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**SARASOTA COUNTY  
TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED SERVICES PLAN  
2008 – 2013**

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## **BACKGROUND OF TRANSPORTATION DISADVANTAGED PROGRAM FOR SARASOTA COUNTY**

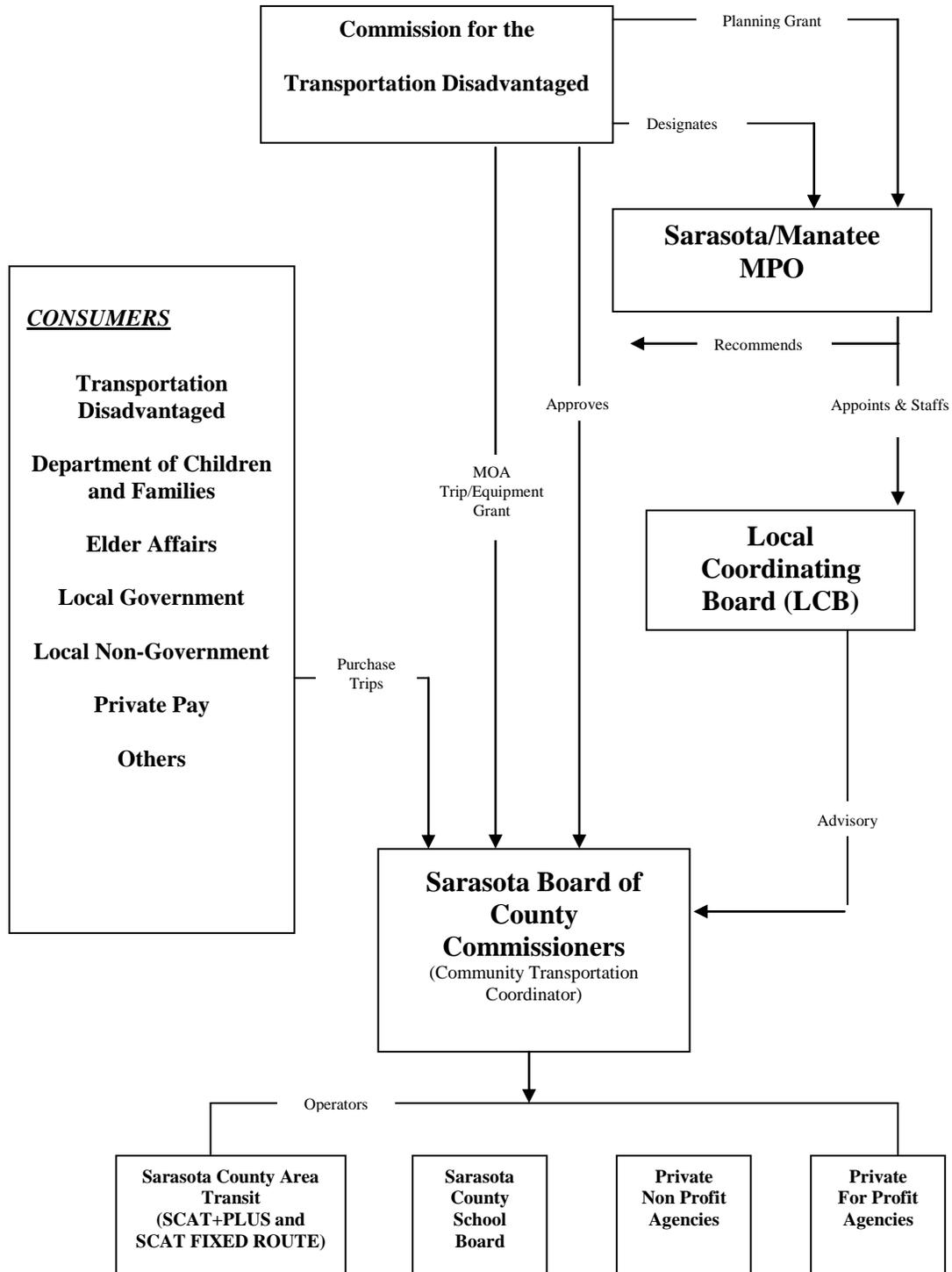
Pursuant to Florida Statutes 427, the Commission for Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD), the State of Florida mandates and provides local funding for transportation services to Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) individuals. In order for local TD programs to receive the state funding, the CTD requires an annually updated plan for meeting the transportation needs of the TD population in Sarasota County (the County).

The CTD has designated the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as the official Planning Agency to appoint and staff a Local Coordinating Board (LCB) to advise an approved Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) in the operation of the local TD program. Currently, Sarasota County is the approved CTC for the local Sarasota County TD Program. Figure 1–1 illustrates the organization structure of the TD program and the CTC within Sarasota County Government.

In addition, Sarasota County, as the Sarasota County Transportation Authority (SCAT), is required to provide complementary paratransit services for individuals living within three-quarters of a mile along the fixed transit route, consistent with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Other state and federally funded transportation programs supporting transportation disadvantaged individuals, including ADA, Elder Americans, and Children at Risk are described in Chapter 5 along with the Service Plan for the TD Program.

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**Figure 1–1: TD and CTC Organizational Chart**



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### ***Community Transportation Coordinators***

For some time, the Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has been working to address the needs of the transportation disadvantaged population in Sarasota County. 1982, the MPO contracted with Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. to complete the Sarasota/Manatee Area Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Disadvantaged Transportation Needs Study. This document analyzed the needs of the transportation disadvantaged population within Sarasota and Manatee counties. Several recommendations were made to address the unmet needs of potential public transportation users. Within Sarasota County, the recommendation was made to designate the Senior Friendship Centers, Inc. (SFC) as the Coordinated Community Transportation Provider for Sarasota County.

#### **Senior Friendship Center Community Transportation Coordinator (1983 – 2000)**

SFC is a private, not-for-profit organization incorporated in 1973 to provide services to people over age sixty in Sarasota County. SFC has provided transportation services to seniors under the Older Americans Act since 1970. In 1983, SFC became the designated Provider of Coordinated Transportation for the Disadvantaged in Sarasota County. The Coordination Council for the Transportation (CTC) Disadvantaged approved a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with SFC in 1986.

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (FCTD) formally recommended SFC as the CTC on July 13, 1990, along with the organization and establishment of the Sarasota County Local Coordinating Board (LCB) through the Sarasota/Manatee MPO. On July 23, 1990, the MPO officially endorsed SFC as the CTC for Sarasota County. SFC also executed a contract with the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners in 1990 to provide (ADA) complementary paratransit trips for Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT).

In late 1999, SFC made the decision not to continue in the role of the Sarasota County CTC upon the expiration of its MOA on June 30, 2000.

#### **Sarasota County Community Transportation Coordinator (2000 - present)**

In July 2000, Sarasota County was designated by the Sarasota/Manatee MPO as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for the TD program in Sarasota County. Subsequently, the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners requested that it assume the role of the Sarasota County CTC on July 1, 2000. The Local Coordinating Board and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO endorsed the County's

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request. Following are important dates related to Sarasota County’s role as the CTC.

- In February 2000, the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged formally approved Sarasota County government to assume the role of the Sarasota County CTC on July 1, 2000.
- On October 8, 2002, the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners moved unanimously to request that the Sarasota/Manatee MPO re-designate the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners as the CTC for Sarasota County.
- On November 21, 2002, the Sarasota County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board voted unanimously to endorse the re-designation of the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners as the Community Transportation Coordinator.
- On January 27, 2003, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO unanimously approved a motion authorizing the MPO Chair to sign Resolution No. 2003-01 recommending to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged that Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners be the Designated Community Transportation Coordinator for Sarasota County beginning July 1, 2003.
- On November 28, 2007, the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners moved to request that the Sarasota/Manatee MPO re-designate the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners as the CTC for Sarasota County through June 2008.
- On November 28, 2007, the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners authorized staff to inform the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged that the CTC would no longer coordinate Medicaid non emergency Transportation services.

**Table 1-1: Sarasota County as the Sarasota County CTC 2000-Present**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Time Frame</b>
February 2000	Formal approval for Sarasota County Government to assume the role of the Sarasota County CTC.	Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged	July 1, 2000 – June 30, 2003
October 8, 2002	Request that the Sarasota/Manatee MPO re-designate the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners as the CTC for Sarasota County.	Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners <i>(Unanimous approval)</i>	

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November 21, 2002	Re-designation of the Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners as the Community Transportation Coordinator.	Sarasota County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board <i>(Unanimous endorsement)</i>	
January 27, 2003	Authorization for MPO Chair to sign Resolution No. 2003-01 recommending to the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged that Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners be the Designated Community Transportation Coordinator for Sarasota County.	Sarasota/Manatee MPO <i>(Unanimously approved)</i>	July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2006
November 28, 2007	Authorization for the County Commission to continue as the CTC.	Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners	July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2008
November 28, 2007	Authorization to discontinue provision of Medicaid services.	Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners	January 1, 2008

**CONSISTENCY WITH LOCAL, STATE AND REGIONAL PLANS**

Transit plan goals and objectives are consistent with local, state, and regional long-range land use and transportation planning efforts. A variety of different State and local plans address regional and countywide transit initiatives, as well as land use and transportation initiatives. These plans are generally described in the following sections. Table 1-2 describes the regional and countywide public transportation initiatives. Table 1-3 describes the local land use and transportation plans.

**Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan**

A review of the 2007 comprehensive plan for Sarasota County revealed a strong commitment to the provision of all modes of public transportation in the County. This

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plan includes objectives and policies designed to support public transit for the general public, visitors, and people who are transportation disadvantaged in Sarasota County. In addition, policies aimed at encouraging transit-oriented and environmentally-friendly development in the County are also included in the comprehensive plan. Transit-related goals and policies included in the Sarasota County Comprehensive Plan are located in the Appendix.

### **Transit Development Plan**

The 2008 Major Update of the Sarasota County Transportation Disadvantaged Services Plan (TDSP) is consistent with the County's 2005 Transit Development Plan (TDP). The County's TDP sets a five-year strategy for implementing community transit goals, along with an assessment of transit needs in the service area. The Sarasota County TDP addresses fixed route, paratransit, and commuter assistance services and includes a five-year capital and operating plan for these transit services and improvements.

### **Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged 5/20 Year Plan**

The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged 5/20 Year Plan sets forth the goals, objectives, and a plan of action for the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (FCTD). The plan presents forecasts of demand for transportation disadvantaged services, the costs of meeting that demand, and forecasts future funding for transportation disadvantaged services. This TDSP is consistent with the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged 5/20 Year Plan.

### **Long Range Transportation Plan**

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan presents a long-range vision of how transportation needs will be met in Sarasota County. The plan contains projects that will improve the mobility of residents and visitors and support economic development in the community. Potential funding streams for transportation improvements are examined both for highway and transit improvements. This TDSP is consistent with the MPO's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

### **Transportation Improvement Program**

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is an annually updated document that contains Transportation Disadvantaged and Public Transit elements, as required by the Florida Department of Transportation. Each year, the CTC, and the LCB work with the Sarasota/Manatee MPO to coordinate the TD and public transit projects identified for implementation over a five-year period. Each of the recommendations contained in the TDSP have been scrutinized for consistency with the MPO's TIP.

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The Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) plans and budgets for transportation and transit improvements in coordination with Sarasota County and the municipalities. The MPO recently prepared a long-range public transportation plan for the Sarasota County and Manatee County region. This Public Transportation Systems Analysis Plan establishes a far-reaching vision for public transit in the two county area.

**Local Land Use and Transportation Plans**

Sarasota County and the municipalities each adopt long-range land use and transportation plans as part of their local comprehensive plan, as required by the State of Florida Growth Management legislation. Comprehensive plans are required to include a transit element. Specialized land use and transportation plans are approved for the local community. Local governments also approve specialized land use and transportation plans refining the goals and objectives of the more generalized comprehensive plan. Recommendations for transit services within Sarasota County include an evaluation of both the comprehensive and specialized land use and transportation plans from each of the municipalities and within the unincorporated county.

**Table 1 – 2: Regional and Countywide Transit Initiatives**

Jurisdiction	Initiative	Discussion
<b>Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization</b>	<p><b>2030 Long Range Transportation Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board adopted the PTSA in November 2005. The PTSA pertains to transit in both Sarasota County and Manatee County.</li> </ul>	<p><b>PTSA</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The PTSA recommends a MPO bi-county policy board for regional transit improvements.</li> </ul>
<b>Sarasota-Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization</b>	<p><b>Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The MPO annually updates the TIP, which contains Transportation Disadvantaged and Public Transit Elements as required by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).</li> </ul>	<p><b>TIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sarasota County works with the MPO to coordinate TD and public transit projects identified in the five-year TIP.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT)</b></p>	<p><b>Sarasota County Transit Development Plan (TDP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Transit Development Plan (TDP) is developed to provide a ten-year capital and operating plan for the Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT). The TDP was updated in 2009 to provide a ten-year plan (2010-2019).</li> </ul>	<p><b>TDP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 2009 Sarasota Transit Development Plan. The TDP is updated annually with major updates every ten years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sarasota County Government</b></p>	<p><b>Sarasota County Strategic Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Sarasota County Board of County Commissioners has outlined 7 strategic areas to focus improving services to county residents.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategic Initiatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth Management</li> <li>Human Services</li> <li>Water Resources</li> <li>Neighborhoods</li> <li>Economic Development</li> <li>Mobility</li> <li>Fiscal Sustainability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sarasota County Openly Plans for Excellence</b></p>	<p><b>Sarasota Openly Plans for Excellence (SCOPE)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCOPE is a volunteer-driven, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Sarasota County. SCOPE recommends four areas for transit improvements. The Community Health Improvement Program (CHIP) in South County, associated with SCOPE and the Venice Foundation, has organized Community Health Action Teams (CHAT) to improve transportation to health services in the North Port, Englewood, and South Venice/Nokomis areas. In 2008, a north Sarasota CHAT was formed.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SCOPE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).</li> <li>Regional transit services</li> <li>Commuter Assistance Program</li> <li>Transit Funding</li> <li>Community Health Action Teams (CHAT)</li> </ul>

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**Table 1 – 3: Local Land Use and Transportation Plans**

Jurisdiction	Comprehensive Plan	Specialized Land Use Plan	Specialized Transportation Plan
<b>Sarasota County</b>	<p><b>Transit Element (2007)</b>  <u>Fixed Route Transit Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ mile walk to route</li> <li>• 16 persons per hour (urban area) minimum</li> <li>• 12 persons per hour (outside urban) minimum</li> <li>• Overcrowding</li> <li>• Connectivity</li> </ul> <p><u>Urban Transit Service Area</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service to 90 percent of residences within 2 miles of transit route every 60 minutes.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sarasota 2050</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Walk able communities in villages east of I-75 and in urban area in the west.</li> </ul> <p><b>Redevelopment Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Englewood Community Redevelopment Agency</li> <li>• Osprey Village</li> <li>• Nokomis Center</li> </ul>	<p><b>Trail Master Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2002 adoption of a trail master plan for Sarasota County linking to trails and greenways in adjacent communities.</li> </ul>
<b>Sarasota City</b>	<p><b>Transit Element (2008)</b>  <u>Transit Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LOS standard shall be consistent with Sarastoa County’s adopted LOS for SCAT which is to improve transit service, as measured by vehicle revenue hours from levels in effect in January 2005.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Downtown Master Plan (2001)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecting to the bay</li> <li>• Walk able Streets</li> <li>• Balanced Transportation</li> <li>• Walk-to-Town Neighborhoods</li> <li>• Civic Improvements</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Parks and Connectivity Master Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Taxi</li> <li>• Multi-Use Recreational Trail</li> <li>• Downtown Trolley</li> </ul>	<p><b>Transportation Management Organization (TMO)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourages alternate transportation modes in the city Concurrency Exception Area.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>Venice</b></p>	<p><b>Transit Element</b>  <u>Transit Services</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit greenways</li> </ul>	<p><b>Development Corridors</b></p> <p><u>Island of Venice</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Business District</li> <li>• US 41 Business Sector Plan</li> </ul> <p><u>Venice Central</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between Intracoastal and US Bypass</li> <li>• US 41 Bypass</li> <li>• Venice Train Depot</li> <li>• Shift industrial to I-75</li> </ul> <p><u>Venice Gateway</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East of US 41 Bypass to unincorporated Sarasota County</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intermodal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore development of a system of urban transit greenways.</li> <li>• Intracoastal waterway recreational trail.</li> </ul>
<p><b>North Port</b></p>	<p><b>Transit Element</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May develop policies, design standards, funding sources, and an implementation schedule for a trolley system linking the neighborhoods to centers.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sumter Boulevard Gateway</li> <li>• Toledo Blade Corridor</li> <li>• US 41 Corridor</li> <li>• Price Boulevard Educational and Arts Center</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intermodal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore development of a system of urban transit greenways.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Longboat Key</b></p>	<p><b>Transit Element</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain transit service, to the Town, at or better than levels in January 1995.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Community Improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bay Isles Town Center</li> <li>• Beach re-nourishment and access</li> </ul>	<p><b>Intermodal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gulf of Mexico Blvd. recreational trail.</li> </ul>

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

A robust stakeholder involvement program was implemented as part of the major update to the Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan. This was accomplished through a strong, well-planned process for involving stakeholders and the public in the development of the TDSP. The goals for public participation were to:

- Develop a planning process that was community-centered and met as many of the needs as possible, within the constraints of the systems;
- Demonstrate to the stakeholders that Sarasota County is committed to analyzing the changing needs and environment of the area and to consider revisions to the transit network to meet those needs;
- Build support for the recommended service model; and,

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- Continue favorable awareness of public transportation in the County's service area.

The public outreach consisted of the following effort.

- Five (5) focus groups (Waldemere medical providers; Local Coordinating Board; Senior Friendship Circle; Community Health Action Team; and Citizens with Disabilities)
- Three (3) quality circles with private vendors and SCAT + PLUS staff
- Two (2) community input meetings
- Random telephone interviews with 20 SCAT + PLUS riders
- Twenty-one (21) one-on-one interviews with community stakeholders

This extensive public outreach program provided invaluable input into the goals and objectives, particularly in terms of operational improvements. Many of these improvements mirror the initiatives recommended in earlier plans.

A summary of the results of the public outreach is contained in the Appendix. Key items that were noted during this process included the following:

- SCAT+ Plus needs to improve both internal and external communications regarding eligibility and usage requirements for the paratransit service.
- The SCAT staff and employees were commended for their efforts on providing a responsive paratransit service.
- A primary need discussed among riders and their advocates was seamless transportation across County lines, particularly Manatee and Charlotte.
- The provision of more TD trips in the evening was discussed at two of the public input meetings.
- A review of the scheduling process should be conducted to minimize early arrivals of drivers at pick up locations and some long travel times.
- There was a general dissatisfaction with the change in provision of the Medicaid non-emergency transportation service.
- The most commonly cited barriers to mobility for the transportation disadvantaged are the physical barriers at and around regular fixed route bus stops.
- A need for more sensitivity training for private contract operators was noted at several meetings.
- The consensus of the public outreach effort was that demand for paratransit service would continue to grow and that the County would be challenged to meet this demand due to constrained resources.

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**CHAPTER 2  
PARATRANSIT SERVICES AND PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

**BASELINE CONDITIONS**

This section provides an overview of the transit service area, demographics of the service area, a review of plans and policies that affect transit in Sarasota County, and a description of current transit service.

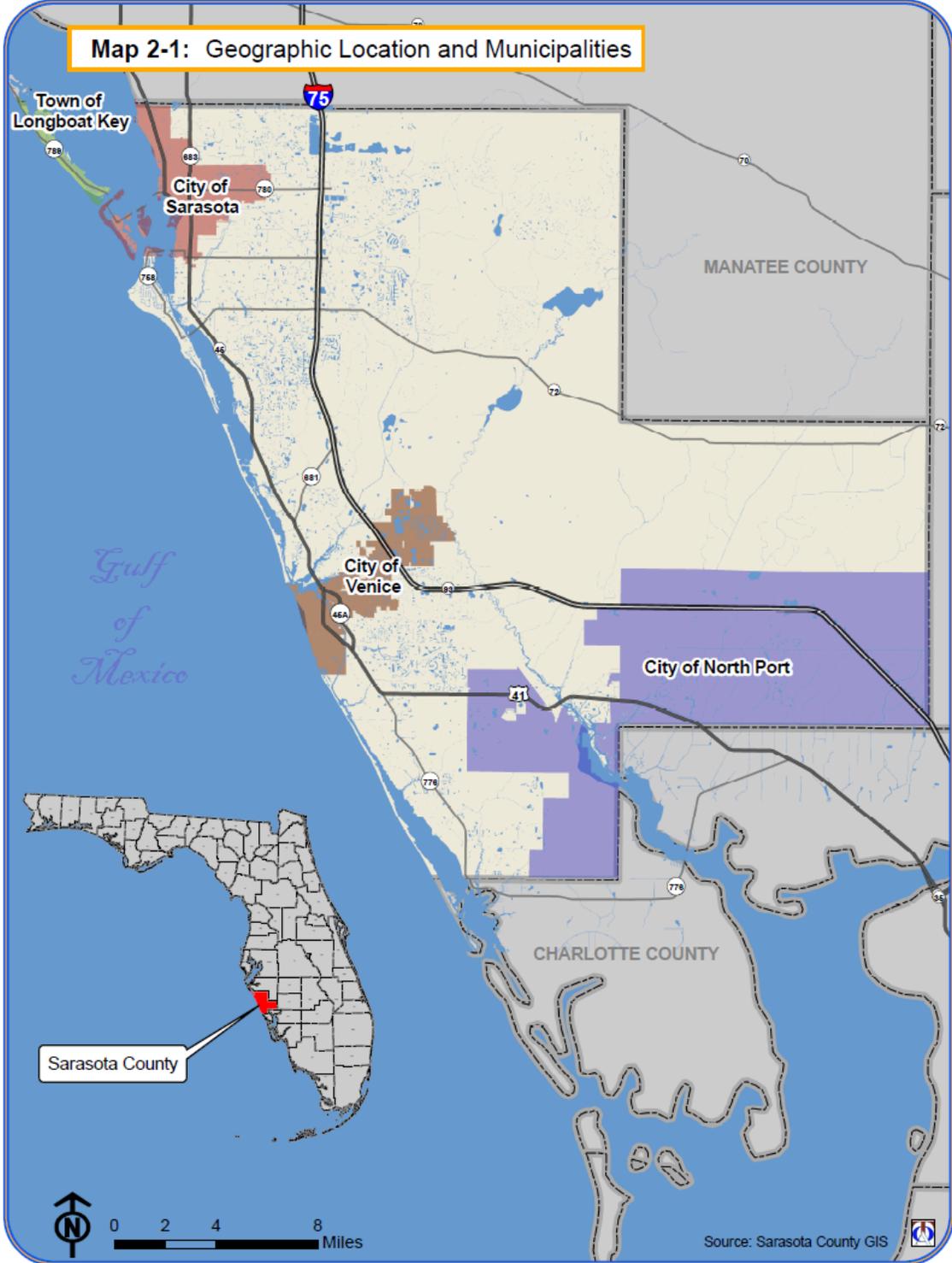
**TRANSIT SERVICE AREA**

In order to provide a clear picture of the study area's transit needs, demographic, economic, labor, land-use, transportation, and transit data were collected. These data will be used to support plan recommendations for the development, improvement, expansion, and realignment of the existing fixed-route bus system.

**Geographic Description**

Sarasota County is located in southwestern Florida and encompasses 572 square miles. It is bordered by Charlotte County to the south, DeSoto County to the east, Manatee County to the north, and the Gulf of Mexico to the west. The County includes four municipalities: the City of North Port, the City of Sarasota, the City of Venice, and the Town of Longboat Key. Map 2-1 shows the location of Sarasota County in addition to its municipalities within the County.

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**Population Characteristics**

In this section, statistics regarding the number of persons in Sarasota County are provided. The population of Sarasota County is expected to increase from 379,448 in 2010 to 509,000 in 2040, an increase of more than 34 percent. Table 2-1 provides the decennial population for 2010 and population projections for Sarasota County for 2015 through 2040.

**Table 2-1**  
**Sarasota County Population Estimate and Projections (in thousands)**

	2010	2015**	2020**	2025**	2030**	2035**	2040**
<b>Resident Population</b>	379.5	400.1	424.7	448.6	470.7	490.7	509.0
<b>Functional Population<sup>1</sup></b>	455.4	480.1	509.6	538.3	564.8	588.8	610.8

Source: \*\* Bureau of Economic and Business Research, "Florida Population Studies Vol. 44, Bulletin 159, March 2011 (Medium)"

(1) Peak season population estimates and projections, referred to as "functional" population, are calculated by multiplying the resident population for each year by 120 percent. Functional population increases the resident population 20 percent by assuming all housing units in the county are occupied. The multiplier (1.2) reflects the 80 percent occupancy rate of permanent residents.

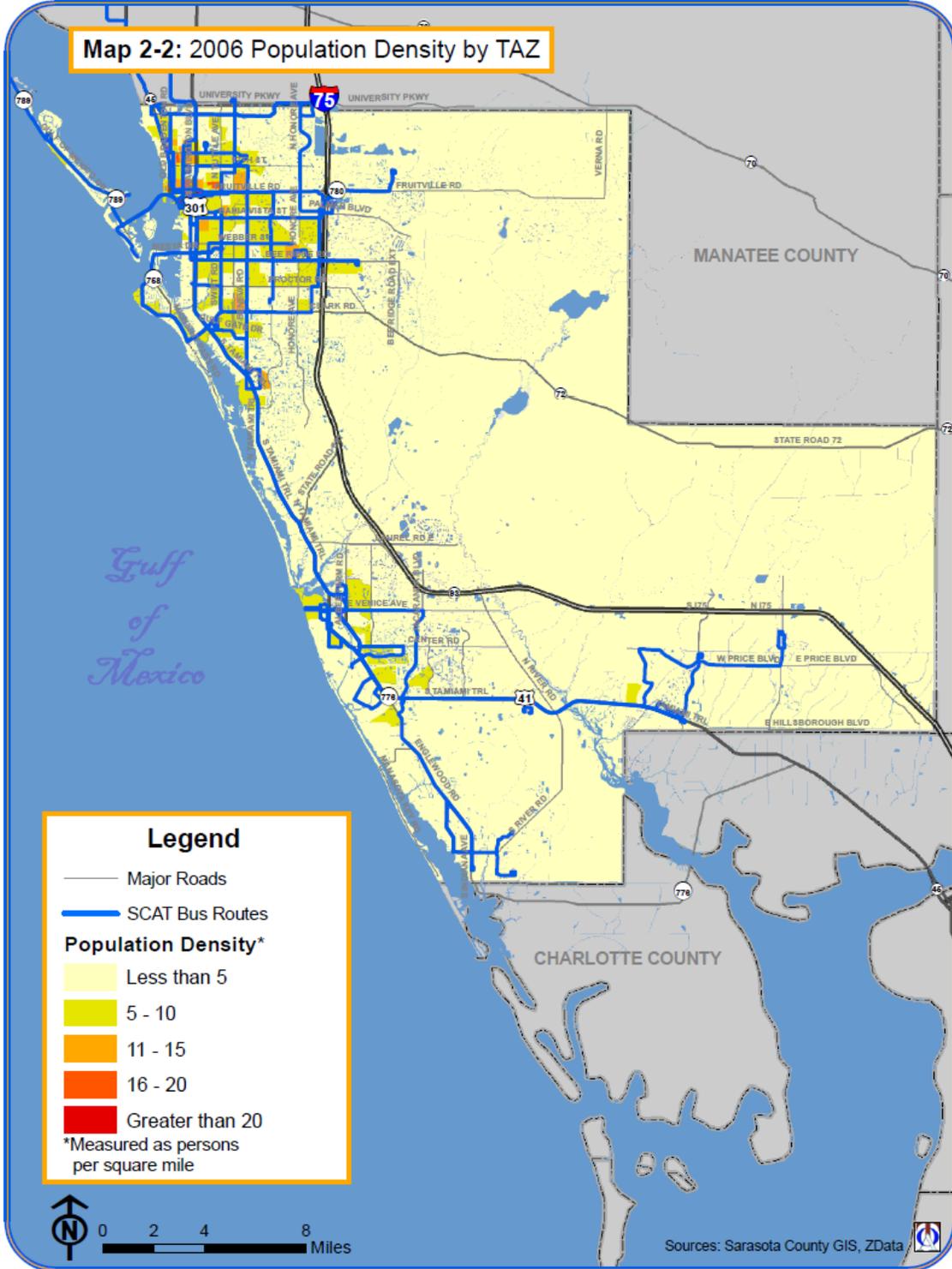
As a popular tourist destination, Sarasota County has a large number of guests who rent temporary quarters or own a second home in the county. When temporary residents are added to the permanent population, the total is referred to as the functional population. The University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) estimates that the functional population is about 120 percent of the size of the permanent population. Table 2-1 provides BEBR estimates and projections for both permanent and functional populations. (Note: The population estimates and projections provided by BEBR may not exactly match those provided by the U.S. Census.)

Map 2-2 displays Sarasota County's 2006 population by traffic analysis zone (TAZ). The majority of the County's population density is fewer than 5 persons per square mile. Only a few small areas in the City of Sarasota have greater than 20 persons per square mile.

In general, Sarasota residents are older than the average Florida resident. Figure 2-1 displays population trends that suggest mobility needs will increase as the County's large population of seniors and others continue to age. Thirty-one percent of Sarasota County's population is over 64 years old, while the same cohort only makes up 17 percent of Florida's total population.

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Sarasota County  
**2009 Transit Development Plan**

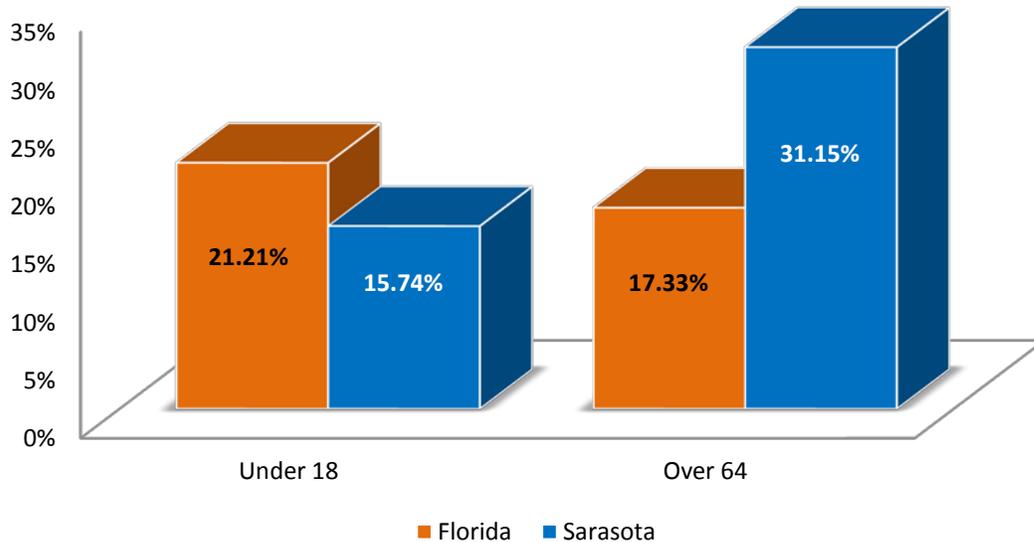


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**Figure 2-1  
Population under Age 18 and over Age 64**

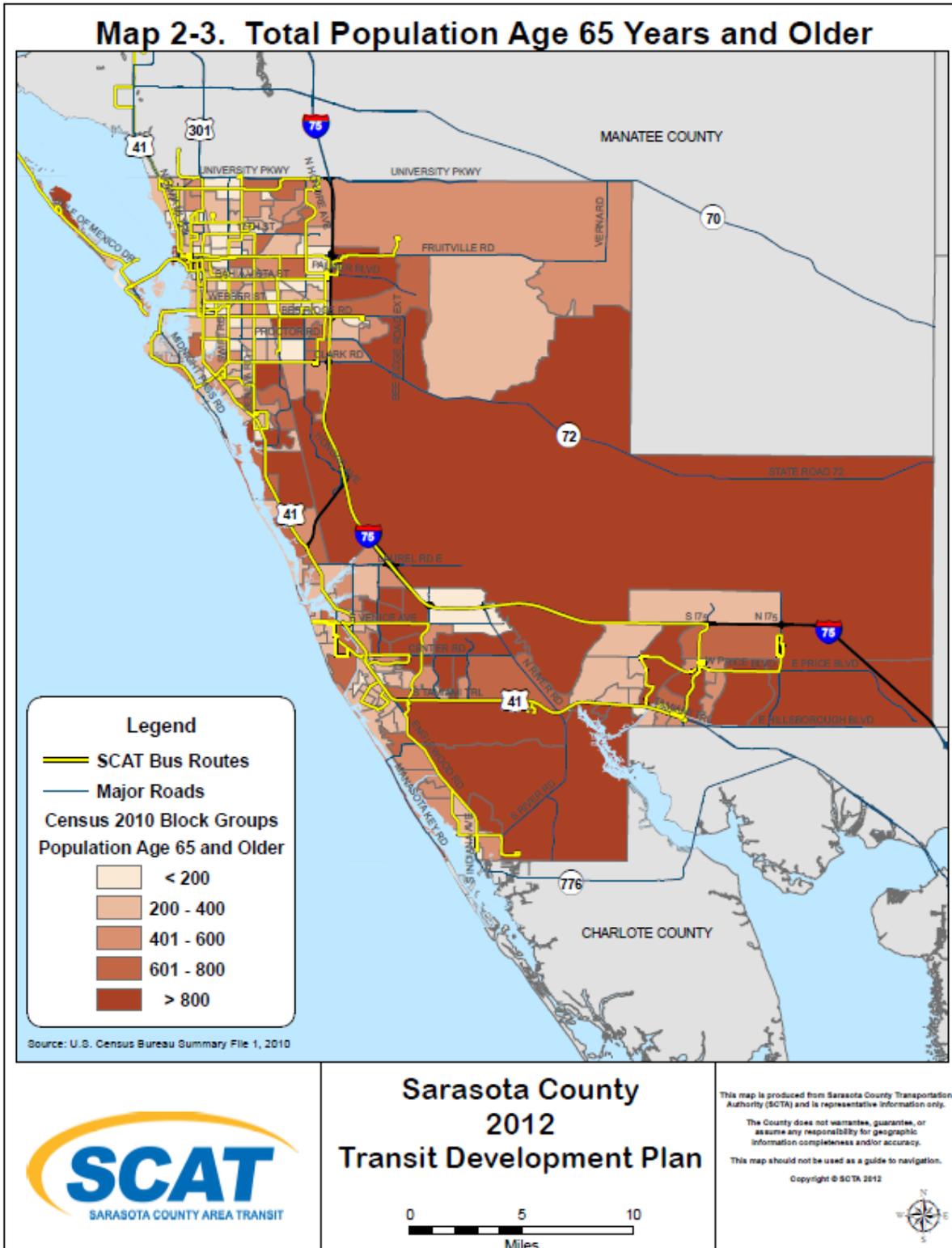


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census.

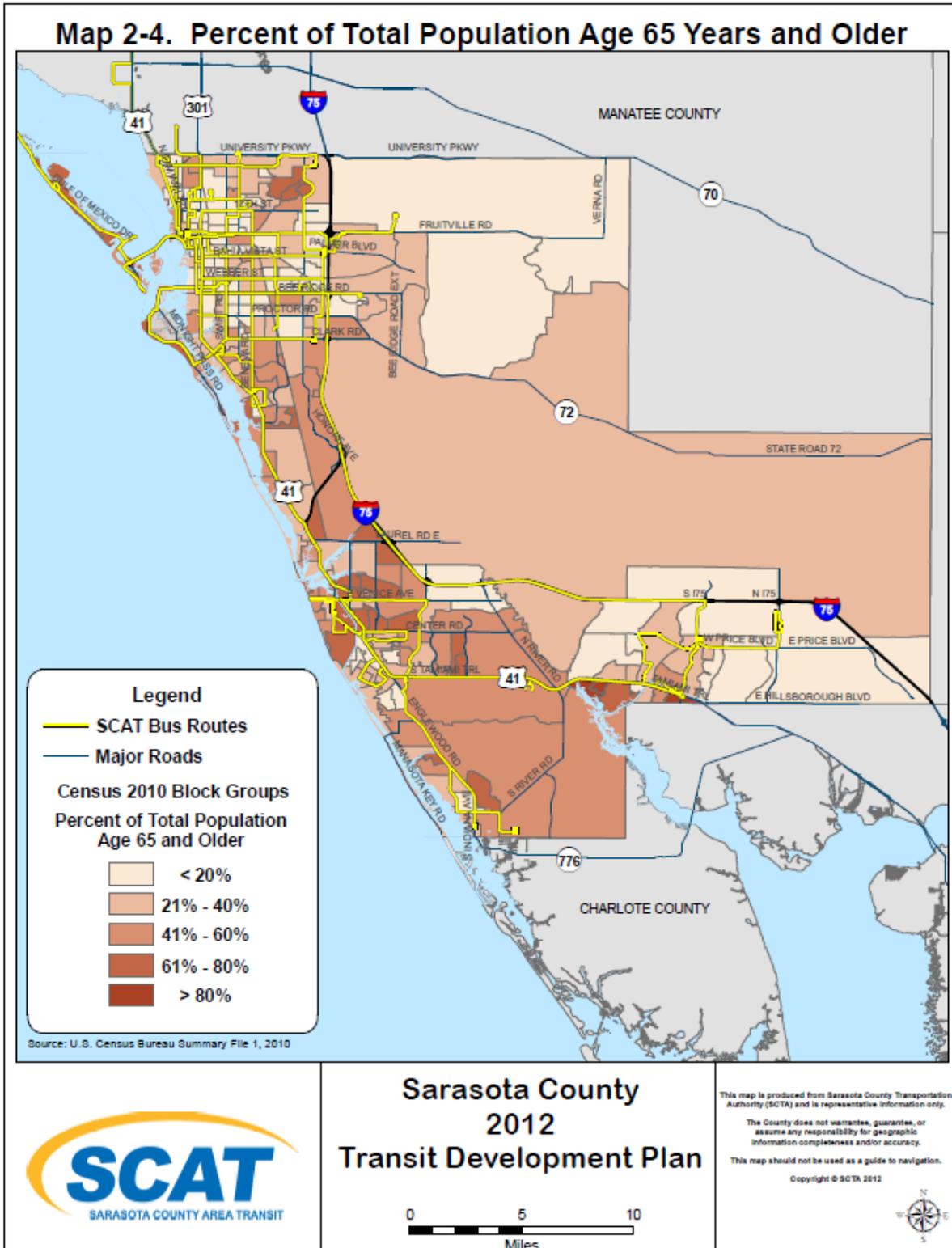
Maps 2-3 and 2-4 display the concentration of elderly individuals by block group throughout Sarasota County. The older populations appear to be concentrated in higher numbers along the coastal areas of the county, while the inland areas have smaller concentrations of elderly individuals.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, 19.1 percent of Sarasota County’s population has some type of disability. Florida’s overall concentration of disabled persons is lower than Sarasota County’s at 15.6 percent. Maps 2-5 and 2-6 display the concentration of disabled persons by block group in Sarasota County. The disabled population concentrations are similar to the elderly population concentrations such that higher concentrations are found in the coastal areas of the county.

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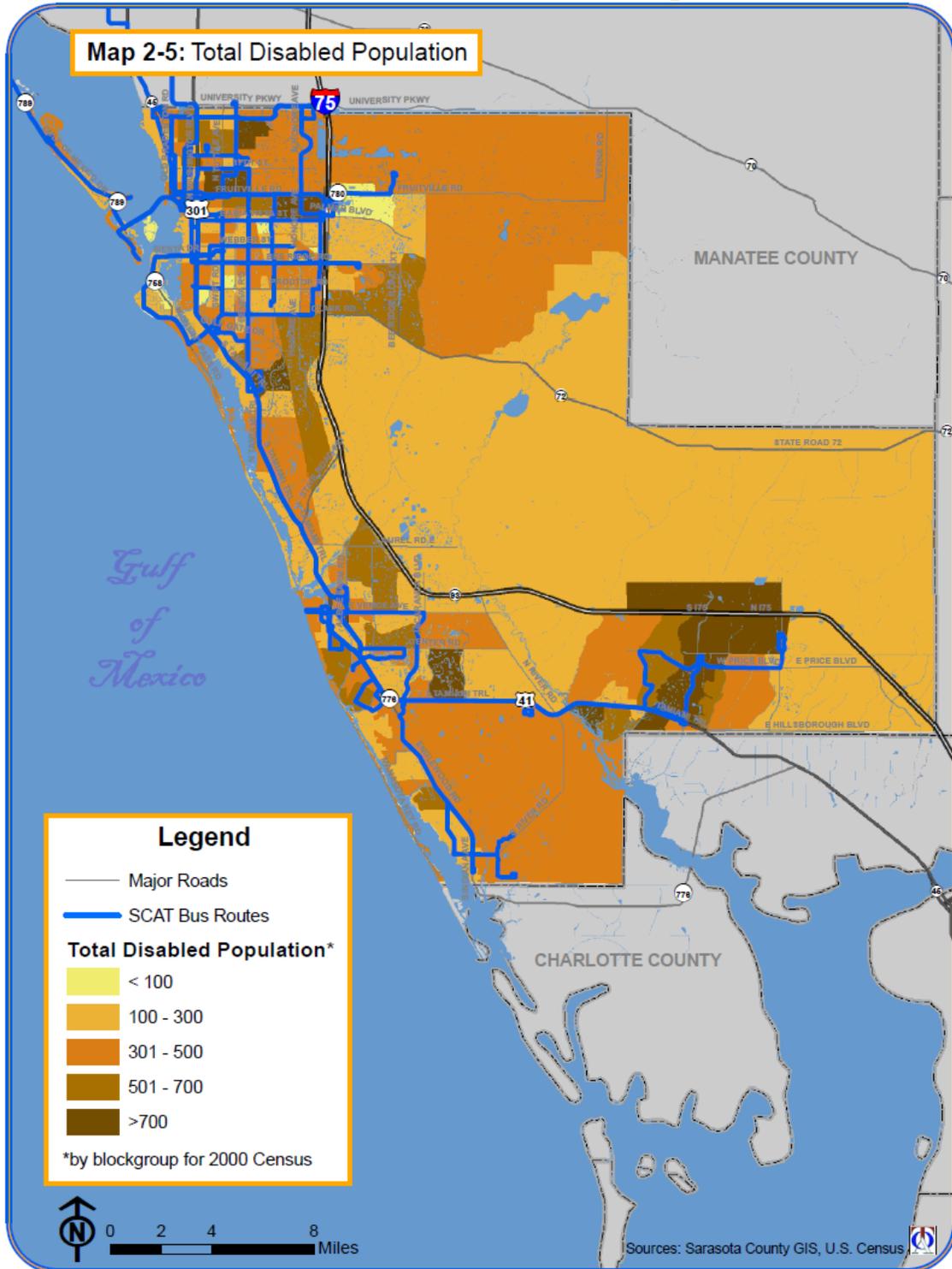


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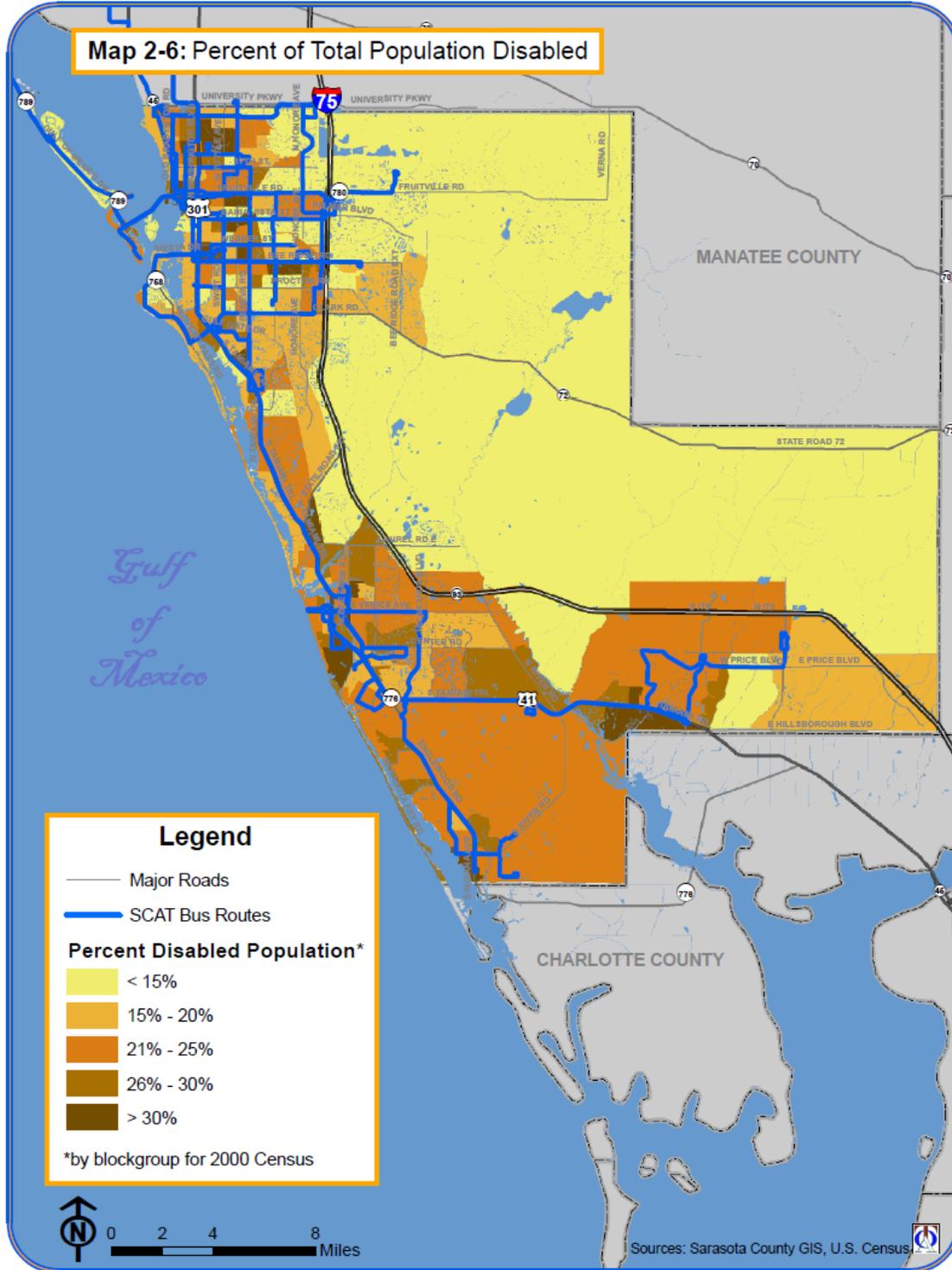


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**2009 Transit Development Plan**



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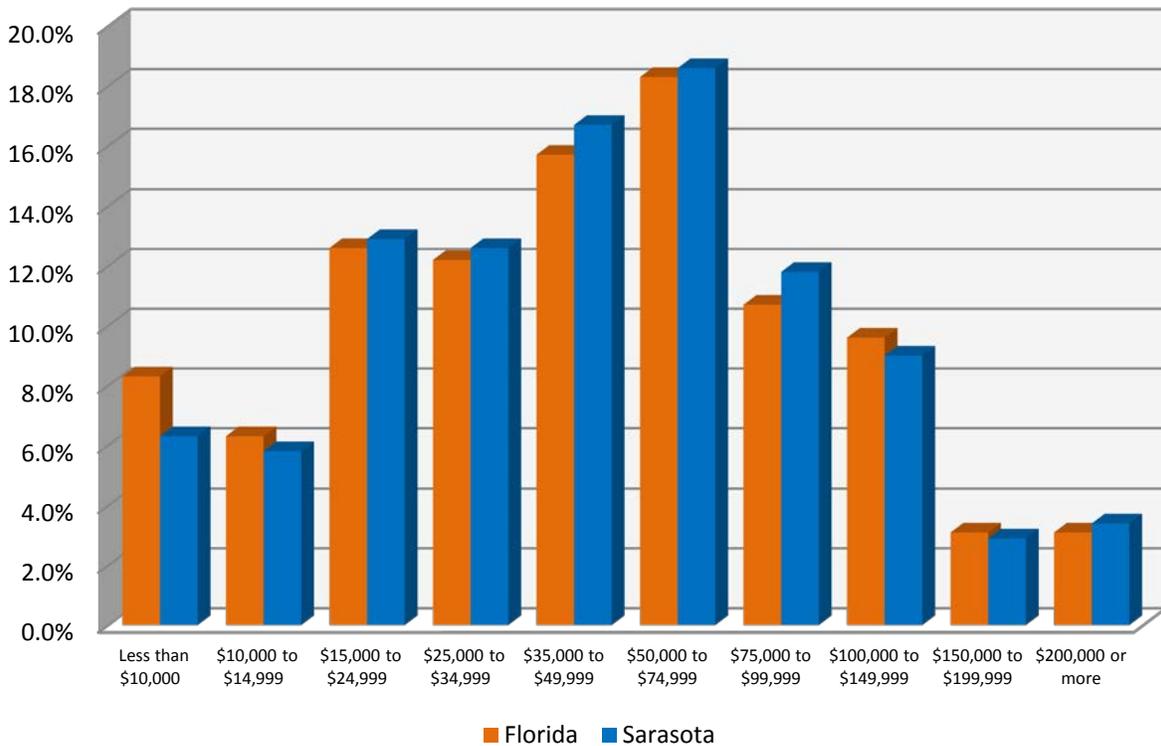
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**Income and Employment Statistics**

In this section, data regarding the income and employment status of Sarasota County residents is provided.

Household income data suggest that Sarasota County’s population is largely middle class, with fewer low-income residents than the state average. Figure 2-2 displays the income distribution for Sarasota County and Florida residents. Sarasota has more residents in the highest income brackets and fewer in the lower income brackets than does Florida, generally. According to the 2010 American Community Survey, 1-year estimate, median household incomes were similar for Sarasota County and Florida. The median household income in Sarasota County in 2010 was \$45,641, while it was \$44,409 for Florida.

**Figure 2-2**  
**Distribution of Income**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey One-Year Estimates.

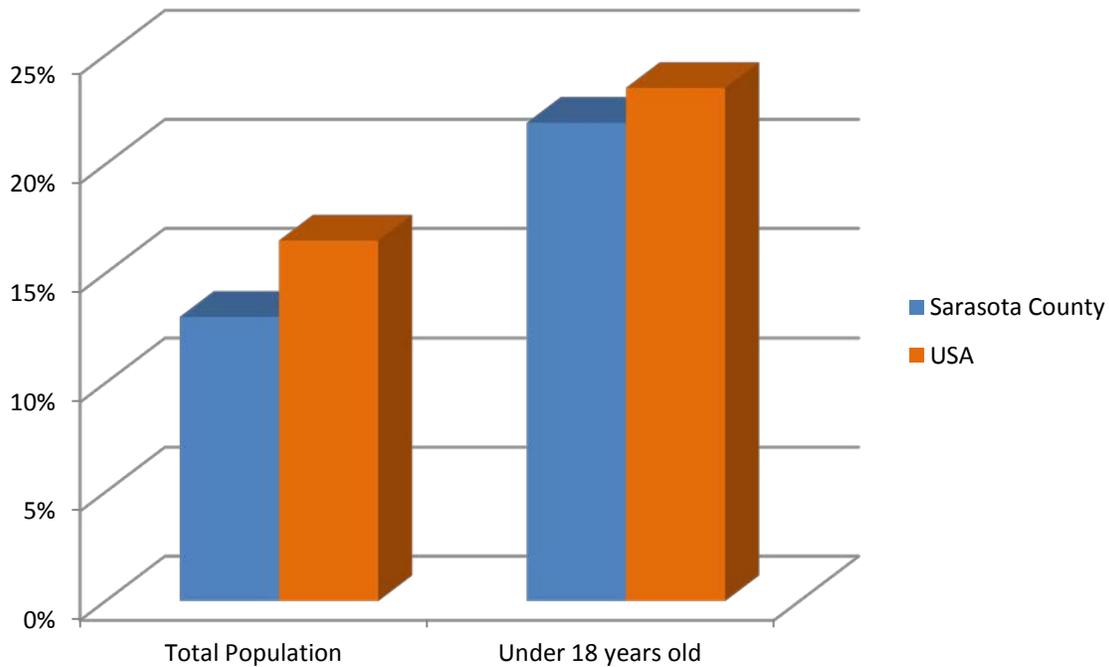
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In 2010, Sarasota County had 13% of its total population living below the poverty level, with 21.9% of those under 18 years old being in this category. Florida had higher percentages of the total population and those under 18 years old living in poverty. Sarasota County’s poverty grew at a faster rate of increase than both the state and nation from 2000 to 2010 increasing from 7.8% to 13% of the total population below the poverty level in Sarasota County.

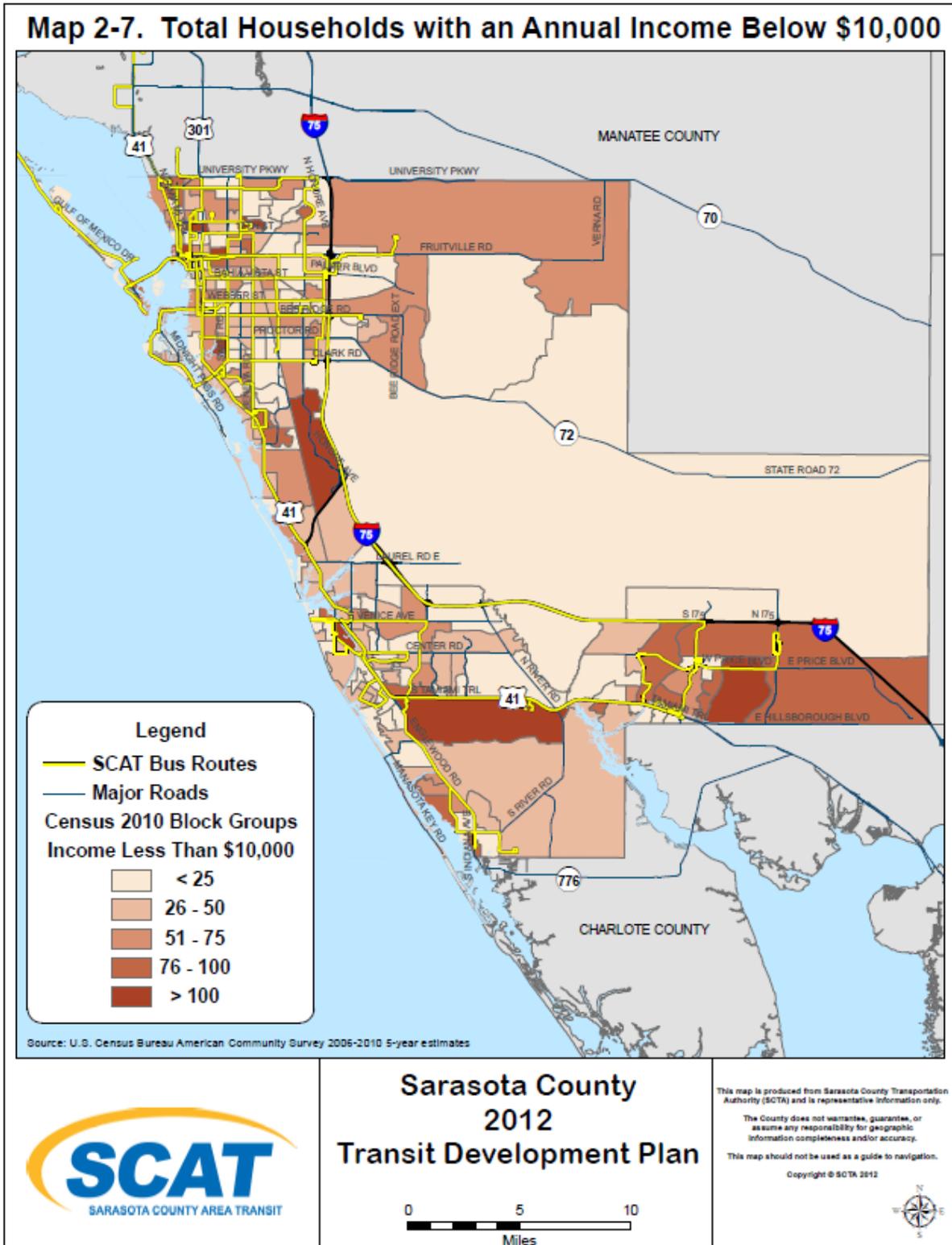
**Figure 2-3**  
**Percent of Population under Poverty Level**



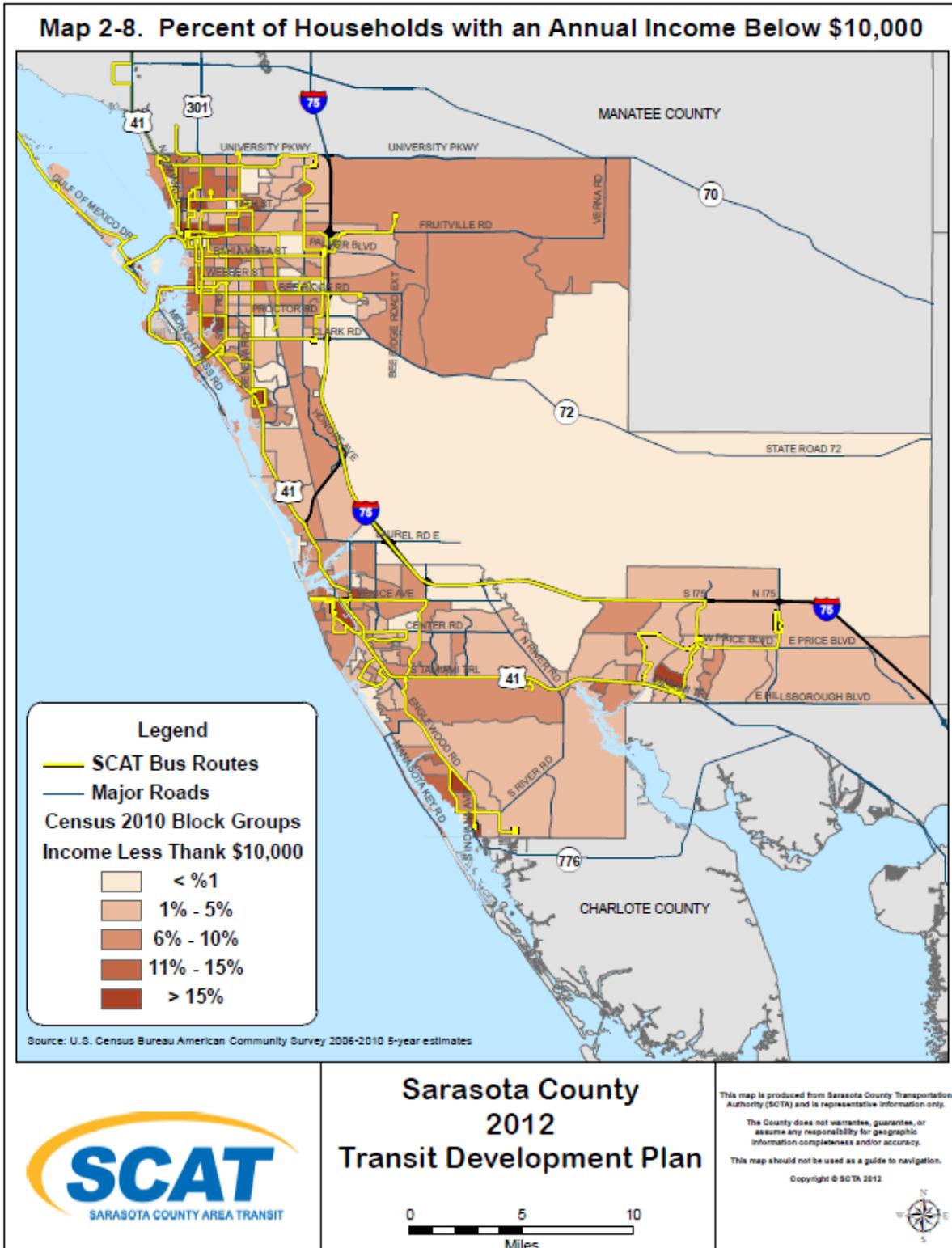
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey One-Year Estimates.

Maps 2-7 and 2-8 display the distribution of households with annual incomes less than \$10,000. Concentrations of low-income households are in the coastal and urban regions.

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Table 2-2 provides data on the average unemployment rate for August 2010 in Sarasota County and the State of Florida. The table also provides data for August 2011, which provides a snapshot of more recent data available in the larger framework of showing which direction the unemployment rate is headed. In both instances, Sarasota County’s unemployment rate is higher than the state, but the gap is growing smaller.

**Table 2-2**  
**Unemployment Data**

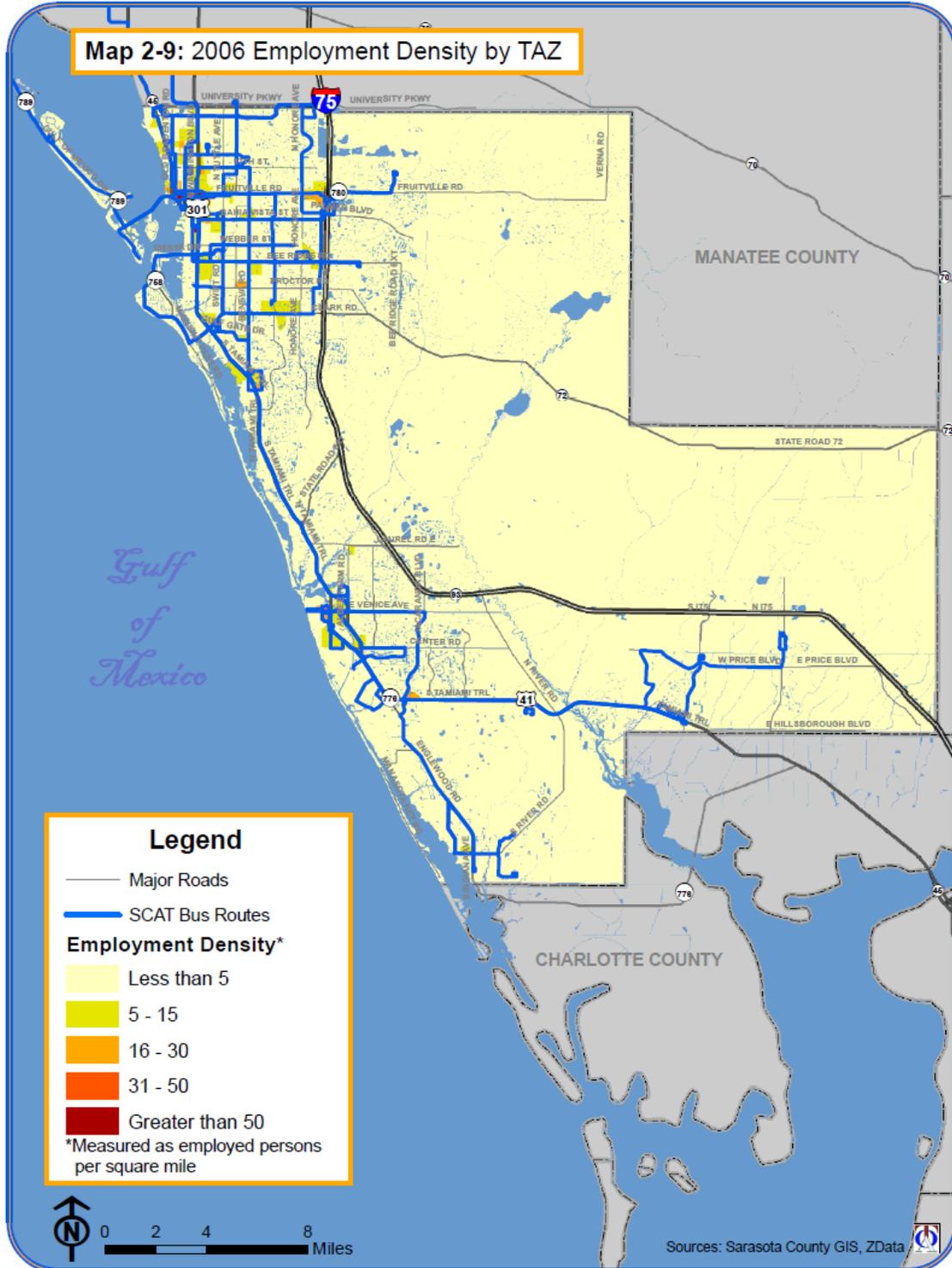
	August 2010		August 2011	
	Florida	Sarasota County	Florida	Sarasota County
<b>Total Labor Force</b>	9,142,603	161,922	9,251,880	159,110
<b>Unemployed Persons</b>	1,029,286	20,156	974,936	17,191
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	11.3%	12.4%	10.5%	10.8%

Source: Agency for Workforce Innovation, State of Florida, Local Area Unemployment Statistics and the Bureau of Labor Statistics (Florida).

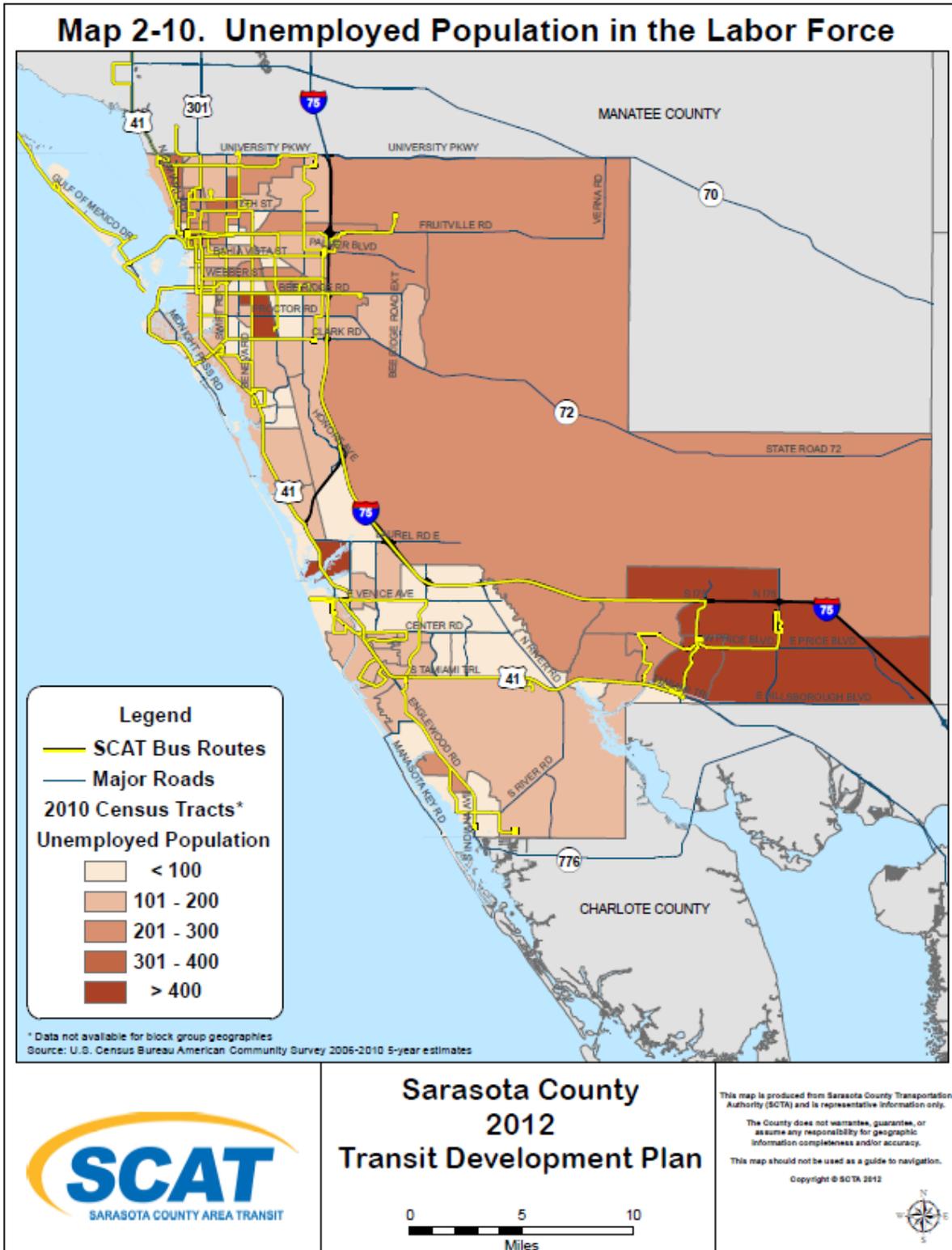
Map 2-9 provides employment density data. Employment per square mile is fairly uniform throughout the county with only slightly higher concentrations in the urban areas of the City of Sarasota and the City of Venice.

Maps 2-10 and 2-11 provided details on the concentrations of unemployed persons. The unemployed population appears to be fairly evenly distributed throughout the county

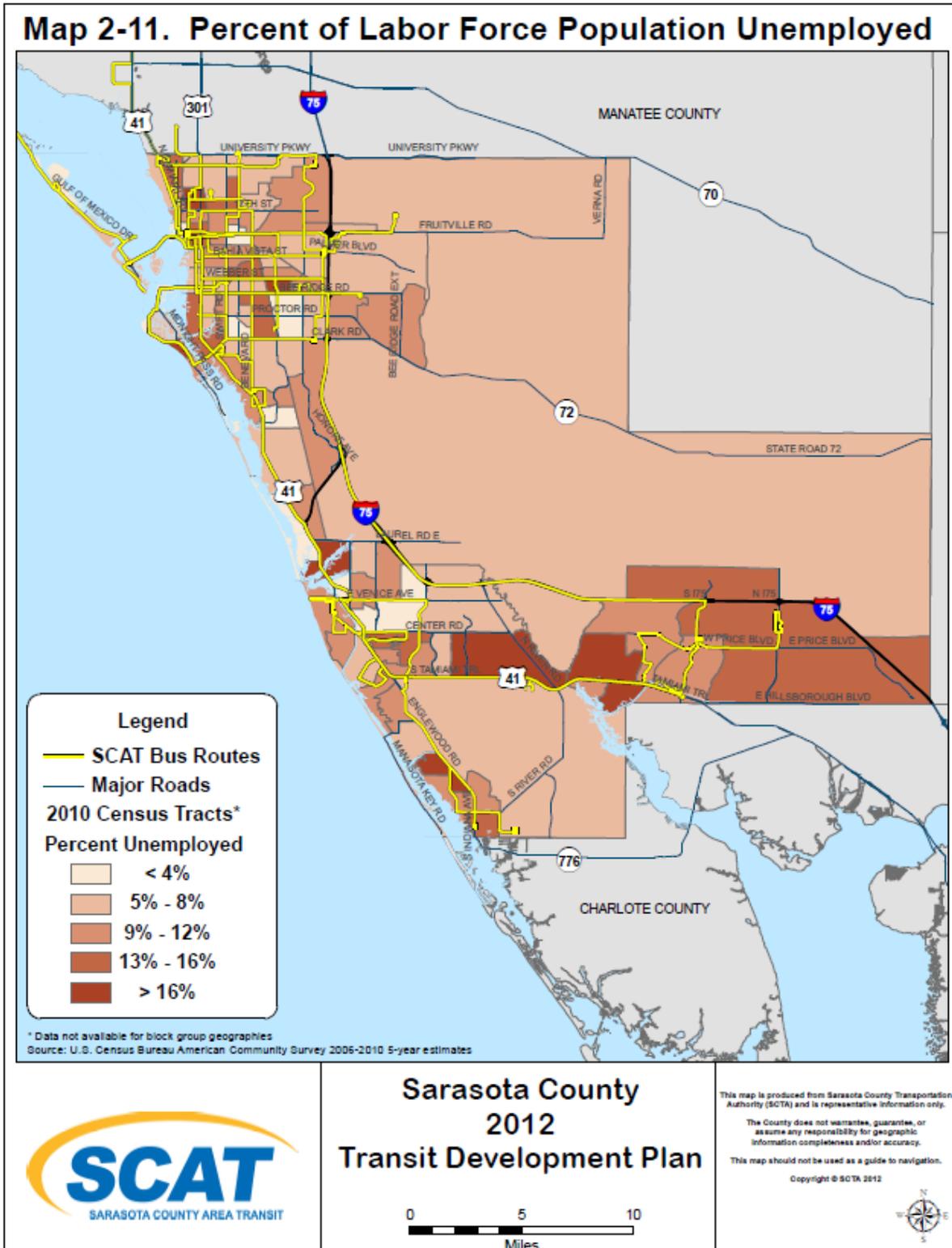
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The top 15 employers, listed in Table 2-3, employ over 18,000 people.

**Table 2-3**  
**Largest Private and Public Employers in Sarasota County (2012)**

Rank	Employer	Number of Employees
1	School Board of Sarasota County	4,239
2	Sarasota Memorial Health Care System	2,996
3	Sarasota County	1,942
4	Publix	1,474
5	Venice Regional Medical Center	1,400
6	PGT Industries	1,118
7	Sun Hydraulics Corporation	686
8	Tervis Tumbler	670
9	Doctors Hospital of Sarasota	624
10	Sunset Automotive Group	600
11	City of Sarasota	596
12	Goodwill Industries	525
13	City of North Port	517
14	Longboat Key Club & Resort	502
15	The Ritz-Carlton of Sarasota	444

Source: Economic Development Corporation, Sarasota County.

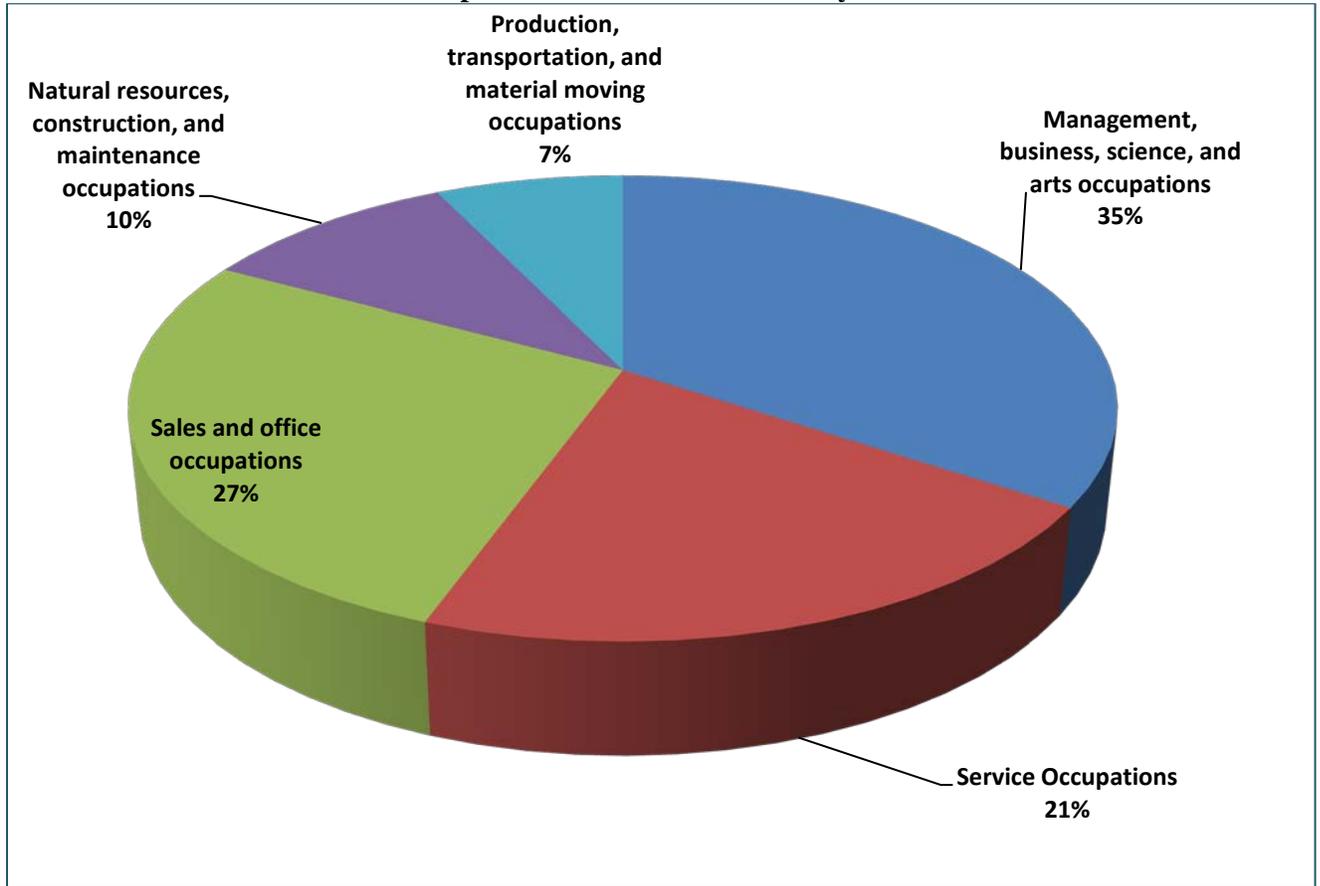
The Economic Development Corporation listing of largest private employers is based upon companies that volunteer to provide information, therefore it does not contain an exhaustive list of the actual largest employers, but the closest estimation based on those companies that volunteer to give the EDC this information.

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**Figure 2-4  
Occupations within Sarasota County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey One-Year Estimates.

### **Commute Patterns**

In this section, data regarding commuting patterns and automobile ownership are provided for Sarasota County.

Table 2-4 summarizes the commuter flows for residents of Sarasota County. The analysis of the 2006 U.S. Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) database worker flow data indicates that 61 percent of the workers residing in Sarasota County also work in Sarasota County. Second only to Sarasota County, nearly 12 percent of workers commute to neighboring Manatee County to the north. Hillsborough County ranks third with just over 5 percent of Sarasota County's workers travelling there.

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**Table 2-4**  
**2006 Commute Shed – Where Sarasota County Residents Work**

County of Employment	Count	Share
Sarasota	90,537	60.1%
Manatee	16,950	11.3%
Hillsborough	7,841	5.2%
Charlotte	6,943	4.6%
Pinellas	6,423	4.3%
Lee	3,526	2.3%
Orange	2,469	1.6%
Polk	1,902	1.3%
Palm Beach	1,671	1.1%
Miami-Dade	1,279	0.8%
All Other Locations	11,004	7.3%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Database.*

The LEHD database was also used to identify commuting patterns between cities within Sarasota County. Table 2-5 displays the cities in which Sarasota residents work.

**Table 2-5**  
**2006 Commute Shed – Cities Where Sarasota County Residents Work**

City of Employment	Count	Share
Sarasota	34,093	22.6%
Venice	8,888	5.9%
Fruitville	6,303	4.2%
Bradenton	3,838	2.5%
South Bradenton	3,677	2.4%
Tampa	3,345	2.2%
Bee Ridge	3,274	2.2%
Gulf Gate Estates	3,109	2.1%
North Port	2,300	1.5%
Charlotte Harbor	2,081	1.4%
All Other Locations	79,637	52.9%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) Database.*

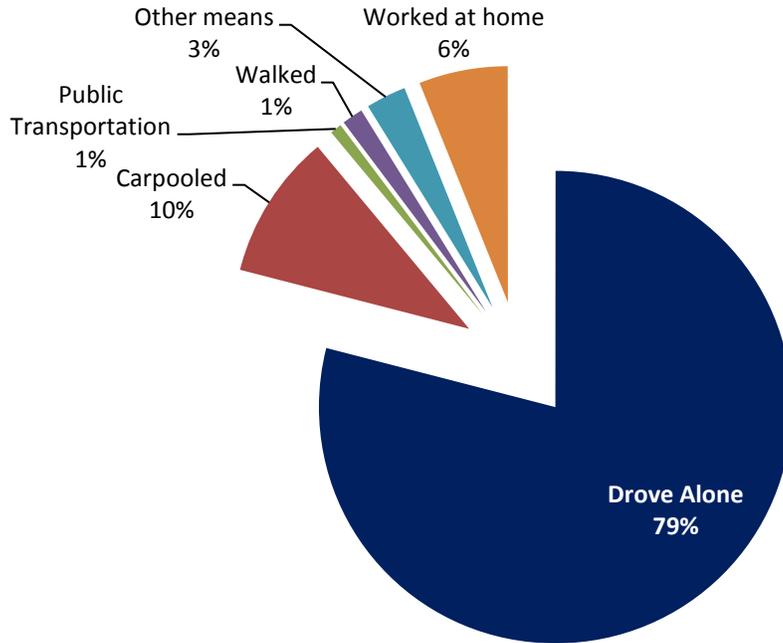
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Residents of Sarasota County primarily travel by private automobile during their commutes. Almost 10 percent of commuters carpool, while less than 1 percent use public transportation to get to work. Figure 2-5 provides a breakdown of commuter modes for Sarasota County.

**Figure 2-5**  
**Commuter Modes in Sarasota County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

## **REVIEW OF POLICIES AFFECTING TRANSIT**

The following section provides a review of plans, policies, and documents that are relevant to the TDP. Documents that affect TDP development range from local to federal in nature. The most relevant local and regional plans are reviewed here. A description of the remaining regional, state, and federal plans, policies, and laws that affect TDPs are described in Appendix A.

### **Local Land Use and Transportation Plans**

Sarasota County and its municipalities each adopt long-range land use and transportation plans as part of the local comprehensive plan, as required by the State of Florida growth management legislation. Comprehensive plans are required to include a transit element. Specialized land use and transportation plans are approved for the local community. Local governments also approve specialized land use and transportation plans refining the goals and objectives of the more generalized comprehensive plan.

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A review of the 2007 comprehensive plan for Sarasota County revealed a strong commitment to the provision of all modes of public transportation in the County. This plan includes objectives and policies designed to support public transit for the general public, visitors, and people who are transportation disadvantaged in Sarasota County. In addition, policies aimed at encouraging transit-oriented and environmentally-friendly development in the County are also included in the comprehensive plan. Recommendations for transit services within Sarasota County include an evaluation of both the comprehensive and specialized land use and transportation plans from each of the municipalities and within the unincorporated county.

**Table 2-6**  
**Local Land Use Transportation Plans**

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Comprehensive Plan</b>	<b>Specialized Land Use Plan</b>	<b>Specialized Transportation Plan</b>
<b>Sarasota County</b>	<p><b>Transit Element (2010)</b></p> <p><u>Fixed-Route Transit Services</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> ½-mile walk to route</p> <p><u>Route Coverage</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Service to 90 percent of residences within 2 miles of transit route every 60 minutes.</p>	<p><b>Sarasota 2050</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Walkable communities in villages east of I-75 and in urban area in the west.</p> <p><b>Redevelopment Plans</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Osprey Village</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Nokomis Center</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Englewood Community Redevelopment Agency</p>	<p><b>Trail Master Plan</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2002 adoption of a trail master plan for Sarasota County linking to trails and greenways in adjacent communities.</p>
<b>City of Sarasota</b>	<p><b>Transit Element (March 2009)</b></p> <p>Transit Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted transit corridors</li> </ul>	<p><b>Downtown Master Plan (2001)</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Connecting to the Bay</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Walkable Streets</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Balanced Transportation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Walk-to-Town Neighborhoods</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Civic Improvements</p> <p><b>Parks and Connectivity Master Plan</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Water Taxi</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Multi-Use Recreational Trail</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Downtown Trolley</p>	<p><b>Transportation Management Organization (TMO)</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Encourages alternate transportation modes in the city Concurrency Exception Area.</p>

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**Table 2-6 (continued)**  
**Local Land Use Transportation Plans**

Jurisdiction	Comprehensive Plan	Specialized Land Use Plan	Specialized Transportation Plan
City of Venice	<b>Transit Element</b> <u>Transit Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit greenways</li> </ul>	<b>Development Corridors</b> <u>Island of Venice</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Business District</li> <li>• US 41 Business Sector Plan</li> </ul> <u>Venice Central</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between Intracoastal and US 41 Bypass</li> <li>• US 41 Bypass</li> <li>• Venice Train Depot</li> <li>• Shift industrial to I-75</li> </ul> <u>Venice Gateway</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East of US 41 Bypass to unincorporated Sarasota County</li> </ul>	<b>Intermodal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore development of a system of urban transit greenways.</li> <li>• Intracoastal waterway recreational trail.</li> </ul>
City of North Port	<b>Transit Element</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May develop policies, design standards, funding sources, and an implementation schedule for a trolley system linking the neighborhoods to centers.</li> </ul>	<b>Community Development</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sumter Boulevard Gateway</li> <li>• Toledo Blade Corridor</li> <li>• US 41 Corridor</li> <li>• Price Boulevard Educational and Arts Center</li> </ul>	<b>Intermodal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore development of a system of urban transit greenways.</li> </ul>
City of Longboat Key	<b>Transit Element</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain transit service, to the Town, at or better than levels in January 1995.</li> </ul>	<b>Community Improvement</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bay Isles Town Center</li> <li>• Beach re-nourishment and access</li> </ul>	<b>Intermodal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gulf of Mexico Blvd. recreational trail.</li> </ul>

Sarasota County updated the Public Transit Sub Element of the Transportation Chapter of the comprehensive plan in October 2010. Sarasota County adopted the following peak hour Transit Level of Service:

Headways – Average system frequency of service will be every 31 to 60 minutes.

Transit Level of Service standards for Route Coverage, Passenger Load, On-Time Performance and Hours of Service were deferred to the annually-updated Transit Development Plan Update.

**Transportation Improvement Program**

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The Sarasota/Manatee MPO TIP is an annually updated document that contains transportation disadvantaged and public transit elements, as required by FDOT. The Sarasota/Manatee MPO plans and budgets for transportation and transit improvements in coordination with Sarasota County and its municipalities.

**Public Transportation System Analysis**

In 2002, the MPO prepared a long-range public transportation plan for the Sarasota County and Manatee County region. The Public Transportation Systems Analysis (PTSA) plan established a far-reaching vision for public transit in the two-county area. The PTSA is a long-range strategic vision for how the Sarasota/Manatee area's future public transportation system should be structured to best meet identified needs in a cost-effective manner. The plan reflects the community's mobility needs, land use and redevelopment plans, and economic objectives. This document was produced in 2002 and served as the Transit Element of the MPO's 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Since this time, the MPO has produced the 2035 LRTP without updated Transit Element.

**(2035) Long Range Transportation Plan**

The Sarasota/Manatee MPO (2035)\_Long Range Transportation Plan presents a long-range vision of how transportation needs will be met in Sarasota County in such a way as to improve the mobility of residents and visitors and support economic development in the community. The plan also addresses the needs of the transportation disadvantaged population, as well as examines potential funding streams for transportation improvements.

The (2035)\_LRTP was updated by the MPO in 2010. The transit component of the 2035 Needs Plan reflects a 120 percent increase in transit ridership above the current ridership levels of the two county-operated bus systems. To meet that increase, the 2035 Needs Plan assumes a substantial increase in bus service frequency, hours of service and coverage, and the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors in both counties, along with regional express bus service, provide faster and more reliable travel options within congested and constrained corridors. The 2035 LRTP makes the following recommendations for transit service improvements in the Sarasota/Manatee area as well as Sarasota County alone. Table 2-7 provides a listing of the transit improvements the LRTP recommends on the regional level, while Table 2-8 provides a listing of transit improvements the LRTP recommends for Sarasota County.

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**Table 2-7**  
**L RTP Regional Transit Improvements**

<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>
I-75 TBARTA	Hillsborough County Line	Sumter Boulevard	Express Bus
University Parkway	Lakewood Ranch Boulevard	US41 (Tamiami Trail)	Express Bus
Route 99 (increased frequency & span of svc.)	--	--	Local Bus

**Table 2-8**  
**L RTP Sarasota County Transit Improvements**

<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>FROM</b>	<b>TO</b>	<b>PROJECT</b>	<b>PURPOSE AND NEED</b>
Sarasota Downtown Circulator (N/S)	Downtown Sarasota	--	Circulator	This project would provide localized transit access for tourists and others whose destination is downtown, providing relief from congestion and providing transportation options.
Sarasota Downtown Circulator (E/W)	Downtown Sarasota		Circulator	This project would provide localized transit access for tourists and others whose destination is downtown, providing relief from congestion and providing transportation options.
Westfield Southgate Mall to Downtown	Westfield Southgate Mall	Downtown	<b>BRT</b>	This project would provide connectivity of regional transit services, linking with BRT line to downtown Bradenton and other key BRT and premium transit services.
Bee Ridge Road / US 41	Cattleman Road	Siesta Drive/Southgate Plaza	<b>BRT</b>	This project would provide premium transit in the corridor, fostering redevelopment along the way and providing relief for traffic congestion on Webber Street
Fruitville Road	Lemon Avenue	East of I-75	<b>BRT</b>	This project would provide options from commuters traveling between the I-75 area and downtown Sarasota.
Sarasota North BRT	Downtown Sarasota	International Airport	<b>BRT</b>	This project would provide connectivity of regional transit services, linking with BRT line to downtown Bradenton and serving key destinations such as the universities and the airport.

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Sarasota South (Venice) BRT	Downtown Sarasota	Sumter Blvd	<b>BRT</b>	This project would provide a regional linkage from high growth areas in southern Sarasota County to downtown Sarasota, connecting to other BRT lines and transit services.
I-75 Local Express			<b>Express Bus</b>	Express bus service will increase regional accessibility and mobility and provide faster and more reliable travel options within congested and constrained corridors.
US 41 Local Express			<b>Express Bus</b>	Express bus service will increase regional accessibility and mobility and provide faster and more reliable travel options within congested and constrained corridors.
Fixed Route increased frequency (20 routes)	--	--	<b>Local Bus</b>	Increased frequency on local routes is identified in the SCAT TDP as key to enhancing existing transit service and providing additional transportation options in the County.
Fixed Route Expansion (14 routes from SCAT TDP + 6 routes planned beyond TDP)	--	--	<b>Local Bus</b>	Several routes have been identified beyond those in the SCAT TDP, providing service to additional transit-supportive areas which have been identified.

**Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) TDP**

Produced in, August 2008, the Major Update to MCAT’s TDP states that one of its recommended actions is to continue to coordinate services with SCAT for fixed route services and paratransit services and improve inter-county transportation between Manatee and Sarasota Counties. It does not make any other recommendations that would affect Sarasota County. Manatee operates a paratransit service (Handy Bus). SCAT and MCAT coordinate fixed and paratransit services along the US 41 (Route 99) and Gulf of Mexico Drive (LBK Trolley) services areas. See Chapter Five.

**Charlotte County Transit TDP (2005 – 2014)**

The Charlotte County–Punta Gorda MPO identifies one of its service enhancement goals to be to pursue a financial sharing arrangement with Sarasota County and the City of North Port to provide bus service along US 41 from the City of North Port to the shopping opportunities in the Murdock area and medical services in Port Charlotte. Another goal would be to provide Dial-a-Ride service in the Englewood area that connects to SCAT’s Route 16 in this community. These are the only recommendations that affect Sarasota County.

**DeSoto County Comprehensive Plan**

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Due to DeSoto County's rural nature, it does not have a fixed-route transit system. It does provide for special transportation services for the elderly and disabled. Since DeSoto does not have a fixed-route system, it does not produce a TDP. The comprehensive plan concentrates on providing adequate traffic circulation. It does not mention any goals for public transportation.

**Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA)**

TBARTA is a regional approach to transportation planning that covers transportation needs between Citrus County in the north and Sarasota County in the south. The TBARTA committee has preliminarily identified four corridors in Sarasota County as important regional corridors:

- US 41,
- I-75,
- Bee Ridge Road, and
- Fruitville Road.

**2008 Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)**

Conducted in January 2008, the COA was designed to identify opportunities for improving the productivity and efficiency of SCAT's public transportation services. The COA distinguishes itself from other transit planning functions in that it takes a very detailed look at specific existing operational characteristics of a transit service, including ridership by stop and by time of day, among others.

The COA provides very specific route-level modification recommendations to improve efficiency of the transit system.

**2008 Onboard Survey & Ridecheck**

Released in April 2008, this document provides detailed information regarding the onboard survey conducted in January 2008 and the ridecheck conducted in January and February 2008. Detailed information on the content of this report is found in Section 3 of the 2011 Update to the Transit Development Plan.

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**LAND USE**

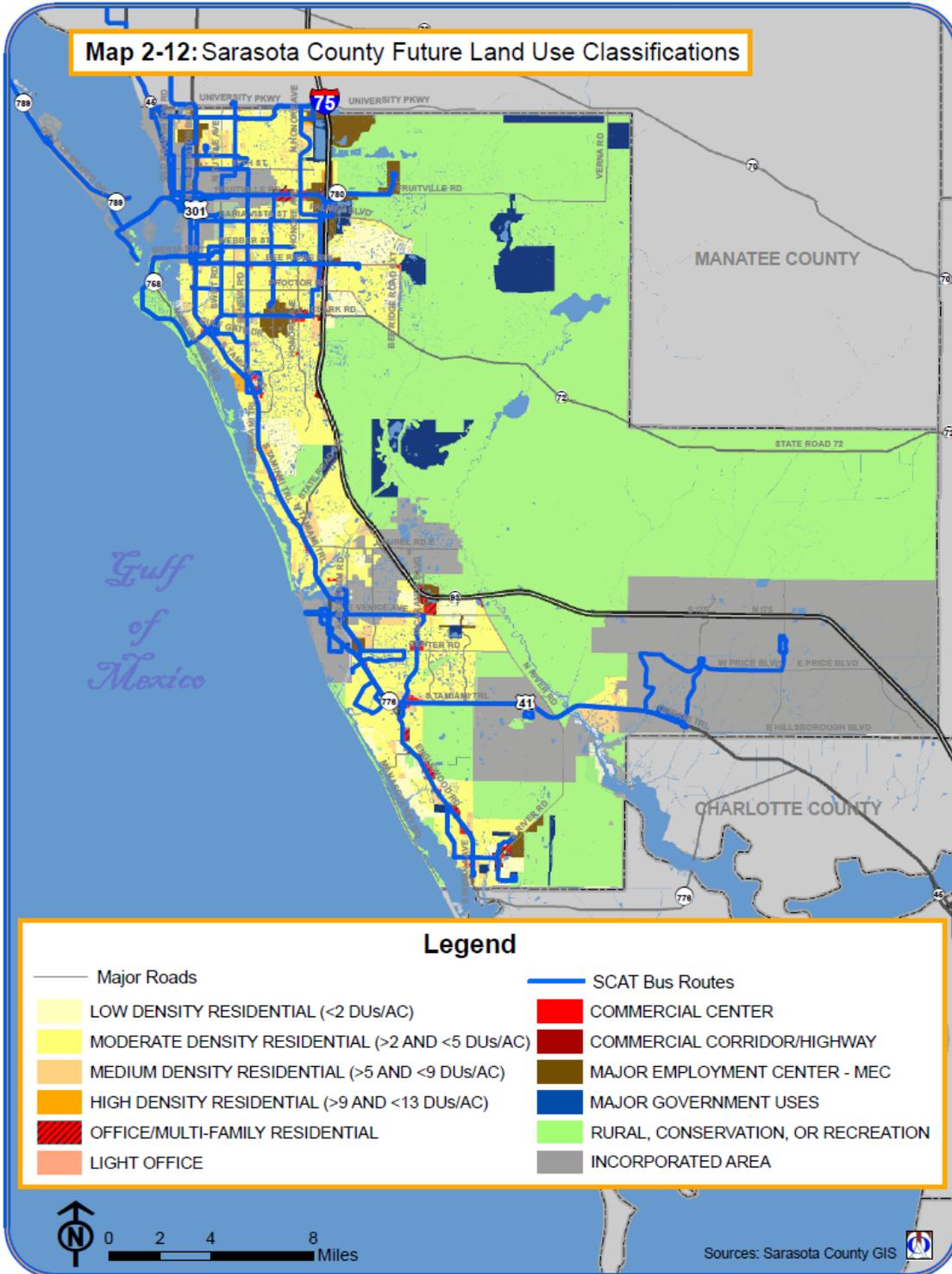
Development in Sarasota County is more heavily concentrated on the coastal side of the county than in the inland areas. As shown on Map 2-12, the county has designated the majority of the inland area as rural, conservation, or recreation land. Residential areas are primarily relegated to the coastal areas.

Map 2-13 displays the major activity centers and employers in the county, as well as a ¼-mile buffer around the transit routes. The transit service area allows a quick visual estimation of the activity centers and major employers that are not within SCAT's service area.

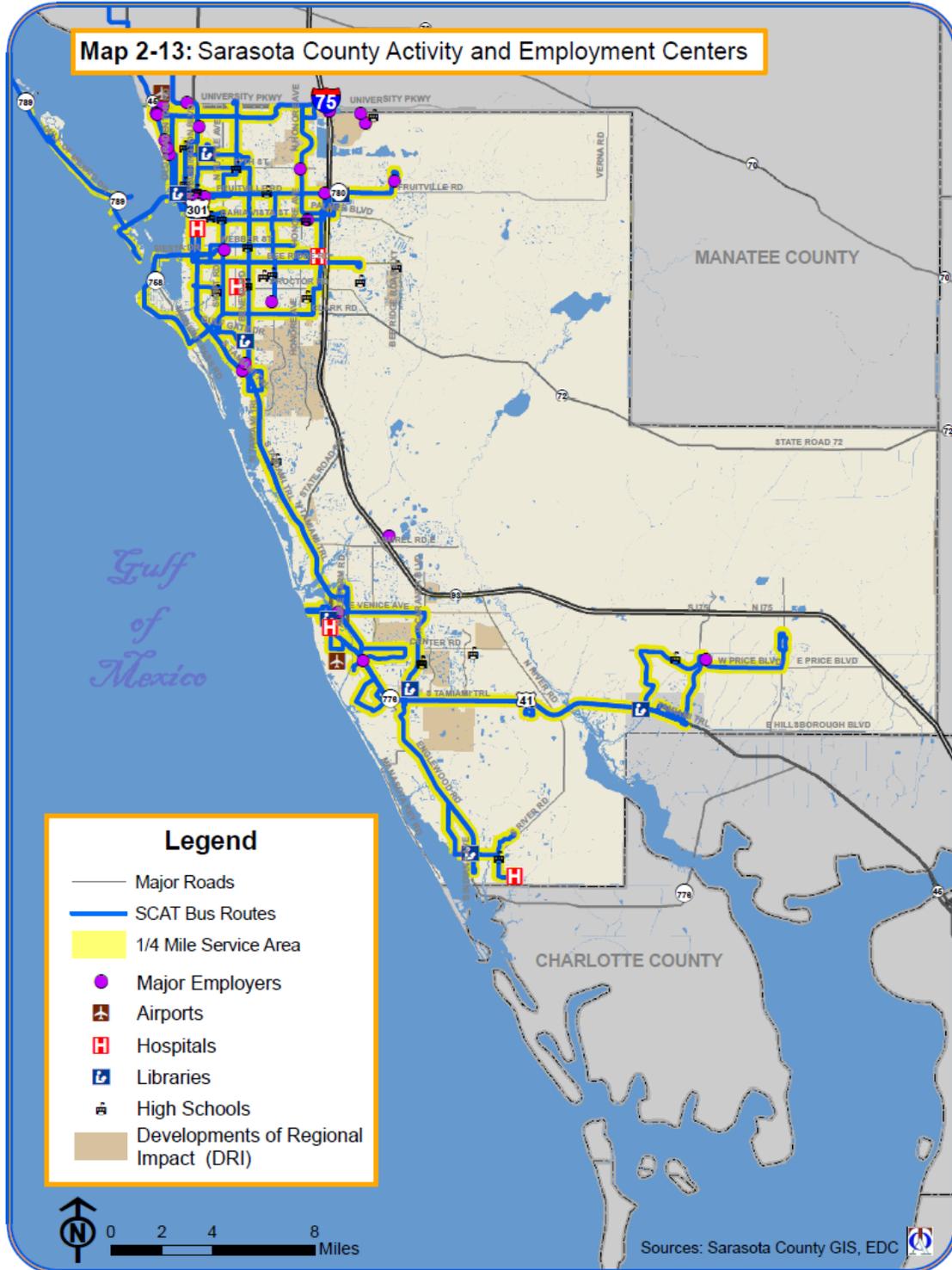
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Map 2-12: Sarasota County Future Land Use Classifications



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**INVENTORY OF EXISTING SERVICES AND RESOURCES**

Public transportation services in Sarasota County were originally privately operated by Cities Transit. In 1979, Sarasota County government took over the transit operation to better meet the transportation needs of the citizens of the county. At that time, only 7 buses were in operation, covering 10 bus routes. Almost 30 years later, SCAT now operates over 50 vehicles on 24 bus routes. The transit agency recorded over two million unlinked passenger trips in FY 2007. Map 2-14 displays each route currently operated by SCAT and a detailed description of each route is provided in Appendix B.

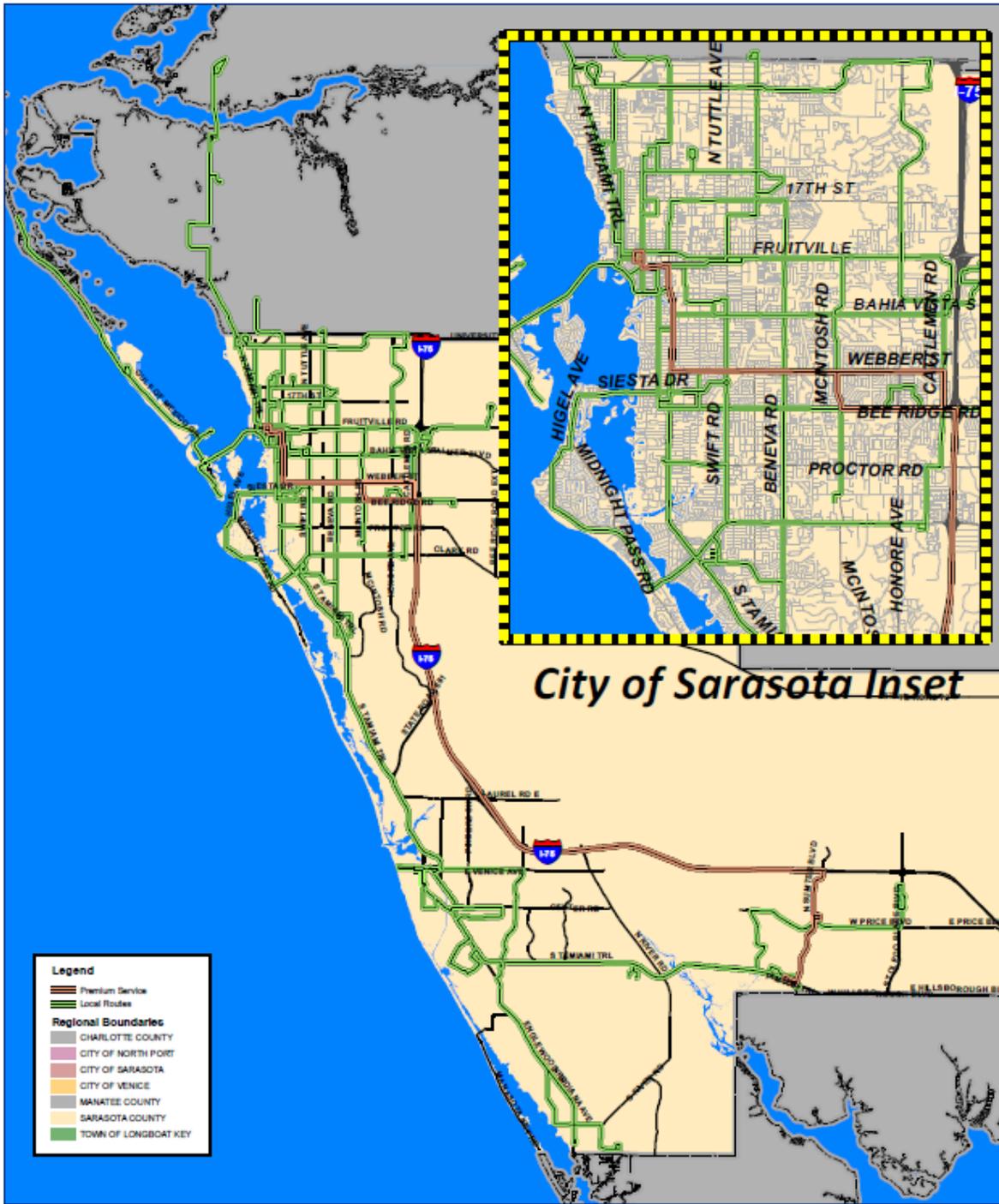
Sarasota County is served by SCAT providing fixed-route service and SCAT Plus paratransit service. There are 24 fixed routes that serve Sarasota, Venice, North Port, and other communities on the western half of the county. A majority of the routes operate from Monday through Saturday with limited service on Sundays. SCAT Plus paratransit service provides trips to people who are unable to use the fixed-route service due to disability. Trips are provided to and from locations during the fixed-route system's regular service hours. SCAT Plus service is limited to areas within a ¾-mile distance of the fixed-route system.

Table 2-9 provides fixed route ridership figures for FY 2010/2011. Total annual ridership during this time period was over 2.8 million passengers. Table 2-10 provides an overview of the operating statistics for each SCAT route.

**Table 2-9**  
**FY 2010/2011 Ridership Data**

<b>Month</b>	<b>Ridership</b>
October	249,616
November	241,415
December	240,614
January	238,107
February	243,529
March	258,139
April	249,023
May	232,123
June	231,305
July	224,281
August	247,509
September	239,497
Total	2,895,158

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**2012 Current Service - TDP Minor Update**



This map is produced from Sarasota County Transit Authority (SCAT) and is representative information only.  
 The County does not warrant, guarantee, or assume any responsibility for geographic information compliance with accuracy.  
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**Table 2-10  
2008 Fixed-Route Operating Statistics**

								Weekday						Saturday					
Route Number	Route Name	Wkdy Rev Miles	Sat Rev Miles	Annual Rev Miles	Wkdy <sup>4</sup> Rev Hours	Sat <sup>4</sup> Rev Hours	Annual Rev Hours	Total Board <sup>1</sup>	Oper Cost <sup>2</sup>	Cost per Board	Pass Revenue <sup>5</sup>	Subsidy per Board	Farebox Recovery	Total Board <sup>1</sup>	Oper Cost <sup>2</sup>	Cost per Board	Pass Revenue <sup>5</sup>	Subsidy per Board	Farebox Recovery
1	Fruitville	348	348	106,836	27.02	27.02	8,213	406	\$1,897.92	\$4.67	\$143.38	\$4.32	7.55%	281	\$1,897.92	\$6.75	\$99.24	\$6.40	5.23%
2	Cocoanut Avenue	140	140	22,400	13.37	13.37	3,793	174	\$489.39	\$2.81	\$61.45	\$2.46	12.56%	157	\$489.39	\$3.12	\$55.45	\$2.76	11.33%
3	Pinecraft	162.5	162.5	49,888	12.73	12.73	3,841	228	\$894.52	\$3.92	\$80.52	\$3.57	9.00%	132	\$894.52	\$6.78	\$46.62	\$6.42	5.21%
4	Lido	144	144	44,208	12.92	12.92	3,888	201	\$907.40	\$4.51	\$70.98	\$4.16	7.82%	170	\$907.40	\$5.34	\$60.04	\$4.98	6.62%
5	Osprey-Swift	348	348	106,836	25.97	25.97	7,847	325	\$1,824.16	\$5.61	\$114.78	\$5.26	6.29%	235	\$1,824.16	\$7.76	\$82.99	\$7.41	4.55%
6	Beneva	667	667	204,769	52.9	52.9	16,095	1,056	\$3,716.23	\$3.52	\$372.93	\$3.17	10.04%	736	\$3,716.23	\$5.05	\$259.92	\$4.70	6.99%
7	Newtown – NE Plaza	210	210	64,470	13.37	13.37	4,059	364	\$939.01	\$2.58	\$128.55	\$2.23	13.69%	230	\$939.01	\$4.08	\$81.23	\$3.73	8.65%
8	Newtown – US 301	156	156	47,892	11.77	11.77	3,583	315	\$826.61	\$2.62	\$111.24	\$2.27	13.46%	173	\$826.61	\$4.78	\$61.10	\$4.42	7.39%
9	North Port	308	308	94,556	14.42	14.42	4,355	163	\$1,012.77	\$6.21	\$57.56	\$5.86	5.68%	134	\$1,012.77	\$7.56	\$47.32	\$7.20	4.67%
11	Siesta Key	312	312	95,784	23.85	23.85	7,242	384	\$1,675.46	\$4.36	\$135.61	\$4.01	8.09%	349	\$1,675.46	\$4.80	\$123.25	\$4.45	7.36%
12	North Lockwood	156	156	47,892	12.83	12.83	3,848	412	\$901.54	\$2.19	\$145.50	\$1.84	16.14%	378	\$901.54	\$2.39	\$133.49	\$2.03	14.81%
13	Venice	168	168	51,576	13.85	13.85	4,166	88	\$972.96	\$11.06	\$31.08	\$10.70	3.19%	95	\$972.96	\$10.24	\$33.55	\$9.89	3.45%
14	Bee Ridge	189	189	58,023	13.28	13.28	4,038	296	\$933.15	\$3.15	\$104.53	\$2.80	11.20%	177	\$933.15	\$5.27	\$62.51	\$4.92	6.70%
15	Airport-Cattlemen	752	752	230,864	38.63	38.63	11,900	373	\$2,713.99	\$7.28	\$131.73	\$6.92	4.85%	247	\$2,713.99	\$10.99	\$87.23	\$10.63	3.21%
16	Englewood-Venice Connector	232	232	71,224	14	14	4,262	91	\$983.50	\$10.81	\$32.14	\$10.45	3.27%	71	\$983.50	\$13.85	\$25.07	\$13.50	2.55%
17	Trail	1364	1364	418,748	80.93	80.93	24,591	1,246	\$5,685.57	\$4.56	\$440.03	\$4.21	7.74%	1,117	\$5,685.57	\$5.09	\$394.47	\$4.74	6.94%
18	Longboat	490	490	150,430	27.35	27.35	8,194	286	\$1,921.34	\$6.72	\$101.00	\$6.36	5.26%	303	\$1,921.34	\$6.34	\$107.01	\$5.99	5.57%
19	Sumter	315	315	96,705	14.13	14.13	4,230	125	\$992.87	\$7.94	\$44.14	\$7.59	4.45%	77	\$992.87	\$12.89	\$27.19	\$12.54	2.74%
20/29	Toledo Blade	234	234	71,838	13.28	13.28	4,042	61	\$933.15	\$15.30	\$21.54	\$14.94	2.31%	47	\$933.15	\$19.85	\$16.60	\$19.50	1.78%
21	Englewood Loop	210	210	33,600	9.8	9.8	2,889	6	\$358.80	\$59.80	\$2.12	\$59.45	0.59%	4	\$358.80	\$89.70	\$1.41	\$89.35	0.39%
24/25	Scenic – Woodmere/Bird Bay	324	324	51,840	25.9	25.9	7,312	95	\$948.26	\$9.98	\$33.55	\$9.63	3.54%	80	\$948.26	\$11.85	\$28.25	\$11.50	2.98%
99	Palmetto-Sarasota Connector	518	518	159,026	40	40	11,934	917	\$2,810.00	\$3.06	\$323.84	\$2.71	11.52%	671	\$2,810.00	\$4.19	\$236.97	\$3.83	8.43%
<b>Total/Average</b>		7,748	7,748	2,279,405	512	512	154,322	7,612	\$34,338.60	\$4.51	\$2,688.20	\$4.16	7.83%	5,864	\$34,338.60	\$5.86	\$2,070.91	\$5.50	6.03%
																	FY 2007 Farebox Revenue		\$793,182
																	Total Annual Boarding		2,245,988
																	Fare per Boarding <sup>3</sup>		\$0.35

<sup>1</sup> Total weekday and Saturday boardings are based on ridecheck data collected January 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Assumes SCAT operates an average of 255 weekdays and 52 Saturdays per year. FY 2007 operating cost per revenue hour provided by SCAT was \$70.25.

<sup>3</sup> Average fare is calculated by dividing total annual farebox revenue with total annual boardings.

<sup>4</sup> Based on October 2007 vehicle block schedule.

<sup>5</sup> Calculated using boardings and the estimated average fare.

Source: 2008 Comprehensive Operations Analysis.

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**CHAPTER THREE  
DEMAND ESTIMATION AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

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## **POPULATION FORECASTS AND DEMAND ESTIMATION**

All estimates are based on the methodology described in *Technical Memorandum 6: Demand Forecasting Methodology*, prepared by the Center for Urban Transportation Research for the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The data used to determine the forecasts are obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau for the latest available information. In many cases, this is the 2006 American Community Survey and in few cases, it is 2004 American Community Survey data. Table 3-3 displays the demand for general trips compared to the available supply.

### ***Forecasts of TD Population***

There are two categories of TD population in the State of Florida, each with specifically related funding arrangements. The first group is the "potential TD population" (also known as TD Category I). This potential TD population includes disabled, elderly, low-income persons, and children who are "high-risk" or "at-risk."

The second group of TD population (also known as TD Category II), includes those persons who are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation. These persons are eligible to receive the same subsidies as those in Category I, plus they are eligible to receive TD Trust Fund monies for non-sponsored general trips. Thus, this population group is actually a subset of the potential TD population.

**Table 3-1: Forecasts of TD Populations in Sarasota County**

<b>TD Population</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Category I	175,759	178,923	182,144	185,422	188,760	192,157
Category II	29,237	29,763	30,299	30,844	31,399	31,964

### ***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.

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The estimated demand for program trips is shown in Table 3-2. 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 can only be 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. Total estimated demand is shown below.

**Table 3-2: Forecasts of Sarasota County Program Trip Demand**

Year	Potential TD Population (Category I)	Demand for Program Trips
2008	175,759	210,911
2009	178,923	214,708
2010	182,144	218,572
2011	185,422	222,507
2012	188,760	226,512
2013	192,157	230,589

### ***Demand for General Trips***

General trips are trips made by Transportation Disadvantaged 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-emergency 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*). 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 has been recommended by the Federal Transit Administration 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 pool of persons eligible for general trips funded by the state. Table 3-3 shows the forecasts of the Sarasota County TD population, as well as demand and supply estimates for general trips by the TD population for the years 2008 through 2013.

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A gap exists between 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 3-3: Forecasts of Sarasota County TD General Trip Demand and Supply**

Year	TD Population (Cat. II)	Demand for General Trips	Supply of General Trips	Unmet Demand for General Trips
2008	29,237	380,311	82,935	297,376
2009	29,763	387,157	84,428	302,729
2010	30,299	394,125	85,948	308,178
2011	30,844	401,220	87,495	313,725
2012	31,399	408,442	89,070	319,372
2013	31,964	415,794	90,673	325,121

It should be noted that the figures related to the demand and supply of TD general purpose trips in Sarasota County include trips that will also fall under the category of ADA complementary paratransit services. The ADA provides for unconstrained delivery of paratransit trips for persons who cannot use the fixed route bus system due to the nature and/or extent of their disability. Persons may be certified as eligible for ADA paratransit trips, as well as TD general purpose trips. Therefore, the figures for unmet demand included in Table 3-3 are inflated and reflect some duplication in the calculation of trip demand.

## **TRANSIT DEPENDENT NEEDS**

“Transit dependents” are persons who are less likely to be able to drive a private vehicle and hence more likely to depend on transit. Although this analysis is often used in small city and rural transit since transit does not typically provide a time, cost or convenience advantage over the automobile in small urban and rural areas, it is still a useful tool when looking at transit needs in Sarasota County.

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Table 3-4 below depicts the percent of transit dependent groups in Sarasota County. This data shows that public transportation can benefit a large percentage of County residents, anywhere from 8 to 30 percent.

**Table 3-4: Percent of Transit Dependent Groups**

Typically Defined Transit Dependent Group	Percent of Total Population
Children ages 5 to 14	8.8%
Age 65 and over	29.6%
Persons below the poverty level	7.9%
Persons living in households without access to an automobile	6.1%
Persons aged 5 to 64 with a disability	18.4%

Source: American Community Survey, 2006

In addition, the mobility needs of the Transportation Disadvantaged have been identified through an analysis of the demographic, land use, and public outreach data. Trends suggest that Sarasota County's population will continue to grow and continue to age. Most of this growth in population is now occurring within the unincorporated area of the County. It is anticipated that the majority of growth will happen along the I-75 corridor. These trends are reflected in the gap that exists between the demand for general TD trips and the supply of these trips. The population is growing, the population is aging, and these trends, as well as the services for the TD, are widely dispersed throughout the County.

The public outreach process that was conducted during the update of the TDSP validated the trends and resulted in identification of the following mobility needs for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

1. SCAT and SCAT+Plus services should run as seamlessly as possible across the Sarasota and Manatee County lines, and, to a lesser degree, Charlotte County.
2. SCAT and SCAT+Plus services should continue to work on improving connectivity options between population centers and employment centers.
3. Efforts should be made to provide recreational paratransit trips during the evening hours for TD eligible clients.
4. Efforts should continue to improve the fixed route bus stops (i.e. wheelchair platforms, curb cuts, shelters and benches) so that the Transportation Disadvantaged are more able to use the fixed route transit service.
5. SCAT+Plus should continue to work with the community's social service agencies that have vehicles to coordinate transportation services.

## **BARRIERS TO COORDINATION OF TD SERVICES**

No federal, state or local government policies are in place that prohibit, hinder or prevent the coordination of both inter- and intra-county coordination. The problem with implementation of this type of coordination remains in existing and proposed funding constraints. Funding reductions in both Medicaid and the Older American Act grants have forced the CTC to monitor expenditures closely and limit the availability of out-of-service-area trips. Coordinating inter-county trips requires the negotiation of farebox collections that serve as match for grant funding sources. Passengers using more than one coordinated system for mass transit service may be responsible for a fare when boarding each entity's vehicle. This can be cost prohibitive for TD passengers.

Defining eligibility for sponsoring funds also often varies from system to system making eligibility determination problematic for the systems. In addition, variance in rate schedules for passenger trips creates coordination difficulties. Sarasota County uses a base plus mileage rate similar to adjacent counties, such as Manatee, DeSoto, Charlotte, Pinellas, and Hillsborough.

Perceived territorialism also has limited the success of inter-county coordination. The CTC coordinates return trips for its clientele when they return from adjacent counties, eliminating down-time for their vehicles. Little reciprocation exists from surrounding counties.

Intra-county coordination has vastly improved over the past years. Former barriers, such as insurance requirements, rates and contract language have been eliminated. The CTC currently has 6 coordinated agreements with local agencies and 7 contracted operators. The CTC continues to negotiate coordination opportunities with private entities in Sarasota County. The Sarasota County CTC's ultimate goal is 100% coordination. Chapter 5, page 12, outlines the recent efforts made by SCAT+Plus to coordinate inter-county service.

Local efforts to address the barriers to coordination have included:

1. Seeking coordination agreements with adjacent counties that may encourage standardized trip and farebox rates with the CTCs.
2. Seeking a simplified eligibility process for purposes of inter-county coordination.
3. Establishing a toll-free phone number for return trips.
4. Provide passengers with business cards that identify the return operator.
5. Selecting pick-up/drop-off locations at county lines for trips moving south to north, with Pinellas and Hillsborough as final destinations.
6. Continuing efforts to increase intra-county coordination by recruiting and including providers not currently under contract.

The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged can encourage and support coordination through the adoption of standardized eligibility definitions and a uniform

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application process. The Commission could also employ a uniform inter-county contract/agreement for all CTCs. Educational workshops offered by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged should include the barriers to inter-county coordination.

Effective January 1, 2008, the CTC discontinued the provision and coordination of Medicaid non-emergency transportation due to continued cuts in funding. Many individuals expressed concern that, without SCAT+Plus coordinating Medicaid non-emergency transportation, that there might be long-term negative impacts to the coordinated system.

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**CHAPTER FOUR  
GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

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**GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Plan goals and objectives were developed to establish the direction of transportation disadvantaged services and improvements in Sarasota County. Table 4-1 lists two broad desired outcomes (goals) along with six objectives for SCAT+PLUS paratransit services.

<b>Table 4 – 1: TDSP Goals and Objectives</b>	
<b>Desired Outcomes</b>	<b>Improved Paratransit Service Delivery</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balance Operating Expenses and Revenues</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Efficiencies of Contract Driver Operations</li> </ul>
	<b>EXCELLENT, DEPENDABLE AND EFFICIENT PARATRANSIT SERVICE</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve Interagency Coordination</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Internal Coordination with Fixed Route Transit Services</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage Paratransit Demand</li> </ul>

**Mid-Range Goals**

Mid-range strategies to accomplish SCAT+PLUS goals were considered for each of the desired outcomes. The strategies are guidelines for paratransit improvements over the next 3 to 5 years. Table 4-2 lists key strategies associated with the plan goals and objectives and discussed in the following section.

**EXCELLENT SERVICE AND IMPROVED DELIVERY**

SCAT’s fixed route services provided over 14,392 trips to Transportation Disadvantaged individuals in 2008. This represents nearly 22 percent of the total trips designated as TD trips. Many of the efficiency improvements that have been implemented by Sarasota County directly impact this high percentage. Additional efficiencies need to be implemented in order to continue to achieve more transition of TD individuals from SCAT+Plus to the fixed route system. This transition provides more opportunity and freedom for individuals, as well as lowering the cost burden on SCAT+Plus.

SCAT+Plus provides essential transportation to persons meeting Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) and ADA eligibility requirements who depend on the County’s

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paratransit system for daily medical, employment, and shopping trips. Over the last eight years, SCAT+Plus ridership has increased from 1999, when SCAT+Plus logged approximately 600 trips per day, to over 778 trips per day in 2008. The increased number of daily trips has resulted in climbing paratransit costs and burdened daily operations. Mid-range strategies associated with the goal of Quality Service Delivery address activities designed to increase passenger trips per vehicle, reduce operating expenses, and enhance contract driver services while reducing the numbers of these purchased trips. Improved interagency and internal coordination and properly managed paratransit demand will work toward these goals.

<b>Table 4 – 2: TDSP Objectives and Strategies</b>	
<b>Improve Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness</b>	<p><b>Increase passenger trips per vehicle hour and vehicle mile.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Create permanent runs, daily and Saturday, using subscription trips as a framework. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Increase the extra board of standby drivers to fill-in absentee runs by using cross-training.</li> <li>✓ Reduce slack time, such as using overbooking to absorb cancels and no-shows.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Consider operating smaller vehicles for non-peak and long trips.</li> <li>● Continue work to increase trips provided by coordination contractors.</li> </ul>
<b>Balance Operating Expenses and Revenues</b>	<p><b>Reduce operating expenses per passenger trip, vehicle and driver hour.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make multi-loading of vehicles a priority. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Work with dialysis centers, adult day programs and others to achieve maximum cooperation in grouping clients.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Maximize every driver hour with “real time” dispatching.</li> <li>● Establish regular review process of the automated scheduling software including: daily trip capacity, scheduling parameters, and quality of the manifests.</li> <li>● Reduce the window for reservations from 14 days to 7 days.</li> <li>● Institute co-pays for agency subscription trips.</li> <li>● Identify alternative revenue sources, including fostering private/public partnerships.</li> <li>● Identify state sponsors for current ADA passengers.</li> <li>● Investigate innovative technologies and equipment to improve bus driver efficiency.</li> <li>● Review TCRP Report 121, <u><i>Toolkit for Integrating Non-Dedicated vehicles in Paratransit Service</i></u>, as a tool to evaluate the best deployment of contractor vehicles.</li> </ul>

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<b>Increase Efficiencies of Contract Operations</b>	<p><b>Enhance contract driver performance, customer relations and on-time performance.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Monitor contract driver on-time performance, evaluating contractors monthly.</li> <li>● Generate a monthly “report card” rating contractors on performance and their complaints, productivity and survey results. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conduct telephone surveys of passengers who ride with contract drivers.</li> <li>✓ Use “mystery passengers” to ride with contractors and report on service.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Require contractors to attend Local Coordinating Board meetings.</li> <li>● Provide and require in-house training to contract drivers, including drug and alcohol training, paratransit sensitivity training, CPR/First Aid, peer driver training, and safety training.</li> <li>● Require contract drivers to wear uniforms and ID badges.</li> </ul>
<b>Improve Interagency Coordination</b>	<p><b>Provide reliable, convenient, and safe transit service.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Provide seamless connection to Manatee and Charlotte counties.</li> <li>● Provide transportation to employment in suburban locations, such as Longboat Key and Lakewood Ranch.</li> <li>● Recognize that transit is an integral part of a multi-modal transportation system.</li> <li>● Ensure City/County policies support transit services.</li> <li>● Bus stops are ADA accessible, comfortable, safe and convenient.</li> <li>● Development supports transit services.</li> <li>● Traffic and transit operations benefit overall transportation network.</li> <li>● Internal transfer locations create an interconnected transit network.</li> <li>● Connections to inter-regional public transportation (e.g., future major rail service along I-75).</li> </ul>
<b>Increase Internal Coordination with Fixed Route Transit Services</b>	<p><b>Encourage SCAT+Plus riders to use fixed route transit services.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer fixed route transit services as the transit mode of choice. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ensure accessible and reliable fixed route transit services.</li> <li>✓ Designate TD bus stops at the 3 fixed-route main transfer stations and all new and existing transit connection locations.</li> <li>✓ Employ pull-ins for Paratransit buses, signage for Paratransit stops, Braille and verbal cues at transfer stations and connections, textured surfaces, shelters, lighting and other amenities (e.g., rest room facilities).</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Provide community friendly transit services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Develop community bus in North Port that makes access to existing fixed route service more convenient .</li> <li>✓ Market the Ride Free Bus-Pass Program encouraging appropriate SCAT+Plus riders to switch to the fixed route.</li> <li>✓ Transition paratransit riders to fixed route when possible.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<b>Manage Paratransit Demand</b>	<p><b>Contain CTC/ADA paratransit trip service and delivery costs.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ADA Trip-by-Trip Eligibility guidelines for staff to identify appropriate paratransit or fixed route transit services for individual travel on a trip-by-trip basis.</li> <li>• Improve communications both internally and externally on TD program eligibility, usage, and changes.</li> <li>• Implement an ADA eligibility appeals process.</li> <li>• Ensure annual employee training (e.g., required sensitivity training).</li> <li>• Foster contracts with independent Med-waiver support coordinators.</li> <li>• Encourage agencies to identify ADA clients who are sponsored by Med-Waiver.</li> <li>• Foster the use of fixed route (e.g., market bus passes, SCAT fixed route, use advertising wrap for the \$1.00 TD Volunteer dollars, bus training, volunteer “bus buddy” programs, promotional days with free rides for all Paratransit eligible clients).</li> </ul>
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**RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES**

Methods of reducing SCAT+Plus costs in light of increased ridership spurred the development of options for new SCAT+Plus operating efficiencies in the upcoming year. The recommended efficiencies, however, will affect existing service levels received by current and future SCAT+Plus riders. Table 4-6 shows the performance improvements that have been previously recommended, and were initiated by SCAT+Plus as of May 2009. The revenue or cost savings and costs are identified for each improvement. Table 4-7 outlines the recommended improvements beginning in July 1, 2010, along with the expected system efficiencies and costs.

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**Table 4-6: SCAT+Plus Performance Improvements**  
 May 2009

<b>Performance Improvement</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>	<b>Begin/End Date</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Improved Co-Pay Collection	Paratransit Staff	Implemented	Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affects passengers with very low and low-moderate incomes.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affects passengers with very low and low-moderate incomes.</li> </ul>
Initiate Permanent Runs Daily and Saturday	Paratransit Staff	Implemented	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves service to passengers (e.g., on-time performance, reliability).</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will require additional bus operators to continue to meet growing future demand.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will require additional bus operators to continue to meet growing future demand.</li> </ul>
Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Bus Stops	Paratransit & Planning Staff	On Going	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports transition from paratransit to fixed route.</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Construction with Transfer Station Development and Bus Stop Program Improvements.</li> </ul>

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**Table 4-7: Recommended SCAT+Plus Efficiencies**  
 Beginning July 1, 2008

<b>Performance Improvement</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>	<b>Begin/End Date</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Bus Stop Improvement Program	Planning Staff	On Going	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves access to the fixed route system for persons with disabilities</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop communication strategy on the status of this program</li> </ul>
Educate community leaders on the nature of SCAT Plus as a shared ride service	Senior Management Staff	Implemented	Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows decision –makers to thoroughly understand who SCAT Plus is intended to serve</li> </ul>
Explore the use of smaller vehicles	Paratransit Staff	Implemented	Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of smaller vehicles may promote efficiency during non-peak times of day and for longer trips</li> </ul>
Increase trips provided by Coordination Contractors	Paratransit Staff	Implemented	Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to identify trips that would be best served by contractors to maximize operational and cost benefits to the system</li> </ul>
Improve communications internally and externally regarding changes in eligibility and usage rules  - Identify a contact person to work with at the County PIO - Develop a TD Users Guide - Use media for communicating to the visually impaired	Senior Management Staff	FY09 Implemented	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves customer relations</li> <li>Allows for accurate information to be shared with customers</li> <li>Minimizes customer challenges</li> </ul>

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<b>Performance Improvement</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>	<b>Begin/End Date</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Develop an improved sensitivity training module for private service contractors	Paratransit Staff	FY09	Staff Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop training module for increased sensitivity to special needs, TD, and disabled passengers</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include in annual agreement as mandatory training for contractor staff</li> </ul>
Regular review of automated scheduling system, including: daily trip capacity, scheduling parameters, and quality of manifests	Paratransit Staff	FY09 Implemented	Staff Time	Regular review of automated scheduling system, including: daily trip capacity, scheduling parameters, and quality of manifests
Consider reducing window for reservations from 14 days to 7 days	Paratransit Staff	FY09 Implemented	Staff Time	Implemented a reduction in the window for reservations from 14 days to 7 days
Provide transportation to employment in suburban locations, such as Longboat Key and Lakewood Ranch	Paratransit Staff	FY09 Partially implemented (Longboat Key, Rt#18)	Future Cost	Provide transportation to employment in suburban locations, such as Longboat Key and Lakewood Ranch
Review TCRP Report 121, <u>Toolkit for Integrating Non-Dedicated Vehicles in Paratransit Service</u> , as a tool to evaluate the best deployment of contractor vehicles	Paratransit Staff	FY09	Staff Time	Review TCRP Report 121, <u>Toolkit for Integrating Non-Dedicated Vehicles in Paratransit Service</u> , as a tool to evaluate the best deployment of contractor vehicles
Implement neighborhood bus service in North Port	Planning Staff	FY10 Implemented North Port, #Rts, 20 & 29))	Future Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improves access to fixed route for persons with disabilities and for the general public</li> </ul>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentrates on employment centers, access to health care, and educational opportunities</li> </ul>

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<b>Performance Improvement</b>	<b>Responsible Staff</b>	<b>Begin/End Date</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Implement fixed route enhancements and system improvements.	Planning Staff	FY10	Future Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase frequency of major routes</li> </ul>
Partially implemented				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement 15-minute peak hour service on selected routes</li> </ul>
Consider crossing county boundaries to serve passengers traveling to/from Sarasota, Manatee, and Charlotte counties	Senior Management Staff	FY10	Future Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the operational and cost impacts of extending service over the county boundaries</li> </ul>

Recommended programs with the greatest potential impact include:

- Neighborhood bus service
- Increased frequencies and extended hours of service
- Maximizing efficiency opportunities

To better use the County's limited paratransit resources while continuing to provide quality service to a growing number of paratransit passengers, SCAT+Plus will implement new neighborhood bus service. The neighborhood buses will enhance access to the fixed route for both the general public and the paratransit passengers. These routes will be fixed with published time points and will make connections at ADA accessible transfer points to the regular fixed bus service. The acute need for door-to-door service is expected to diminish significantly, reducing the costs associated with the ADA service.

Other SCAT Plus program services and projects will improve the overall operating efficiencies without major service impacts to the SCAT+Plus passenger or the SCAT+Plus budget.

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**IMPLEMENTATION**

Table 4-8, Transit Service Improvement Plan, describes recommended fixed route and paratransit service improvements and efficiencies for FY2008 through FY2013.

**Table 4-8: Transit Service Improvement Plan**

FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
<b>Marketing and Customer Service</b>			
Marketing – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transit ridership</li> <li>• Spanish language info</li> </ul>	Marketing – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neighborhood Bus Service</li> <li>• New Ride Guide</li> <li>• How to Ride the Bus training film</li> <li>• Paratransit Newsletter</li> </ul>	Marketing – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trip travel planning</li> <li>• Google Transit</li> <li>• New Veterans Service Brochure</li> </ul>	TBD
<b>Other Transit Improvements</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus replacement</li> <li>• Fleet expansion</li> <li>• Technology bus operator training</li> <li>• Technology infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus replacement</li> <li>• Fleet expansion</li> <li>• Other technology improvements</li> <li>• MDTs on paratransit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus replacement</li> <li>• Fleet expansion</li> <li>• Other technology improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus replacement</li> <li>• Fleet expansion</li> <li>• Other technology improvements</li> </ul>
Advanced public transportation technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced travel information systems</li> <li>• Communications upgrades</li> </ul>	Advanced public transportation technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus signal priority system</li> </ul>	Advanced public transportation technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Demand Management</li> </ul>	Advanced public transportation technology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation Demand Management</li> </ul>
<b>Other Public Transportation Services</b>			
Paratransit service efficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility coordination center</li> <li>• Shelter improvements</li> <li>• Customer travel training</li> </ul>	Paratransit service efficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility coordination center</li> <li>• Shelter improvements</li> <li>• Customer travel training</li> </ul>	Paratransit service efficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility coordination center</li> <li>• Shelter improvements</li> <li>• Customer travel training</li> </ul>	Paratransit service efficiencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobility coordination center</li> <li>• Shelter improvements</li> <li>• Customer travel training</li> </ul>
CAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By FDOT</li> </ul>	CAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By FDOT</li> </ul>	CAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By FDOT</li> </ul>	CAP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• By FDOT</li> </ul>

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Transit Planning Initiatives			
Dedicated transit infrastructure	Dedicated transit infrastructure	Dedicated transit infrastructure	Dedicated transit infrastructure
Research sample agreements with Charlotte County to provide seamless service	Develop interlocal agreement with Charlotte County to provide seamless service	Ongoing transit coordination	Ongoing transit coordination

Summary of Fixed Route Transit Service Improvements			
<p>Neighborhood Bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Port</li> <li>• Osprey Town</li> <li>• Laurel/Knights Trail</li> <li>• Webber Street</li> </ul> <p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 7 (30-min)</li> <li>• Route 8 (30-min)</li> <li>• Route 9 (60-min)</li> <li>• Route 14 (30-min)</li> <li>• Route 19 (60-min)</li> </ul> <p>Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 18</li> <li>• Rout 5</li> <li>• University Pkwy</li> <li>• Bee Ridge East</li> </ul> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunday and extended weekday and Saturday</li> <li>• Commuter services</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Sarasota</li> <li>• Bee Ridge/Lakeview</li> <li>• Shade Avenue Area</li> <li>• McIntosh Road</li> <li>• Nokomis Center</li> </ul> <p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US 301 (30-min)</li> <li>• Venice area</li> </ul> <p>Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 3</li> </ul> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuter services</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iona/Lakewood Ranch</li> <li>• Siesta Key Trolley</li> </ul> <p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venice Island (60-min)</li> </ul> <p>Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North Port Toledo Blade</li> </ul> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuter services</li> </ul>	<p>Neighborhood Bus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proctor/Twin Lakes</li> </ul> <p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Route 9 (30-min)</li> </ul> <p>Extension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Center Road</li> </ul> <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commuter services</li> <li>• Express service from North Port and Venice to Sarasota</li> </ul>

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<b>Infrastructure Improvements</b>			
Bus Stops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beneva (Bee Ridge to Mall)</li> <li>• Fruitville Road/Sarasota City</li> </ul>	Bus Stops SAFETEALU	Bus Stops SAFETEALU	Bus Stops SAFETEALU
Intermodal Planning and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bee Ridge Road and Honore Avenue</li> <li>• SRQ Airport</li> </ul>	Intermodal Planning and Development Bee Ridge and Cattlemen	Intermodal Planning and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US 41 and Laurel</li> <li>• US 41 and Blackburn</li> <li>• New North Port Hub</li> </ul>	Intermodal Planning and Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honore/North Ridge Area</li> <li>• NE Plaza</li> </ul>
Park and Ride Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• North County locations in coordination with City of Sarasota</li> </ul>	Park and Ride Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBD</li> </ul>	Park and Ride Planning TBD	Park and Ride Planning TBD

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**CHAPTER 5  
SERVICE PLAN**

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## OPERATIONS ELEMENT

### *Types, Hours and Days of Service*

Ambulatory paratransit, non-ambulatory paratransit (wheelchair and stretcher), and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) fixed route bus pass program are coordinated by the Sarasota County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). Sarasota County's paratransit service is administered under SCAT as a separate operating unit called "SCAT + Plus." SCAT + Plus is an external door-to-external door, demand responsive, paratransit service requiring one day advance reservations. SCAT + Plus has several different funding sources for paratransit services. Each funding program has different eligibility criteria.

Individual reservation trips and subscription service are available to customers. Individual reservation trips are scheduled one a day in advance. Trips that recur from week to week, at the same time with the same origin and destination are defined to as subscription trips. Over fifty percent of the current trips can be classified as subscription trips. Same day service is provided by the CTC on a space and vehicle available basis.

SCAT + Plus is provided under the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Program, for those individuals who, because of a disability, income status, age (65 or older) or other reason are dependent on others and are physically unable to access the SCAT fixed route bus system. The TD funded service area includes all of Sarasota County. Out-of-Service Area transportation can be arranged by a special trip request through the CTC. TD service is available Monday through Friday with the exception of Medical trips during the same hours as the fixed route bus service. TD service after hours is only provided for medically necessary trips, where the medical service is not provided during the normal operating hours. General-purpose trips that are not subsidized by any other governmental or social service agency may be eligible under this program.

Regular fixed route bus service is available to the general public. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), individuals living within three fourths of a mile of a fixed route who are unable to access or use fixed route bus service because of a disability can apply for ADA certification to use SCAT + Plus. ADA service is provided on the same days and hours as the fixed route bus service.

Social service agencies that have a need for client transportation may contact SCAT + Plus to provide paratransit service. The CTC charges a base rate plus mileage for these services. Currently, the agencies contracting with SCAT + Plus are the Agency for Persons with Disabilities Med-Waiver and Senior Friendship Center.

### **Accessing Services**

Customers who are eligible for SCAT + Plus service can request trip reservations the day before and not more than seven days in advance. Telephone reservations are accepted from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. However, reservations

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for the next day service are not accepted after 2:00 p.m. unless adequate capacity and vehicle availability exist. The CTC will accept same day reservations based on seating and schedule availability. Reservations can be made by calling (941) 861-1234 or by fax at (941) 861-1034. Fax reservations will be confirmed by request.

Customers, their guardians, or agency sponsor should cancel trips as soon as they become aware the trip will not be made. Cancellation of trips should be made no later than one hour prior to the scheduled pick-up time to avoid being classified as a no-show. Cancellations made within the one hour pickup window will be documented as "late cancels." A letter is generated and mailed outlining service policies and costs as a result of late cancellations.

Cancellations at the door or no response at the door are considered no-shows. Canceled trips or no-shows are not charged to the customer. On August 28, 2007, in response to escalating occurrences of cancellations received at the door, SCAT + Plus announced that it would begin a strict enforcement of the no-show policy. The CTC will monitor these occurrences during each month. The CTC will notify clients of missed trips, no shows, late cancellations and suspensions by way of U.S. Mail. Policy guidelines are as follows:

First Occurrence	Client receives a copy of SCAT policy regarding lates/cancels/no shows. (Client will only receive this letter upon first offense.)
Second Occurrence	Client receives a letter of warning that lists the date(s) of the Occurrence(s). (Clients who have previously been sent a SCAT policy letter AND have 1 or 2 Occurrences in a month.)
Third Occurrence	Client receives a 2 <sup>nd</sup> copy of the SCAT policy letter and a letter listing the dates of the Occurrences, advising them they will be suspended beginning the 1 <sup>st</sup> of the coming month, through the end of that month. (Clients who have been previously sent a SCAT policy letter AND have 3 or more Occurrences in a month.)

The CTC maintains a 10% spare ratio to back-up the paratransit service during all operational hours. Back-up drivers are available daily, as needed to drive these vehicles.

Dispatchers are on duty Monday through Friday from 4:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Saturday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and on Sunday from 9:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. Dispatchers

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are trained to handle both radio and telephone calls. After business hours call 941-861-9616 for cancellations

### ***SCAT and SCAT Plus Transportation***

Mobility needs for transportation-disadvantaged individuals are being provided through five major transportation programs. These programs include TD non-sponsored paratransit, Americans with Disabilities Act complementary paratransit, agency-sponsored / Med-Waiver paratransit, Older Americans Act service and regular fixed route transit. Each program is discussed in the following sections.

#### **TD Non-Sponsored Paratransit Services**

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (FCTD) receives funding from a nonrefundable fee of a \$1.50 on the initial and renewal registration of each automobile for private use as well as each truck having a net weight of 5,000 pounds or less. TD service is available to persons who, because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation.

TD non-sponsored trips are general-purpose trips that are not subsidized by any other governmental or social service agency. Eligibility for the TD service is determined through a written application process.

The fare for a one-way trip on the TD service increased on November 7, 2011 from \$2.00 to \$2.50. FCTD pays the remaining cost of the trip according to a base plus mileage formula. The demand for TD trips has continually exceeded the resources available to SCAT + Plus. Due to this shortfall in resources, a set of trip priorities have been established by the CTC and LCB. Prioritization of trips is determined by the purpose of the trip. Medical, employment, education, and life sustaining trip requests receive top priority. Life sustaining trips include such trips as; grocery shopping, post office, bank, food stamp office, congregate dining, court mandated activities and other trips that are at the discretion of the reservationists. These might include a trip to the hairdresser if the elderly person cannot shampoo their own hair or visiting an elderly spouse in the nursing home if the individual has no alternative transportation. Requests for other purposes, such as shopping, nutritional and recreational are scheduled as resources allow. TD non-sponsored trips are the only trips being prioritized. Effective October 1, 2009, The CTC will provide TD trips Monday through Friday only, eliminating Saturday service with the exception of medical trips.

Applicants who reside east of I-75 and outside of the ADA ¾ mile service area and whose income exceeds one and one-half times poverty level will be extended service from specified pick up points on Monday, Wednesday and Friday only. These pick up points will be located just west of I-75 at the intersections of University

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Parkway, Fruitville Road, Bee Ridge Road and Clark Road. Applicants must arrange alternative transportation to and from the specified pick up point to be eligible for service. The CTC will select pick up points that provide shelter, air conditioning and public restrooms.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Complementary Paratransit Service**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for 1990 is a civil right that ensures persons with a disability the same access to public transportation as able-bodied individuals. If a person with a disability is functionally unable to utilize the fixed route bus service, then complementary paratransit service must be provided. Two areas in the provision of ADA service that need to be addressed are; subscription trips should not exceed 50% and reservation services should be available during at least all normal business hours of the administrative office, as well as during times, comparable to normal business hours, on days when the office is not open before a service day.

The complementary service is provided within the three fourths of a mile corridor of the fixed route bus service during the same days and hours as the fixed route bus service. Exceptions to the three fourths of a mile corridor have been made for Easter Seals Southwest and Lighthouse for the Blind, located in Manatee County.

To manage increasing demand for SCAT + Plus services, SCAT developed the position of ADA Mobility Coordinator. The key responsibilities include; re-certification of customers for paratransit service, training bus operators and encouraging and training customers to use the fixed route bus services. ADA door to door paratransit service is provided, at a fare not to exceed two times the cost of a fixed route one-way fare, for ADA eligible passengers.

**ADA Subscription Service**

ADA subscription service provides a higher level of service by guaranteeing capacity and requires a significant amount of paratransit resources, usually at peak travel times. Agency sponsored customers receive the most ADA subscription service. This type of service results in an unintended subsidy to the state and social service agencies. SCAT + Plus reserves the right to charge a premium co-pay for subscription service. The TD Local Coordinating Board approved a premium co-pay for agency subscription trips in October, 2008. To date, the CTC has not implemented this premium co-pay. The CTC worked closely with social service agencies to find alternatives. The CTC strongly encourages social service agencies to actively participate in the 5310 Vehicle Procurement Program and to submit applications for New Freedom and Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC). Effective October 1, 2009, the CTC no longer provided work-related trips originating from agencies.

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**ADA Bus Pass Program**

SCAT + Plus allows ADA eligible customers to obtain a monthly fixed route bus pass at no charge for the first month and \$8.00 a month thereafter. The pass provides for unlimited trips on the fixed route bus system. Customers may still use the door-to-door paratransit service for destinations that cannot be accessed by the fixed route system.

**Agency Sponsored Paratransit Service**

The CTC offers the door-to-door paratransit service to social service agencies. The CTC charges a base fare and an applicable mileage charge for these services. Client fares will vary according to funding service, typically, clients pay a \$2.50 fare per one way trip. Effective October 1, 2009, the CTC will no longer provide work-related trips originating from agencies. The CTC will provide the trip into the agency and the return trip home from the agency. Agencies will be required to seek alternatives to scheduled work trips to and from the agency.

**Med Waiver Services**

Med Waiver is administered through the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. Working with the support coordinators, transportation to adult day programs and work sites can be added as an eligible expense for client services. The Support Coordination Services representative designates the approved destinations and number of trips. A service authorization is completed for each client with the rate and level of service.

Over the past several years, SCAT + Plus staff has worked on identifying those customers that are eligible for transportation under the Med Waiver program. This has resulted in an increase in Med Waiver trips from 16,764 in fiscal year 2003 to 37,461 in fiscal year 2007. Effective October 1, 2008, Med Waiver drastically reduced funding for Tier IV clients under the FSL waiver. SCAT +Plus responded by offering service to these individuals at a reduced cost of 70% of the calculated rate. Effective in August 2010, SCAT+Plus no longer offers that 70% rate. Social service agencies also increased the number of clients transported to their respective agencies using 5310 grant-funded vehicles.

***Eligibility***

In order to be eligible for SCAT+Plus service, under the ADA or TD programs, an application must be completed. Mobility coordinators will review all applications and conduct an interview with those applicants where it is not clear if an individual can use the fixed route bus service. Clients sponsored by another agency, where the agency is purchasing service, may be certified as eligible to use paratransit service by that

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agency, and do not have to repeat the certification process with SCAT+Plus. Paratransit customers are re-certified every three years.

**TD Non-Sponsored Paratransit Service**

Demand for TD service has continually exceeded the available resources throughout Florida. In response to this situation, eight criteria have been proposed by the FCTD to use in determining eligibility.

- No other funding is available to pay for the requested trip.
- No other means of transportation is available. Applicants must demonstrate that they cannot drive themselves or do not have ready access to family, friends, or neighbors who can transport them.
- If public transit is available, applicants must show why it cannot be used.
- Physical or mental disability, as outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)
- Age (65 or older)
- Individual and household income status must be 150% of the federal poverty level or less.
- No self-declaration allowed. CTCs must use a formal eligibility process that substantiates applicant's ability to meet eligibility criteria.
- Ability to pay (as specified by the LCB and CTC).

The CTC has adopted these criteria to determine eligibility for non-sponsored TD paratransit service. A Mobility Coordinator will review the written application and conduct an interview, when appropriate, to verify applicant's eligibility. SCAT is reviewing the potential to implement a scale for individual and household income status exceeding the guidelines.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA Complementary Paratransit Service)**

ADA paratransit service is available to those customers with disabilities who are unable to use or access the fixed route bus service. In response to the trend of continually increasing demand for ADA paratransit service, SCAT + Plus has instituted a more thorough ADA eligibility process. The goal of this process is to ensure that only individuals who meet the specific criteria outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 are provide ADA paratransit service.

A Mobility Coordinator will start with the written application. Unconditional eligibility is conferred on those individuals who are determined unable to ever independently navigate the fixed route bus system, even with training. Conditional eligibility is assigned to those individuals who are able to use fixed route bus service for some of their trips. Individuals who are certified as unconditionally eligible may use the ADA paratransit service at will. Unconditional eligibility allows an individual to use the ADA paratransit service under specified circumstances and/or conditions.

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If a Mobility Coordinator cannot determine an applicant's eligibility based on the written application, a functional assessment will be done. Transportation to and from the SCAT facility for the functional assessment will be provided by the CTC. During the functional assessment, the Mobility Coordinator will evaluate; the individual's capability to get to a bus stop and get on the bus, the individual's ability to plan a trip on the bus service and the individual's capability to pay fares and signal for a stop. Applicants who are unable to demonstrate these skills are certified for the ADA paratransit service. Those applicants that are found to be functionally able to use the fixed route service are denied the paratransit service. Travel training is offered to these individuals to help navigate the public transit system.

### ***Transportation Operators and Coordination Contracts***

In 2006, SCAT + Plus issued a Request for Interest to potential private vendors. There was a local distribution of the Request for Interest. Ten vendors responded with an interest in providing paratransit service. The CTC evaluated the vendors utilizing the following criteria.

- Capabilities of operator
- Previous experience
- Management
- Qualifications of staff
- Scope of Work
- Safety Program
- Capacity
- Training Program
- Insurance
- Reporting capabilities
- Accident history
- Quality
- Community knowledge

After a review of the criteria, the CTC entered into contract with seven private vendors for the provision of paratransit service. These contracts expired on January 8, 2012. SCAT initiated a Request for Professional Services process for new contracts in 2011. Currently, 49% of all trips are performed by private vendors. In January 2012, these contracts were extended for 90 days until April 7, 2012. After a Request for Proposal process, the CTC entered into contract with two private vendors for the provision of paratransit service.

The CTC uses the private vendors to cover operations when the daily trip capacity is exceeded, as well as for service after hours, weekends and on holidays. All trips are coordinated by the CTC with assignment to the vendors. The vendors must submit documentation of having performed the trip with times and odometer readings.

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Reimbursement of the trips occurs within 30 days of providing the documentation and a proper invoice.

<b>Contract Operators</b>	<b>Type of Service</b>	<b>Clients Served</b>
South County Transportation 3587 Manfero Avenue North Port, Florida 34286 Contact: Nancy Head (941) 423-6639 email: <a href="mailto:nancyleehead@hotmail.com">nancyleehead@hotmail.com</a>	Ambulatory and wheelchair service	All
Empire Transport 2601 14 <sup>th</sup> Street, West Bradenton, Florida 34205 Contact: Dan McLoughlin (941) 752-9440 email: <a href="mailto:dmac8823@aol.com">dmac8823@aol.com</a>	Ambulatory and wheelchair service	All

In addition, the CTC maintains coordination contracts with 2 private non-profit agencies that are recipients of publicly funded vehicles under the Section 5310 grant process. The CTC currently has coordination contracts with the following agencies shown on Table 5-2.

**Table 5-2: Coordination Contracts with the CTC**

<b>J H Floyd Sunshine Manor</b> 1755 18 <sup>th</sup> Street Sarasota, FL 34234 Contact: Deborah Oellrich (941) 955-4915 Mon-Fri, 8 AM to 5 PM Agency Clients Only		<b>The Pines of Sarasota</b> 1501 N. Orange Avenue Sarasota, FL 34234 Contact: John Overton (941) 552-1826 Mon-Fri, 8 AM to 5 PM Agency Clients Only
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The CTC evaluates entering into a coordination contract on a case by case basis. A review of the existing coordination contracts was completed to determine the type of criteria the CTC was utilizing.

- Case 1 found that an agency had the ability to meet all the trip needs of their clients and thus free up capacity on the CTC's vehicles.
- Case 2 identified the unique needs of an agency's clients that could not be accommodated through the use of the CTC's shared ride paratransit program.
- Case 3 found a coordination contract was advantageous based on the continuous need for out of service area trips due to the location of the agency near an adjacent county.

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All these cases resulted in the CTC being better served as well as the clients by entering into the coordination contracts.

Annually, the CTC reviews the purchased transportation contracts to ensure that the initial reasoning for the contract has not changed. A review of the Commission's Annual Operation reports for FY 08 and FY 09 showed that SCAT + Plus has increased the amount of trips provided through purchased transportation contracts by 2%. FY 08 reflects the provision of 112,371 trips, increasing to 114,591 trips in FY 09. FY 10 reflected the provision of 87,314 trips and FY 11 reflects the provision of 85,415 trips.

### ***Public Transit Utilization***

Fixed route bus service is available to transportation-disadvantaged individuals in Sarasota County. SCAT operates 22 routes, Monday through Saturday, providing service throughout Sarasota County. Average daily span is 15 hours with average headway every 45 minutes. SCAT also operates Express bus service via I-75 between North Port and Sarasota debuted in April 2011, operating only in the Monday through Friday rush hour periods. That route, the #100X, will soon be supplemented with a second express route connecting North Port to Sarasota via Venice.

Due to destinations and densities, much of the fixed route service is concentrated within and near the City of Sarasota. Fixed route bus service is also available in south Sarasota County including the Town of Longboat, City of Venice, greater Venice area, City of North Port and the unincorporated Englewood in Sarasota County. In north Sarasota County, SCAT coordinates Route 99 (Palmetto-Sarasota) and Longboat Key Trolley (Route 18) in coordination with Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT).

On February 25, 2008, SCAT added night service to some routes and Sunday service on some routes. Nine bus routes are now operated on Sunday. Service span on Sunday depends on the particular route; start times range from 5:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., some routes operating as late as 11:15 p.m.

### ***School Bus Utilization***

The CTC does not use school buses in the coordinated system. It is not cost effective, seat belts are not available, and the school buses are in use at the peak time for the coordinated system. The CTC will continue to work in the community to facilitate and encourage the maximum use of existing transportation resources, including school buses.

### ***Vehicle Inventory***

The Appendix contains the vehicle inventory report reflecting the year, make, model, mileage, funding source and owner of each vehicle.

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### ***System Safety Program Plan Certification***

SCAT + Plus annually updates its System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) in compliance with Rule 14-90, Florida Administrative Code. A copy of the certification is included in the Appendix. Private vendors are also required to have an SSPP, and SCAT+Plus staff is responsible for monitoring contract compliance.

### ***Inter-County Services***

Sarasota and Manatee County entered into an Inter-local Agreement on October 26, 2006 for the provision of inter-county services between the two counties. The Agreement provides a frame work of understanding with respect to the provision of inter-county fixed route bus service along the U.S. 41 corridor and a jointly operated rubber wheeled trolley service between the Sarasota County Transfer Station and the Manatee County “Coquina” Transfer Station. For ADA service, the county from which the ADA trip originates shall be responsible for ensuring the customer receives the level of service required under ADA.

Charlotte County operates a paratransit “Dial-A-Ride” system to the south of Sarasota County. The Charlotte system and SCAT fixed route service use the Chamber of Commerce in Englewood as a designated transfer point between the two systems. Paratransit passengers of both systems transfer at Englewood Hospital.

SCAT offers veteran’s daily transportation (Monday thru Friday) to two out-of-county medical facilities, Bay Pines VA Healthcare System in Bay Pines, and James A. Haley Veteran’s Hospital in Tampa. This service is provided from six pick up and drop off points in Sarasota County and costs between \$8.00 and \$13.00, depending on the pick up point. Reservations must be made at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled medical appointment.

Out of county trips are available to TD customers, who are unable to receive the necessary medical treatment in Sarasota County. Trips that been provided outside the County include; pediatric dentists, kidney/liver transplants and associated follow ups. Whenever possible, trips are scheduled on the veterans’ service.

### ***Emergency Preparedness and Response***

SCAT + Plus vehicles and drivers participate under the guidance of local Emergency Management during emergency evacuations as required. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) maintains a list of residents that require transportation assistance. During an emergency, volunteers verify with these residents their need for transportation and SCAT + Plus will then dispatch a vehicle to pick up the resident and transport them to a special needs shelter. SCAT + Plus has added a question on their certification form to determine the need for emergency evacuation. Those customers indicating a need for

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assistance are added to the EOC list. Under special circumstances, during these periods, the CTC will provide service to non-County residents.

### ***Educational Efforts / Marketing***

SCAT + Plus publishes a Service and Information Guide to provide information about the paratransit service program. It includes information regarding services provided, eligibility requirements, how to apply for certification, reservations procedures, the cancellation and no-show policy and rules to remember.

In addition, information on the ADA portion of the service as well as an application form can be found on the SCAT website.

### ***Acceptable Alternatives***

SCAT + Plus does not provide any alternative forms of transportation at this time.

### ***Service Standards***

#### **Drug and Alcohol Testing**

The Sarasota County CTC complies with applicable Federal Transit Administration and U.S. Department of Transportation requirements for all safety sensitive positions.

#### **Transportation of Escorts/Personal Care Attendant and Dependent Children**

Escorts/Personal Care Attendant (PCA) are required for children under age 12 and individuals requiring special loading assistance. The PCA must be able to provide the necessary assistance to the passenger and will be transported free. PCAs are determined during the eligibility process for individuals requiring special loading assistance. Companion passengers who are not PCAs must pay the regular fare.

#### **Use, Responsibility and Cost of Child Restraint Devices**

Children under the age of four (4) years and/or under the weight of 45 pounds will be required to use a child restraint device. Due to the cost of purchasing, maintaining and replacing the devices and for sanitary reasons related to transmittal of communicable diseases, the devices must be provided by the accompanying adult or PCA.

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**Passenger Property**

Passengers shall be allowed to have unlimited pieces of personal property which they can stow in the rear of the vehicle. Passenger property does not include wheelchairs, child seats, secured oxygen, personal assistance devices, or intravenous devices. Passengers must be able to independently carry all items brought onto the vehicle. Groceries shall be limited to three (3) plastic bags or two (2) paper bags. Grocery carts are encouraged which can be safely secured aboard the vehicle. Driver shall be allowed to carry packages and assist with the cart as individually needed by the passenger.

**Vehicle Transfer Points**

Vehicle transfer points shall provide for the shelter, security and safety of passengers.

**Local Toll-Free Numbers**

SCAT + Plus has signs posted in all paratransit vehicles with toll free numbers to call for complaints and commendations. The toll free numbers listed in the vehicles are provided below.

SCAT + Plus 861-1234  
TD Helpline 1-800-983-2435

**Out of Service Area Trips**

The CTC provides out-of-service area medically necessary trips based on availability and capacity. Reservations must be made no less than 24 hours prior to the trip.

**Vehicle Cleanliness**

SCAT + Plus vehicles are cleaned, fueled and maintained daily. Private providers are required to clean their vehicles (interior and exterior) per contract.

**Billing Requirements**

Payment to contractors will be made within seven days of receipt of payment from the purchasing agencies, in accordance with Chapter 287.0585 Florida Statutes.

**Passenger/Trip Database**

The CTC uses an automated scheduling system to maintain the passenger / trip database. This database will provide information on each individual customer, service eligibility, special requirements, their billing codes and the trips that have been provided to them.

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**Adequate Seating**

All SCAT + Plus and private operator vehicles provide seating based on the capacity of the vehicle. Each daily run has a vehicle assigned indicating seating capacity. The automated scheduling system assigns customers to runs based on the seating capacity of the vehicle. This system reflects both ambulatory and wheelchair capacity for each vehicle.

**Drivers Identification**

Drivers for SCAT + Plus shall be in uniform with their names and SCAT + Plus logo displayed on their uniforms. Contracted operators shall wear a nametag and picture I.D. at all times when transporting customers. Drivers shall be required to announce and identify themselves by name and company in a manner that is conducive to communication with the specific passenger upon pickup. In addition, vehicles used for SCAT+ Plus service must have the company name posted on the vehicle.

**Passenger Assistance**

All drivers shall be trained in passenger assistance techniques. Training includes wheelchair / mobility assistance device loading, securement and storage, seat belt securement, door-to-door service and sensitivity awareness of persons with special needs. Drivers will not assist wheelchairs up or down more than one-step.

**Smoking, Eating and Drinking**

Smoking, use of tobacco products, eating, and drinking on board the vehicle will not be allowed. Stops may be made to accommodate the needs of the customers as determined by the dispatcher. The driver will determine comfort stops.

**Passenger No-Shows**

SCAT has a strict enforcement of the no show policy. Passenger no-shows are defined as; you are not at your location when the driver comes to your door or failure to notify SCAT + Plus one hour prior to your scheduled pick up time. On the first ever occurrence of a no show, the customer receives a copy of SCAT policy regarding lates/cancels/no shows. On the second occurrence of a no show, the customer receives a letter of warning that lists the date(s) of the Occurrence(s). This letter of warning also applies to customers who have previously been sent a SCAT policy letter AND have 1 or 2 Occurrences in a month. Finally, clients who have a third occurrence of a no show within one month receive a 2<sup>nd</sup> copy of the SCAT policy letter and a letter listing the dates of the Occurrences, advising them they will be suspended beginning the 1<sup>st</sup> of the coming month, through the end of that month. This applies to customers who have been previously sent a SCAT policy letter AND have 3 or more Occurrences in a month.

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**Two-Way Communications**

All vehicles shall be equipped with two-way communications, either radios or cell phones. They should be kept in good working order to ensure audible communications with the dispatcher.

**Air Conditioning/Heating**

All vehicles in the coordinated system are required to have working heaters and air conditioners. Vehicles that do not have a working air conditioner or heater will be scheduled for repair or replacement as soon as possible.

**CPR / First Aid**

All drivers shall be certified in CPR and Community First Aid.

**Pick up Windows**

Trips are scheduled by the individual's appointment time. There is a one-hour pick up window for trips within Sarasota proper and an hour and a half window from city to city. Out-of-Service area trips may require additional time.

**On-Time Performance**

The CTC has established a standard of 95% on time performance for all completed trips.

**Advance Reservation Requirement**

Trips may be scheduled at a minimum of one day prior to date of travel and at a maximum of seven days in advance, with the exception of subscription service.

**Public Transit Ridership**

The CTC has established a goal of diverting 17% of all applicants for paratransit service to fixed route.

**Complaints**

The CTC has established a goal of no more than two written complaints per 1,000 trips.

**Accidents**

The CTC has established a goal of 1.2 accidents per 100,000 miles.

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**Road calls**

The CTC has established a goal of no less than 10,000 miles between each road call.

**Call Hold Time**

The CTC has established a goal of not exceeding more than 2 minutes hold time for any caller and monitors adherence to this goal.

**Driver Criminal Background Screening**

All drivers in the coordinated system must have an FDL Level II criminal background screening prior to employment.

***Local Complaint and Grievance Procedures***

**Local Grievance Procedure**

The following points outline the grievance process followed in the Sarasota County TD program to facilitate the quick resolution of passenger and client complaints related to service.

- The grievance rights of the user shall be posted in a location that is generally visible to sighted clients and be made available, upon request, in a format accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Complaints, which emanate from continued lateness, driver behavior, passenger discomfort, irregularities in the system of delivery or decisions made to deny, reduce, or terminate services constitute grievances for users or funding agencies. Complaints about charges or billing constitute grievances by a funding agency or transportation operator. Other complaints can be heard at the discretion of the Grievance Board. The CTC will record, maintain and report all complaints and problems to the Coordinating Board.
- A letter stating the problem shall be sent to the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) outlining the nature of the alleged grievance, and where applicable the date, time and place of the incident constituting the grievance. The Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) will make every effort to resolve the grievance following the procedures of their agency.
- If this effort is not successful, the grievant may present their grievance to the chairman of the Grievance Committee by written notice.

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- Upon receipt of the grievance form, the chairperson shall have 10 working days to contact Grievance Committee members and set a grievance hearing date. The hearing date must be within 20 days of receipt of written grievance.
- The grievant and all parties involved shall be notified at least 7 working days prior to the hearing date by certified mail, return receipt requested. The Grievance Committee shall review the material presented and issue a decision to all parties involved within 10 working days. The said notice shall be sent to all parties by certified mail, return receipt requested.
- If the Grievance Committee cannot resolve the grievance, the grievant may notify the Coordination Board.
- If the grievance is not resolved at the level of the Local Coordinating Board, the grievant may notify the full body of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

**Local Complaint Procedures**

Outlined below is the complaint process utilized by Sarasota County TD program.

- All complaints received by SCAT + Plus are directed to the Sarasota County call center that handles complaints for the entire county.
- The call center obtains as much information as possible from the customer. The complaint is entered into an automated tracking system and issued a sequential number for the purpose of tracking the resolution of the complaint.
- Once the call center has completed the complaint form (electronically) and issued a tracking number, it is then turned over to the SCAT staff person assigned to coordinate resolution of complaints with the call center.
- The SCAT staff person forwards the complaint to the appropriate manager / supervisor for investigation and response.
- This investigation and response is provided to the SCAT staff person who in turn, provides the investigation and response to the call center.
- The call center, then responds to the customer.
- Each complaint is categorized by the length of time necessary to respond.
  - Level 1 – 3 days to respond
  - Level 2 – 2 days to respond
  - Level 3 – requires immediate response

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All complaints are processed electronically.

### ***CTC Contract Monitoring of Private Vendors and Coordination Contractors***

Annual on-site reviews are conducted of the private vendors to ensure compliance with adopted standards and regulations. The Appendix contains the forms utilized by the CTC to evaluate the private vendors. Areas that are reviewed include:

- General operations and safety/management policies
- Maintenance operations and vehicle inspections
- Drivers' records and training
- Drug and alcohol policy
- System Safety Program Plan
- Provision of mandatory reports to the CTC.
- Certification of Compliance with ADA, Chapter 427 Florida Statutes and Rule 14-90, F.A.C.

Utilizing the same areas as outlined for private vendors, the CTC conducts annual desk reviews of the coordination contractors. Information is completed by the coordination contractors for the review by the CTC. A completed contract monitoring report is included in the Appendix.

### ***Cost/Revenue Allocation and Rate Structure Justification***

1. The rate structure for vehicles operated by the CTC is:

Service Type	Base Rate
Ambulatory	\$30.24
Wheelchair	\$51.84

2. The rate structure for vehicles operated by the private vendors is:

Service Type	Base Rate	Mileage
Ambulatory	\$11.00	\$1.75
Wheelchair	\$13.00	\$1.75

The rate structure for the CTC is consistent with the Commission's Rate Calculation Model which is included in the Appendix. This rate structure was approved by the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board and Commission for the State Fiscal Year July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013.

The rate structure for the private vendors was negotiated in March 2012 and expires in March, 2015, however the agreements have an automatic renewal annually for two

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additional one year periods after March 2015. The Appendix contains the Service Rates Summary.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

The Sarasota County Local Coordinating Board (LCB) and the staff of the Sarasota / Manatee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) utilize the Commission's QADE/LCB CTC EVALUATION HANDBOOK to conduct the annual evaluation process of the CTC.

The LCB creates an Evaluation Committee to lead the review of the CTC. Based on a review of the worksheets provided in the EVALUATION HANDBOOK, the committee presents the results and recommendation to the LCB. After approval by the LCB, the planning agency staff presents the evaluation to the Metropolitan Planning Organization for their endorsement.

Once endorsed, the evaluation is forwarded to the commission. A copy of the most recent evaluation of the Sarasota County CTC and the LCB minutes approving the evaluation are contained in the Appendix. In reviewing the evaluation information, the following items were noted.

1. The CTC has adopted a proactive approach to encourage transportation-disadvantaged customers to use the fixed route bus service. This approach starts with ADA Mobility Coordinators. SCAT created the position to educate passengers on SCAT + Plus policies and services. Their responsibilities include; re-certification of customers, selling customers on fixed route services, training of bus operators, and outreach to train customers on how to use the fixed route services.
2. In addition, SCAT offers individuals meeting the criteria an ADA Bus Pass. The pass allows unlimited use of the fixed route service for free. The CTC is exceeding the goal of diverting 17% of all applicants for paratransit service to fixed route.
3. The CTC is meeting all local standards for on time performance, accidents and call-hold time.
4. On August 28, 2007, the Sarasota County Commission approved enforcement of SCAT's "No Show" policy. This resulted in a 54% reduction in no shows. Prior to the emphasis on enforcement, SCAT + Plus was averaging 218 no shows a month. After enforcement, no shows are now averaging 33 per month.
5. CTC should provide recommendation in the areas outlined below.

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- A. Recommendations for those local service standards that were not met have been developed. On time performance is monitored monthly and monthly report cards are provided to private contractors.
- B. Contractor surveys were utilized during the 2008-2009 evaluation.
- C. The contract monitoring reports are a part of the annual evaluation process.
- D. Website information for ADA paratransit service. SCAT + Plus service and Information Guide has been updated to reflect current handling of TD programs.
- E. In response to a recommendation to ensure on-hold call time is less than 2 minutes, the CTC crossed-trained staff to relieve the hold time when the system is busy. This has enabled the CTC to address the former issue.