

Hernando County Transit Development Plan Major Update (2020-2029)

Final Report
August 2019

*Adopted by the Hernando County Board of County
Commissioners on August 13, 2019.*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1 Introduction	1-1
Objectives of the Plan	1-1
TDP Checklist	1-2
Section 2 Baseline Conditions	2-1
Overview of Study Area	2-1
Population Profile	2-3
Population and Employment Densities	2-5
Demographic & Socioeconomic Characteristics and Trends	2-6
Travel Behavior and Commuting Trends	2-16
Major Activity Centers and Trip Generators	2-21
Tourist and Visitor Levels	2-22
Roadway and Traffic Conditions	2-22
Current and Future Land Use and Densities	2-24
Section 3 Existing Services Evaluation	3-1
Overview of Existing Transit Services	3-1
Trend Analysis	3-10
Peer Review Analysis	3-12
Section 4 Public Involvement	4-1
Summary of TDP Public Involvement Activities	4-1
Project Review Meetings	4-3
Stakeholder Interviews	4-3
Rider and Non-Rider Surveys	4-5
Open House Public Workshops	4-17
Other Outreach Efforts	4-20
Section 5 Situation Appraisal	5-1
Review of Plans	5-1
Situation Appraisal	5-5
Section 6 Goals & Objectives	6-1
Vision	6-1
Mission	6-1
Goals, Objectives & Policies	6-1
Section 7 Transit Demand Assessment	7-1
Market Assessment	7-1
Ridership Demand Assessment	7-8
Section 8 Alternatives Development and Evaluation	8-1
Development of 10-Year Transit Needs	8-1
10-Year Transit Service Needs	8-2
Capital/Infrastructure and Technology Needs	8-4
Policy/Other Alternatives	8-5
Evaluation of Transit Alternatives	8-6
Section 9 10-Year Transit Development Plan	9-1
Recommended 10-Year Transit Plan	9-1
10-Year Financial Plan	9-2

Section 10 TDP Implementation & Coordination	10-1
Implementing the TDP	10-1
Post-Adoption Outreach and Marketing.....	10-1
Coordination with Other Plans	10-1
Continuing on Established Relationships.....	10-2
Hernando County TDP – A Strategic Blueprint for Transit.....	10-2
Appendix A: Farebox Recovery Report.....	A-1
Current Farebox Recovery Ratio	A-2
Appendix B: Trend and Peer Review Figures	B-1
Appendix C: Public Involvement Materials	C-1
Appendix D: Performance Monitoring Program	D-1
TheBus Performance Monitoring Program.....	D-2

List of Figures

Figure 2-1: Population and Trends for Cities and Towns, Hernando County, 2000–2017	2-3
Figure 2-2: Population Projection, Hernando County, 2016–2045.....	2-4
Figure 2-3: Trends in Population by Age, Hernando County, 2017–2045	2-5
Figure 2-4: Labor Force Distribution by Industry, Hernando County, 2016	2-6
Figure 2-5: Labor Force Distribution by Occupation, Hernando County, 2016.....	2-11
Figure 2-6: Household Income, Hernando County, 2016	2-11
Figure 2-7: TD Trips Provided and TD Population, Hernando County, 2016.....	2-15
Figure 2-8: Education Attainment, Hernando County, 2016.....	2-16
Figure 2-9: Commuting Time, Hernando County	2-18
Figure 2-10: Commuting Modes, Hernando County and Florida, 2017.....	2-18
Figure 2-12: Commuting Inflow, Hernando County, 2015.....	2-20
Figure 2-11: Commuting Outflow, Hernando County, 2015.....	2-20
Figure 2-13: Congested Roadways, Hernando County, 2019.....	2-23
Figure 2-14: Hernando County Future Land Use	2-25
Figure 2-15: City of Brooksville Future Land Use	2-26
Figure 3-1: TheBus Passenger Trips, 2014–2018	3-4
Figure 4-1: Satisfaction with Current System	4-6
Figure 4-2: Frequency of Ridership	4-6
Figure 4-3: Trip Purpose.....	4-7
Figure 4-4: Need for Additional Transit	4-7
Figure 4-5: Top Three Service Improvements	4-8
Figure 4-6: Top Three Service Improvements	4-9
Figure 4-7: Have you ever used public transportation outside of Hernando County?.....	4-10
Figure 4-8: Have you used TheBus services?	4-10
Figure 4-9: How satisfied are you with TheBus services?	4-10
Figure 4-10: How often do you ride TheBus?	4-11
Figure 4-11: Trip Purpose.....	4-11
Figure 4-12: Do you think \$3 for a one-day pass would benefit riders?	4-12

Figure 4-13: Methods to Purchase Bus Tickets.....	4-12
Figure 4-14: Is there a need for additional transit service in Hernando County?	4-13
Figure 4-15: Most Important Transit Improvements	4-13
Figure 4-16: Most Important Technology Improvements	4-14
Figure 4-17: Alternative Modes Services Preferred	4-14
Figure 4-18: Reason for Preferring Alternative Modes.....	4-15
Figure 4-19: What is your age?.....	4-15
Figure 4-20: What is your annual household income?.....	4-15
Figure 4-21: Ranking of Transit Characteristics	4-16
Figure 4-22: Top-Ranked Service Improvements.....	4-17
Figure 4-23: Top Infrastructure and Technology Improvements	4-18
Figure 4-24: Top-Ranked Service Improvements.....	4-18
Figure 4-25: Top Infrastructure and Technology Improvements	4-19
Figure 4-26: Top-Ranked Improvements to Existing Services.....	4-19
Figure 4-27: Top-Ranked Infrastructure/Technology Improvements.....	4-20
Figure 5-1: Regional Transit Vision	5-12

List of Maps

Map 2-1: Study Area, Hernando County	2-2
Map 2-2: Population Density by TAZ, Hernando County, 2019.....	2-7
Map 2-3: Population Density by TAZ, Hernando County, 2029.....	2-8
Map 2-4: Employment Density by TAZ, Hernando County, 2019.....	2-9
Map 2-5: Employment Density by TAZ, Hernando County, 2029.....	2-10
Map 2-6: Minority Population by Block Group, 2016	2-13
Map 2-7: Low-Income Population (<\$25,000) by Block Group, Hernando County, 2016	2-17
Map 2-8: Zero-Vehicle Households by Block Group, Hernando County, 2016	2-19
Map 3-1: TheBus Existing Network	3-2
Map 7-1: 2019 DTA with Existing Network.....	7-4
Map 7-2: 2029 DTA with Existing Network.....	7-5
Map 7-3: 2017 TOI with Existing Network.....	7-7
Map 8-1: Hernando 10-Year Needs Map	8-3

List of Tables

Table 1-1: TDP Checklist	1-4
Table 2-1: Population Characteristics, Hernando County, 2000, 2010, and 2016	2-3
Table 2-2: Population and Trends for Cities and Towns, Hernando County, 2000–2017	2-4
Table 2-3: Gender and Ethnic Characteristics, Hernando County	2-12
Table 2-4: Language Spoken at Home, Hernando County, 2016.....	2-14
Table 2-5: Educational Attainment and Poverty Incidence, Hernando County	2-15
Table 2-6: Commuter Outflows, Hernando County, 2015	2-21

Table 2-7: Commuter Inflows, Hernando County, 2015	2-21
Table 2-8: Major Employers, Hernando County	2-22
Table 3-1: TheBus Fixed-Route Services	3-3
Table 3-2: TheBus Fares and Passes.....	3-4
Table 3-3: TheBus Vehicle Inventory	3-5
Table 3-4: TheBus Vehicle Inventory Summary.....	3-5
Table 3-5: Other Transportation Providers – Hernando County	3-7
Table 3-6: TheBus Fixed-Route Trend Analysis, 2013–2017.....	3-11
Table 3-7: Selected Peer Systems for TheBus Peer Review Analysis	3-12
Table 3-8: TheBus Fixed-Route Peer Review Analysis, 2016	3-13
Table 4-1: Key Public Involvement Activities.....	4-1
Table 4-2: TDP Stakeholders	4-3
Table 5-1: Local Plans, Policies, and Programs.....	5-3
Table 5-2: Regional Plans, Policies, and Programs.....	5-4
Table 5-3: State and Federal Plans, Policies, and Programs	5-4
Table 7-1: Transit Service Density Thresholds	7-2
Table 7-2: TOI Variables	7-6
Table 7-3: Weekday Ridership Projections and Growth Rates for 2020–2029*	7-11
Table 7-4: Annualized Saturday-Only Ridership with 2029 TDP Needs Scenario*	7-11
Table 7-5: Total Weekly System Ridership Projections and Overall Growth Rates for 2020–2029*	7-11
Table 8-1: Alternative Evaluation Criteria and Weights.....	8-7
Table 8-2: Alternatives Evaluation Results Matrix.....	8-8
Table 9-1: TheBus 10-Year Transit Plan Service Improvements.....	9-1
Table 9-2: Vehicle Acquisition/Replacement Plan	9-3
Table 9-3: 10-Year Costs and Revenues.....	9-4
Table 9-4: 10-Year Implementation Plan and Unfunded Needs.....	9-5

SECTION 1 INTRODUCTION

The Hernando County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) currently provides fixed-route bus transit services in the Hernando County and in northwest Pasco County in the immediate region. The existing fixed-route bus service consists of four routes that serve primarily the areas of Brooksville and Spring Hill as well as major corridors in between. Complementary ADA paratransit service also is provided to persons with disabilities who live within a $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile buffer of the fixed-route local bus system.

This study was initiated by the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in coordination with the Hernando County Transit Division to update Hernando County's Transit Development Plan (TDP), the 10-year strategic guide for public transportation in the community that is updated every five years. It represents the transit agency's vision for public transportation in its service area during this time period.

Objectives of the Plan

The main purpose of this study is to update the TDP for the fixed-route transit services provided by TheBus system, Hernando County's transit system, as required by State law. Upon completion, this TDP will result in a 10-year plan for transit and mobility needs, cost and revenue projections, and community transit goals, objectives, and policies.

TDP Requirements

TDP requirements were formally adopted by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) on February 20, 2007. Major requirements of the TDP Rule include the following:

- Major updates must be completed every five years, covering a 10-year planning horizon.
- A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) must be developed and approved by FDOT or be consistent with the approved MPO PIP.
- FDOT, the Regional Workforce Development Board, and the MPO must be advised of all public meetings at which the TDP is presented and discussed, and these entities must be given the opportunity to review and comment on the TDP during the development of the mission, goals, objectives, alternatives, and 10-year implementation program.
- Estimation of the community's demand for transit service (10-year annual projections) must be made using the planning tools provided by FDOT or a demand estimation technique approved by FDOT.

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

TDP Checklist

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

Organization of This Report

This report is organized into 10 major sections (including this Introduction).

Section 2 presents the **Baseline Conditions** for Hernando County. This includes a physical description of the study area, a population profile, and demographic and journey-to-work characteristics. Land use trends, major transit trip generators and attractors, economic factors, existing roadway conditions, and major employers also are explored.

Section 3 summarizes the results of **Existing Services Evaluation**. This section discusses the results of the trend analysis conducted for fixed-route bus services in Hernando County, which reviews the performance of the public transportation system over time, from fiscal years 2014 to 2017. The results of a peer review analysis are also discussed in Section 3. This type of analysis compares the performance of the public transportation system with other transit systems selected as having similar characteristics at a given point in time.

Section 4 presents the **Public Involvement** efforts undertaken as part of this TDP process and summarizes the activities undertaken. The goal of the public involvement activities is to increase the likelihood of active participation from citizens and stakeholder agencies during the development of the updated plan. Input from the public is critical, as the 10-year plan provides a strategic guide for public transportation in the community over the next 10 years.

Section 5 includes **Situation Appraisal** and a review of transit policies at the federal, local, and regional levels of government. Various transportation planning and programming documents are summarized, with an emphasis on issues that may have implications for TheBus. Transit plans such as Comprehensive Plans and TDPs were reviewed. A Situation Appraisal also was developed based on the public involvement results presented in Section 4 and the key findings from the review of transit policies.

Section 6 discusses **Goals and Objectives**, which are an integral part of a transportation plan because they provide the policy direction to achieve the community's vision. The goals and objectives presented were prepared based on the review and assessment of existing conditions, feedback received during the public involvement process, and the review of local transportation planning documents.

Section 7 summarizes the **Transit Demand Analysis** conducted as part of this TDP process. Analysis techniques are summarized, followed by the results of each analysis used to assess demand for transit services in Hernando County, which were then combined with the baseline conditions assessment, performance reviews, public involvement feedback, and reviews of relevant plans and studies to yield a building block for evaluating the transit needs for the next 10 years.

Section 8, Alternatives Development and Evaluation, presents the development of potential transit improvements for the 10-year transit plan for Hernando County. The proposed improvements for fixed-route service represent the transit needs for the next 10 years. Once the improvements were prioritized using the evaluation process, they were used to develop the 10-year implementation and financial plans, which will be presented in the Hernando County plan. As Hernando County continues to grow, the prioritized transit needs will assist the MPO in selecting and implementing service improvements as funding becomes available.

Section 9 summarizes the **10-year Transit Development Plan**, including the 10-year implementation program and finance plan for TheBus fixed-route bus transit service. Recommended 10-year transit needs are presented, and an implementation plan is provided with a summary of cost-feasible projects and unfunded needs. The 10-year financial plan is presented, including a summary of the assumptions and capital and operating costs used in its development.

Section 10 summarizes the techniques and approaches to help make **Plan Implementation and Coordination** for TheBus TDP successful after adoption. This section identifies implementation strategies, including using tools and outreach materials from the TDP process while building and continuing the outreach for TheBus.

Table 1-1: TDP Checklist

Public Involvement Process	
√	Public Involvement Plan (PIP) drafted
√	PIP approved by FDOT
√	TDP includes description of Public Involvement Process
√	Provide notification to FDOT
√	Provide notification to Regional Workforce Board
Situation Appraisal	
√	Land use
√	State and local transportation plans
√	Other governmental actions and policies
√	Socioeconomic trends
√	Organizational issues
√	Technology
√	10-year annual projections of transit ridership using approved model
√	Assessment of whether land uses and urban design patterns support/hinder transit service provision
√	Calculate farebox recovery
Mission and Goals	
√	Provider's vision
√	Provider's mission
√	Provider's goals
√	Provider's objectives
Alternative Courses of Action	
√	Develop and evaluate alternative strategies and actions
√	Benefits and costs of each alternative
√	Financial alternatives examined
Implementation Program	
√	Ten-year implementation program
√	Maps indicating areas to be served
√	Maps indicating types and levels of service
√	Monitoring program to track performance measures
√	Ten-year financial plan listing operating and capital expenses
√	Capital acquisition or construction schedule
√	Anticipated revenues by source
Relationship to Other Plans	
√	Consistent with Florida Transportation Plan
√	Consistent with local government comprehensive plan
√	Consistent with MPO long-range transportation plan
√	Consistent with regional transportation goals and objectives
Submission	
√	Adopted by Hernando Board of County Commissioners on August 13, 2019
√	Submitted to FDOT

SECTION 2 BASELINE CONDITIONS

The analysis of data and conditions related to public transit provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of the environment in which the transit system is operating. This information provides the foundation upon which to review trends and forecasts and helps identify areas of opportunity for development of future transit services.

This section reviews the study area in the context of Hernando County TDP and documents existing baseline data. The following components were reviewed for consideration:

- Overview of study area
- Population and employment densities
- Socio-demographic characteristics and trends
- Travel behavior and commuting trends
- Major activity centers and trip generators
- Tourist and visitor levels
- Roadway and traffic conditions
- Current and future land use

In addition to summaries for each of these key areas, a series of maps and tables also was used to illustrate selected population, demographic, and socioeconomic characteristics. Data from the U.S. Census, American Community Survey (ACS), Bureau of Economics and Business Research (BEBR) of the University of Florida, Hernando-Citrus MPO, and TheBus were used as primary data sources. The data were supplemented by data from local and regional agencies and other sources, as available.

Overview of Study Area

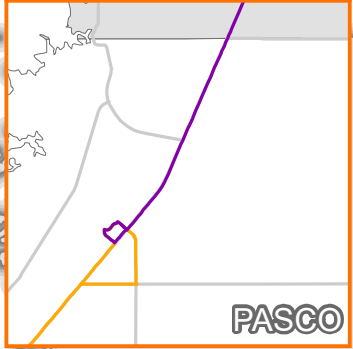
Hernando County is located in west central Florida and is bordered on the north by Citrus County, on the east by Sumter County, on the west by the Gulf of Mexico, and on the south by Pasco County. It is part of the greater Tampa Bay region and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council's geography. The total land area of the county is 473 square miles. Map 2-1 illustrates the study area for the TDP.

Hernando County is a historically rural county that has grown to include two municipalities—Brooksville, the county seat, and Weeki Wachee—as well as the unincorporated areas (e.g., Census Designated Places) of Spring Hill (the county's sole Urbanized Area, as designated by the MPO), North Weeki Wachee, Timber Pines, Ridge Manor, Brookridge, North Brooksville, South Brooksville, High Point, and Hernando Beach. Brooksville is located in the center of the county where US-41 and SR-50 intersect. It is the most populated area in the county, either incorporated or unincorporated, and is located in the southwest Hernando County between US-19 and SR-589. Five major highways intersect Hernando County—I-75, US-19, US-301, Suncoast Parkway, and US-41. Hernando County is home to 25 county parks and one Florida State park; 29 percent of the county is classified as conservation area, which includes the Withlacoochee State Forest, Weeki Wachee Preserve, and Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge.

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)

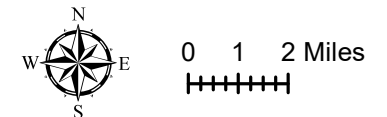
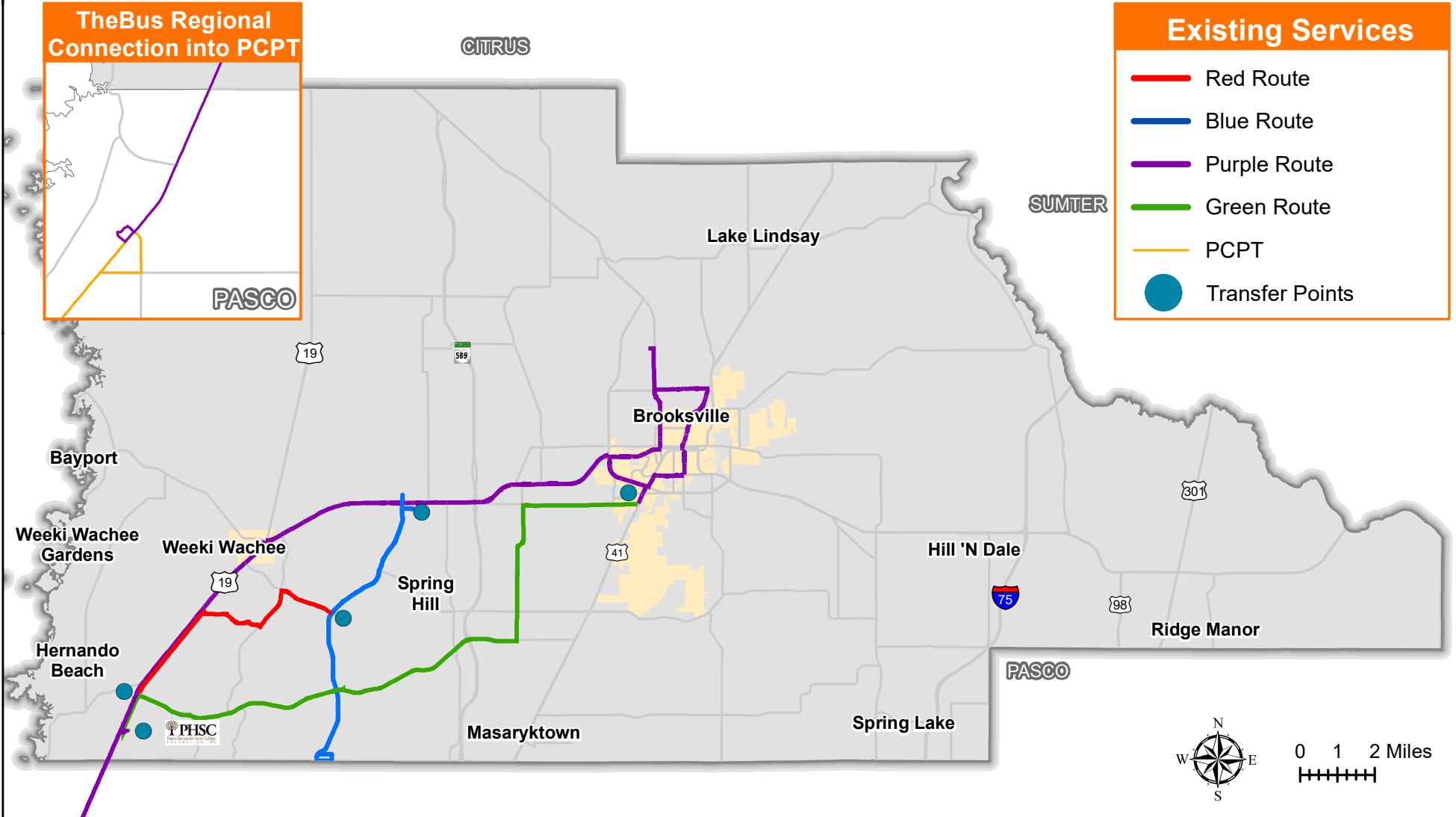


TheBus Regional Connection into PCPT



Existing Services

- Red Route
- Blue Route
- Purple Route
- Green Route
- PCPT
- Transfer Points



**Map 2-1
Study Area**

Municipalities



Population Profile

Population Trends

Data from the 2000 U.S. Census and the 2010 U.S. Census, along with information from the 2017 ACS, were used to form the population profile for the study area in Hernando County. The total population grew from 130,802 to 170,377 persons, approximately 30 percent, during the 2000–2010 period. However, population growth slowed from 2010–2017, at approximately 5 percent (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1: Population Characteristics, Hernando County, 2000, 2010, and 2017

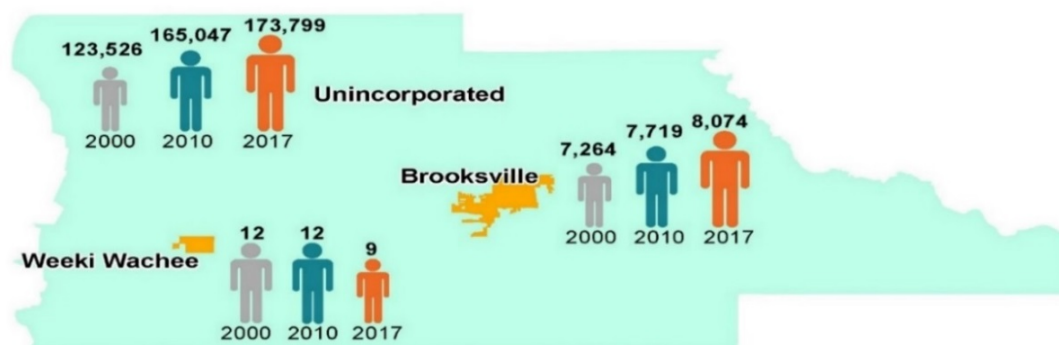
Characteristic	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2000–2010	% Change 2010–2017
Population	130,802	170,337	179,144	30.2	5.2
Households	55,425	82,958	85,726	49.7	3.3
Number of workers	109,225	140,088	149,770	28.3	6.9
Land area (square miles)	473	473	473	0.0	0.0
Person per household	2.32	2.38	2	2.6	-12.2
Workers per household	1.97	1.69	1.75	-14.3	3.5
Persons per square mile of land area	277	360	379	30.2	5.2
Workers per square mile of land area	231	296	317	28.3	6.9

Sources: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2013–2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-1 shows that both the total population and population density are increasing; number of persons per square mile of land density in particular experienced a significant increase, approximately 37 percent from 2000 to 2017. However, although density increased, a decrease in the number of persons per household was observed over the same period, suggesting that growth in the number of housing units occurred in tandem.

The unincorporated parts of Hernando County have grown at faster rates than Brooksville and Weeki Wachee. As shown in Figure 2-1 and Table 2-2, Brooksville’s population grew 10 percent, Weeki Wachee’s population declined, and unincorporated Hernando County’s population grew approximately 29 percent from 2000 to 2017.

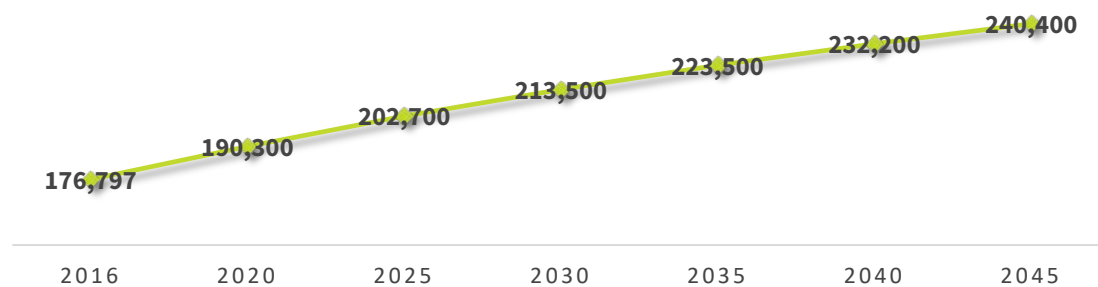
Figure 2-1: Population and Trends for Cities and Towns, Hernando County, 2000–2017



Source: BEBR 2017 Florida Statistical Abstract

Population estimates prepared by BEBR indicate that Hernando County's population is projected to grow approximately 13 percent by 2025, from 176,797 to 202,700 in 2025 and by approximately 26 percent, to 240,400 by 2045. Figure 2-2 shows the population projections for Hernando County from 2017 to 2045.

Figure 2-2: Population Projection, Hernando County, 2016–2045



Source: BEBR 2017 Statistical Abstract Florida

Population trends of the two municipalities and unincorporated areas also were evaluated using estimates from BEBR and revealed that population growth was projected for Brooksville and the unincorporated areas of Hernando County, but a decline was projected for Weeki Wachee. The majority of the population growth is projected to occur in unincorporated areas of the county, including Spring Hill, Hernando Beach, Ridge Manor, North Brooksville, South Brooksville, and High Point. Overall, population growth is projected for Hernando County as a whole, as shown in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Population and Trends for Cities and Towns, Hernando County, 2000–2017

Municipality	2000	2010	2017	% Change 2010–2017	Recent Trend	% Change 2000–2017	Full Trend
Brooksville	7,264	7,719	8,074	4.4%	↗	10.0%	↗
Weeki Wachee	12	12	9	-33.3%	↘	-33.3%	↘
Unincorporated	123,526	165,047	173,799	5.0%	↗	28.9%	↗
Total	130,802	172,778	181,882	5.0%	↗	28.1%	↗

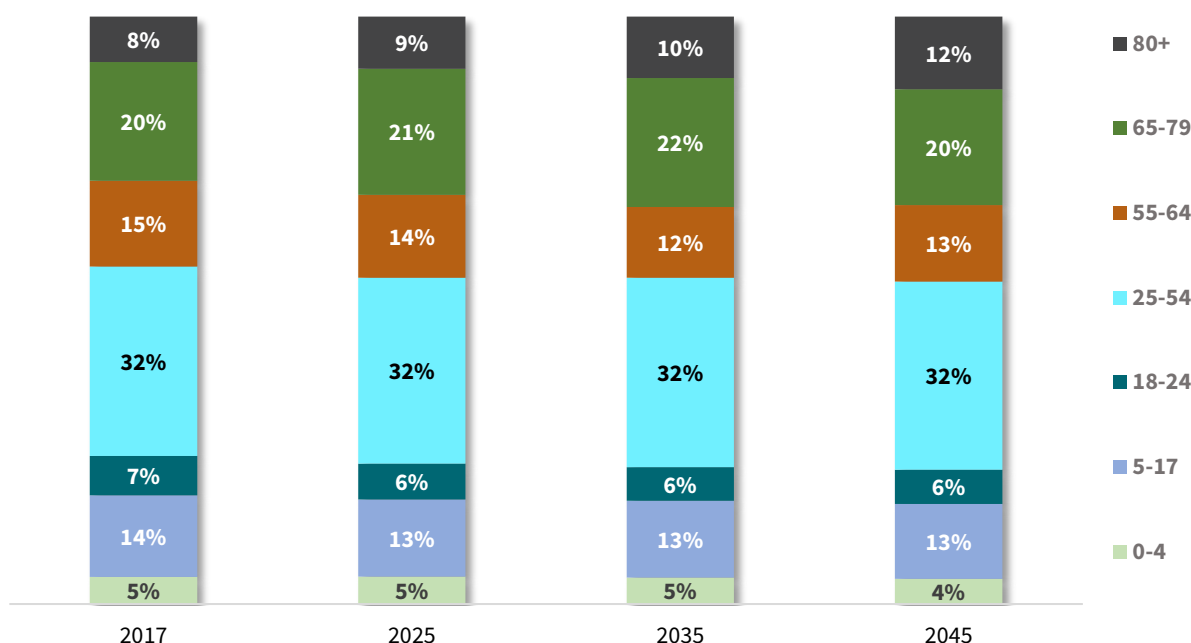
Source: BEBR 2017 Florida Statistical Abstract

Although Hernando County's population is projected to continue growing as a whole, the proportions of the population under age 16 and over age 65 also are projected to grow and are projected to comprise approximately 18 percent and 30 percent of the county population by 2025, respectively. However, although the proportion of residents over age 65 is projected to continue growing and is estimated to reach approximately one third of the population by 2045, the proportion of residents under age 16 will remain at approximately 18 percent of the population by 2035 and will fall to approximately 17 percent by 2045. The proportion of the population between ages 25 and 54 is projected to remain at approximately 32 percent through 2045.

Approximately 43 percent of Hernando County's residents are either over age 65 or under age 16. The over age 65 segment comprises approximately 28 percent of the population, and residents under age 16 comprise approximately 15 percent. Almost one third of residents (32%) are ages 25 to 54.

Compared to the rest of Florida, Hernando County comprises a higher proportion of residents over age 65 and is projected to maintain this age distribution (Figure 2-3). Approximately 20 percent of Florida’s population currently comprises residents over age 65; however, in Hernando County, the same age group comprises approximately 28 percent. By 2025, the proportion of residents over age 65 is projected to comprise approximately 22 percent of Florida’s population; however, Hernando County’s population is projected to comprise just over 30 percent of residents over age 65. By 2045, the same age group is projected to reach approximately a quarter of Florida’s population and approximately one third of Hernando County’s population.

Figure 2-3: Trends in Population by Age, Hernando County, 2017–2045



Source: BEBR 2017 Florida Statistical Abstract

Population and Employment Densities

Population

Map 2-2 shows the projected population densities for Hernando County for 2019, developed based on the socioeconomic data that were developed to support the Hernando County 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Map 2-3 shows the projected population densities for 2029, indicating that there will be more growth in unincorporated areas, such as Spring Hill and North Weeki Wachee. With 29,265 people projected to be added to the county by 2029, the key areas projected to experience the most growth include those north and west of Hill ‘N Dale, particularly along SR-50; east of US-41 in Spring Lake; throughout Spring Hill, particularly around Pasco-Hernando State College; and east of the Suncoast Parkway and west of Brooksville in the northern half of the county.

Employment

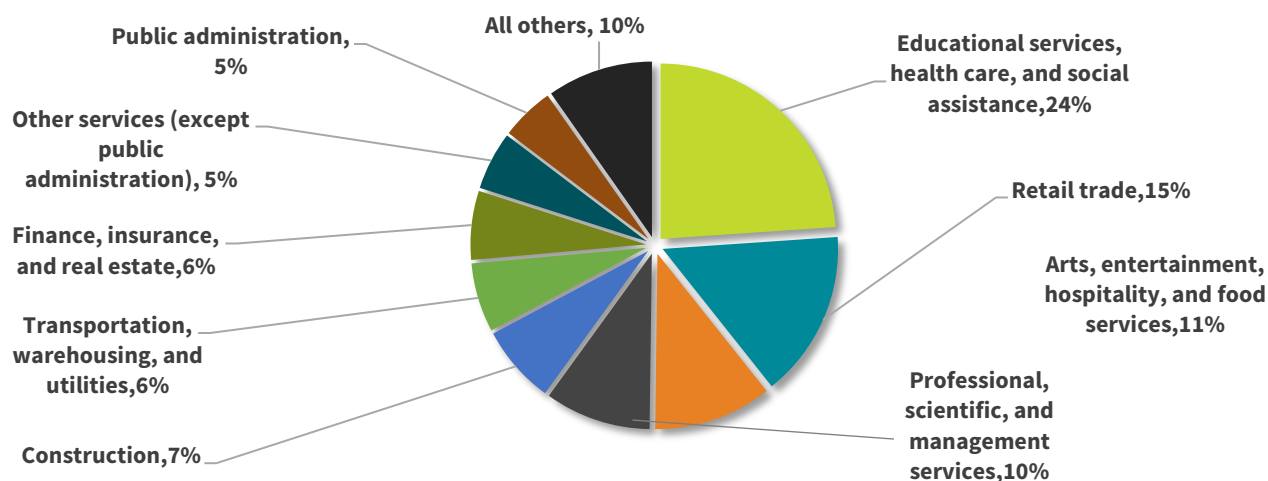
Map 2-4 shows the projected employment densities for Hernando County for 2019. The employment data also are based on socioeconomic data developed to support the Hernando County 2040 LRTP. Map 2-5 shows the projected employment densities for 2029. In base year 2019, the 67,340 employed persons are mainly concentrated in Spring Hill and Weeki Wachee Gardens, areas in which many attractors and retail destinations are located. Looking forward to 2029, the projected employed population grows 80,256 people. The areas near Masaryktown and along US-41 south of Brooksville will experience the majority of the employment growth. In the southeast corner of the county, Spring Hill will continue to be an area of high employment densities all the way to US-19 and the coast.

Demographic & Socioeconomic Characteristics and Trends

Labor Force

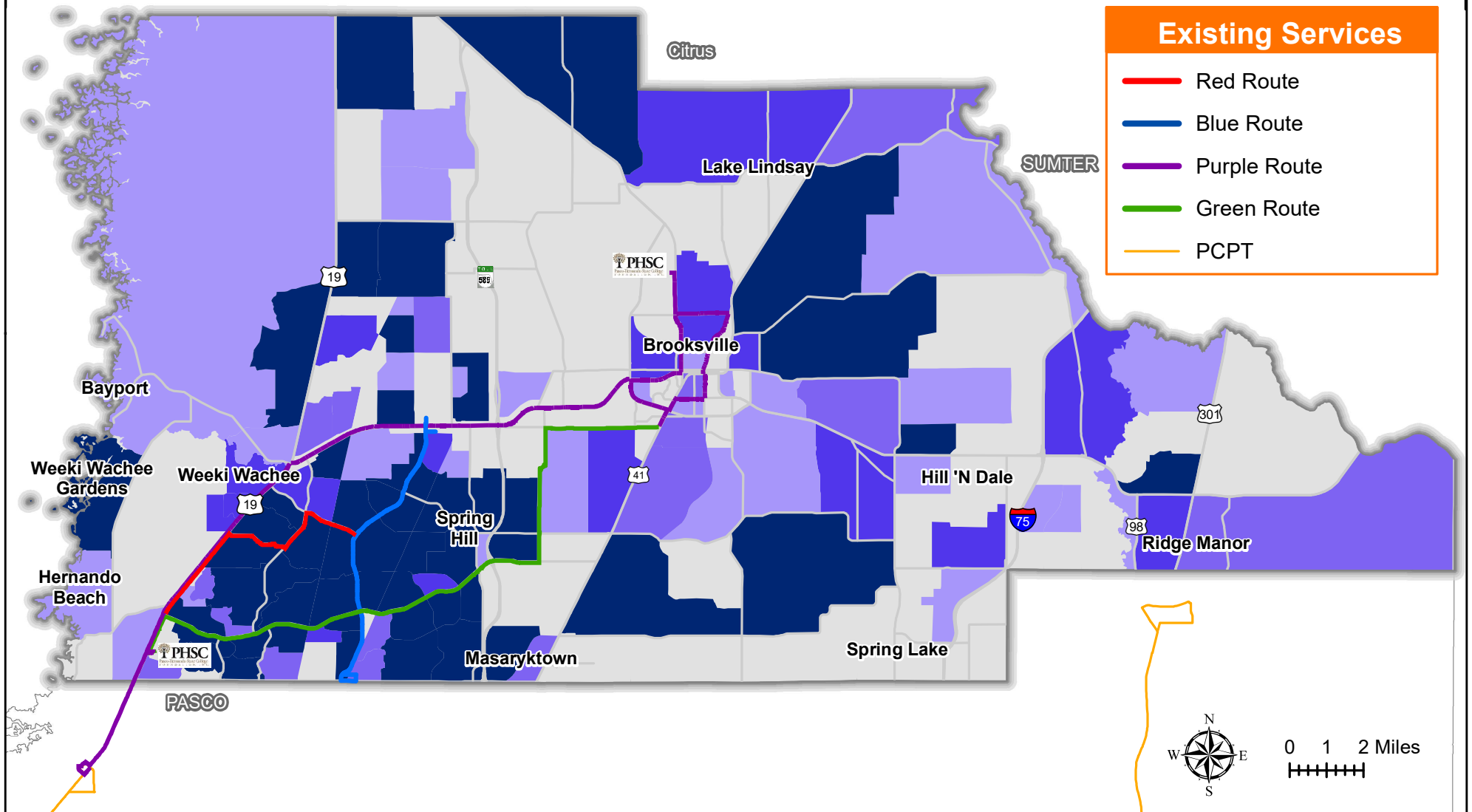
Figure 2-4 displays the percent of population broken down by industry in Hernando County. The largest sector includes educational services, health care, and social assistance, which comprises approximately 24 percent of the county's employment. Retail trade (15.4%) and arts, entertainment, hospitality, and food services (10.9%) round out the second quartile of employment by industry.

Figure 2-4: Labor Force Distribution by Industry, Hernando County, 2016

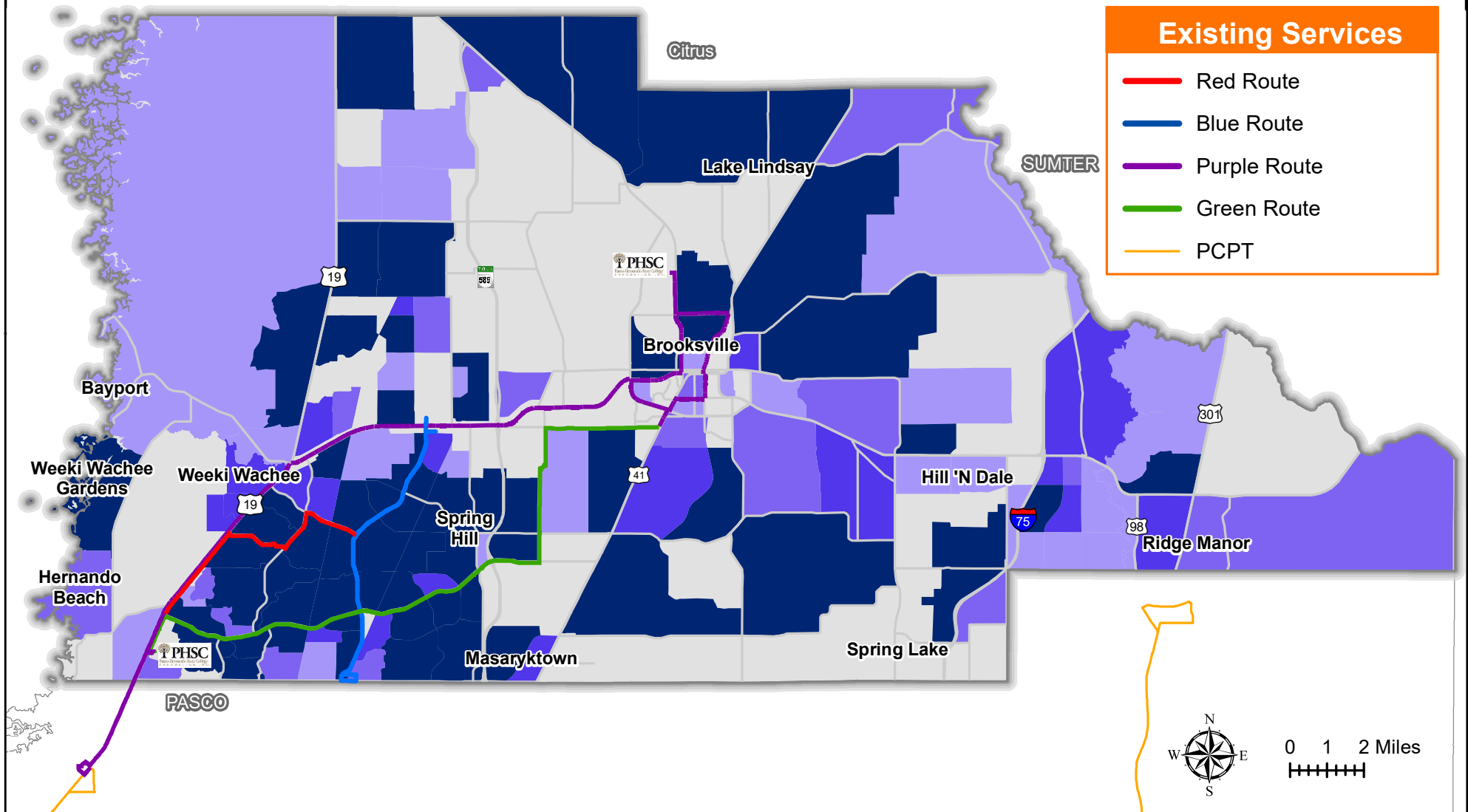


Source: 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



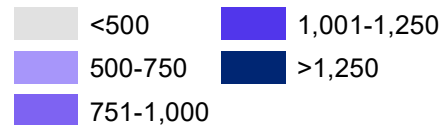
Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



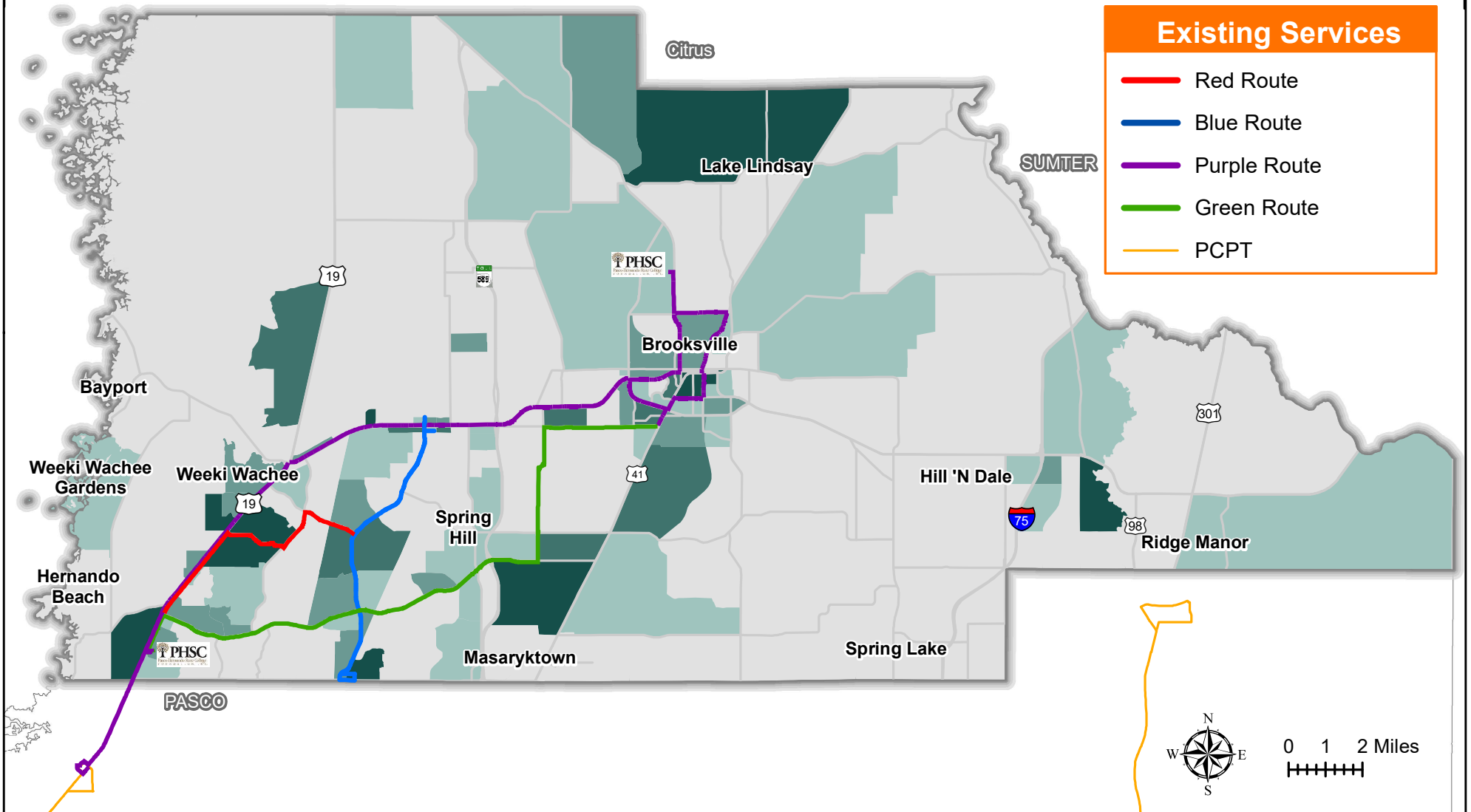
**Map 2-3
Population
Density (2029)**

Source: Hernando County 2040 L RTP

Persons per Traffic Analysis Zone



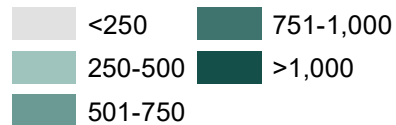
Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



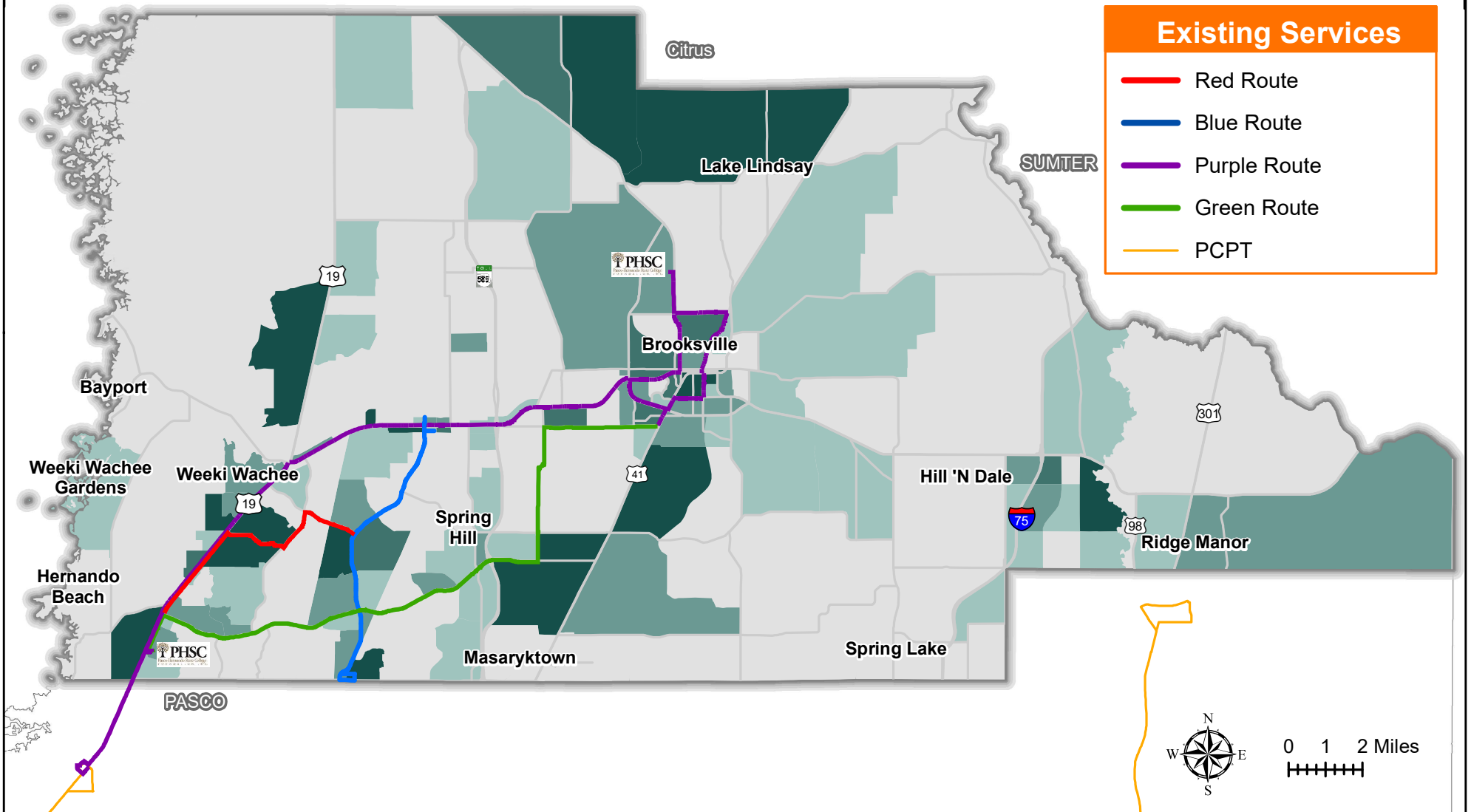
**Map 2-4
Employment
Density (2019)**

Source: Hernando County 2040 L RTP

Jobs per Traffic Analysis Zone



Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



**Map 2-5
Employment
Density (2029)**

Source: Hernando County 2040 LRTP

Jobs per Traffic Analysis Zone

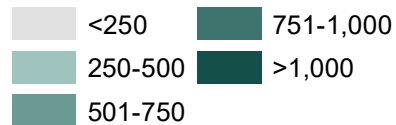
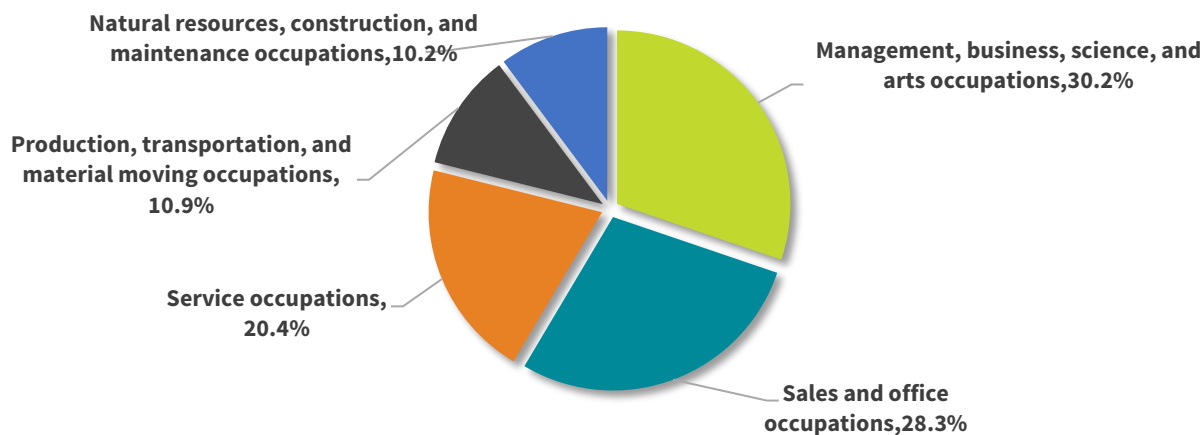


Figure 2-5 displays the percent of population broken down by occupation type in Hernando County. The largest occupation type includes management, business, science, and arts occupations (30.2%), followed closely by sales and office occupations (28.3%).

Figure 2-5: Labor Force Distribution by Occupation, Hernando County, 2016



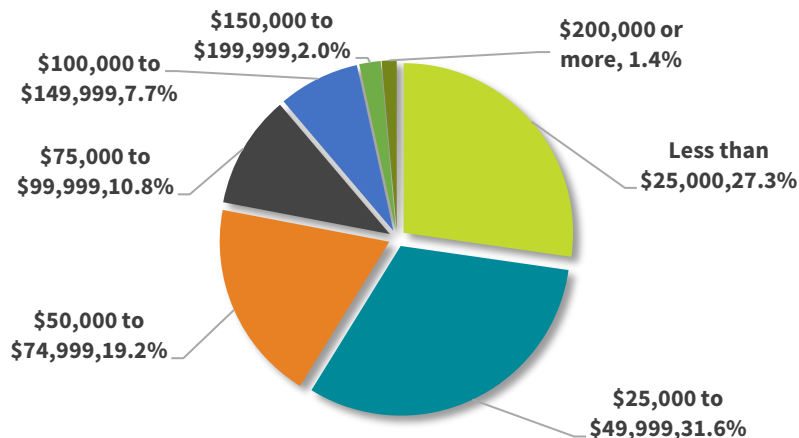
Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Income Distribution

Earned income is an important factor in determining public transit needs. It can be inferred that persons with low income may be less likely to own a vehicle and, therefore, are more likely to use public transit. Figure 2-6 shows the distribution of income for residents in Hernando County.

Figure 2-6: Household Income, Hernando County, 2016



Source: 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

According to 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates, more than a quarter of the households in Hernando County earned an annual income of less than \$25,000, highlighting the need for transit services. Additionally, almost one third of households (31.6%) earned between \$25,000 and \$49,999.

Minority Populations

Hernando County is becoming more ethnically diverse, with all minority population segments growing since 2000. Table 2-3 lists some demographic characteristics of Hernando County for 2000, 2010, and 2016. Although gender distribution was virtually unchanged during this period, other key demographic changes were worthy of review, including a large increase in persons of Hispanic/Latino origin. Black or African American accounted for 6.3 percent, Native American 1.0 percent, Asian 0.2 percent, and other races 1.8 percent. Map 2-6 illustrates where minority populations live within Hernando County.

Table 2-3: Gender and Ethnic Characteristics, Hernando County

Characteristic	2000	2010	2016	Trend ¹
Gender				
Male	47.5%	47.9%	48.1%	↗
Female	52.5%	52.1%	51.9%	↘
Ethnic Origin				
White	92.9%	91.7%	91.8%	↘
Black or African American	4.1%	5.3%	6.3%	↗
American Indian and Alaska Native	0.3%	0.8%	1.0%	↗
Asian	0.6%	1.4%	1.7%	↗
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%	↗
Other	1.4%	2.2%	1.8%	↗
Hispanic Origin				
Not of Hispanic/Latino origin	95.0%	82.9%	88.4%	↘
Hispanic/Latino origin	5.0%	9.7%	11.6%	↗

¹ Trend is shown if there was a significant change (absolute change of greater than 5% was considered significant).

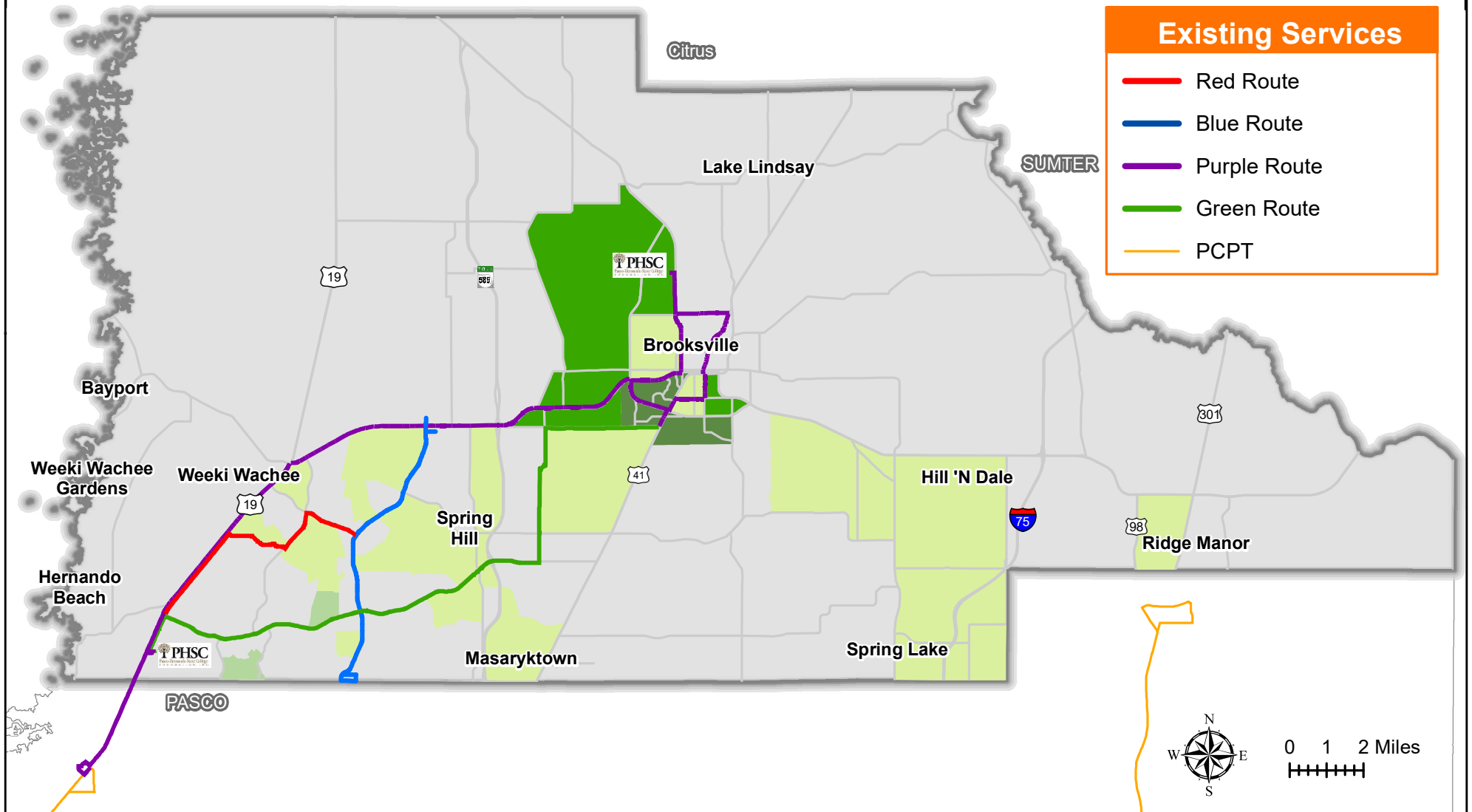
Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Sources: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Table 2-4 provides a summary of the language(s) spoken at home by Hernando County residents age 5 and older. Approximately 89 percent of the population over age 5 speak only English, and the remaining 11 percent speak a language other than English. Of the 11 percent remaining, approximately 7 percent speak Spanish, and the remainder speak other Indo-European (2.6%), Asian and Pacific Island (0.6%), or other languages (0.3%). On average, about one-third of residents that speak a language other than English at home reported speaking English less than “very well”; in total, approximately 3.7 percent of the total county population over age 5 speaks English less than “very well.”

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



Map 2-6
Minority Population

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates 2012-2016



Table 2-4: Language Spoken at Home, Hernando County, 2016

Population Segment	Total		% of Total
Population over 5 years	168,929		96.3%
Speak only English	150,605		89.2%
Speak a language other than English	18,324		10.8%
		% of Other than English	
Spanish	12,384	67.6%	7.3%
Other Indo-European languages	4,315	23.5%	2.6%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	1,091	6.0%	0.6%
Other languages	534	2.9%	0.3%
Speak English less than "very well"	6,191		3.7%
		% of Less than "Very Well"	
Spanish	4,414	35.6%	2.6%
Other Indo-European languages	1,184	27.4%	0.7%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	513	47.0%	0.3%
Other languages	80	15.0%	0.0%

Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Sources: Hernando-Citrus MPO LEP Plan, 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

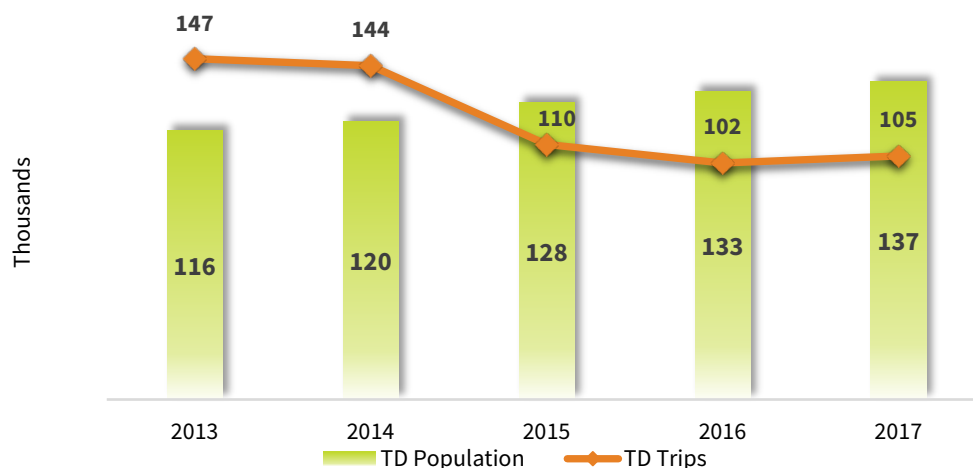
TD Population

In addition to fixed-route transit, Mid-Florida Community Services provides transportation for persons who are transportation disadvantaged (TD) in Hernando County. These services provide an important function to help increase access to activities such as health care, employment, and education for those who are older adults, have disabilities and/or low incomes, and are children of high risk or at-risk. The TD population includes individuals who meet the requirements to receive subsidized trips by the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) Trust Fund allocated to the local Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) by the CTD. The service is arranged based on need, with medical needs and life-sustaining activities receiving higher priority than work, business, or recreation.

For FY 2016–2017, Hernando County’s Mid-Florida Community Services (dba Trans-Hernando), a non-profit organization, received a Mobility Enhancement Grant of \$141,505 to support enhancements to the current system, help the development of non-urbanized areas, aid the efficiency of services, and stimulate the participation of any private transportation providers. Trans-Hernando was approved to expand its current service hours and provide an additional three connector stops to its fixed-route service. In FY 2016–2017, almost 30,000 medical trips were provided and almost 75,000 employment, education, or training trips were provided. Overall, 114,068 trips were provided for the TD community.

According to the 2017 Florida CTD Annual Operator Report, approximately 75 percent of Hernando County’s residents are considered potential TD populations compared to the state’s proportion of approximately 42 percent. In 2017, Hernando County’s TD population was 182,835 residents, representing a 3 percent increase in residents that were transportation disadvantaged over the prior year. Figure 2-7 shows that over the 2013–2017 period, Hernando County experienced a 16 percent increase in its TD population, but a 40 percent decrease in the number of trips provided over the same period. The noticeable decline in trips, even with the rise of TD population, may be partially related to the reclassification of Medicaid to other providers and the reduction of funding made available to the CTC.

Figure 2-7: TD Trips Provided and TD Population, Hernando County, 2016



Source: FL CTD Annual Operator Reports

Education Attainment

The county's population as a whole improved in achieving greater education attainment over the 2012–2016 period. Not only did the portion of the population not completing high school decrease, but the percent completing at least some college grew for every advanced degree category (Table 2-5). Figure 2-8 depicts the levels of educational attainment for Hernando County as of 2016. However, the rates of poverty for each level of educational attainment also increased over the same period.

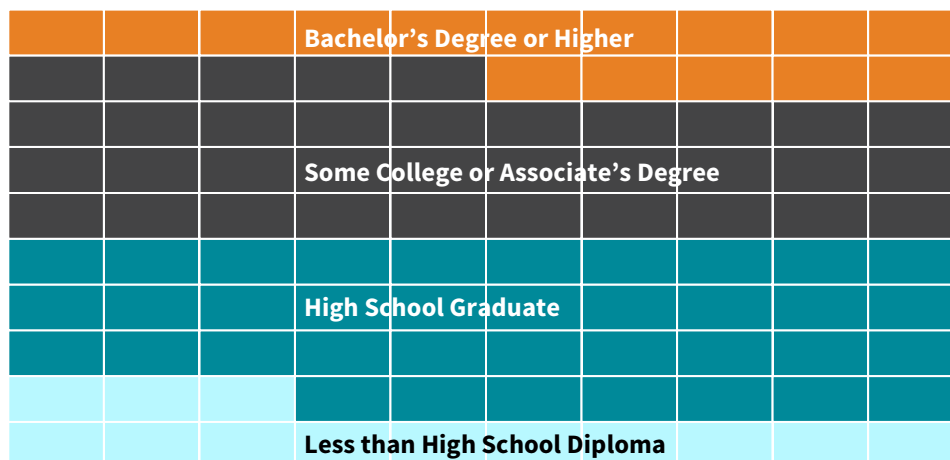
Table 2-5: Educational Attainment and Poverty Incidence, Hernando County

Educational Attainment Level	2010			2016		
	Population > Age 18	Percent	Percent in Poverty	Population > Age 18	Percent	Percent in Poverty
Less than high school graduate	20,456	15.0%	17.8%	18,805	13.1%	23.9%
High school graduate (incl. equivalency)	52,174	38.3%	9.9%	53,007	36.9%	14.3%
Some college or Associate's degree	43,099	31.6%	8.9%	49,635	34.6%	11.3%
Bachelor's degree or higher	20,614	15.1%	4.1%	22,037	15.4%	6.5%

Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Sources: 2010 Census, 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2-8: Education Attainment, Hernando County, 2016



Note: Each box represents approximately 1 percent.

Source: 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Poverty Levels

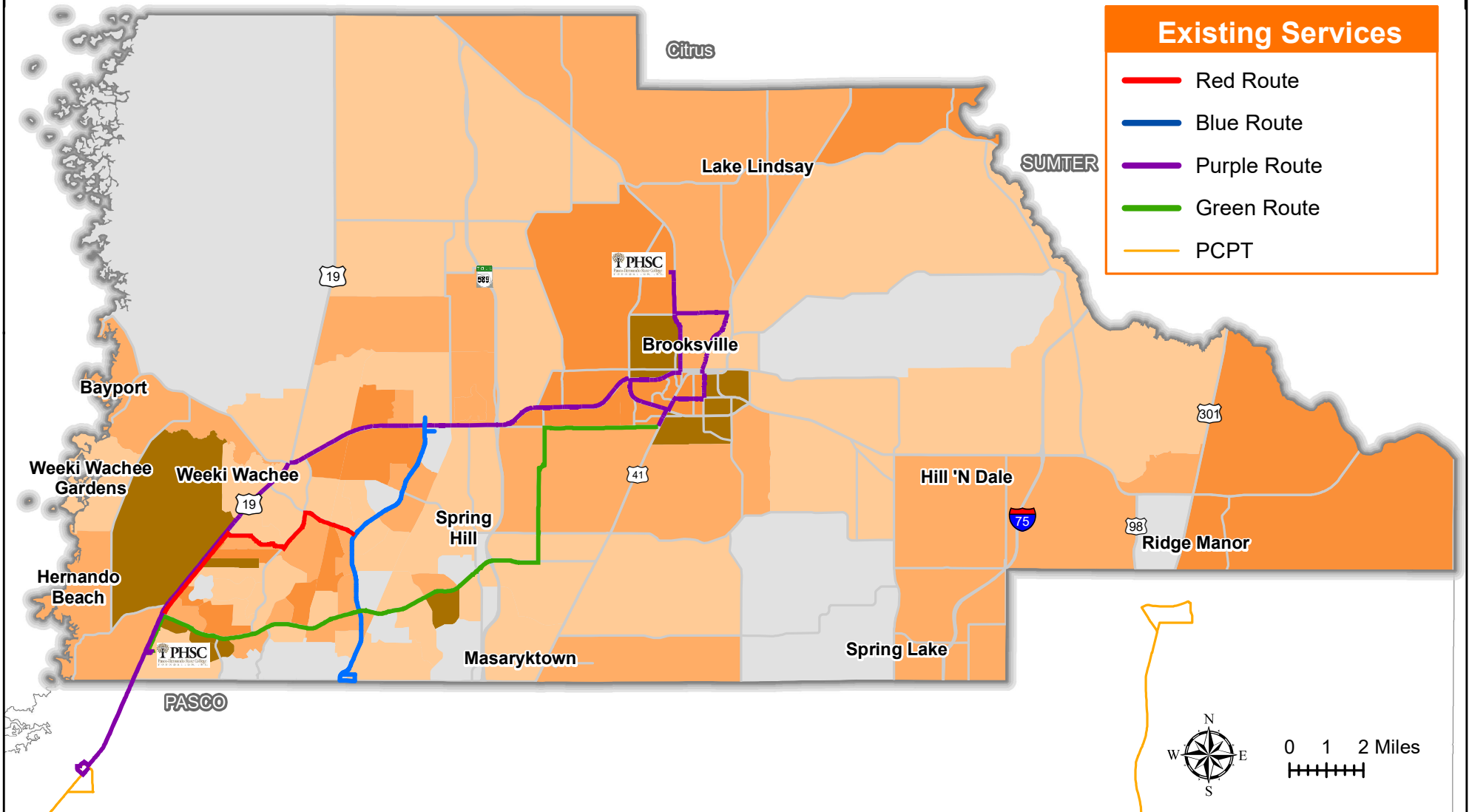
Income is a significant factor in determining transit needs. According to the 2012–2016 ACS 5-year Estimates, approximately 16 percent of Hernando County's population lives below the poverty level, whereas the proportion for Florida is 14 percent (Map 2-7). Since 2000, there has been a 51 percent increase in the proportion of the population that lives below the poverty line in Hernando County (10.3% in 2000 to 15.6% in 2016). The federal poverty threshold for a family of four was \$24,600 in 2017. The median annual household income in Hernando County was \$42,274, 15 percent lower than the median annual income in Florida, which is \$48,900. Continued growth in this population segment of transit-dependent riders within the county may indicate a need to provide new or enhanced transit service to those areas.

Travel Behavior and Commuting Trends

Journey-to-Work

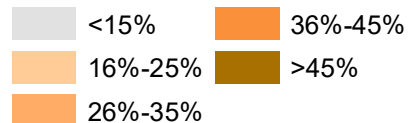
According to the 2012–2016 ACS 5-year Estimates, 17 percent of commuters in Hernando County spent 15–19 minutes traveling to or from work (Figure 2-9). The average commute time nationally and in Florida is 25–29 minutes, indicating that Hernando County has a lower-than-average commute time when compared with state and national trends. In 2005, Hernando County's average commute time was 30–34 minutes one-way, a substantial decrease in just over one decade.

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



Map 2-7
Low Income

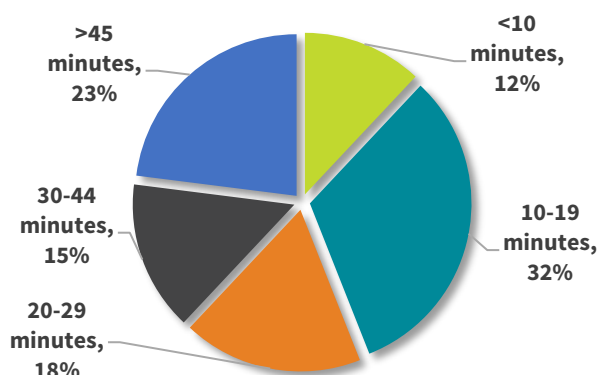
Percent of Low Income Households per Block Group



Source: ACS 5-year Estimates 2012-2016



Figure 2-9: Commuting Time, Hernando County

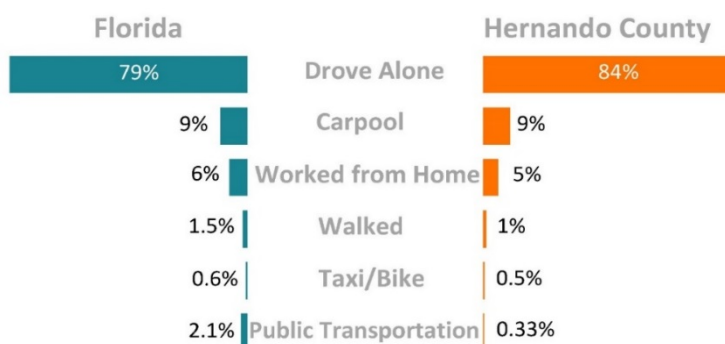


Source: 2012–2016 ACS 5-Year Estimates

Commuting Choices

A significant majority of Hernando County residents, 84 percent, chose to drive alone on their commute, five points higher than the state average of 79 percent. Figure 2-10 shows that the modes carpooling and walking to work trailed behind, at approximately 9 percent and 1 percent, respectively. Less than one percent of Hernando County residents chose to take public transportation for their commute compared to the 2.1 percent and 5.1 percent statewide and nationally, respectively.

Figure 2-10: Commuting Modes, Hernando County and Florida, 2017



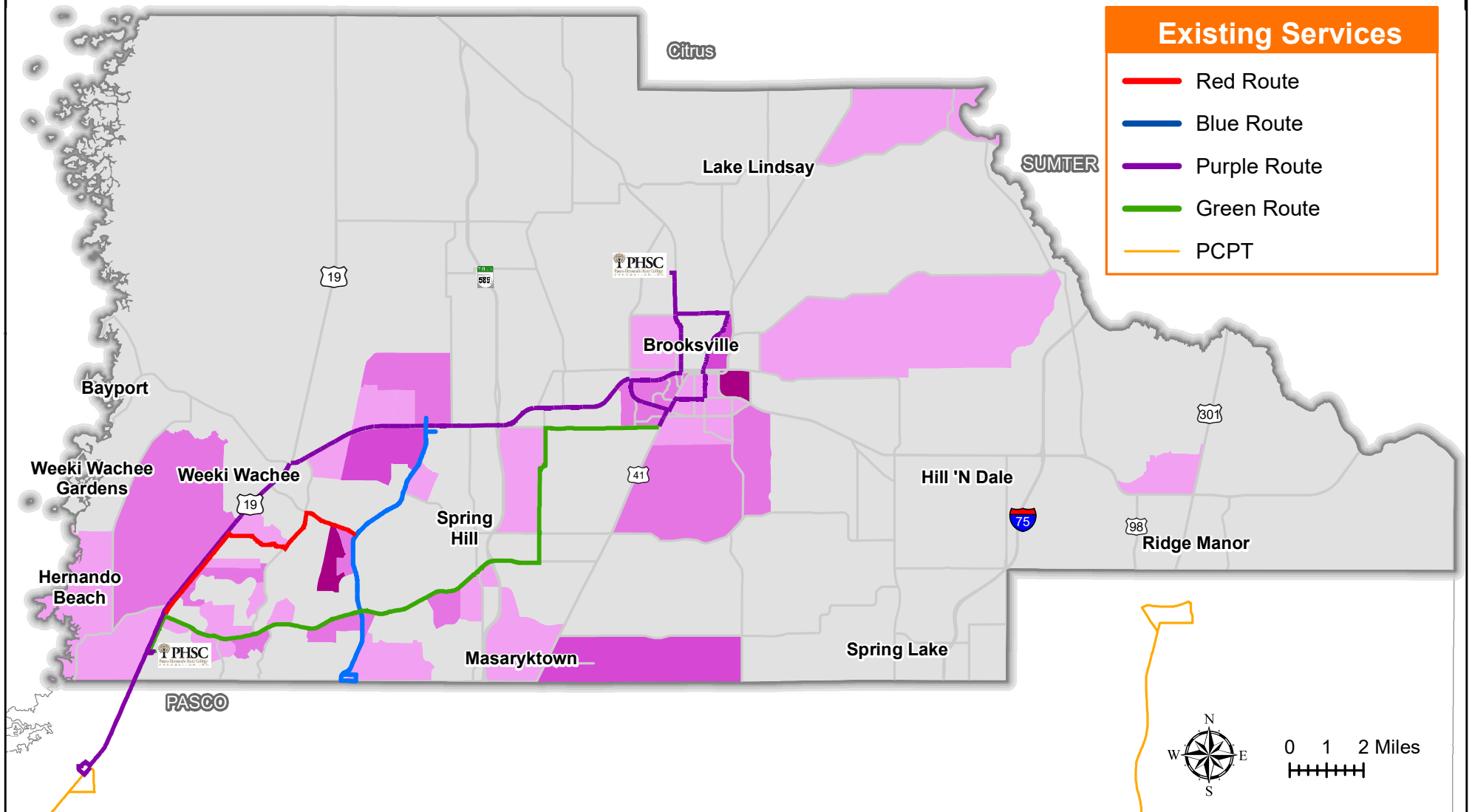
Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: FDOT Commuting Trends in Florida, 2017 Special Report

Automobile Ownership

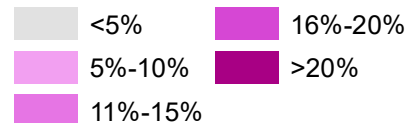
Owning a vehicle can be a significant financial burden, particularly for households already near or below the poverty line; therefore, many households own no vehicles and are considered zero-vehicle households. These households are more likely to be dependent on public transportation for work, education, and recreation. Map 2-8 shows the areas of concentration of zero-vehicle households in Hernando County; 2.5 percent of households are considered zero-vehicle households, which is lower than the statewide rate of 6.6 percent and national rate of 8.7 percent, approximately 77 percent of

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



Map 2-8
Zero Vehicle
Households

Percentage of Zero Vehicle Households by Block Group



Source: ACS 5-year Estimates 2012-2016

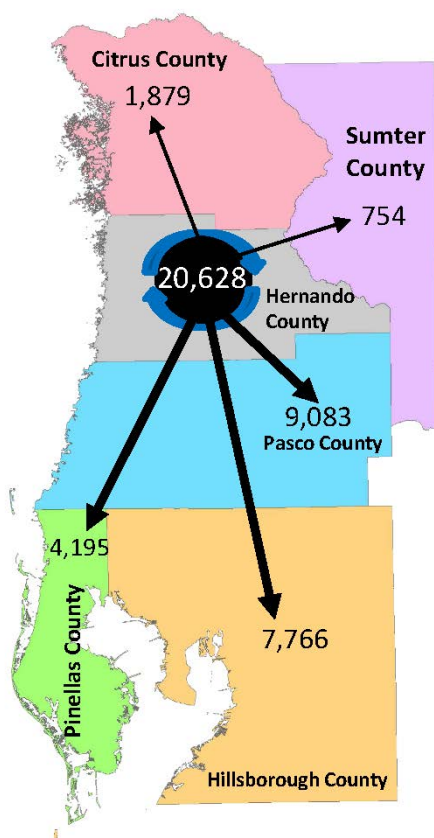


households have two or more vehicles available, and approximately 20 percent have one. Many of the areas with the greatest concentration of zero-vehicle households are areas currently served by TheBus network; however, there currently are no routes in Masaryktown and south of Brooksville.

Commuting Inflows/Outflows

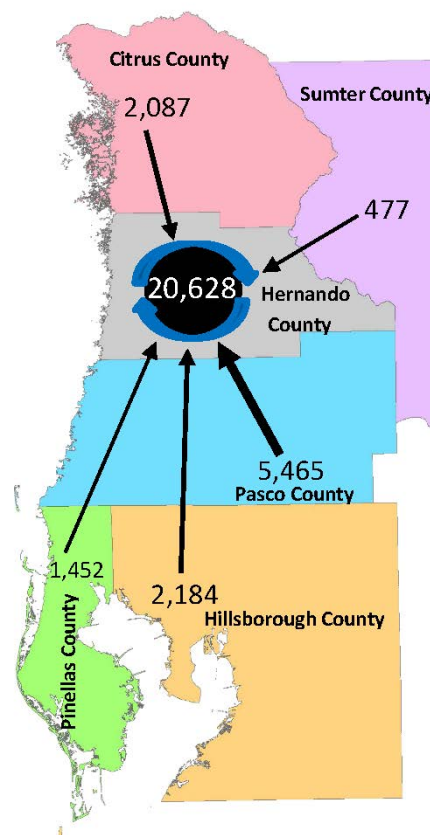
To assess the regional trends and patterns of commuters, an analysis using 2015 Longitudinal Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES) data (“OntheMap,” U.S. Census Bureau) was completed. This analysis provides geographic commuting patterns of jobs by their location of employment and residential locations based on Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages data concerning where workers live and work. Figure 2-11 shows regional commuting patterns by commuter outflow for Hernando County, and Figure 2-12 shows regional commuting patterns by commuter inflow for Hernando County based on the 2015 LODES data.

Figure 2-12: Commuting Outflow, Hernando County, 2015



Source: “OntheMap,” U.S. Census Bureau

Figure 2-11: Commuting Inflow, Hernando County, 2015



Source: “OntheMap,” U.S. Census Bureau

Approximately 41 percent of Hernando County’s work force also lives in the county, and approximately 59 percent of residents who participate in the labor force commute to work outside of the county.

Table 2-6: Commuter Outflows, Hernando County, 2015

County	Number of Workers	Percent
Pasco	9,083	16%
Hillsborough	7,766	13%
Pinellas	4,195	7%
Citrus	1,879	3%
Sumter	754	1%
All Other Locations	10,842	19%

Note: 20,628 individuals live and work in Hernando County, comprising 41% of commuter outflow total.

Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: “OntheMap,” U.S. Census Bureau

As shown in Tables 2-6 and 2-7, Pasco County is the top commuting destination and origin outside of Hernando County, where approximately 16 percent and 13 percent of commuters travel to/from, respectively. Hillsborough County follows behind Pasco County in both commuting destinations and origins outside of Hernando County at 13 percent and 5 percent, respectively. Some commuters traveled as far north as Duval County and as far east as Orange County.

Table 2-7: Commuter Inflows, Hernando County, 2015

County	Number of Workers	Percent
Pasco	5,465	13%
Hillsborough	2,184	5%
Citrus	2,087	5%
Pinellas	1,452	3%
Sumter	477	1%
All Other Locations	8,102	20%

Note: 20,628 individuals live and work in Hernando County, comprising 53% of commuter inflow total.

Note: % may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Source: “OntheMap,” U.S. Census Bureau

Major Activity Centers and Trip Generators

The Spring Hill urbanized area is home to a large concentration of employment within Hernando County. Major trip generators for Hernando County include healthcare, retail, outdoor parks, and professional services locations. Major employers are listed in Table 2-8. Oak Hill Hospital, located to the west of the Suncoast Parkway and north of Weeki Wachee, is the top private sector employer in the county and also one of its primary medical centers. Walmart Super Centers are the top retail employer, and Hernando County Schools is the top public sector employer. An education center, the Spring Hill branch of Pasco-Hernando State College, is located in the southwest corner of the county.

Table 2-8: Major Employers, Hernando County

Rank	Employer Name	Employees
1	Hernando County Public Schools	3,002
2	Oak Hill Hospital	2,036
3	Walmart Super Centers	1,350
4	Hernando County Government	1,200
5	Publix	1,050
6	Walmart Distribution Center	1,020
7	Board of Commissioners	753
8	Southwest Florida Water Management District	736
9	Sheriff's Office	509
10	Winn Dixie	450

Source: Greater Hernando County Chamber of Commerce

Tourist and Visitor Levels

Although tourism is not a top industries, Hernando County is being promoted as a great destination for tourists seeking a variety of nature-based activities. Hernando's Chamber of Commerce aspires for the county to continue to be a world-famous destination by promoting its unique features such as spring-fed water parks, freshwater springs, and other natural attractions to boost its local economy through tourism. For cyclists and outdoor enthusiasts, the Suncoast Parkway provides a significant stretch of bikeway and is used by thousands of riders every year.

Weeki Wachee is home to the most famous tourist attraction in the county, a 538-acre park with natural springs with a mermaid show that attracts an estimated half million visitors each year. Visitors can rent kayaks, go on river boat cruises, or swim. Other recreational centers in Hernando County include Withlacoochee State Forest, Buccaneer Bay, Rogers Park, and the Weeki Wachee Preserve.

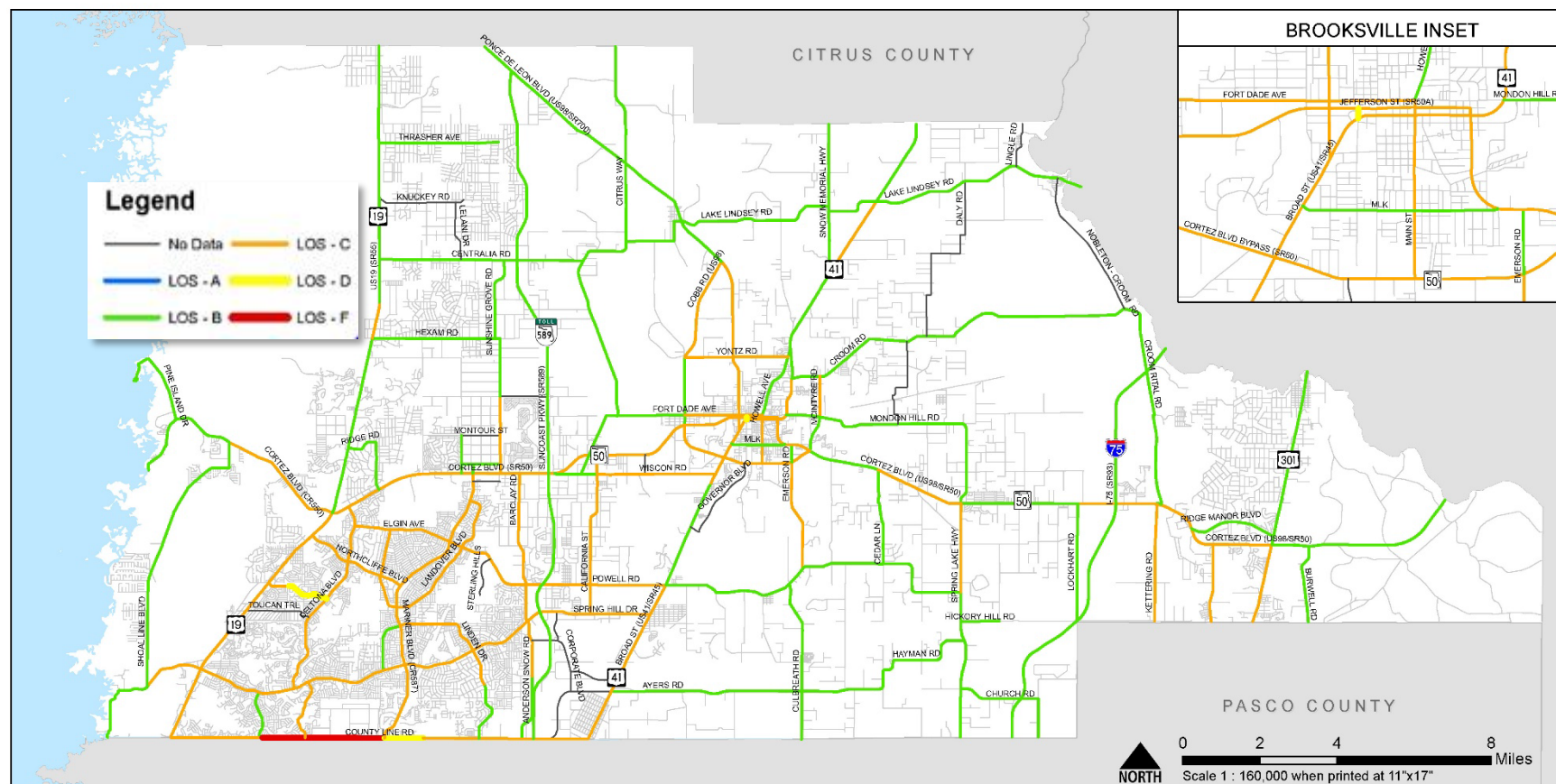
Roadway and Traffic Conditions

The Hernando-Citrus MPO's 2040 LRTP identifies a variety of goals and projects with respect to reducing and avoiding congestion on the county's roadways. Additionally, a handful of segments and intersections as part of key roads have been identified to benefit from congestion management improvements, including programs, road expansions/modifications, and intelligent transportation system (ITS) projects. Current conditions of the roadways are summarized in Figure 2-13.

By 2040, the MPO anticipates that some of its mobility goals will begin to be impeded by increases in congestion if the identified mitigation strategies are not pursued. Transit services are identified as a means to mitigating congestion and are cited as part of a number of strategies outlined by the MPO, thereby opening up the opportunity for transit to be a key tool for the MPO to achieve its goals. It is anticipated that the MPO will continue to work with TheBus to achieve its goals and projects aimed at reducing congestion, as transit services are identified as a key demand management strategy. The most congested corridors/segments include the following:

- County Line Road from Cobblestone Drive to Mariner Boulevard
- Intersection of W Jefferson Street and S Broad Street
- Forest Oaks Boulevard from Forest Villas Circle to Deltona Boulevard
- County Line Road from Mariner Boulevard to Farnsworth Boulevard

Figure 2-13: Congested Roadways, Hernando County, 2019



Source: Hernando-Citrus 2040 LRTP

Current and Future Land Use and Densities

A review of current and emerging land uses was conducted for the baseline conditions assessment. The future land use maps from Hernando County and Brooksville, shown in Figures 2-14 and 2-15, were reviewed, and the following key trends were observed.

Hernando County

- The areas of Hernando County classified as residential uses (yellow) typically are located in the areas immediately outside the Brooksville municipal boundaries, in the Spring Hill urbanized area, and, to a lesser extent, along US-19 north of Spring Hill towards Citrus County, along SR-50 north of Spring Hill, and along US-98 and SR 50 from Hill ‘N Dale and Ridge Manor.
- The areas of Hernando County classified as planned developments (light brown) are located in three principal areas—the eastern part of Spring Hill (e.g., south of Spring Hill Drive, north of Masaryktown, and roughly bounded east-west by US-41 and SR-589), the eastern part of the county along I-75 (e.g., east of Spring Lake, west of Ridge Manor, and roughly bounded north-south by US-98/SR-50 and the Pasco-Hernando county border), and between US-98 and the Hernando-Citrus county border north of Lake Lindsey Road.

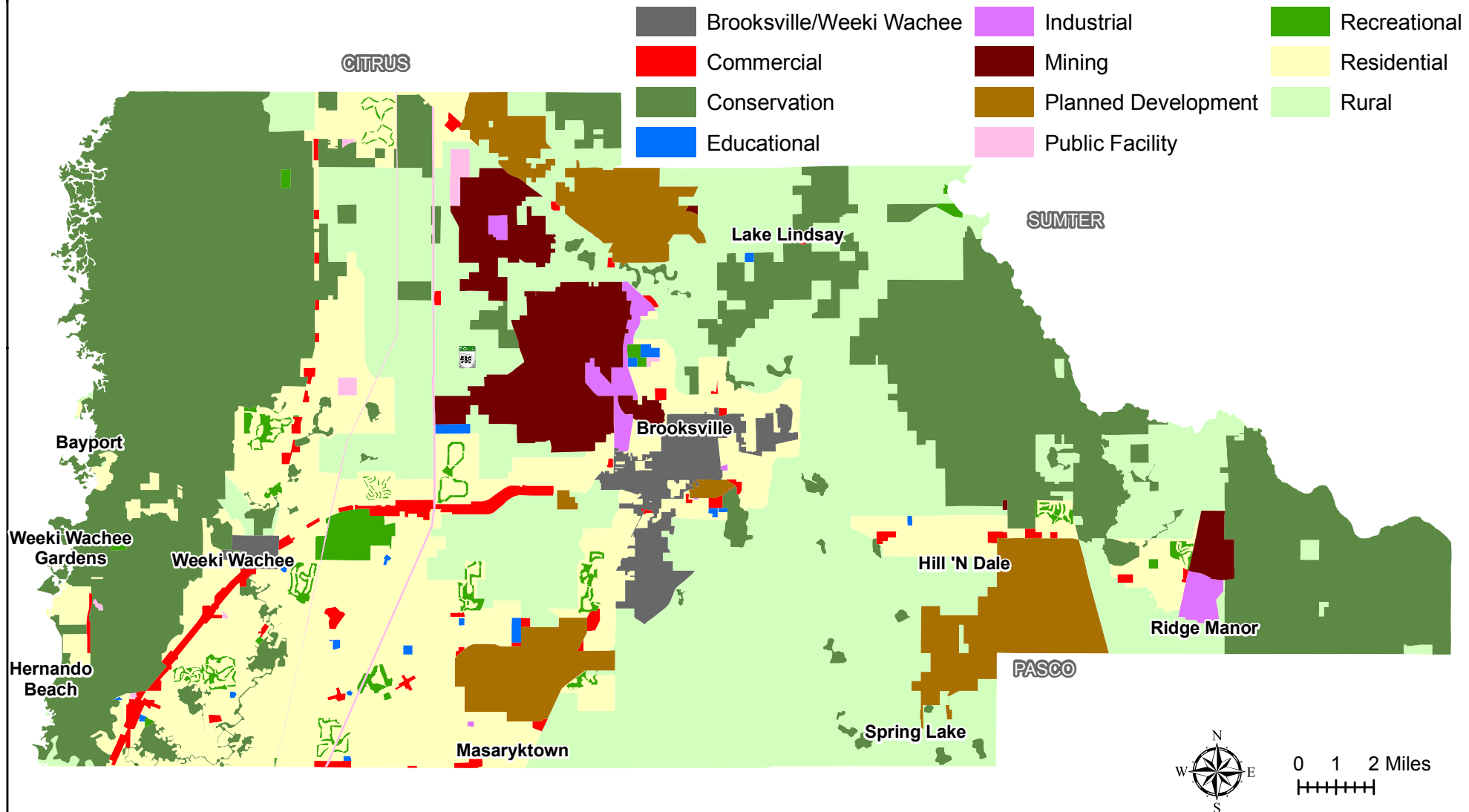
A significant total area is classified as conservation land (green), rural (light green), or mining (burgundy); the first two are concentrated in the periphery of the county (with the exception of the Spring Hill urbanized area), and the third is concentrated northwest of Brooksville.

Brooksville

- Brooksville is centered on the commercial centers along N and S Broad Street and along SR-50/Cortez Boulevard. Immediately adjacent to these commercial corridors is a wide variety of land uses.
- Few areas of the city are designated as multi-family residential (tan); the majority of northern Brooksville and parts of central Brooksville are designated as single-family residential (yellow). However, areas designated as multi-family/mobile home residential are scattered throughout the city, typically adjacent to commercial areas and arterials.

In addition to these commercial and residential uses are a number of mixed-use districts and planned development areas. The mixed-use districts are located in northeastern Brooksville (e.g., north of Mondon Hill Road, south of CR-480 W, and west of Weatherly Road) and southern Brooksville (e.g., Southern Hills Plantation Club). The planned development areas are located in south-central Brooksville (e.g., south of E Dr. Martin Luther King Boulevard, north of SR-50/Cortez Boulevard, and west of US-98) and southern Brooksville (e.g., north of Powell Road and west of Culbreath Road).

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)

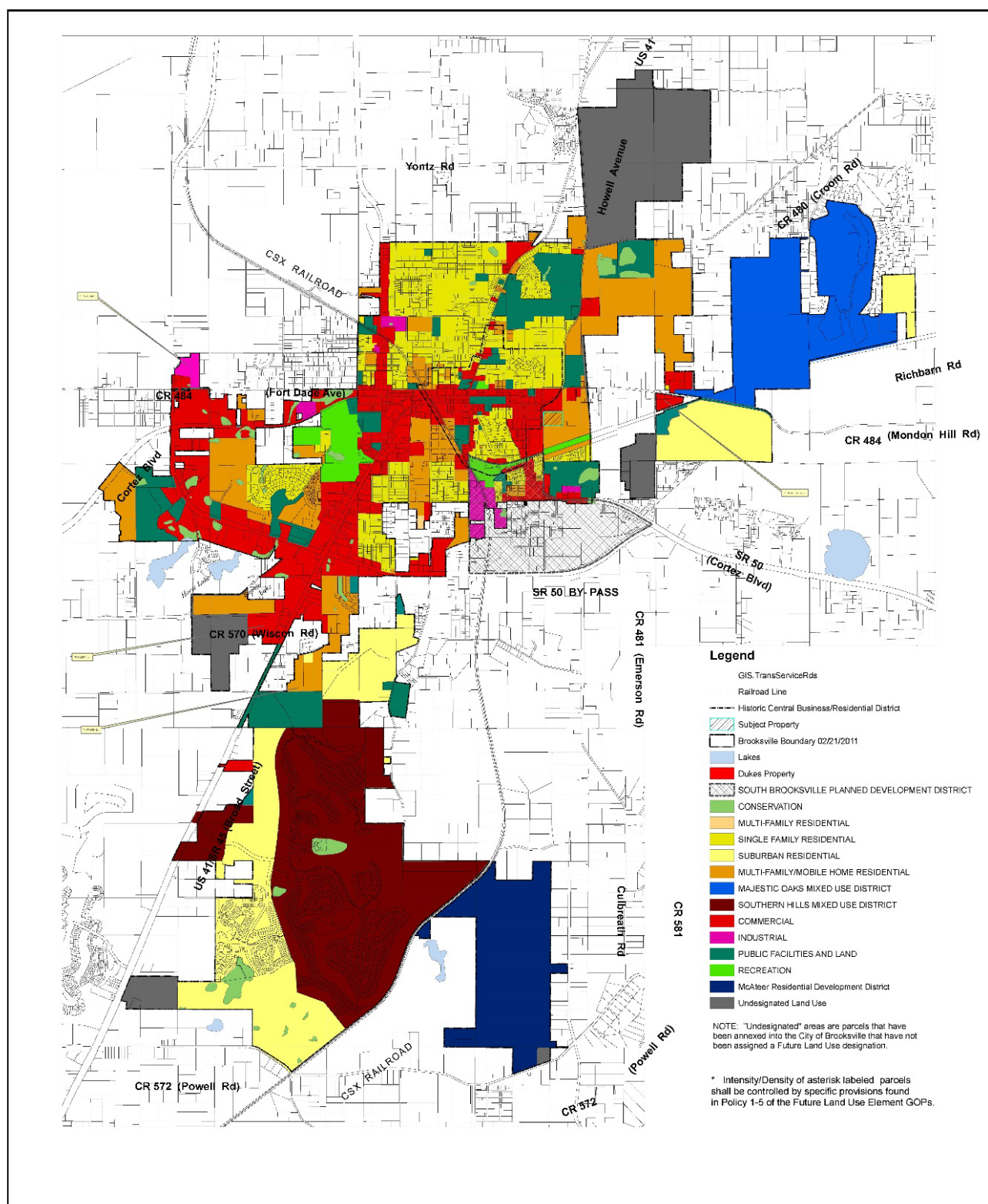


**Figure 2-14:
Future Land Use**

Source: Hernando County MPO



Figure 2-15: City of Brooksville Future Land Use



Source: City of Brooksville Future Land Use

SECTION 3 EXISTING SERVICES EVALUATION

Existing public transportation services in Hernando County include both fixed-route and paratransit services. TheBus, including the fixed-route bus system and its complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) demand-response paratransit service, is governed by the Hernando County BOCC. In addition, Mid-Florida Community Services (dba Trans-Hernando) provides door-to-door TD service for county residents who are unable to drive or do not have available transportation due to age, income, or disability. A brief summary of TheBus and Trans-Hernando services is provided in the next section.

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

Overview of Existing Transit Services

TheBus

Fixed-route service has been provided in Hernando County for more than 15 years and has been expanded multiple times in Brooksville and the urbanized area of the county. Currently Hernando County operates its transit system through a purchased transit service including complementary ADA, by a contract with a transit operator. Current service includes four routes that operate Monday through Friday with 60-minute headways, an improvement from the 75-minute headways of several years back.

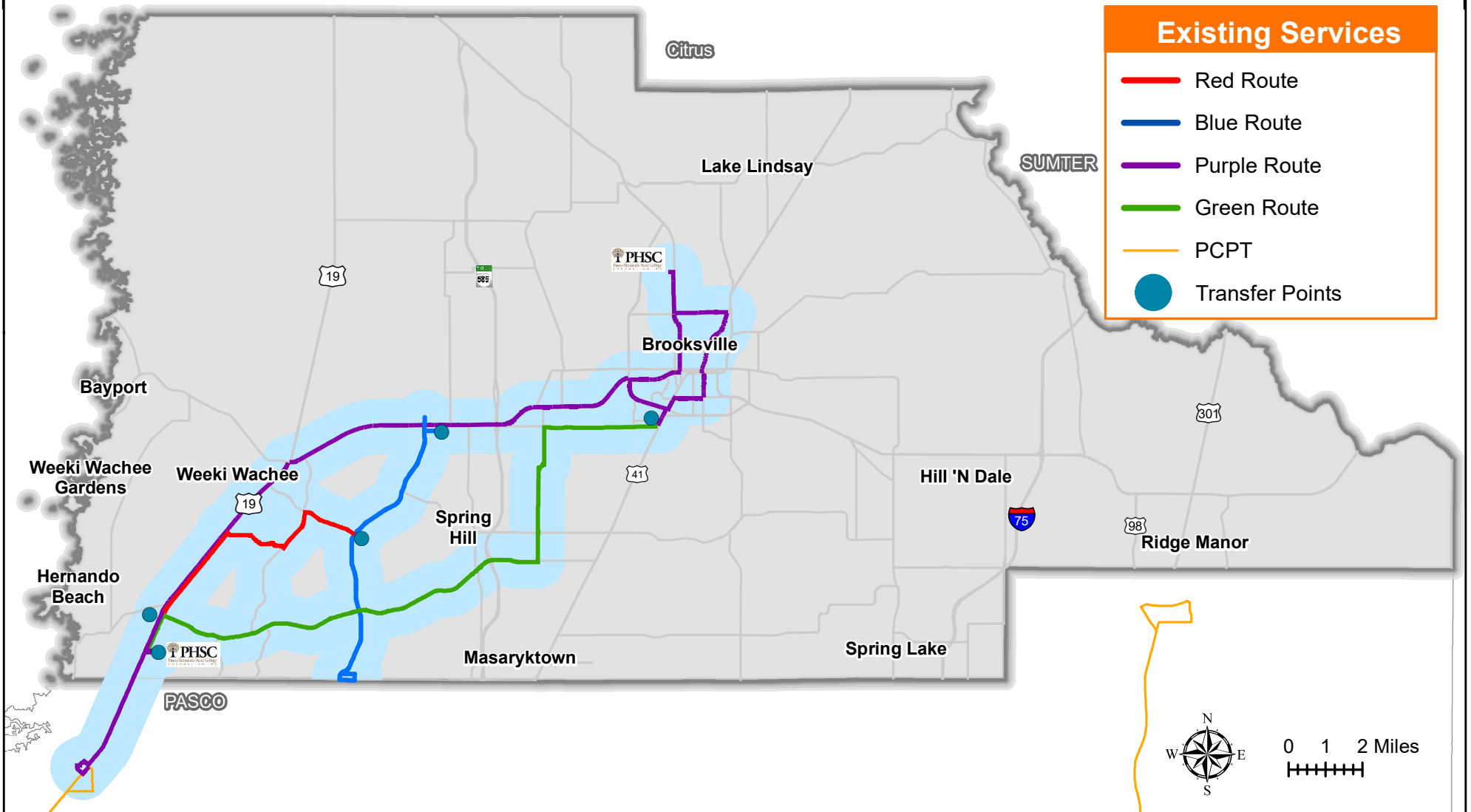
In addition to improved frequencies, a connection to Pasco County's transit services was made since the last TDP. As part of the Purple route extension, service on US-19 was established in 2016 to help serve Hernando's residents connect between the two counties. The County also added a new route to the fixed-route system, the Green route, connecting residents to the airport, education centers, and medical centers in Spring Hill area.

More detailed summaries of the fixed-route bus service are presented later in this section, including type of services provided, fares, and facilities. Map 3-1 shows the existing fixed-route services and key transit facilities Hernando County and the complementary ADA paratransit service area.

Complementary ADA Paratransit Service

In addition to fixed-route bus, services for persons qualifying under ADA is provided, complementing the existing public transportation service for residents who live within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on either side of the fixed-route system but are unable to access due to an eligible disability. TheBus provides and schedules appointments for ADA service one day prior to a trip and during office hours, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Scheduled pickup times for ADA service are from 5:50 AM to 7:35 PM, and trips have a one-hour pickup window. ADA card holders may ride TheBus for free by showing their eligibility photo identification card to the driver. Visitors in Hernando County whose ADA eligibility has been determined by another transit or public agency also may use their ADA eligibility identification card to use the transit service.

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



Map 3-1
Existing Routes

 3/4-mile ADA Paratransit Service Area

Trans-Hernando

The CTD has contracted with Trans-Hernando to provide paratransit services for Hernando County. Also officially designated as the CTC for Hernando County since 2000, Trans-Hernando provides the door-to door TD service for county residents who are unable to drive or do not have available transportation due to age, income, or disability. To qualify with Trans-Hernando, riders must complete an application to receive services; once deemed eligible, riders can make reservations for Monday through Friday for a trip between 7:30 AM and 4:00 PM, with services provided during a two-hour window. These services are available primarily to help meet basic needs, medical needs, and provide access to available shopping. When there is available service, Trans-Hernando also provides seats to those who need to get to a bank, hairdresser, hospital, or other recreational needs. The standard fee associated with a trip is \$5.00 each way and \$10.00 round trip, although a reduced fee is available based on income level, employment, and veteran status and upon proof of status. These services are funded by FDOT, CTD, and private donations.

Fixed-Route Service Overview

A summary of current fixed-route service, fare structure, recent ridership trends, and inventory of transit facilities and vehicles is presented in Table 3-1 to provide a complete snapshot of TheBus system.

Table 3-1: TheBus Fixed-Route Services

Route Color/Name	Key Locations/Corridors Served	Weekday Service Frequency	Days of Service	Weekday Span	FY 2018 Ridership
Purple	Pasco County via US-19 through Brooksville city loop	60 min	Monday–Friday	5:30 AM–7:20 PM	50,280
Green	Spring Hill Dr from PHSC Spring Hill to transfer station in Brooksville on SR-50	60 min	Monday–Friday	6:00 AM–7:00 PM	34,894
Blue	Mariner Blvd from Pasco County line to Coastal Way Plaza	60 min	Monday–Friday	6:00 AM–7:00 PM	25,268
Red	Spring Hill Dr Transfer Center via US-19 to Mariner Commons Transfer Center	60 min	Monday–Friday	5:45 AM–5:40 PM	16,630

Source: TheBus

Fares

The regular one-way cash fare on TheBus system is \$1.25. Also available for purchase are 12 One-Way, 18 One-Way, transfers, and monthly passes. TheBus offers discounts for children under age 6, students, older adults, and persons with disabilities, as shown in Table 3-2. To be eligible for reduced fares, riders must show their ADA eligibility card or TheBus reduced-fare photo ID (except if under age 6). TheBus

reduced-fare photo ID is for persons age 65 and older, students, Medicare recipients, or those who are disabled.

Table 3-2: TheBus Fares and Passes

Fare Category	Regular	Reduced
One-Way	\$1.25	\$0.60
Transfers	\$0.50	-
12 One-Way tickets	\$10	-
18 One-Way tickets	\$15	-
Monthly Pass	\$25	\$12.50

Source: TheBus website

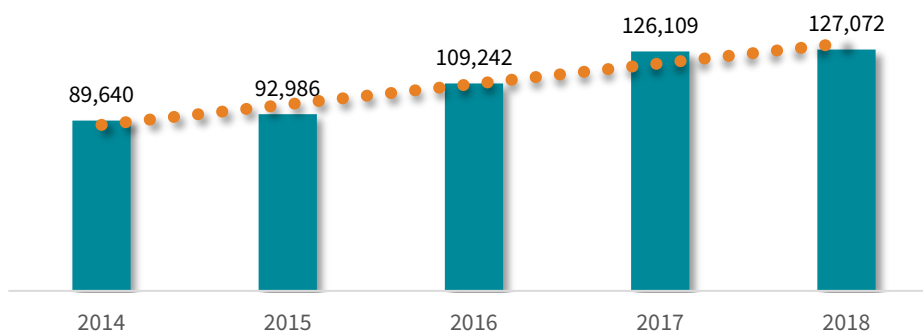
TheBus passes can be purchased via cash, money order, and debit/credit card (unless noted) at the following locations:

- Main Library, 238 Howell Avenue, Brooksville 34601
- Spring Hill Library, 9220 Spring Hill Drive, Spring Hill 34608
- West Hernando Library, 6335 Blackbird Avenue, Weeki Wachee 34613
- Pasco-Hernando State College North Campus Bookstore, 11415 Ponce De Leon Boulevard, Brooksville 34601
- Pasco-Hernando State College Spring Hill Campus Bookstore, 450 Beverly Court, Spring Hill 34606
- Brooksville City Hall, 201 Howell Avenue, Brooksville 34601 (cash or money order only)
- Tax Collector's Office/Westside Government Center, 7489 Forest Oaks Boulevard, Spring Hill 34606 (cash or money order only)

Ridership Trends

Figure 3-2 summarizes the ridership trends on TheBus for 2014–2018. Whereas transit ridership has declined nationally and regionally for the last few years, TheBus ridership has increased by 42 percent in five years analyzed, showing a growing demand for the system.

Figure 3-1: TheBus Passenger Trips, 2014–2018



Source: Hernando County, TheBus

Facilities

Mariner Square Shopping Center Transfer Station on Cortez Boulevard in Spring Hill served as the major transfer point for fixed-route services until recently, but the agreement to use the facility has now expired. In FY 2017, Hernando County installed benches and shelters at 89 bus stops along various routes. By adding a new route to the fixed-route system (Green route), Hernando County also added approximately 88 bus stops.

Vehicles

A summary of the current vehicle inventory for TheBus fixed-route and ADA services is provided in Table 3-3 and summarized further in Table 3-4. In addition, Hernando County acquired one new Gillig fixed-route bus and one paratransit vehicle to help replace its aging fleet, now with two spare vehicles to aid the Red, Blue, and Purple routes for peak travel periods.

Table 3-3: TheBus Vehicle Inventory

	Veh#	Description	Year	Coach Type	Model ID	Vehicle Past Recommended Life?
Fixed Route	19411	Gillig low floor	2002	Gillig	31' Low Floor	Yes
	19412	Gillig low floor	2002	Gillig	31' Low Floor	Yes
	19413	Gillig low floor	2002	Gillig	31' Low Floor	Yes
	18897	Transit bus cutaway	2011	Arboc	Chevrolet g4500	Yes
	18898	Transit bus cutaway	2011	Arboc	Chevy g4500	Yes
	18899	Transit bus cutaway	2011	Arboc	Chevy g4500	Yes
	19429	Gillig low floor	2015	Gillig	31' Low Floor	No
	20041	Gillig low floor	2016	Gillig	29' Low Floor	No
	20042	Gillig low floor	2016	Gillig	29' Low Floor	No
	20079	Gillig low floor	2017	Gillig	29' Low Floor	No
	21367	Gillig low floor	2018	Gillig	29' Low Floor	No
Demand Response	18891	Transit van cutaway	2013	Goshen	Goshen coach	Yes
	19441	Dodge caravan	2015	Dodge	Ada van	No
	20054	Ford e450	2016	Glaval	Universal 23'	No
	20055	Ford e450	2016	Glaval	Universal 23'	No
	20056	Ford e450	2016	Glaval	Universal 23'	No
	20038	Ford e450	2016	Glaval	Cutaway	No
	20828	Transit cutaway	2017	Glaval	Cutaway	No

Source: Hernando County

Table 3-4: TheBus Vehicle Inventory Summary

Bus Type	Total Number	Average Age	Percent At or Past Useful Life Benchmark
Bus	11	7	27%
Demand Response	7	2.4	14%

Source: Hernando County

Inventory of Existing Transportation Services

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

Table 3-5: Other Transportation Providers – Hernando County

Provider	Types of Services Provided			Levels of Service		Fare Structure	Types of Vehicles	Phone	Email
	General Service Area	Eligible Trip Purposes	Eligible Riders	Days of Operation	Hours				
CTC-Coordinated Contractors									
Medical Transportation Management (MTM)*	Hernando	All	Disabled, Older Adult, Medicaid Eligible, Transportation Disadvantaged	Mon-Sun	24/7	Variable	Wheelchair Van, Sedan, Ambulance	(636) 561-5686	tphelpdesk@mtm-inc.net
Access 2 Care*	Hernando	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Medicaid, Medicare	Mon-Sun	24/7	Free for Medicare and Medicaid receivers	Wheelchair Van, Ambulance	(727) 282-1451	
Logisticare*	Hernando	Ambulatory, Wheelchair	Medicaid, Medicare, Older Adult	Mon-Sun	24/7	Variable	Sedan/Van	(404) 888-5800	network@logisticare.com
All Other Transportation Providers									
American Cancer Society Transportation Program	Statewide	Medical	Cancer Patient	Mon-Fri	24/7	Program uses volunteer and private contracted providers. Depending on need, discount vouchers are available for other than volunteer drivers	Sedan	(800) 227-2345	n/a
Black Coach Transportation Services	Hernando, Lake, Marion, Sumter	Any	Cancer Patient, Disabled, Older Adult, Private Pay Consumer, Veterans	Mon-Sun	24/7	\$75-\$80 Round Trip. Flat rates available for airport transport	Car, Non-Emergency Stretcher Van, Van, Wheelchair Van	(352) 461-7174	blackcoachexpress@gmail.com
Corporate Angel Network	Statewide	Medical	Cancer Patient	Mon-Fri	9:00AM-5:00PM	Free service	Airplane	(914) 328-1313	info@corpangelnetwork.org
Greyhound Bus	Statewide	Any	All	Mon-Sun	5:00AM-10:45PM	Fares dependent on distance	Bus	(813) 229-2174	webmaster@greyhound.com

Table 3-5: Other Transportation Providers – Hernando County (continued)

Provider	Types of Services Provided			Levels of Service		Fare Structure	Types of Vehicles	Phone	Email
	General Service Area	Eligible Trip Purposes	Eligible Riders	Days of Operation	Hours				
J and M Limousines	Spring Hill/Brooksville	Any	All	Mon-Sun	24/7	Fares dependent on distance	Sedan/van	(352) 688-2999	n/a
Hernando Car Service	County-wide	Any	All	Mon-Sun	24/7	\$2.00/miles	Sedan/van	(352) 797-5596	n/a
Lyft	National	Any	Any	Mon-Sun	24/7	Fare dependent on distance	Sedan	n/a	support@lyft.com
MedFleet Systems	Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas	Any	Medicaid Eligible, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sun	24/7	Medicaid - \$1 each way if qualified, Wheelchair Van, base price \$30 one way plus \$2.50/mile; Stretcher Van, base price \$75 one way, plus \$3.00/mile	Ambulance, Non-Emergency Stretcher Van, Wheelchair Van	(727) 376-7240	n/a
Mobility Freedom of Florida	Statewide	Recreation, Errands	Disabled	Mon-Fri	9:00AM-5:00PM	1 Day rental \$135; 2-4 Days \$120; 5-20 Days \$90; 21-29 Days \$85; 30 Days \$80	Wheelchair Van	(352) 429-3972	cindy@mobilityfreedom.com
Olympus Limousine, Inc	Hernando, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas	Any	Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sun	24/7	Fares dependent on distance	Bus, Car, Limousine/ Luxury Car, Van	(800) 841-8838	info@olympuslimo.com
Stretcher/Wheelchair Inc.	Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas	Errands, Medical, Recreation	Disabled, Older Adult, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sat	6:00AM-6:00PM	Wheelchair Van, \$28.00 base rate each way, plus \$3.00 per mile Stretcher Van, \$85.00 base rate each way, plus \$3.00 per mile	Mini-Bus, Non-Emergency Stretcher Van, Wheelchair Van	(727) 845-4454	stretcherlimo@aol.com
Sunnyvale Medical Transport, Inc.	Statewide	Medical	Cancer Patient, Disabled, Older Adult, General Public, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sun	24/7	Fares dependent on distance	Bus	(863) 381-3565	dwrkwklw@gmail.com

Table 3-5: Other Transportation Providers – Hernando County (continued)

Provider	Types of Services Provided			Levels of Service		Fare Structure	Types of Vehicles	Phone	Email
	General Service Area	Eligible Trip Purposes	Eligible Riders	Days of Operation	Hours				
Terri's Taxi and Errand Service	Citrus, Hernando, Levy, Marion, Pasco, Sumter	Errands, Medical, Recreation	Disabled, Older Adult, Medicaid Eligible, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sun	24/7	\$3 flat rate, \$1.50 per mile	Sedan	(352) 726-3723	ttaxi66@aol.com
The BusBank	Statewide	Recreation, Errands	Disabled, Older Adult, General Public, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Fri	8:00AM-6:00PM	Fares dependent on distance	Bus	(312) 476-6100	n/a
Trans Hernando Para Transit	Hernando	Any, Medical	Medical Eligible, Transportation Disadvantaged	Mon-Fri	8:00AM-5:00PM	Transportation Disadvantaged, \$10.00 round trip Approved Medicaid, no charge	Wheelchair Van	(352) 799-1510	transhernando@mfc.us.com
Transcare Plus, Inc.	Citrus, Hernando, Pasco	Medical	ADA Eligible, Cancer Patient, Disabled, Older Adult, General Public	Mon-Sun	24/7	Variable	Ambulatory Van, Non-Emergency Stretcher Van, Wheelchair Van	(352) 340-5096	transcareplus@gmail.com
Yellow Cab of Hernando County	Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas	Any	ADA Eligible, Disabled, Older Adult, Medicaid Eligible, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sun	24/7	\$3.25 for first 1/4 mile; then \$2/mile	Sedan	(352) 686-0607	info@yellowcabflorida.com
Yellow Cab of Pasco County	Collier, Hernando, Lee, Pasco, Pinellas	Medical	Disabled, Older Adult, Private Pay Consumer	Mon-Sun	24/7	Meter starts at \$3.25 for first 1/4 mile plus \$2.00/mile. Medicaid and Americans with Disabilities need pre approval	Car, Mini-Bus	(888) 459-7827	info@yellowcabflorida.com
Uber	National	Any	All	Mon-Sun	24/7	Fares dependent on distance	Sedan	n/a	support@uber.com
Wheelchair/Stretcher Limo	County-wide	Any	All, wheelchair accessible	Mon-Fri	6:00AM-7:00PM	Dependent on qualifying program with Hernando County	Wheelchair Van	(727) 845-4454	n/a

Trend Analysis

To assess how efficiently TheBus supplies fixed-route transit service and how effectively those services meet the needs of the area, a trend analysis of critical performance indicators and measures was conducted to examine the performance of its fixed-route services over a five-year period.

To complete this trend analysis, data from the Florida Transit Information System (FTIS) were used, which includes validated NTD data for 2013–2017 for transit agencies in Florida. Using the same measures, a peer system review analysis also was conducted and summarized followed by this trend analysis. This compares various TheBus fixed-route performance characteristics to a group of transit peers using the most complete, recent national transit data at the time of the analysis, 2015 NTD data.

Analysis Indicators and Measures

Various performance measures were used to present the data that relate to overall system performance. Three categories of indicators and performance measures were analyzed for the trend and peer analysis of the existing transit service:

- **Performance Indicators** – quantity of service supply, passenger and fare revenue generation, and resource input
- **Effectiveness Measures** – extent to which the service is effectively provided
- **Efficiency Measures** – extent to which cost efficiency is achieved

The trend analysis was organized by the type of measure or indicator and include statistics, figures, and tables to illustrate TheBus' performance over the past five years. This analysis includes statistics that summarize selected system performance indicators, effectiveness, and efficiency measures for the five-year period. The findings of the trend analysis are presented by indicator in Table 3-6, and a complete summary of the results is provided in Appendix B.

Trend Analysis Summary

- **Service Consumption** – All service consumption metrics have been increasing over the five-year analysis period except for service area population density. This suggest that riders are using TheBus increasingly.
- **Service Supply** – Passenger trips per capita increased by approximately 14.4 percent, which corresponds with the increase in service consumption overall. Passenger trips per revenue hour decreased (-16.9%) and revenue miles per capita increased (46.4%), suggesting that riders are using TheBus more, but they are not using it during all hours that service is provided, leaving room for increased efficiency with TheBus.
- **Quality of Service** – The number of vehicles operated in maximum service increased by 75 percent in the five-year period, suggesting that there has been more service, which corresponds with the increase in revenue hours.
- **Cost Efficiency** – Operating costs increased over the five-year period, at 41.7 percent, corresponding with an increase in operating expense per capita. Although the operating

expenses increased, the operating expense per passenger trip and operating expense per revenue mile decreased, -7 percent and -27.4 percent, respectively. This suggests that although service and ridership have increased, there is room for improvement with cost efficiency.

Table 3-6: TheBus Fixed-Route Trend Analysis, 2013–2017

Indicator/ Measure	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% Change (2013– 2017)	Status ¹	Desired Trend ²
General Indicators								
Service Area Pop	86,848	87,136	87,479	115,427	115,715	33.2%	↗	↗
Service Area Pop Density	1,379	1,383	1,389	1,297	1,300	-5.7%	↘	↗
Passenger Trips	82,770	89,640	92,986	109,242	126,109	52.4%	↗	↗
Revenue Miles	206,983	225,165	229,513	369,627	403,876	95.1%	↗	↗
Revenue Hours	11,613	12,459	12,438	19,526	21,291	83.3%	↗	↗
Total Operating Exp	\$810,769	\$843,282	\$747,355	\$1,180,758	\$1,148,545	41.7%	↗	↘
Vehicles in Max Svc	4	4	4	7	7	75%	↗	↗
Effectiveness Measures								
Revenue Miles per Capita	2.38	2.58	2.62	3.20	3.49	46.4%	↗	↗
Passenger Trips per Capita	0.95	1.03	1.06	0.95	1.09	14.4%	↗	↗
Passenger Trips per Rev Hr	7.13	7.19	7.48	5.59	5.92	-16.9%	↘	↗
Efficiency Measures								
Operating Exp per Capita	9.34	9.68	8.54	10.23	9.93	6.3%	↗	↘
Operating Exp per Passenger Trip	\$9.80	\$9.41	\$8.04	\$10.23	\$9.11	-7.0%	↘	↘
Operating Exp per Revenue Mile	\$3.92	\$3.75	\$3.26	\$3.19	\$2.84	-27.4%	↘	↘
Farebox Recovery	n/a	8.08%	8.62%	n/a	8.17%	1.1%*	↗	↗
Average Fare	\$0.72	\$0.76	\$0.69	\$0.73	\$0.74	3.8%	↗	↗

¹ Status assigned only if trend is outside 1 standard deviation of trend average.

² Desired Trend for General Indicators based on expanding transit system.

*2013 and 2016 data not available, based on 2014–2017 trend.

Source: NTD FTIS

Farebox Recovery Report

In addition to the summary of the most recent farebox recovery trend for TheBus fixed-route service, a more detailed analysis and set of recommendations to improve the farebox recovery rate is provided as part of Appendix A.

Peer Review Analysis

In addition to the trend analysis presented previously, a peer system review was conducted to assess how TheBus compares to similar/peer transit agencies. The peer review analysis, when combined with the trend analysis of an overall transit performance evaluation, provides an excellent starting point for understanding the efficiency and effectiveness of a transit system.

Peer System Selection Methodology

A fixed-route peer system selection was conducted using 2015 NTD data available in the FTIS database. The 2015 data for all systems reported in NTD were then compared with 2015 data for TheBus. The pool of possible peers was assessed and subsequently scored through an objective assessment of nine standard variables, including the following:

- Geography (southeastern U.S.)
- Average speed (revenue miles/revenue hours)
- Passenger trips
- Revenue miles
- Service area population
- Service area population density
- Total operating expense
- Vehicles operated in maximum service
- Revenue hours

The peers were first selected based on geographic location (southeastern states), including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. Fixed-route systems operating in these states were added to the pool of possible peers and analyzed based on the eight remaining criteria. A potential peer received 1.0 point when one of the eight criteria was within 1 standard deviation of TheBus' performance value. A peer received 0.5 points for each criterion that fell within 2 standard deviations of TheBus value. Table 3-7 shows the final set of selected peer systems for the peer system review analysis.

Table 3-7: Selected Peer Systems for TheBus Peer Review Analysis

Agency Name	Location
Suffolk Transit (Suffolk)	Suffolk, VA
Hub City Transit (Hub City)	Hattiesburg, MS
East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission (EARPDC)	Anniston, AL
City of Miramar – Public Works Department (Miramar)	Miramar, FL
Jonesboro Economical Transportation System (JETS)	Jonesboro, AK

Peer Review Analysis

The results of the peer review analysis of Hernando County's fixed-route bus service during 2016 (after the peer selection was made using 2015 data) are shown in Table 3-8. Findings are presented by key indicators/measures in terms of their deviation above or below the peer group mean and a general assessment of the result. Following the table, a summary of the overall results is provided.

Table 3-8: TheBus Fixed-Route Peer Review Analysis, 2016

Indicator/Measure	TheBus % from Mean	Assessment
General Indicators		
Service Area Population	-9.8%	n/a
Service Area Population Density	-19.4%	n/a
Passenger Trips	-11.9%	Can improve
Revenue Miles	-52.0%	Can improve
Revenue Hours	39.1%	Good
Total Operating Expense	35.2%	Can improve
Vehicles Operated During Max Service	23.5%	Good
Effectiveness Measures		
Passenger Trips per Capita	-26.8%	Can improve
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	-39.5%	Can improve
Revenue Miles per Capita	15.0%	Good
Efficiency Measures		
Operating Expense per Capita	0.76%	Good
Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	42.1%	Can improve
Operating Expense per Revenue Mile	-15.1%	Good
Farebox Recovery	11.2%	Good
Average Fare	33.4%	Good

Source: NTD FTIS

Peer Analysis Summary

- General Performance Indicators** – TheBus placed above the peer mean in revenue hours, total operating expense, and vehicles operated during maximum service and placed under the peer mean in passenger trips, service area population, and revenue miles. TheBus can improve on passenger trips, service area population, revenue miles, and total operating expense. TheBus placed an average of 24.54 percent below the mean in metrics that suggest room for improvement in the amount of service provided given population levels. TheBus placed an average of 32.61 percent above the mean in metrics related to efficiency of service provided.
- Effectiveness Measures** – TheBus placed below the peer mean for most effectiveness measures. Passenger trips per capita and passenger trips per revenue hour were below the mean; revenue miles per capita was above the mean. Revenue miles per capita scoring 15.02 percent above the mean suggests that TheBus is effective at serving those using TheBus for longer distances.
- Efficiency Measures** – TheBus placed above the peer mean in every metric except operating expense per revenue mile. This suggests that TheBus is maximizing its funding per person and receiving a higher farebox recovery rate than most peers of the same size.

SECTION 4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This section outlines the public involvement activities planned and conducted for Hernando County's 2020–2029 TDP. Prior to conducting public involvement activities, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that describes all outreach activities to be undertaken during the development of the TDP was prepared. The activities included in the PIP provide numerous opportunities for involvement by the general public and representatives of local agencies and organizations. A copy of the PIP developed for the Hernando County TDP is included in Appendix A. Summarized in this section are findings based on the input received from these activities. The results of all public involvement activities were combined with findings from other components of the TDP to develop and evaluate the 10-year strategic transit plan for Hernando County, as summarized later in this report.

Summary of TDP Public Involvement Activities

Several public involvement activities and techniques were used with the Hernando County TDP process to ensure the opportunity for a range of community stakeholders to actively participate in the plan development process. The activities and techniques are summarized in greater detail in the following sections, and a tabulated summary of the events and public engagement/participation by outreach event is provided in Table 4-1.

Table 4-1: Key Public Involvement Activities

Outreach Activity	Date	Engaged/Participated
Stakeholder Interviews		
Community Stakeholders	December 2018–February 2019	17
Total		17
Grassroots Outreach		
Farmer’s Market	January–February 2019	10
Spring Hill Library		36
Heritage Festival		15
Walmart		15
Total		76
Rider and Non-Rider Surveys		
Public Input Survey	January 2019–March 2019	61
Transit Priorities Survey	April 2019–May 2019	39
Bus Rider Survey	January 2019–March 2019	19
Total		119
Open House Public Workshops		
Brooksville City Hall	April 2019	30
Spring Hill Library		32
Total		62
Total Participants		274



Project Review Meetings

A Project Review Team was established to review project documentation and help guide the overall TDP update effort. The review team was established at the discretion of the MPO staff and included Hernando County Transit and MPO staff. The following meetings were held as part of this effort:

- **Meeting #1** – November 16, 2018; teleconference that served as kick-off for project and included discussions on overall objectives for TDP and review of project schedule, including future staff meetings, upcoming public outreach activities, and various data needs to complete TDP.
- **Meeting #2** – April 18, 2019, 12:00 PM, Hernando County Government Center; reviewed and discussed Project Review Team comments on TDP goals and objectives, necessary revisions; reviewed schedule for TDP and outreach; finalized comments on Technical Memorandum #2.

Stakeholder Interviews

One-on-one stakeholder interviews provide a forum to gather input from policy, agency, or community leaders concerning the vision for public transportation in their community. These direct conversations are conducted to enhance the understanding of location conditions for transit as assessed through the perceptions and attitudes of stakeholders within the community. A total of 17 stakeholders, selected by MPO/Hernando County staff, were contacted. Table 4-2 provides a list of the individuals contacted and those who were interviewed as part of this outreach effort. Of the 17 stakeholders contacted, 10 were interviewed from December 2018 through February 2019.

Table 4-2: TDP Stakeholders

Name	Organization	Title
Kevin Daugherty	Brooksville Airport	Airport Manager
Valerie Pianta	Hernando County Business Development	Manager
Bill Geiger	City of Brooksville	Director, Community Development
William Hall	School Transportation	Director, Fire, Safety & Security
Patricia Crowley	Hernando Chamber of Commerce	President/CEO
Donna Burdzinski	Pasco–Hernando State College, Spring Hill	Provost
Tim Beard	Pasco–Hernando State College, North	President – North Campus
Marilyn Pearson-Adams	Hernando Chamber of Commerce	Board Chair
Nicole Palmer	Walmart Supercenter Brooksville	Store Manager
Steve Smith	Walmart Supercenter Cortez Blvd	Store Manager
Jerome Salantino	Pasco Hernando Workforce Board	CEO
Andrew Chamberlain	Jericho Road Ministries	Executive Director
Mickey Smith	Oak Hill Hospital	CEO
Ken Wicker	Bayfront Health Brooksville	CEO
Robin Napier	Department of Health	Administrator
Luli Cannon	RMC Property Group	Realtor
Ronald Sikora	SITE Centers Corp	Property Manager

Interview Summary

A list of questions and discussion topics was developed for the interviews, and each stakeholder was provided the same questions and topics. The script for the interviews is included in Appendix B. The input received during these interviews was reviewed, and major themes were identified and are summarized in the following sections.

Overall, interviewees expressed the need for more frequent bus services in Hernando County, regional connections to access key employment and commercial hubs in the Tampa Bay region, and providing bus services later in the day to accommodate workforce and educational needs.

- **Service Improvements** – All stakeholders agreed that frequency and timeliness of TheBus needs to improve to attract more ridership and grow the service overtime. Key service improvements were as follows:
 - *More frequent bus service* – Stakeholders commented that more frequent service was necessary to connect residents to their appointments or jobs in a timely manner. Service reliability was also identified as necessary for those who depended on the service for work related trips.
 - *Weekend service* – Buses operating on weekends, especially on Saturdays, also was considered to be a necessary improvement to help those who work in service and medical industries or who cannot drive get to shopping and medical appointments.
 - *Later service* – Extending current services at least until 9:00 PM and, if possible, extended hours to 11:00 PM was also highlighted as a need to help those who work non-traditional hours.
- **New Areas for Service** – All stakeholders agreed that regional connectivity to Pasco County and other areas in Tampa Bay was essential to help link residents to shopping and work opportunities. It was noted that service to Citrus County would be helpful as well, but it was not as important as connecting to south of Pasco County. Service to Ridge Manor also was discussed, but low density and distance were considered factors, making such a service a long-term need.
- **Express Bus Service** – Some stakeholders noted that an express bus from core areas in Hernando County to Pasco County may be better than a traditional fixed-route service to address commuter needs and for others needing a faster connection to Tampa Bay.
- **Fare Policy** – Stakeholders agreed that the current \$1.25 fare was reasonable but agreed that there should be options in addition to carrying exact change, such as mobile fare payment.
- **Awareness/Marketing** – All stakeholders were aware of TheBus and thought it was a necessary service for Hernando County. They also felt that there was a need for more education and awareness campaigns related to TheBus services. As a whole, stakeholders agree that a social media campaign would be a great way to raise awareness about service and increase ridership. It was also suggested that a free ride day once every six months would encourage passengers to try the service and residents to use TheBus more often.

More detailed and direct input from the stakeholder interviews/discussions included the following:

- Workers, older adults, low-income persons, and students use the service a lot.
- Workers and low-income persons use the bus; routes are needed that leave the county; more extended hours and later service are needed for those who leave work later.
- Major destinations are on US-19; need connection to Citrus County for work and training.
- Need more service, more frequent service, and extended/late service in Brooksville and core areas such as Spring Hill.
- Need to expand public awareness of services offered.
- Use local funding sources such as partnerships with local businesses or companies with a larger presence.
- Increase frequency; need regional connections with express-type bus.
- Major destinations are the two college campuses, which need a connector bus; need a connector bus to Dade City–Pasco County campus from the Spring Hill and Brooksville campuses.
- Social media campaigns are underused, could be implemented more to get the word out to increase ridership.
- Additional taxes would be a hard sell with the community, but could raise private funds.
- Best way to get more people to use services is have a free day every six months and an increase in bike racks on buses and at bus stations.
- Expand public awareness about TheBus, including TV broadcasts and commercials.
- Weekly reduced pass is important because low-income population cannot afford to spend money all at once.
- Need park-and-ride lots; would increase number of people willing to use the bus, could also be used for people who want to go to other counties for work but do not have a nearby route.
- Need for route on Suncoast Parkway to both Pasco and Citrus counties, possibly starting at SR-50 and then to SR-52 or SR-54.
- Need regional transportation to Pasco County and maybe even further south, maybe a limited express bus; not many people need to go further south beyond Pasco.
- Low-income persons and older adults have difficult transportation conditions due to lack of comfort at bus stops and no money for gas or other transportation options; some bus stops do not have benches, coverings, or sidewalks connecting them to the bus stop.

Rider and Non-Rider Surveys

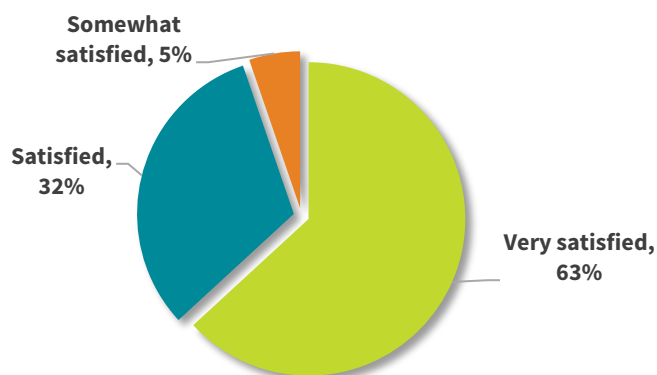
Bus Rider Survey

A bus rider survey was conducted in January 2019 by TheBus to collect information on travel frequency, user satisfaction, and desired future improvements. A 15-question paper survey was developed

exclusively for bus riders to gauge their opinions and was distributed to riders by bus operators and collected at the end of their trip. All surveys were in English. In total, 19 surveys were completed. The survey was self-administered and offered to all persons boarding buses on the day of the survey. Key findings are organized and summarized below.

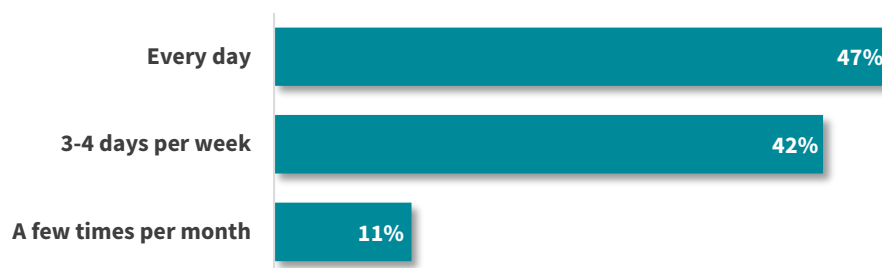
Figure 4-1 shows that the majority of passengers (63%) were very satisfied with the current transit system.

Figure 4-1: Satisfaction with Current System



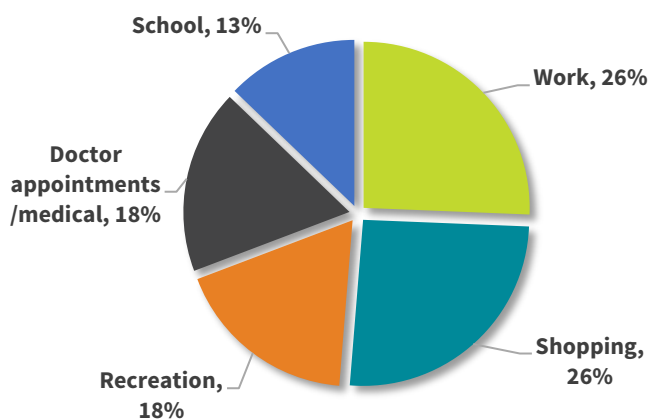
When asked how often they used TheBus, 47 percent of passengers responded that they used the service every day (Figure 4-2).

Figure 4-2: Frequency of Ridership



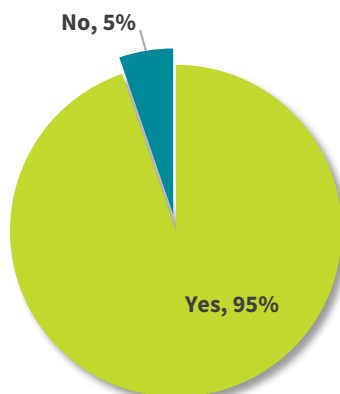
As shown in Figure 4-3, more than half of the passengers (52%) responded that they use TheBus for work and shopping (26% each), followed by recreation (18%), medical (18%), and school (13%).

Figure 4-3: Trip Purpose



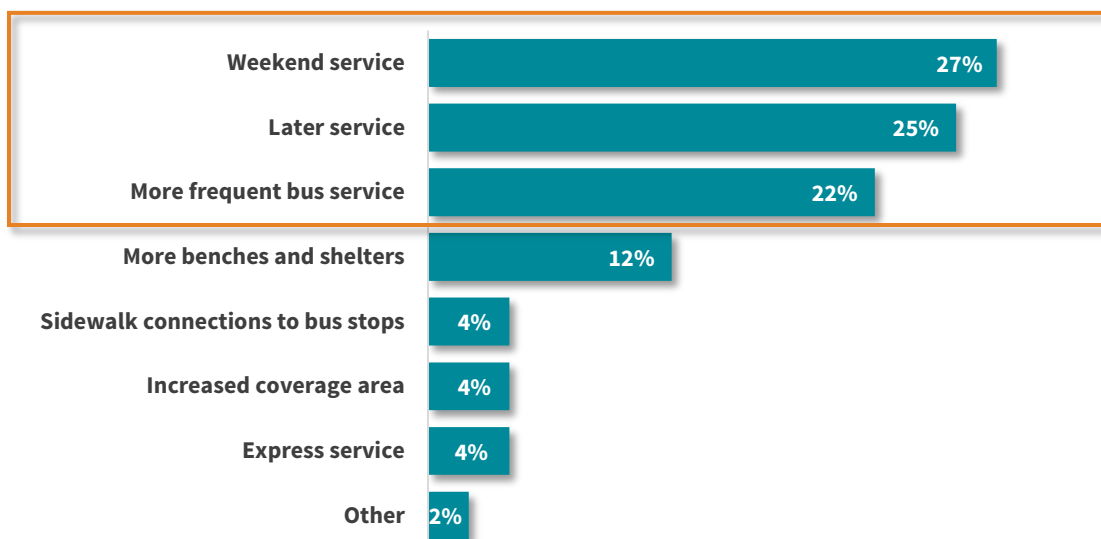
A large majority of respondents (95%) agreed that there was a need for additional transit services in Hernando County (Figure 4-4).

Figure 4-4: Need for Additional Transit



Riders were asked what they believed were necessary improvements for TheBus in the next 10 years. The top three improvements that passengers would like to see were weekend service (27%), later service (25%), and more frequent bus service (22%), shown in Figure 4-5.

Figure 4-5: Top Three Service Improvements



Grassroots Outreach Activities

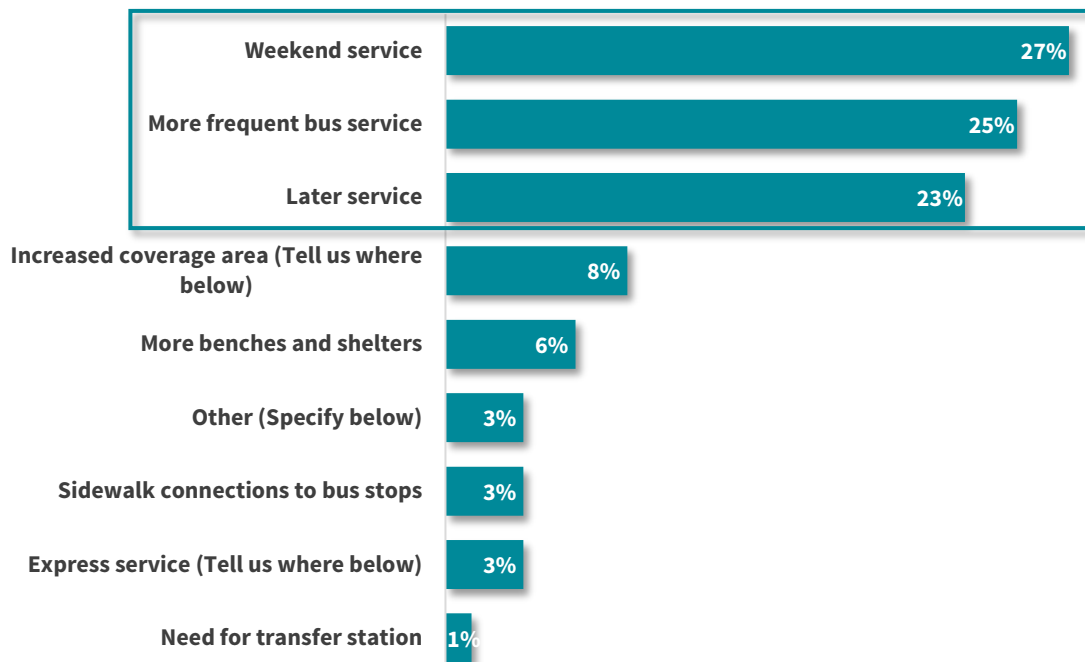
Grassroots outreach events at already-planned public events or at key activity centers also were used to engage the community and gather input and to raise awareness and encourage transit use. Staff of the MPO and TheBus jointly conducted four grassroots events in January and February 2019 to capture a range of opinions and perspectives with respect to the TheBus services. The events also used a TDP public input survey. In total, 76 people participated at the four events, as summarized below:

- Farmer's Market, 615 Old Hospital Drive, Brooksville** – On January 20, 2019, Hernando/Citrus MPO/TheBus staff conducted a TDP outreach event to engage the participants and gather input on transit. As it was a weekend event, there was opportunity to capture a wider audience to provide awareness about TheBus and capture ideas from residents and visitors attending the event.
- Walmart, 7305 Broad Street, Brooksville** – On January 25, 2019, Hernando County MPO/TheBus staff set up a table at the entrance of the Walmart to collect survey input and raise awareness about the ongoing 10-year TDP update. The shopping center is one of the busiest locations in the county and is a key bus transfer location, capturing current and potential riders.
- Spring Hill Library** – Hernando County MPO/TheBus established a survey drop-off location at the Spring Hill Library to collect input from the general public from January 23–February 1, 2019.
- Heritage Festival** – Hernando County/TheBus staff attended the festival on February 16, 2019, to educate the public about the TDP and obtain their input on how transit should grow in the county in the next 10 years. As a large weekend event in Brooksville celebrating Hernando County, this was an opportunity to attain a wide array of viewpoints and raise awareness about TheBus.

During the outreach efforts, fliers and information regarding the TDP were distributed in addition to the survey. Graphics demonstrating current and future population and employment within TheBus service area were presented to help engage the public and illustrate the impending growth of the area. The Farmer's Market yielded 10 surveys, with residents suggesting later service and weekend service. Surveys resulting from the outreach event at Walmart indicated desires for more frequent service and express services to denser areas, as did surveys collected from the Spring Hill library event.

The perspectives gathered during this effort were an important contribution to the diversity of the public outreach respondent samples. Although few new patterns or prevailing preferences were revealed during these efforts, the results substantiated other public outreach findings. Figure 4-6 shows the results of respondents' top three transit improvements. Weekend service was the most popular choice (27%), followed by more frequent bus service (25%) and later service (23%).

Figure 4-6: Top Three Service Improvements



Public Input Survey

An online public survey began in January 2019 via social media platforms, email blasts, and TheBus website. The survey was available through March to gather public input during grassroots events. In total, 15 questions were asked to gauge willingness to use public transit and the community's transit needs, determine public awareness of transit issues in Hernando County, and gather demographic information of survey respondents. In total, 61 surveys were completed.

Summary of Public Input Survey Results

When asked whether they had ever used public transportation outside of Hernando County, 79 percent of respondents answered that they had, as shown in Figure 4-7.

Figure 4-7: Have you ever used public transportation outside of Hernando County?

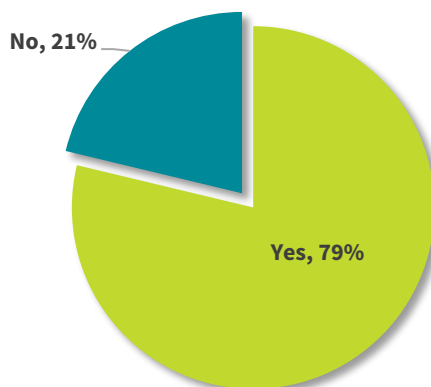


Figure 4-8 shown that approximately half (54%) of respondents had used TheBus services, and 39 percent agreed that they are satisfied with the service, as shown in Figure 4-9.

Figure 4-8: Have you used TheBus services?

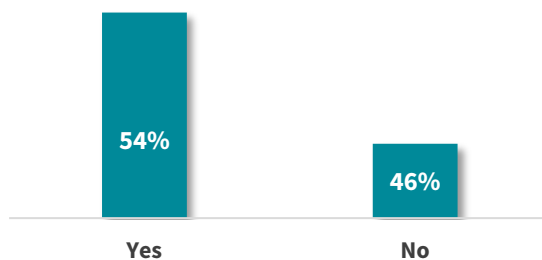
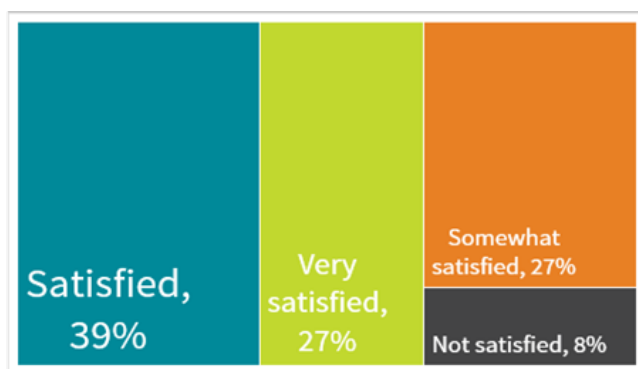
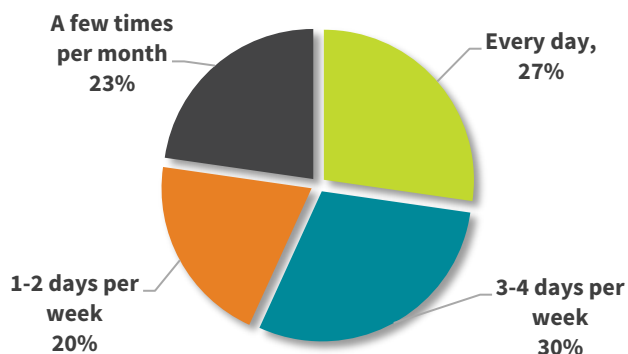


Figure 4-9: How satisfied are you with TheBus services?



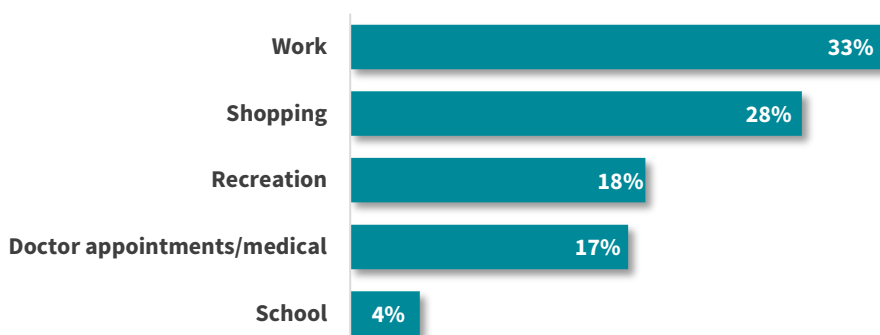
For those who currently used TheBus, 30 percent used the service 3–4 days per week. Figure 4-10 shows that approximately 27 percent used TheBus every day, 20 percent used it 1–2 days per week, and 23 percent used it a few times per month.

Figure 4-10: How often do you ride TheBus?



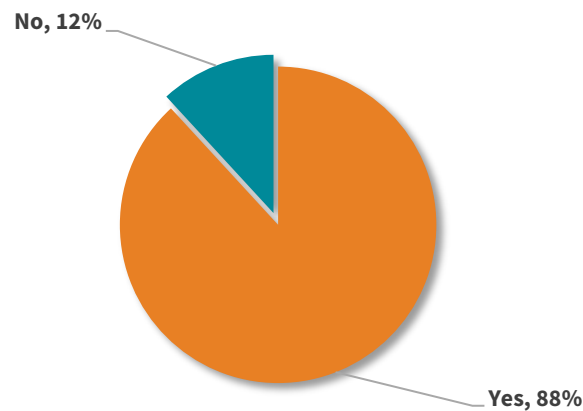
When asked why they used the transit system, responses indicated that the most popular answer, at approximately 33 percent, was work, followed by shopping (28%), recreation (18%), doctor appointments/medical (17%), and school (4%), as shown in Figure 4-11.

Figure 4-11: Trip Purpose



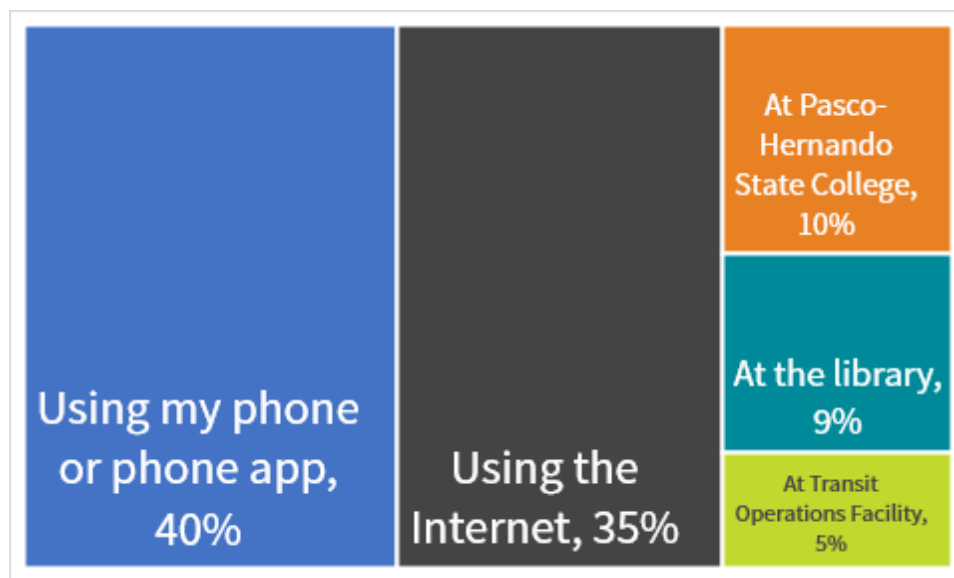
As shown in Figure 4-12, participants were asked if \$3.00 for a one-day pass with unlimited rides would benefit riders; a majority (88%) responded that it would.

Figure 4-12: Do you think \$3 for a one-day pass would benefit riders?



Approximately 40 percent of participants indicated that they would like to use a phone or app to purchase bus fares, and 35 percent said they would like to use the Internet, purchase at Pasco-Hernando State College (10%), at the library (9%), or at a transit operations facility (5%), as shown in Figure 4-13. A majority, 75 percent, specified that they would like to purchase bus fares using technology.

Figure 4-13: Methods to Purchase Bus Tickets



Although only 54 percent indicated that they had used TheBus before, 91 percent indicated that there was a need for additional transit service in Hernando County (Figure 4-14). The top three improvements that participants would like to see were weekend service (24%), more frequent bus service (21%), and later service (17%) (Figure 4-15).

Figure 4-14: Is there a need for additional transit service in Hernando County?

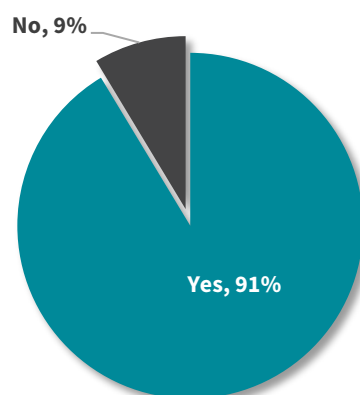
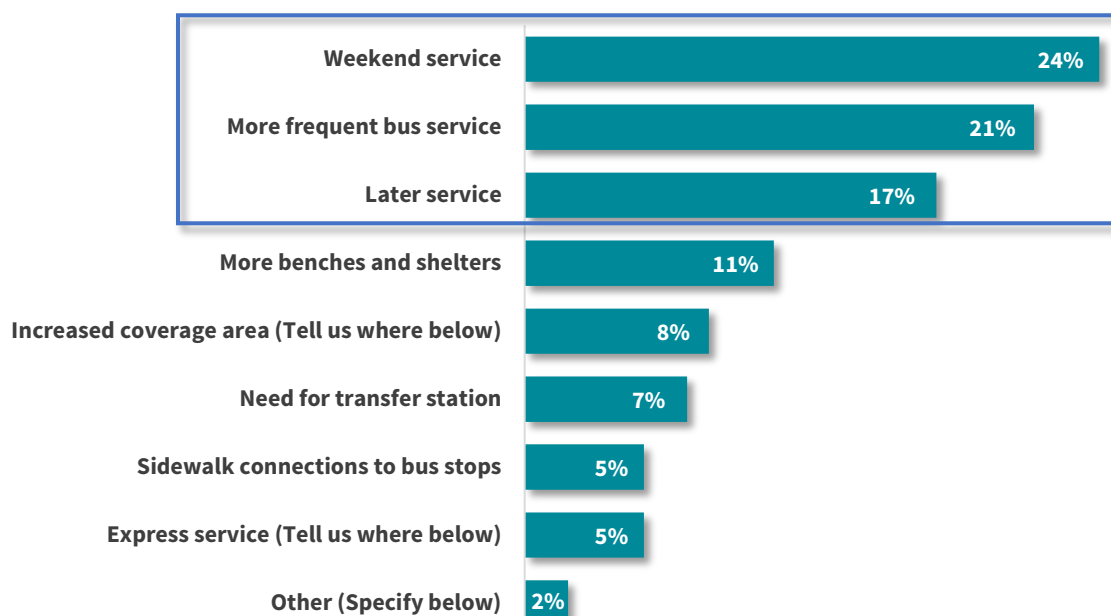
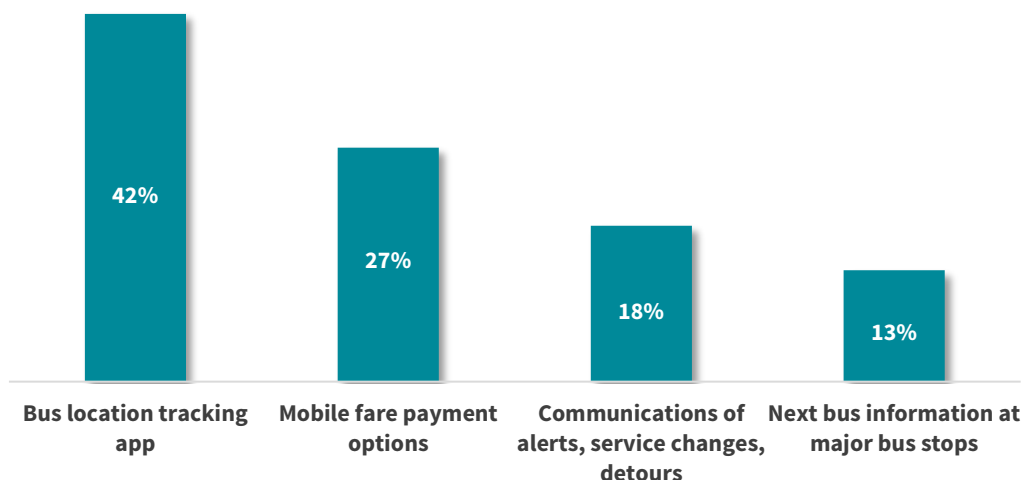


Figure 4-15: Most Important Transit Improvements



When asked what technology improvement they would like to see most, 42 percent indicated a bus location tracking app, 27 percent indicated a mobile fare payment options, 18 percent indicated communications of alerts, service changes, and detours, and 13 percent indicated next bus information at major bus stops (see Figure 4-16).

Figure 4-16: Most Important Technology Improvements



Participants were asked if they had ever used other rideshare services; 42 percent indicated they used Uber/Lyft, followed by taxi service (48%) and medical transportation (9%). No respondents indicated that they used social services transport (TD). Participants indicated that they chose these alternative services because of convenience/time (60%), the destination was outside of TheBus area (32%), and the cost (8%) (Figure 4-17).

Figure 4-17: Alternative Modes Services Preferred

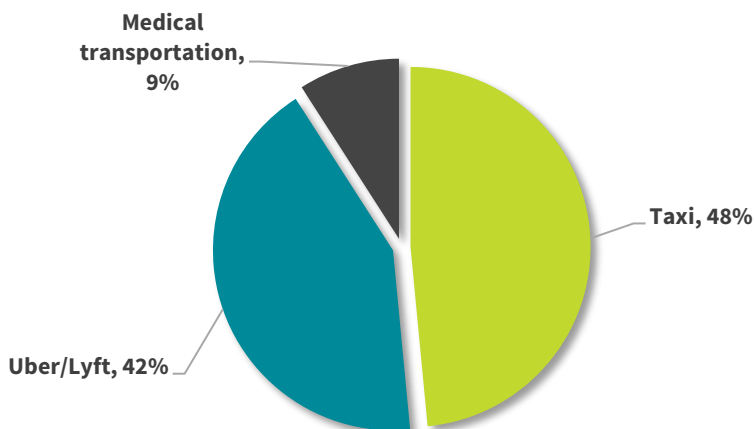
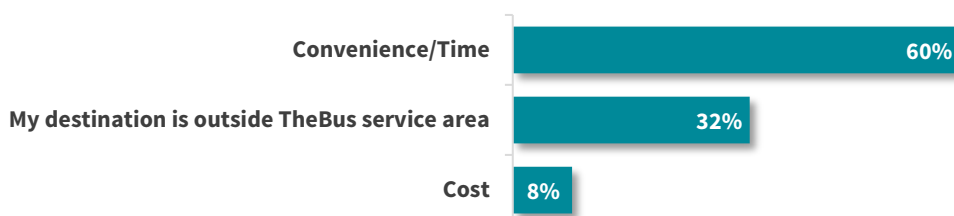


Figure 4-18: Reason for Preferring Alternative Modes



To gather demographic data about the respondents, they were asked to indicate their age. Figure 4-19 shows that the most common age group was 41–60, followed by 25–40 at 23 percent, over age 60 at 19 percent, and 18–24 at 13 percent; no respondents were under age 18.

Figure 4-19: What is your age?

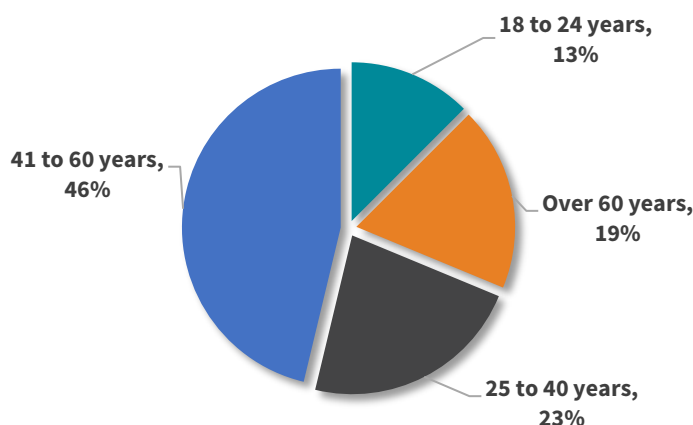
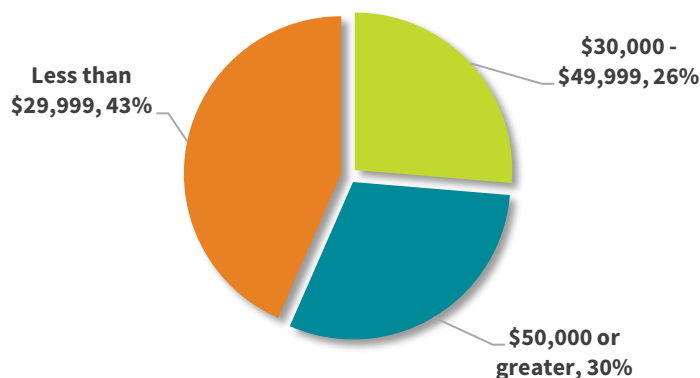


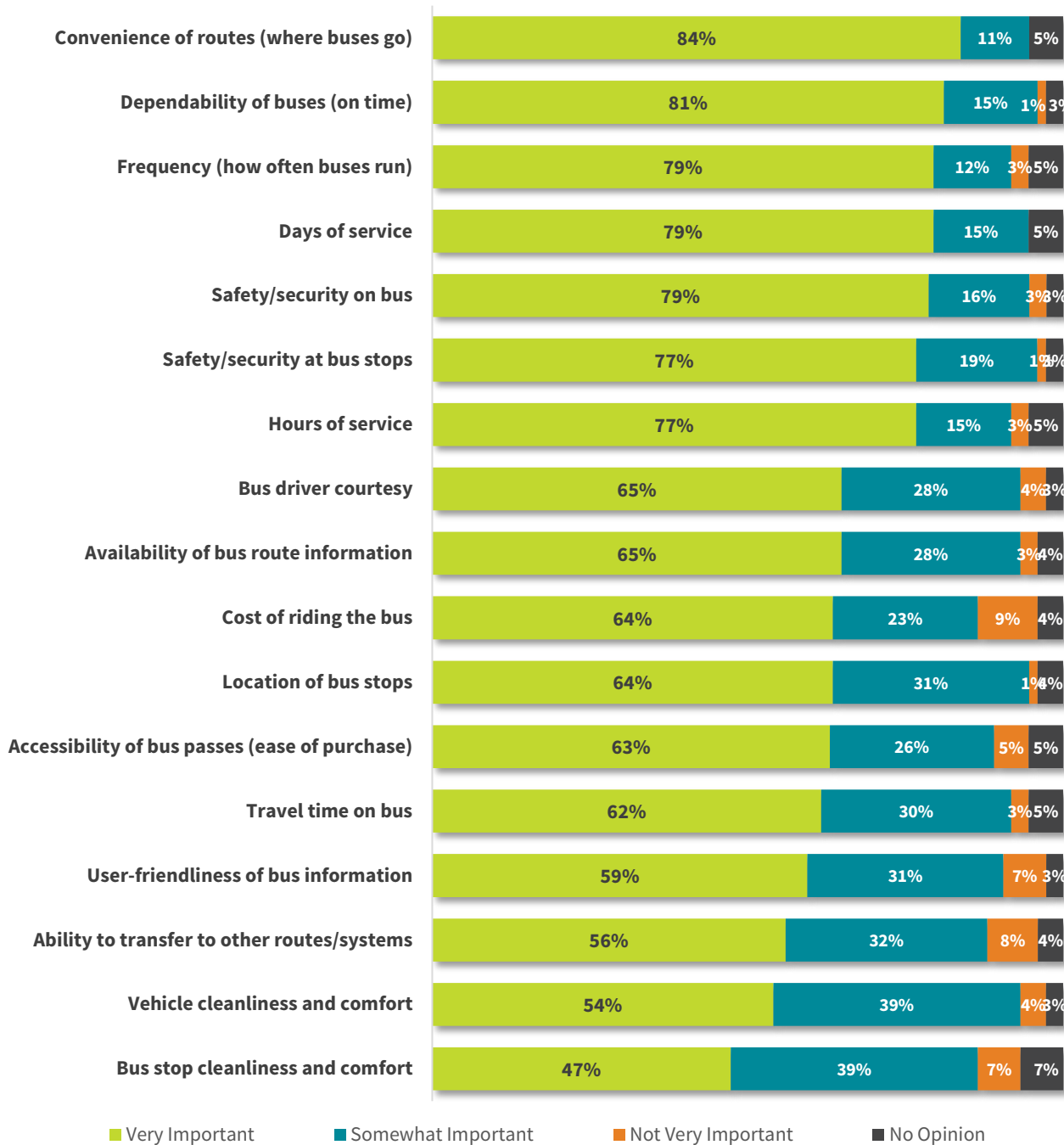
Figure 4-20 shows that the distribution of total household income of respondents varied; the most common income was less than \$29,999 (43%), followed by \$50,000 or greater (30%) and \$30,000 to \$49,999 (26%).

Figure 4-20: What is your annual household income?



Aspects of transit were listed and participants were asked to indicate which were the most important to them. As shown in Figure 4-21, the top three aspects that were rated as Very Important were convenience of routes (84%), dependability of buses (81%), and frequency (79%).

Figure 4-21: Ranking of Transit Characteristics



Open House Public Workshops

To identify how TheBus can improve its services, two open house public workshops were held in April 2019, each focusing on identifying general attitudes regarding transit in Hernando County and needed improvements to the current TheBus system. In these informal workshops, participants could come and go as they pleased, and no formal presentations were made.

Brooksville Workshop

The first public workshop was held at the Brooksville City Hall Council Chambers in Brooksville from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM on April 18, 2019. Brooksville City Hall is in Hernando County's downtown surrounded by retail and restaurants. The workshop was attended by 30 participants who asked questions and provided input, with 21 completing surveys. Of those who attended and completed a survey, 71 percent had never used TheBus, 24 percent used it once a week, and 5 percent rode once a month. The following are key findings from the Brooksville City Hall workshop.

Adding Saturday service was the most popular service improvements indicated by participants (32%), as shown in Figure 2-22. Also, adding the East Hernando Connector SR-50 and the Commuter Express on the Suncoast Parkway were selected as necessary improvements, both supported approximately 26 percent of respondents. Approximately 16 percent expressed interest in extending service hours until 9:00 PM (Figure 4-22).

Figure 4-22: Top-Ranked Service Improvements

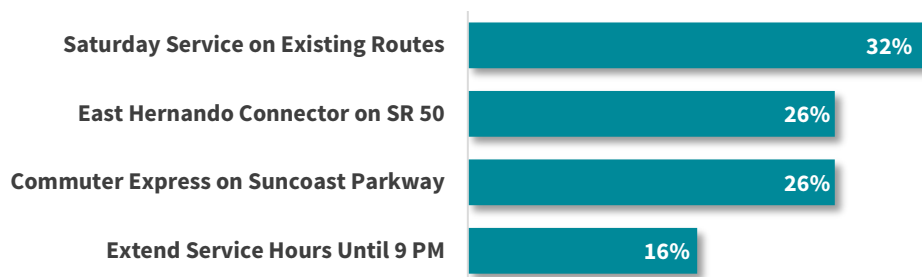
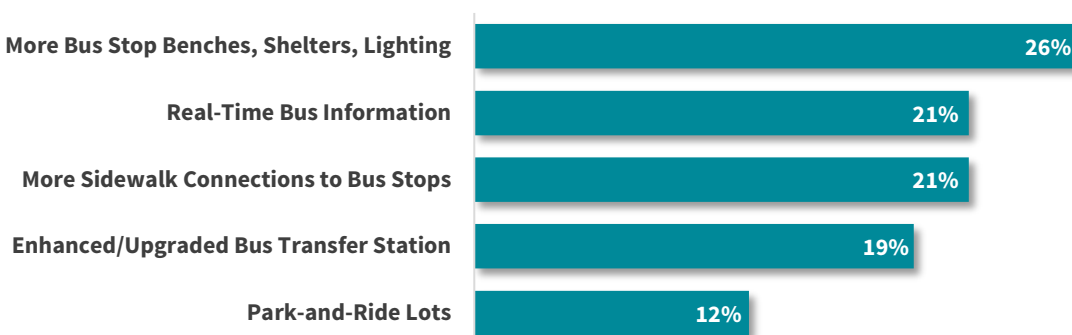


Figure 4-23 shows a summary of the priorities expressed at the Brooksville public workshop on future transit services in Hernando County. More bus stop benches, shelters, and lighting were cited as the most important improvements followed by real-time bus information and more sidewalk connections to bus stops.

Figure 4-23: Top Infrastructure and Technology Improvements

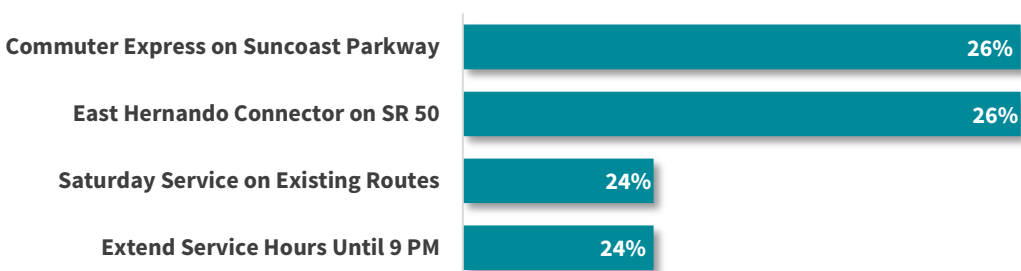


Spring Hill Workshop

The second public workshop was held at the Spring Hill Library in Spring Hill from 2:00–4:00 PM on April 18, 2019. The Spring Hill Library is located in the most densely-populated community in the southern part of Hernando County. The workshop was attended by 32 participants who asked questions and provided input, with 21 completing surveys. Approximately 70 percent of survey respondents had never used TheBus services, and the remaining 30 percent reported using it once per month, once per week, or more than once per week. The following are key findings from the Spring Hill Library workshop.

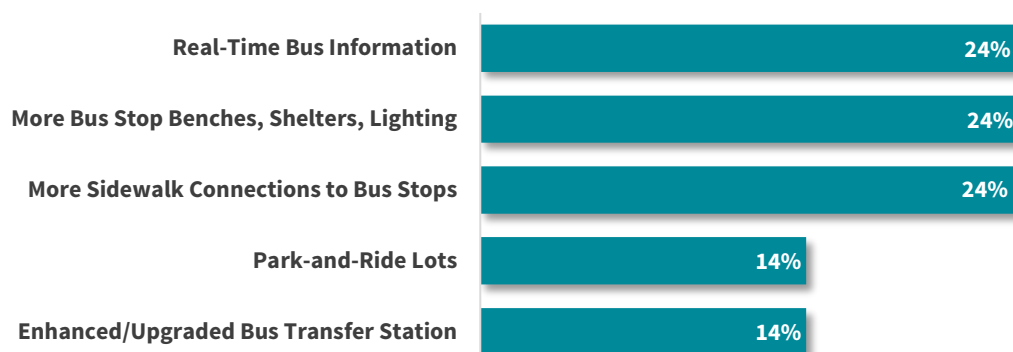
Participants responded positively to improving TheBus services by adding a Commuter Express on the Suncoast Parkway and an East Connector on SR-50, each supported by 26 percent. As shown in Figure 4-24, approximately 24 percent each favored extending service hours until 9:00 PM and adding Saturday service on existing routes.

Figure 4-24: Top-Ranked Service Improvements



Real-time bus information, followed by more bus stop infrastructure such as benches, shelters, and lighting, and more sidewalk connections to bus stops, were indicated as the top three TheBus improvements. Figure 4-25 shows a summary of the future transit service priorities expressed at the Spring Hill Library public workshop.

Figure 4-25: Top Infrastructure and Technology Improvements

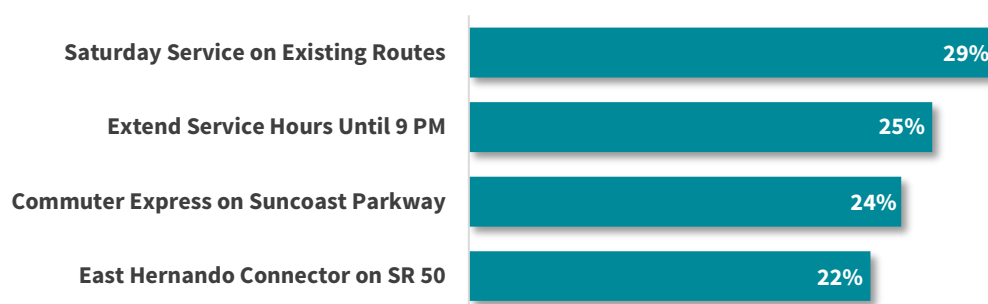


10-Year Transit Priorities Survey

During the period starting with the public workshops on April 18, 2019, a survey was available online and at workshops for attendees and the general public to gather feedback on the identified transit alternatives and identify any additional areas of need. In total, 39 surveys were completed. Respondents were asked to indicate their use of TheBus; approximately 67 percent had never used TheBus, 23 percent noted using it more than once per week, 8 percent used it once per month, and 3 percent used it once per week. A copy of the survey instrument is provided in Appendix C.

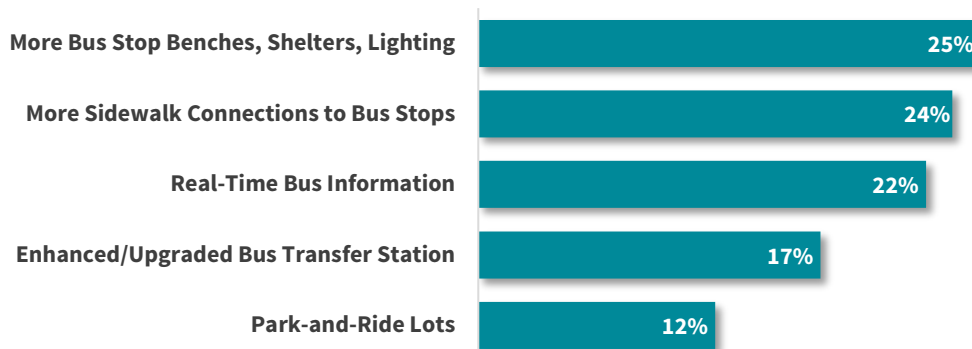
Adding Saturday service on existing routes was the most popular improvement to the existing network, with approximately 29 percent expressing support. As summarized in Figure 4-26, extending service hours until 9:00 PM was also received favorably (25%), followed by a Commuter Express on the Suncoast Parkway (24%) and an East Hernando Connector on SR-50 (22%).

Figure 4-26: Top-Ranked Improvements to Existing Services



Support for potential technology/capital improvements was widespread across each of the alternatives. The top three potential improvements were more bus stops, benches, and lighting, followed by more sidewalk connections to bus stops and real-time bus information. The final ranking for each of these improvements is presented in Figure 4-27.

Figure 4-27: Top-Ranked Infrastructure/Technology Improvements




MPO
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
HERNANDO/CITRUS

HERNANDO/CITRUS METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Metropolitan Planning Organization

- Programs and Plans
- Counts, Studies and Reports
- Get Involved
- Links of Interest
- Contact MPO
- MPO News

Major Update to the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP)

The TDP is a 10-year plan required by the FDOT with the intent to support the development of an effective, multi-modal transportation system for the County and Florida. In order to assess transit needs in our community and plan for the future,

WE NEED YOUR INPUT!
Click to participate in our public input survey.

Other Outreach Efforts

TheBus will continue to use its existing public engagement electronic media platforms and website to expand the reach of the TDP outreach program. Part of the Hernando County MPO website has been used to promote the TDP, on which the public can be linked to the latest public survey. The website also will be used to raise awareness about opportunities for public participation via workshops or other outreach events.

SECTION 5 SITUATION APPRAISAL

A TDP is a strategic planning document that includes an appraisal of factors in and out of the transit service area that affect the provision of transit service. Florida Rule 14-73.001 notes that, at a minimum, a Situation Appraisal should include the effects of land use, State and local transportation plans, other governmental actions and policies, socioeconomic trends, organizational issues, and technology of the transit system.

The following sections synthesize previous efforts for the TDP and present a plans review to develop an assessment of the full operating environment for TheBus. This assessment serves as the basis for the formulation of the future goals and objectives for transit in Hernando County.

Review of Plans

Numerous agencies/organizations conduct studies to produce plans and policies for addressing local and regional transportation issues. In addition, various Federal and State plans and regulations may impact the provision of transit services in Hernando County.

This plans and policy review is intended to help Hernando County understand and support the pursuit of existing goals while pursuing its own goal of creating a viable and accessible transit system in Hernando County. Relevant transportation planning and programming documents are summarized, with an emphasis on issues that have implications for transit services in Hernando County. Additionally, selected plans produced in Hernando County related to land use were reviewed to summarize and call attention to community goals, objectives, and policies that may have implications for current and future transit services.

The following local, regional, State, and Federal plans and studies were reviewed to understand current transit policies and plans with potential implications for transit services in Hernando County:

- Local Plans
 - o City of Brooksville Comprehensive Plan (CP)
 - o Hernando County Comprehensive Plan (CP)
 - o Hernando County TDP Major Update
 - o Hernando County TDP Annual Progress Report
 - o Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP)
 - o Hernando/Citrus MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
- Regional Plans
 - o Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority 2016-2025 TDP Major Update
 - o Hillsborough Area Regional Transit 2018-2027 TD P Major Update
 - o Pasco County Public Transit 2019-2028 TDP Major Update
 - o 2017 Crystal River Congestion Management Process Study
 - o 2018 Hernando/Citrus Coastal Connector Study

- o Tampa Bay Regional Transit Feasibility Plan
 - o Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) Master Plan
 - o Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA) Transit Vision Plan
- State and Federal Plans
 - o State of Florida Transportation Disadvantaged 5-Year/20-Year Plan
 - o FDOT's Complete Streets Implementation Update: Handbook and Design Manual
 - o Florida Transportation Plan: Horizon 2060 (FTP)
 - o Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

The transportation planning and programming documents are summarized in Tables 5-1, 5-2, and 5-3 by their geographic applicability, type of plan, responsible agency, overview of the plan/program, and key considerations for the Situation Appraisal.

Table 5-1: Local Plans, Policies, and Programs

Plan Title	Geographic Applicability	Most Recent Update	Type of Plan	Responsible Agency	Plan/Program Overview	Key Considerations/Implications for TDP
Brooksville Comprehensive Plan	City of Brooksville	2017	CP	Brooksville	Addresses land use, transportation, capital projects, public facilities, recreation, government coordination, conservation, and development goals, among others, for the city.	Provides goals for ensuring a safe, efficient, and quality transportation system; establishes a policy of monitoring modal split, transit trips per capita, and automobile occupancy rates to measure the system’s efficiency. Key strategy identified is to expand transit service into areas with demonstrated need, such as assisted living facilities and low-income neighborhoods. In addition to supporting the County in its efforts to provide public transportation services (providing bus stops, constructing connections to transit routes, increasing public awareness), some policies are set to support the objective of strengthening the entire multimodal network: • Development regulations (compact, mixed-use development in prioritized corridors) and design standards for parking (maximum parking requirements or elimination thereof, park-and-ride lots, and on-street parking), circulation systems, and access points will ensure adequate transit, bicycle, and pedestrian site access to promote these modes in place of single occupant vehicles. • Bicycle and pedestrian connections from residential areas will be provided to transit terminal areas. • Site plan review and traffic circulation system will encourage transit-friendly design features along roadways. • Participation in TDM measures with MPO and FDOT will encourage use of transit.
Hernando County Comprehensive Plan	Hernando County	2018	CP	Hernando County	Addresses land use, transportation, capital projects, public facilities, and economic development goals, among others, for the county.	Discusses the intention to invest in expanding service and upgrade number of existing transit shelters to ADA compliance standards. Prescribes several transit-supportive goals, objectives, and policies, such as the need to develop transit-oriented design strategies, a frontage road network for transit service, encourage maximum use of the right-of-way, improve connections with pedestrian and bicycle networks, promote the expansion of aviation, long term transit solutions such as rail, and coordinate with other transit agencies to meet regional mobility needs and improve opportunities for the county.
TDP Major Update	Hernando County	2015	TDP	MPO	Emphasizes transit improvements and additions in key corridors; outlines cost feasible plan and focuses on connections with Pasco county.	Identified funded and unfunded projects including enhanced services, express services, new transit center, or weekend/extended services to come to fruition. Weekend Services recommended for all routes on TheBus system. New route proposed on Spring Hill Drive to serve as a connector to the airport.
TDP Annual Progress Report	Hernando County	2018	TDP	MPO	TDP Annual Progress Report, provides status report on transit improvements identified in major TDP update.	Provides updates on variety of facility, service, and capital projects: • For capital projects, County continued to work with MPO to install benches and/or shelters. Accomplished installing equipment at 57 bus stop locations along fixed-routes. • For service projects, TheBus implemented more frequent service on all routes (improved to 60-min headways improved from 120-min previously). Expanded Purple Route service to connect with Pasco County via US 19. On other projects, County and MPO continued to improve bus stop safety and ADA accessibility at bus stops.
Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP)	Hernando County	2018	TDSP	Hernando County/MPO	Major TDSP update, emphasizes improvements and additions that serve needs of transportation disadvantaged population in an efficient and cost-effective manner.	Identifies key populations in need (older adult and low-income populations). Guiding policies as part of outlined goals and objectives, relevant to broader TheBus system include: • Adjusting fixed-route schedules to meet demands of TD population, expanding service in areas of Hernando County where no fixed-route service exists. • Augmenting current fixed-route service gaps. Transferring eligible and qualified riders from paratransit service to fixed-route system to improve cost effectiveness and resource efficiency.
Hernando/Citrus MPO 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan	Hernando & Citrus counties	2018	L RTP	Hernando/Citrus MPO	Major update to LRTP that includes Hernando County’s 20-year vision of transportation projects for the area.	Includes a plan for one cent local government infrastructure surtax for community involvement. Highlights on improving service in the long term include: • Expanding/enhancing existing routes/network • Enhancing ADA accessibility at existing bus stops • Increasing access between surrounding counties and Hernando County via public transportation

Table 5-2: Regional Plans, Policies, and Programs

Plan Title	Geographic Applicability	Most Recent Update	Type of Plan	Responsible Agency	Plan/Program Overview	Key Considerations/Implications for TDP
TBARTA Master Plan	District 7	2015	Regional Plan	TBARTA	Update to Master Plan that serves as regional LRTP. Continues to examine high capacity corridors that deserve attention to improve mobility within region. Also incorporates region's six MPO LRTP adopted Cost Feasible Plans and Needs Plans.	Update acknowledges that growth in Tampa Bay region expected to grow 43% by 2040; as a result, commute times expected to double by 2040. Since a majority of cross-country travel occurs between Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas counties, plan identifies regional and future priority projects to target in coming year(s). Single regional plan necessary to move forward with regional transportation vision that begins with these priority projects: I-275/SR60/Memorial Interchange, SR-54/56 Corridor Improvements, Gateway Express, Howard Frankland Bridge, Tampa Bay Express Starter Projects, and Westshore Multimodal Center and Connections to Downtown Tampa & Airport.
TBARTA Transit Vision Plan	District 7	2015	Regional Plan	TBARTA	Extending to 2040, explores possibilities for regional fixed-guideway services, premium transit or express service, and commuter transit services.	Regional transit service by 2040 and beyond includes Regional Fixed-Guideway (service operating on rail or within a dedicated transit lane), Regional Premium Transit (BRT or express bus service in express lanes or water ferry or similar), and Regional Commuter Transit (commuter express bus service or similar).

Table 5-3: State and Federal Plans, Policies, and Programs

Plan Title	Geographic Applicability	Most Recent Update	Type of Plan	Responsible Agency	Plan/Program Overview	Key Considerations/Implications for TDP
State of Florida Transportation Disadvantaged 5-Year/20-Year Plan	Florida	2007	State	Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (FCTD)	Purpose is to accomplish cost-effective, efficient, unduplicated, and cohesive transportation disadvantaged services within its respective service area.	Develop and field-test model community transportation system for persons who are transportation disadvantaged; create strategy for FCTD to support development of universal transportation system.
Florida Department of Transportation's Complete Streets Implementation Update: Handbook and Design Manual	Florida	2018	State	Florida Department of Transportation	Developed as a way to create alternative transportation systems to facilitate "Complete Streets" focused design.	Plan includes: - Revising guidance, standards, manuals, policies, and other documents - Updating the way decision making is processed - Modifying the evaluation of performance - Managing communication between agencies - Update training and education in agencies
Florida Transportation Plan: Horizon 2060 (FTP)	Florida	2005	State Transportation Plan	FDOT	Requires, as part of Florida Statutes, pursuit to make Florida's economy more competitive and communities more livable and looks at 50-year transportation planning horizon.	Supports development of state, regional, and local transit services through series of related goals and objectives, emphasizing new and innovative approaches by all modes to meet needs today and in future.
FAST Act	National	2015	Federal Transportation legislation	114 th US Congress	Enacts five years of funding for nation's surface transportation infrastructure, including transit systems and rail transportation network. Provides long-term certainty and more flexibility for states and local governments, streamlines project approval processes, and maintains strong commitment to safety.	- Increases dedicated bus funding by 89% over life of bill. - Provides stable formula funding and competitive grant program to address bus and bus facility needs. - Reforms public transportation procurement to make federal investment more cost effective and competitive. - Consolidates and refocuses transit research activities to increase efficiency and accountability. - Establishes pilot program for communities to expand transit through use of public-private partnerships. - Provides flexibility for recipients to use federal funds to meet their state of good repair needs. - Provides for coordination of public transportation services with other federally assisted transportation services to aid in mobility of older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Situation Appraisal

As an important component of a TDP major update, a Situation Appraisal is an assessment of the operating environment that enables the transit agency to develop an understanding of the transit context for its service area. This context includes several specific elements through which the transit in Hernando County will be assessed. This assessment will leverage input gathered from a review of relevant plans, studies, and programs; and the results of technical evaluations of TheBus services conducted previously in this TDP, as well as the following elements:

- Socioeconomic trends
- Travel behavior and trends
- Public involvement
- Land use
- Organizational attributes and funding
- Technology
- Regional Coordination



Socioeconomic Trends

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

- Hernando County has experienced continued population and employment growth and is projected to experience population growth of approximately 11 percent by 2025 and approximately 32 percent by 2045.
- The county's population is older than the average for Florida counties. The median age of residents in Hernando County is 48.9, which is above the statewide median of 41.6, and is expected to continue to trend higher based on the most recent BEBR projection data by age group, which estimates that the age 65 or older age group will grow the fastest. BEBR data shows that 28 percent of the county's population were age 65 or older in 2017, and that number is anticipated to grow to 32 percent by 2045.
- Unincorporated areas are among the fastest-growing in the county, collectively growing by more than 29 percent since 2000 and consisting largely of residential areas just north of the County line.
- Most future population growth for Hernando County is projected to occur outside the urban core, but near key corridors in the areas by Spring Hill. These areas have a predominantly medium- to high-residential land use character with a variety of commercial uses along the major thoroughfares, and most currently have hourly transit service.
- Poverty status for individuals increased considerably, from 10.3 percent in 2000 to 15.6 percent in 2016.

- The proportion of the population that identifies as Hispanic more than doubled, increasing from 5 percent in 2000 to 11.6 percent in 2016.
- Areas with the high employment will continue to include the SR-50/US-19 corridor in the Spring Hill area, Weeki Wachee Gardens, the Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport and Technology Center, and areas of Brooksville.



Implications

Continued population growth in existing and growing suburban areas in unincorporated Hernando County will lead to inefficiencies in providing traditional bus service; therefore, service delivery innovations may be required to serve these growing areas. In addition to attracting new riders in suburban areas, maintaining mobility and freedom for the aging adult population is a key consideration for future transit service and may require service on-demand type

public transit to ensure that the needs of the aging population are met.

The data also show that the traditional transit market, including low-income, minority, and older adults, may continue to be the major part of TheBus ridership. This indicates the need to, at a minimum, maintain the current service and make it reliable, safe, and efficient service for this key rider market while improving/enhancing it when financially feasible.

However, the provision of more frequent transit services and enhanced regional connections may support the needs of both current and potential riders of all ages and income levels if the County desires to grow transit to become a viable option of travel. The ability for residents to access jobs within Hernando County or adjacent counties from low-income areas will remain a critical need for TheBus going forward. Continued success depends on the ability of TheBus to tailor services that will expand its rider base and capture new transit markets and riders.



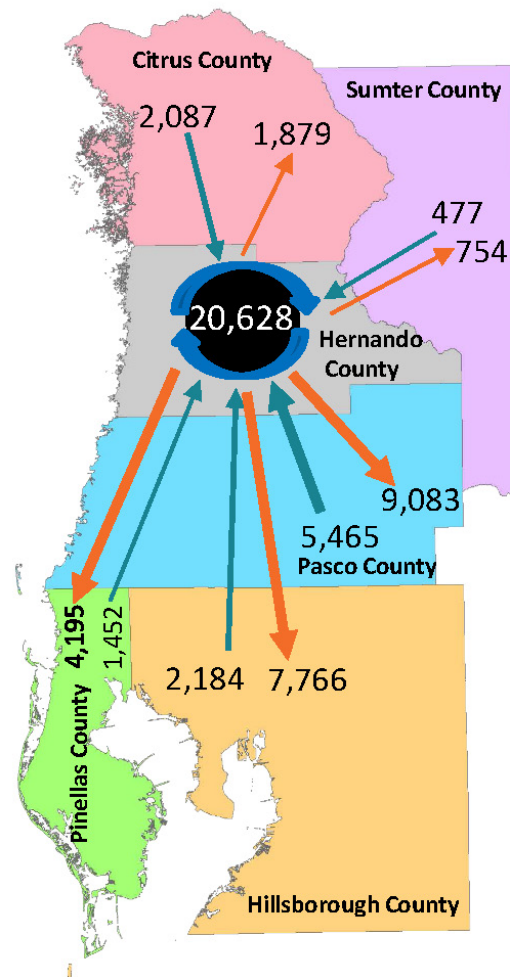
Travel Behavior and Trends

It is important to understand existing and expected local and regional travel behaviors and conditions to determine possible impacts or benefits affecting transit. Several key findings are summarized below based on the data analyzed previously:

- Major trip attractors in Hernando County include the Brooksville-Tampa Bay Regional Airport; major big-box retailers/supermarkets such as Walmart, Publix, and Winn Dixie; outdoor parks/recreational areas; medical facilities such as the Oak Hill Hospital; and educational facilities such as the Pasco-Hernando State College campuses.
- When typical travel behaviors are considered, more than 80 percent of commuters drove alone, but some participated in carpooling (9%) in 2016. The typical commute in the county is less than 20 minutes (44%), and more than 62 percent of commutes are less than 30 minutes. According to the ACS 2012–2016 5-Year Estimates, less than one percent of commuters traveled to work using public transportation in Hernando County in 2016.

- Based on 2016 ACS data, Hernando County had 60,732 employed residents, but only 41 percent lived and worked within the county, indicating nearly 60 percent of commuters traveling out the county for work on a daily basis.
- More than three times as many commuters leave Hernando County each day for work in Hillsborough County as those who live in Hillsborough County who travel to Hernando County, and nearly twice as many leave for Pasco County as those who live in Pasco County and travel to Hernando County, as shown in Figure 2-1.
- More than three times as many commuters leave Hernando County each day for work in Hillsborough County as those who live in Hillsborough County leave for Hernando County, and nearly twice as many leave for Pasco County as those who live in Pasco County and travel to Hernando County.

Figure 2-1: Travel Patterns in Hernando County



Implications

Hernando County should continue to pursue improvements that make its services more competitive with the single-occupant automobile and attract a higher share of travel. Whereas an operating environment consisting of low-density suburban land use patterns makes it difficult to meet the need to provide services locally and regionally, transit services may have to be uniquely designed to meet the needs of those depending on public transportation to access work, shopping, and educational services.

For Hernando County to attract a more diverse group of riders and increase ridership levels significantly, an overall increase in transit frequencies to connect key employment centers locally and regionally may be needed. Becoming a viable transportation alternative that can compete with the single-occupant vehicle and attract choice ridership is critical to the future of transit in Hernando County. With increased attention locally and regionally on transit, a more well-connected and frequent transit service can help establish transit as an integral part of the overall transportation network in the county and region.



Public Involvement

Many public involvement activities have been conducted or are planned to gather feedback from area residents and transit users. Events already conducted include several grassroots outreach events at various locations in Hernando County, including libraries, farmer's markets, major retail locations, etc. In addition, a public input survey was distributed to current riders and the general public in both electronic and printed formats. These outreach events are important because they engage the community and raise awareness about the TDP process as well as TheBus services. These events have generated a wide range of ideas for the existing service and for future transit enhancements.

Several key themes that emerged from the TDP public outreach include the following:

- **More Service Frequency/Hours** – Public feedback emphasized the need for more frequency as a high priority. Implementing later evening hours at night was also a high priority for users and stakeholders. Current riders also indicated a desire for service that runs until approximately 11:00 PM.
- **Weekend Service** – Stakeholders and respondents emphasized the desire for services to be provided on weekends, even if on a limited schedule. Without weekend service, many riders are unable to get service industry jobs or attend religious services.
- **Other Service Options** – On-demand services to fill first/last-mile mobility gaps and express service were mentioned by numerous stakeholders as a means to improve TheBus service and attract new ridership.
- **Infrastructure** – Riders emphasized the need for Hernando County to improve the comfort, safety, and accessibility of bus stops throughout the county. As part of efforts toward improving accessibility, riders noted that more sidewalk connections should be provided.
- **Expand Service Coverage** – Areas identified as needing new or expanded service include Hernando Beach, North Weeki Wachee, and Spring Lake as well as new or expanded regional connections to Citrus County, Pasco County, and Tampa.



Implications

Frequency improvements have remained one of the most costly improvements to make but has the most potential to attract new ridership to transit networks, including in Hernando County. TheBus frequency was improved to 60-minute headways few years back and the system since then has increased its ridership significantly. Another increase in frequency, even just on selected routes or times may help generate more demand and increase its attractiveness in the community. TheBus has an ongoing effort to increase bus stop level comfort and ADA compliance to make bus stops accessible. In addition, span-of-service extensions also will help connect transit-dependent residents to a wider array of jobs and provide more flexibility for workers who rely on TheBus services. Weekend service, currently not provided by TheBus, also may attract riders who travel for work and other purposes. It will convince riders who currently use it regularly on week days but unable to use it to continue to go to work on weekends. Therefore, at least a limited level of service may be helpful to make transit not just a weekday option.



Land Use

To better assess the impact of local land use conditions and policies on public transportation needs, it is important to identify current and future areas of the county that may benefit the most from the provision of public transportation services. Key findings from a review of current and future land use conditions are summarized as follows:

- The land use pattern in Hernando County is predominantly low-density residential in nature, with significant areas designated for rural, mining, and conservation uses. There are a few pockets of commercial uses, particularly along major corridors, and planned developments in the southern half of the county. In the 2040 Comprehensive Plan, the maximum density dwelling unit per acre was increased from 16 to 22 to help promote high density developments.
- Brooksville is centered on the commercial centers along N and S Broad Street and along SR-50/Cortez Boulevard. However, immediately adjacent to these commercial corridors is a wide variety of different land uses. Although there are few areas of the city that are designated as multi-family residential, the majority of northern Brooksville and parts of central Brooksville are designated as single-family residential.
- Continued commercial land use growth along SR-50 and suburban growth in the Spring Hills area, primarily on the south side of SR-50, are anticipated in the next 10 years. With this continued commercial and suburban growth, TheBus will have renewed cause to identify new innovations in service delivery in order to remain cost-efficient.



Implications

TheBus should continue to focus on providing improvements to its existing network and connections with adjacent transit agency services. Improvements to existing transit service and frequency can make transit services more attractive and productive.

In the pursuit of providing a more productive and attractive service, Hernando County should continue to encourage coordination within the County and between County and City agencies to improve access to transit in proposed developments and land use decisions. (Some major developments such as the Quarry Preserve and the Spring Center have already included requirements for public transit.) If Hernando County coordinates service improvements and expansions in these areas, it can bolster existing economic development efforts, considering that transit is an engine of economic development and impetus for real estate investment, and also provide benefits for developers such as reduced parking needs, a multimodal pedestrian-friendly environment, and support for a greater mix of uses.

Additionally, TheBus should continue to support changes to Hernando County's comprehensive plan that would result in additional density and/or transit-supportive development adjacent to established higher-density/intensity areas or in developing nodes. The existing low-density residential pattern of development is a challenging environment in which to provide productive transit services in terms of passengers per revenue mile. TheBus also should continue to monitor route performance and adjust it as needed to react to possible changes in land use as Hernando County develops and as new residents

continue to move to the area to ensure that connections from growing residential areas to key employment centers exist.



Organizational Attributes and Funding

The current transit delivery framework for Hernando County involves the County and MPO maintaining their planning and oversight roles in conjunction with private provider RATPDev., serving as the transit operator. The County Transit Division is included in the Planning Department, which also manages the County's Comprehensive Plan and land development regulations. More importantly, the department conducts the review of new development projects and provides guidance to the Hernando County Planning Zoning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners.

The Transit Division coordinates the provisions of two types of public transportation—fixed-route and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) demand-response service.

Similar to many other small transit agencies in Florida, the major portion of public transit operating and capital expenditures in Hernando County is funded by federal grants. The remainder is provided primarily by FDOT and State grants, and local government funds are used as match for leveraging State and federal funds. In addition, farebox and advertising and other miscellaneous revenues also provide some assistance for covering operating costs. In 2015, Hernando County Commissioners voted to implement a "ninth cent" gas tax to raise the gas tax by three cents in order to fund transit. Hernando County has also secured funding from FDOT (service Development) and federal grants (Section 5311) to expand service into Pasco County to help regional connections and add the Green route.



Implications

Whereas the existing organizational structure has worked well and should continue for operating and administering TheBus, Hernando County should continue exploration of additional funding that may be necessary for any significant service enhancements in the future. This especially includes local funding streams, as they act as matching funds for securing other sources.

Although new improvements may not have to be funded totally by local funding sources, additional local sources may be needed to leverage federal and State revenues.

Securing a dedicated long-term funding source for public transportation services is a goal that many transit providers aspire to achieve. Also, to assist any effort to market transit as an option that is worthy of local investment, the potential benefits from such expanded/fixed-route transit service need to be emphasized. Awareness of the returns on transit investment may positively influence local funding decisions as well as any discussions with the private sector to form public-private partnerships to help fund future transit.



Technology

Although Hernando County's transit system is smaller in scale and demand, the County has taken many steps to provide a system that is technologically-enhanced and up-to-date. As part of this, Route Match scheduling and dispatch technology was recently purchased and implemented. The County is in the process of implementing various additional types of technology projects to enhance the overall transit experience for its patrons.

Regional Electronic Fare System

TheBus is coordinating with the other regional partners on finalizing the implementation of the Flamingo Fares regional fare collection system, already fully launched by HART and PSTA and currently a pilot program with TheBus. Once implemented systemwide, Hernando County will use the system to improve the ease of fare payment, reduce bus-boarding times, and make transit easier and more attractive to new rider markets. When fully launched in Hernando County, the fare system will allow bus passengers to use a credit or debit card tap system, an app, preloaded fare card for rides in Hernando and other counties in the Tampa Bay region. Counties currently participating in Flamingo Fares are Hillsborough (HART/TECO Line Streetcar System), Pasco (PCPT), Pinellas (PSTA/Jolley Trolley), and Sarasota (SCAT).



Google Transit

Since 2016, Hernando County has used Google Transit to enable users of TheBus to view public transportation options to help them plan the best routes to get where they are going in the county. By combining schedule and route data developed by TheBus with the tools of Google Maps, Hernando County has made transit become easily accessible to its residents.

Additionally, the County is monitoring or should review other applicable transit technologies that can be used to improve the efficiency and attractiveness of transit services. As Hernando County plans for the improvement of its existing transfer site and/or acquisition of another location for the transfer facility, considerations should be given for deployment of real-time bus arrival information displays and other technical upgrades as part of that facility upgrade.

In addition, battery-powered electric and/or autonomous buses often are seen as the future of bus service in the public transit industry. Although the majority of public transit buses in the U.S. currently run on diesel fuel, gasoline, and compressed natural gas (CNG), many agencies are looking to transition to electric buses for cost and environmental reasons. Continued investment into growing the capabilities of autonomous and connected vehicle technologies have brought them within reach for transit agencies. The potential benefits of these two technologies have led many agencies to explore how to fund and potentially undertake pilot projects in the future. To better understand the implications of these technologies, TheBus should monitor transit industry progress with these technologies.



Implications

Although existing technology implementations such as Flamingo Fares offer the prospect of more efficient transit operations and more satisfied passengers, additional technology investments, which are quickly becoming more affordable, can continue to enhance operational efficiencies and overall rider satisfaction. Real time bus arrival information displays and mobile ticketing can enhance the information that the agency has access to in order to manage its daily operations as well as plan for service modifications, and even new services.

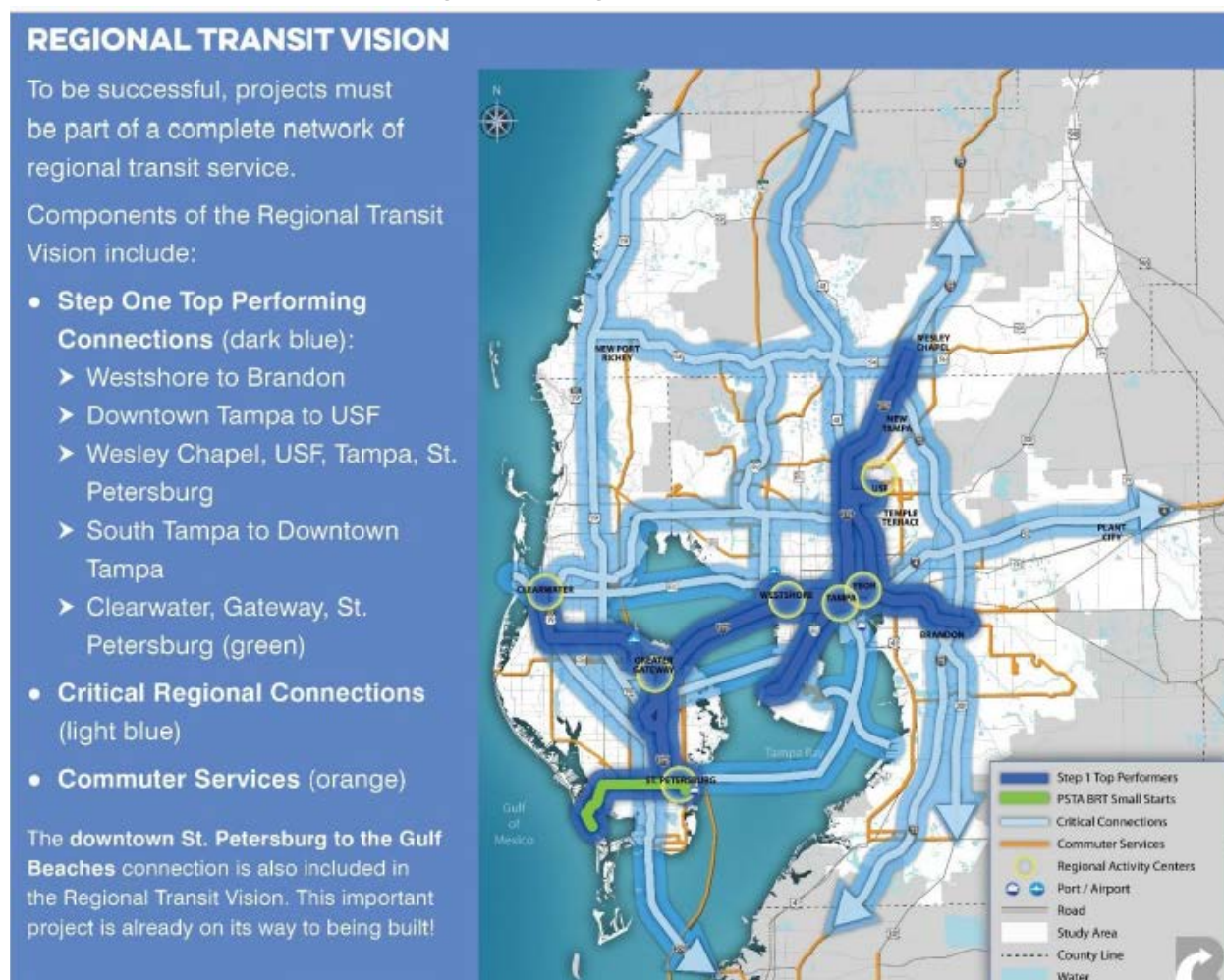


Regional Coordination

Regional coordination also was reviewed as part of Hernando County TDP, as the County is part of the regional transit network. Hernando County connected its services to Pasco County's transit services a few years ago and, ultimately, to other area transit networks such as HART, PSTA, and MCAT in Manatee County. In addition, the County is one of the five counties in Tampa Bay that falls under TBARTA's planning umbrella, making its network part of TBARTA's transit network.

Figure 2-2 shows the Regional Transit Vision developed recently by the Regional Transit Feasibility Plan prepared collaboratively by Tampa Bay region's transit agencies. Although the final catalyst project for further consideration and implementation did not include a connection to Hernando County, the regional network clearly identifies a number of critical connections and commuter routes to Hernando County.

Figure 5-1: Regional Transit Vision





Implications

With connections south to Pasco County and the rest of the regional transit network, Hernando County has been proactive in the regionalism discussion and should continue to play a key role as a partner in developing an effective and well-connected regional network. At this time, data and public outreach indicate a potential future need for connecting regionally on US-19 and the Suncoast Parkway; it also indicates much higher support and a strong desire for improving local connections first.

Although Citrus County is not part of TBARTA, it should also be a consideration for regional connections, as there is a sizable flow of commuters between the two counties, and the MPO's planning area also includes Citrus County.

SECTION 6 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are an integral part of TheBus TDP, as they provide the policy direction to achieve the community's vision while helping guide the agency as the county evolves. This section presents the goals and objectives to support the community's vision for transit services over the next 10 years. These TDP goals and objectives were updated based on a review and assessment of existing conditions, feedback received during the public involvement process, discussions with MPO staff, and the implications of the situation appraisal. First, the agency's overall mission and vision are provided, followed by the goals, objectives, and policies designed to help accomplish the transit mission.

Vision

Providing public transportation for enhanced mobility and sustained economic vitality, thereby improving the quality of life of the community and region.

Mission

Provide safe, efficient and accessible transit services to citizens and visitors in need of transportation and to evolve into a system that ultimately provides for the mobility of all residents and visitors in Hernando County offering a viable choice among travel modes.

Goals, Objectives & Policies

An updated set of goals and objectives has been developed for the TDP, as summarized below. For each goal, a series of objectives and policies is presented that outline how each goal will be achieved. In the following section, blue text denotes potential modifications and additions, and red text denotes the deletions compared to the prior Major TDP Update.

Goal 1 – Increase quality and level of transit services in Hernando County.

Objective 1.1 – Evaluate the need to expand the frequency of service to 30-minutes or less on better performing routes by 2024.

Objective 1.2 – Establish a second inter-county, regional transit connectivity along one additional major transportation corridor by 2024.

Objective 1.3 – By 2029, identify and implement innovative approaches to transit service in Hernando County, e.g., commuter/express deviated fixed-route bus service, shared-ride/ride-hail opportunities, express service, peak-hour service, vanpools, etc.

Objective 1.4 – Where feasible, include transit-oriented features in the design and construction of roadways along existing and planned bus routes.

Policy 1.1 – *Improve service headways to 30 minutes on better performing routes when funding becomes available.*

Policy 1.2 – *Provide regional transit services on Suncoast Parkway.*

Policy 1.3 – *Implement Saturday service on all existing routes.*

Policy 1.4 – Implement projects or programs to manage or improve the State of Good Repair of transit capital assets as identified by TheBus Transit Asset Management Plan (TAM).

Policy 1.5 – Coordinate with TBARTA on regional transit connections.

Policy 1.6 – Operate a fleet of fixed-route vehicles with an average age of less than six years.

Policy 1.7 – Establish new/enhanced bus transfer center by 2025.

Goal 2 – Increase transit ridership and improve cost efficiency.

Objective 2.1 – Increase the number of fixed-route passenger trips by 50 percent by 2024.

Objective 2.2 – Achieve and maintain an annual operating cost per one-way passenger trip between \$3.00 and \$10.00.

Objective 2.3 – Improve transit infrastructure comfort, accessibility, and compliance by providing more bus stop amenities and ensuring their compliance with ADA standards.

Policy 2.1 – Increase the frequency of existing services to 30 minutes and increase service hours if demand warrants and funding is available.

Policy 2.2 – Improve existing transit services and implement new transit services, consistent with the 10-year transit priorities identified in the adopted TDP.

Policy 2.3 – Operate a fleet of fixed-route vehicles with an average age of less than six years by 2024.

Policy 2.4 – Explore new service innovations (i.e., on-demand, microtransit services, and same-day reservation technology, autonomous vehicle technology) to serve new areas, attract new ridership, and complement existing services.

Policy 2.5 – Coordinate with PCPT staff to ensure that schedules are properly aligned on existing and any future connections between the two counties.

Policy 2.6 – Coordinate with the City and County transportation planning staff to locate bicycle and pedestrian facilities adjacent to transit corridors and bus stop infrastructure.

Goal 3 - Increase the visibility and name recognition of transit services and TheBus.

Objective 3.1 – Increase marketing and public outreach efforts to educate citizens and visitors about the benefits, availability, and characteristics of existing and planned transit services.

Policy 3.1 – Maintain an ongoing public involvement process through surveys, discussion groups, interviews, public workshops, and participation in public events.

Policy 3.2 – Distribute bus schedules and system information in public places throughout the county for residents and visitors.

Policy 3.3 – Maintain and regularly update TheBus website with current service and schedule information.

Policy 3.4 – Conduct an on-board survey every three years or as part of major TDP updates to monitor changes in user demographics, travel behavior characteristics, and user satisfaction.

Policy 3.5 – Explore the provision of real-time transit information at transfer points or consolidate all information on mobile app or real time on bus.

Policy 3.6 – Upgrade and enhance TheBus website and integrate with the upcoming Flamingo Fares mobile application.

Policy 3.7 – Explore options to increase the number of ticket sales locations and allow online ticket sales.

Policy 3.8 – Explore innovative approaches to marketing transit to new audiences (e.g., coordinating marketing efforts with middle and high school media classes).

Policy 3.9 – Convert to an electronic fare system for rider convenience.

Policy 3.10 – Partner with local colleges and education centers to promote and sell bus passes.

Goal 4 – Pursue coordination activities with regional entities and neighboring counties.

Objective 4.1 – Ensure coordination and consistency with local and regional plans for the future provision of public transit service in Hernando County.

Objective 4.2 – Identify areas for cooperative efforts with neighboring county transit systems including Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT) and Citrus County Transit (CCT).

Policy 4.1 – Meet at least two times a year with transit staff in neighboring counties to better understand existing and future transit services and to identify coordination requirements associated with public transit services and planning efforts across county lines.

Policy 4.2 – Participate on the TBARTA Board and its committees and regularly coordinate with TBARTA staff periodically to coordinate and cooperate on the TBARTA Regional TDP development and/or implementation process.

Policy 4.3 – Meet as appropriate with staff from applicable County agencies and the City of Brooksville to discuss the role of transit in their respective comprehensive plans.

Policy 4.4 – Facilitate discussions with staff from FDOT District 7 and its current R/TIES program, TBARTA, and adjacent counties to coordinate on regional plans.

Goal 5 – Pursue transit-supportive land use and development.

Objective 5.1 – Support land use planning and regulations that encourage transit-supportive development.

Objective 5.2 – Support the use of development incentives such as impact fee credits for developers and major employers to promote public transit.

Policy 5.1 – Continue to participate in the County’s land use development review process and make recommendations for transit related amenities.

Policy 5.2 – Consider bus stop accessibility in the identification and prioritization of sidewalk and bicycle facility improvements.

Goal 6 – Reduce environmental impacts caused by public transit and preserve, where possible, and enhance community social and environmental values.

Objective 6.1 – Evaluate the feasibility of converting part of the transit fleet to electric or alternative fuel vehicles as the existing stock reaches useful life maximums.

Objective 6.2 – TheBus should investigate opportunities to create and encourage bicycle and pedestrian use to promote nonautomotive trips and help with first/last mile transportation to bus stops.

Policy 6.1- Evaluate fleet age and condition annually and evaluate feasibility of replacing aging vehicles with electric vehicles.

Policy 6.2- Install bike racks on all vehicles and at highly used bus stops to encourage alternative transportation to bus stops.

SECTION 7 TRANSIT DEMAND ASSESSMENT

The purpose of this section is to summarize the demand and mobility needs assessment conducted as part of the 10-year TDP for Hernando County. When combined with the baseline conditions assessment, performance reviews, and findings from public outreach and relevant plan reviews, the demand assessment yields the building blocks for determining the transit needs for the next 10 years.

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

- **Market Assessment** – Two market assessment tools were used to assess demand for transit services for the next 10 years. The tools assessed traditional and discretionary transit user markets in Hernando County for various time periods.
- **Ridership Demand Assessment** – Projected ridership demand for the existing fixed-route transit network was analyzed to gauge route-level and system-wide demand, assuming the maintenance of 2019 transit service levels and facilities. The projections were prepared using the Transit Boarding's Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST), the FDOT-approved ridership estimation software for TDPs.

These assessment techniques are summarized below, followed by the results of each technical analysis used to assess the demand for transit services in Hernando County.

Market Assessment

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

Discretionary Rider Markets

The discretionary market refers to potential riders living in higher-density areas of the county that may choose to use transit as a commuting or transportation alternative. The analysis conducted uses industry-standard density thresholds to identify the areas within Hernando County that exhibit transit-supportive residential and employee density levels today as well as in the future. Hernando County socioeconomic data, including dwelling unit/population and employment data developed as part of the adopted 2040 LRTP, were used to conduct the DTA. Using these through a process of data interpolation, existing (2019) and future (2029) dwelling unit and employment data were analyzed.

Three density thresholds, developed based on industry standards/research, were used to indicate whether an area contains sufficient density to sustain some level of fixed-route transit operations:

- **Minimum Investment** – reflects minimum dwelling unit or employment densities to consider basic fixed-route transit services (i.e., local fixed-route bus service).

- **High Investment** – reflects increased dwelling unit or employment densities that may be able to support higher levels of transit investment (i.e., more frequent service, longer service span, etc.) than areas meeting only the minimum density threshold.
- **Very High Investment** – reflects very high dwelling unit or employment densities that may be able to support more significant levels of transit investment (i.e., more frequent services, later service hours, weekend service, etc.) than areas meeting the minimum or high-density thresholds.

Table 7-1 presents the dwelling unit and employment density thresholds (in terms of Traffic Analysis Zone [TAZ]) associated with each threshold of transit investment.

Table 7-1: Transit Service Density Thresholds

Level of Transit Investment	Dwelling Unit Density Threshold ¹	Employment Density Threshold ²
Minimum Investment	4.5–5 dwelling units/acre	4 employees/acre
High Investment	6–7 dwelling units/acre	5–6 employees/acre
Very High Investment	≥8 dwelling units/acre	≥7 employees/acre

¹ TRB, National Research Council, TCRP Report 16, Volume 1 (1996), “Transit and Land Use Form,” November 2002, MTC Resolution 3434 TOD Policy for Regional Transit Expansion Projects.

² Based on review of research on relationship between transit technology and employment densities.

Maps 7-1 and 7-2 illustrate the results of the 2019 and 2029 DTA analyses conducted for Hernando County, identifying areas that support different levels of transit investment based on existing and projected dwelling unit and employment densities. These maps also include the existing TheBus transit route network to gauge how well the current transit network covers the areas of Hernando County that are considered supportive of at least a minimum level of transit investment.

Results

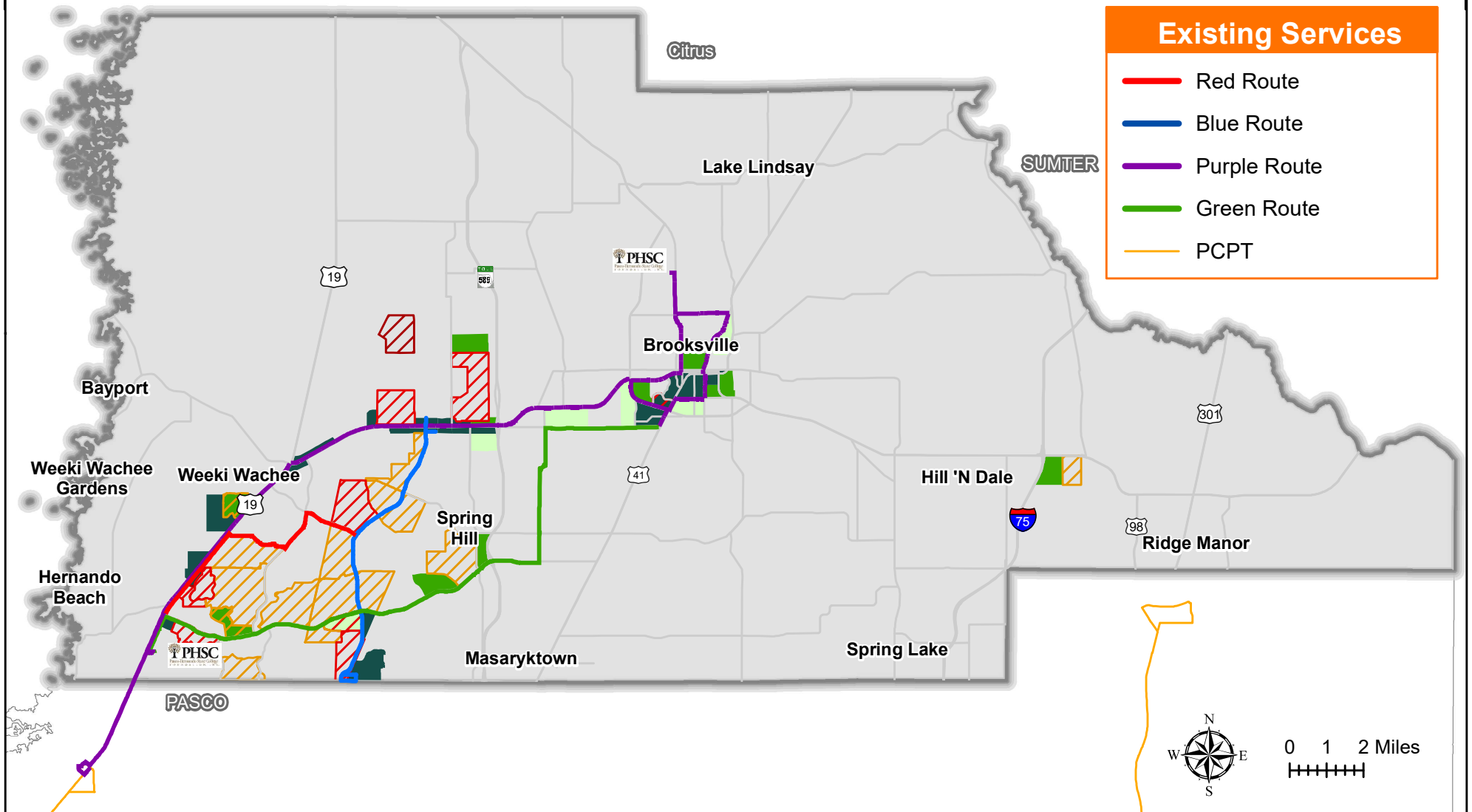
The 2019 DTA analysis indicates that the discretionary transit markets are derived mainly from population densities rather than from employment densities and can be summarized as follows:

- The majority of the areas exhibiting minimally supportive dwelling units or employment density of transit investment in 2019 and 2029 are in the southwestern and central areas of Hernando County, particularly along US-19, in Spring Hill, and in Brooksville.
- The majority of areas that meet the threshold for transit investment are adjacent to the current TheBus network. All current routes border the majority of the “Minimum” and “High” dwelling unit and employment thresholds. In 2029, all current routes will be adjacent to the majority of all levels of dwelling unit and employment thresholds.
- The areas that are considered “High” and “Very High” dwelling unit thresholds for transit investments are in Spring Hill and near the Pasco–Hernando State College. From 2019 to 2029, some of these areas are projected to transition from “Minimum” dwelling unit densities to “High” or “Very High.” Connecting areas to the north are expected to meet the “Minimum”

dwelling unit thresholds for transit investment which are located along the western portion of US 19 near the south county line.

- The areas that meet “High” or “Very High” employment density thresholds for transit investment in the 2019 DTA are concentrated in Brooksville, the county seat. Other areas that meet the “High” and “Very High” thresholds are scattered throughout the southwestern part of the county including the following:
 - o Areas to the west of US-19, including Lakewood Plaza, Weeki Wachee Springs State Park, and Towne Square Mall
 - o Along Cortez Boulevard, consisting of Mariner Square, Western Way Shopping Center, and the Oak Hill Hospital
 - o Bordering the south county line to Pasco County and Mariner Boulevard
- Based on the 2029 DTA, all previously-listed areas continue to meet “High” and “Very High” employment and dwelling thresholds. However, some new areas located adjacent to the already-established areas will meet the “Minimum” employment and dwelling unit thresholds. Additionally, there will be increased employment growth from “High” to “Very High” in Hill ‘n Dale south of SR-50 and in between I-75 and SR-98.

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



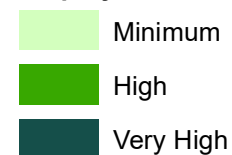
Map 7-1
Density Threshold
Assessment (2019)

Source: Hernando County 2040 L RTP

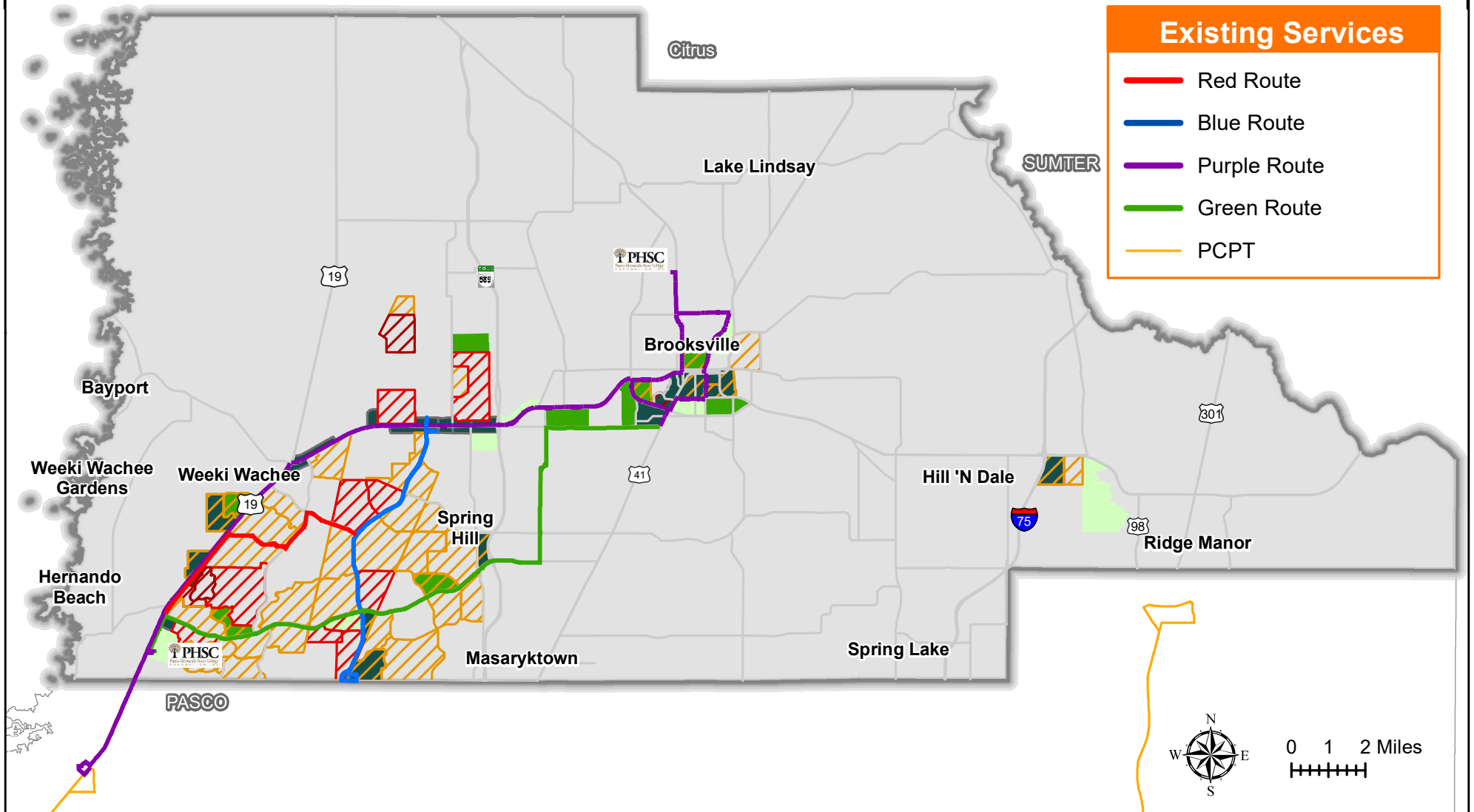
Dwelling Unit Density Threshold



Employment Density Threshold



Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



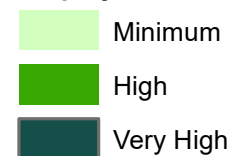
Map 7-2
Density Threshold
Assessment (2029)

Source: Hernando County 2040 LRTP

Dwelling Unit Density Threshold



Employment Density Threshold



Traditional Rider Markets

A traditional rider market refers to population segments that historically have had a higher propensity to use transit or are dependent on public transit for their transportation needs. Traditional transit users include older adults, youth, and households that are low-income and/or have no vehicles. For some individuals, the ability to drive is greatly diminished with age, so they must rely on others for their transportation needs. Likewise, younger persons not yet of driving age but who need to travel to school, employment, or for leisure may rely more on public transportation until they reach driving age. For lower-income households, transportation costs are particularly burdensome, as a greater proportion of income is used for transportation-related expenses than it is for higher-income households. Households with restricted income, such as those with no private vehicle, are more likely to rely on public transportation.

A Transit Orientation Index (TOI) was developed to assist in identifying areas of the county where these traditional rider markets exist. To create the TOI for this analysis, demographic data from the ACS 5-Year Estimates (2013–2017) were analyzed at the block group level for the demographic and economic variables shown in Table 7-2.

Table 7-2: TOI Variables

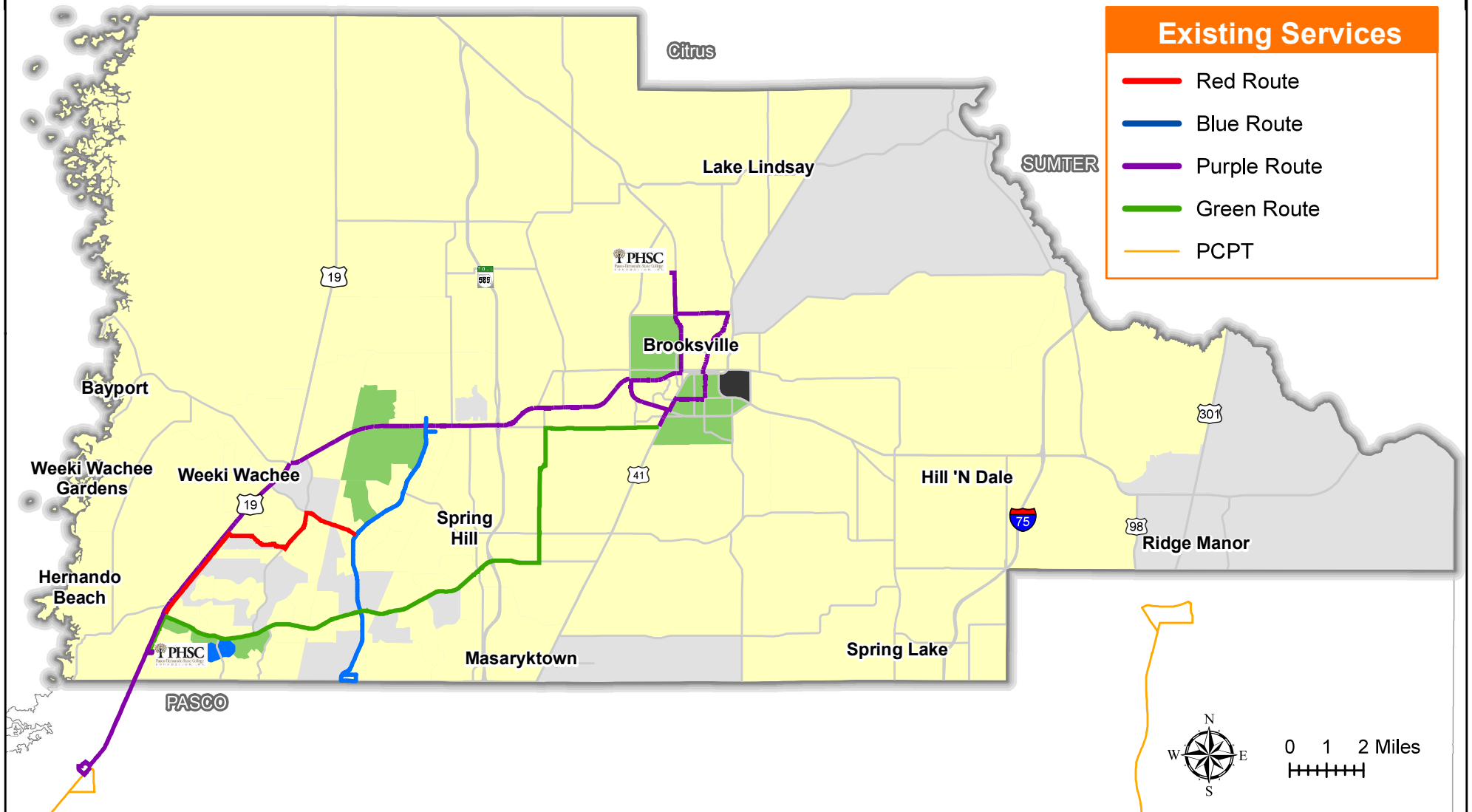
TOI Variable	Units
Population Age 14 and Under	Youth residents
Low-Income Population	\$25,000 or less annual income for 4-person household
Households with No Vehicles	Zero-vehicle households
Population Age 65 and Over	Older adults

Using data for these characteristics and developing a composite ranking for each census block group, each area was ranked as “Very High,” “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” in their respective levels of transit orientation. Any block group with a population density less than 250 persons per square mile was ranked as “Very Low.” Map 7-3 illustrates the 2017 TOI, reflecting areas throughout the county with varying traditional market potential. The existing transit route network shows how well TheBus covers those areas.

Results

- Not many areas exhibit a “Very High” or “High” orientation toward transit; a “Very High” area is present in Brooksville adjacent to SR-50 and “High” orientation areas border along the Pasco–Hernando State College, Spring Hill campus.
- Areas that exhibit “Medium” transit orientation include along Cortez Road north of Spring Hill and clustered in Brooksville between US-41 and SR-50.
- Generally, the county has a low population density and a low orientation towards transit.

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



Map 7-3
Transit Orientation
Index

Source: ACS 5-year Estimates 2013-2017

*Population density is <250 persons per square mile



Ridership Demand Assessment

As another component of the transit demand assessment, projected transit ridership demand for the existing and approved 2019 fixed-route transit network was analyzed using the ridership forecast data from TBEST. This analysis was completed to gauge route-level and system-wide demand, assuming the maintenance of existing 2019 transit service levels and facilities.

T-BEST Overview

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

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

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

Model Inputs / Assumptions and Limitations

T-BEST uses various demographic and transit network data as model inputs. The inputs and the assumptions made in modeling Hernando County's TheBus transit system in T-BEST are presented below. The model used the recently released T-BEST Land Use Model structure (T-BEST Land Use Model 2018), which is supported by parcel-level data developed from the Florida Department of Revenue (DOR) statewide tax database. The DOR parcel data contains land use designations and supporting attributes that allow the application of Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)-based trip generation rates at the parcel level as an indicator of travel activity.

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

Transit Network

The transit route network for all existing TheBus transit routes was created to reflect 2018 conditions, the validation year for the model. General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data for Hernando County's TheBus as of November 2018 was obtained from the Florida Transit Data Exchange (FTDE) as the base transit system. Data include:

- Route alignments
- Route patterns
- Bus stop locations
- Service spans
- Existing headways during peak and off-peak periods (frequency at which a bus arrives at a stop—e.g., 1 bus every 60 minutes)

The GTFS data were verified to ensure the most recent bus service spans and headways; edits were made as needed. Transfer locations were manually coded in the network properties.

Socioeconomic Data

The socioeconomic data used as the base input for the T-BEST model were derived from American Community Survey (ACS) Five-Year Estimates (2012–2016), Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2015 InfoUSA employment data, and 2015 parcel-level land use data from the Florida DOR. Using the data inputs listed above, the model captures market demand (population, demographics, employment, and land use characteristics) within ¼-mile of each stop.

T-BEST uses a socioeconomic data growth function to project population and employment data. Using ACS socioeconomic data, population and employment growth rates were calculated. Population and employment data are hard-coded into the model and cannot be modified by end-users. As applied, the growth rates do not reflect fluctuating economic conditions as experienced in real time.

Special Generators

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

- University – Pasco-Hernando State College, Spring Hill and North Campus
- Transfer Hubs – Mariner Square, Lakewood Plaza, US-19 Walmart, US-41 Walmart, Nature Coast Commons
- Hospitals – Oak Hill, Bayfront Health SPH, Bayfront Health Brooksville

T-BEST Model Limitations

It has long been a desire of FDOT to have a standard modeling tool for transit demand that could be standardized across the state, similar to the Florida Standard Urban Transportation Model Structure

(FSUTMS) model used by metropolitan planning organizations in developing long range transportation plans (LRTPs). However, whereas T-BEST is an important tool for evaluating improvements to existing and future transit services, model outputs do not account for latent demand for transit that could yield significantly higher ridership. In addition, T-BEST cannot display sensitivities to external factors such as an improved marketing and advertising program, changes in fare service for customers, fuel prices, parking supply, walkability and other local conditions and, correspondingly, model outputs may over-estimate demand in isolated cases.

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

Ridership Projections

Using these inputs, assumptions, and 2018 route level ridership data obtained from TheBus, the T-BEST model was validated. Using the 2018 validation model as the base model, T-BEST ridership forecasts for this TDP major update planning starting year (2020) and horizon year (2029) were developed. The generated annual ridership forecasts reflect the estimated level of service utilization if no changes were to be made to any of the fixed-route services.

In addition, a 2029 TDP Needs Plan Scenario (described in detail in the next section) also was coded and modeled to assess the route-level and system ridership. The 2029 needs plan incorporates the following potential service changes:

- Saturday service on all current routes
- Extended service span until 9:00 PM on all current routes
- New Commuter Express route from future transfer station to SR-52 in Pasco County via SR-50 and Suncoast Parkway
- New peak hour connector service from Brooksville to Ridge Manor

Table 7-3 shows the projected number of annual riders by route for 2020, 2029, and the 2029 Needs Scenario as well as the corresponding average annual ridership growth rates derived from T-BEST. Table 7-4 lists estimated annual ridership for introduced Saturday service in the 2029 Scenario.

Table 7-3: Weekday Ridership Projections and Growth Rates for 2020–2029*

Route	2020 Base Network Forecast	2029 Base Network Forecast	2029 TDP Needs Network Scenario Forecast	% Change, 2020–2029 Base (No improvements) Network	% Change, 2020–2029 TDP Needs Network Scenario
Red	17,302	18,438	22,110	6.6%	27.8%
Green	36,618	38,978	44,778	6.4%	22.3%
Purple	52,536	56,404	60,738	7.4%	15.6%
Blue	26,342	28,242	30,222	7.2%	14.7%
Blue	26,342	28,242	30,222	7.2%	14.7%
Commuter Express	n/a	n/a	2,594	n/a	n/a
East Hernando Connector	n/a	n/a	4,223	n/a	n/a
Totals	132,798	142,062	164,665	7.0%	24.0%

* Based on T-BEST model

Table 7-4: Annualized Saturday-Only Ridership with 2029 TDP Needs Scenario*

Route	% Change, 2020–2029 TDP Needs Network Scenario
Purple	19,428
Green	7,358
Blue	4,770
Red	4,111
Commuter Express	No Service
East Hernando Connector	No Service
Totals	35,667

* Based on T-BEST model

Table 7-5: Total Weekly System Ridership Projections and Overall Growth Rates for 2020–2029*

Route	2020 Base Network Forecast	2029 Base Network Forecast	2029 TDP Needs Network Scenario Forecast	% Change, 2020–2029 Base (No improvements) Network	% Change, 2020–2029 TDP Needs Network Scenario
Purple	52,536	56,404	80,166	7.4%	52.6%
Red	17,302	18,438	26,221	6.6%	51.5%
Green	36,618	38,978	52,136	6.4%	42.4%
Blue	26,342	28,242	34,992	7.2%	32.8%
Commuter Express	n/a	n/a	2,594	n/a	n/a
East Hernando Connector	n/a	n/a	4,223	n/a	n/a
Totals	132,798	142,062	200,332	7.0%	50.9%

* Based on T-BEST model

Forecast Ridership Analysis

Based on the T-BEST model results for all day total system as shown in Table 7-5, maintaining the current system will result in only a moderate increase in ridership for all routes over the next 10 years. According to the projections, overall average annual ridership is expected to increase by just 7% by

2029, an annual growth rate of less than 1%. The model results for base show that the most ridership growth in the base (no improvements) network scenario will occur on the Blue and Purple routes within the next 10 years.

With the 2029 Needs Plan Scenario, total system ridership is estimated to increase by 51% compared to the 7% growth if no improvements are done to the system. Table 7-5 demonstrates the ridership estimation for each route and the system as a whole for all days, including weekdays and Saturdays. The table shows that each existing route will increase its ridership by around 33–53% over the next 10 year period. Breakdowns of individual route performance are outlined as follows:

- **Purple Route** – forecasted to have a total of 52,536 riders in 2020, and if no changes are made to the route, it is projected to generate more than 56,000 riders by 2026. However, after introducing Saturday service and later evening spans under the 2029 Needs Plan Scenario, total ridership for the Purple Route is expected to increase by 52.6%, up to 80,166 trips. This is over seven times higher than the 7.4% increase with no improvements and is the most growth any route has projected.
- **Red Route** – forecasted to have a total of 17,302 riders in 2020 and, given no service changes, would have increased by 6.6% to more than 18,000. After introducing Saturday service and later evening spans under the 2029 Needs Scenario, total ridership for the Red Route is expected to increase by 51.5%, up to 26,221 trips.
- **Green Route** – forecasted to have a total of 36,618 riders in 2020 and, if no improvements are implemented, would have increased by 6.6% to nearly 39,000 by 2026. After introducing Saturday service and later evening spans under the 2029 Scenario, total ridership for the Red route is expected to increase by 42.4%, up to 52,136 trips.
- **Blue route** – forecasted to have a total of 26,342 riders in 2020 and will increase to more than 28,000 in ridership by 2029 with no service changes. After introducing Saturday service and later evening spans under the 2029 Scenario, total ridership for the Blue route is expected to increase by 32.8%, up to 34,992 trips. This route could continue to see ridership growth once PCPT’s Shady Hills Connector route (which is expected to meet with this route just north of County Line Road) is implemented.
- **Commuter Express on Suncoast** – proposed under the 2029 Needs Plan Scenario and does not have a current operating equivalent for comparison purposes. If implemented under the 2029 Needs Plan Scenario, this peak-hour-only route would generate 2,594 per year. More details on this route are presented in the next section.
- **East Hernando Connector** – proposed under the 2029 Needs Plan Scenario and also does not have a current operating equivalent for comparison purposes. If this service is implemented under the 2029 Needs Plan Scenario, the express route would generate more than 4,000 trips per year. More details on this route are presented in the next section.

Overall, forecasted ridership for the 2029 Needs Scenario is more than seven times higher than the 2029 No Improvements forecast, with 51% estimated ridership growth systemwide.

SECTION 8 ALTERNATIVES DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

This section summarizes the development of potential transit improvements for the Hernando County 10-year TDP Major Update. The needed improvements, referred to as alternatives, represent the transit needs for the next 10 years and were developed without consideration of funding constraints.

The alternatives were developed based on information gathered through various data collection and public outreach efforts conducted throughout the TDP planning process. The identified service alternatives are then prioritized using a number of criteria and weights. The prioritized list of improvements summarized in this section will be used to develop the 10-year implementation and financial plans, to be summarized and included in the full TDP.

Development of 10-Year Transit Needs

The 2020–2029 TDP transit alternatives consist of improvements that enhance existing TheBus services and expand transit service to new areas. The alternatives reflect the transit needs for the next decade and have been developed based on information gathered through the following methods:

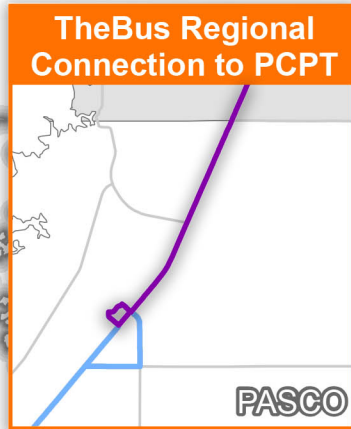
- **Public Input** – Multiple techniques were used to obtain substantive public input on transit needs throughout the TDP planning process. Public input surveys, grassroots outreach, stakeholder interviews, open house public workshops, and other communications were conducted to gather input from the public, stakeholders and the community in general regarding what alternatives should be considered for the next 10 years.
- **Situation Appraisal** – Hernando County’s 10-year TDP is required by State law to include a situation appraisal of the operating environment in which the transit agency operates. This helps to develop an understanding of the operating environment of TheBus in the context of key elements as specified in the TDP Rule. The implications from the situation appraisal findings were considered in identifying potential transit alternatives.
- **TDP Goals & Objectives** – The goals and objectives updated as part of this 10-year TDP re-emphasize many of the agency’s existing priorities, as well as outline new priorities for improvements based on transit needs. The objectives and policies often provide insight into transit needs within the community and the potential means with which to meet them.
- **Transit Demand Assessment** – As presented previously, an assessment of transit demand and needs also was conducted for Hernando County. The assessment included the use of various GIS-based analysis tools and an FDOT-approved ridership estimation software to develop projections of future ridership. These technical analyses, together with the baseline conditions assessment and performance reviews previously conducted, were used to help identify demand when developing transit alternatives.

Based on these methods, alternatives were identified and grouped into three categories, including service, infrastructure, technology, and policy improvements. Specific improvements identified within each category are summarized below and are depicted in Map 8-1, as applicable.

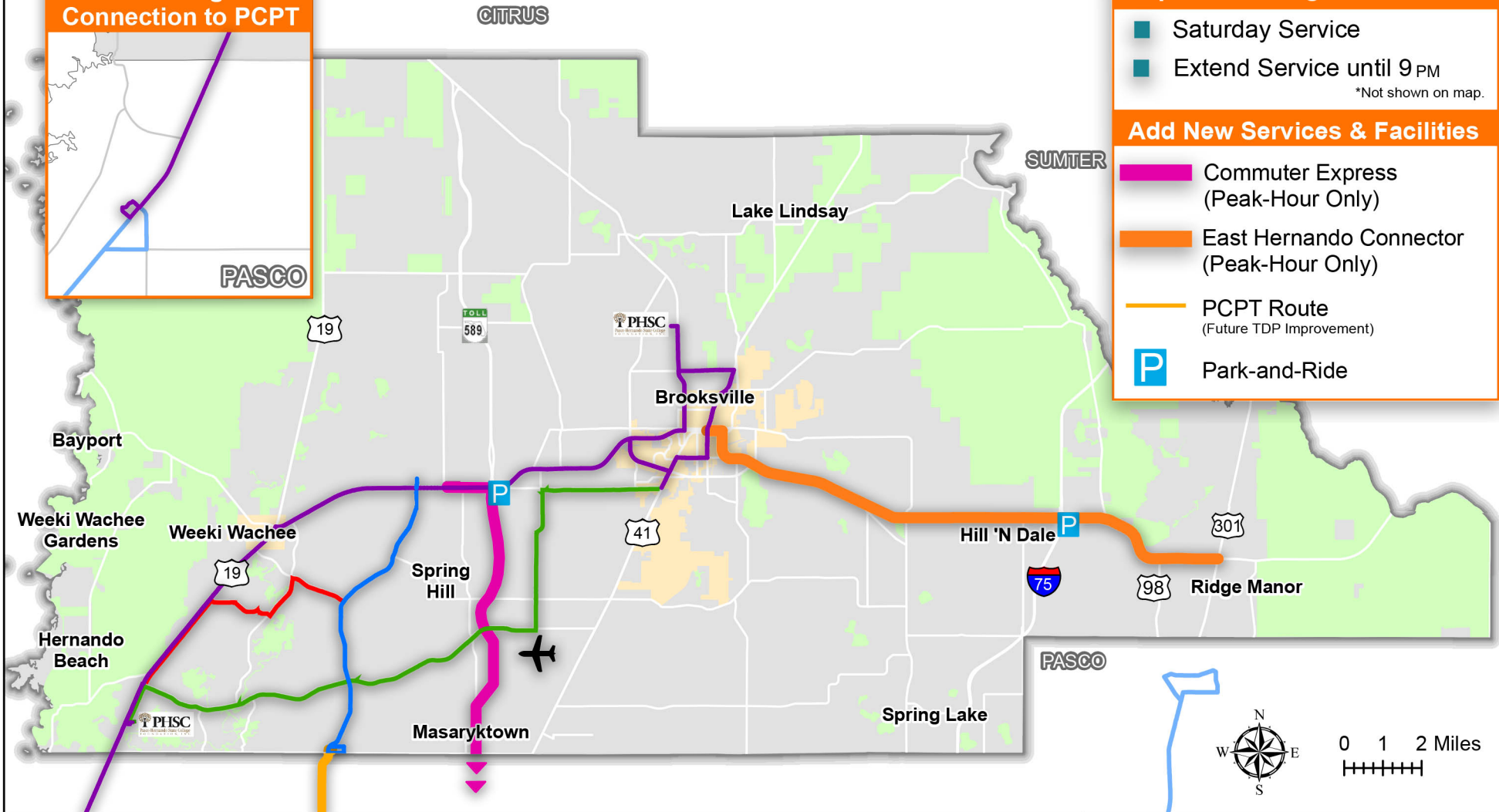
10-Year Transit Service Needs

- **Add Saturday service to all routes (8:00 AM–5:00 PM)** – Adding weekend service was one of the most desired needs expressed by the public during this and previous TDP outreach processes. This improvements adds Saturday service on all existing routes. This service, however, would be provided only from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM only, as the demand may be different than it is for weekdays. However, based on utilization and demand and if adequate financial resources are available, TheBus may expand Saturday service later to match weekday service hours.
- **Extend service hours until 9:00 PM on existing routes** – Another major need identified by the public for potential implementation the next 10 years was extending the current span of service, which currently ends at approximately 7:00 PM. To make the existing services more attractive to current and potential riders who may have early and late travel patterns, this improvement would extend the current service span until 9:00 PM on weekdays for all routes, including the Red, Blue, Purple, and Green routes.
- **Establish East Hernando Connector (bus service on SR-50 from Brooksville to I-75)** – Identified as a need during the last several years, this route would connect east Hernando County to the rest of transit system, providing service on SR-50 from Brooksville to Ridge Manor and eventually connecting jobs and services in Brooksville and most of the central and west side of Hernando County with the east. This route would operate as an express route and will serve Ridge Manor only in the morning and afternoon peak hours.

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (2020-2029)



- Expand Existing Services**
- Saturday Service
 - Extend Service until 9 PM
*Not shown on map.
- Add New Services & Facilities**
- Commuter Express (Peak-Hour Only)
 - East Hernando Connector (Peak-Hour Only)
 - PCPT Route (Future TDP Improvement)
 - P Park-and-Ride



Map 8-1
2029 Transit Needs

- Existing Services**
- Red Route
 - Blue Route
 - Purple Route
 - Green Route
 - PCPT
 - Municipalities
 - Conservation



- **Implement Commuter Express Service on Suncoast Parkway** – With efforts by Hernando County and TBARTA towards a regional connected by transit, express service on the Suncoast Parkway has been identified as key regional need for many years. To provide a regional commuter express route to connect to major employment/ shopping centers south of Hernando County and to stay connected with a future regional transit network, peak-hour commuter express service is proposed for the Suncoast Parkway. However, as no express bus service need north of SR-54 has been identified by the recently-adopted Pasco County TDP, this service, which would begin at the proposed future transfer station (discussed later this section) on Cortez Boulevard (SR 50) in Hernando County and operate on SR-50 and then on Suncoast Parkway south, would end at SR-52 in Pasco County. Once the SR-52 express, identified in the adopted Pasco County TDP is implemented, this would connect with Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT) to provide additional connections regionally. The express service would operate two trips in the morning peak and two in the afternoon peak periods.

Capital/Infrastructure and Technology Needs

The following capital and infrastructure alternatives were developed for implementation the TDP's 10-year planning horizon:

- **Establish a major transfer facility** – TheBus should establish a transfer station to allow riders to conveniently transfer between routes. As Hernando County is planning to implement expanded fixed-route transit service and potentially add new routes, TheBus should consider establishing a transfer facility that can provide a convenient and safe location for transfers for its transit patrons. The enhanced facility should not only facilitate transfer between buses serving various areas of the county, but also should potentially provide adequate passenger amenities, including larger shelters, benches, information displays, bus pass outlets/kiosks, restrooms, vending machines, etc. In addition, if funding is available the facility could include space for TheBus administrative offices. Therefore, establishing a major transfer facility is recommended.
- **Real-time bus location app/displays** – With upgrades to current technology/dispatch software, Hernando County should explore the ability to offer real-time bus tracking information. Real-time bus information, available through a smart phone mobile app and via in-station sign displays to improve the riding experience and aid in attracting new ridership, is recommended.
- **Mobile fare program** – TheBus should continue to work with its regional partners to finalize the rollout of the regional Flamingo Fares program in Hernando County. The program will ensure seamless regional travel from Hernando County to the rest of the Tampa Bay region for residents of Hernando County and would improve the overall customer experience using the smart card and mobile fare platform. Implementation of the Flamingo Fares system will allow customers to cross county boundaries without transfer fees using the same smart card and/or smart phone app.

- **Vehicle Replacement and Acquisition Program** – TheBus should continue its vehicle fleet replacement and expansion to ensure the adequate number of vehicles and spares are available for maintaining current service as well as for any planned expansions of service in the next 10 years.
- **Bus Stop Infrastructure Program** – Hernando County should continue its current Bus Stop Infrastructure Program to purchase and installation of bus shelters, benches, bike racks, and other amenities to provide its riders a comfortable and safe experience at its bus stops to the maximum extent possible.
- **Shared park-and-ride facilities** – To support the proposed regional express services and the express service connecting Ridge Manor in east Hernando to Brooksville, two shared-use/joint use park-and-ride lots should be established at the following locations:
 - o Suncoast Parkway/SR-50 interchange area
 - o SR-50 and I-75 interchange area

These lots are assumed to be operated as shared lots through an agreement with a land/property owner of the facility in the vicinity of these two locations. Per FDOT’s *2012 State Park-and-Ride Guide*, the cost to maintain a parking space at a shared lot is minimal, approximately \$12 per space per year.

Policy/Other Alternatives

Other potential improvements include various general enhancements that are not necessarily route-specific or capital-related. These improvements are drawn primarily from information in current plans/studies as well as input from public involvement efforts performed as part of the TDP. Other needed improvements identified for the next 10 years are as follows:

- **Expanded transit marketing program** – An expanded marketing program can help to significantly to increase public awareness, potentially generating more ridership. Marketing and public education are perhaps the most difficult tasks for public transportation systems, primarily due to the lack of available resources. However, it is recommended that Hernando County explore every avenue to expand the scope of its current marketing activities within the next 10 years. In addition, using social media such as Facebook also may help to attract bike riders and millennials (those born between the 1980s and early 2000s, also called Generation Y) to consider using transit once in a while if not regularly. These marketing activities are critical investments in the long-term development of the public transportation system.
- **Engagement of business community to develop employee bus pass/subsidy programs** – As another strategy to increase use of TheBus, especially targeting routes that serve key employers such as hospitals, major retailers, and industrial parks, TheBus should work with the business community to encourage them to become more proactive in providing commuter benefit programs that offer travel choices for their employees. By providing employees with free bus passes, commuter benefits programs also offer tax benefits to participating employers, making such program a “win-win” situation for both participating

employers and employees. These strategies also could increase demand for establishing park-and-ride lots at potential locations in the county.

Evaluation of Transit Alternatives

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

Alternatives Evaluation Methodology

A qualitative/quantitative methodology was developed to evaluate and prioritize the needs presented previously in this section. To prioritize and program these service improvements for potential implementation, it is important to weigh the benefits of each service improvement against the others.

The remainder of this section identifies and defines the evaluation criteria to be used in prioritizing the service improvements developed for the TheBus TDP and the methodology by which those criteria should be applied. The four evaluation categories that were identified for use in the methodological process to rank the alternatives are described as follows:

- **Community Support** – A key reason for the success of any improvement is its acceptance and support by the community it serves and impacts. The findings previously summarized from the extensive public outreach effort were reviewed to gauge public interest.
- **Ridership Demand** – Success of any route relies heavily on its productivity. Two GIS-based technical analyses conducted as part of the demand assessment were reviewed to assess the potential demand from discretionary and traditional markets for each improvement.
- **Regional Connectivity** – Connectivity between key regional hubs plays a critical role as TheBus focuses on enhancing and expanding its network to meet the demands of creating a truly multimodal transportation system.
- **Funding Potential** – Funding is often the most restrictive factor and, therefore, is one of the most heavily weighted criteria as funding for community transportation is primarily linked to the routes for which funding is applied.

Table 8-1 lists these evaluation categories and their corresponding descriptions, the associated measure, and the assigned weighting for each category. Using these criteria, each of the alternatives were then assigned a qualitative measure of Very High, High, Medium, or Low to determine their overall priority, as presented later in this section.

Table 8-1: Alternative Evaluation Criteria and Weights

Criterion	Measure	Description	Weight
Community Support	Public Input	Level of interest in specific alternatives during public outreach.	40%
Ridership Potential	Traditional Market	General overlap in “High” or “Very High” Transit Orientation Index (TOI), Density Threshold Assessment (DTA)	20%
	Discretionary Market	General overlap in areas that meet “Minimum” Density Threshold Assessment (DTA) tier for employment or dwelling unit density	
Regional Connectivity	Connections to Regional Hubs	Connections to regional transit networks/hubs in adjacent counties	15%
Funding Potential	Funding Feasibility/ Realistic Opportunities	Likelihood of securing stable operational/service funding	25%

Alternatives Evaluation Results Summary

Each alternative was evaluated using the criteria and process summarized previously; the detailed results of the evaluation are presented in Table 8-2. As shown, the nine improvements were given a ranking of “Very High,” “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” based on the qualitative/quantitative evaluation process discussed previously. Next, an overall ranking was calculated by assigning a score to each of the ratings, where “Very High” received the highest score (7) and “Low” received the lowest score (1), and then deriving a weighted score based on the weight of each category/criteria for each improvement.

For example, “Extend service to 9:00 PM on All Routes” was ranked as “Very High (7),” “Medium (3),” “Medium (3),” and “Low (1)” for the respective criteria; once these rankings were combined into a single score (3.9 out of 7), it came in between the thresholds of “Medium (3)” and “High (5).”

Table 8-2: Alternatives Evaluation Results Matrix

TDP 10-Year Needs	Criteria				Weighted Score	Priority Rank
	Community Support	Ridership Potential	Regional Connectivity	Funding Potential		
Extend service hours until 9:00 PM on existing routes	VERY HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH	HIGH	4.3	1
Saturday service to all existing routes	VERY HIGH	MEDIUM	HIGH	MEDIUM	4.0	2
Commuter Express service on SR-50/Suncoast Parkway	MEDIUM	LOW	HIGH	HIGH	2.3	3
East Hernando Connector	MEDIUM	LOW	LOW	LOW	1.4	4

Improvement alternatives are scored using ranking of “Very High,” “High,” “Medium,” or “Low” based on qualitative/quantitative evaluation process in this report. Scores for each rankings as follows: Very High = 7, High = 5, Medium = 3, and Low =1.

Despite the extensive data reviewed in this plan, including market data and demand forecasts, setting transit priorities for the next 10 years relied heavily on the direction/vision set by the community and the realities of impending financial constraints to realize that vision within the plan timeframe.

The results of the evaluation are consistent with the community's vision for TheBus services, as summarized below:

- Extending service hours to 9:00 PM on all existing routes was ranked as the top priority for the system for the next 10 years. With a weighted average of 4.3, it scored Very High in community support, High in regional connectivity and funding potential, and Medium in ridership potential.
- Saturday service on all existing routes was ranked as the second priority, based on the criteria used above. It scored Very High for community support, High for regional connectivity, and Medium for “ridership potential” and “funding potential,” with a weighted score of 4.0.
- As expected, East Hernando Connector serving the sparsely-populated Ridge Manor area, located further east of the current service area, was ranked at the bottom, receiving a weighted score of 1.4.

When developing a TDP corresponding implementation plan, these priorities should be balanced with the funding realities to determine to what degree that the community's vision can be realized over the next decade.

SECTION 9 10-YEAR TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section presents the recommended and funded 10-year transit plan for Hernando County. Included is a brief summary of each service, capital/infrastructure, and policy improvement programmed for the plan, each of which is part of the 10-year transit needs plan summarized in detail and prioritized in Section 8. Finance and implementation plans for the 10-year TDP are presented, as is a summary of the capital and operating cost assumptions used in developing costs and revenues for the TDP finance plan and the financial and implementation plans developed for the recommended 10-year transit plan for TheBus system.

Recommended 10-Year Transit Plan

Recommended transit service improvements for the next 10 years were determined based on input from the public and TheBus/MPO staff and the evaluation of transit needs identified previously, as well as careful consideration of financial resources summarized later in this section.

Table 9-1 presents the service improvements for the recommended 10-year transit plan. Capital improvements such as the addition of a bus transfer center, bus stops, bus stop accessibility improvements, and vehicle purchases are expected to be implemented corresponding to the implementation of these improvements.

Table 9-1: TheBus 10-Year Transit Plan Service Improvements

Service Improvements	Operating Characteristics		
	Frequency	Service Span	Day of Service
Add Saturday service	60 min	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Saturday
Extend service hours until 9:00 PM	60 min	5:00 AM to 9:00 PM	Monday-Friday
Add East Hernando Connector	90 min	AM and PM Peak	Monday-Friday

Improvements to Existing Routes

- **Add Saturday service to existing routes (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)** – Add Saturday service to all TheBus routes, with service from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.
- **Extend service hours to 9:00 PM on existing routes** – Extend current service end times to approximately 9:00 PM on weekdays for all routes, including Red, Blue, Purple, and Green.
- **Add East Hernando Connector (AM and PM express bus service from Brooksville to Ridge Manor on SR-50)** – Add two bus trips in the morning and two in the afternoon to connect Ridge Manor to Brooksville from Monday to Friday.

Capital/Infrastructure/Policy Improvements

- **Major transfer facility** – Establish a transfer facility that can provide a convenient and safe location for transfers for its transit patrons to accommodate expanded fixed-route transit service and potentially add new routes.
- **Mobile fare payment app** – Continue to work with regional partners to finalize the rollout of the regional Flamingo Fares program so riders can use a smartphone app to pay bus fare.

- **Vehicle replacement and acquisition program** – Continue vehicle fleet replacement and expansion to ensure that an adequate number of vehicles and spares are available for maintaining current service and for any planned expansions of service in the next 10 years.
- **Bus stop infrastructure and ADA accessibility program** – Continue the current program to purchase and install bus shelters, benches, bike racks, and other amenities to provide riders with a comfortable and safe experience at bus stops to the maximum extent possible; continue bus stop ADA accessibility improvements to ensure that stops are accessible to every type of rider.
- **Shared park-and-ride facilities** – Establish a shared-use/joint use park-and-ride lot to support the proposed express service connecting Ridge Manor to Brooksville, potentially at the SR-50/I-75 interchange area in east Hernando County northwest of Ridge Manor.
- **Expanded transit marketing program** – Using existing resources, expand the scope of current marketing activities and use low- to no-cost tools such as social media/Facebook to attract new riders.
- **Engagement of business community to develop employee bus pass/subsidy programs** – Work with the business community to encourage provision of commuter benefit programs that offer travel choices for employees.
- **Promotion/expansion of transportation demand management (TDM) strategies** – Continue to coordinate with the TBARTA Commuter Services program to promote and expand the use of TDM strategies, including alternative travel options such as transit, carpool, vanpool, etc.

10-Year Financial Plan

A 10-year financial plan was developed to facilitate implementation of the service and capital/technology improvements identified previously. This section presents the capital and operating cost assumptions and the costs and revenues associated with that 10-year plan.

Cost Assumptions

Numerous cost assumptions were made to forecast transit costs for the time period from 2020 through 2029 based on a variety of factors, including service performance data from the current TheBus service and information and discussions with TheBus/MPO staff. These assumptions are summarized as follows:

- Annual operating costs for fixed-route and ADA paratransit services are based on information provided by Hernando County staff.
- A total of \$1 million is identified for securing a land for the development of the future major transfer facility on Cortez Boulevard (SR-50). Currently, the cost of building the facility has not been determined at this time. The proposed new transfer facility for TheBus is expected to be fully funded by the Hernando County Local Option Ninth Cent Gas Tax proceeds.

- Based on information from TheBus staff, bus vehicles are assumed to cost \$450,000 and ADA vehicles are assumed to cost \$80,000 each. Table 9-2 summarizes the 10-year vehicle replacement plan for both fixed-route and ADA paratransit services.

Table 9-2: Vehicle Acquisition/Replacement Plan

Year	<i>Fixed-Route Buses</i>	<i>ADA Paratransit Vans</i>
2020	3	0
2021	0	2
2022	1	2
2023	2	1
2024	1	1
2025	1	0
2026	2	2
2027	3	2
2028	0	1
2029	1	1
Total	14	12

Source: TheBus

- A 10-year total of \$1.5 million is assumed for continuing development and implementation of a Bus Stop Infrastructure Program to install signs and shelters and conduct ADA accessibility improvements.
- Approximately \$2.5 million is assumed for preventive maintenance for the 10-year period.
- The capital plan includes purchasing a new bus wash for \$40,000.

Revenue Assumptions

Revenues for fixed-route and ADA paratransit services were provided by TheBus staff; the major assumptions used in developing the revenues are as follows:

- A combination of Federal Section 5305d, 5307, and 5311 funds and FDOT Block and Service Development Grants is assumed to fund most operating costs.
- The implementation of Saturday and weekday late services is assumed to be funded partially by new FDOT Service Development Grants for the initial three years of the plan (grant program is for pilot projects and available only for three years with a 50% local match requirement).
- Local General Fund allocation for operating would continue at approximately \$895,000, on average, for the next 10 years.
- Capital costs are assumed to be fully funded by Federal Section 5307 and Section 5339 funds.
- The cost of securing land (location to be determined) for the proposed major transfer facility is assumed to be covered by Hernando County Local Option Ninth Cent Gas Tax proceeds from TheBus transit reserves.

Recommended TDP Costs/Revenues

The costs and revenues developed for TheBus for the next 10 years are presented in Table 9-3. These were developed using the operating/capital cost and revenue assumptions previously summarized.

Table 9-3: 10-Year Costs and Revenues

Cost/Revenue	FFY 2020	FFY 2021	FFY 2022	FFY 2023	FFY 2024	FFY 2025	FFY 2026	FFY 2027	FFY 2028	FFY 2029	10-Year Total
Operating											
Costs											
Fixed Route Service	\$1,556,465	\$1,572,030	\$1,587,750	\$1,603,627	\$1,687,417	\$1,704,291	\$1,721,334	\$1,738,547	\$1,755,933	\$1,773,492	\$16,700,885
ADA Paratransit Service	\$1,037,644	\$1,048,020	\$1,058,501	\$1,069,086	\$1,079,777	\$1,090,574	\$1,101,480	\$1,112,495	\$1,123,620	\$1,134,856	\$10,856,052
Total Costs	\$2,594,109	\$2,620,050	\$2,646,251	\$2,672,713	\$2,767,193	\$2,794,865	\$2,822,814	\$2,851,042	\$2,879,552	\$2,908,348	\$27,556,937
Revenues											
Federal Section 5305d	\$79,000	\$79,790	\$80,588	\$81,394	\$82,208	\$83,030	\$83,860	\$84,699	\$85,546	\$86,401	\$826,515
Federal Section 5307	\$788,757	\$796,645	\$802,917	\$927,860	\$937,083	\$946,454	\$955,918	\$965,477	\$975,132	\$985,435	\$9,081,678
FDOT Fed 5311 for Operating	\$241,533	\$243,948	\$246,388	\$248,852	\$319,126	\$322,317	\$325,541	\$328,796	\$332,084	\$335,405	\$2,943,990
FDOT State 5305d	\$9,875	\$9,974	\$10,073	\$10,174	\$10,276	\$10,379	\$10,483	\$10,587	\$10,693	\$10,800	\$103,314
FDOT State Block Grant	\$394,378	\$398,322	\$402,305	\$406,328	\$410,391	\$414,495	\$418,640	\$422,827	\$427,055	\$431,325	\$4,126,066
FDOT Service Development for Operating	\$111,815	\$112,933	\$115,756	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$340,505
Local Funds	\$855,751	\$864,309	\$872,952	\$881,681	\$890,521	\$899,426	\$908,420	\$917,505	\$926,680	\$935,946	\$8,953,190
Program Income	\$11,010	\$11,120	\$11,231	\$11,344	\$11,457	\$11,572	\$11,687	\$11,804	\$11,922	\$12,041	\$115,189
Farebox Revenues	\$101,990	\$103,010	\$104,040	\$105,080	\$106,131	\$107,193	\$108,264	\$109,347	\$110,441	\$110,993	\$1,066,489
Total Revenues	\$2,594,109	\$2,620,050	\$2,646,251	\$2,672,713	\$2,767,193	\$2,794,865	\$2,822,814	\$2,851,042	\$2,879,552	\$2,908,348	\$27,556,937
Revenues Minus Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Rollover from Prev. Year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Surplus/Shortfall	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Capital											
Costs											
Vehicles	\$1,263,050	\$210,000	\$610,000	\$980,000	\$530,000	\$450,000	\$1,090,000	\$1,510,000	\$80,000	\$530,000	\$7,253,050
Replacement Vehicles - Section 5307	\$900,000	\$0	\$450,000	\$900,000	\$450,000	\$450,000	\$900,000	\$1,350,000	\$0	\$450,000	\$5,850,000
New Vehicle - Section 5339	\$363,050	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$363,050
Replacement ADA Vans	\$0	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$0	\$160,000	\$160,000	\$80,000	\$80,000	\$960,000
Replacement Specialty/Service Vehicle	\$0	\$50,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$80,000
Transit - Other	\$948,953	\$846,982	\$658,191	\$664,587	\$716,174	\$1,485,460	\$492,448	\$502,172	\$509,561	\$519,748	\$7,344,277
Stop Amenities/ADA Compliance	\$450,000	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,000
Administrative	\$200,953	\$206,982	\$213,191	\$219,587	\$226,174	\$232,960	\$239,948	\$247,147	\$254,561	\$262,198	\$2,303,702
Transfer Facility	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,000,000
Preventive Maintenance	\$235,000	\$240,000	\$245,000	\$245,000	\$250,000	\$252,500	\$252,500	\$255,025	\$255,000	\$257,550	\$2,487,575
Equipment OTHER MISC	\$13,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$53,000
Transit Shelter(s) & Amenities	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
Total Costs	\$2,212,003	\$1,056,982	\$1,268,191	\$1,644,587	\$1,246,174	\$1,935,460	\$1,582,448	\$2,012,172	\$589,561	\$1,049,748	\$14,597,327
Revenues											
Federal Section 5307 for Buses	\$900,000	\$210,000	\$610,000	\$980,000	\$530,000	\$450,000	\$1,090,000	\$1,510,000	\$80,000	\$530,000	\$6,890,000
Federal Section 5307 for Other Capital	\$948,953	\$846,982	\$658,191	\$664,587	\$716,174	\$1,485,460	\$492,448	\$502,172	\$509,561	\$519,748	\$7,344,277
Federal Section 5339	\$363,050	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$363,050
Total Revenue	\$2,212,003	\$1,056,982	\$1,268,191	\$1,644,587	\$1,246,174	\$1,935,460	\$1,582,448	\$2,012,172	\$589,561	\$1,049,748	\$14,597,327
Surplus/Shortfall	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Local Option Gas Tax (Ninth Cent)											
Estimated Remaining Reserve	\$2,100,000	\$2,150,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,250,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,550,000	
10-Year Transit Development Plan											
Total Costs	\$4,806,112	\$3,677,032	\$3,914,442	\$4,317,300	\$4,013,367	\$4,730,325	\$4,405,262	\$4,863,214	\$3,469,114	\$3,958,096	\$42,154,264
Total Revenues	\$4,806,112	\$3,677,032	\$3,914,442	\$4,317,300	\$4,013,367	\$4,730,325	\$4,405,262	\$4,863,214	\$3,469,114	\$3,958,096	\$42,154,264
Surplus/Shortfall	\$2,100,000	\$2,150,000	\$2,200,000	\$2,250,000	\$2,300,000	\$1,350,000	\$1,400,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,550,000	

10-Year Implementation Plan and Unfunded needs

The implementation plan in Table 9-4 outlines funded and unfunded improvements for TheBus from 2020 through 2029. The table also shows the implementation years for funded improvements based on information available at this time. It is important to emphasize that the implementation schedule shown in the table does not preclude the opportunity to delay or advance any projects. As priorities change, funding assumptions do not materialize, or more funding becomes available, this project implementation schedule should be adjusted.

Table 9-4: 10-Year Implementation Plan and Unfunded Needs

TDP Improvement	Implementation Year
Fixed-Route Bus Service	
Add Saturday service to existing routes (8:00 AM to 5:00 PM)	2020
Extend service hours to 9:00 PM on existing routes	2020
Add East Hernando Connector (AM and PM bus service to Ridge Manor)	2024
Add commuter express service on Suncoast Parkway	Unfunded
Capital/Infrastructure/Technology	
Bus stop infrastructure/ADA accessibility improvements	2020–2029
Shared park-and-ride facilities	2020–2030
Major transfer facility (secure a location and development)	2025–2029
Real-time bus location app/displays	Unfunded
Policy/Other Improvements	
Implement regional mobile payment app	2020
Engage businesses to develop employee bus pass/subsidy programs	2020–2029
Coordinate with TBARTA to promote TDM strategies	2020–2029
Expand transit marketing program	2020–2029

SECTION 10 TDP IMPLEMENTATION & COORDINATION

Key factors to the successful implementation of any 10-year TDP, once the agency clear hurdles to get the plan approved, is to continue the support gathered and strengthen the collaboration built over the planning period. This section provides key elements to consider as Hernando County moves to implement its plan to grow the transit system into the vision outlined in the TDP.

Implementing the TDP

Due to various factors internal and external to the agency, the adoption of the TDP does not necessarily mean that Hernando County will be able to adhere to the implementation schedule identified in the TDP. However, the action items listed below may help to ensure that the most critical factors such as continued public support, adequate funding, and operational support are preserved until the next major TDP update:

- **Funding Support** – Address each recommendation and outline steps to take in the current and succeeding years to secure the best chance of obtaining the needed funding.
- **Operational Support** – Establish a blueprint to determine how a recommended alternative will be incorporated into the existing network from an operational perspective.
- **Progress Beyond Adoption** – Use the adopted TDP as a tool to justify and explain the reasons for continued investments to transit services and facilities.
- **TDP Annual Progress Report** – Use updates to provide needed motivation to reiterate the benefits of the recommended alternatives.

Post-Adoption Outreach and Marketing

Hernando County has conducted extensive public outreach as part of the TDP process that can be expanded to market other planning efforts, such as service initiation efforts, marketing programs and campaigns, and budget plans. The TDP Executive Summary, a concise summary of the plan (to be completed after plan adoption), should be extensively used as a tool to promote the plan beyond TDP adoption. It should be shared with TDP stakeholders to update them on their contribution and keep them engaged in post-adoption outreach and will be an effective medium to continue generating support for the TDP's recommendations.

Promoting the TDP after adoption and keeping the heightened public support will also improve the likelihood of achieving the implementation plan and funding support. Any themes or branding already in use or developed specifically for the Hernando County's 10-year TDP can serve as the foundation for a post-TDP marketing campaign.

Coordination with Other Plans

With potential implementation of expanded services, it is recommended that Hernando County consider a Comprehensive Operational Assessment (COA) and repeat it at least every five years to maintain operational health. Effective coordination on the timing of a COA may be beneficial in the goal

to provide efficient transit services. The findings of a COA can be fed into the capital and operational recommendations for the initial years of the 10-year plan so that near-term system improvements can be set.

Continuing the consistency with key State, regional, and local plan priorities should also be a primary focus of Hernando County. Coordinating the timing of the TDP major updates with the new Transit Asset Management Plan requirement should be considered, as both plans are designed to govern investment strategies based on needs.

In addition, the analyses completed during this TDP can be used to help update required plans for ADA access and Title VI service provisions, as they document how the system will meet or serve older adults, persons with disabilities, and populations that fall under Title VI protections. The adopted TDP can also be useful for other entities with subsequent planning efforts, such as local comprehensive plans, Florida's SIS Needs Plan, the MPO's UPWP and TIP, etc.

Continuing on Established Relationships

Throughout the TDP public involvement process, the MPO and TheBus identified transit advocates and educated the public on the importance of transit. These relationships should be leveraged to continue building support for the implementation strategies. These advocates may serve as facilitators for a “grassroots” outreach program or could become transit cheerleaders/ambassadors who can provide a foundation/support network for future outreach. These future efforts can build upon the tools and lessons afforded by the TDP and aid in prioritizing specific target markets to engage.

Hernando County TDP – A Strategic Blueprint for Transit

Although this planning effort was conducted to fulfill regulatory and administrative requirements so Hernando County can continue to receive State funding, it is also intended to serve as the strategic planning guide for future transit in the county. It analyses the operating environment, solicits broad input by coordinating with other plans, involves substantial public engagement, and explores community goals to define a future action plan. Therefore, the greatest value from this five-year planning effort will occur when TheBus uses it as a “living” document to plan and promote transit as an effective and viable alternative for everyone in Hernando County and the region.

APPENDIX A: Farebox Recovery Report

TheBus Fixed-Route Bus System Hernando County, Florida

July 2019

Current Farebox Recovery Ratio

Farebox recovery (ratio) refers to the percent of a transit system's total operating expenses that are funded with fares paid by passengers and is calculated by dividing the total fare revenue collected by the total operating expenses. This value is reported by transit agencies to NTD using a standardized equation, as required for FTA grant recipients. The farebox recovery ratio for TheBus, the public transportation provider for Hernando County, was 8.17 percent in FY 2017. The background with regards to the farebox recovery ratio includes the following.

Prior Year Fare Studies and Changes

TheBus fares were last increased in 2008, when the base fare was increased to \$1.25 and reduced fares were increased to \$0.60. Reduced fares are available to students, older adults, children under age 6, individuals with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders. The \$0.50 transfer fee was eliminated in November 2018.

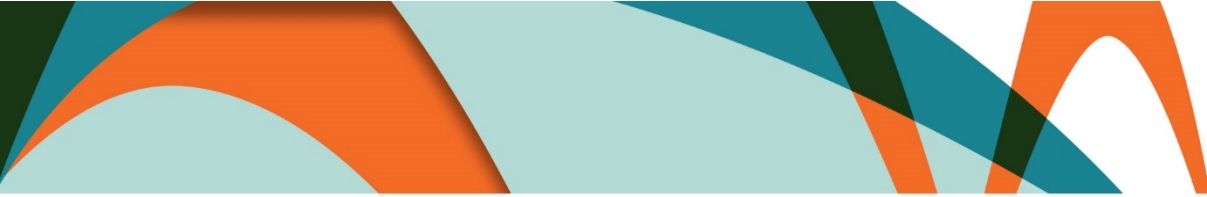
Proposed Fare Changes for the Upcoming Years

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

Strategies That Will Affect Farebox Recovery Ratio

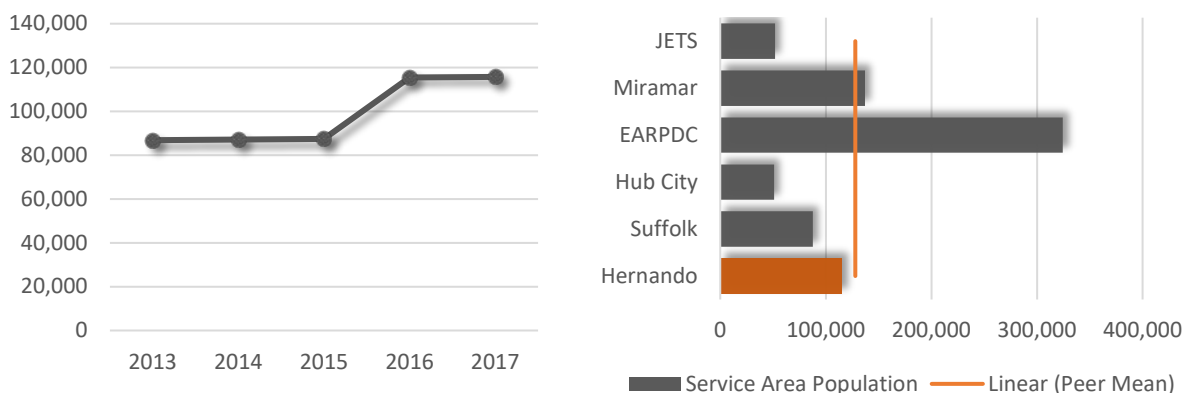
The following is a list of strategies TheBus will employ to improve the farebox recovery ratio:

- Conduct annual assessment on increasing charge for bus fare and opportunities for additional passes and present to Hernando County BOCC for further consideration.
- Minimize costs required to operate and administer transportation services.
- Increase ridership by transitioning paratransit service patrons to fixed-route service.
- Determine the most cost-effective service type on all major corridors, given demand, routings, and coverage area, ensuring that transit serves all major activity centers.
- Increase ridership while maintaining costs to operate and administer transportation services by engaging the public to refine services and aim to better meet the needs of customers.
- Improve attractiveness of transit service to riders through dissemination of real-time bus location information.
- Work with key employers, community-based contacts, and homeowner associations to expand marketing efforts aimed at increasing ridership and revenue for the fixed-route system.

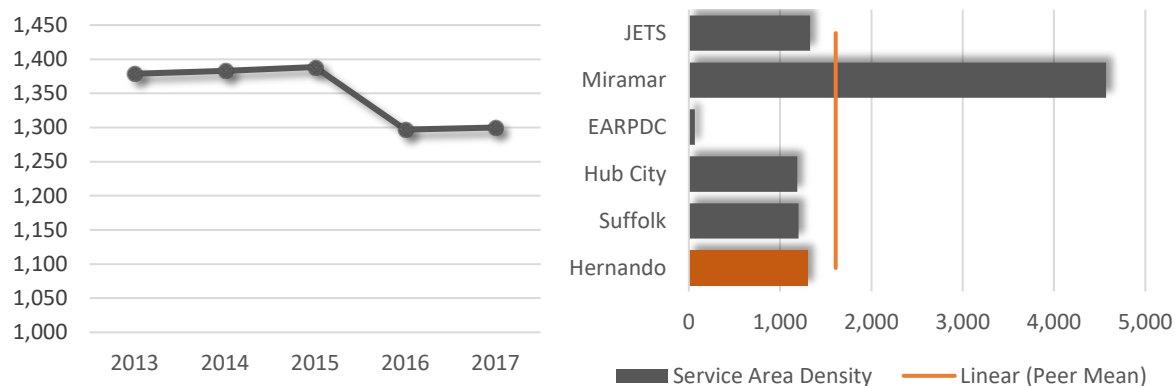


APPENDIX B: Trend and Peer Review Figures

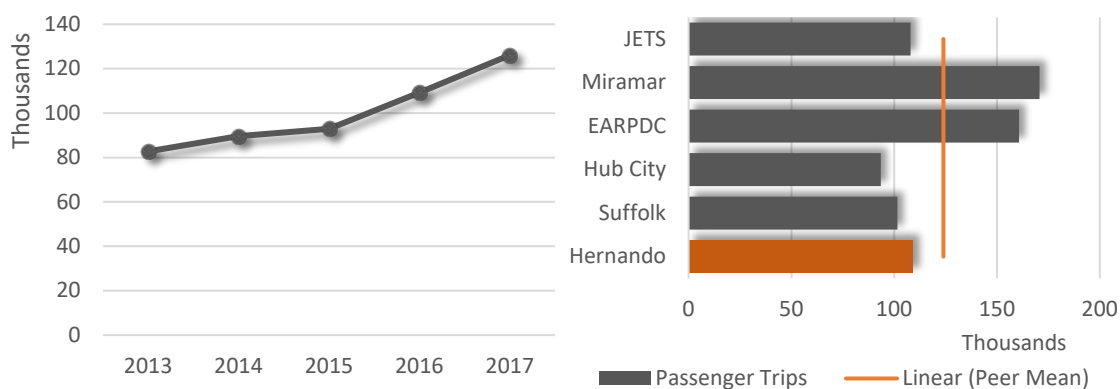
Service Area Population



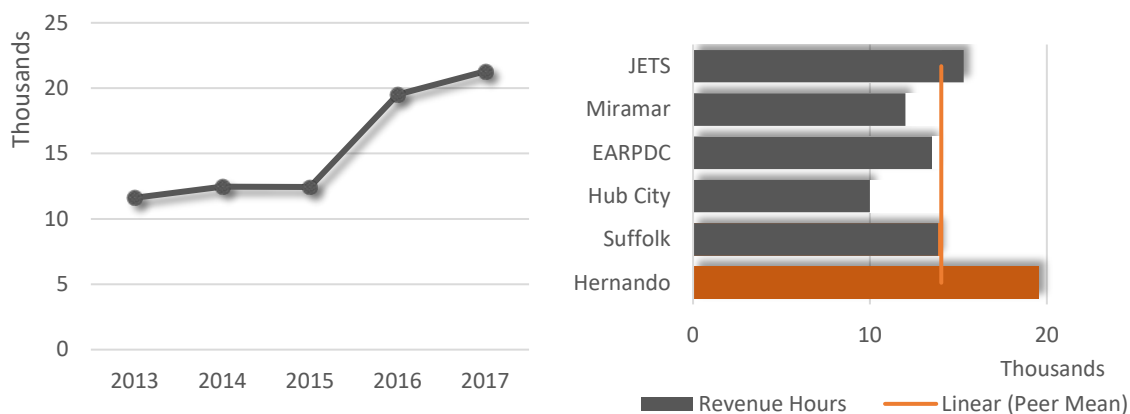
Service Area Population Density



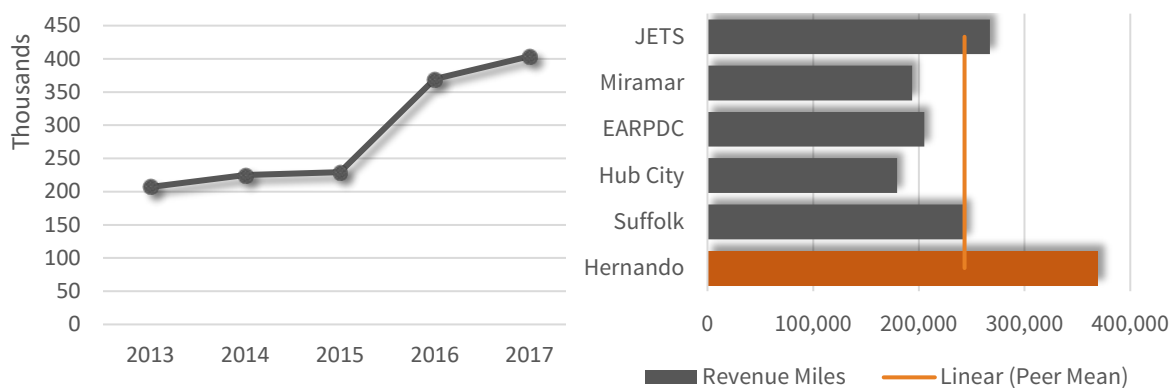
Passenger Trips



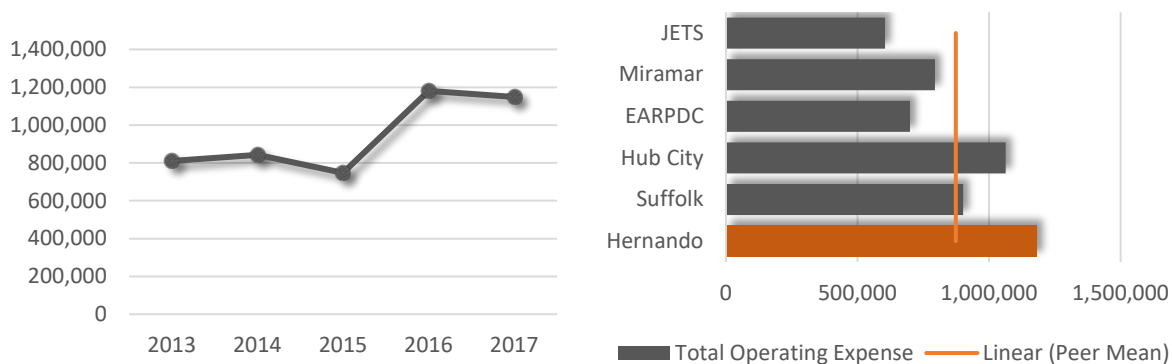
Revenue Hours



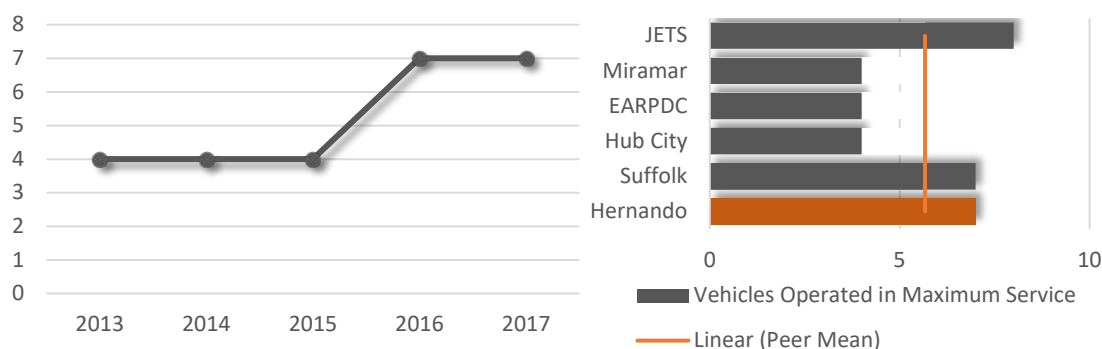
Revenue Miles



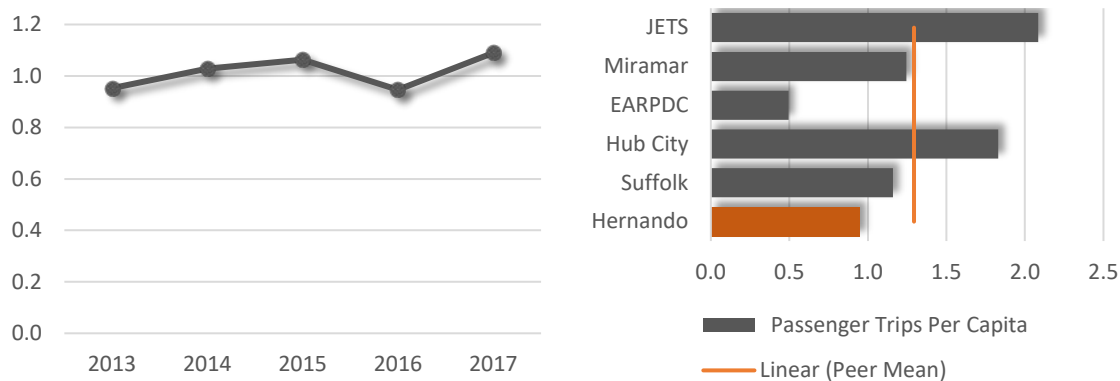
Total Operating Expense



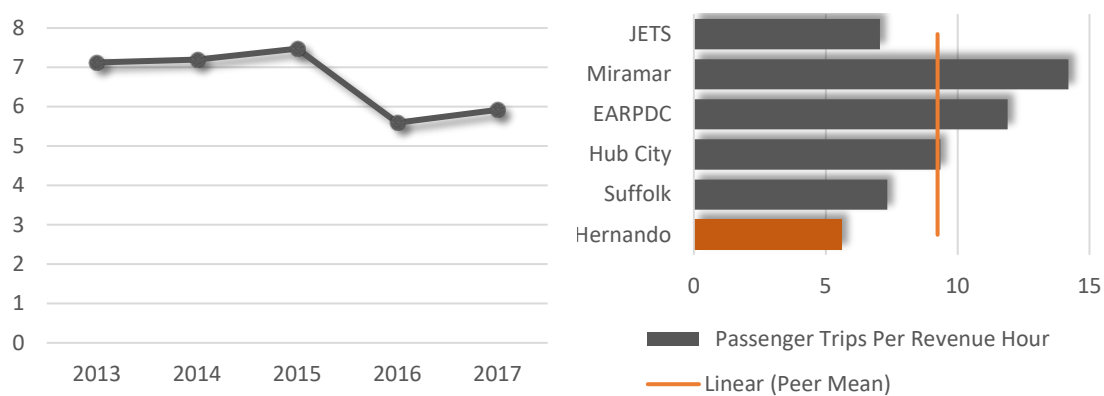
Vehicles Operated During Maximum Service



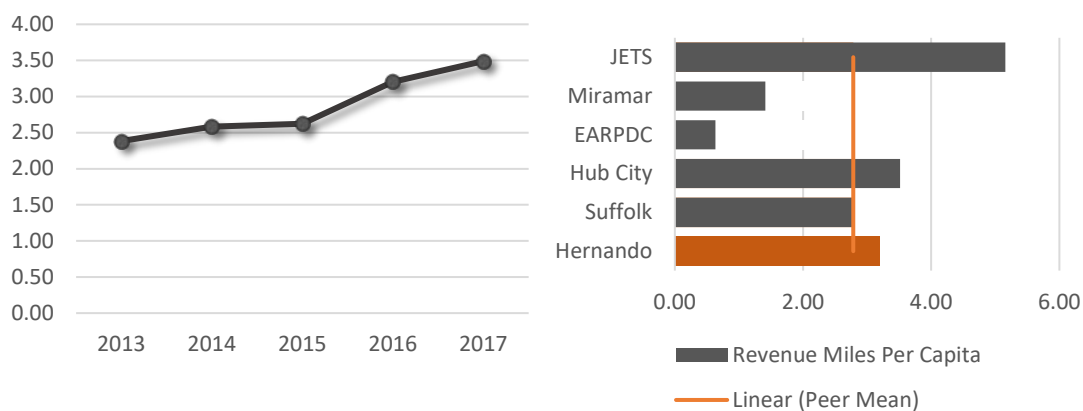
Passenger Trips per Capita



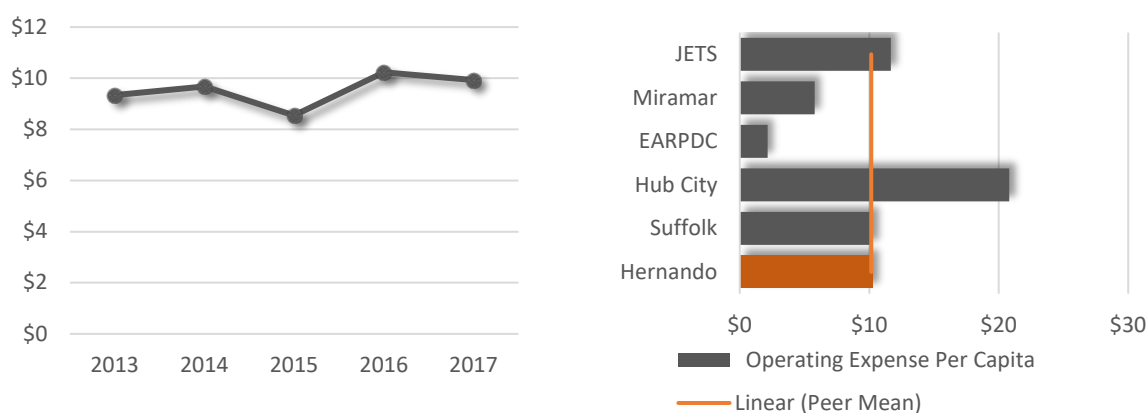
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour



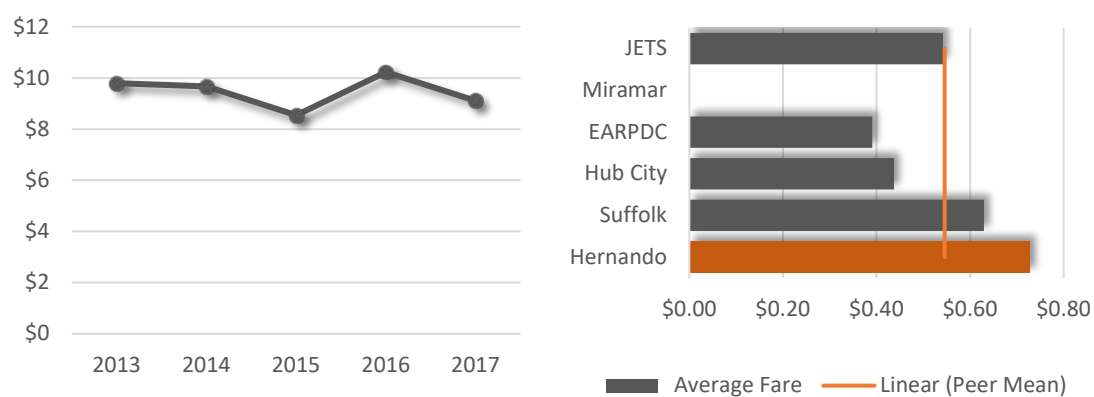
Revenue Miles Per Capita

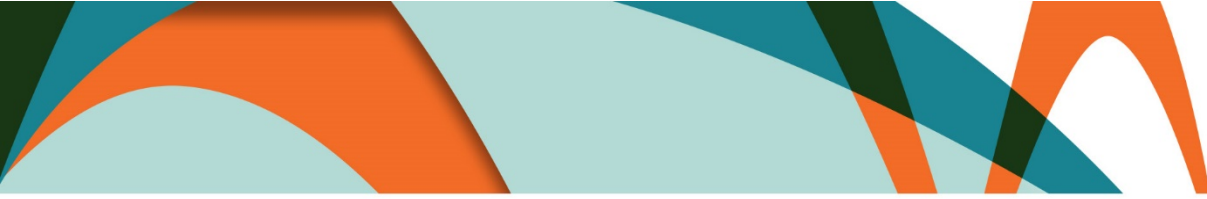


Operating Expense per Capita



Operating Expense per Passenger Trip





APPENDIX C: Public Involvement Materials

Hernando County 10-Year Transit Development Plan

Public Involvement Plan

Final

March 2019

Prepared for



Prepared by



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in collaboration with TheBus, the fixed-route bus transit service in Hernando County, is preparing its 10-year Transit Development Plan (TDP), which will provide a guide for development of the transit system over the next 10 years. As required by State statute every five years, this is a major update to its TDP. This update covers FY 2020 through 2029.

This Public Involvement Plan (PIP) provides an overview of the public outreach activities that will be undertaken as part of the TDP process. The PIP is designed to comply with TDP State statutory requirements and is consistent with the Hernando/Citrus MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP).

Rule 14-73.001 requires that the TDP preparation include the following activities:

- A PIP approved by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or the local MPO's PPP, approved by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).
- Description of the process used, and the public involvement activities undertaken.
- Solicitation of comments from FDOT, the MPO, and the regional Workforce Development Board (i.e., CareerSource Pasco Hernando) on the mission, goals, objectives, alternatives, and 10-year implementation program.
- Notification of all public meetings at which the TDP is presented to or discussed with FDOT, the MPO, and the regional Workforce Development Board.

Relevant requirements from the overall public participation strategy set out in the Hernando/Citrus MPO's PPP include for the MPO, to the maximum extent possible, to (1) hold public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times, (2) employ visualization techniques to describe transportation plans and programs, and (3) make public information available in an electronically-accessible format, such as the MPO's website, as appropriate, to afford reasonable opportunities for consideration of public comment and opinion.

In addition, Hernando County, as a recipient of federal and state funding, is required to adhere to federal non-discrimination regulations, including those outlined in Title VI. Hernando County has developed and maintains a Title VI Plan, outlining the policies, procedures, services, and steps, that will guide the public involvement activities outlined in this PIP to ensure inclusive and representative participation, including those with disabilities, limited English proficiency (LEP), and/or other factors that may limit their participation. By reference, this PIP integrates the policies and procedures into the programs, activities, and services of this PIP.

TDP PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

The public involvement process for the development of the TDP seeks TheBus user and non-user public input on transit needs, priorities, and implementation strategies to enhance public transportation in Hernando County. As part of an effort to use the TDP process to improve services of TheBus, this outreach effort will ensure that a broad range of groups is consulted as part of the process, including passengers, major employers, human service providers, bus operators, and the public.

Key Objectives

The objectives of the TDP PIP include the following:

- To develop a multi-faceted communication model that will keep the public and all stakeholder groups informed about the status of the project.
- To clearly define the TDP purpose and objectives early in the process.
- To identify and document the concerns, issues, and needs of key stakeholders.
- To provide stakeholders with baseline information about the current state of TheBus and keep them fully informed throughout the study.
- To encourage participation of all stakeholder groups within the project area while paying special attention to underserved communities.
- To provide frequent opportunities and a consistent access point for community input.
- To identify tools to gather information from stakeholders who cannot participate in meetings, such as via email, online surveys, social networking tools, etc.
- To respond to community questions and comments when requested and provide contact information.

Phases of Outreach

The approach to this TDP's outreach consists of 2 phases:

- *Phase I* – During this phase, the TDP Project Team will conduct outreach to the community to seek public input on transit needs, including service and capital/infrastructure needs for the next 10-years. Stakeholder interviews, grassroots outreach, online surveys, and email/social media/website communication will be part of this phase.
- *Phase II* – Following extensive evaluation of the input received and development of recommendations, additional outreach, including surveys and public workshops will occur to seek public input on the recommendations, including service, priorities, and implementation strategies to enhance public transportation in Hernando County.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Numerous public involvement techniques were selected for inclusion in the PIP to ensure the active participation of the community. Table 1-1 presents the types of activities that will be completed for the TDP and the tools associated with each type of activity.

Table 0
TDP Public Involvement Activities

Public Involvement Activity		TDP PIP
Project Review/Coordination Calls/Meetings		✓
Website Outreach and Communications		✓
Social Media Networking and Email Outreach		✓
Collateral Materials and Visual Aids	Fact sheets & informational items	✓
	Visual aids	✓
Community Engagement, Review & Comment	Public workshops	✓
	Stakeholder interviews	✓
	Grassroots outreach	✓
	Paper and Online surveys	✓
	Email, mail, in person, and telephone comments	✓
Agency Coordination	Regional coordination	✓
	State, regional, and local officials	✓

The remainder of this section summarizes these activities in detail, including composition of the various committees and workshops and audiences for each of the activities along with an anticipated timeline for completion by month.

Efforts will also be made to gather input from individuals with limited English proficiency in Hernando County. To the extent possible, the project team will make Spanish-speaking individuals available to assist with public outreach events and/or provide pertinent materials such as surveys and workshop flyers in Spanish.

Project Kick-off Meeting

A kickoff meeting for the project was held to discuss the project scope, project schedule, milestones, and deliverables. The following items were key topics on the agenda:

- Discuss TDP goals and objectives – what this plan should achieve.
- Discuss project coordination/review strategies and overall schedule.
- Discuss timeline and strategy for public involvement efforts.

During this meeting, the Project Team clarified the high-level objectives for the TDP and how they can fit in with other planning efforts in Hernando County. Additionally, key timelines, particularly for near-

term anticipated completion dates, were discussed and clarified, and a substantial discussion took place regarding the composition and timeline for the public involvement activities that are set to take place over the succeeding months.

Project Review/Coordination Meetings

In addition to the kickoff meeting, two project coordination meetings with the MPO staff and any other agency as invited by MPO staff also are scheduled for the duration of the TDP planning process. These meetings would be conducted via telephone to provide an update on the project progress and discuss any deliverables/input on the TDP.

Conduct Stakeholder Interviews

The Project Team will conduct 15 stakeholder interviews that involve the Hernando/Citrus MPO and representatives of key public and private sector organizations to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the current public transportation system and the necessary future service enhancements to serve the community.

This process is key to the public involvement effort to enhance the understanding of those who rely on the system to get to and from work or conduct important trips. These interviews will be formal structured interviews with questions prepared by the Consultant to facilitate conversation and generate data about the TheBus system. These interviews will be conducted over the phone.

Public Input Surveys

The Project Team will conduct two surveys of the public (mostly targeting non-riders) to obtain information related to attitudes, latent demand, and general support of the community related to public transit services and to augment findings of the on-board survey.

The first survey will be conducted prior to development of potential service alternatives for the TDP, and the second will be developed as part of the alternatives refinement and prioritization process. The surveys will be available online, through social media, and in hard copy formats. Access to the online versions will be provided via links on the MPO website, TheBus website, Facebook, and other online platforms as available. A tablet-based and/or hard copy format will be provided at workshops, grassroots events, bus pass outlets, and partnering agencies. Participants in the public workshops will be encouraged to complete the surveys via tablets to improve the ease and accuracy of data collection and reporting.

Email-blasts also will be used to promote the online survey efforts. In addition, stakeholders participating in stakeholder interviews/discussions will be requested to distribute the survey links and

promote the availability of the online surveys. Attendees at other activities, the discussion group and Project Review Team members will be asked to distribute the links through their places of business, and TheBus and MPO staff will distribute the links/hard copies of the surveys at other locations for distribution.

Grassroots Outreach

MPO/TheBus staff will coordinate and conduct grassroots outreach efforts for at least two events/meetings in Hernando County. These will be held as standalone events or piggy-backing on already-planned community events such as farmer's markets or festivals or at locations where the public gathers, such as shopping malls, or at transit hubs to obtain input from the public about the TDP update process. The Project Team will provide display boards and surveys to MPO staff for grassroots events.

Open House Public Workshops

The Project Team will facilitate two open-house style public workshops as part of the TDP outreach process. These will be held as standalone events, piggy-backing on already-planned community events such as farmer's markets or festivals or at locations where the public gathers, such as shopping malls, or at transit hubs to obtain input from the public about the TDP update process.

It is anticipated that both workshops will be held later in the project to collect input on prioritizing potential transit service and capital alternatives/improvements. These workshops will include displays and interactive information exchange, public opinion surveys (tablet and/or hard copy), and enlistment for social media engagement. The events will be designed to capture information from seasonal and permanent residents about community values, needs, and priorities.

Event locations will be selected to ensure geographic coverage and expanded citizen participation. The findings and themes collected during the public open houses will be summarized for use in subsequent parts of TDP planning.

Review Comments and Suggestions

The Project Team will review any available comments and suggestions collected by TheBus or MPO staff from the Hernando County citizens (riders and non-riders) regarding existing and future transit services in the county for consideration in the TDP. The major themes and topics of this feedback will be summarized as part of the TDP's public outreach.

Social Media Outreach

The Project Team will develop content for social media such as Facebook and/or Twitter throughout the TDP process. After consultation with MPO staff, the content will be provided to TheBus staff for posting on Hernando County's Facebook and/or Twitter account(s).

Web and Email Outreach

The Project Team will coordinate with the MPO and TheBus staff on posting material on web and social media. TheBus website will be used as a platform to distribute the public outreach information described, including fliers, links to surveys, information about public workshops and other project meetings, project materials as appropriate, and contact information so the public can engage directly with agency staff or the Project Team.

Additionally, the Project Team will facilitate the dissemination of emails to key contacts within the community, as provided by the MPO staff, to provide information and updates similar to that available on the TDP webpage and social media networks. The Project Team will coordinate with TheBus and develop content for two e-mail blasts:

- At project initiation/beginning of public outreach
- To encourage participation in online survey/outreach events

TDP Presentations

One presentation of the TDP will be conducted at publicly-advertised meetings after the Draft has been reviewed by the MPO and TheBus. These presentations will be provided to the MPO and its committees, as directed by TheBus staff.

Other Outreach Efforts

As part of the public outreach effort, fliers, fact sheets, and other materials will be developed as public involvement tools to distribute information about public outreach activities and upcoming public workshops, facilitate education about TheBus system during outreach events, and provide participants with a means for asking questions. Potential public involvement tools and resources include the following:

- *Fact sheets* will include information to distribute to the public at outreach events and public workshops and will offer an overview of the TDP and TheBus and promote the value and

importance of public involvement. They also will direct and encourage the public to reach out to TheBus staff to share questions and concerns.

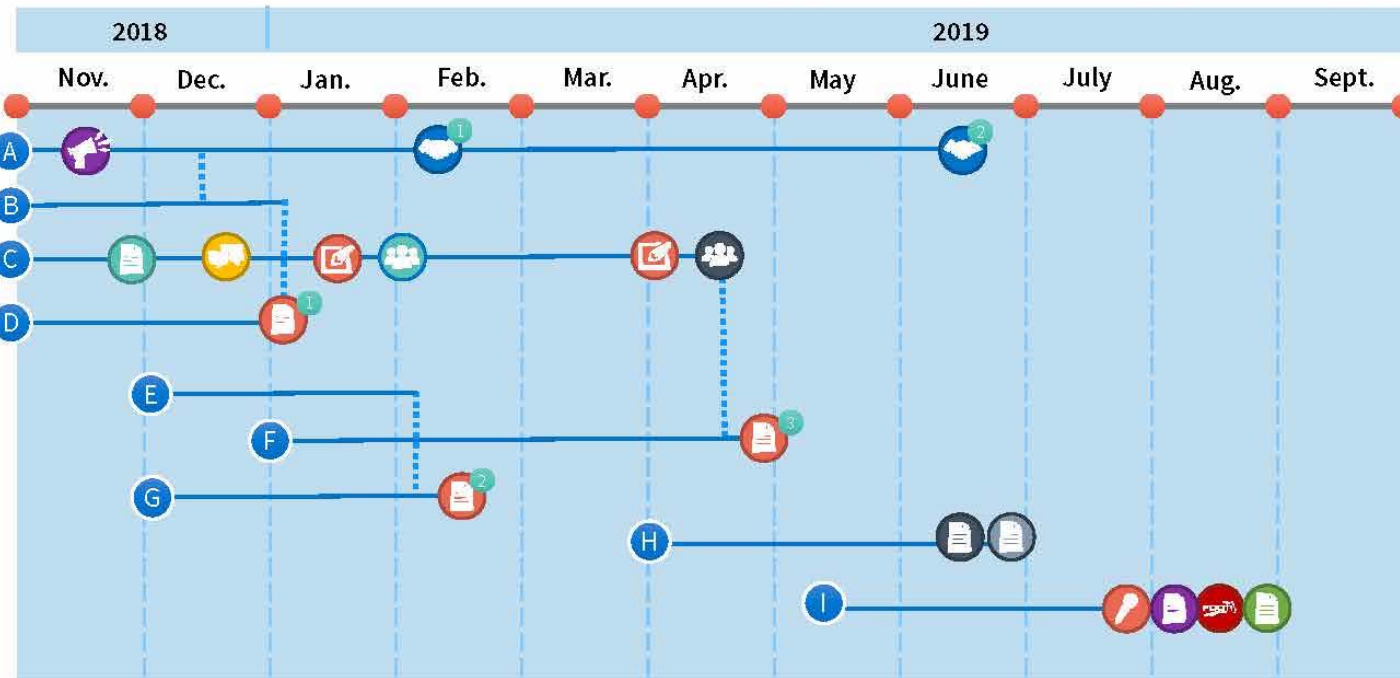
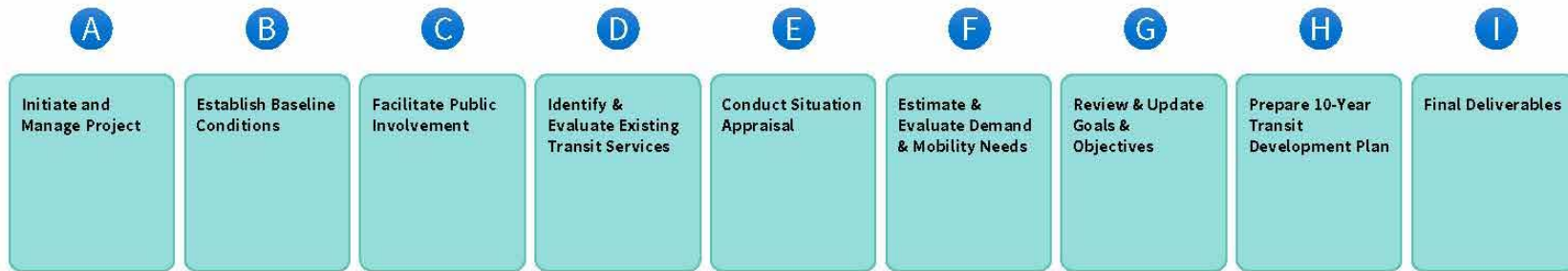
- *Media releases* will be prepared and provided to the County Public Information Office for distribution as appropriate.
- *Fliers* will be developed to share information with the public, provide TDP updates, and educate the public on the public involvement process and the value of their participation. Fliers will direct the public to visit the TDP website and the TheBus Facebook/Twitter accounts to stay involved with and informed about the development of the TDP.
- *Project presentations* that are user-friendly and graphical will be developed to support the communication and adoption of the TDP and will be available for use by TheBus staff beyond the adoption of the TDP.
- *Presentation boards* will include exhibits such as service and demographic maps, plan proposals, and more at public workshops.

Table 2
Tentative Public Outreach Schedule

Event	Anticipated Date
Project Coordination/Review Meetings	February 2019–June 2019
Stakeholder Interviews	January 2019
Grassroots Outreach	February 2019
Phase I–Public Input Survey	January–February 2019
Phase II–Public Input Survey	April–May 2019
Open House Public Workshops	April 2019
Social Media Outreach	January–May 2019
Web/Email Outreach	January–May 2019
Project Presentations	June 2019

TDP Project Schedule

Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update





WANTS YOUR INPUT!

Hernando County 10-Year Transit Development Plan

Public Transit Workshops

The Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Hernando County Transit (TheBus) want your input! Please stop by any time during the following two public workshops and let us know how you think Hernando County Transit should grow!

Public Workshop #1

Thursday, April 18, 2019 (10 AM - 12 PM)

Brooksville City Hall — Council Chambers

201 Howell Avenue

Brooksville

FL 34601

(Bus Route: Purple)

Public Workshop #2

Thursday, April 18, 2019 (2 PM - 4 PM)

Spring Hill Library

9220 Spring Hill Drive

Spring Hill

FL 34608

(Bus Route: Green)

Can't attend?

Take the on-line survey:

Go to : <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HernandoTDPPrioritiesSurvey> or Scan ➡



**If needed, transportation can be provided for workshop attendees immediately following the workshop, contact TheBus at (352) 754-4444.*



If you are unable to attend one of the workshops, written comments will be accepted through May 31, 2019, and may be sent to:

Hernando/Citrus MPO

1661 Blaise Drive

Brooksville

FL 34601

352-754-4082

CRiecss@co.hernando.fl.us

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Any person requiring special accommodations to attend or participate, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact The Bus within at least three (3) business days before the workshops at (352) 754-4444.

For additional route and schedule information, please contact TheBus at (352) 754-4444) or www.hernandocounty.us/departments/departments-n-z/transit-thebus





NECESITA TU AYUDA!

Plan de Desarrollo de Transito de 10 Años de Hernando County Talleres de Transporte Publico

Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) y Hernando County Transit (TheBus) están planificando para su futuro, y necesitan tu ayuda! Por favor atender cualquiera de los dos talleres públicos y háganos saber como cree usted que deberá crecer Hernando County Transit!

Taller Publico #1

Jueves, Abril 18, 2019 (10 AM - 12 PM)

Brooksville City Hall — Council Chambers

201 Howell Avenue

Brooksville

FL 34601

(Ruta de Autobús: Purple)

Taller Publico #2

Jueves, Abril 18, 2019 (2 PM - 4 PM)

Spring Hill Library

9220 Spring Hill Drive

Spring Hill

FL 34608

(Ruta de Autobús: Green)

¿No Puede Asistir?

Tome la Encuesta en Linea:

Visite la pagina de web: [https://](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HernandoCountyTransit2019)

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HernandoCountyTransit2019)

[HernandoCountyTransit2019](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HernandoCountyTransit2019) o Escanear ➡



**Si es necesario, se puede proporcionar transporte a los asistentes al taller inmediatamente después del taller. Comuníquese con TheBus al (352) 754-4444 para hacer los arreglos.*



Si no puede asistir a uno de los talleres, puede enviar sus comentarios por escrito antes del 31 de Mayo del 2019 a esta dirección:

Hernando/Citrus MPO

1661 Blaise Drive

Brooksville

FL 34601

352-754-4082

CRiecsc@co.hernando.fl.us

ACOMODACIONES ESPECIALES

Cualquier persona que necesite alojamientos especiales para asistir o participar, de conformidad con el Acta de Americanos con Discapacidades, debe ponerse en contacto con TheBus al menos tres (3) días hábiles antes del taller llamando al (352) 754-4444.

Para obtener información adicional sobre las rutas y horarios de TheBus, por favor contactar a TheBus al (352) 754-4444 o visite la pagina de web:

www.hernandocounty.us/departments/departments-n-z/transit-thebus





HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSIT (TheBus) SURVEY

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

(1) Have you ever used public transportation outside of Hernando County?

☐	Yes
☐	No

(2) Have you used TheBus, Hernando County's transit service?

☐	Yes
☐	No

(3) What is your level of satisfaction with the transit system?

☐	Very satisfied
☐	Satisfied
☐	Somewhat satisfied
☐	Not satisfied

(4) If you currently use TheBus, how often do you use it?

☐	Everyday
☐	3-4 days per week
☐	1-2 days per week
☐	A few times per month

(5) For what purpose do you use the transit system? Check all that apply:

☐	Work (including volunteer work)
☐	Shopping
☐	Recreation
☐	School
☐	Doctor appointments/medical

(6) Do you think that \$3.00 for a One-Day Pass (unlimited rides for one day) would benefit riders?

☐	Yes
☐	No

(7) What way would you prefer to purchase bus fares?

☐	Using the Internet
☐	At Pasco-Hernando State College
☐	Using my phone or phone app
☐	At the library
☐	At Transit Operations Facility

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

☐	Yes
☐	No

(9) If you answered YES to question 8, select the TOP THREE transit improvements you would most like to see.

☐	More frequent bus service
☐	Express service, where? _____
☐	Later service
☐	Increased coverage area, where? _____
☐	Weekend service
☐	More benches and shelters
☐	Sidewalk connections to bus stops
☐	Need for transfer station
☐	Other, specify _____

(10) What ONE technology improvement would you like to see?

☐	Bus location tracking app
☐	Next bus information at major bus stops
☐	Mobile fare payment options
☐	Communications of alerts, service changes, detours

(11) Have you ever paid to use one of the following services rather than TheBus?

☐	Taxi	☐	Social services transport (TD)
☐	Uber/Lyft	☐	Medical transportation

(12) If you chose one from the aforementioned list, why?

☐	Cost
☐	My destination is outside TheBus service area
☐	Convenience/Time

(13) Your age is...

☐	Under 18	☐	41 to 60 years
☐	18 to 24 years	☐	Over 61 years
☐	25 to 40 years		

(14) What is the range of your total household income for 2018?

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

Please continue survey on the other side of this page.

(15) Please rate how important each of the following aspects are to you.

		Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	No Opinion
Service	a. Days of service	☐	☐	☐	☐
	b. Frequency (how often buses run)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	c. Hours of service	☐	☐	☐	☐
Location	d. Convenience of routes (where buses go)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	e. Location of bus stops	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time	f. Dependability of buses (on time)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	g. Travel time on bus	☐	☐	☐	☐
\$	h. Cost of riding the bus	☐	☐	☐	☐
Ease	i. Accessibility of bus passes (ease of purchase)	☐	☐	☐	☐
	j. Availability of bus route information	☐	☐	☐	☐
	k. User-friendliness of bus information	☐	☐	☐	☐
Comfort & Safety	l. Vehicle cleanliness and comfort	☐	☐	☐	☐
	m. Bus stop cleanliness and comfort	☐	☐	☐	☐
	n. Bus driver courtesy	☐	☐	☐	☐
	o. Safety/security on bus	☐	☐	☐	☐
	p. Safety/security at bus stops	☐	☐	☐	☐

Other Comments and Suggestions



THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!





Hernando County is conducting a public input survey for our 10-year Transit Development Plan (TDP). Please complete the following questions to help us understand how we can better meet the transit needs of Hernando County in the next 10 years!

1. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following potential service improvements.

Please see 2029 Transit Needs map to locate the proposed service improvements.

	Strongly Agree		Neutral		No Opinion
Improve Existing Services					
Saturday Service on Existing Routes	5	4	3	2	1
Extend Service Hours Until 9 PM	5	4	3	2	1
Add New Services					
Commuter Express on Suncoast Parkway (Peak-Hour Only)	5	4	3	2	1
East Hernando Connector on SR 50 (Peak-Hour Only)	5	4	3	2	1
Infrastructure/Technology Improvements					
Enhanced/Upgraded Bus Transfer Station	5	4	3	2	1
Park-and-Ride Lots	5	4	3	2	1
Real-Time Bus Information (Mobile App/Electronic Displays)	5	4	3	2	1
More Bus Stop Benches, Shelters, Lighting	5	4	3	2	1
More Sidewalk Connections to Bus Stops	5	4	3	2	1

4. How often do you use TheBus services?

_____ I have never used it
 _____ Once a month or less

_____ Once a week
 _____ More than once a week

If you have any comments, please use the space below and back of this page.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

2020-2029 HERNANDO MPO /TheBus TDP

PURPOSE OF INTERVIEW

- Working with Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization to develop 10-year transit development plan (TDP) for the TheBus that meet FDOT requirements for state funding eligibility.
- As part of the TDP process, meetings are held with members of the local business and political community to gauge their awareness of current public transit, as well as garner input as to need and viability of transit services in the county.
- The TDP also serves as an opportunity to discuss improvements that might be needed to the transit system and to discuss initiatives for future system growth.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A TDP is a strategic guide for public transportation development in the county.
- The TDP:
 - Evaluates existing services,
 - Reviews demographic information of riders and their travel behaviors,
 - Summarizes local community and transit policies and priorities,
 - Gauges public perception through accessible activities for the general public and interested parties,
 - Compares the local transit system or community to other similar systems, and
 - Reviews performance of the local system.
- It is a ten-year implementation plan which provides recommendations on:
 - How, where, when, and if new transit services should be introduced to the transit system, and,
 - Adjusting, removing, or improving aspects of the transit system that may not be adequately serving the public or that is not meeting performance measures.
- Finally, a ten-year financial plan is constructed as part of the TDP that:
 - Estimates costs of existing and new services, and,
 - Projects known and potential revenues.
- Although transit systems are required to submit a TDP to FDOT, TDPs can also be very useful as they provide a review of the current transit system, provide a forum for public input, recommendations for improvements, and outline the cost of improvements.
- TDPs are not budgets or CIPs and do not necessarily bind decision-makers to elements of the TDP. However, great effort is put into developing a comprehensive overview of the transit system and planning for the future needs of the general public that can:
 - Encourage residents, businesses, and government officials to support and advocate use of public transportation,
 - Use transit to improve/manage congestion in the local area
 - Promote sustainable and environmentally friendly transportation, and
 - Provide transportation options that improve overall quality of life of residents
- Candid discussions and continued participation from stakeholders in the transit development process allows:
 - Decision-makers to become more knowledgeable about the transit planning process and,

- o The County to construct and support a plan that not only has input from the local public, private and government sector, but helps foster consensus in the decision-making process (“everyone is on the same page”).

Interview Questions

1. Are you currently aware of Hernando County’s public transit system (TheBus) and its services?
2. Have you ever personally used TheBus? Why or why not?
3. Who do you believe uses the transit system? (Workers, Students, Elderly, Tourists/Visitors)
4. What groups of travelers seem to experience the most difficult transportation conditions (low-income, elderly, youth, commuters, etc.)? Why?
5. What type of transit services would you like to see more of in Hernando County? (More frequent bus service, Express Bus/Regional Connections, Increased Weekend Service, Early/Late Evening Service)
6. Is there a need for more service in core areas currently served by TheBus in Hernando County? Is there a need for transit service in other areas in Hernando County?
7. What do you think are the most significant issues facing transit users?
8. What are reasonable passenger fares for transit service? (please specify per trip or other)
9. Do you believe there is a congestion problem in Hernando County? (If yes, go to the next question, if no skip to question 11)
10. Do you believe that public transportation can relieve congestion in Hernando County? If so, are there specific areas that transit can play in alleviating this problem?
11. What are the major destinations/key locations within your community that people need to travel to?

12. What are the major destinations outside of your community where people are traveling to, from your area?
13. Is more regional transportation needed to connect Hernando County with surrounding areas (Pasco, Sumter, Citrus, Hillsborough, Polk, and Pinellas counties)?
14. What additional steps do you feel should be taken to increase the use of public transit in Hernando County?
15. Are you willing to pay additional local taxes for an expanded transit system?
16. What types of local funding sources should be used to increase transit service in the future? (i.e. private partnerships, advertising revenues, fare increases, ad valorem tax, sales tax, gas tax). Would you be interested in supporting a county tax or fee for transportation improvements, including transit, bicycle and sidewalk improvements.
17. Are there other transportation problems in the county (e.g. safe pedestrian and bicycle corridors)? If yes, please describe the type(s) of problems and any specific locations affected.



Fact Sheet

What is TheBus?

Hernando County Transit (TheBus) provides fixed-route bus transit service in Hernando County. The services includes 4 routes serving Brooksville and Spring Hill areas and connecting to Pasco County on US 19.

Most routes operate 6 am–7 pm on weekdays with 60-minute frequency. The regular cash fare is \$1.25, with discounts offered for students, children, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and Medicare card holders. Services are also available for persons unable to access transit because of a disability or distance from a route.

What is Hernando County TDP?

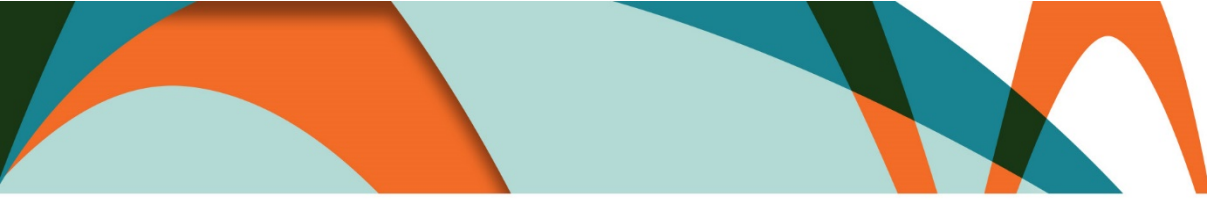
A Transit Development Plan (TDP) is being developed by the Hernando County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and TheBus to serve as a strategic guide for public transportation in Hernando County from 2020 to 2029. It will represent Hernando County's vision to promote transit growth and improvement over the next decade.

Why Do We Need Your Input?

Public participation is an important part of developing the TDP, and numerous public outreach activities will support the plan, including public workshops, online surveys, stakeholder interviews, grassroots outreach, and social media/web/email outreach. Your participation and input are needed so we can learn more about the public transportation needs and issues in Hernando County and the region.

Scan & Take Survey!

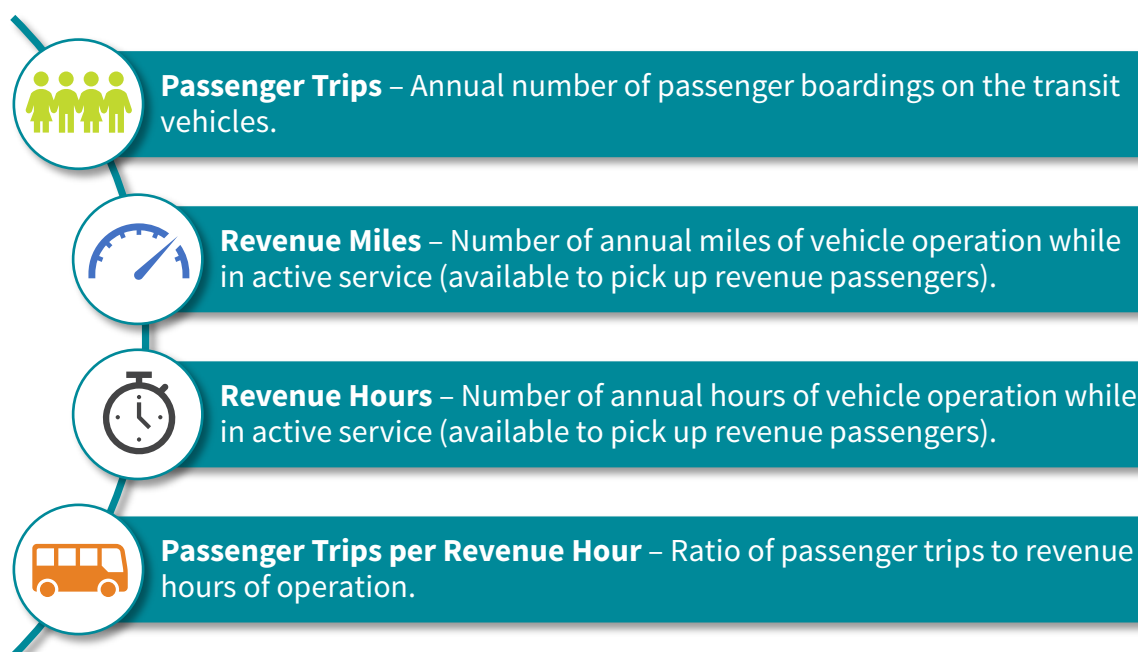




APPENDIX D: Performance Monitoring Program

TheBus Performance Monitoring Program

Once the proposed transit services are implemented, the following performance indicators and measures should be monitored by TheBus at least on a quarterly basis (in addition to any monitoring processes currently in place) for its fixed-route services as part of the recommended performance-monitoring program:



However, as new fixed-route-type services typically take up to three years to become established and productive, the performance data up to that point should be reviewed and interpreted cautiously. Although adjustments/modifications are encouraged, outright discontinuations based on performance monitoring data alone are discouraged.