Ridership on Florida’s 29 urban fixed-route transit systems grew much faster than that state’s population between 2000 and 2010 (27.8% vs. 17.6%). Ridership grew even faster than Florida’s urban population during this time (27.8% vs. 22.1%).

Florida’s transit markets will continue to comprise low-income transit dependent populations, as well as immigrants. However, there is strong evidence that Baby Boomers and Millennials, in particular, have the potential to comprise larger proportions of transit riders in the state.

Public transit agencies and the communities in which they operate should be poised to provide the types of high quality transit services that will be demanded by those in the urbanized areas. They need to support the high-tech, rapid transit desire of Millennials and focus on access to employment and educational facilities.

To better serve the Boomers and aging population, transit agencies will need to focus on improved access to medical facilities and recreational points of interest. More education and outreach with these populations may be necessary to assure them that public transportation is a safe and convenient way to stay mobile and active in their community.
From 2000 to 2010, the number of urbanized areas (UZAs) in Florida increased from 28 to 30. Based on the U.S. Census, the population contained within these UZAs increased 22.1 percent, while the total population of the state grew 17.6 percent, indicating that Florida’s population is becoming more urban.

In 2010, 87 percent of the state’s population was contained in the UZAs, compared to 84 percent in 2000. 2017 population projections indicate that more than 89 percent of the state’s population will be contained in the UZAs. By 2020, Florida’s population is expected to increase approximately 12 percent, while the U.S. population is projected to increase more than 8 percent.

Baby Boomers & Millennials

Baby Boomers (now age 49-67) are leaving the phase of life when they do the most commuting, while the Millennials (now age 18-34) are just entering that stage.

Research shows that Millennials, now the largest generation in the U.S., are driving less and are most open to alternative forms of transportation. Overall, many in this generation may tend to prefer to live in urban, walkable places with amenities including high quality public transportation. They rely on mobile internet technology more than older generations and use it to connect with others differently than previous generations. Because they use technology in most aspects of their lives, they are more willing to use it to access transit and other alternate modes of transportation. Should these trends continue, Florida’s transit agencies will need to respond and adapt.

There is evidence that many Baby Boomers may prefer to age in place and remain active in their current communities, rather than moving to traditional retirement areas. They will be working longer, by choice or necessity, and will be living longer, requiring important access to medical care.