers along SR 464, plus scattered centers north and northwest of downtown Ocala.

- 2) Hospitals and medical centers are concentrated in and around downtown Ocala, particularly Munroe Regional Medical Center and Ocala Regional Medical Center, which are located on SW 15th Street and SW 1st Avenue, respectively. Other medical facilities not centered around downtown Ocala are in the southwest, generally along SR 200, and include Timber Ridge Nursing Home, Timber Ridge Professional Center, Prompt Primary Care of Ocala, Ocala Podiatry Center, Ocala Eye Surgeons, Mid Florida Physical Therapy, Medical Park West, and Marion Citrus Mental Health. Closer to downtown Ocala, but also concentrated around SR 200 are Surgery Center of Ocala, Central Florida Heart Center, Ocala Eye Surgery Center, Hospice of Marion County, Paddock Park Professional Center, Ocala Pulmonary Associates, Ocala Regional Cancer Center, Central Florida Eye Institute, Ocala Sleep and Diagnostic Center, Velisetti Medical Park Common, Urology Center of Florida, Palm Garden of Ocala, Central Florida Heart Group, Wound Care, Ocala Family Medical Center, HealthSouth Urgent Care Facility, and Cardiology Associates of Central Florida. The Marion County Health Department and Ocala Regional Physical Therapy Center are both located to the southeast of downtown Ocala, just off SR 464. There are no are also several newer facilities that been constructed in the last few years in the southeast, northeast, or northwest sections of the county.
- 3) In addition to the elementary, middle, and high schools in the area, Ocala is also home to the College of Central

Florida, Rasmussen College and Webster College, all of which are located just southwest of central Ocala.

- 4) The social services facilities in Ocala are also located in central Ocala, including the Department of Children and Families, the Ocala Housing Authority, Volunteer Service Bureau, and the Community Education Center
- 5) Other employers in the area circle downtown Ocala, generally to the southwest, northwest, and southeast. Some examples of the major employers include Closet Maid, Emergency One, Inc., Lockheed-Martin (in the far southeast of the county along CR 464), Clairson International (just west of downtown Ocala), Kmart Distribution Center (west of downtown off SR 40), Fluid Routing Solutions Inc. (southeast on SR 464), and Georgia Pacific (southeast on CR 464).
- 6) Major public facilities in Ocala/Marion County include the Marion County Court House (in downtown Ocala), the City of Ocala Complex (northeast of downtown Ocala), the Marion County Sheriff's Complex and the Marion County Jail (west of downtown Ocala), and the City of Ocala City Hall (downtown Ocala). Virtually all the public facilities are concentrated in and around downtown Ocala.
- 7) The Ocala/Marion County parks are also concentrated in and around downtown Ocala, but also include facilities in outlying areas, such as the Belleview Sports Complex (far southeast Marion County in Belleview), the Ocala Regional Sportsplex (southwest of downtown on SW 38th Street), and Coehadjoe Park (in the far northeast).
- 8) In addition, Silver Springs State Park and Wild Waters are major tourist attractions in the area. Ocala is also home to the Ocala National Forest, the Appleton Museum of Art, the Don Garlitt's Museum of Drag Racing, the Discovery Science Center, the Marion County Museum, and the Silver River Museum and Education Center. Major annual events in Ocala and Marion County include God and Country Day, the Chamber of Commerce Christmas Parade, Ocali-Fest, Light-Up Ocala, Brick City Days, the McIntosh 1890 Festival, Boomtown Days and Withlacoochee River Bluegrass Jamboree in Dunnellon and Belleview Founder's Day.
- 9) Marion County is a major equine breeding and training hub and there are numerous horse farms, events, riding areas, and other equestrian facilities and events.

C. Service Analysis

1. The methodology to estimate demand for specialized transportation combines the actual 2010 population numbers reported by US Census Bureau and the detailed demographic characteristics. Ideally, the demographic characteristics should also describe the uniqueness of the 2010 U.S. population. Therefore, the methodology applied in this service demand estimate assumes a similar distribution pattern among disabled and low-income groups as the Ocala/Marion Transit Development Plan. Figure 3-1 illustrates the findings and methodology.

Table 3-2: 2010-2014 Population History, Marion County					
	Year				
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Population Estimate	319,337	321,817	323,803	325,289	329,631
Elderly	79,820	82,196	84,490	86,684	93,004
Disabled	27,602	28,979	29,041	29,452	31,127
Non-disabled	52,218	53,217	55,449	57,232	61,877
Low-income	7,022	6,303	6,461	6,923	7,150
Non-Low income	72,798	75,893	78,029	79,761	85,854
Non Elderly	239,517	239,621	239,313	238,605	236,627
Disabled	25,084	26,862	25,923	29,003	28,853
Non-disabled	214,433	212,759	213,390	209,602	207,774
Low-income	41,727	46,642	49,542	52,034	52,441
Non-Low income	197,790	192,979	189,771	186,571	184,186

Note that the demand for special transportation services is a “derived” demand from certain combinations of groups shown in Table 3-2. Furthermore, the TD population groups can be double counted—the demand methodology eliminates potential sources of double counting. The categories that will be included in TD Category I are disabled, elderly, and low income. The disabled group includes all individuals with a disability regardless of age and income. The elderly group includes non-disabled and non-low income individuals over 60 years of age. The low-income group includes non-disabled individuals under the low-income category. In essence, these groups generate demand for special transportation services. Table 3-3 summarizes the TD population.

Table 3-3: Transportation-Disadvantaged Population Estimate, Category I, Marion County							
	Year						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Disabled	75,261	76,680	78,127	79,601	81,102	82,362	84,191
Elderly*	90,378	92,083	93,820	95,590	97,393	99,230	101,102
Low-Income**	60,715	61,861	64,002	64,240	65,429	66,662	67,919
Total TD Category I	226,354	230,624	235,949	239,431	243,924	248,254	253,212

* Non Disabled, non-Low income

** Non-disabled

An important subset of the Category I trips includes the non-disabled, low-income individuals who do not have access to private or public transportation. Category II trips further breaks down the Category I trips to identify the TD by age that are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation. It is assumed that 12.2 percent of the elderly population and 3.3 percent of the non-elderly population represents the transportation-disabled population.

Table 3-4: Transportation-Disadvantaged Population Estimate, Category II, Marion County							
	Year						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Transportation Disabled Elderly Population	28,837	29,524	30,227	30,947	31,683	31,310	30,160
Transportation Disabled Non-Elderly Population	7,627	7,806	7,987	8,175	8,366	8,264	7,956
Non-Transportation disabled, low-income	8,778	8,995	9,219	9,448	9,682	9,578	9,234
no auto, no public transit*							
Total TD Category II	45,242	46,325	47,433	48,570	49,732	49,151	47,350

Demand Projections

This section summarizes forecasts of TD trip demand, supply, and unmet demand for Marion County for the time period from 2015 through 2021. These estimates are based on the TD population forecasts that were presented previously and on information from the Marion County CTC Annual Performance Report. Florida's TD system provides two types of trips: program trips and general trips. Demand for program trips is forecasted

Demand for Program Trips

Persons in Category I are eligible to receive governmental and social service subsidies for program trips. A program trip is one made by a client of a government or social service agency for the purpose of participating in a program of that agency. Examples of program trips are trips to congregate meal sites or trips to job training facilities.

Based on the TD population estimate, the actual trip demand for specialized transit services can be estimated by using factors that represent the trip frequency of these groups. Using nationally recognized travel characteristics for the TD Category I market segment, the demand for Cate-

gory I can be estimated. The levels of trip-making by various market segments are available from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Study (NPTS) and National Survey of Transportation for Handicapped People (NSTHP) and are summarized in Table 3-4.

It is important to point out that the trip-making might have varied over time due to the expansion of accessible service. Ideally, the trip-making traits should be characterized by geographic location to reflect the travel behavior and transit service in different regions. Current county ridership data indicates that these trip-making rate assumptions are not representative of the actual rates in Marion County. This factor should be taken into account in further TD estimates.

The estimated demand for program trips compared to the Potential TD estimates prepared by CUTR is shown in Table 3-5. Program trip demand is dependent upon the existence of the program to which the potential TD population group is transported. For example, demand for trips to sheltered workshops exists only because there are sheltered workshop programs. Thus, the demand for program trips is equal to the number of trips required to take advantage of the service offered by the program. Therefore, the demand for program trips depends on the funding level for the various social service programs. It also assumes that the supply of program trips will increase at a rate sufficient to continue to provide the current level of service to the Category I population. If local social service or governmental agencies undergo major changes in the scope of their programs that require TD transportation service, the estimates may increase or decrease at the same rate. Therefore, the demand for program trips depends on the funding level for the various social service programs.

Table 3-5, Trip Demand and Supply Category I, Marion County								
	Mode Split	Year						
		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Potential TD Cat1	0.60%	172,192	176,953	181,858	186,913	192,050	197,328	202,750
Elderly	0.30%	263,846	271,233	278,828	286,635	294,512	302,606	310,922
Low-Income	0.30%	263,846	271,233	278,828	286,635	294,512	302,606	310,922

Source: CUTR. "Florida Statewide TDSP Population Demand and Forecasts"

Demand for General Trips

General trips are trips made by TD persons (Category II) to destinations of their choice (not to agency programs). Examples of general trips are trips to work or grocery stores and non-medicaid medical trips. Deriving the demand for general trips is different than for program trips. The methodology developed to forecast demand for general trips involves the use of trip rates derived in a study of paratransit demand conducted in 1990 for the San Francisco Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission by Crain & Associates, Inc., and others ("San Francisco Bay Area Regional Paratransit Plan: Final Report"). Trip rates are the average number of trips taken by a single transportation disadvantaged individual. The trip rates were developed from the actual experiences of paratransit systems around the country that were meeting most or all of the trip demand in their service areas. The use of these trip rates is recommended by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for estimating demand for ADA complementary paratransit.

Total demand for general trips is simply the TD population multiplied by the trip rates. The TD population (rather than the Potential TD population) was used to forecast demand because the

TD population is the population eligible for general trips funded by the state. According to the county level forecasts of the demand for TD services completed by CUTR, the average monthly trip rate for Marion County is 1.2 trips per person per month. Table 3-6 shows the annual demand and supply estimates for general trips by the TD population for Marion County for the years 2015 through 2021. As shown in the table, a gap exists between the demand for general trips and the supply of these trips. Unmet demand refers to demand that currently exists in the TD transportation market but is not being met due to factors such as funding, price, convenience, comfort, eligibility and the availability of other transportation modes.

Table 3-6, Trip Demand and Supply Category II, Marion County							
	Year						
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
TD Population Cat II	45,632	46,836	48,075	49,352	50,647	51,977	53,341
Demand - General Trips	657,101	674,438	692,280	710,669	729,334	748,469	768,116
Supply - General Trips	67,932	69,834	71,790	73,800	75,737	77,725	79,766
Unmet Demand	589,169	604,604	620,490	636,869	653,597	670,744	688,350

Source: CUTR. "Florida Statewide TDSP Population Demand and Forecasts"

Needs Assessments

This section includes the assessment of existing needs and unmet public transportation needs for low-income and persons with disabilities. An inventory of existing transportation providers and identification of redundancies and gaps in service were also used to identify unmet needs or duplications of public transportation services.

Map 3-1, presented previously in this section, shows the employment densities within Marion County. Map 3-2 depicts the percent of the total population age 65 and above in Marion County. Map 3-3 presents the traditional transit market assessment that includes population segments that historically have a higher propensity to use transit and/or are dependent on public transit for their transportation needs. Traditional transit users include the older adults, youths, and households that are low income and/or have not vehicles. To create the TOI, 2010 Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) demographic data estimates were compiled at the block group level and categorized according to each block group's relative ability to support transit based on the prevalence of specific demographic characteristics. For this analysis, five population and demographic characteristics were used to develop the TOI. Each characteristic is traditionally associated with the propensity to use transit. The five characteristics that were used to produce the index include the following:

- Population density (persons per square mile)
- Proportion of the population age 65 and over (older adults)
- Proportion of the population under age 16 (youths)
- Proportion of the population below the poverty level
- Proportion of households with no vehicles (zero-vehicle households)

ESRI data do not include zero-vehicle household information. As a surrogate measure, the number of households with an annual income equal to or less than \$10,000 was used. It was assumed that households earning less than \$10,000 were not able to afford vehicles or other costs associated with vehicle ownership. The block groups are rated as “Very High,” “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” in their respective levels of transit orientation, where “Very High” reflects a very high transit orientation, i.e., a high proportion of transit dependent populations.

Based on the existing transit services and concentrations of targeted populations, the following needs have been identified as priority areas for increased mobility options:

- Based on the TOI analysis, block groups containing high proportions of transit dependent populations are located southwest of Ocala to the east and west of SR 200.
- Block groups with existing employment densities of more than 1,500 people per square mile are located in Ocala, southwest of Ocala, Dunnellon, Belleview, and just south of Reddick along Interstate 75. The future employment densities appear to grow within the same areas that contain the existing employment densities, with the exception of two block groups located in north Marion County near the Sumter County and Lake County lines and one block group to the west of Ocala along SR 40.
- Current data depicting the county’s population of persons with disabilities are not available for mapping purposes; therefore, this analysis relies on the TD population estimates presented earlier in this section and the percent of population at or above age 65. Block groups containing higher percentages of the population age 65 and over and limited transit service, include the areas the block group between NW 60 Avenue and US HWY 27, south of Belleview along HWY 441 to the Sumter County line, Dunnellon, and to the east and west of SR 200 between SW 60 Avenue and SW CR 484.
- Other areas with higher percentages of the population age 65 and above that contain fixed-route transit service include Ocala and Silver Springs Shores. While these areas have existing transit service, they may be considered for new and innovative projects that go beyond the existing ADA requirements.

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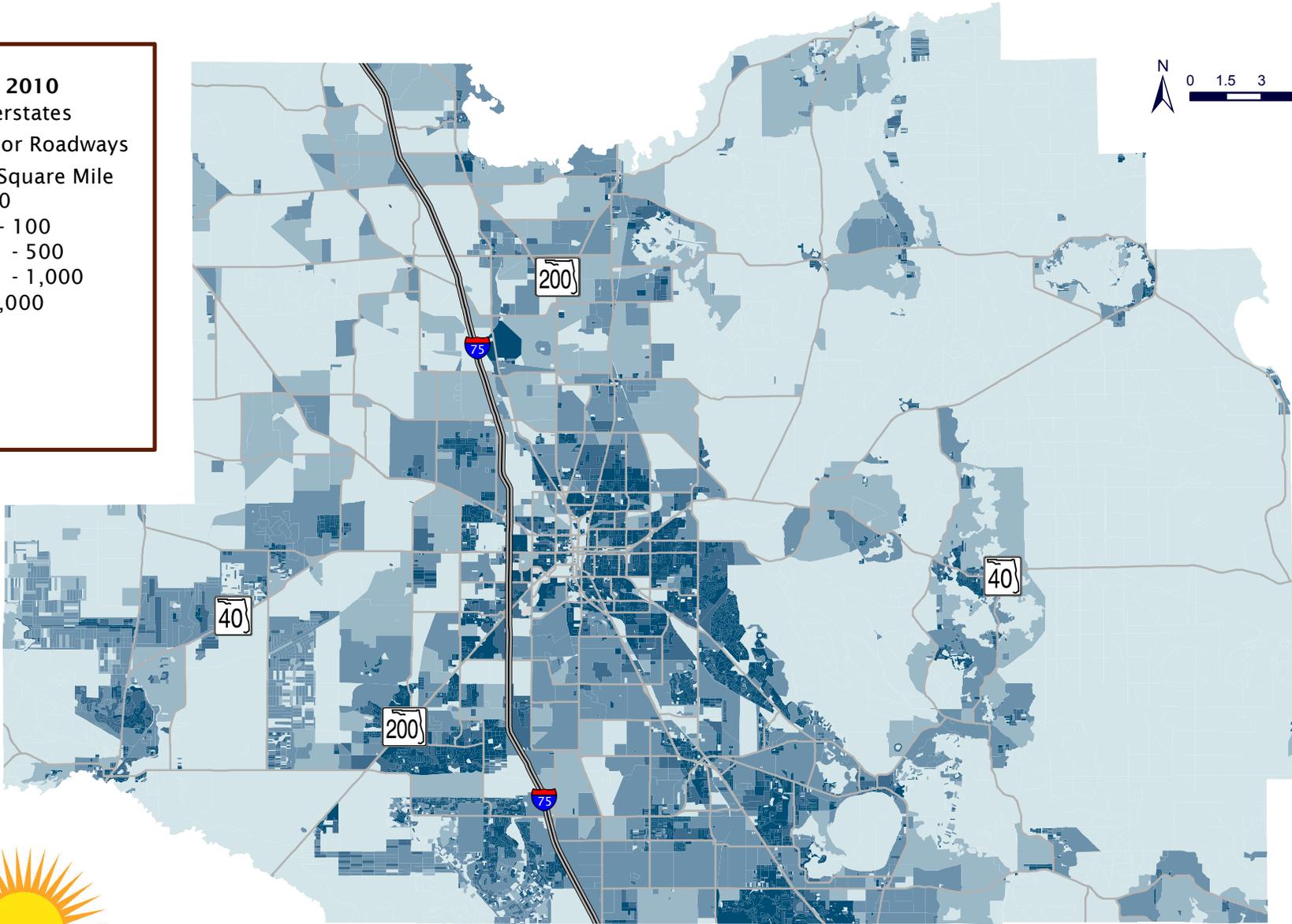


Legend
Population 2010

- Interstates
- Major Roadways

People per Square Mile

- < 50
- 50 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- > 1,000



Source: U.S. Census 2010



Map 3-1: Existing Population Density

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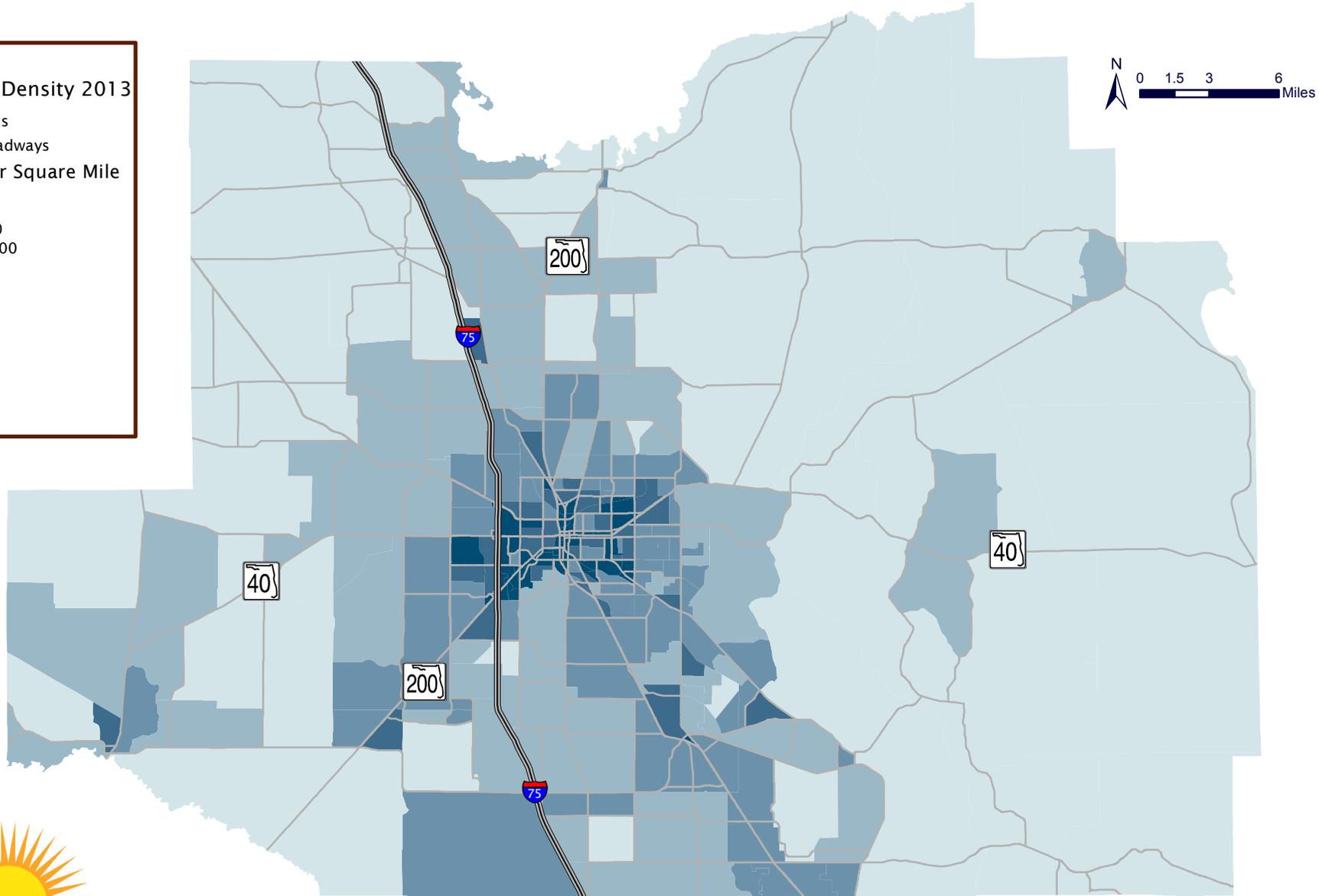


Legend
Employment Density 2013

- Interstates
- Major Roadways

Employees per Square Mile

- < 25
- 25 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,500
- > 1,500



Source: Marion County TPO 2035 L RTP Forecast Socioeconomic Data



Map 3-2: Existing Employment Density

OCALA/MARION COUNTY TDSP UPDATE 2015

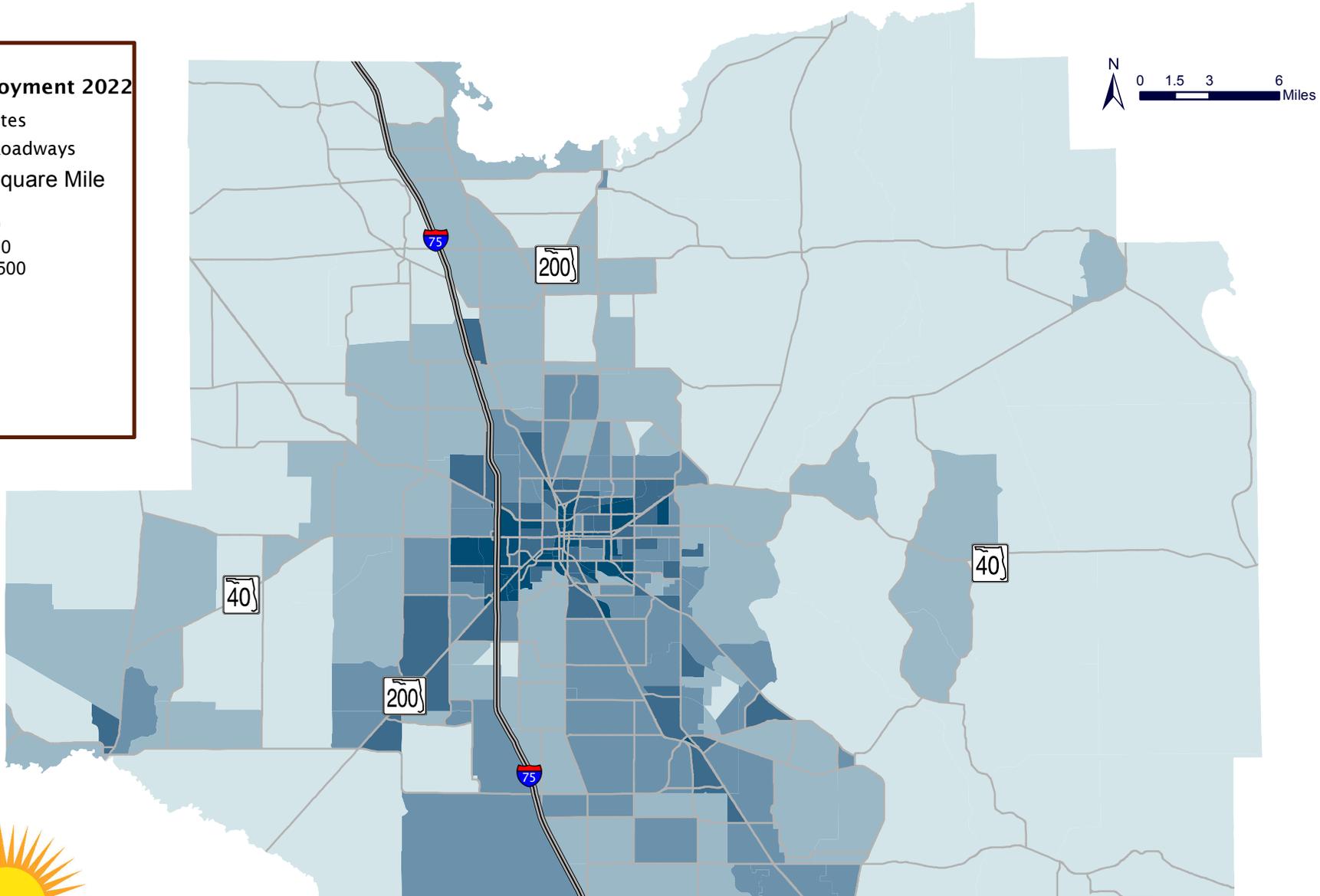


Legend
Future Employment 2022

==== Interstates
— Major Roadways

People per Square Mile

- < 25
- 25 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,500
- > 1,500



Source: Marion County TPO 2035 LRTP Forecast Socioeconomic Data



Map 3-3: Future Employment Density

OCALA/MARION COUNTY TDSP 2015



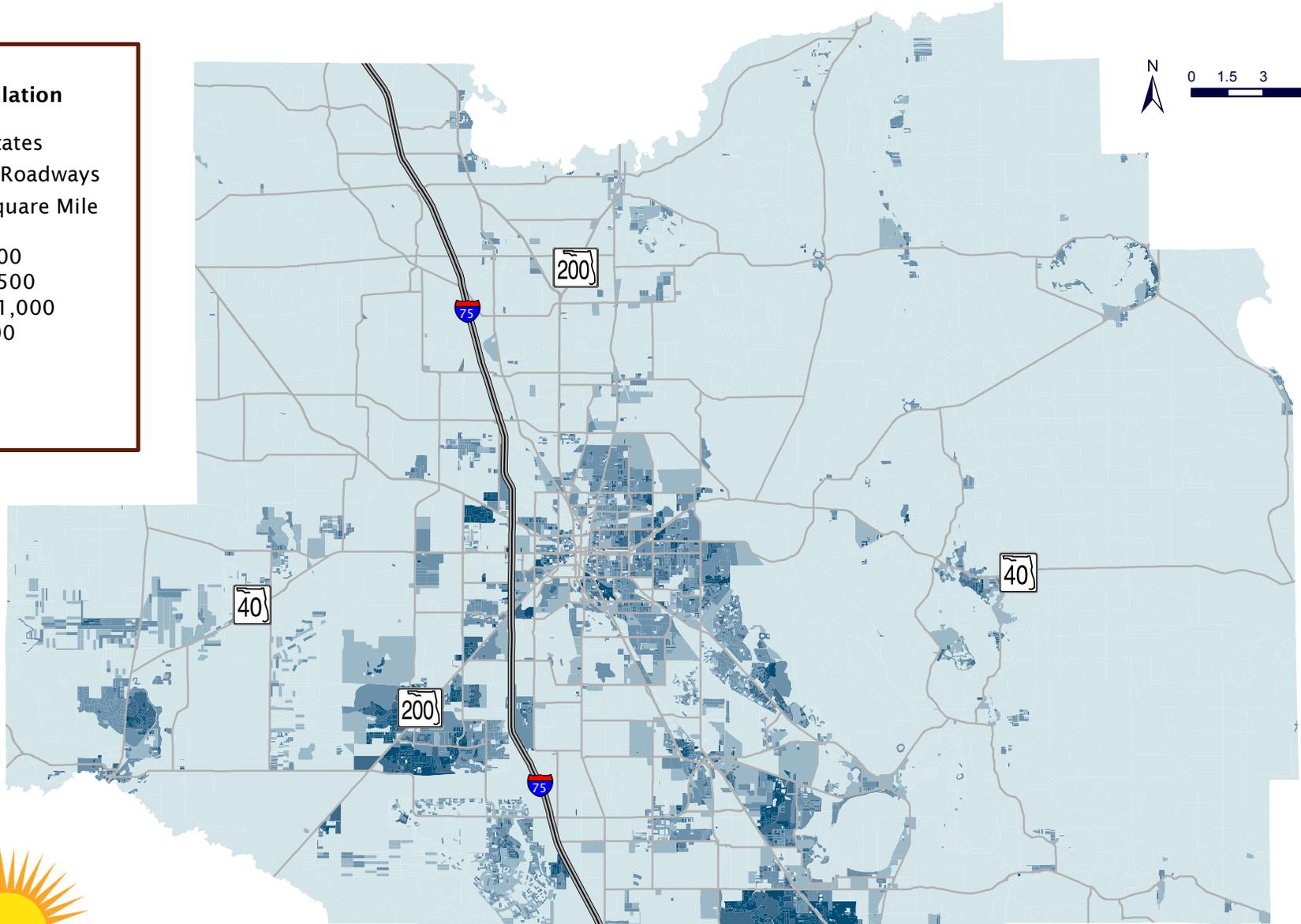
Legend

Elderly Population 65+

- Interstates
- Major Roadways

People per Square Mile

- < 50
- 50 - 100
- 101 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- > 1,000



Source: 2010 Census Data



Map 3-4: 2010 Older Adults

I. SERVICE PLAN

A. Operation Element

1. Types, Hours and Days of Service

Ambulatory, wheelchair and stretcher transportation is provided in priority order for medical, life sustaining, nutritional, shopping and business appointments throughout Marion County, Monday – Friday, 6:30 am – 5:00 pm.

Customer multi-loading is practiced whenever possible to transport the greatest number of passengers for maximum vehicle utilization. Outlying areas of the county are serviced on specific days of the week in order to group requests and more efficiently utilize transportation resources.

Transportation on weekends and evenings is by special request and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Contract operators provide transportation for out-of-county services if the service is determined not to be available in Marion County.

Certified ADA transport is provided during public transit operator's hours Monday through Saturday.

Standing-order (recurring) trips are provided on a routine basis. Standing-order customers need only call in their request for transportation once and furnish pick-up and destination locations along with the days and times that transportation is required.

2. Accessing Service

a. Notification time required to obtain service:

Advance notification policy applies to all services. Customers are to notify the Coordinator a minimum of seventy-two (72) hours (3 workdays) in advance to schedule a ride, ADA requests (24) hours. In case of cancellations, or if time or space allow, rides will be scheduled with less notification.

b. Scheduling of Services:

Services can be scheduled by telephoning (352) 620-3071 or by Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm. Appointments made by fax are received 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

c. Cancellation Process:

The transportation office should be notified of a cancellation as soon as possible and no later than two (2) hours before appointment time. Cancellations can be made between 6:00am and 5:00pm.

d. No-show Procedure:

In the event of a no-show, the driver calls Dispatch and every effort is made to contact the customer. If the customer cannot be located, the driver leaves a no-show notification on the doorknob notifying the customer that transportation was there to pick-up customer and that repeated no-shows may jeopardize their future transportation services. Two (2) no-shows within a sixty- (60) day period may result in a suspension of 30 days, second suspension for sixty- (60) days and the third offense, termination.

e. Dispatching Back-up Vehicles and After Hours Services:

Back-up vehicles are dispatched as required to replace vehicles that have become disabled. This may occur by using fleet vehicles that were not scheduled for service. After-hours and weekend contractors may perform transportation services as needed. In order to improve cost efficiency, all customers are informed of the hours of operation and are encouraged to maintain their trip request within those guidelines. There are times when overtime is required to effectively complete daily trips.

f. Eligibility:

All potential customers are screened for eligibility at the time the transportation is initially requested. Eligibility is determined by the customer's declaration of accessibility to transportation and their ability to pay for other forms of transportation. Riders may be required to fill out and sign an application/declaration.

g. Prioritization:

The Local Coordinating Board has approved the following priority system:

- 1)Medical: Kidney Dialysis, Oncology Treatment, Doctors Appointments, and Therapy
- 2) Life-sustaining: Food, Prescriptions, Medicaid Re-certification, and Shopping
- 3) Education: Life skills training for persons with disabilities and Day treatment programs for abused and/or neglected children
- 4) Work:
- 5) Business: Banking, Social Security, Hospital and Nursing Home visits
- 6) Recreational:

Anyone requesting transportation with a lower priority may be scheduled with a higher priority trip if time and space allows.

NOTE: Due to capacity limitations only medical and life-sustaining trips are accommodated at this time.

3. Transportation Operators and Coordination Contractors:
 - a. Process by which transportation operators and coordination contract entities will be obtained and contracted:
 - 1) Needs of the CTC are identified.
 - 2) The request for proposals is advertised in local newspapers and local transportation companies are contacted to make them aware that the CTC is soliciting proposals from qualified operators
 - 3) Proposals are evaluated and results tabulated by at least a three (3) member panel (CTC' Admin. / Management/ Fiscal staff), using a uniform assessment procedure that measures management experience and expertise, fiscal stability, dependability, fleet capacity, expansion ability, adequate insurance coverage and proposed service rates.
 - 4) The results of this assessment procedure are presented to the Local Coordinating Board for review and approval.
 - 5) In the event the CTC must initiate new or expanded service, organizations and operators in the area will be contacted to determine their ability to respond to the level of service needed. The Local Coordinating Board will be informed of the action taken and justification for the same.
 - 6) Coordination agreements are executed with other Agencies whose transportation needs cannot be met by Marion Transit Services and its contractors because of timing, capacity and/or resources. After determination of inability to serve by the CTC and TDLCB, coordination agreement agencies will provide their own transportation to a designated population.

Community Transportation Coordinator

Marion County Senior Services d/b/a Marion Transit
Donna Hersom, Transportation Director
1101 SW 20th Court
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 620-3519

b. Sub-Contract Operator:

Leopard Transportation
Owner: Tom Wilding
PO Box 923
Ocala, FL 34478
(352) 812-1670

c. Coordination Agreements:

Association for Retarded Citizens Marion, Inc.
Troy Strawder, Executive Director
2800 SE Maricamp Road
Ocala, FL 34471
(352) 387-2210

Independent Living for Retarded Adults, Inc.
Ailne Klein, ILRA Contact
8660 SW 27th Avenue
Ocala, FL 34476
(352) 873-1117

4. Public Transit Utilization

Our goal is to meet 100% of all passengers within the fixed route system. All passengers must utilize the fixed route unless determined to be eligible for complementary paratransit service under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

SunTran is the public fixed route system servicing Ocala/Marion County. All requests for MTS' paratransit transportation from individuals where both the origination and destination of the trip are within three quarters (3/4) of a mile from a bus route are directed to utilize the fixed route bus system. All SunTran vehicles are ADA accessible.

MTS is contracted by SunTran to perform the ADA complementary paratransit service.

SunTran has an ADA certification program to insure that the citizens of Marion County are afforded the proper transportation that they are entitled to. SunTran

has contracted with the Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida to assist with certification process.

5. Inter-county Services

Marion Transit provides transportation to medical facilities in surrounding counties via contract operators and commercial bus service.

6. Natural Disaster / Emergency Preparedness

Marion County Senior Services has a written disaster plan and is designated as a secondary transportation provider in the countywide Emergency Management Plan.

7. Marketing

Information about transportation services is distributed through brochures and the agency bi-monthly newsletter. The brochures are distributed to local banks, doctor's offices, hospitals, neighborhood stores and through the mail. Potential customers can also access the service through the telephone directory, which lists the transportation number in the special Human Services section under transportation and in the regular alphabetical section. Vans are lettered on both sides and rear displaying the name and telephone number.

8. Acceptable Alternatives

None

II. QUALITY ASSURANCE

A. Service Standard

The following service standards have been developed in order to ensure quality transportation for the transportation disadvantaged of Marion County.

1. Marion County Senior Services/Marion Transit is to provide a healthy, satisfying work environment for employees as well as safe, comfortable transportation for Marion County residents. It is our policy to; (1) assure that employees are not impaired in their ability to perform assigned duties in a safe, productive and healthy manner; (2) create a work place environment free from adverse effects of drugs and alcohol abuse or misuse; (3) prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of controlled substances; and (4) to encourage employees to seek professional assistance due to alcohol or drug dependency. Drug and Alcohol testing is performed in accordance with 49 CFR Part 40, "Procedures for Transportation Workplace Drug & Alcohol Testing Programs", and Part 655, "Prevention of Prohibited Drug & Alcohol Use in Transit Operations".

2. Driver Identification: All drivers will have a picture identification displayed at all times when transporting passengers. Drivers may also have nametag and company logo on their uniform for identification.

They are required to announce and identify themselves by name and company in a manner that is conducive to communications with the specific passenger, representative or guardian of rider upon pickup except in situations where the driver regularly transports the rider on a recurring basis.

3. Passenger Assistance: Provide door-to-door service. Drivers are required to assist all passengers from the door of their pick-up point onto the vehicle as well as off the vehicle and to the door of their destination. Drivers may not assist wheelchairs up or down more than one step unless it can be performed safely as determined by the driver.
4. Seating: Vehicle seating will not exceed the manufacturer's recommended capacity. All passengers and driver will be properly seated using the provided seat restraint devices.
5. Smoking, Eating and Drinking: There will be no smoking, eating, or drinking on any vehicles
6. Escorts: Escorts are limited to one individual per passenger as deemed medically necessary only. Escort must be at least 16 years of age. Escorts pay no vehicle fare.
7. Pick-up Window: Customer must be ready for pick-up two (2) hours prior to appointment time.
8. Advance Reservation Requirements: Advance reservations must be made at least seventy-two (72) working hours prior to appointment but no more than two (2) weeks before appointment.
9. No-show Policy: Customer who has two (2) no-shows in a sixty-day period may be suspended for thirty- (30) days on the first suspension. The second suspension for sixty- (60) days and the third termination.
10. Consumer Comment Telephone Number: There is a local toll free number available for the entire service area and it is posted in all vehicles for consumer comments. The number is (352) 622-2450.
11. Complaints: Our goal is to have under one-half percent complaints of our total rides annually. Complaints are handled on an individual basis. Every complaint received through this office is recorded on a standardized complaint form. It is then investigated and findings are annotated on the complaint form. The person filing the complaint may request a telephonic or written reply of the complaint, findings, and resolution.
12. Road Calls: There should be no less than 10,000 miles between each road call.
13. Accidents: Accidents should be no more than 1 per 100,000 miles.

14. Call Hold Time: Callers may not be placed on hold for longer than two (2) minutes. All calls must be answered within three (3) rings. (The present telephone system does not have the ability to monitor these standards therefore sampling is done annually).
15. Customer Property: Customer may only carry personal property on the vehicles if it can be placed on their lap or under their seat. Drivers may not handle customer's property. The exception to this is shopping vans where the customer may have 2-3 bags and the driver may assist to ensure bags are safely stowed on the vehicle.
16. Child Restraint: Children under the age of five (5) or weighs less than forty- (40) pounds must be in an appropriate child seat. The child seat may be furnished by the transport company if requested or may be furnished by the customer. The driver is responsible for properly securing the child and the child seat.
17. Common wheelchairs are no wider than 30 inches and no longer than 48 inches in length and do not exceed 600 pounds combined wheelchair/person weight can be accommodated by our vehicles.
18. CPR and First Aid are not a local requirement.
19. Driver Criminal Background Screening: State and local criminal and abuse background checks are done prior to date of hire.
20. Vehicle Cleanliness: Interior of all vehicles will be free from dirt, grime, oil, trash, torn upholstery, damaged or broken seats, protruding metal or other objects or materials that could soil items placed in the vehicle or soil, injure or provide discomfort for the passenger.
21. Passenger Trip Database: Information on trips scheduled with the CTC and/or our sub-contractors is maintained in a map-based computer software program RouteLogic.
22. Two-way communication: All vehicles are equipped with a two-way radio communication device to provide audible accessibility for the driver and base at all times.
23. Air Conditioning/Heating: All vehicles are equipped with air conditioners and heaters and will be serviced immediately if mechanical failure occurs.
24. Billing Requirements: Sub-contractors are to be paid within three working days after receiving payment for services rendered from the funding agency.
25. Service Animals: Trained service animals are allowed to assist passengers in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
26. Vehicle transfer points shall provide shelter, security, and safety of passengers.

27. Out of service area trips shall be provided when determined locally and approved by the local Coordinating Board, except in instances where local ordinances prohibit such trips.
28. On-time performance: In an ideal world all trips would be on-time every time. However a more realistic standard was required. Therefore, the following on-time performance standard has been established: Trips will be on time 95% of the time.

B. Local Grievance Process

Step 1 – Filing of a Grievance to the CTC

Once a complaint is received by the CTC and the complainant feels he/she has unresolved issues and wants to pursue filing a grievance, CTC staff advises the complainant on the TDLCB's grievance process and how to file the complaint. The aggrieved party must file a grievance in writing to the CTC. Assistance in filing the grievance must be provided by the planning agency staff if necessary. The complainant should try to show or establish a clear violation of a specific law, regulation, or contractual arrangement (copies of which may be obtained from the CTC).

The grievance will include:

1. Name and address of the complainant.
2. Statement of the grounds for the grievance made in a clear and concise manner supplemented by supporting documentation.
3. Explanation of the relief desired by the complainant.

Within fifteen (15) working days, following the date of receipt of the formal grievance, the CTC will render a decision in writing giving the complainant the factors that entered into the final decision. At the time the decision is made, the CTC will submit a copy of the formal grievance and a copy of the final decision to each member of the TDLCB for review at the next regularly scheduled TDLCB meeting.

Step 2 – Appeal to the TDLCB Grievance Subcommittee

The decision of the CTC may be appealed in writing to the TDLCB Grievance Subcommittee, via staff to the TDLCB within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the CTC's final decision. Once an appeal has been received, the Grievance Subcommittee will meet and render its decision within thirty- (30) days of the date the appeal was filed. The complainant will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the Grievance Subcommittee meeting where the appeal will be heard. This written notice will be mailed at least ten (10) working days before the meeting. A written copy of the decision made by the Grievance

Subcommittee will be presented to the TDLCB at its next regularly scheduled meeting and mailed to all parties involved within ten (10) working days of the date of the decision.

Step 3 – Appeal to the TDLCB

The decision of the Grievance Subcommittee may be appealed in writing to the TDLCB, via staff, within fifteen (15) working days from the date when the Grievance Subcommittee makes its decision. Once an appeal has been received, the TDLCB will meet and render its decision within thirty- (30) days of the date the appeal was filed. The complainant will be notified in writing of the date, time, and place of the TDLCB meeting where the appeal will be heard. This written notice will be mailed at least ten (10) working days before the meeting. A written copy of the decision made by the TDLCB will be mailed to all parties involved within ten (10) days of the date of the decision.

Step 4 – Appeal to the Ocala/Marion County TPO

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the TDLCB, an appeal may be filed with the Ocala/Marion County Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). The TPO will review the complaint at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

Step 5 – Appeal to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the TPO, an appeal may be filed with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. Should this situation present itself, the planning agency staff will contact CTD staff to initiate the procedure necessary to process the complaint.

C. Evaluation Process

1. CTC Evaluation Process

The CTC annual evaluation is performed by the TPO staff as directed by the local TDLCB. The tool utilized for the evaluation is the “CTC Evaluation Workbook” (Revised January 2010) distributed by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

2. CTC Monitoring Procedures for Operators and Coordination Contractors

Semi-annual site visits to each operator and coordination contractor are done to review maintenance and driver records, performance standards and daily operational procedures as well as annual site visits to providers to ensure

fiscal responsibility. Sub-contractor and coordinated contractor monitoring procedures reflect contract and performance check-lists with written reports including corrective action requirements if necessary.

IV. COST/REVENUE ALLOCATION AND RATE STRUCTURE JUSTIFICATION

A. BUDGET

Operational budgets are based solely on actual projected costs. Trip rates have been established for Marion Transit Service based on 15/16 projected budget. Total cost for rate calculation excludes depreciation or capital purchases since these are traditionally made through grant funds with match from the County Commission.

B. RATE PROPOSAL

MTS operates as a partial broker providing the majority of trips and utilizing a subcontracted provider for evening, weekend, and overflow. Rates for both MTS and the subcontractor are inclusive of a coordination fee.

MTS trip rates: Marion County Senior Services develops a rate structure for MTS based on a mileage rate for each one-way passenger trip. Such a rate structure more equitably spreads costs across shorter and longer trips. The trip cost is based on passenger mileage calculated in tenths of a mile by *RouteLogic* ParaPro software as the geographic rectilinear trip distance utilizing a true map database (MapInfo software). Wheelchair trips have a calculated proportionately higher fee to account for the increased loading time and the decreased vehicle capacity available for multi-loading resulting from wheelchair transport.

Rates are calculated by using the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged Rate Calculation Worksheet. The rates are updated on an annual basis according to this tool.

The following trip rates for MTS for all purchasers* were adopted by the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged in 2015 after financial analysis, review, and unanimous recommendation by the Commission's Rate Review Committee:

Ambulatory	\$3.96/mile
Wheelchair	\$6.79/mile
Stretcher	\$10.00/mile
Escort	No charge

Fares: The one-way fare or co-pay to the rider for all trips not is \$2.00 for in-county and \$5.00 out-of-county. Trip rates are already calculated inclusive of the anticipated collected fare.

SunTran rates: Rates for public transit ridership are as follows:

Regular Fare	\$1.50
Youth/Student	\$1.10
Elderly/Disabled	\$.75
Medicare Card Holder	\$.75
Children 5 years & younger	Free
Regular Monthly pass	\$45.00
Youth/Student Monthly pass	\$34.00
Elderly/Disabled Monthly pass	\$23.00

APPENDIX A
SUMMARY OF EXISTING PLANS AND DOCUMENT
AND GOALS, OBJECTIVES & POLICIES

State of Florida TD Five-Year/Twenty-Year Plan

Developed by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (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 Long-Range and Five-Year strategic visions were reviewed and used for guidance and are indicated below.

Long-Range Strategic Vision

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

Develop and field-test a model community transportation system for persons who are TD 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.

Annual Performance Report for Marion County

The annual transportation disadvantaged performance report prepared by FCTD was reviewed for Marion County. The performance report provides an overview of the operating environment, the CTC, and other information related to the TD program in Marion County. Statistics reported by MTS in their Annual Operations Report are also provided in the FCTD Annual Performance Report, including service statistics, passenger trip information, a financial summary, and a graphical summary of performance indicators. This information was used to complete the peer and trend analysis presented in Section 1.

Annual Operations Report for Marion County

An Annual Operations Report (AOR) is submitted to the FCTD. The AOR for fiscal years 2008–2009 and 2009–2010 were reviewed for this TDSP update effort. The AOR is compiled by MTS. Information submitted in the AOR is used to develop the Marion County section of the Annual Performance Report produced by the FCTD, as discussed previously.

LOCAL PLANS AND POLICIES

SunTran 2007–2016 Major Transit Development Plan Update

Marion County's transit system, SunTran, provides fixed-route transit services in and around Ocala and Silver Springs Shores. The Marion County Senior Services (MCSS) is the designated Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Marion County and operates the paratransit services under the name Marion Transit Services (MTS). MTS provides public transportation to the transportation disadvantaged population of Marion County and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit services for SunTran. The TPO is the policy board for SunTran.

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 2007, providing a strategic guide for public transportation in Marion County for a 10-year period, from FY 2007 through FY 2016. 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 revenues) 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 rule requirements and plan for Marion County's 10-year vision for transit. The goals, objectives, and initiatives 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 area by 25% by 2012.
- Objective 1.2:** Decrease passenger fixed-route access time by 25% by 2012.
- Objective 1.3:** Increase unlimited and stored value pass sales by 100% by 2015.
- Objective 1.4:** Increase ridership by 50% by 2015.

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 services, and inter-county commuters.

- Objective 2.1:** Review Marion Transit Services ridership for areas of possible transfers to Fixed-Route services.
- Objective 2.2:** Ensure seamless coordination between SunTran services and private transportation systems by 2012.
- Objective 2.3:** Ensure coordination with land use policies and local jurisdictions.
- Objective 2.4:** Provide connections to neighboring counties by 2014.

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

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

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

Objective 3.3: Achieve an operation ratio (farebox revenues/total operating expenses) of at least 15% 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 (2007–2016).

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.
- Develop a new fare policy and structure.
- Study the feasibility of growth in transit services to meet the needs of the general public, including:
 - Identifying transit needs for the general public.
 - Identifying potential transit demand.
 - Comparing 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 (2007–2016).

During the TDP development process, specific transit service target areas were identified by TPO staff to be focus areas for new service development. Five areas were selected including:

- Area 1: Between Silver Spring Boulevard to the north, SW 60th Avenue to the west, SW 66th Street to the south, and SW 27th Avenue to the east. Specific corridors in Area 1 include SW 60th Avenue/Silver Spring Boulevard, 38th Street, and the southern portion of SR 200.

- Area 2: North of SR 200 and west of SW 60th Avenue. Corridors that are located within Area 2 include SW 80th Avenue/38th Street, and the southern portion of SR 200.
- Area 3: Bounded by SW 66th Avenue to the north, SR 200 to the east, CR 484 to the south, and I-75 to the east. Corridors that run through Area 3 include SW 49th Avenue/95th Street/SW 60th Avenue, SW 103rd Street/62nd Avenue, and southern sections of SR 200.
- Area 4: Marion Oaks area. Corridors in Area 4 include CR 484 and Marion Oaks.
- Area 5: Belleview area. Corridors bisecting this area include US 301, SR 35/62nd Avenue/102nd Place, and Abshire Boulevard/110th Street/Oak Road.

SunTran Ocala/Marion 2007 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan Update

The Ocala/Marion 2007 Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan updates the 2002-2007 TDSP that was completed previously in 2002. The TDSP is used by the CTC and the Local Coordinating Board (LCB) to maintain and/or improve transportation services for the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) and to serve as a framework for performance evaluation. The TDSP is updated annually and submitted to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) for final approval. Marion County services under the TD program are provided funding from state TD funds, local revenues, and private sources.

MCSS has been designated as the Marion County CTC for all non-emergency medical transportation and for those needing wheelchairs or other assistance since 1982 pursuant to Chapter 27, F.S. and Rule 41-2 of the Florida Administrative Code (FAC). A Memorandum of Agreement was executed between MCSS and FDOT on January 5, 1983. In 1990, the TPO accepted the responsibility of Designated Official Planning Agency for the TD program, and established the TDLCB.

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, objectives, and strategies that were developed as part of the TDSP are described below.

Goal 1: Provide increased mobility for transportation disadvantaged services using the MCSS system and promote an increase in ridership.

Objective 1.1: Provide transit or demand response services to 10% of the transportation disadvantaged population by 2012.

Objective 1.2: Provide the ADA-eligible 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: Transition 25% of Marion Transit Services exclusive ridership, at least partially, to Fixed-Route services.

Objective 2.2: Ensure seamless coordination between Marion Transit Services and private transportation systems by 2012 to eliminate duplication or fragmentation of services for in county and out of county transportation.

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

Objective 3.1: Hold maintenance costs at less than 20% 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 20% for fixed-route and demand-responsive service.

Objective 3.4: Maintain financial support of transportation disadvantaged services consistent with the financial plan in the Major Update for the TDP (2007–2016).

Goal 4: Provide for the most comprehensive transportation services possible to serve all transportation disadvantaged residents of Marion County.

Objective 4.1: Meet future needs and demand of users for both services and amenities described in Major Update to the TDP (2007–2016).

Objective 4.2: Reevaluate transit services for the transportation disadvantaged annually.

An implementation plan was also developed to phase potential service improvements over the five-year period.

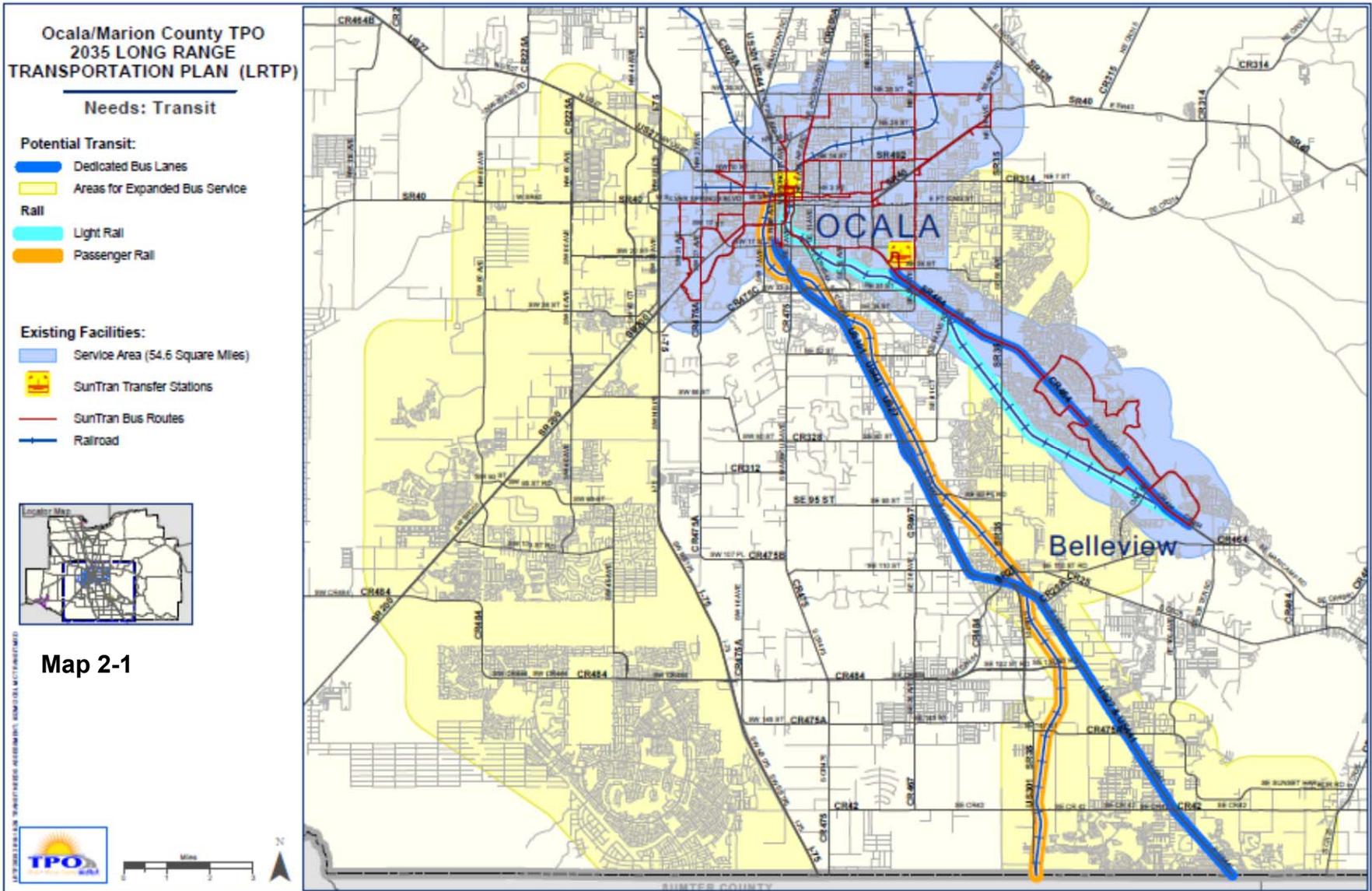
Ocala/Marion County 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Update

The 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (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 think are important to the overall transportation system over the next 25 years.

Transit projects that are included in the 2035 LRTP Needs Assessment are listed below and depicted on Map 2-1.

- 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 the City of Ocala to the Sumter County line.
- Light rail from the City of 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 was comprised of 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 Tusawilla 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 underused 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 underused properties with development potential adjacent to or within ¼ mile of a transit corridor depicted on the vision plan. (Year 2012 and ongoing)

Building & Site Design Strategies

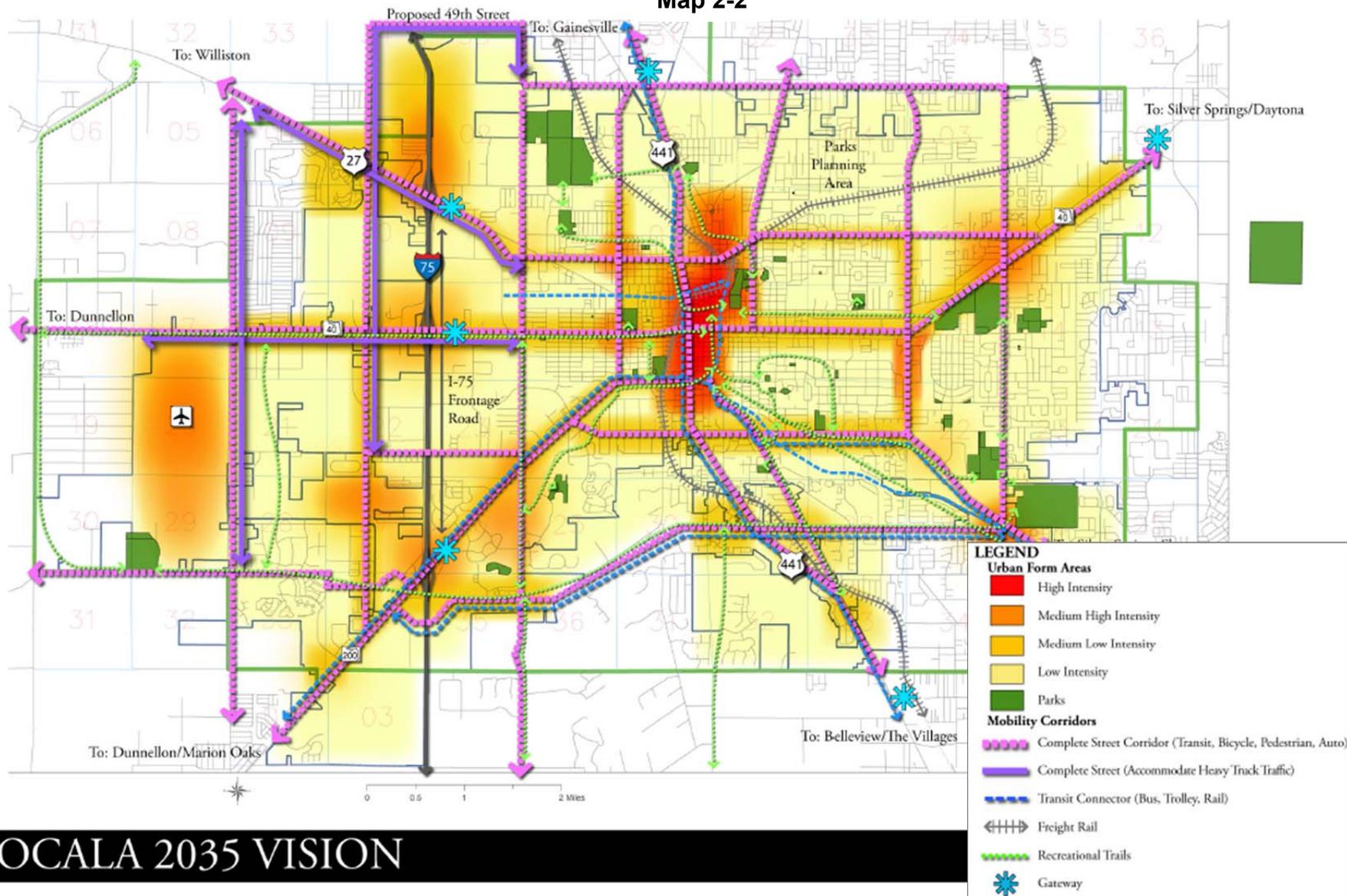
- Create an incentive program to encourage infill, development, or redevelopment. (Year 2011–2015)

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 the Florida Department of Transportation (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 city-wide 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. (Year 2011–2015)
 - Acquire easements for sidewalks where they do not exist. (Year 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. 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. Map 2-2 shows Urban Form Areas and Mobility Corridors.

Map 2-2



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 relative to the promotion and support of transit use. The goals of the Transportation Element is to develop a balanced and sustainable transportation system improving access and travel choices through 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 and Capital Improvements Element (Policy 1A.1.7).

All new development and redevelopment within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) will require greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction measures. Pursuant to Policy 1A.1.8, the following strategies will be implemented to ensure compatible uses that promote shorter trip lengths and generate fewer vehicle miles per capita by February 10, 2012.

- Require interconnected developments for vehicular and pedestrian connection between developments.
- Use access management standards to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).
- Allow innovative site designs and roadway configurations to minimize the number of lane-miles needed while maximizing access.
- Minimize gated communities, which prevent existing or future roadway interconnections.
- Promote use of public transit by requiring development along transit corridors and routes to accommodate mass transit and provide for park-and-ride areas, sheltered bus/rail stops, and bus turnouts, as appropriate.
- Discourage the use of single-occupancy vehicles by adopting reduced parking requirements and by limiting roadway capacity on key roads, as appropriate, as a disincentive to automobile travel.
- Protect existing railroad corridors and facilitate the location of industrial and commercial employment centers along those corridors, and encourage increased use of rail transport by industrial and commercial enterprises.
- Encourage walking and bicycle use by requiring bikeways, trails, and pedestrian paths for development within the UGB.

The County also has an objective to ensure adequate rights-of-way for roadway, mass transit, bicycle and pedestrian pathways, and protect existing and future rights-of-way from building encroachment. To meet this objective, the County has developed policies for minimum right-of-way requirements in the Land Development Code (LCD) and rights-of-

way acquisition (Policies 1A.2.1 through 1A.2.7). Where site and location analysis determines that there is a need, the County may provide or require the provision of bicycle and/or pedestrian ways, and/or other alternative modes of transportation through the LDC to connect residential, recreational, schools, and commercial areas internally and to adjacent properties unless such facilities would create a safety hazard.

Policy 1A.3.3 requires new residential and non-residential development and redevelopment projects generating more than 1,000 net new trips accessing arterial or collector roadways to enhance community health, reduce GHG emissions, increase connectivity, and minimize trips on major roadways through the provision of the following facilities:

Residential Development

- 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

- 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.

Marion County's Mass Transit Sub-Element goal is to coordinate with the TPO to undertake action to serve transportation disadvantaged persons with an efficient mass transit system; provide for the development of a rational and integrated multimodal transportation system; provide management support to coordinate all components of the mass transit service system and relevant comprehensive plan elements; and preserve options to promote the development of long-range transit alternatives.

In Objective 1b.7 and its implementing policies, the County’s objective is to have all areas within an UGB identified in the Future Transportation Corridor Map served by transit. Within an UGB availability of transit facilities shall be one of the criteria used to evaluate proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. In addition, Marion County shall require that transit facilities, such as turn-out bays, preemptive signals, high-occupancy vehicle lanes, bus-only lanes, and transit shelter locations identified within future transit corridors and existing routes lacking adequate facilities, be included in roadway design proposals for the expansion of arterials or collectors. For Developments of Regional Impact, and for new developments, Marion County may require site and building design to be coordinated with public transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities.

The County shall provide connections between and within land uses in order to increase pedestrian mobility and transit accessibility where opportunities and resources permit. A list of transit-related short term (5yr) and long term (2035) strategies for implementation of this policy are listed below (Policy 1b.8.7).

Short Term

- Improvements to existing transit routes including increased service levels
- Connections of established transit stops to the sidewalk network

Long Term

- New transit fixed facilities such as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

In addition, Policy 1b.9.1 includes parking strategies to enhance multimodal opportunities, including locating bus stops at existing, major parking facilities (i.e. malls and shopping centers).

The County’s comprehensive plan focuses on the provision of future transit service for new development and redevelopment through the LDC 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 UGB.

City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan

The City of Ocala’s adopted Comprehensive Plan was last updated in Winter 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 within 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 TDSP.