October 2024

Hernando County 2025-2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP)

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CHAPTER 1
BASELINE CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

Introduction

Developing a Transit Development Plan (TDP) is an important process for any transit agency seeking to improve and expand their transit services. A TDP serves as a blueprint for the transit agency, outlining the short-term and long-term goals, objectives, and strategies to improve transit services and meet the changing needs of the communities they serve. However, a successful TDP is not just about designing better transit services or improving infrastructure. It must also consider the diverse needs and characteristics of the people who use the transit system. This section outlines the existing and projected demographic, economic, and commuting patterns of Hernando County to assess current and likely conditions, and how that may impact current and future public transportation services.

Baseline Conditions Assessment

The Hernando County 2025-34 Transit Development Plan (TDP), leverages a comprehensive array of demographic data, including insights from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) and its Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, and population projections from the University of Florida's Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR). Further, this section includes an evaluation of existing transit service, infrastructure, performance metrics, and local and regional plans. Collectively, the Technical Memorandum establishes the basis for identifying areas of improvement and making informed, strategic recommendations for future transit development.

The Baseline Conditions Assessment in the Hernando County TDP provides a comprehensive analysis of the current demographic and transit landscape. This assessment is critical in understanding the foundational elements that will inform future transit planning and development. It includes an in-depth examination of demographic data, existing transit infrastructure, services, and usage patterns. This analysis sets the stage for developing responsive and sustainable transit solutions tailored to the county's evolving needs.

Demographic Patterns

Understanding Hernando County's demographic landscape is crucial for effective transit planning. This section not only informs about key population characteristics and socio-economic patterns

but also instructs on the importance of these demographics in guiding the Hernando County Transit Division. Through a detailed analysis, it utilizes maps, tables, and charts to depict vital data points. The graphics are carefully arranged to create a narrative that transitions from broad population and housing trends to specific transit markets, such as age distribution, economic conditions, employment density, and vehicle ownership. By highlighting geographic data on major activity centers, trip generators, and populations with unique needs, this visual analysis forms a foundation for identifying current and future transit demands. This comprehensive approach enables targeted service delivery and efficient resource allocation, ultimately enhancing accessibility and connectivity for all residents of Hernando County.

Total Population

Over the last decade, Hernando County has experienced notable changes in population, as shown in Table 1-1 and Figure 1-1. The total population has grown steadily, reflecting broader demographic shifts within the county.

Table 1-1. Population Trends 2010 to 2022

Year	Total Population
2010	170,337
2011	172,079
2012	172,784
2013	173,119
2014	173,792
2015	174,809
2016	176,797
2017	179,144
2018	182,696
2019	186,313
2020	190,700
2021	192,128
2022	196,621

Figure 1-1: Population Trends 2010 to 2022
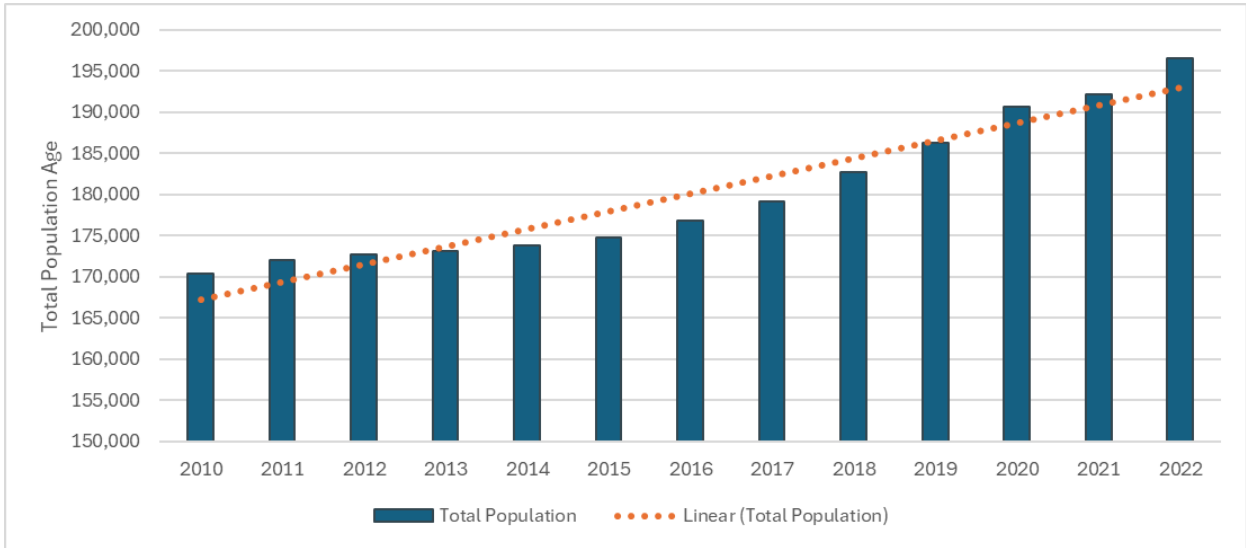
The population distribution across Hernando County varies widely. Map 1-1 illustrates this by showing the total population for each block group in the county. This map shows where residents are located and highlights the uneven distribution of the county's residents. This pattern is essential for aligning routes with areas of demand.

Map 1-1. Total Population
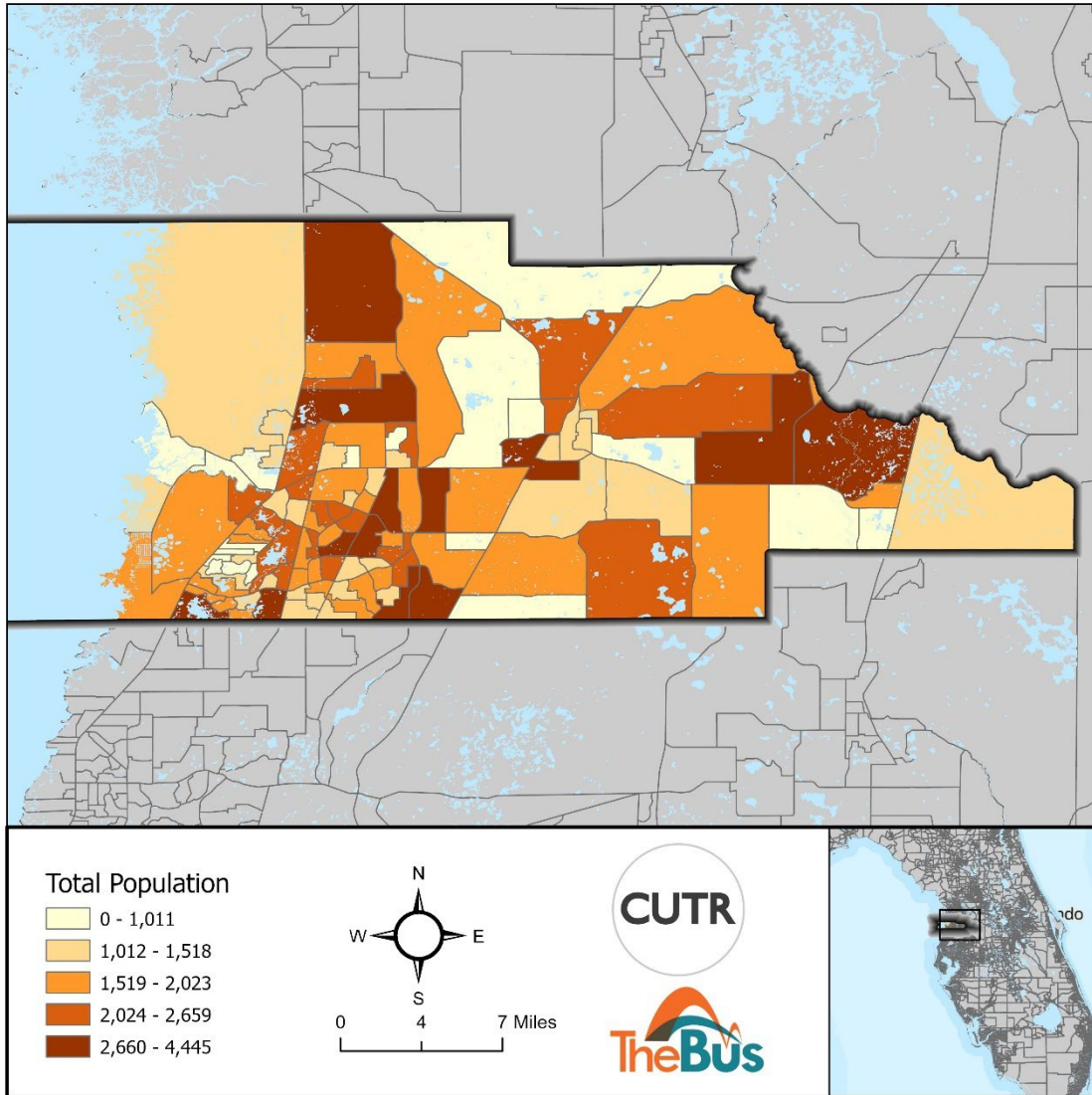
Total Households

Understanding the total number of households in Hernando County is a fundamental yet crucial aspect of Hernando's demographic profile. Households represent the basic units of transit

demand, providing insight into the population segments that may rely on public transportation. This metric helps planners gauge potential ridership and tailor transit services to meet the needs of residents.

Hernando County has 79,169 households, with an average size of 2.46 individuals. Of these households, 25.4 percent include children under 18, and 56.3 percent have individuals aged 60 and over. These demographics highlight diverse transit needs, from daily commuting for working adults to reliable services for elderly residents who may depend on public transportation. The household

Map 1-2. Total Households by Census Block Group

Total Households
- 0 - 417
- 418 - 633
- 634 - 788
- 789 - 1,056
- 1,057 - 1,396

CUTR

TheBus
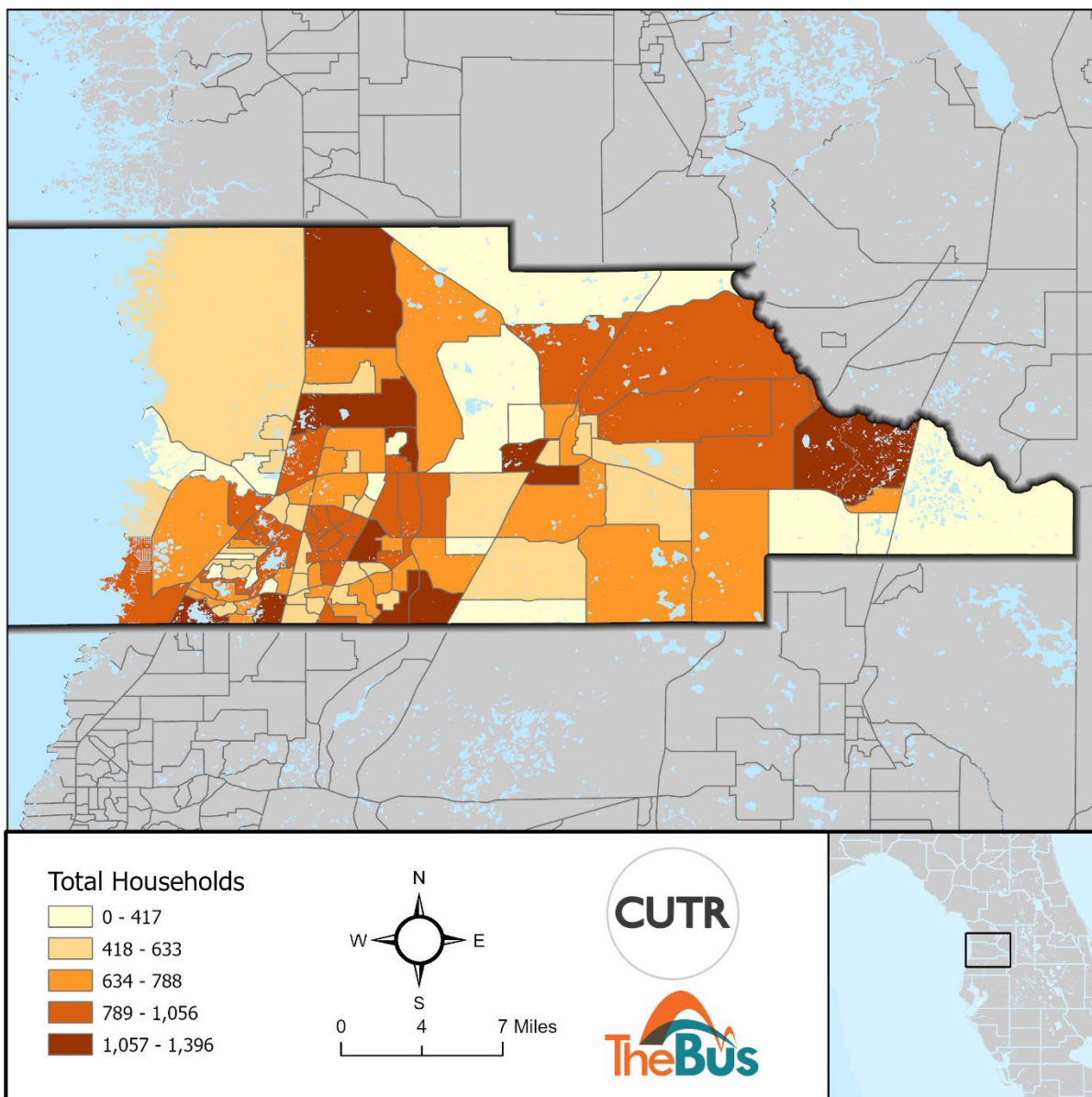
distribution throughout the county, illustrated in Map 1-2, further defines the transit markets within Hernando County's service area.

Transit Markets

Examining the demographic characteristics of population segments more likely to use public transit refines the analysis. Optimizing public transportation in Hernando County requires analyzing various demographic and socioeconomic factors that influence transit demand and usage patterns. This section reviews metrics such as population density, household density, age distribution, vehicle ownership, poverty levels, commute times, and employment density to identify areas where transit services are most needed. These insights help tailor solutions to enhance accessibility and efficiency, ensuring the transit system meets residents' needs. Comprehensive analysis enables the development of strategies that improve service delivery and promote sustainable transit development in the region.

Population Density

Population density is crucial for transit planning, as it directly impacts the feasibility and efficiency of public transportation. Higher population densities typically indicate greater potential demand for transit. By focusing resources on high-density areas, the Hernando County Transit Division can improve service effectiveness and better meet residents' needs. Map 1-3, depicting persons per square mile, provides insights into areas with higher potential support for public transit demand.

Map 1-3. Population Density by Census Block Group

Population Density per SQ. Mile

- 18 - 200
- 201 - 500
- 501 - 2,000
- 2,001 - 3,000
- 3,001 - 4,772

N
W — E
S

0   4   7 Miles

CUTR

TheBus
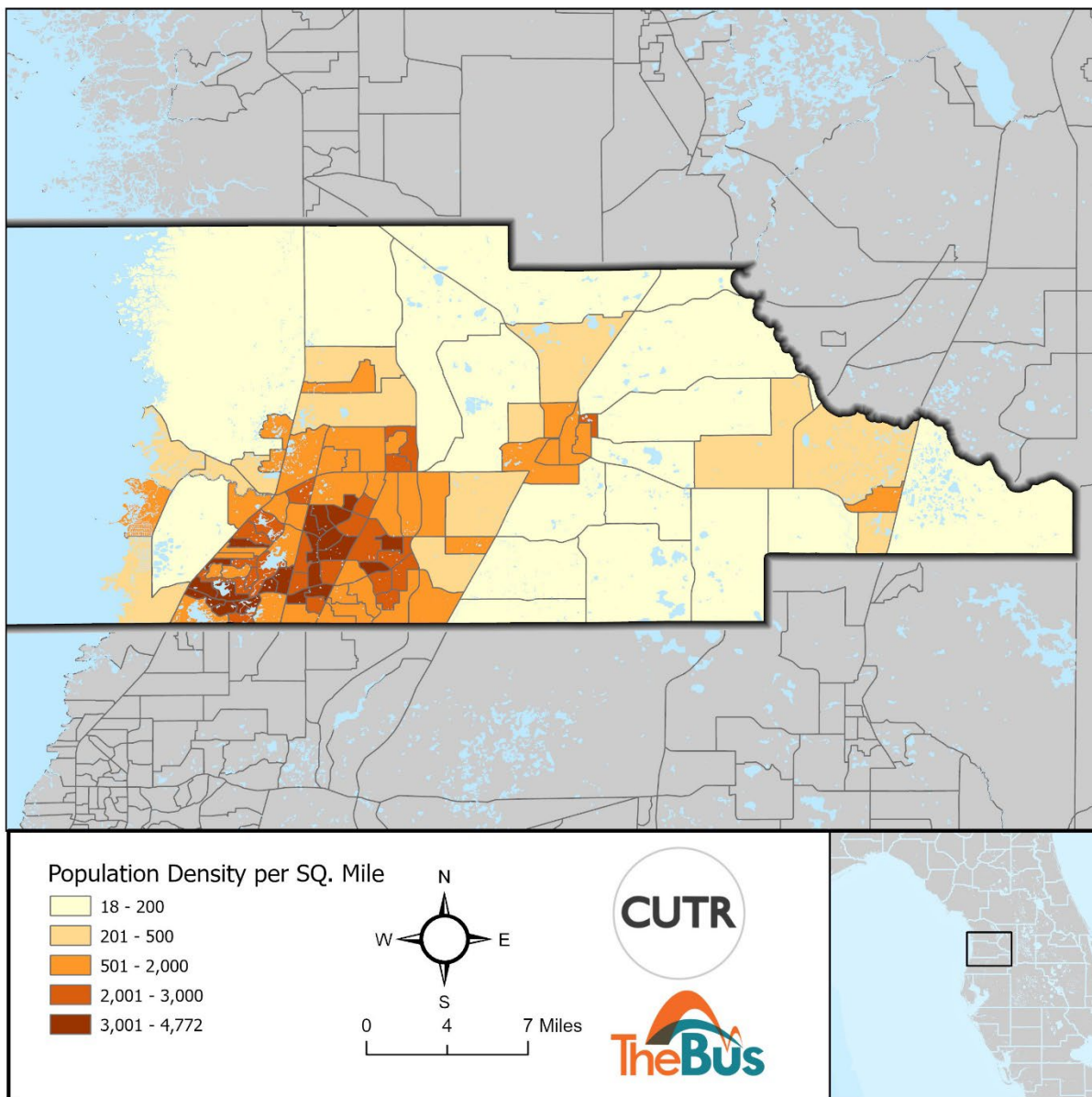
Household Density

Household density, which measures the number of households within a given area, is an important factor in determining transit demand. High household density often correlates with higher transit ridership, as more households in close proximity can benefit from shared transportation resources. Understanding household density helps in planning transit routes and services that are accessible and convenient for a large number of households, thereby enhancing overall transit utilization. Map 1-4 depicts the household density pattern for Hernando County.

Map 1-4. Household Density by Census Block Group

Households Per Square Mile

- 0 - 150
- 151 - 500
- 501 - 1,000
- 1,001 - 1,500
- 1,501 - 2,153
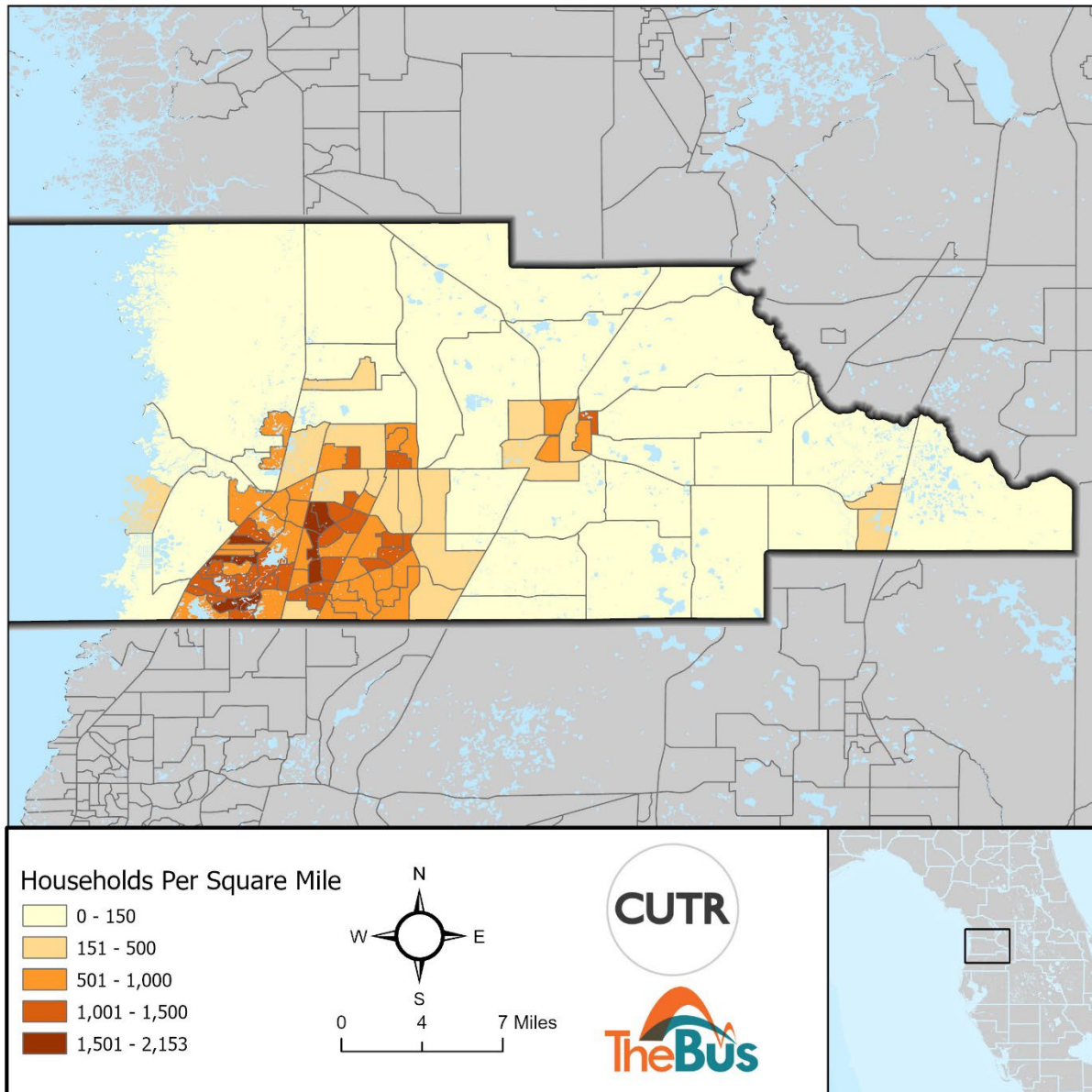
Population Over Age 60

Adults aged 60 and over represent a significant market when designing transit services because they often have specific transportation needs. They may rely heavily on public transit if they cannot drive or prefer not to. By focusing on areas with a higher concentration of older residents, transit services can be tailored to provide accessible, reliable, and convenient options that support their independence and quality of life.

Table 1-2 highlights the trend of the population aged 60 and over in Hernando County between 2017 and 2022. During this period, the population in this age group grew from 61,882 to 67,311. Despite this increase, the percentage of the population aged 60 and over remained relatively stable, fluctuating slightly between 34.2 percent and 34.8 percent.

Table 1-2. Population Over 60 Trend

Year	Total Population	Population Over 60	Percent Over 60
2017	179,144	61,882	34.5%
2018	182,696	63,500	34.8%
2019	186,313	64,698	34.7%
2020	190,700	65,653	34.4%
2021	192,128	65,662	34.2%
2022	196,621	67,311	34.2%

Figure 1-2 illustrates the trends in both the total number and the percentage of the population over 60 during this period. Despite the increase in the total population over 60, the percentage has remained consistent, indicating proportional growth in this demographic relative to the overall population.

Figure 1-2: Population Over Age 60
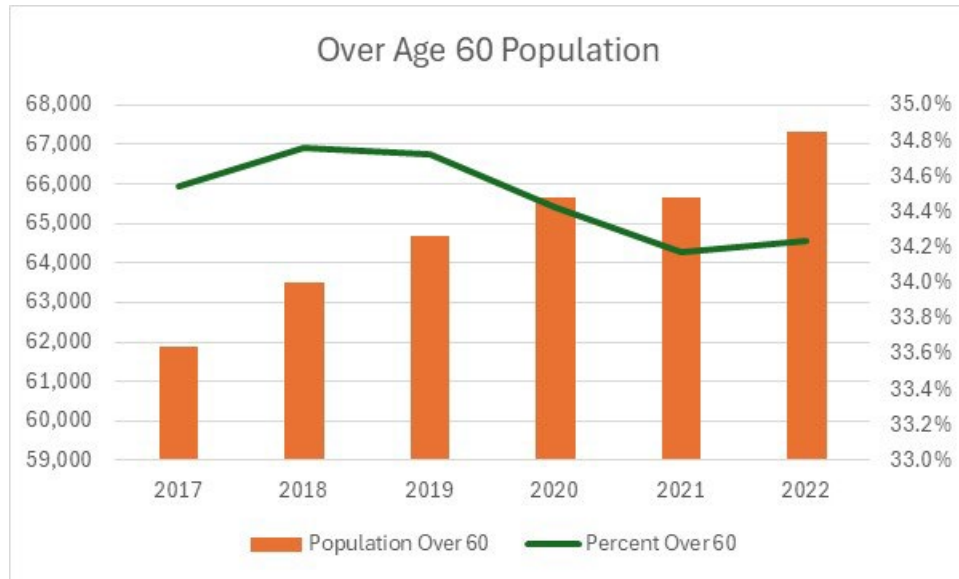
This consistent proportion of older residents underscores the need for transit services that cater to their specific needs. Map 1-5 highlights areas with a higher percentage of residents over age 60. By focusing on these areas, transit planners can ensure that older residents have access to reliable and efficient transportation options, enhancing their mobility and overall quality of life.

Map 1-5. Percent of Population Over Age 60 by Census Block Group

Percentage of the Population ages 60+

- 6% - 23%
- 24% - 31%
- 32% - 41%
- 42% - 57%
- 58% - 97%

CUTR

TheBus

0   4   7 Miles

2025-2034
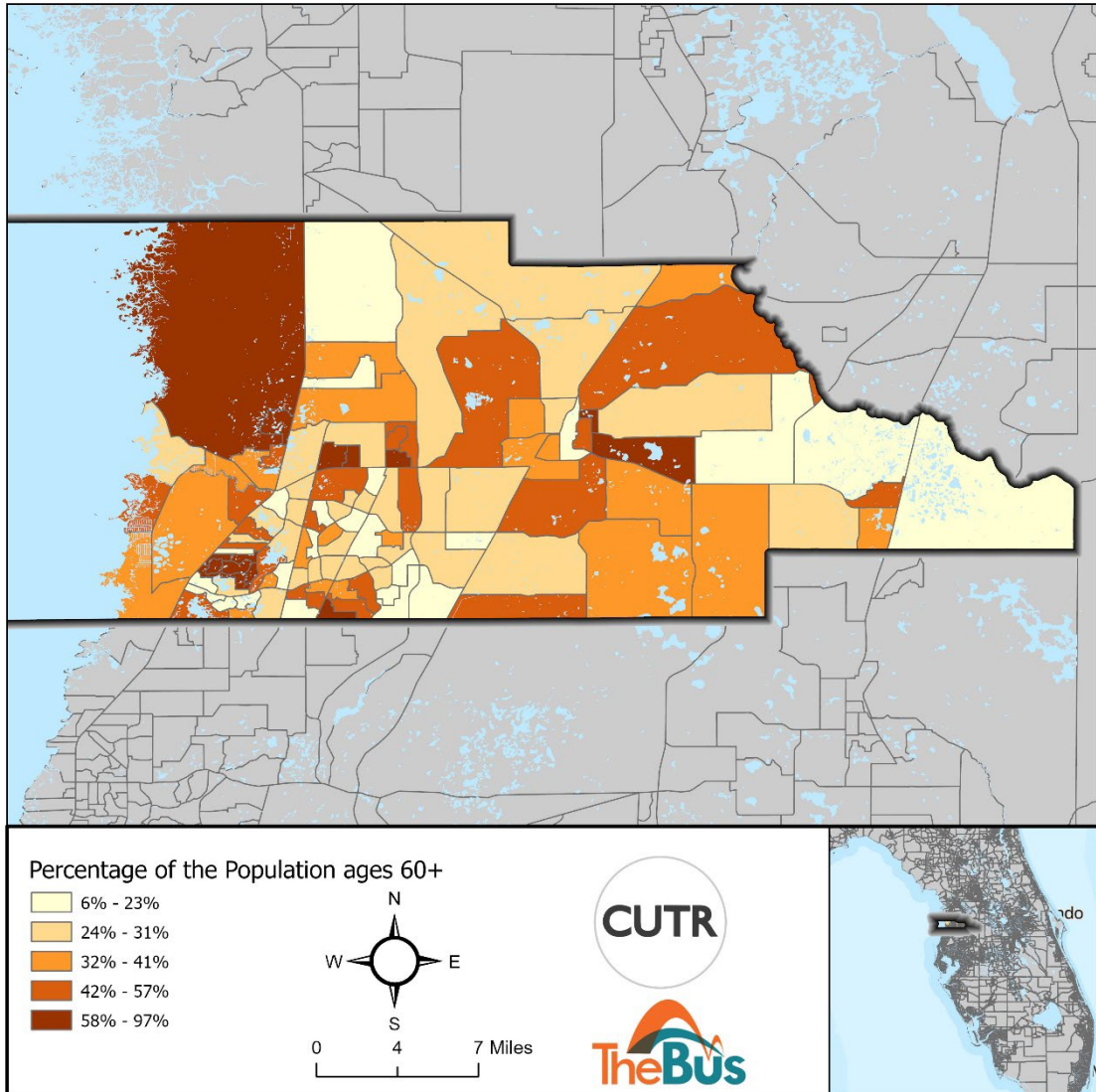
Population Under Age 18

The population under 18 years of age represents a critical transit market. When using public transportation, this group typically makes trips for commuting to schools, employment opportunities, extracurricular activities, and social engagements. Ensuring that transit routes are safe, reliable, and conveniently located in areas with a high concentration of young people can support their mobility needs and contribute to their overall well-being and development.

Table 1-3 shows the population trends from 2017 to 2022, with the total population in Hernando County steadily increasing from 179,144 to 196,621. Correspondingly, the population under 18 has also grown from 33,512 in 2017 to 36,103 in 2022. The percentage of the population under 18 has remained relatively stable, fluctuating slightly between 18.4 percent and 18.7 percent.

Table 1-3. Under Age 18 Population Trends

Year	Total Population	Population Under 18	Percent Under 18
2017	179,144	33,512	18.7%
2018	182,696	33,900	18.6%
2019	186,313	34,415	18.5%
2020	190,700	35,063	18.4%
2021	192,128	35,729	18.6%
2022	196,621	36,103	18.4%

Figure 1-3 illustrates the trends in both the total number and the percentage of the population under 18 over this period. Despite the increasing total population under 18, the percentage has stayed fairly consistent, indicating that the growth in the under-18 demographic is proportional to the overall population growth in the county.

Figure 1-3: Under Age 18 Trends

Under Age 18 Population

Legend: Population Under 18, Percent Under 18
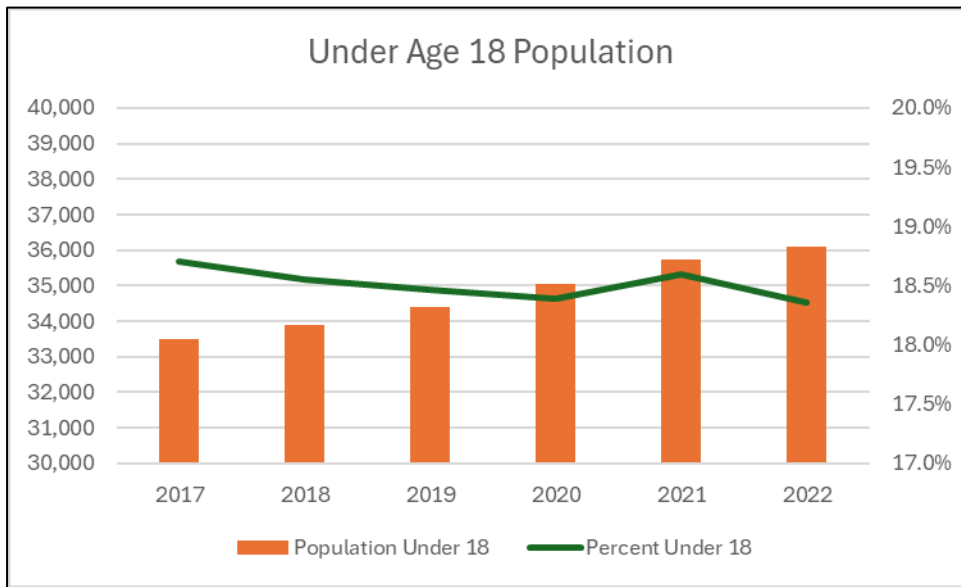
This consistent proportion of the young population highlights the need for transit services that cater to their specific needs. Map 1-6 highlights the areas of the county with the highest concentration of young people. By focusing on these areas, transit planners can ensure that younger residents have access to reliable and efficient transportation options, supporting their education and overall quality of life.

Map 1-6. Percent of Population Under Age 18 by Census Block Group

Percentage of the Population Under 18 Years old
- 0% - 5%
- 6% - 12%
- 13% - 19%
- 20% - 27%
- 28% - 39%
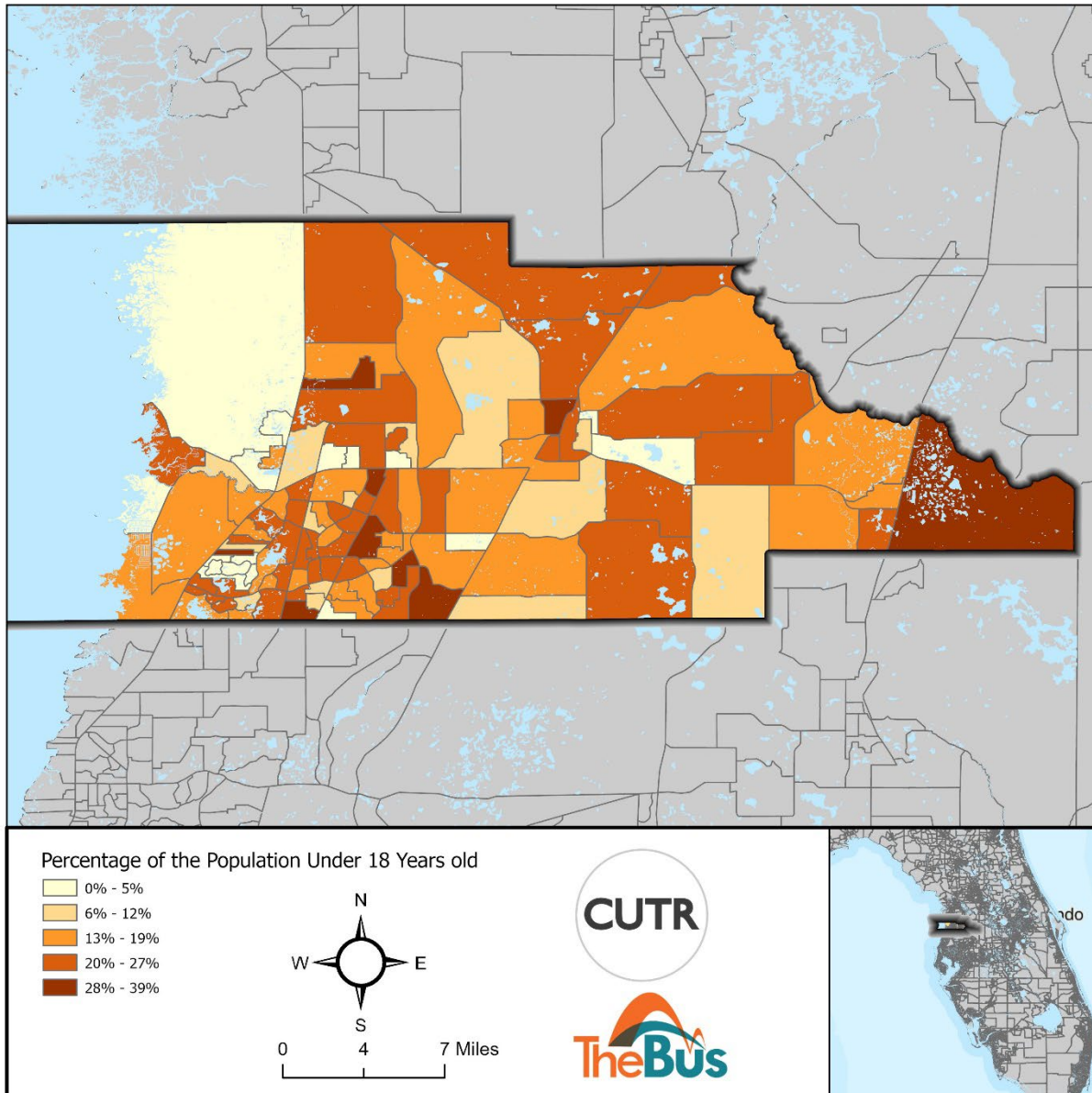
Zero Vehicle Households

From 2017 to 2022, Hernando County, Florida, has experienced a notable increase in the total number of households, as evidenced by the ACS data from the U.S. Census Bureau. During this period, the total number of households rose from 62,636 in 2017 to 77,310 in 2022. Parallel to this overall growth, there has been an increase in the number of households without access to a vehicle, growing from 1,184 zero-vehicle households in 2017 to 1,716 in 2022 (Table 1-4).

Table 1-4. Zero Vehicle Household Trends

Year	Total Households	Zero-Vehicle Households	Percentage Zero-Vehicle
2017	62,636	1,184	1.89%
2018	65,018	1,034	1.59%
2019	67,604	1,292	1.91%
2020	71,407	1,346	1.88%
2021	73,875	1,501	2.03%
2022	77,310	1,716	2.22%

Figure 1-4 highlights the increase in the percentage of zero-vehicle households from 1.89 percent to 2.22 percent. In addition, Map 1-7 below outlines those areas in Hernando County with the highest concentration of zero-vehicle households.

Figure 1-4: Zero-Vehicle Household Totals and Percentage
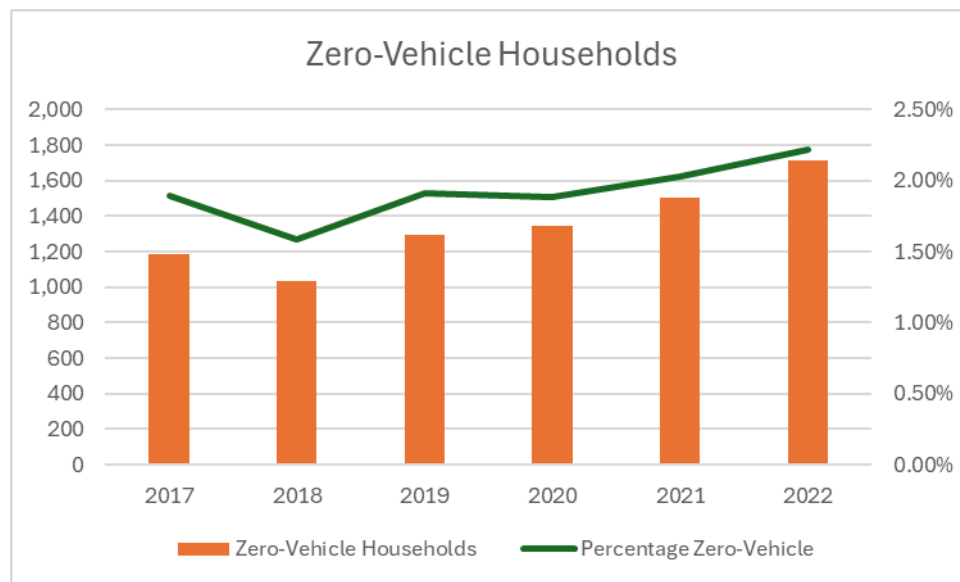
Map 1-7. Percentage of Households with Zero Vehicles

Percentage of Households with Zero Vehicles
- 0% - 1%
- 2% - 4%
- 5% - 8%
- 9% - 13%
- 14% - 24%

N
W E
S

0   4   7 Miles

CUTR

TheBus
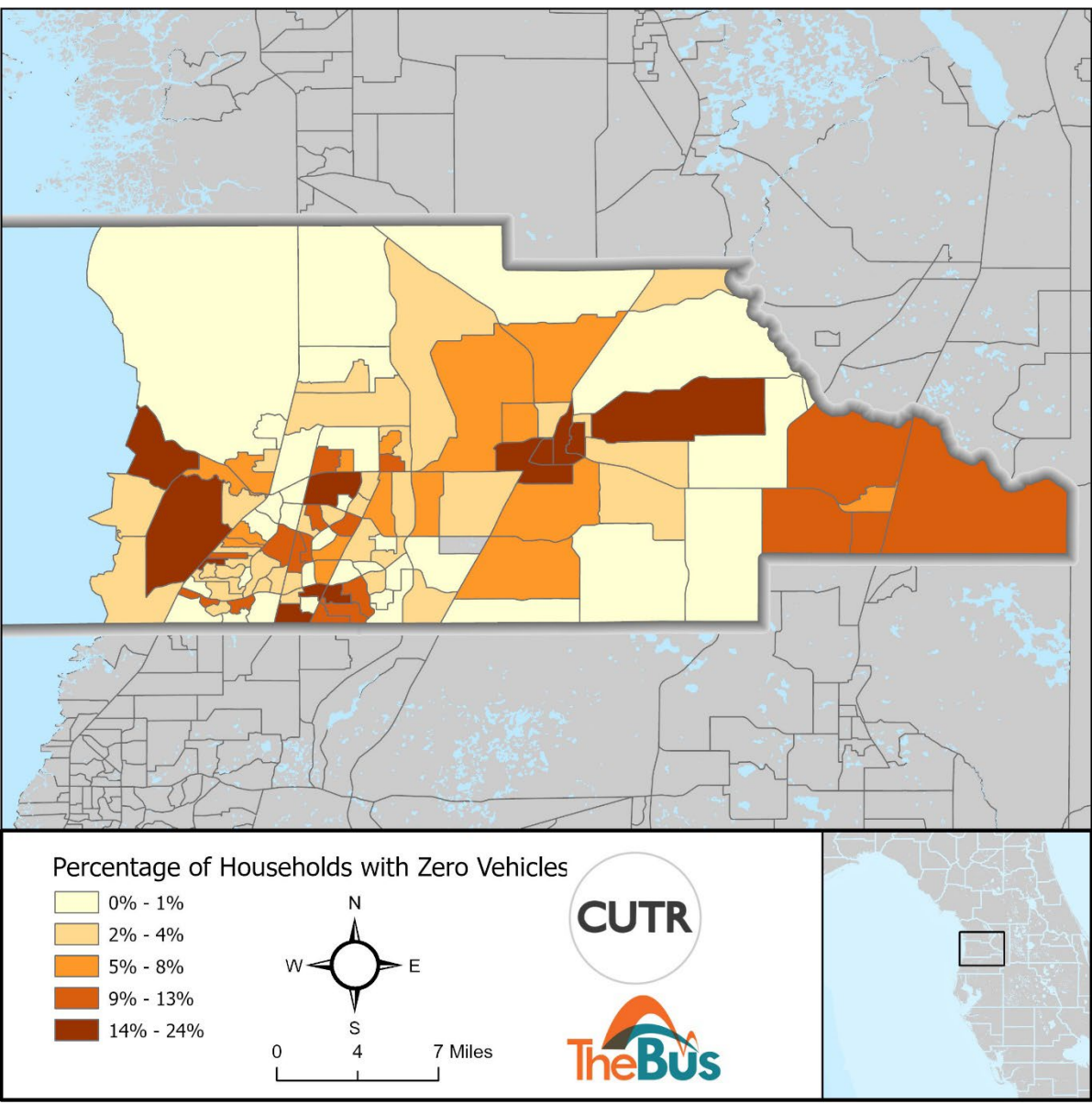
Persons Living in Poverty

Households living in poverty often face significant transportation barriers that can limit their access to employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services. By focusing on transit services in areas with higher poverty rates, planners can help reduce these barriers, providing affordable and reliable transportation options that support economic mobility and social inclusion. Table 1-5 below reveals a general decline in the number of people living in poverty over time.

Table 1-5. Persons Living in Poverty

Year	Total Persons Living in Poverty	Percentage
2017	25,322	14.3%
2018	25,718	14.3%
2019	25,902	14.1%
2020	27,018	14.4%
2021	24,940	13.2%
2022	24,134	12.5%

Figure 1-5 highlights the overall trend of those living in poverty. From the data, 2020 had the highest poverty levels, while 2022 recorded the lowest figures, showing significant improvement. The distribution of those living in poverty is uneven across the county. Map 1-8 illustrates the distribution of the impoverished block groups in Hernando County.

Figure 1-5: Population and Percentage Living in Poverty Trends
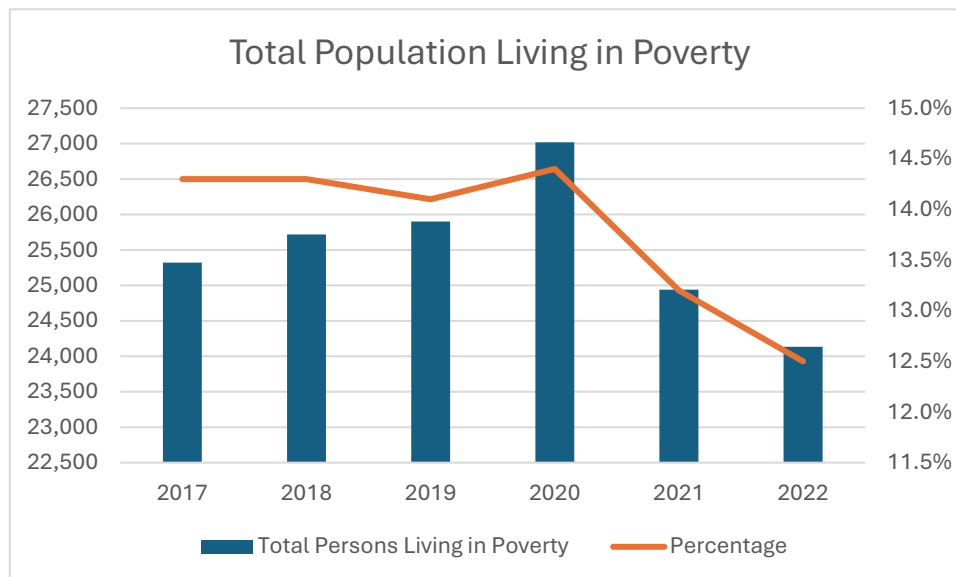
Map 1-8. Distribution of Population Living Below the Poverty Line

Percentage of the Population that live below the Poverty Line

- 0% - 7%
- 8% - 13%
- 14% - 23%
- 24% - 36%
- 37% - 68%

CUTR

TheBus

0 4 7 Miles
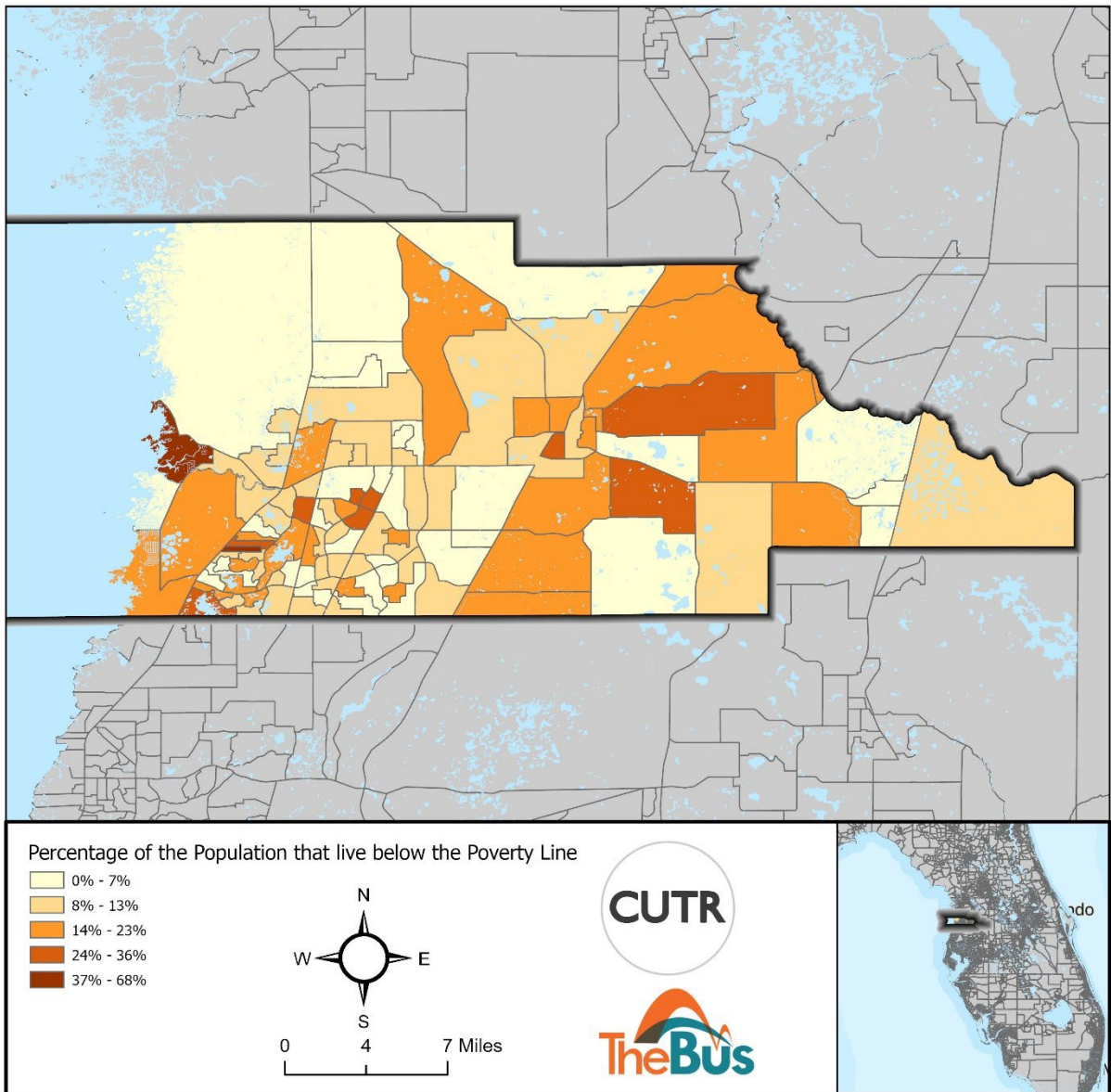
Commuting Patterns

This section analyzes commuting patterns in Hernando County using two primary data sources: the ACS from the U.S. Census Bureau and the LEHD data. The ACS provides insights into the number and percentage of workers commuting various durations, including those traveling more than 60 minutes. This helps to understand overall commuting times and the prevalence of long commutes for county residents.

Conversely, the LEHD data offers detailed information on the origins and destinations of workers' home and work locations. It enables mapping of commuting flows and identification of key employment hubs and residential areas. The LEHD data represents actual jobs, including those held by individuals commuting from outside the county. Therefore, it may show a higher number of jobs compared to the ACS data, due to factors like individuals holding multiple jobs and data anomalies related to preserving anonymity.

While the ACS focuses on commute durations for Hernando County residents, the LEHD emphasizes the spatial relationships between home and work, including inbound commuters. Together, these sources provide a comprehensive picture of commuting patterns, highlighting both the time spent commuting and the geographical connections. This combined analysis is essential for transit planning and addressing the commuting needs of the county's workforce.

Commuting Time

Commuting time is another factor to help identify and understand transit markets within Hernando County. Analyzing how long residents travel to work helps identify service opportunities to meet specific needs of commuters. In Hernando County, the average commute time is 29.4 minutes, which is among the longest when compared to the surrounding counties. Table 1-6 shows the average commute times of the surrounding counties.

Table 1-6. Average Commute Time Hernando Region

County	Average Commute Time (minutes)
Hernando	29.40
Pasco	31.20
Sumter	27.10
Citrus	27.90
Pinellas	24.70
Hillsborough	28.30

To further understand the commuting patterns and identify specific transit service needs, Table 1-7 breaks down the number of workers and corresponding percentages for various commute times, along with recommended types of transit services for each group. Additionally, Figure 1-6 accents the overall travel time pattern for the 70,227 workers that commute.

Table 1-7. Commuting Data and Public Transportation Service Options

Commute Time	Number of Workers	Percentage	Types of Service
Under 5 minutes	2,087	3%	Last-mile solutions, bike-sharing, micro-transit
5 to 9 minutes	5,822	8%	Short-route bus services, flex routes
10 to 14 minutes	7,001	10%	Short-route bus services, flex routes
15 to 19 minutes	9,183	13%	Short-route bus services, flex routes
20 to 24 minutes	6,778	10%	Expanded bus routes, increased frequency
25 to 29 minutes	3,428	5%	Expanded bus routes, increased frequency
30 to 34 minutes	9,663	14%	Comprehensive and extensive bus services
35 to 39 minutes	2,529	4%	Limited Stop and Express bus services
40 to 44 minutes	3,126	5%	Express bus services, park-and-ride facilities
45 to 59 minutes	11,672	17%	Long-haul public transit, vanpools
60 to 89 minutes	6,591	9%	Long-haul public transit, vanpools
90 minutes or more	2,347	3%	Long-haul public transit, vanpools

Figure 1-6: Distribution of Commuting Travel Times

Travel Time Distribution of Workers
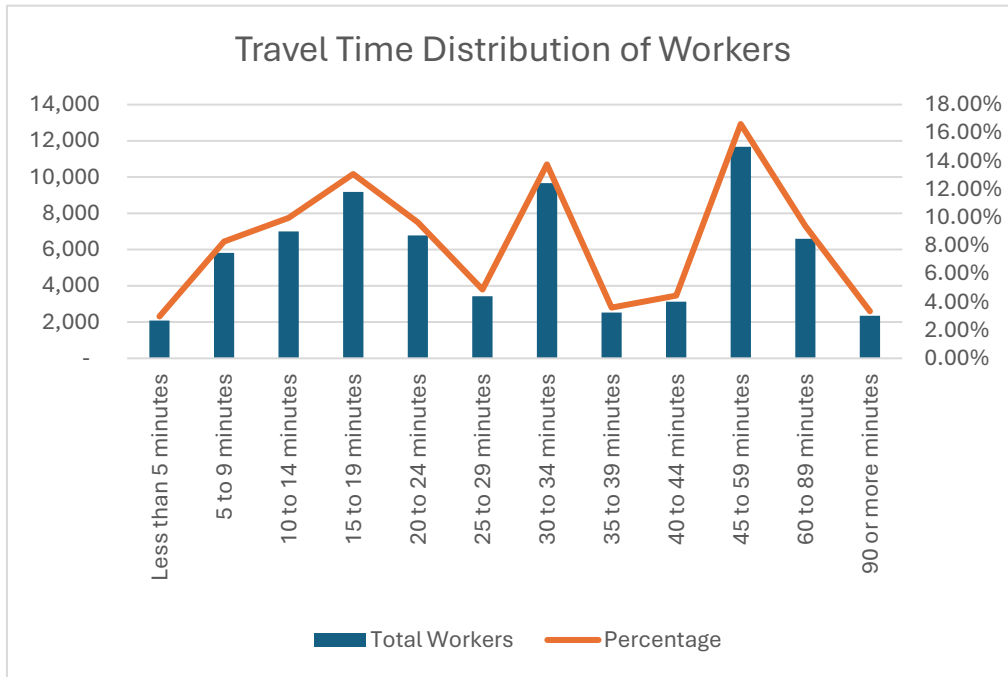
Commute Time of 60 Minutes and Greater

Long commute times can be a significant burden on residents, affecting their quality of life and productivity. Areas where many residents have commute times of 60 minutes or more indicate a potential need for improved or additional transit services that may reduce travel times and enhance connectivity. Map 1-9 highlights the Block Groups that have higher rates of workers with 60 minute or longer commutes.

Map 1-9. Percentage of Workers Commuting Greater than 60 Minutes

Percent Commuting 60 Minutes or more

- 0% - 4%
- 5% - 10%
- 11% - 16%
- 17% - 30%
- 31% - 55%

CUTR

TheBus

0   4   7 Miles
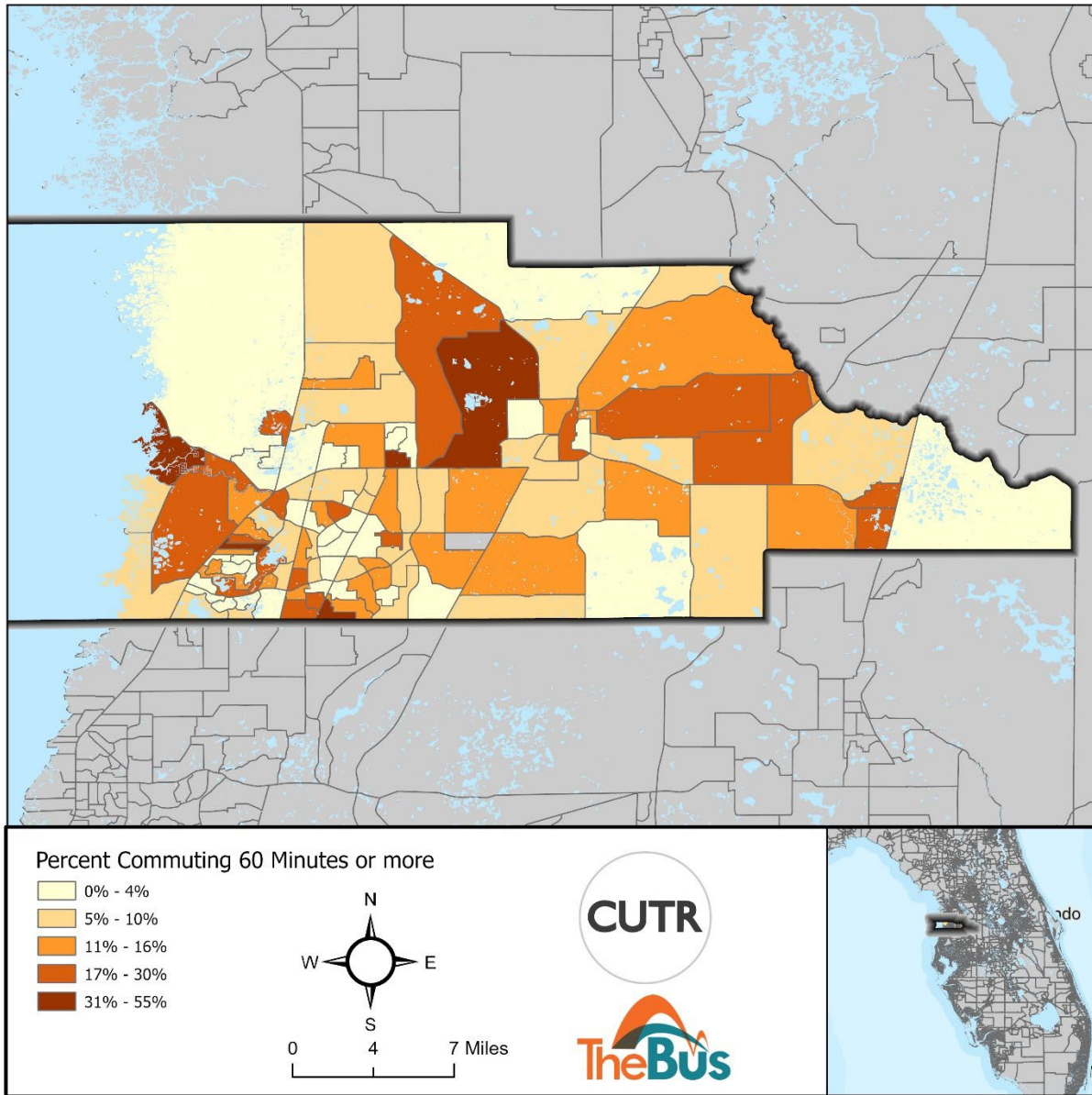
Origin and Destination

The LEHD data from the U.S. Census Bureau provides the origin and destination patterns of workers commuting to and from Hernando County. This data helps identify transit markets and potential areas to serve in Hernando.

County-Wide Flows

In 2021, Hernando County had a total workforce of 68,551 workers. Of these, 21,304 both live and work within the county, representing a significant portion of the local labor force. However, the majority, 47,247 workers, commute outside the county for employment, highlighting a substantial net job outflow. Notably, of the jobs located in Hernando County, 25,355 are held by workers commuting from outside the county, which is more than the number of residents who work within the county. Examining the commuting destinations of the Hernando County residents and origins of workers commuting to Hernando demonstrates potential transit solutions that serve regional or cross county travelers. Figure 1-7 and Table 1-8 illustrate the total commuters in and out of the county.

Figure 1-7: Commuting Pattern

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2021
All Workers

25,355   21,304   47,247

Workers Living and Employed in

Commuting to Hernando County

Working Outside Hernando County
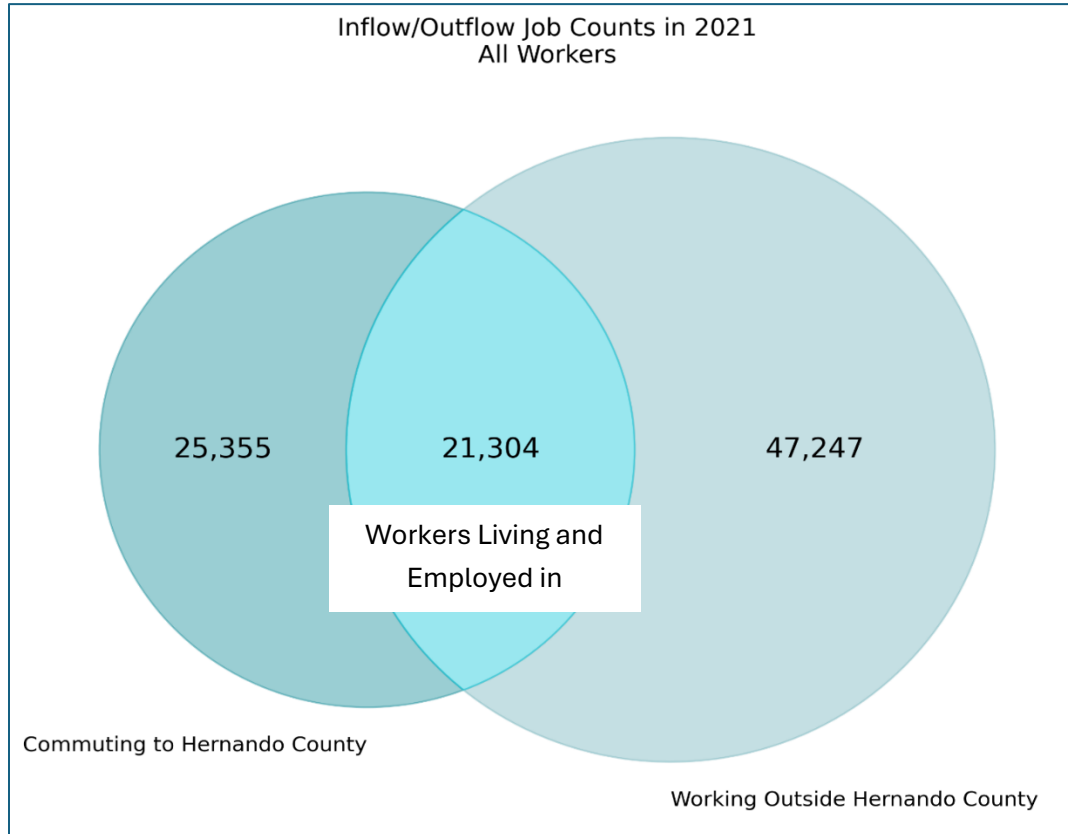
Table 1-8. Commuting Totals to and from Hernando County

Category	Count
Workers Commuting to Jobs Located in Hernando County	25,355
Workers Living and Employed in Hernando County	21,304
Workers Living in Hernando County but Employed Outside	47,247

Inbound Commuting

There are over 46,000 jobs located in Hernando County. Nearly 55 percent (more than 25,000) of those jobs are filled by workers traveling from outside of Hernando County, representing potential opportunities to connect with neighboring transit providers to connect inbound commuters to job locations. Table 1-9 highlights the top 10 origin counties of commuters to Hernando County.

Table 1-9. Origin Counties of Commuters to Hernando County

County	Count	Share
Pasco County, FL	6,678	14.3%
Hillsborough County, FL	2,726	5.8%
Citrus County, FL	2,592	5.6%
Pinellas County, FL	1,704	3.7%
Polk County, FL	1,335	2.9%
Orange County, FL	1,120	2.4%
Marion County, FL	1,008	2.2%
Lake County, FL	782	1.7%
Sumter County, FL	713	1.5%
All Other Locations	6,697	14.4%

Outbound Commuting

Hernando County residents hold over 68,000 jobs, with more than 68 percent (47,247) located outside the county. This high percentage of outbound commuters highlights potential opportunities for regional and cross-county transit services. Table 1-10 lists the top commuter destinations for Hernando County residents, detailing the counties they travel to for work.

Table 1-10. Top Commuter Destination for Hernando County Residents

County	Count	Share
Pasco County, FL	11,361	16.6%
Hillsborough County, FL	10,476	15.3%
Pinellas County, FL	5,413	7.9%
Orange County, FL	2,872	4.2%
Polk County, FL	2,000	2.9%
Citrus County, FL	1,840	2.7%
Duval County, FL	1,055	1.5%
Sumter County, FL	961	1.4%
Lake County, FL	959	1.4%
All Other Locations	10,310	15.0%

Municipal Focused Flows

For Brooksville, the largest city within Hernando County, the LEHD data offers a closer look at the local labor market. In 2021, Brooksville experienced a net job inflow, indicating that the number of jobs within the city exceeds the resident workforce (as displayed in Table 1-11 and Figure 1-8 below). This suggests that Brooksville is a net importer of labor, attracting workers from outside the city limits. Such dynamics are critical for tailoring The Bus's services to effectively manage the high volume of incoming and outgoing commuters.

Table 1-11. Commuting Totals to and from Brooksville

Category	Count
Employed in Brooksville but Living Outside	8,994
Workers Living and Employed in Brooksville	452
Workers Living in Brooksville but Employed Outside	2,765

Figure 1-8: Brooksville Commuting Pattern

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts in 2021
All Workers

8,994   452   2,765

Working Outside Brooksville

Commuting to Brooksville
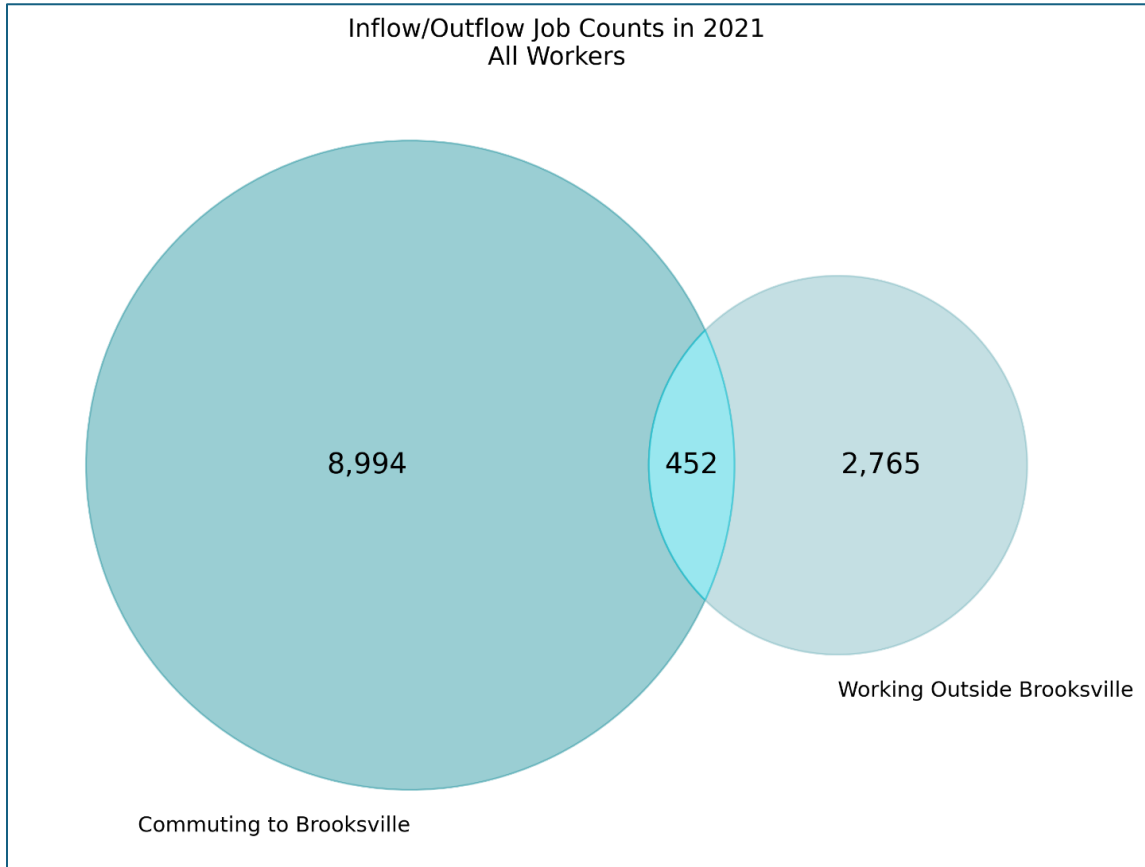
Population Projections

The Bureau of Economic and Business Research (BEBR) at the University of Florida provides critical population projections that are essential for effective planning in Hernando County. According to BEBR's data, Hernando County's total population is expected to grow from 199,207 in 2022 to 244,492 by 2050 (see Figure 1-9). Notably, the under-18 population will see minor fluctuations, rising from 35,619 in 2022 to a peak of 39,413 in 2040 before slightly declining to 39,192 by 2050. In contrast, the over-65 population is projected to increase significantly from 57,739 in 2022 to 79,454 in 2050. Understanding these demographic trends is vital for the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP), as it reveals the growing demand for services catering to seniors while highlighting the relatively stable number of younger residents. These insights support strategic planning efforts, ensuring that the county can allocate resources efficiently and develop infrastructure to meet the evolving needs of its residents.

Figure 1-9. Hernando Population Growth 2025 to 2050
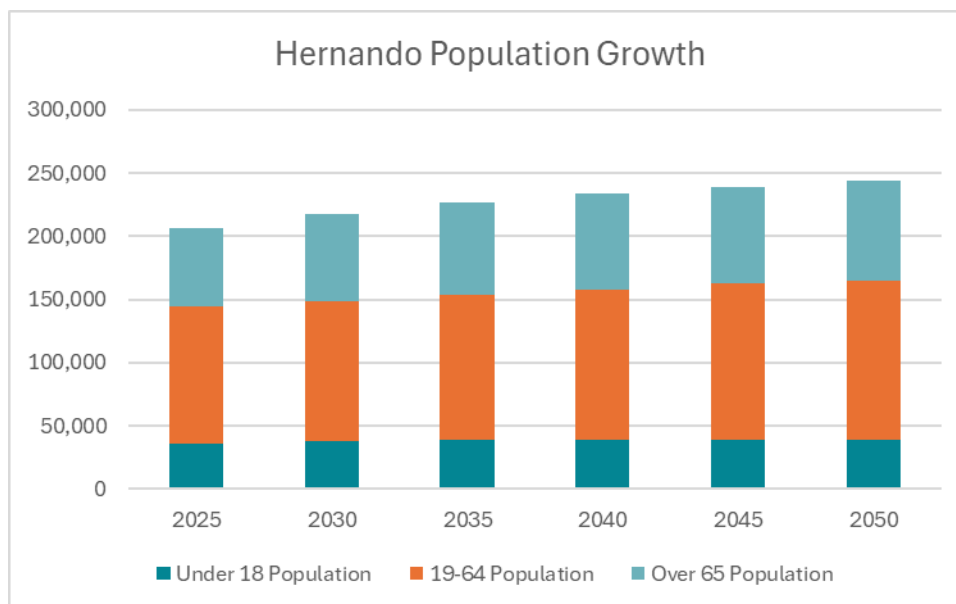
CHAPTER 2

EXISTING SERVICES & PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Performance Evaluation

Trend Analysis

The trend analysis completed for this TDP comprises several performance indicators, effectiveness measures, and efficiency measures for both Hernando County's fixed-route (TheBus) and demand-response services. As an agency that receives FTA funding on an annual basis, the Hernando County Transit Division is required to annually track the operating, financial, and asset conditions of all transit systems to the National Transit Database (NTD). The NTD provides a consistent source of data that can be used to track annual and long-term progress, allowing transit providers to act and plan accordingly.

For Hernando County, the NTD reporting years usable for this analysis include Fiscal Years (FYs) 2018 through 2023. It should be noted that the latest closed out NTD data are from FY 2022; however, Hernando's preliminary FY 2023 data are also included (Hernando's fiscal year runs from October 1 through September 30 for purposes of NTD reporting). The team gathered the data used in the trend analysis via a viewer role for Hernando County's profile in the NTD online reporting system which is accessed through FTA's web portal. Hernando County is an NTD reduced reporter, which is a designation intended by FTA to lower the reporting burden for small agencies that operate less than 30 vehicles across all modes of service. Reduced reporters submit less data than full reporters. The available NTD data for Hernando County are included in this analysis.

Table 2-1and Table 2-2 display NTD data for Hernando's fixed route motorbus and demand-response services for the six-year period from FY 2018 through FY 2023. The preliminary FY 2023 data will likely be closed out by July 2024 and can be updated as needed before the final TDP is prepared. The tables show the percentage change for the six-year period from FY 2018 to FY 2023, as well as the percentage change from FY 2021 to FY 2023. The latter percentage change illustrates recent changes including the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. Arrows in the tables indicate the desired trend direction as well as Hernando's trend directions for both the six-year timeframe and the more recent three-year timeframe. Arrows are green for a desired trend direction or red if the data trend is in the opposite direction of a desired trend. The desired trend for all the general indicators is to increase, which would demonstrate an overall expansion and growth of transit services.

Fixed-Route Services

Table 2-1 focuses on the fixed-route bus services (known as TheBus). Regarding the general performance measures, the data show that ridership for TheBus has increased over the six-year trend period from 127,072 trips in FY 2018 to 134,242 trips in FY 2023. The ridership trend reached a high of 140,220 trips in FY 2019, declined from FY 2020 to FY 2021, and recovered since FY 2021, for an overall increase of 20 percent between FY 2021 and FY 2023. The years 2017 through 2019, ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic, saw ridership declining nationwide. Thus, it is notable that TheBus experienced increasing ridership between FY 2018 and FY 2019. Revenue miles and hours of service grew by approximately one-third from FY 2018 to FY 2023, but have remained stable since FY 2021, increasing by less than one percent from FY 2021 to FY 2023. Total operating expenses grew steadily over the trend period but increased significantly in FY 2022 before falling slightly in FY 2023. Fare revenue increased over both the six-year and three-year timeframes, while other directly generated revenues declined 38 percent from FY 2018 to FY 2023. It should be noted that, in the NTD, directly generated revenues can vary year to year. By definition, these funds exclude local, state, and federal funds and are also measured system-wide rather than by mode. Finally, the number of buses operated in maximum service remained steady at seven vehicles over the trend period.

Four measures of effectiveness are shown in Figure 2-1 and comprise measures of service supply (using revenue miles and hours) and service consumption (using passenger trips). The first two are revenue miles per capita and passenger trips per capita. Per-capita measures increased over the trend period. Productivity in terms of passenger trips per revenue mile and per revenue hour each decreased approximately 20 percent from FY 2018 to FY 2023, but then each increased approximately 20 percent between FY 2021 and FY 2023 to 0.24 trips per revenue mile and 4.70 trips per revenue hour. Figure 2-1 illustrates some service consumption data, including passenger trips and the measure of passenger trips per revenue hour.

Efficiency measures are also included in Table 2-1. The operating expense ratios include operating expense per capita, per passenger trip, per revenue mile, and per revenue hour. Each has increased over both the six-year and three-year trend periods. As might be expected, the desired trend for these ratios is to decrease, which would show increasing cost efficiency. Although fare revenues have grown over the trend period, the farebox recovery ratio, which shows the percentage of operating expenses covered by fares, has declined. Lastly, the average fare per passenger trip increased from $0.76 in FY 2018 to $0.87 in FY 2023.

Table 2-1. Hernando County TheBus Fixed-Route Trend Data FY 2018 – FY 2023

Indicator/Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*	% Change 2018-2023	% Change 2021-2023	Status 2018-2023	Status 2021-2023	Desired Trend
General Indicators											
Service Area Population	116,265	116,315	116,315	119,384	119,384	119,384	2.68%	0.00%	⬆ (green)	--	⬆ (green)
Service Area Density (pop per sq mi)	1,306.3	1,306.9	1,306.9	1,341.4	1,341.4	1,341.4	2.68%	0.00%	⬆ (green)	--	⬆ (green)
Passenger Trips	127,072	140,220	134,710	111,602	122,298	134,242	5.64%	20.29%	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Revenue Miles	409,107	408,854	515,913	552,013	553,508	554,483	35.53%	0.45%	⬆ (green)	--	⬆ (green)
Revenue Hours	21,613	21,816	26,778	28,537	28,603	28,575	32.21%	0.13%	⬆ (green)	--	⬆ (green)
Total Operating Expense	$1,398,508	$1,472,114	$1,666,283	$1,727,583	$2,560,754	$2,403,323	71.85%	39.11%	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Fare Revenue	$97,083	$107,763	$83,276	$89,396	$91,158	$116,546	20.05%	30.37%	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Other Directly Generated Revenue	$23,739	$9,882	$10,852	$9,597	$13,714	$14,702	-38.07%	53.19%	⬇ (red)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	7	7	7	7	7	7	0.00%	0.00%	--	--	⬆ (green)
Effectiveness Measures											
Revenue Miles Per Capita	3.52	3.52	4.44	4.62	4.64	4.64	31.99%	0.45%	⬆ (green)	--	⬆ (green)
Passenger Trips Per Capita	1.09	1.21	1.16	0.93	1.02	1.12	2.88%	20.29%	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	0.31	0.34	0.26	0.20	0.22	0.24	-22.06%	19.75%	⬇ (red)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	5.88	6.43	5.03	3.91	4.28	4.70	-20.10%	20.13%	⬇ (red)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)
Efficiency Measures											
Operating Expense Per Capita	$12.03	$12.66	$14.33	$14.47	$21.45	$20.13	67.36%	39.11%	⬆ (red)	⬆ (red)	⬇ (green)
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	$11.01	$10.50	$12.37	$15.48	$20.94	$17.90	62.67%	15.65%	⬆ (red)	⬆ (red)	⬇ (green)
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	$3.42	$3.60	$3.23	$3.13	$4.63	$4.33	26.79%	38.50%	⬆ (red)	⬆ (red)	⬇ (green)
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	$64.71	$67.48	$62.23	$60.54	$89.53	$84.11	29.98%	38.93%	⬆ (red)	⬆ (red)	⬇ (green)
Farebox Recovery Ratio	6.94%	7.32%	5.00%	5.17%	3.56%	4.85%	-30.14%	-6.29%	⬇ (red)	⬇ (red)	⬆ (green)
Average Fare	$0.76	$0.77	$0.62	$0.80	$0.75	$0.87	13.64%	8.38%	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)	⬆ (green)

*Source: NTD Online Reporting Tool (viewer access) *2023 data are preliminary as of June 2024.*

Figure 2-1: Hernando TheBus Measures of Service Consumption, FY 2018 – FY 2023
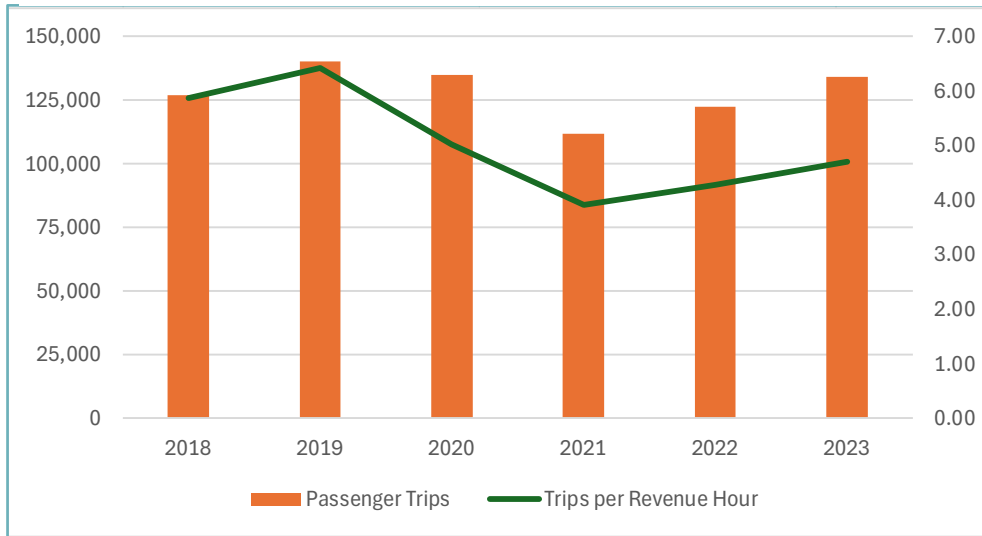
Demand-Response Services

Table 2-2 examines trend data for Hernando's demand-response services. Among the overall performance indicators, demand-response ridership declined over the trend period. Miles and hours of service decreased significantly from FY 2018 through FY 2023 yet increased approximately five percent between FY 2021 and FY 2023. Total operating expenses were stable over the six-year trend period but increased nearly 17 percent between FY 2021 and FY 2023. Fare revenues decreased over both the six-year and three-year timeframes. The final indicator is the number of vehicles operated in maximum service, which decreased by one, from four vehicles to three, over the six-year period.

The effectiveness measures for service supply and service consumption have all decreased over the trend period with one exception: the number of revenue miles per capita grew more than five percent from FY 2021 to FY 2023, settling at 0.63 in FY 2023. For the efficiency measures, each of the four operating expense ratios increased significantly over the trend period except for operating expense per capita, which declined approximately two percent from FY 2018 to FY 2023. Both the farebox recovery ratio and the average fare per trip decreased between FY 2018 and FY 2023 and from FY 2021 to FY 2023.

Table 2-2. Hernando County Demand-Response Trend Data FY 2018 – FY 2023

Indicator/Measure	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023*	% Change 2018-2023	% Change 2021-2023	Status 2018-2023	Status 2021-2023	Desired Trend
General Indicators											
Service Area Population	116,265	116,315	116,315	119,384	119,384	119,384	2.68%	0.00%	⬆	--	⬆
Service Area Density (pop per sq mi)	1,306.3	1,306.9	1,306.9	1,341.4	1,341.4	1,341.4	2.68%	0.00%	⬆	--	⬆
Passenger Trips	14,219	13,208	9,131	8,169	7,715	7,661	-46.12%	-6.22%	⬇	⬇	⬆
Revenue Miles	124,477	111,397	79,186	70,876	70,767	74,717	-39.98%	5.42%	⬇	⬆	⬆
Revenue Hours	6,093	5,603	4,153	3,846	4,012	4,060	-33.37%	5.56%	⬇	⬆	⬆
Total Operating Expense	$608,220	$586,894	$518,000	$521,999	$359,148	$610,258	0.34%	16.91%	--	⬆	⬆
Fare Revenue	$31,869	$30,257	$19,938	$19,322	$17,431	$16,558	-48.04%	-14.30%	⬇	⬇	⬆
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	4	4	3	3	3	3	-25.00%	0.00%	⬇	--	⬆
Effectiveness Measures											
Revenue Miles Per Capita	1.07	0.96	0.68	0.59	0.59	0.63	-41.54%	5.42%	⬇	⬆	⬆
Passenger Trips Per Capita	0.12	0.11	0.08	0.07	0.06	0.06	-47.53%	-6.22%	⬇	⬇	⬆
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	0.11	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.11	0.10	-10.24%	-11.04%	⬇	⬇	⬆
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	2.33	2.36	2.20	2.12	1.92	1.89	-19.14%	-11.16%	⬇	⬇	⬆
Efficiency Measures											
Operating Expense Per Capita	$5.23	$5.05	$4.45	$4.37	$3.01	$5.11	-2.29%	16.91%	⬇	⬆	⬇
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	$42.78	$44.43	$56.73	$63.90	$46.55	$79.66	86.22%	24.66%	⬆	⬆	⬇
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	$4.89	$5.27	$6.54	$7.36	$5.08	$8.17	67.16%	10.90%	⬆	⬆	⬇
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	$99.82	$104.75	$124.73	$135.73	$89.52	$150.31	50.58%	10.75%	⬆	⬆	⬇
Farebox Recovery Ratio	5.24%	5.16%	3.85%	3.70%	4.85%	2.71%	-48.22%	-26.70%	⬇	⬇	⬆
Average Fare	$2.24	$2.29	$2.18	$2.37	$2.26	$2.16	-3.57%	-8.62%	⬇	⬇	⬆

*Source: NTD Online Reporting Tool (viewer access) *2023 data are preliminary as of June 2024.*

Peer Review Analysis

For the peer review analysis, several performance measures for Hernando County's fixed-route services (TheBus) are compared with those of a group of selected peer transit agencies. In addition to a typical peer review, this TDP includes an aspirational peer review (of larger agencies/transit systems) representing a potential future level of performance for TheBus. This type of analysis provides decision makers with the ability to measure areas of success and, if necessary, areas that may need improvement.

The determination of an appropriate peer group is both formulaic and discretionary. The peers used in the current peer analysis were determined by first returning to the peers used in the last major TDP update. Most of those peers are used in this analysis. Then, the methodology presented in TCRP Report 141, *A Methodology for Performance Measurement and Peer Comparison in the Public Transit Industry*, was also used (note: CUTR was a co-author). The Florida Transit Information System (FTIS) has a tool for applying the TCRP methodology based on pre-determined factors and/or factors chosen by the analyst. The use of this tool introduced some new peer transit systems to consider. The TCRP tool was also used to develop an aspirational peer group of systems similar in many ways to Hernando County but with higher levels of service and ridership.

Utilizing these tools, it is important to develop a clear criterion for peer selection. One of the main criteria for peer selection was geography; only southeastern states were considered, including several Florida agencies. The selected peer groups contain a mix of agencies that directly operate their service and those who contract for service. Service area population, population density, and population growth rates were also factors, as well as some operational characteristics such as revenue miles of service and total operating budget. The peer methodology results in "likeness scores." The transit agency being studied (Hernando County) will have a likeness score of zero, and its best peer agencies will have scores closer to zero which indicates they are more "like" the primary agency and its respective service area. All peers used in this analysis had likeness scores to Hernando County of less than 1.0.

The most recent data available to the team for the non-Florida peer agencies is from FY 2022; thus, all data used in both peer analyses represent final FY 2022 data.

Current Peer Analysis

First, data and information for Hernando's current peer group is presented. A selection of information about the transit systems included in this group is listed in Table 2-3.

Table 2-3. Hernando County Current Peer Group, FY 2022 Data

Agency	Motorbus DO or PT*	Service Area Population Density (persons per sq. mi.)	Peak Vehicles
East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission, AL	PT	64	4
City of Jonesboro, AR	DO	1,587	7
City of Ocala, FL (SunTran)	PT	1,397	7
Hernando County, FL (TheBus)	*PT*	*1,341*	*7*
Lake County, FL (LakeXpress)	PT	1,373	10
Martin County, FL	PT	2,461	7
Hub City Transit, Hattiesburg, MS	DO	1,188	7
City of Concord, NC	PT	1,457	8
Buncombe County, NC	PT	410	3
City of Suffolk, VA	PT	1,292	6

DO = directly operated; PT = purchased transportation

As shown in Table 2-3, there are a few differences among typical Florida transit agencies and those from out of state. Most Florida transit agencies operate as a form of county government, while four of the six peers from outside Florida are operated by a city government. Regarding the number of vehicles operated in peak service, the largest is LakeXpress in Lake County, Florida (10 vehicles), and the least is in Buncombe County, North Carolina (three vehicles). TheBus is at the median with seven peak vehicles.

Table 2-4 shows additional data for the peer agencies, the peer group mean, and TheBus's percentage difference from that mean. FY 2022 data were gathered from Florida Transit Information System (FTIS), which includes information from the National Transit Database (NTD). For the effectiveness and efficiency measures, an assessment is provided that determines whether TheBus's performance compared to the peer group can be considered "good" or "can improve." The performance is rated "good" if TheBus is above the peer mean or no greater than 10 percent below the mean for measures where a higher value is considered better. The performance is rated "can improve" if TheBus is below the peer mean or no greater than 10 percent above the mean for measures where a lower value is considered better. The general indicators are not assessed, as they do not best represent performance compared to the group. Instead, the effectiveness and efficiency measures are used to demonstrate productivity and overall cost-efficiency of services.

While passenger trips and the number of vehicles operated in maximum service are not included in the peer selection methodology, it is interesting to note that TheBus's data for these two indicators are at or remarkably close to the peer group mean. TheBus operates seven peak vehicles and its FY 2022 ridership of 122,298 passenger trips is approximately 1.5 percent above the mean of the group. Hernando's service area population is 13 percent below the peer mean, yet its service area is approximately seven percent denser than the peer mean. For the remaining indicators, TheBus is greater than the peer group averages, as shown in Table 2-5.

Table 2-4. Hernando TheBus Current Peer Analysis

Indicator/Measure	East Alabama, AL	City of Jonesboro, AR	City of Ocala, FL	Lake County, FL	Martin County, FL	Hub City Transit, MS	City of Concord, NC	Buncombe County, NC	City of Suffolk, VA	TheBus	Peer Group Mean	TheBus % from Mean	Assessment
General Indicators													
Service Area Population	319,979	61,893	86,589	97,497	159,942	51,084	113,639	269,452	94,324	*119,384*	137,378	-13.10%	--
Service Area Density (pop per sq mi)	64.1	1,587.0	1,396.6	1,373.2	2,460.6	1,188.0	1,456.9	410.1	1,292.1	*1,341.4*	1,257.0	6.71%	--
Passenger Trips	104,898	76,114	189,289	199,138	79,450	46,023	293,613	20,473	73,369	*122,298*	120,467	1.52%	--
Revenue Miles	199,199	288,009	492,866	548,750	440,114	303,669	704,387	129,400	399,914	*553,508*	405,982	36.34%	--
Revenue Hours	13,359	17,712	33,031	33,196	23,636	19,286	40,136	7,747	19,979	*28,603*	23,669	20.85%	--
Total Operating Expense	$647,462	$790,105	$3,219,336	$3,563,644	$2,121,368	$1,711,091	$3,931,553	$660,350	$1,572,039	*$2,560,754*	$2,077,770	23.25%	--
Fare Revenue	$165	$30,102	$143,311	$97,135	$97,667	$20,028	$203,507	$0	$59,151	*$91,158*	$74,222	22.82%	--
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	4	7	7	10	7	7	8	3	6	*7*	7	0.00%	--
Effectiveness Measures													
Revenue Miles Per Capita	0.62	4.65	5.69	5.63	2.75	5.94	6.20	0.48	4.24	*4.64*	4.08	13.50%	*Good*
Passenger Trips Per Capita	0.33	1.23	2.19	2.04	0.50	0.90	2.58	0.08	0.78	*1.02*	1.16	-12.04%	*Can improve*
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	0.53	0.26	0.38	0.36	0.18	0.15	0.42	0.16	0.18	*0.22*	0.28	-22.46%	*Can improve*
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	7.85	4.30	5.73	6.00	3.36	2.39	7.32	2.64	3.67	*4.28*	4.75	-10.05%	*Good*
Efficiency Measures													
Operating Expense Per Capita	$2.02	$12.77	$37.18	$36.55	$13.26	$33.50	$34.60	$2.45	$16.67	*$21.45*	$21.04	1.93%	*Good*
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	$6.17	$10.38	$17.01	$17.90	$26.70	$37.18	$13.39	$32.25	$21.43	*$20.94*	$20.33	2.97%	*Good*
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	$3.25	$2.74	$6.53	$6.49	$4.82	$5.63	$5.58	$5.10	$3.93	*$4.63*	$4.87	-5.03%	*Good*
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	$48.47	$44.61	$97.46	$107.35	$89.75	$88.72	$97.96	$85.24	$78.68	*$89.53*	$82.78	8.15%	*Good*
Farebox Recovery Ratio	0.03%	3.81%	4.45%	2.73%	4.60%	1.17%	5.18%	0.00%	3.76%	*3.56%*	2.93%	21.55%	*Good*
Average Fare	$0.00	$0.40	$0.76	$0.49	$1.23	$0.44	$0.69	$0.00	$0.81	*$0.75*	$0.56	34.28%	*Good*

Source: FTIS FY 2022 NTD data

Table 2-5. Hernando TheBus Current Peer Analysis Summary

Indicator/Measure	TheBus	Peer Group Mean	TheBus % from Mean	Assessment
General Indicators				
Service Area Population	119,384	137,378	-13.10%	--
Service Area Density (pop per sq mi)	1,341.4	1,257.0	6.71%	--
Passenger Trips	122,298	120,467	1.52%	--
Revenue Miles	553,508	405,982	36.34%	--
Revenue Hours	28,603	23,669	20.85%	--
Total Operating Expense	$2,560,754	$2,077,770	23.25%	--
Fare Revenue	$91,158	$74,222	22.82%	--
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	7	7	0.00%	--
Effectiveness Measures				
Revenue Miles Per Capita	4.64	4.08	13.50%	*Good*
Passenger Trips Per Capita	1.02	1.16	-12.04%	*Can improve*
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	0.22	0.28	-22.46%	*Can improve*
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	4.28	4.75	-10.05%	*Good*
Efficiency Measures				
Operating Expense Per Capita	$21.45	$21.04	1.93%	*Good*
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	$20.94	$20.33	2.97%	*Good*
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	$4.63	$4.87	-5.03%	*Good*
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	$89.53	$82.78	8.15%	*Good*
Farebox Recovery Ratio	3.56%	2.93%	21.55%	*Good*
Average Fare	$0.75	$0.56	34.28%	*Good*

Source: FTIS FY 2022 NTD data

Overall, the results of the current peer analysis demonstrate that TheBus performs relatively well among its peers. Of the four effectiveness measures, TheBus rates as "good" for revenue miles per capita (13.5 percent greater than the peer mean) and the productivity measure of passenger trips per revenue hour (10 percent below the peer mean). For the latter measure, it is just within the defined range to be rated as "good" in this analysis. The other two effectiveness measures, passenger trips per capita and passenger trips per revenue mile, are approximately 12 percent and 22 percent, respectively, below the peer means and are therefore noted as areas where TheBus can improve.

Among the efficiency measures, TheBus rates as "good" for all of them. For operating expense per capita and per passenger trip, values for TheBus are just two percent and three percent, respectively, above the peer mean and thus within the threshold to be rated "good." Similarly, TheBus's value of $89.53 per revenue hour is just eight percent above the mean, which is within the 10 percent threshold to be rated as "good" performance. The Bus's value of $4.63 per revenue mile

is five percent below the peer mean. Lastly, TheBus performs well regarding fare revenues, with a farebox recovery nearly 22 percent greater than the peer group average, and its average fare of $0.75 is approximately 34 percent greater than the peer mean of $0.56. Figure 2-2 graphically illustrates the four operating expense ratios.

Figure 2-2: Peer Analysis – Operating Expense Ratios, FY 2022
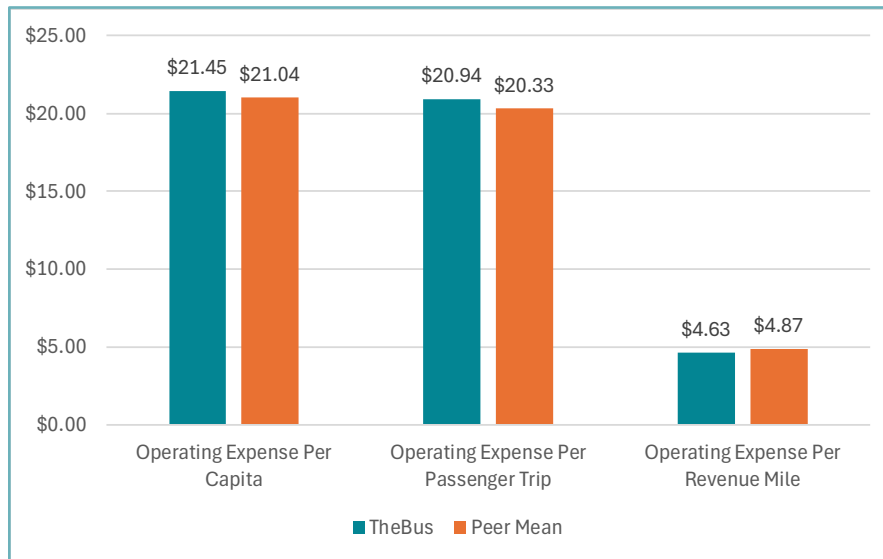
Aspirational Peer Analysis

This TDP includes an aspirational peer analysis, which could represent potential performance for a growing system in Hernando County. This group includes TheBus's relatively larger neighboring agency, Pasco County Public Transportation (GOPASCO). These larger peer agencies are listed in Table 2-6, along with some basic information and data from TheBus for comparison. Most of the peers in this part of the analysis are also peer agencies of GOPASCO.

Table 2-6. Hernando County Aspirational Peer Group, FY 2022 Data

Agency	Motorbus DO or PT*	Service Area Population Density (persons per sq. mi.)	Peak Vehicles
Manatee County Area Transit, FL	DO	538	25
Pasco County (GOPASCO), FL	DO	782	25
City of Albany, GA	DO	4,448	11
Columbus METRA, GA	DO	1,744	15
Macon-Bibb County, GA	DO	2,196	20
Greenville, SC	DO	2,153	17
City of Clarksville, TN	DO	1,290	18
Hernando County, FL (TheBus)	*PT*	*1,341*	*7*

DO = directly operated; PT = purchased transportation

As shown in Table 2-6, as with the group of current peers, there are some differences among typical Florida transit agencies and those from out of state. Most Florida transit agencies operate as a form of county government, while peers from out of state tend to be operated by a city government (except for Macon-Bibb County). The service areas for Manatee County and Pasco County are less dense than the other peer agencies, including Hernando. It should be explained that NTD service area population and size are calculated system-wide so that the mode with the largest service area becomes the NTD reported service population and size. For Florida systems operated by a county government, most also operate demand response services county-wide, which results in a lower reported service area population density. Regarding the number of vehicles operated in maximum service, Manatee and Pasco are the largest, with 25 vehicles each. The smallest is the system in Albany, Georgia, with 11 vehicles. As a reminder, Hernando's TheBus operates seven peak vehicles.

Table 2-7 shows the peer group mean for this larger group and, for comparison, TheBus's percentage difference from the mean. As with the first peer group, data were gathered from FTIS, which includes information from the NTD for FY 2022. TheBus does compare favorably with GOPASCO for the two per-capita effectiveness measures. For both revenue miles per capita and passenger trips per capita, TheBus's values are greater than those for GOPASCO. Also, TheBus's values for operating expense per revenue mile and per revenue hour are lower than those for GOPASCO.

Table 2-7. Hernando TheBus Aspirational Peer Analysis

Indicator/Measure	Manatee County, FL	Pasco County, FL	City of Albany, GA	Columbus METRA, GA	Macon-Bibb County, GA	Greenville, SC	City of Clarksville, TN	TheBus	Peer Group Mean	TheBus % from Mean
General Indicators										
Service Area Population	399,710	584,067	75,616	230,208	153,691	202,390	135,471	*119,384*	237,567	-49.75%
Service Area Density (pop per sq mi)	538	782	4,448	1,744	2,196	2,153	1,290	*1,341.4*	1,811.5	-25.95%
Passenger Trips	1,244,847	559,249	286,147	558,859	436,054	651,440	431,425	*122,298*	536,290	-77.20%
Revenue Miles	1,478,881	1,486,346	394,719	967,500	874,802	984,775	1,196,293	*553,508*	992,103	-44.21%
Revenue Hours	101,597	89,392	22,458	71,796	91,906	67,971	71,374	*28,603*	68,137	-58.02%
Total Operating Expense	$10,846,687	$8,091,598	$3,232,288	$4,585,906	$6,038,000	$6,927,981	$5,910,734	*$2,560,754*	$6,024,244	-57.49%
Fare Revenue	$727,477	$530,895	$513,307	$513,001	$321,640	$653,554	$519,200	*$91,158*	$483,779	-81.16%
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	25	25	11	15	20	17	18	*7*	17	-59.42%
Effectiveness Measures										
Revenue Miles Per Capita	3.70	2.54	5.22	4.20	5.69	4.87	8.83	*4.64*	4.96	-6.55%
Passenger Trips Per Capita	3.11	0.96	3.78	2.43	2.84	3.22	3.18	*1.02*	2.57	-60.12%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	0.84	0.38	0.72	0.58	0.50	0.66	0.36	*0.22*	0.53	-58.53%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	12.25	6.26	12.74	7.78	4.74	9.58	6.04	*4.28*	7.96	-46.29%
Efficiency Measures										
Operating Expense Per Capita	$27.14	$13.85	$42.75	$19.92	$39.29	$34.23	$43.63	*$21.45*	$30.28	-29.17%
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	$8.71	$14.47	$11.30	$8.21	$13.85	$10.63	$13.70	*$20.94*	$12.73	64.54%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	$7.33	$5.44	$8.19	$4.74	$6.90	$7.04	$4.94	*$4.63*	$6.15	-24.79%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	$106.76	$90.52	$143.93	$63.87	$65.70	$101.93	$82.81	*$89.53*	$93.13	-3.87%
Farebox Recovery Ratio	6.71%	6.56%	15.88%	11.19%	5.33%	9.43%	8.78%	*3.56%*	8.43%	-57.77%
Average Fare	$0.58	$0.95	$1.79	$0.92	$0.74	$1.00	$1.20	*$0.75*	$0.99	-24.85%

Source: FTIS FY 2022 NTD data

Table 2-8. Hernando TheBus Aspirational Peer Analysis Summary

Indicator/Measure	TheBus	Peer Group Mean	TheBus % from Mean
General Indicators			
Service Area Population	119,384	237,567	-49.75%
Service Area Density (pop per sq mi)	1,341.4	1,811.5	-25.95%
Passenger Trips	122,298	536,290	-77.20%
Revenue Miles	553,508	992,103	-44.21%
Revenue Hours	28,603	68,137	-58.02%
Total Operating Expense	$2,560,754	$6,024,244	-57.49%
Fare Revenue	$91,158	$483,779	-81.16%
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	7	17	-59.42%
Effectiveness Measures			
Revenue Miles Per Capita	4.64	4.96	-6.55%
Passenger Trips Per Capita	1.02	2.57	-60.12%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	0.22	0.53	-58.53%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	4.28	7.96	-46.29%
Efficiency Measures			
Operating Expense Per Capita	$21.45	$30.28	-29.17%
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	$20.94	$12.73	64.54%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	$4.63	$6.15	-24.79%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Hour	$89.53	$93.13	-3.87%
Farebox Recovery Ratio	3.56%	8.43%	-57.77%
Average Fare	$0.75	$0.99	-24.85%

Source: FTIS FY 2022 NTD data

Overall, and although this peer group represents somewhat larger agencies, TheBus is relatively close to the mean for two measures, revenue miles per capita (seven percent below the mean) and operating expense per revenue hour (four percent below the mean). For the other measures, TheBus is well below the peer means, except for the measure of operating expense per passenger trip, for which TheBus's value is approximately 65 percent greater than the peer group average, as shown in Table 2-8. This aspirational peer group analysis provides insight into the possible scale of service for TheBus in the future. The results of these two peer analyses, as well as the trend analysis included at the beginning of this section, will assist Hernando in making strategic decisions for its future.

CHAPTER 3

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Public Involvement and Outreach Summary

This section documents the public outreach activities that occurred to support the development and findings, and strategic direction of the final Hernando County 2025-34 Transit Development Plan (TDP). A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed for the TDP and approved by FDOT in May of 2024 (see Appendix A).

The following sections highlight the specific public involvement activities that occurred and inform the 2025-34 TDP.

In-Person Public Outreach Meetings

The TDP was presented at several in-person meetings to gather input from citizens and stakeholders to provide information and opportunities for public input into the development of the TDP (see Table 3-1 below).

Table 3-1. In-Person Public Outreach Meetings/Activities Completed

ACTIVITY	MEETINGS/TIMEFRAME
IN-PERSON MEETINGS	
Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)	5/14/24, 9/10/24, 12/3/24
Hernando/Citrus MPO Board of Directors	6/6/24, 9/5/24, 12/5/24
MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	5/23/24, 8/29/24, 11/21/24
MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	5/23/24, 8/29/24, 11/21/24
MPO Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)	8/8/24, 11/14/24
PUBLIC MEETINGS/WORKSHOPS/OPEN HOUSE	
Hernando Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Committee Meeting	8/12/24
TDP Public Workshop/Open House #1 - West Hernando Branch Library	9/30/24
TDP Public Workshop/Open House #2 - Spring Hill Branch Library	10/1/24

In addition, several public comments were received during in-person public meetings, adding a number of key insights and suggestions on the state of the TheBus system and suggested improvements (see Table 3-2).

Table 3-2. Public Meeting Comments Received

COMMON PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS RECEIVED
Develop an imporved marketing program
Add more bike racks at bus stops
Add a new fixed route to US 19 to Citrus County
Add more bus shelters
Add a new fixed route on Deltona Blvd.
Add fixed route connection to new Wilson-Simpson Technical College
Coordinate with school system for discount pass program
Coordinate with major employers for discount pass program
Provide discount passes to social svc. agencies
Weekday Service Span expansion could be tested as a pilot project
Become a free fare system
Connect better to recreation & tourist areas
Add a Rt. 50 to East County/Ridge Manor
Add more sidewalks around bus stops
Add a fixed route on Barclay Ave.
Add the Mermaid route
Add US 41/County Line Rd. route
Make a safer pedestrian crossing at Spring Hill Branch Library
Add Sunday service
Add Elgin-Powell Rd. Connector

Figure 3-1: Public Meeting Notice & Event

On-Board Survey

To better understand the needs and opinions of current riders of TheBus system, CUTR conducted an on-board survey in May of 2024. The survey instrument contained 20 questions and was available in both English and Spanish. While most questions were multiple choice, two were open-ended, and one question asked respondents to rate their satisfaction with an array of service elements on a scale of one to five. Surveys were offered to every passenger after they boarded the bus and were settled. CUTR included a bilingual English/Spanish-speaking surveyor, and surveyors were available to assist riders with disabilities in the completion of their surveys if necessary. Figure 3-2 displays a copy of the On-Board Survey.

The survey was conducted on Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday during the weeks of May 5, and on Wednesday, May 15. Specific bus duties were selected to ensure adequate service coverage on all four routes and at different times of the day. Answering every question was not a requirement for the survey to be included in the analysis; therefore, some of the records in the final survey dataset have blank values. Details for the number of surveys collected are shown in Table 3-3 below. Full copies of the on-board survey instrument are available in Appendix B.

Table 3-3. On-Board Surveys Collected by Route

Route	FY 2023 Ridership	Total Surveys Collected
Red	11,869	23
Purple	53,165	40
Green	43,352	26
Blue	29,275	31
TOTAL:		120

Figure 3-2: On-Board Survey Instrument

On-Board Survey Highlights

The on-board survey is a crucial tool for understanding the needs and preferences of transit riders, providing valuable insights into various aspects of the service, including trip purposes, frequency and length of usage, and reasons for riding. In addition, the survey can provide feedback on the overall quality of the service, such as its reliability, comfort, and safety, as well as the availability of alternatives to riders. For TheBus service, the on-board survey can be instrumental in identifying potential areas for improvement to better meet the needs of its ridership. In this section, we will

analyze and summarize the results of the on-board survey for TheBus riders, with a particular focus on the trip purposes of riders, ridership patterns and service preferences and any notable differences based on age group. We will also discuss the implications of these findings for transit planning and service delivery and explore potential areas for improvement in TheBus service based on the survey results.

Trip Purpose

The on-board survey results have provided a wealth of information about the trip purposes of those surveyed while using TheBus services. As shown in Figure 3-3, the most common trip purpose was work-based (41.7%), followed by Shopping/Errands (28.6%), Visiting/Recreation (9.5%), and Doctor/Medical (8.3%).

Figure 3-3: Trip Purpose of Current Riders
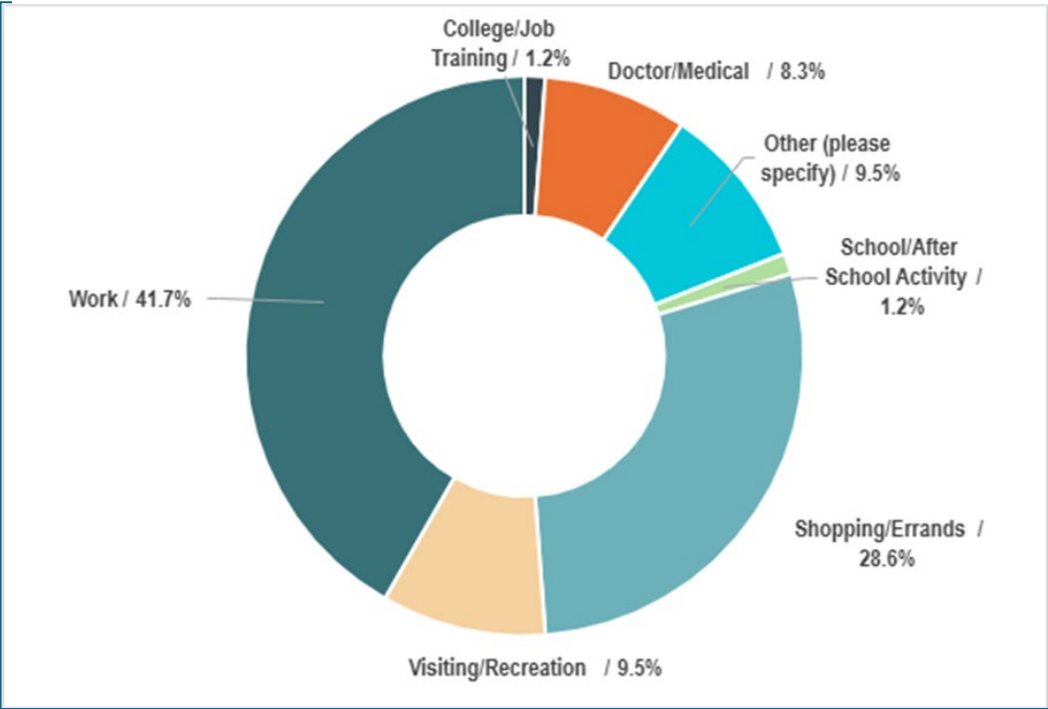
These survey results offer a clear picture that TheBus system provides a critical link for those workers, visitors, and those needing connections to other important services. The lower trip purposes observed for the categories of School/After School Activity (1.2%) and College/Job Training (1.2%) offer an opportunity for Hernando County to increase connections and links to these institutions as part of any proposed transit improvements in the final TDP.

Age of TheBus Riders
Understanding the age breakdown of the survey respondents is crucial to ensuring that TheBus is meeting the needs of all of its riders, regardless of age. Interestingly, the average age of TheBus users is mostly uniform across age categories (see Figure 3-4). Such an even spread of age cohorts provides some insight that TheBus system is critical to broad sections of the public. The lower usage of those 19 or Under (2%) may reflect the lower trip purposes for School/After School/College activities previously observed.

Figure 3-4: Age of Riders Surveyed
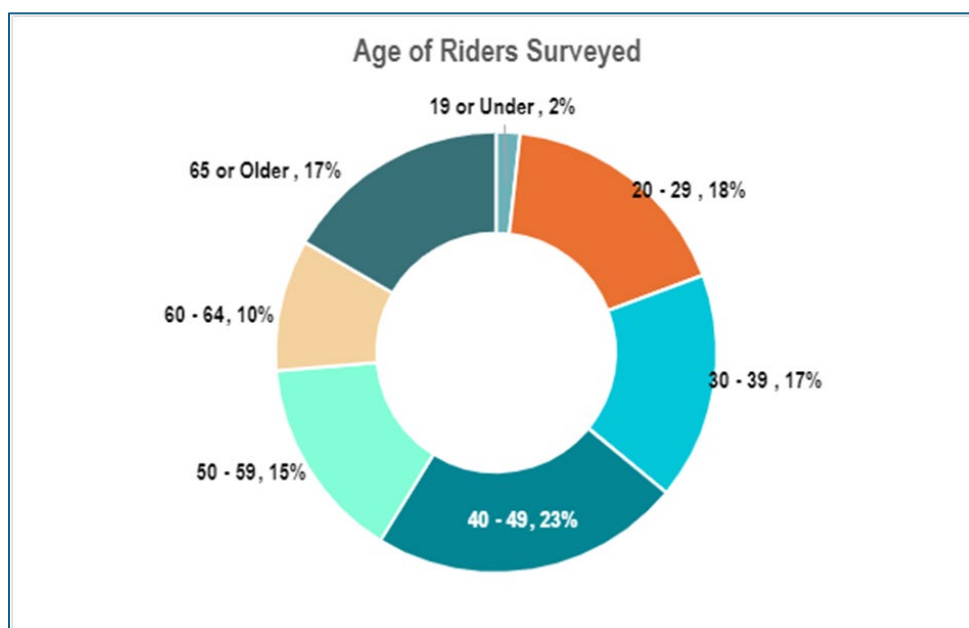
Length of Time Using TheBus
Analyzing the length of time that riders have used TheBus provides important insights into rider loyalty, satisfaction, and overall usage patterns. The survey indicates that a significant percentage of riders have been using the service for several years, with more than 27% reporting that they have been using the service for more than five years. An additional 23% of riders have been using the service for 2 to 5 years, and 24% have been using it for 6 months to 2 years. Figure 3-5 outlines the findings in more detail.

Figure 3-5: Length of Time Rider Has Used TheBus
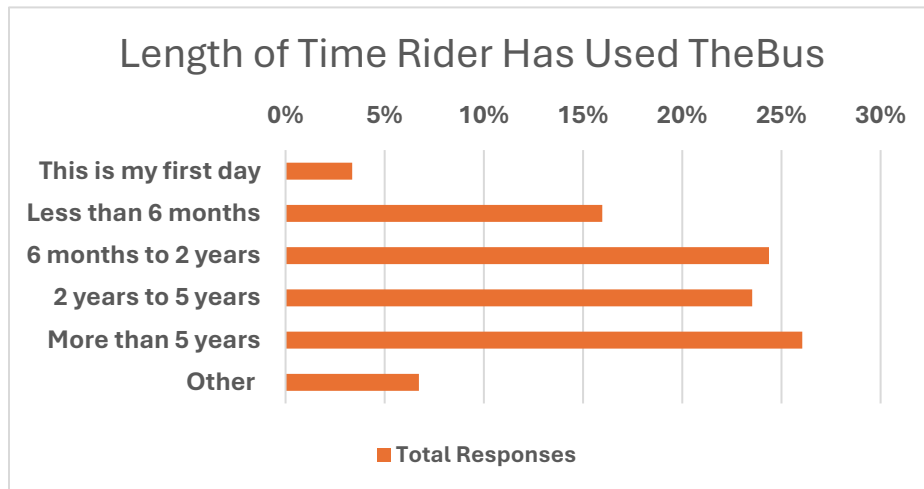
Frequency of Use

The frequency with which they use it can also provide important insights into rider's behavior and preferences. As shown in Figure 3-6, a majority of rider's surveyed (53%) use the service 4 or more days a week, followed by a good number that use the service 2 or 3 days per week (21%). This data underscores the importance of providing reliable service that meets the needs of these regular riders, who depend on TheBus as a vital mode of transportation. However, it may also be worth exploring other ways to encourage more sporadic riders to use the service more frequently, such as by identifying the barriers to usage and addressing them through targeted improvements or outreach efforts.

Figure 3-6: Frequency of Use

Frequency of Use

- 4%
- 10%
- 21%
- 12%
- 53%

Legend:
- 2 or 3 days per week
- 4 or more days per week
- About 1 day per week
- Once or twice a month
- No response
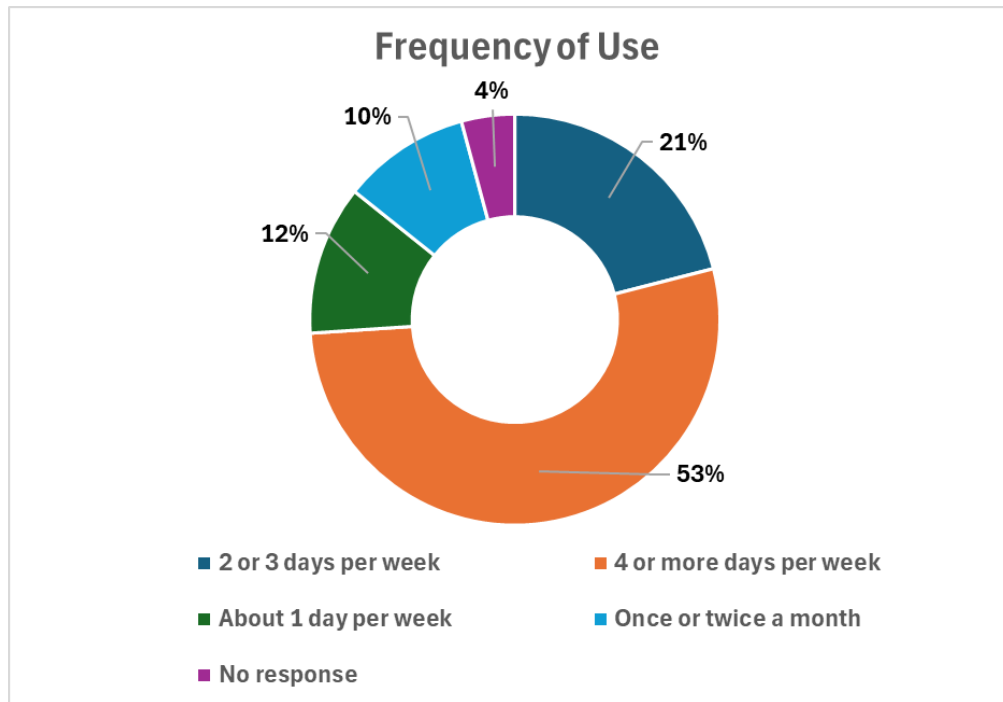
Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

In addition to the previously discussed survey data, this section of the report delves deeper into the on-board survey results by examining customer satisfaction across various aspects of service quality delivered by TheBus. Figure 3-7 categorizes the data into distinct areas, such as Overall Satisfaction, Service Frequency & Timing, and Accessibility & Convenience. Overall, these findings can provide a more comprehensive understanding of overall system performance from those who currently utilize the system.

Figure 3-7: Overall Customer Satisfaction
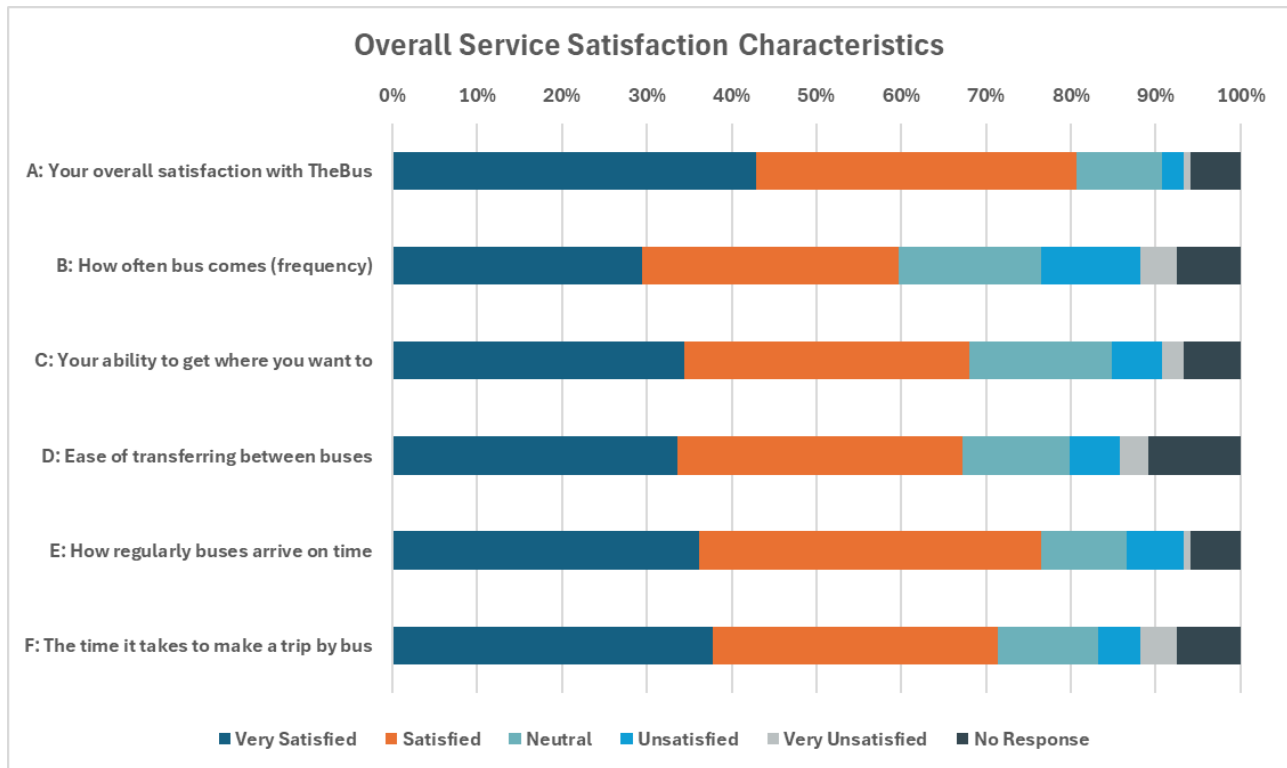
Highlights and findings from the Overall Customer Service Satisfaction (see Figure 3-7 above) responses include:

- **Overall Satisfaction**: Most respondents (51) are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with TheBus service. Only a small number indicated they were "Unsatisfied" or "Very Unsatisfied."

- **Frequency of Service**: Satisfaction with the frequency of the bus service shows a mixed response, with less than 30% "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied." respondents. This indicates an interest in and need for the additional transit services.

- **Ability to Reach Destinations**: Over 65% of respondents were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied") with where TheBus service provides service. This indicates some interest in serving other corridors/parts of Hernando County.

- **Ease of Transferring**: Satisfaction with the ease of transferring between buses is relatively high, with 65% respondents being either "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied." This finding indicates that the system may benefit better from a more centralized transfer facility that may improve route-to-route transfer timings.

- **On-Time Arrival**: More than 75% of respondents are satisfied are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" punctuality (on-time performance) of the buses, which indicates that TheBus system is currently scheduled and timed well for customers overall.

- **Trip Duration**: More than 75% of respondents are satisfied are "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the time it takes to make their trip, indicating that the length of the current routes generally meets their needs.

When asked about the availability and accessibility of information for using TheBus services, over 50% of riders were generally "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied" with the Usefulness of the Token Transit Mobile Ticketing app and the RouteShout bus tracking system (see Figure 3-8). Notably, over 70% of riders were "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied" with the overall access to bus route and bus schedule information.

Figure 3-8: Accessibility of Information
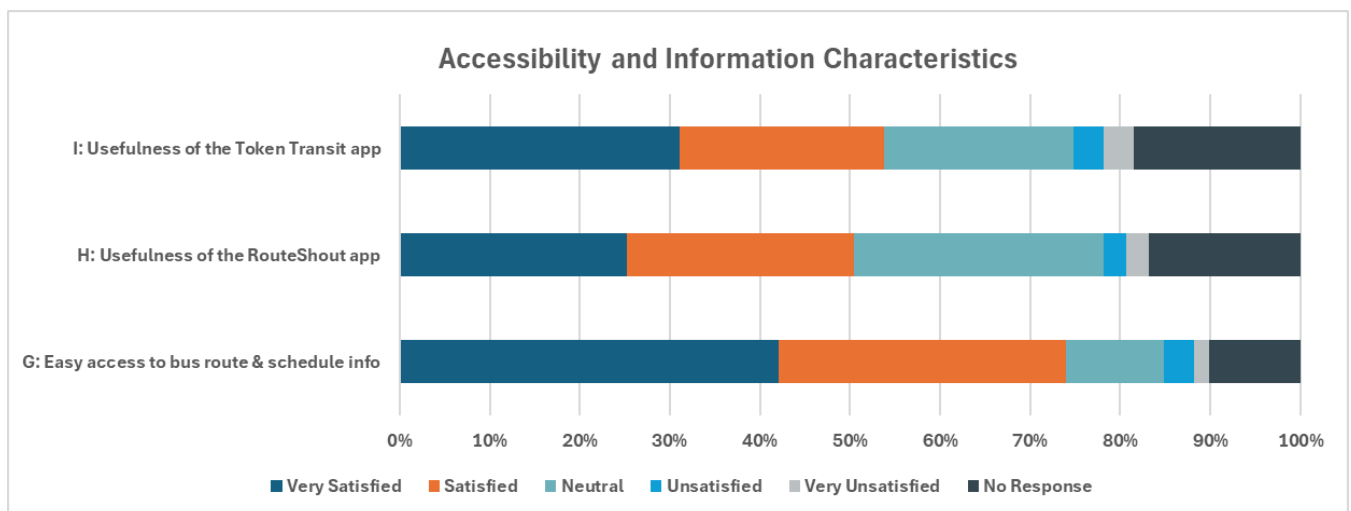
Figure 3-9 presents the Service Frequency & Timing category, a crucial aspect of customer satisfaction in public transportation services. Service frequency and timing directly impact the convenience and reliability of the service, affecting passengers' ability to plan their journeys and meet their daily schedules.

These data are helpful in prioritizing which service changes are most important by highlighting the areas where customer satisfaction scores are comparatively lower, indicating room for improvement. Additionally, focusing on the unsatisfied and very unsatisfied customer responses can provide valuable insights into areas that need immediate attention.

Figure 3-9: Schedule and Timing

Schedule and Timing Characteristics

Legend: Very Satisfied, Satisfied, Neutral, Unsatisfied, Very Unsatisfied, No Response
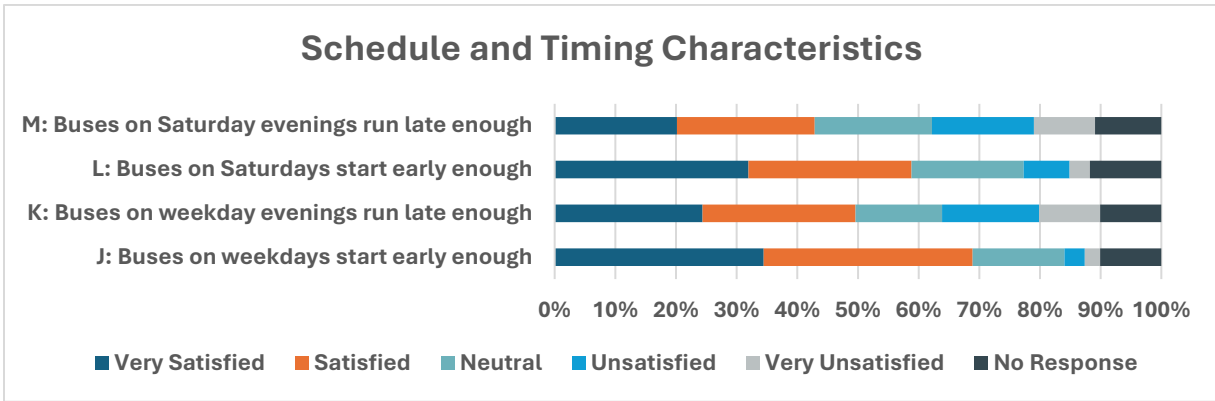
The average scores and dissatisfaction levels for each question in the Service Frequency & Timing indicate some order of needs particular to TheBus system:

- Bus service on Saturdays does not run late enough
- Bus service on Weekdays does not run late enough
- Bus service on Saturdays does not start early enough
- Bus service on Weekdays does not start early enough

Most Important Issues for Riders

When asked what the most important issues to the riders are, several responses were provided that outline additional areas of where the system could be improved (see Figure 3-10 below).

Figure 3-10: Summary of Most Important Issues
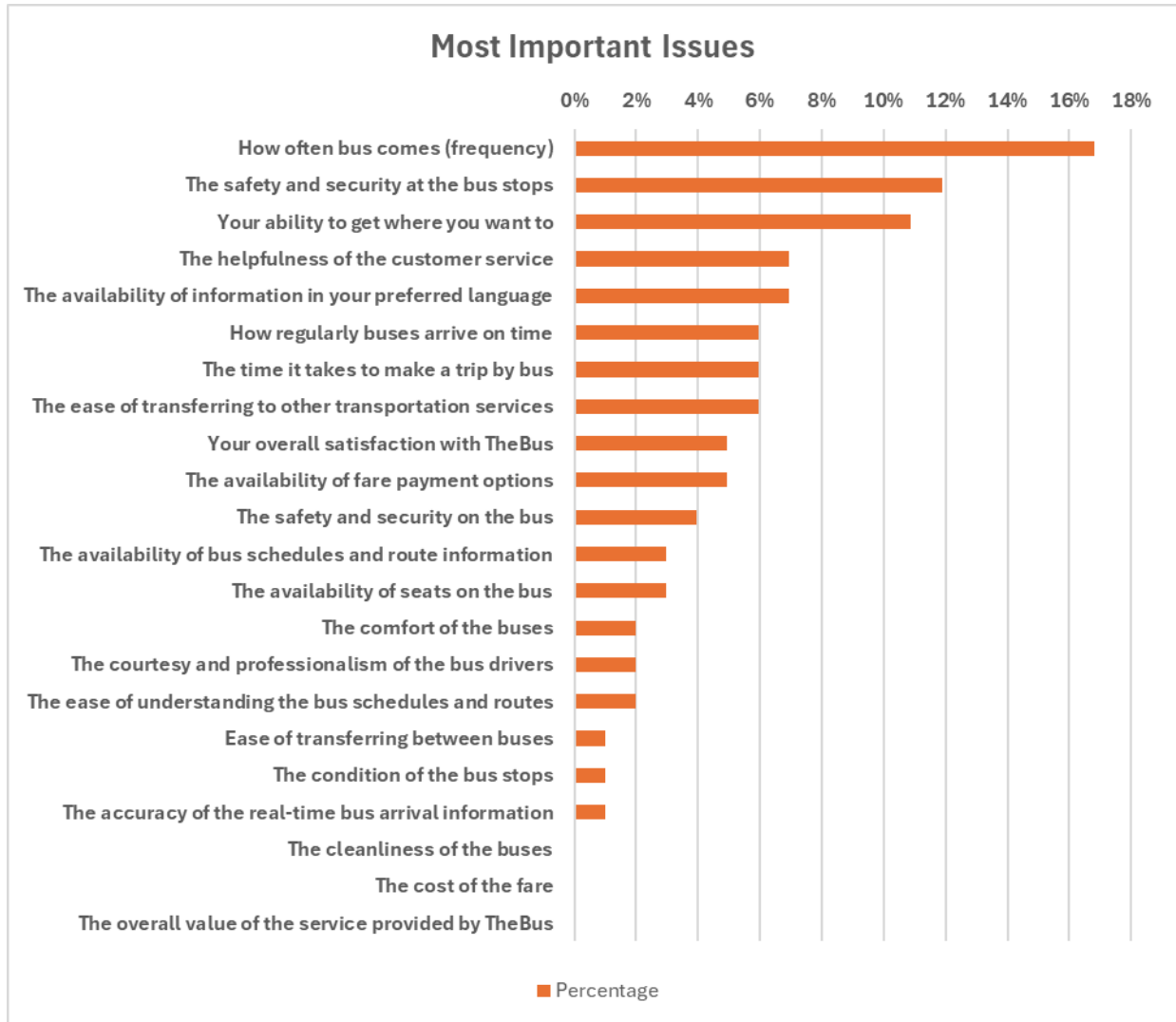
Key issues include bus frequency, safety and security at bus stops, where the bus goes, helpful customer service, bilingual information availability, on-time performance of buses, ease of transferring, and fare payment options.

Phase 1 Online Survey

A Phase 1 online bus rider survey was conducted in July 2024 to collect information on travel frequency, user satisfaction, and desired future improvements. Following the insights gathered from the on-board survey with existing TheBus passengers, we expanded our efforts to gauge the views of the broader Hernando County community via an online survey. This survey aimed to capture the perceptions, needs, and potential concerns of those who may not currently use TheBus but could potentially benefit from the service and current users of TheBus that may have

not been surveyed during the on-board survey effort. Understanding the views of the public is crucial for several reasons. First, it provides a broader perspective on the overall transportation needs of the community. Second, it helps identify barriers that may be preventing potential passengers from using the service. Finally, it offers valuable insights into how TheBus is perceived by the wider community, which can inform our marketing and communication efforts.

An 18-question survey was developed by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) for both bus riders and non-bus riders to gauge their opinions and was distributed via an online survey link. A social media targeted advertisement was sent out throughout specific locations in Hernando County and various locations around northern Pasco County. Online surveys were available in English and Spanish.

The advertising strategy for the online survey included distributing the survey link to Hernando County's Public Information Office, other local partners/stakeholders in the Hernando County area and the launching of a targeted social media campaign specifically for this region (see Figure 3-11 below). The social media advertisements were managed through the CUTR's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Throughout the campaign, the advertisements reached over 26,000 people across Hernando and Pasco Counties. Of those reached, approximately 9% engaged with the content, which included actions such as clicking the survey link, sharing the post, commenting, liking, and other forms of interaction. This level of engagement helped to effectively promote the survey within the targeted communities.

Figure 3-11: Social Media Ad, Post from Hernando County, & Survey Platform
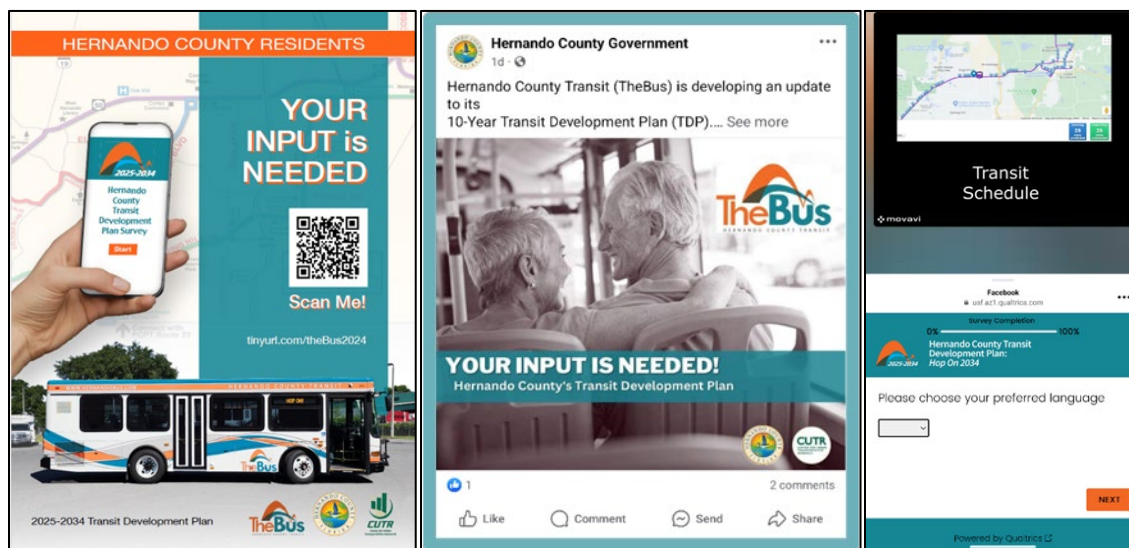
In total, 253 surveys were viewed and/or taken, and 190 surveys were completed. Key findings are organized and summarized below.

Riders and Non-Riders

Those who completed the survey were asked whether they were a rider or non-rider of TheBus system (see Figure 3-12. below). 58% of those who participated in the Phase 1 online survey indicated that they are not riders of TheBus system.

Figure 3-12: Riders and Non-Riders

Have you ever used TheBus Transit?

Yes — 42%

No — 58%
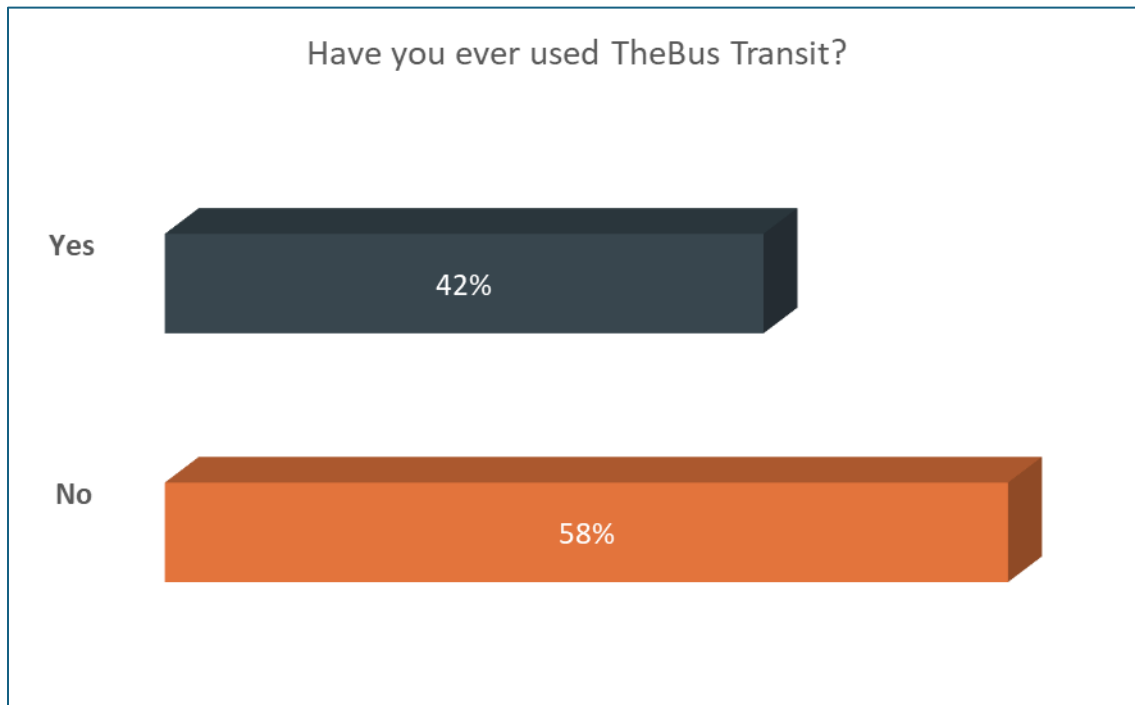
Reasons You Ride the Bus

When asked to identify their primary reason for using TheBus, 39% indicated that they ride TheBus because they do not drive a car (see Figure 3-13). Additionally, a combined 40% of riders stated that they use TheBus either because a car was not available to them or because riding the bus was a more economical option. These responses highlight the significant demand for public transit, particularly among individuals without access to a personal vehicle. The high percentage of riders who rely on TheBus due to lack of vehicle ownership underscores the essential role that transit plays in providing mobility options for residents, making it clear that expanded transit services could better meet the needs of this population. This data also suggests that enhancing transit accessibility and affordability could be crucial in supporting individuals who depend on public transportation for their daily mobility.

:

Figure 3-13: Top Reason Why You Ride TheBus
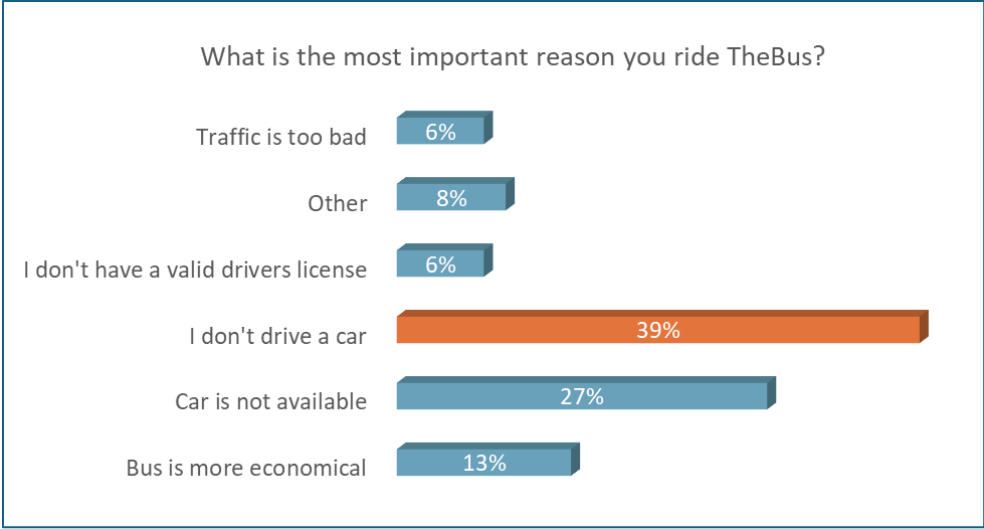
What is the most important reason you ride TheBus?

Reason	Percentage
Traffic is too bad	6%
Other	8%
I don't have a valid drivers license	6%
I don't drive a car	39%
Car is not available	27%
Bus is more economical	13%

Rider and Non-Rider Opinion of TheBus Service

The survey included a question asking both riders and non-riders for their opinions on TheBus service (see Figure 3-14**.**). Among riders, 23% indicated that they consider TheBus service essential, meaning it must be provided. Interestingly, 66% of non-riders expressed support for TheBus (41% stating that it is "essential", 25% noting that it "might be useful to others, but I don't use it"). These findings indicate that there is generally support for having public transportation service available in Hernando County,

Figure 3-14: Rider and Non-Rider Opinion of TheBus Service

Opinion of TheBus Service "Riders" & "Non-Riders"

	Essential (must be provided)	Might be useful to others, but I don't use it	Not essential	Sometimes useful
Yes	21%	2%	1%	1%
No	41%	25%	4%	5%

- ■ Essential (must be provided)
- ■ Might be useful to others, but I don't use it
- ■ Not essential
- ■ Sometimes useful
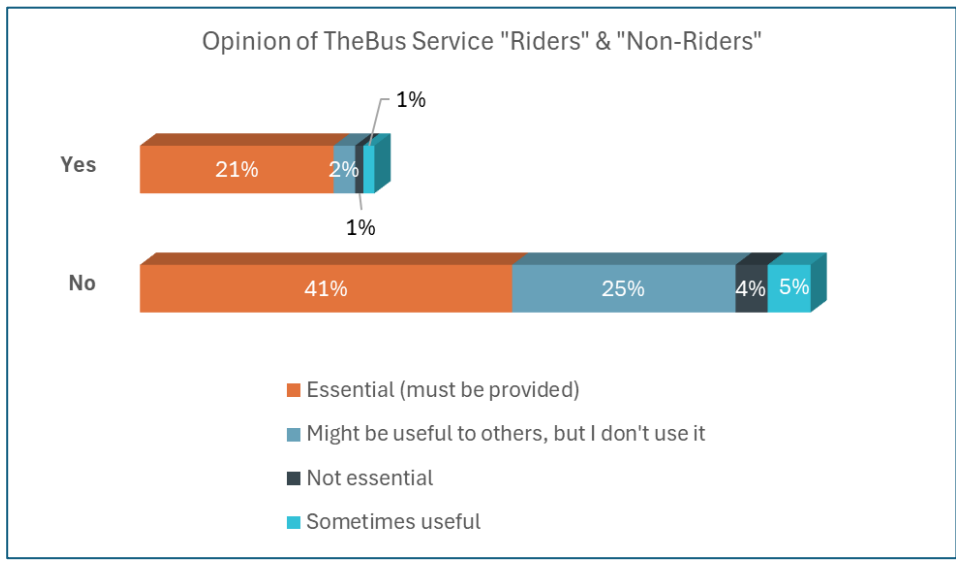
Transit System Improvement Rankings

Respondents that identified as riders were asked to prioritize the transit improvements, they considered most important (see Figure 3-15).

Figure 3-15: Top-Ranked Transit Improvements Requested by Riders

Ranked Transit Improvements "Riders"

Improvement	Percentage
Sunday Service	50%
More Frequent Service	88%
More connecting sidewalks	13%
More bus shelters & benches	25%
Expansion into areas not served	38%
Expand Saturday Hours	75%
Earlier/Later Weekday Service	63%
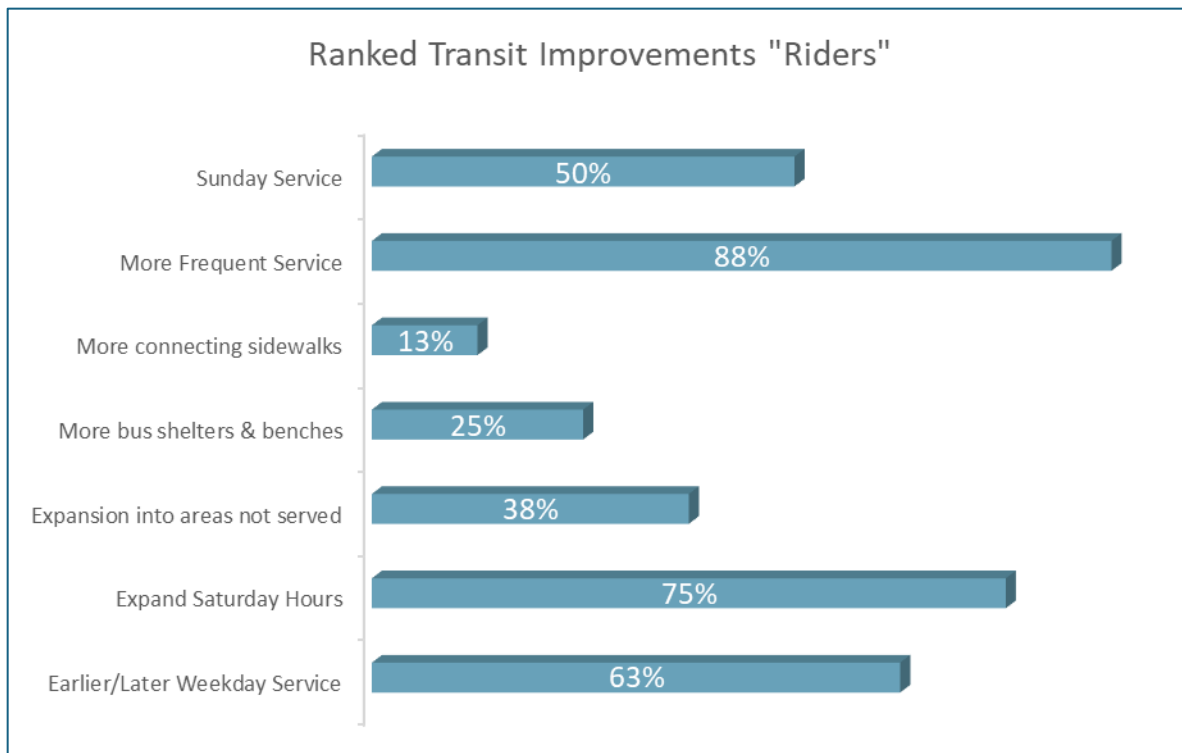
The top-ranked transit improvements included More Frequent Service (88%), Expanded Saturday Hours (75%), Earlier/Later Weekday Service (63%) and Expansion into New Areas (38%).

Phase 1 Online Survey and Advertising Highlights

The most important highlights from the Phase 1 online survey include:

- **Survey Responses:** There were 190 completed survey responses using the target ad approach.

- **Targeted Ad Reach:** The targeted social media advertisement reached over 25 thousand people in the Hernando County and North Pasco County areas.

- **Non-Rider Opinion of TheBus Service:** Over 50% of non-rider respondents selected the opinion TheBus Service is "Essential" and "Might be Useful" for riders.

- **Ranked Transit Improvements**: "Rider" respondents selected "More Frequent Service", "Expand Saturday" and "Earlier/Later Weekday Service" as their top three ranked Transit Improvement Services.

- **On-Time Arrival**: 68% of respondents use TheBus for work, shopping and errands.

- **Bike to Bus**: 38% of riders responded they have used as bike to get to a bus stop to use TheBus.

Phase 2 Online Survey

Following both the Onboard Survey and the Phase 1 Online/Social Media Survey efforts conducted in May-July of 2024, a Phase 2 Online/Social Media Survey was made available to the public during mid-September through October 5th, 2024. For this survey, the public was asked to rank the proposed service and capital improvements identified in the previous survey and public outreach efforts as well as identify and prioritize new transit services they would most like to see.

Phase 2 Online Survey: Advertising and Returns

The Phase 2 online survey was developed using the Qualtrics platform and was made available in both English and Spanish. Once the English version of the survey was finalized, it was promptly translated into Spanish to ensure accessibility for a broader audience. For distribution, a shareable link was generated alongside a QR code specifically designed for printed marketing materials (see Figure 3-16).

Figure 3-16: Phase 2 Online Survey Information Posters

The survey received 226 clicks from the shareable link and 21 scans from the printed QR code. Additionally, other responses were collected through various online platforms, further expanding the survey's reach and participation. In total, 284 surveys were completed (see Figure 3-17).

Figure 3-17: Phase 2 Social Media Survey Characteristics
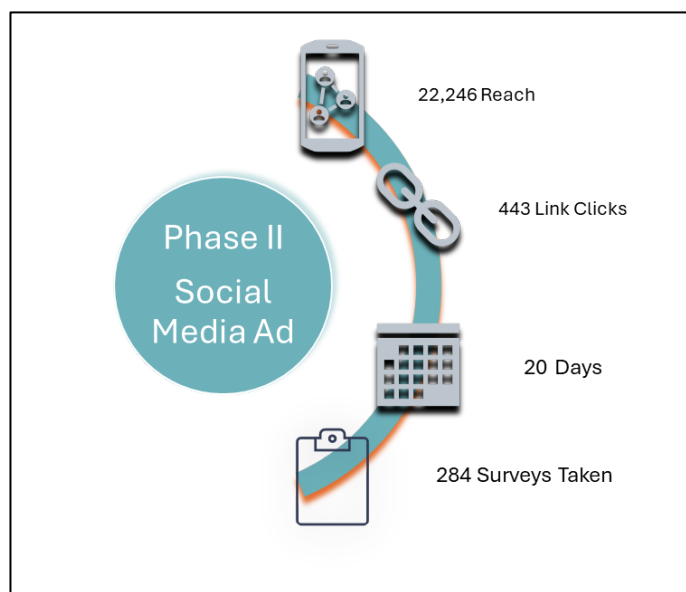
Phase 2 Online Survey: Riders and Non-Riders

Figure 3-18 below shows 60% percent of the those who responded to the Phase 2 online social media survey indicated they have used TheBus service before (see below) as compared to 42% of respondents for the Phase 1 survey. This increase in rider participation for Phase 2 may be due to the wide distribution of the survey posters (see Figure 3-17 above) on all buses and at the two public meeting/open house events held at the West Hernando and Spring Hill Branch libraries. In some cases, riders filled out the surveys during the meetings and often indicated they did not complete an on-board or Phase 1 survey.

Figure 3-18: Phase 2 Survey Participant Response on TheBus Usage
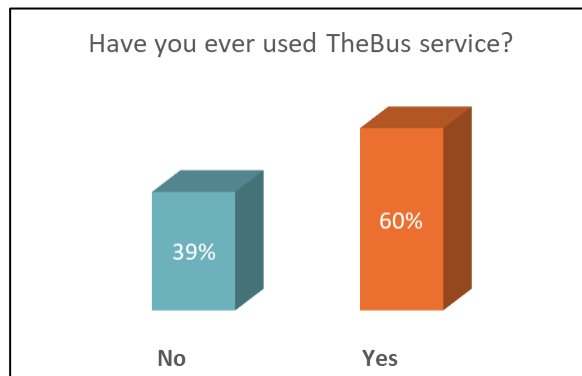
Phase 2 Online Survey: New Routes/Service Segments

Respondents were asked to rank the new bus routes or service segments they would like to see implemented based on a map provided in the survey instrument (see Map 3-1 below).

Map 3-1: Proposed New Route Alignments/Segments
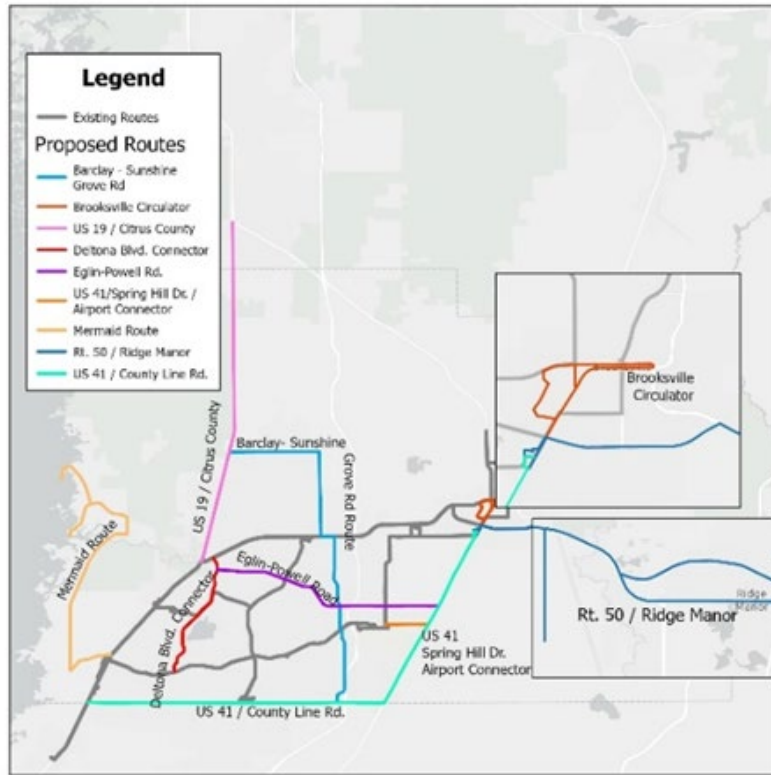
The rankings were determined using a weighted scoring system (see Table 3-4). Ranking of New Routes/Segments) that ordered the nine options from most important (1) to least important (9).

Table 3-4. Ranking of New Routes/Segments

Ranked Proposed Routes	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Rank 9	Weighted Score	Rank	Percent Rank
1 Barclay - Sunshine Grove Rd.	34	24	16	13	13	4	4	4	0	16.68518519	1	0.9
2 Brooksville Circulator	21	20	25	14	11	9	5	1	6	15.44444444	2	0.8
3 US19/Citrus County	13	24	23	14	8	4	12	9	5	14.46296296	3	0.7
4 Deltona Blvd. Connector	9	14	10	29	13	17	9	6	5	13.44444444	4	0.6
5 US 41/Spring Hill Dr./Airport Connector	5	11	10	21	12	30	15	7	1	12.61111111	5	0.375
6 Eglin-Powell Rd.	7	8	12	6	35	21	10	9	4	12.40740741	6	0.4
7 US 41/County Line Rd.	15	3	8	5	9	10	12	5	45	9.87037037	7	0.3
8 Mermaid Route	3	2	6	3	6	9	38	23	22	8.574074074	8	0.2
9 Rt.50/Ridge Manor	5	6	2	7	5	8	7	48	24	8.5	9	0.1
(weighted value)	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1			

Phase 2 Online Survey: New Service/Areas of Importance

Online survey respondents were asked to select up to three regions on the map where you believe more transit services would be beneficial. Using a computer mouse curser or finger/pen for their tablet or phone, respondents were able to select three locations they would like to see additional transit route opportunities in their area that were not previously provided with the ranking questions. A heat map is a great opportunity to use a geographical visual to assist with future decision-making processes, as well as assist with future planning prioritization with new transit routes. Map 3-2 below shows hot spots selected by respondents. In addition to the heat map

Map 3-2. Heatmap of Most Preferred New Service Areas
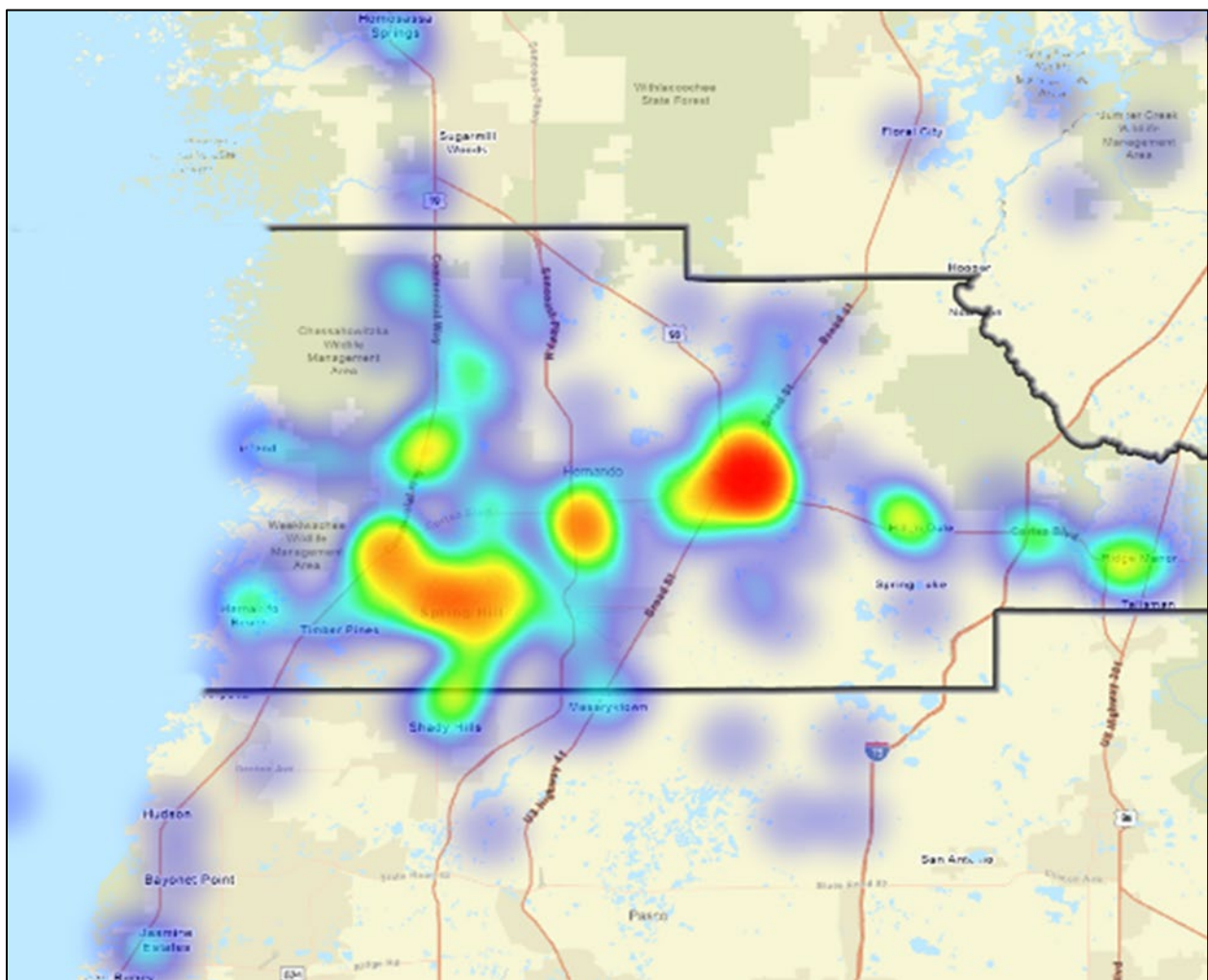
provided, respondents were asked to also list locations they would like the bus service extended. These findings indicate a strong preference for new service around downtown Brooksville, in the Spring Hill area, along Rt. 19, and east along Rt. 50 to Ridge Manor, the beach/coastal areas, and into northern Pasco County.

Phase 2 Online Survey: Existing System Improvements

Table 3-5 below summarizes the improvements rankings of TheBus transit system based on the data collected through the online survey. Respondents were asked to rank the bus improvements they would like to see implemented. The rankings were determined using a weighted scoring system that ordered the seven options from most important (1) to least important (7). Among the options, "Earlier/Later Weekday Service," "New Routes in Unserved Areas," and "More Frequent Service" emerged as the top three selected improvements. Specifically, "Earlier/Later Weekday Service" was ranked as the highest proposed improvements by respondents.

Table 3-5. Ranking of Most Preferred Improvements to the Existing System

Ranked Bus Improvements										
	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Weighted Score	Rank	Percent Rank
1 Earlier/Later Weekday Service	38	33	24	21	18	3	1	24.77142857	1	0.875
2 New Routes in Unserved Areas	39	23	28	19	13	12	4	23.77142857	2	0.75
3 More Frequent Service	21	23	19	18	33	19	5	20.91428571	3	0.625
4 Earlier/Later Saturday Service	6	29	27	34	24	13	5	20.8	4	0.5
5 Addition of Sunday Service	17	10	15	19	15	42	20	17.62857143	5	0.375
6 More Accessible Bus Stops	13	18	14	8	10	14	61	15.94285714	6	0.25
7 Capital/Facility Improvements	4	2	11	19	25	35	42	14.17142857	7	0.125
(weighted value)	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1			

Phase 2 Online Survey: Qualitative Responses

Respondents were invited to suggest additional locations and services where they would like to see expanded transit routes in their area. Below is a list of locations and services that were frequently mentioned by multiple survey respondents.

Locations
- Spring Hill Drive to US41
- Masaryktown
- Mariner Blvd.
- Citrus County
- Barclay Ave

Services
- More transit frequency
- Transit to popular destinations

Phase 1 & 2 Online Survey: Conclusions and Recommendations

The online survey process was a valuable tool for collecting data from both TheBus riders and non-riders. Survey participants were able to rank potential route locations and service improvements, providing insights that are essential for enhancing the transit system. For non-riders, the survey

also served as an opportunity to introduce and promote TheBus service, helping to raise awareness and potentially attract future ridership. From a marketing standpoint, the social media advertisements for both Phase I and II of the survey reached nearly 49,000 people in the Hernando County area. A total of 474 surveys were completed, providing a solid foundation of both qualitative and quantitative data for the Hernando County to examine and utilize.

Some further recommendations include:

- **Recognize the Need for Additional Transit Service & Amenities:** Both Phases of the online/social media survey efforts showed a strong interest from the public (riders and non-riders) in providing an expanded service hours for the current TheBus system, additional routes/route segments in areas currently not served, and improved transit amenities (such as a transfer facility, bus shelters, bike racks, and safer pedestrian connections).
- **Enhance Marketing Program:** To expand the reach of future surveys and engagement efforts, a more robust marketing strategy could be employed. This might include using a variety of online platforms—such as local news websites, email newsletters, and community forums—to target a broader audience. Additionally, partnering with other county departments and local agencies to share survey links through their social media channels could further increase visibility and participation.
- **Increase Exposure to Available Customer Information Systems:** Increase efforts to market transit-related applications to the public, ensuring that potential and current riders are aware of available tools that enhance the convenience of using TheBus.
- **Increase Bicycle/Pedestrian Accessibility:** Incorporate public feedback on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support first-mile/last-mile connections, improving access to transit stops for those walking or biking.
- **Monitor a Likely Increase of Those Without Automobiles or Unable to Drive:** Consider the rising costs of vehicle ownership and an aging population decreasing mobility options for some in the coming years.

Overall, the online/social media survey initiative provided crucial insights and highlighted the potential to further strengthen TheBus services through targeted marketing and by addressing community feedback on multimodal transportation options.

Stakeholder Outreach and Interviews

An important component of the public involvement activities for a TDP includes conducting interviews with key stakeholders and institutions in the community. The perceptions, opinions, and ideas of these important members and institutions regarding public transportation in the community helps inform the future direction of these services. Key stakeholders/institutions can

offer Hernando County different perspectives and insight that may not always be evident until discussed in a TDP development process.

For this effort, the project team completed separate interviews of key community stakeholders and institutions in areas diverse as economic development, education, workforce development training, housing, charitable industries, and other transportation partners. Table 0-3 outlines the stakeholders/institutions interviewed during this process. Additional officials from these areas were contacted, but a scheduled interview was not able to be completed for everyone.

Table 3-6. Stakeholder/Institutions Interviewed

STAKEHOLDER/INSTITUTION	PERSON INTERVIEWED	TITLE/ROLE	DATE INTERVIEWED
Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)	Chris Leffert	Transit Programs Mngr.- Dist. 7	6/24/24
Pasco-Hernando Workforce Development Board	Jerome Salantino	Chief Executive Officer	6/25/24
Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)	Robert Esposito	Executive Director	6/27/24
GOPASCO (Pasco County Public Transportation)	Janina Elkin	Director	7/1/24
United Way of Hernando County	Angie Walasek	Executive Director/CEO	7/11/24
You Thrive Florida (Community Transportation Coordinator - CTC)	Miranda Moldanado	Community Services Director	7/12/24
Citrus County Transit	Joanne Granger	Transit Services Director	7/12/24
Adventure Coast Visitors Bureau	Tammy Heon	Tourism Development Manager	7/12/24
Hernando County - Dept. of Health & Human Services	Veda Ramirez	Dept. Manager	7/16/24
Hernando County - Dept. of Health & Human Services	Velvet Burris	Housing Coordinator	7/16/24
Pasco-Hernando State College (Spring Hill Campus)	Amy Anderson	Provost	7/17/24
City of Brooksville - Community Development Dept.	David Hainley	Community Development Director	7/17/24
Jericho Road Ministries	April Gordon	Community Relations Director	7/19/24
Greater Hernando Chamber of Commerce	Ashley Hofecker	Chief Executive Officer	8/12/24

There were 9 key themes that emerged from our stakeholder/institution outreach and interviews:

1. Regionalism and Inter-County Connectivity

2. Service Gaps and Coverage Issues

3. Access to Job Training and Employment

4. Transportation for Special Populations

5. Technology and Service Efficiency

6. Funding and Resource Constraints

7. Community Outreach and Awareness

8. Tourism and Special Event Transportation

9. Safety and Accessibility Concerns

The following sections summarize the content of these nine themes (note: no direct quotes are attributed to any one individual but is noted by institution).

Regionalism and Inter-County Connectivity
Several stakeholders emphasized the need for improved regional connectivity between neighboring counties, particularly Hernando, Citrus, and Pasco. The representatives from Citrus County Transit underscored the lack of connections to neighboring counties like Sumter, Marion, and Levy, which

restricts mobility for residents needing access to employment, healthcare, and essential services. Similarly, stakeholders from Hernando-Citrus MPO stressed that although community feedback on transit has been positive, challenges remain in expanding services due to funding limitations and the complex politics of regional collaboration.

The representatives of Pasco County Public Transportation (GOPASCO) highlighted the importance of maintaining inter-county connections, such as the Purple Route that links Hernando and Pasco counties. They expressed concern about potential changes to the route that could disrupt these crucial links, which serve both workforce mobility and regional access.

A recurring issue across counties is that while regional connections exist, the lack of cohesive marketing and public outreach prevents residents from fully utilizing them. Stakeholders suggested a joint marketing campaign between counties to boost ridership and raise awareness of cross-county transit services.

Service Gaps and Coverage Issues

Stakeholders across multiple agencies mentioned gaps in transit service coverage, especially in rural areas and on the eastern side of the counties. The representative of the Pasco-Hernando Workforce Development Board noted that the lack of transportation options on Sundays, as well as limited routes in remote areas such as East Hernando County, disproportionately affects low-income individuals and people with disabilities who rely on public transportation to access work and essential services.

Similarly, Citrus County Transit discussed how the absence of inter-county connectivity hinders residents' ability to reach vital destinations, particularly for those who live far from bus routes. In Hernando County, stakeholders from Jericho Road Ministries described the transportation challenges faced by their clients in recovery programs. Many of these clients lack personal vehicles, and the limited public transit options restrict their mobility, particularly after they regain more freedom and responsibilities after completing the first three months of the program.

Representatives from the Hernando County Housing and Human Services Departments highlighted that many low-income and elderly clients living in Brooksville struggle with the limited span and frequency of existing transit services. In some areas, like Ridge Manor, there is a clear need for expanded services to improve access to employment, healthcare, and other vital resources.

Access to Job Training and Employment

A common theme among stakeholders was the role of public transportation in providing access to employment opportunities, especially for low-income individuals and people with disabilities. The Pasco-Hernando Workforce Development Board representative emphasized the critical link between public transit and workforce mobility, particularly in accessing entry-level healthcare and retail jobs, as well as manufacturing positions, which are in high demand. Without reliable

transportation, many residents, especially those living in remote areas, face significant barriers to employment. They suggested developing employer partnerships to support transit services that can better connect workers to key employment hubs.

Similarly, the representative from Pasco Hernando State College-Spring Hill Campus highlighted the need for more flexible transit schedules to accommodate students' needs, noting that many students are struggling financially and cannot afford gas or vehicle maintenance, which affects their ability to attend classes. Additionally, the lack of evening transit services prevents some students from enrolling in night classes, limiting their educational and employment opportunities.

Representatives from United Way echoed these concerns, noting that transportation challenges often prevent clients from accessing jobs, particularly in areas where transit services are inconsistent or nonexistent. They suggested implementing more user-friendly resources and fare systems to help clients, many of whom are unfamiliar with how to navigate public transportation.

Jericho Road Ministries added that many of their clients, who are recovering from addiction or resolving legal issues, have a critical need for transportation to attend job interviews, court dates, and other appointments. The absence of reliable transportation often impedes their ability to secure employment and regain independence.

Transportation for Special Populations
Several stakeholders highlighted the unique transportation needs of special populations, including veterans, the elderly, individuals with disabilities, and those in recovery programs. The representatives from YouThrive Florida emphasized the difficulties many residents face when seeking medical care across county lines, particularly to destinations like the Social Security office in Pasco County or medical appointments in Hillsborough County. Despite the availability of a previous connector service aimed at helping residents reach these critical services, it was underutilized due to a lack of awareness.

United Way echoed similar concerns, noting that a large portion of their clientele, including low-income families and individuals with disabilities, rely heavily on public transportation for accessing essential services like healthcare and job opportunities. The representatives stressed that without reliable transit options, these populations face significant barriers in maintaining employment and attending important appointments.

The Housing and Human Services Departments of Hernando County emphasized the transportation challenges faced by elderly clients. Many clients experience difficulties accessing services due to the limited transit routes and service hours available, which are particularly problematic in more rural parts of the county.

At Jericho Road Ministries, transportation needs are also pressing for clients recovering from addiction or legal issues. Many of these individuals do not have valid driver's licenses, leaving them dependent on public transportation to attend appointments, job interviews, or community

programs. However, the limited-service areas and schedules make it challenging for them to regain independence and access opportunities post-recovery.

Stakeholders across these organizations suggested several potential improvements, including:

- offering travel training programs,
- introducing special bus vouchers, and
- expanding on-demand services to better meet the mobility needs of individuals facing physical or financial barriers.

Technology and Service Efficiency

Several stakeholders emphasized the need for improved technology to enhance transit service efficiency and the overall rider experience. Representatives from Citrus County Transit and GOPASCO pointed out that outdated systems, such as the lack of real-time bus tracking, negatively impact service reliability and limit the ability to provide timely updates to passengers. Both counties expressed interest in adopting modern scheduling software and GPS systems to address service delays and improve operational efficiency.

FDOT District 7 highlighted the critical role that technology plays in maintaining reliable services, particularly in rural areas like Hernando County, and emphasized the need for more robust data collection on service performance, which could help identify delay patterns and improve scheduling. The adoption of advanced scheduling tools and real-time tracking systems were recommended to help manage service disruptions.

Hernando-Citrus MPO echoed these sentiments, stressing that data and analytics are key to transit planning and securing funding for improvements. By integrating better technology into transit systems, both efficiency and service quality can be enhanced, ultimately leading to better ridership outcomes and more satisfied passengers.

Funding and Resource Constraints

One of the most frequently discussed challenges among stakeholders was the issue of limited funding and resource constraints for public transportation. Representatives from Hernando-Citrus MPO highlighted the delicate balance between community demand for more transit services and the financial limitations faced by local agencies. While the community has expressed interest in expanded routes and services, tight budgets and a lack of dedicated funds restrict the ability to meet these expectations.

GOPASCO representatives emphasized the need for more sustainable funding sources, noting that while there are ongoing efforts to improve transit services, budget limitations make it difficult to expand routes or increase frequency. They discussed the potential for a dedicated tax, similar to the "Penny for Pasco" initiative, to support long-term investments in transit infrastructure.

Similarly, the FDOT District 7 representative pointed out that although Hernando County has seen some federal funding for rural transportation services, the County still struggles to maintain and

expand these services due to rising infrastructure costs. The District 7 representative stressed the importance of diversifying funding sources, including seeking public-private partnerships and additional state or federal grants, to ensure that the transit system can meet growing demand.

Representatives from Citrus County Transit also noted the fragmented nature of funding streams and the challenges of relying on inconsistent sources, which complicates long-term planning efforts. They underscored the need for more coordinated and efficient use of available resources to maximize service output with limited funds.

Community Outreach and Awareness

A recurring theme among stakeholders was the need for more effective outreach to inform the public about existing transportation services and gather input on unmet needs. Representatives from Citrus County Transit and the Chamber of Commerce emphasized that there is a general lack of public awareness about the available transit options. They suggested that many potential riders are unaware of key services, especially for connecting rural areas to essential destinations.

Similarly, representatives from YouThrive Florida discussed how limited awareness of transit services, particularly the connector services available for reaching nearby counties, has led to underutilization. Many residents who could benefit from these services, particularly those traveling for medical appointments or accessing government services, are unaware that such options exist.

The Hernando-Citrus MPO also highlighted the importance of continuous public engagement through surveys, advisory committees, and outreach events to keep the community involved in transit planning. However, they acknowledged the challenges of getting residents to participate in in-person meetings, particularly in more rural areas. Digital platforms, online surveys, and other remote engagement tools were suggested as more effective methods to reach a broader audience.

United Way echoed the need for better communication, noting that many of their clients struggle to navigate the transit system due to a lack of clear, accessible information. They suggested that transit agencies could improve by offering simplified guides and multilingual resources to help residents better understand available services.

Tourism and Special Event Transportation

Stakeholders from the Adventure Coast Visitors Bureau highlighted unique transportation challenges related to tourism and special events in Brooksville, particularly during major events like the Blueberry Festival. The area's hilly topography presents a barrier for visitors, making it difficult for them to walk between key locations, such as the hilltop areas and downtown. Representatives suggested implementing a shuttle or trolley service during these events to improve mobility and encourage participation.

Additionally, there was discussion about the need to better integrate public transportation with local trails, as Brooksville is part of the Coast-to-Coast Trail Connector. Representatives from the Visitors Bureau expressed interest in creating bus routes that connect visitors and residents to

trailheads, which would encourage cycling and outdoor recreation as alternative transportation options.

Representatives also noted the changing demographics of Brooksville's visitors, with an increase in younger tourists and a shift from being solely a snowbird destination to more vacation rental-based tourism. This change highlights the growing need for transit services that cater to day-trippers and vacationers, many of whom prefer not to drive. They suggested exploring funding opportunities through grants or local business partnerships to support special transportation services during peak tourist seasons.

Safety and Accessibility Concerns

The representatives from the Pasco-Hernando Workforce Development Board expressed concerns about the safety and accessibility of public transportation for certain populations. They noted several critical safety issues at bus stops, including inadequate lighting, a lack of security cameras, and physical barriers like missing sidewalks. These deficiencies create unsafe environments for passengers, particularly for those waiting for buses during early morning or late evening hours.

Accessibility challenges were also highlighted, particularly for individuals with disabilities. The representatives pointed out that limited-service availability and difficulties in physically accessing transit options have created barriers for many residents, preventing them from fully utilizing public transportation. This disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, such as low-income individuals and those with mobility impairments, who often rely on public transit as their primary means of transportation.

To address these concerns, there was a suggestion to improve infrastructure at bus stops, such as enhanced lighting, the installation of security cameras, and better-designed sidewalks to improve safety and accessibility for all passengers.

CHAPTER 4

SITUATION APPRAISAL

Historical and Institutional Arrangements

Currently, the Hernando County Transit Division (TheBus) is administered by the Transit Department of Hernando County and housed within the County's Department of Public Works (DPW). Operations are provided under contracted services (currently contracted with RATP Dev, USA).

There are currently two types of public transportation services provided by Hernando County, including fixed-route and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) demand response service. Fixed-route service operates along a designated route with set stops on a predetermined schedule. Hernando County's fixed route transit system (TheBus) was initiated on October-November of 2002. Transit service commenced on the Spring Hill Routes (Red and Blue) and the Brooksville Purple Route, which connected to the Spring Hill Routes on SR 50. The system began with 4 buses in Spring Hill and 1 bus in Brooksville. Within its first year, ridership surpassed the 3rd year projection of 200 trips per day, with daily ridership of 219 trips. After 22 months of operation, TheBus was averaging 425 to 434 trips per day. At this time, the service was only available on weekdays. Throughout the 2010s, service was further expanded with the additions of the Green Route, extensions of the Purple Route into Pasco County, and extensive realignments of the Blue and Purple Routes. Since this time, no additional service has been added.

The Hernando County Transit Division provides curb-to-curb ADA service (including a connection to the fixed route service) to eligible riders with a trip origin and destination within ¾-mile on either side of a fixed-route. The Hernando County Transit Division has an eligibility process developed for current and potential users of this system. Overall, this complimentary ADA service meets the FTA requirement for providing complimentary ADA service near existing fixed route services.

The Hernando County BOCC's fixed route (TheBus) and ADA demand response service are primarily funded by 5307 grants from FTA, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and a required County match of local funding, including general funds and a portion of the County's Ninth-Cent Gas Tax. Fare and advertising revenues partially offset the system's operating expenses and funding totals.

A third type of transportation service provided in Hernando County is for the transportation disadvantaged (TD) population. TD service is provided door-to-door for county residents that are unable to drive or do not have available transportation due to age, income or disability. Florida's Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) currently contracts with You Thrive Florida

(formerly known as Mid-Florida Community Services, Inc.) to provide TD and additional ADA service trips that lie beyond the 3/4-mile service area provided by Hernando County. It should be noted that qualifications for using the You Thrive TD (CTD) and Hernando County's ADA (FTA) services differ and reflect their respective state and federal funding sources.

Service Area

The Hernando County TDP study area encompasses all of Hernando County, which has 473 square miles of land area and is the 62nd largest county in Florida (out of 67 total counties) by total land area in square miles (U.S. Census, www.data.census.gov, 2024). From a US Census perspective, Hernando County consists of twenty-one (21) census-designated places (CDPs). The Spring Hill CDP lies in the southern portion of the county, representing the largest CDP area of 62.2 square miles, and serves as the primary population and employment center in Hernando County (see Map 4-1 below).

Map 4-1. Spring Hill Census-Designated Place (CDP)
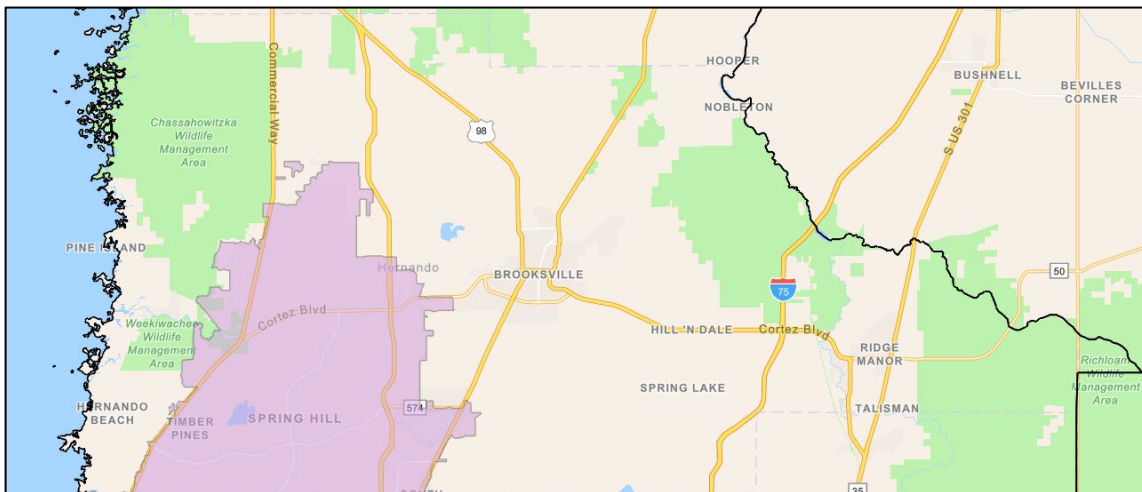
The current transit service (TheBus) area is shown in Map 4-2. This area defines where TheBus currently operates. However, it should be noted that the area of study for this TDP effort includes the entirety of Hernando County, much of which extends well past the existing fixed-route system (see Map 4-1). Understanding the boundaries and features of this study area is crucial for crafting an effective TDP, as it provides the context needed for informed decisions about transit service design and implementation. Analyzing the study area helps the transit agency identify high-demand transit zones and underserved locations, forming the basis for demographic analysis.

Map 4-2. TheBus Fixed Route Service Map

The Bus Existing Route
- Blue
- Green
- Purple
- Red
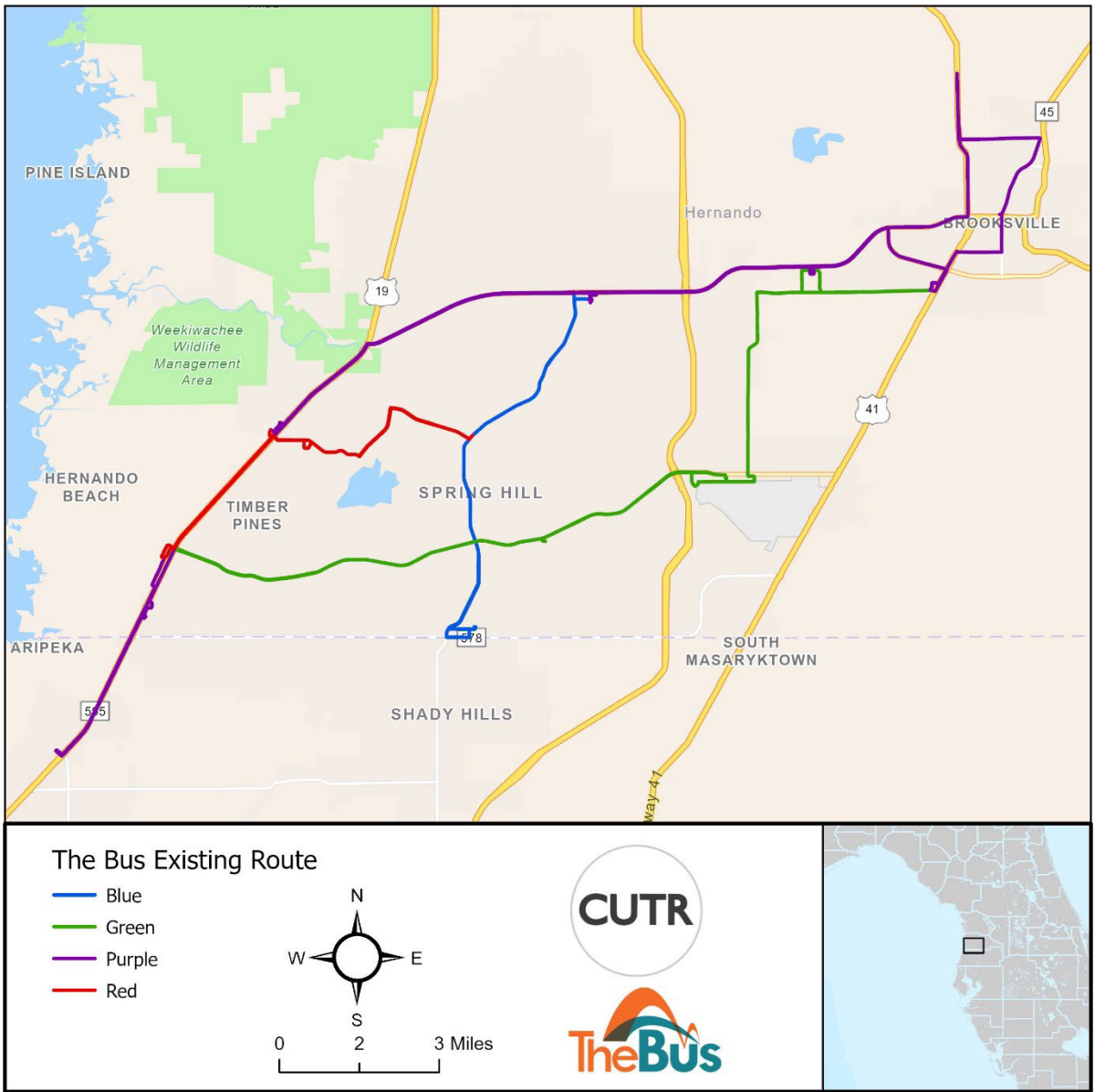
Services Provided

The Hernando County Transit Division operates both fixed-route and complementary ADA paratransit services within the study area, as depicted in Map 4-2. Fixed-route services consist of four (4) routes, as described below:

Purple Route – The Purple Route travels along SR 50 and US 19 to Pasco County, linking Brooksville and Spring Hill. This route connects with Pasco County Public Transportation (GOPASCO), providing a regional transit system connection between TheBus and the Pasco, Hillsborough, and Pinellas County public transportation systems.

- Red Route – The Red Route travels Deltona Blvd. and a portion of Northcliffe Blvd. and US 19.

- Blue Route – The Blue Route travels north-south as a connector along Mariner Blvd. (connecting SR 50 to County Line Rd.). This route serves as a second connector with GOPASCO at Tampa General Hospital Spring Hill.

- Green Route – The Green Route is a connector from Brooksville to Spring Hill and serves the Brooksville/Tampa Bay Regional Airport and Technology Center on Spring Hill Drive, and traverses California Street and Wiscon Road including Tampa General Hospital Brooksville.

As noted above, complementary ADA paratransit service is provided to eligible persons with disabilities living within a ¾-mile buffer zone of the fixed route local bus service.

Service Levels

TheBus provides weekday and Saturday service within Hernando County. The fixed route service operates from 05:00 a.m. to 08:10 p.m. on weekdays and 05:00 a.m. to 07:10 p.m. on Saturdays. All TheBus routes operate at sixty (60) minute headways for both weekday and Saturday service. Table 4-1 outlines key fixed-route service characteristics and provides a detailed overview of the system's route connectivity. Table 4-2 outlines the key transfer points that each route serves and demonstrates where some routes connect to each other.

Table 4-1. Fixed Route System Characteristics

Route	Days of Service	Service Span	Headways	Connecting Routes	Vehicles In Service
Red Route	Mon.-Fri. Sat.	5:47 am - 7:43 pm 5:47 am - 6:43 pm	60 minutes 60 minutes	Blue, Green	1
Blue Route	Mon.-Fri. Sat.	6:00 am - 7:54 pm 6:00 am - 6:54 pm	60 minutes 60 minutes	Green, Red, Purple	1
Purple Route	Mon.-Fri. Sat.	5:20 am - 8:10 pm 5:20 am - 7:10 pm	60 minutes 60 minutes	Blue, Green	3
Green Route	Mon.-Fri. Sat.	6:10 am - 8:03 pm 6:10 am - 7:03 pm	60 minutes 60 minutes	Blue, Purple, Red	2

Saturday service ends one (1) hour earlier for all routes

Table 4-2. Transfer Points Between Routes

Transfer Points Between Routes	Red Route	Blue Route	Purple Route	Green Route
Walmart US 19	x		x	x
Mariner Blvd. & Northcliffe Blvd.	x	x		
Emerald Blvd. (Pasco County)			x	
Pasco-Hernando State College (PHSC) - Spring Hill			x	x
Walmart SR 50		x	x	
Bayfront Health (BKSH)			x	x
Walmart SR 41			x	x
Lakewood Plaza			x	
Spring & Deltona Blvd.				x
Spring Hill & Mariner Blvd.		x		x

Fares

A standard one-way fare is $1.25. Table 4-3 outlines the existing fare structure for regular and discounted fares for both the fixed-route and ADA demand response service.

Table 4-3. Hernando County Fare Structure

Fare	Fare (Regular)	Reduced Fares	Notes
Fixed Route Bus Fares			
1-Way Pass	$ 1.25	$ 0.60	Reduced Fares require Reduced Fare Photo I.D.
1-Day Pass	$ 3.00	$ 1.50	Reduced Fares require Reduced Fare Photo I.D.
7-Day Pass	$ 10.00	$ 0.50	Reduced Fares require Reduced Fare Photo I.D.
31-Day Pass	$ 30.00	$ 15.00	Reduced Fares require Reduced Fare Photo I.D.
Children (age 6 and under)	Free	n/a	n/a
ADA Demand Response Fare			
1-way Fare	$ 2.50	n/a	Requires ADA Photo I.D.

Ridership

Table 4-4 provides an overview of TheBus ridership from 2018 – 2023 by route (please note that a more detailed analysis of future ridership for existing services will be provided in Chapter 6 of this TDP).

Table 4-4. Annual Ridership by Route

Route	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Red	15,651	16,258	13,814	12,280	9,427	11,869
Blue	26,851	28,797	23,216	23,732	27,771	29,275
Purple	52,063	57,975	46,436	39,349	48,213	53,165
Green	37,759	44,804	37,211	34,766	40,891	43,352

Some highlights of these existing routes and their ridership performance include:

- The Purple Route (which travels along SR 50 and US 19 to Pasco County linking Brooksville and Spring Hill) is the most utilized route in the system, providing 53,165 trips in 2023.
- The Green Route connector (which travels from Brooksville to Spring Hill) provided 43,352 trips in 2023.
- The Blue Route connector (which travels along Mariner and connects SR 50 to County Line Rd.) provided 29,275 trips in 2023.

- The Red route (which travels on Deltona Blvd. and a portion of Northcliffe Blvd. and US 19) provided 11,869 trips in 2023.

Capital Assets

The following section outlines the Hernando County Transit Division's current transit capital facilities, programs, rolling stock, and support facilities.

Transit Facilities

TheBus fixed route and ADA services operate out of a county-owned operations and storage facility. All rolling stock (and related support vehicles) and supervisory/dispatch functions and staffing are also housed at this site. This facility is located at:

- 700 Aeriform Dr., Brooksville, FL, 34601

Major maintenance activities and fueling of rolling stock occurs at the neighboring Hernando County Fleet Management site at:

- 1525 E Jefferson St., Brooksville, FL, 34601

Currently, TheBus system has no official transfer station/facility. Transfers are commonly made at either on-street locations/bus stops or at other locations (such as a Wal-Mart, shopping center, school, etc.). TheBus has the following bus stop-related infrastructure:

- 237 bus stops systemwide
- Two new bus shelters:
    - City of Brooksville (City Hall Parking Lot)
    - Airport/Hernando County Administration Bldg.

Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan

Transit agencies in the United States are required to develop a transit asset management (TAM) plan if they own, operate, or manage federal capital assets used to provide public transportation that utilizes federal financial assistance under 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53 as a recipient or subrecipient. TAM is an FTA business model developed to ensure that transit agencies continually review the condition of their capital assets to keep them in a state of good repair (SGR). TAM plans became a requirement by FTA in late 2018. At the time of this publication, all TAM plans must cover a four-year planning horizon. Hernando County Transit has an established TAM plan and is a TAM Tier II transit agency.

The Hernando County Transit Division has developed a TAM planning process that evaluates all rolling stock and capital assets, assesses the condition of the assets, identifies financial resources, evaluates existing maintenance and operational plans, and develops a capital replacement plan. County staff currently enter and update all assets by logging the VIN number, mileage, maintenance

history, and repair history of all vehicles on an annual basis. In addition, the vehicles and equipment are consistently reconciled with existing route characteristics, with estimates of future mileage by year forecasted to provide useful estimates of when vehicles may meet their useful life benchmarks. A similar process is required and conducted for other capital assets, including administrative/maintenance facilities and bus shelters. In total, good TAM planning aids in the management of a continually safe and operational transit system. For an overview of a recent revenue service and administrative vehicle inventory (which also demonstrates how the agency tracks mileage between critical maintenance periods), see Table 4-5.

Table 4-5. Vehicle Inventory/Maintenance Tracking

EQ #	EQ Desc	Year	Make	Model ID	VIN	Date Last PM Performed	Current Life Meter	Last PM Performed	Next PM Mileage Due	PM Mileage Remaining
19429	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2015	GILLIG	29' Low Floor	15GGE271XF1092952	5/7/2024	489,286	486,830	492,830	3544
19441	DODGE CARAVAN	2015	DODGE	ADA VAN	2C4RDGCG2FR705653	7/7/2023	89,938	84,658	90,658	720
20038	FORD E450	2016	GLAVAL	CUTAWAY	1FDFE4FS6HDC01266	4/23/2024	165,812	162,298	168,298	2486
20041	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2016	GILLIG	29' Low Floor	15GGE2719G1093155	7/1/2024	418,332	417,213	423,213	4881
20042	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2016	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	15GGE2710G1093156	6/20/2024	408,003	405,526	411,526	3523
20054	FORD E450	2016	GLAVAL	UNIVERSAL 23'	1FDFE4FS5HDC01288	5/1/2024	197,244	194,260	200,260	3016
20055	FORD E450	2016	GLAVAL	UNIVERSAL 23'	1FDFE4FS3HDC01287	5/6/2024	147,173	142,161	148,161	988
20056	FORD E450	2016	GLAVAL	UNIVERSAL 23'	1FDFE4FS5HDC01260	12/7/2023	112,237	109,216	115,216	2979
20079	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2017	GILLIG	29' LOW FLOOR	15GGE2711H3093205	6/26/2024	366,145	363,828	369,828	3683
20828	TRANSIT CUTAWAY	2017	GLAVAL	CUTAWAY	1FDFE4FS3HOC75941	6/26/2024	165,066	164,755	170,755	5689
21367	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2018	GILLIG	29' LOW FLOOR	15GGE2712J3093350	6/6/2024	369,652	365,380	371,380	1728
22093	FORD E450	2019	Champion	CUTAWAY	1FDFE4FSXKDC14092	7/5/2024	115,665	115,497	121,497	5832
22136	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2019	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	15GGE2711K3093289	6/5/2024	316,023	312,200	318,200	2177
22137	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2019	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	15GGE2718K3093290	6/28/2024	288,458	287,225	293,225	4767
22256	CHEVROLET	2019	EQUINOX	SUV	3GNAXHEV8KS640835	6/6/2022	27,902	27,666	33,666	5764
22363	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2019	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	15GGE2718K3093595	7/3/2024	267,616	267,615	273,615	5999
22650	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2020	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	15GGE2710L3093639	6/4/2024	190,511	187,517	193,517	3006
22651	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2020	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	15GGE2719L3093638	5/17/2024	215,326	211,226	217,226	1900
22676	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2021	GILLIG	29'Low Floor	93867	6/13/2024	166,796	162,215	168,215	1419
22983	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2023	GILLIG	29' Low Floor	15GGE2715P3094419	8/31/2023	2,913	2,907	8,907	5994
22985	GILLIG LOW FLOOR	2023	GILLIG	29' Low Floor	15GGE2711P3094420	9/28/2023	2,887	2,879	8,879	5992

In addition to rolling stock and support vehicles, Hernando County Transit tracks additional capital assets as part of its TAM plan requirements, including the operations and storage facility. Although not required as part of the TAM planning process, a detailed bus stop inventory (237 bus stops and 2 bus shelters) is also maintained by the agency. Additional transit assets not required in the TAM plan are managed and tracked through an established Hernando County asset tagging/tracking process.

As part of the FTA TAM Plan requirements, asset performance and associated targets must be developed and maintained to provide an accurate reflection of the most recent age and condition of each asset class. Annual performance and targets for assets are submitted and appear annually in the Hernando/Citrus MPO's updated transportation improvement plan (TIP) update. The Hernando County Transit Division's most recent asset targets (2022) are shown in Table 4-6.

Table 4-6. Hernando County Transit Asset Management Targets (2022)

Hernando County Asset Category - Performance Measure	Asset Class	FY 2024 Asset Condition	FY 2025 Target
Rolling Stock			
Age - % of revenue vehicles within a particular asset class that have met or exceeded their ULB	Bus	Fair	15%
	Cutaway Bus	Fair	20%
	Minivan	Fair	0%
Equipment			
Age - % of non-revenue vehicles within a particular asset class that have met or exceeded their ULB	Generator	Good	0%
Facilities			
Condition - % of facilities with a condition rating below 3.0 on the FTA Transit Economic Requirements Model (TERM) Scale	Maintenance	Good	0%

Source: Hernando/Citrus MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY2025-2029

Transit Safety

The Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) Rule, which became effective on July 19, 2019 (49 C.F.R. Part 673), requires certain operators of public transportation systems that are recipients of FTA grant funds to develop safety plans that include the process and procedures necessary for implementing safety management systems (SMS). The rule applies to agencies that receive FTA Section 5307 funds, but not to those who only received FTA Section 5310 and 5311 funding. In addition, small public transportation providers (with 100 vehicles or less) may have their states draft a PTASP on their behalf. In either case, the agency is responsible for implementing the safety plan.

A PTASP should include the following components:

- An approval by the agency's accountable executive and board of directors;
- The designation of a chief safety officer;
- The documented processes of the agency's SMS, including the agency's safety management policy and processes for safety risk management, safety assurance, and safety promotion;
- An employee reporting program;
- Performance targets based on safety performance measures established in FTA's National Public Transportation Safety Plan (NSP); and
- A process and timeline for conducting an annual review and update of the safety plan.

The Hernando County Transit Division's PTASP and associated safety targets was adopted in May of 2022 (see Table 4-7). Within 180 days of the adoption of this first PTASP, the County was required to set transit safety performance targets for its planning area. This effort is similar to the development of annual transit asset management (TAM) performance targets (see above). In this case, performance targets for the following areas of transit safety are regularly set and monitored: fatalities (total and rate), injuries (total and rate), safety events (total and rate), and system reliability. These are the top measures and targets that Hernando County Transit strives to meet every year to run a safe and secure system. The adopted targets include:

Table 4-7. Hernando County Adopted Safety Targets (May 2022)

Transit Mode	Fatalities (total)	Fatalities (rate)	Injuries (total)	Injuries (rate)	Safety Events (total)	Safety Events (rate)	System Reliability
Hernando County Board of County Commissioners							
Fixed Route Bus	0	0	1	0 (per 100,000 VRM)	1	0 (per 100,000 VRM)	1 (per 100,000 VRM Failures)
Demand Response	0	0	0	0 (per 100,000 VRM)	0	0 (per 100,000 VRM)	0 (per 100,000 VRM Failures)

Source: Hernando/Citrus MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY2025-2029

Technology

Since the adoption of the last TDP in 2019, the Hernando County Transit Division has invested in several information technology systems that are beneficial and convenient for TheBus customers and assist in more efficient operations. One such system is a next bus app called RouteShout (see Figure 4-1). RouteShout is a smart phone app that provides real-time bus arrival/departure

information directly to one's mobile device. When using the app on a phone or a personal device, customers can access real-time information on when the next bus will arrive based on their location (see Figure 4-2).

Figure 4-1: Screenshot of Hernando County RouteShout App Information
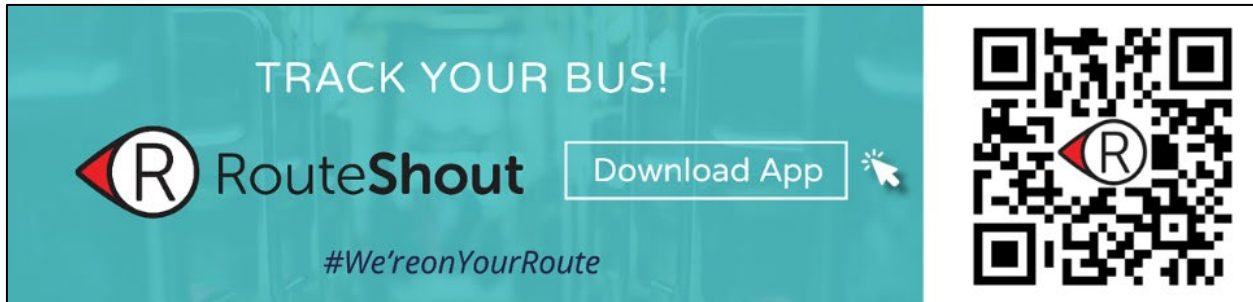
Figure 4-2: Screenshot of Blue Route on the RouteShout App
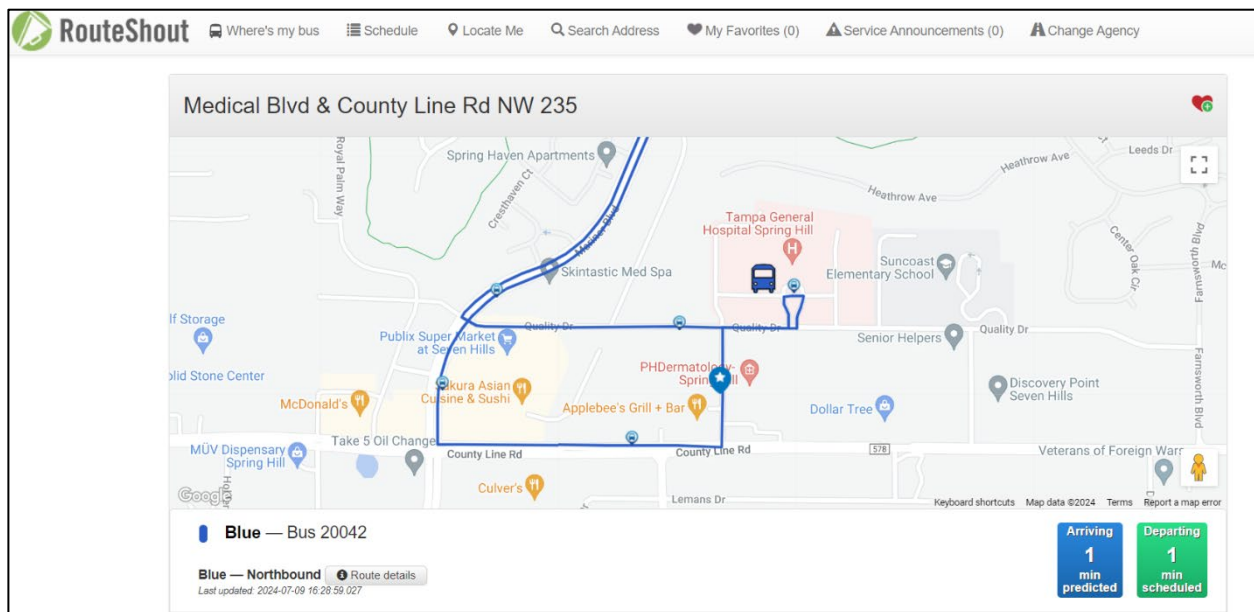
The Hernando County Transit Division also instituted a mobile ticketing option for its customers. The Token Transit app allows customers to purchase bus fare and passes from a mobile device. This option allows for greater flexibility for customers and shortens the time needed for a transaction with the farebox and/or operator of the bus.

Technology Assessment

Although the Hernando County Transit Division has embraced and adopted an admirable number of technological improvements for the system, additional technology investments that improve safety, operations, maintenance, or customer information may be required.

Recently an assessment of existing RouteShout tablets was performed and the tablets were deemed outdated. A migration project is in process from RouteShout tablets to Novus and Streets mobile data terminals (MDT). This upgrade transition is expected to:

- Improved software and interface
- Reduced charges on licenses
- Provide cost certainty of annual maintenance
- Complete cloud-hosted services
- Enhance full, on-going customer care
- Provide modular solutions designed for growth and changes
- Allow services and migration created with future options

As technology and transit evolves, the Hernando County Transit Division should consider an annual evaluation of technology needs and conduct a 5-year assessment and needs program.

Organizational Issues and Coordination

Hernando County's public transportation services are identified as the Mass Transit (Division) in the most recent Hernando County organizational chart from January of 2024 (see Figure 4-3). In early 2024 and after the time of the publishing of the organizational chart, the Mass Transit Division was reorganized to operate under the Public Works Division (previously under the Development Services Division). For this study, the agency is referred to the "Hernando County Transit Division" in general, and "TheBus" when analyzing current and planned services.

Hernando County Transit Division staff currently coordinate with several other divisions to develop and manage transit projects, including but not limited to assistance from staff responsible for procurement, engineering, legal counsel, maintenance, and project management. Future planning coordination with municipal, county, state, and federal partners will be needed to enhance service and capital programs.

Figure 4-5 outlines the current organizational structure for the Hernando County Transit Division (as of July of 2024). As a smaller transit agency, the Hernando County Transit Division has minimal staffing for key areas of administration, operations and finance/grants. Many other critical functions occur in coordination with other divisions (as outlined above). However, the successful implementation of additional transit service, facilities, and amenities that are expected in the

future requires the County to make sure that the Hernando County Transit Division has or can secure expertise and/or more staffing in the following critical areas:

- Customer service
- Mechanics (if fleet size grows)
- NTD reporting
- Performance management
- Planning (Title VI, asset management, TDP)
- Procurement
- Project management (ITS, construction, facilities, amenities)
- Scheduling

Figure 4-3: Hernando County Organization Chart (January 2024)
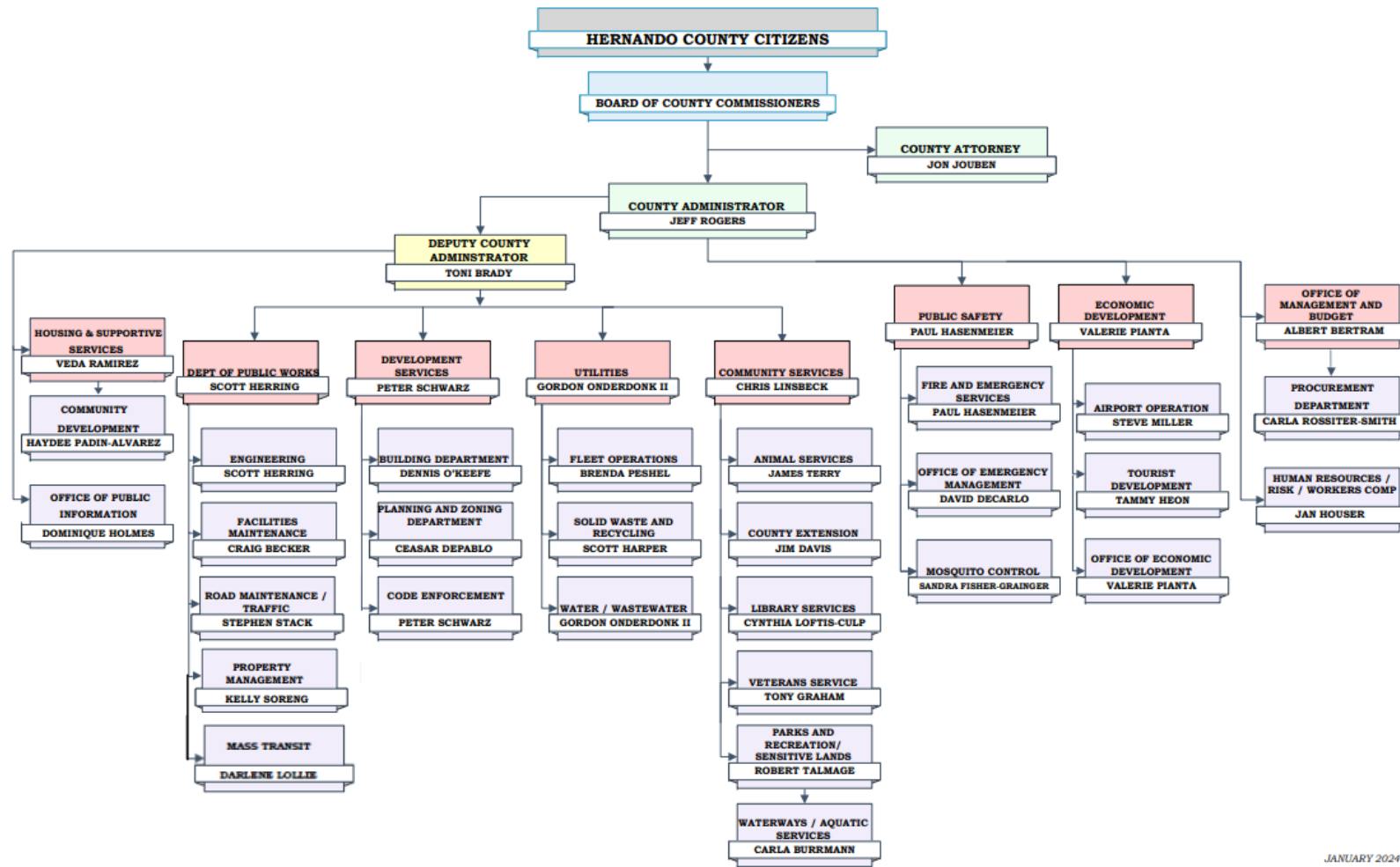
JANUARY 2024

Figure 4-4: Hernando County Transit Division Organization Chart (July 2024)
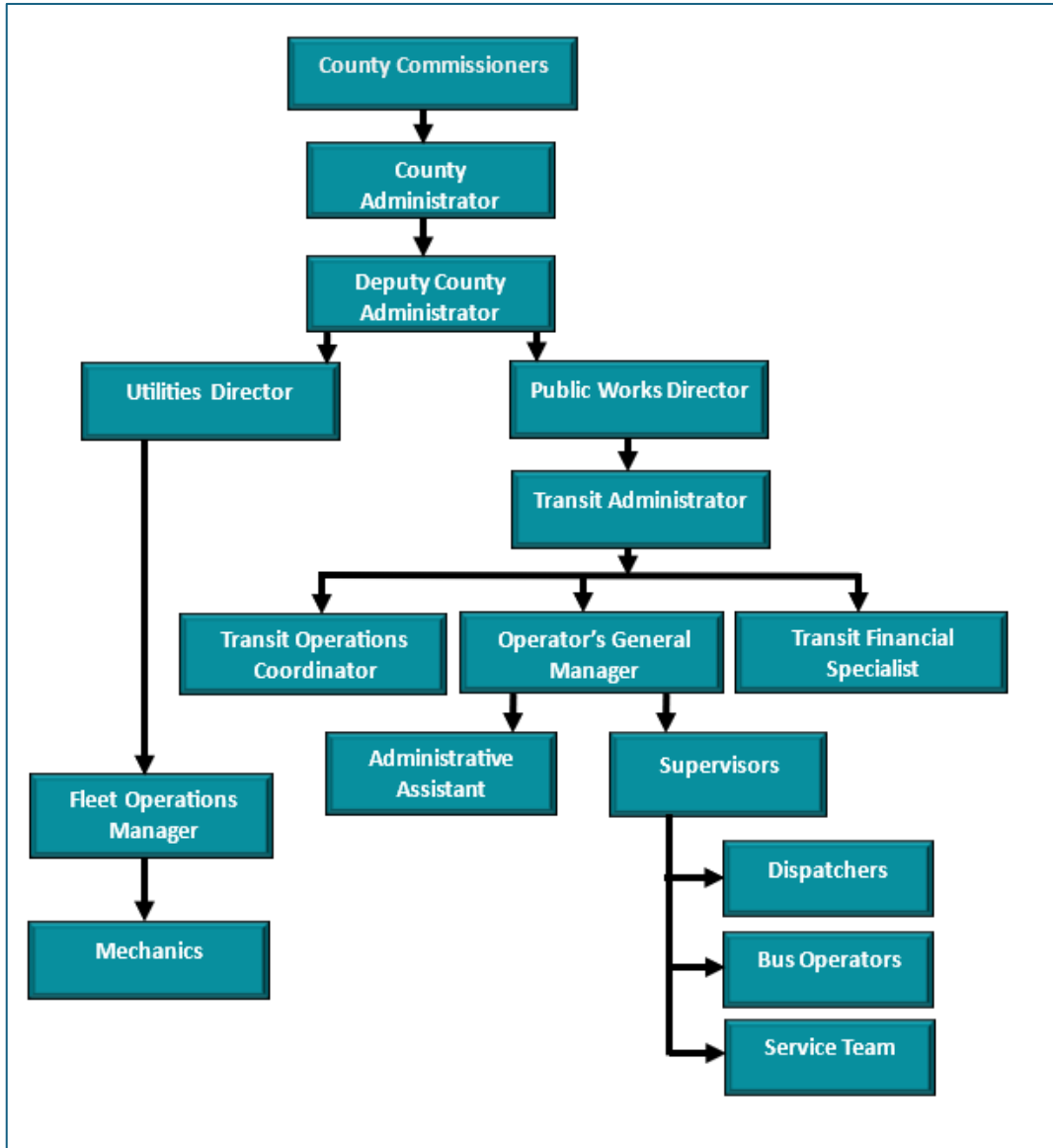
Review of Plans and Studies

This section reviews transit policies and plans at local, regional, state, and federal levels of government to identify policies or issues that may have implications for Hernando County's public transportation (TheBus) services. Findings from this review will show that the Hernando County Transit Division is consistent with other local and regional planning efforts, as well as identify opportunities to enhance transit services and refine relevant TDP goals and objectives. In addition, the results of this review serve as a component of meeting the "Relationship to Other Plans" requirement of the current TDP Rule.

As part of this effort, the following plans and programs most relevant to public transportation in Hernando County were reviewed:

1. Federal plans/programs
   a. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law
   b. Inflation Reduction Act
2. State plans/programs
   a. Florida Transportation Plan (FTP)
   b. State of Florida Transportation Disadvantaged 5-Year/20-Year Plan
   c. Florida's Strategic Intermodal System Policy Plan (2016)
3. Regional plans/programs/studies
   a. Tampa Bay Economic Development Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for 2023-2027
   b. West Central Florida Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) 2045
4. Local plans/programs/studies
   a. Hernando County 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
   b. Hernando/Citrus 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)
   c. The Hernando/Citrus MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2025 – FY 2029
   d. The Hernando/Citrus MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP)
   e. Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) FY 2024-2028 / Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) FY 2019-2023
   f. Hernando County 2040 Comprehensive Plan
   g. City of Brooksville Comprehensive Plan

Federal Plans/Programs

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), also known as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2022, has a profound impact on public transportation in the United States. The law includes substantial funding and policy changes aimed at modernizing and expanding public transit systems. The BIL includes the following key impacts:

1. Significant Funding Increases

The BIL provides an unprecedented level of funding for public transportation, with over $90 billion allocated over five years. This funding supports a wide range of transit projects, including:

- State of good repair (SGR) grants: addressing the maintenance backlog and improving the reliability and safety of existing transit infrastructure.
- Capital investment grants: funding new transit projects and expanding current transit systems, including rail, bus rapid transit (BRT), and streetcar systems.

2. Modernization and Expansion

The law emphasizes the modernization and expansion of transit systems to meet current and future demands. Key areas of investment include:

- **New and expanded transit lines:** supporting the construction of new transit lines and the extension of existing ones to improve connectivity and accessibility.
- **Station and facility upgrades:** enhancing transit stations and facilities to be more accessible, safe, and user-friendly.

3. Transition to Clean Energy

The BIL includes significant funding for transitioning public transit fleets to cleaner energy sources. This includes:

- **Low- and no-emission vehicle grants:** helping transit agencies purchase electric buses and other zero-emission vehicles.
- **Charging and fueling infrastructure:** supporting the installation of electric vehicle charging stations and other necessary infrastructure.

4. Safety and Accessibility Improvements

Safety and accessibility are major focuses of the BIL. Investments include:

- **Pedestrian and cyclist safety:** enhancing infrastructure to protect pedestrians and cyclists near transit facilities.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance:** upgrading transit stations and vehicles to ensure full accessibility for all riders.

5. Resilience and Climate Adaptation

The law also prioritizes making transit systems more resilient to climate change and extreme weather events. This includes:

- **Resilience grants:** funding projects that strengthen the resilience of transit infrastructure against natural disasters and climate-related impacts.

6. Equity and Inclusion

Equity is a central theme of the BIL, aiming to ensure that transit improvements benefit all communities, particularly underserved and disadvantaged areas. Key measures include:

- **Equity-focused grants:** supporting projects that improve transit services in low-income and historically marginalized communities.
- **Transit oriented development (TOD):** encouraging development around transit hubs to create more livable, accessible, and equitable communities.

7. Workforce Development

The BIL supports workforce development programs to train and upskill workers for jobs in the transit sector. This ensures that there is a skilled workforce ready to build, maintain, and operate modern transit systems.

8. Innovation and Technology

The law promotes the adoption of innovative technologies to improve transit services, including:

- **Smart transit systems:** implementing advanced technologies for real-time tracking, automated fare collection, and other smart transit solutions.
- **Research and development:** funding research to develop new technologies and practices for efficient and sustainable transit operations.

Overall, the BIL represents a comprehensive investment in the future of public transportation, aimed at creating a more efficient, sustainable, and equitable transit system across the United States.

Situation Assessment: Clearly the Federal BIL has implications to Hernando County Transit Division for service improvements including safety, operational modernization, technology, customer service and accessibility, and workforce development. The current Hernando County transit program is consistent with this federal legislation.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) 2022

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 has several provisions that impact public transit agencies, primarily through funding opportunities and incentives aimed at promoting sustainable and resilient transportation systems. Some key ways the IRA affects public transit agencies include:

1. Funding for Clean Transit Initiatives

The IRA allocates significant funding for the transition to cleaner transit options. This includes grants and incentives for the adoption of electric buses and other zero-emission vehicles. Public transit agencies can apply for these funds to replace aging diesel fleets with more environmentally friendly alternatives.

2. Investment in Infrastructure

The act provides funding for the development and improvement of public transit infrastructure. This includes building and upgrading transit stations, installing charging infrastructure for electric buses, and enhancing overall transit system resilience to climate change.

3. Operational Support

In addition to capital investments, the IRA offers operational support to public transit agencies. This can help cover the costs associated with maintaining and operating a modernized, greener fleet, ensuring that these agencies can continue to provide reliable service while transitioning to more sustainable practices.

4. Research and Development

The IRA supports research and development in the transportation sector. Public transit agencies can benefit from advancements in technology and best practices that emerge from federally funded research, helping them to implement cutting-edge solutions for efficiency and sustainability.

5. Equity and Accessibility

The act emphasizes equity and accessibility, ensuring that public transit improvements benefit all communities, including underserved and low-income areas. Funding and programs are designed to make public transit more accessible and affordable for all users.

6. Climate Resilience

The IRA includes measures to enhance the climate resilience of public transit systems. Funding is available for projects that protect transit infrastructure from extreme weather events and other climate-related impacts.

7. Workforce Development

Public transit agencies can also benefit from workforce development programs funded by the IRA. These programs aim to train and upskill workers for jobs in the clean transportation sector, ensuring that there is a skilled workforce ready to support the transition to greener transit systems.

Overall, the IRA represents a significant investment in the future of public transit, promoting cleaner, more efficient, and more resilient transportation options for communities across the United States.

Situation Assessment: Along with the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) provides opportunities and support for improvements and resources for Hernando County's public transportation and is mutually consistent in perspective.

State Plans/Programs

2055 Florida Transportation Plan (FTP)
The FTP, updated every five years, provides a framework to guide the state's transportation future over a 30-year planning horizon. The FTP is developed by FDOT and includes engagement with public and private transportation planning providers at the local, state, and federal levels. The FTP also plans how and where the state will allocate transportation funding. The 2055 FTP is anticipated to be adopted in 2025.

The 2055 FTP Update is deemed important by FDOT for the following factors:

• Enhancing safety.

• Promoting efficient movement of people and goods.

• Engaging and connecting the community.

• Supporting economic competitiveness.

• Preserving Florida's natural resources and quality of life.

Community and stakeholder engagement will include a diverse steering committee, focus group meetings, and engagement with public and private transportation providers from all major sectors of transportation, including public transportation.

Situation Assessment: Hernando County's public transportation services and efforts are consistent with the intent and priority factors of the FTP Update process. The scope of this TDP Major Update includes a focus on safety, effective and efficient movement of customers, as well as supporting community values, economic development, and overall quality of life throughout the county.

Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Policy Plan Update
Florida's SIS Policy Plan updates the policy framework for managing and improving Florida's Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), which includes designated high priority transportation facilities that contribute significantly to the state's economy, including airports, seaports, waterways, rail corridors and terminals, urban fixed guideway corridors, and highways.

The SIS Policy Plan highlights the following new policy focus areas to support Florida's existing SIS facilities:

• Safety

• Resilience

• Technology and innovation

• Urban mobility and connection

• Rural mobility and connection

Situation Assessment: Overall, Florida's Strategic Intermodal System Policy Plan Update aims to create a more integrated, efficient, and sustainable transportation network. For public transportation, this means improved infrastructure, better connectivity, increased investment, and a focus on sustainability and equity. These changes are expected to enhance the overall transit experience, making public transportation a more viable and attractive option for residents and visitors. The Hernando County Transit Division, in partnership with the Hernando MPO, can coordinate efforts to address SIS opportunities with the Hernando LRTP Update. Overall, the Hernando County Transit Division program is consistent with the policy plan.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Master Plan (EVMP 2021)
Florida's EVMP provides guidance for the development of electric vehicle (EV) charging stations along the State Highway System.

The EVMP establishes a framework that supports short- and long-range EV travel, encourages expansion of EV use, and serves major evacuation routes within and out of the state. The Plan

identifies potential fast charging locations along the state's major highways, including I-10, I-75, I-95, and I-4, as well as along expressways and principal and minor arterials.

In summary, Florida's EVMP 2021 is designed to support the transition to electric vehicles across all transportation sectors, including public transportation. By providing the necessary infrastructure, funding, and policy support, the plan aims to facilitate the integration of electric buses and other electric transit solutions, thereby enhancing the sustainability and efficiency of public transportation in the state.

Situation Assessment: The Hernando County Transit Division finds compatibility and compliance with the State's EVMP as transit develops in the future and may advance certain vehicle technologies to be considered for electrification operations.

Regional Plans/Programs/Studies

Tampa Bay Economic Development District: Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for 2023-2027
According to the draft plan, "…The U.S. Economic Development Administration contracts with each designated Economic Development District (EDD) to develop and maintain a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). EDDs are required to fully update the CEDS every five years with the assistance of regional stakeholder involvement and may elect to update the CEDS on an annual basis."

The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC), the EDD for the Tampa Bay region (defined as the counties of Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas), developed this effort as the first CEDS of the 2022 Major Update cycle. TBRPC will update this document on an annual basis.

The plan identifies that the Tampa Bay region's economy is strong as the 17th largest economy in the United States. However, the issue of affordability (housing, wages) and housing availability (supply) can prove most challenging to maintaining the region's impressive economy. An additional weakness of the region that was identified was the lack of transportation connectivity (no extensive regional rail or bus system).

Goal 12 of the Strategic Action Plan for the CEDS is centered on regional transportation improvements: Promote a regional perspective on multi-modal transportation system for people, goods, and services that includes transit, highway, seaport, airport, rail, broadband, and multi-use trail planning and development.

Situation Assessment: The Hernando County Transit Division finds compatibility and compliance with the TBRPC Economic Development Strategy document.

Sun Coast Transportation Alliance (SCTPA)

The SCTPA includes the MPOs from the region: Hernando/Citrus, Pasco, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Polk, and Sarasota/ Manatee. They collectively adopted the RLRTP in 2019. The 2045 RLRTP identifies regionally significant and multimodal transportation improvements and outlines the planning, design, and construction phases needed to implement these needs.

The RLRTP outlines a "Transit Vision" for the region that includes alternatives to roadway development including the following:

• Bus rapid transit (BRT)

• Reusing freight railroad tracks (for passenger rail)

• Water transit

• Light rail transit (LRT)

Situation Assessment: The Hernando County Transit Division finds compatibility and compliance with the West Central Florida Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (RLRTP) 2045. As the region evolves into high-capacity transit systems, local transit services will adjust appropriately as connector and feeder services.

Local Plans/Programs/Studies

Hernando/Citrus 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Hernando/Citrus 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Major Update

The 2045 LRTP was adopted in December of 2019 and identifies a set of prioritized plans and funding for roadways, bicycle/pedestrian, and transit for both Hernando and Citrus counties over the next 25 years.

The Cost Feasible Transit Plan for 2045 maintains existing transit services (TheBus) for Hernando County. Additional needs for TheBus system, as identified in the 2020-29 TDP, are considered unfunded by LRTP standards, but are listed in the plan (Appendix C):

• Expansion of Saturday evening service hours

• Expansion of weekday evening service hours

• Express bus service: East Hernando Connector

• Expansion of weekday evening service hours

• Major transfer facility

Projects identified as "aspirational" and unfunded include:

• Increased headways on existing routes

• Express bus service: Suncoast Parkway Express Connector, SR 19/SR 50, US 41/Airport Connector, Citrus Connector, Spring Hill-Airport Connector, I-75 Regional Express

• Commuter rail (along CSX corridor)

The Hernando/Citrus MPO 2050 LRTP Major Update was adopted in October of 2024. For more details on this plan and how it relates to the Hernando County FY 2025-34 Transit Development Plan (TDP), see Chapter 9.

Situation Assessment: The Hernando County Transit Division continues to coordinate urban transportation planning activities with the Hernando Citrus MPO as this TDP Update and the LRTP Update are simultaneously being conducted. Both planning studies are sharing base information and anticipated mobility service needs as transit priority projects are developed. This coordination between the Hernando County Transit Division and the Hernando Citrus MPO serves as a foundation for evolving coordination, consistency, and collaboration to address federal and state transportation planning requirements and defining project priorities.

The Hernando/Citrus MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) FY 2025 – FY 2029
The TIP outlines a five-year program of prioritized multi-modal capital and non-capital surface transportation improvement projects for the Hernando/Citrus area that are eligible for funding under Title 23 U.S.C. and Title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53. Projects include roadway capacity building; transportation operations, maintenance, and safety; transit and transportation disadvantaged services (including transit capital and operating projects); bicycle, pedestrian, trail, and enhancement activities; aviation; and transportation planning studies.

The FY 2025-2029 TIP is consistent with other federal, state, and local plans, including the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Major projects related to public transportation services in Hernando County include:

• Capital and operating funding for TheBus system, including FTA 5307 and 5311 programs and State Transit Block Grant.

• Priority roadway improvement projects, some of which will impact bus service and capital investments.

• Transportation disadvantaged program planning.

Situation Assessment: This Urban Transportation plan is essential for the Hernando County Transit Division to bring planned mobility service projects to reality by continuing to coordinate with the Hernando Citrus MPO and participating in annual TIP updates. Hernando County Transit is consistent with the TIP process.

The Hernando/Citrus MPO Public Participation Plan (PPP)

Adopted in December of 2023, the PPP reflects the Hernando/Citrus MPO's efforts at initial and ongoing participation by the public in the transportation planning and decision-making process. According to the MPO webpage: "The PPP provides guidance to the public regarding when and how to participate in the transportation planning and decision-making process. The MPO makes every effort to make plans and programs easy to understand for the public. The MPO must provide communities, public agencies and transportation related entities, users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, those with disabilities, and interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and transportation related planning and programming processes."

Key aspects of the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Public Participation Process have traditionally been utilized when Hernando County develops and adopts a Major Transit Development Plan (TDP) every five years. For the FY 2025-34 TDP effort, input and participation with the MPO's Board of Directors, Local Coordinating Board (LCB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) remain a key component of the TDP's adopted Public Involvement Plan (PIP).

Situation Assessment: The Hernando County Transit Division is in alignment and consistent with the MPO's Public Participation Plan.

Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) FY 2024-2028 / Hernando County Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan (TDSP) FY 2019-2023

The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) requires that each Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) submit a comprehensive transportation disadvantaged service plan (TDSP). The CTD reviews the TDSP and approves for consistency with CTD policies and procedures and as a requirement for TD funding. The TDSP is legislatively mandated. Each year, the CTD publishes an annual operating report that provides an overview of all coordinated transportation services provided by the CTCs in the state.

You Thrive Florida (formerly Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.) serves as the area's CTC and the Hernando / Citrus MPO serves as the designated Official Planning Agency (OPA). The purpose of the OPA is to perform long-range transportation disadvantaged planning and assist the CTD and the LCB in implementing the TD program within a designated service area. The OPA is responsible for preparing and submitting applications to the CTD for planning grants funded from the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund. In addition, the OPA is required to certify on an annual basis that the membership of the LCB represents, to the maximum degree possible, a cross section of the local community.

The LCB is a local component of the TD program and plays a crucial role in the TD program, which aims to ensure that transportation services are available to individuals who are unable to transport themselves due to physical or mental disability, income status, or age. The LCB operates at the

county level and performs several key functions including program advisory, oversight, coordination, and approval of the TDSP and evaluation of the CTC. The LCB includes elected officials, human service agencies, advocates, and residents. The Hernando County Transit Division holds a seat on the LCB.

Situation Assessment: The TD program services in Hernando County are administered under the CTC responsibilities of the You Thrive Florida and a review of the TDSP presents consistency with Hernando County Transit services and management. Of note concerning coordination and continued consistency in plans and programs are the following highlighted goals cited in the TDSP:

- GOAL 1: Provide paratransit connector service to the fixed-route service whenever possible on a space-available basis to assist with the transportation needs of the citizens of Hernando County.

- GOAL 5: Implement marketing strategies to increase public awareness of and involvement in both the fixed route and paratransit programs.

These goals exhibit the coordination compatibility of efforts between the TD Program and the Hernando County Transit Division. Furthermore, TD Program services are prioritized for medical and nutritional needs; however, educational, employment, and recreation trips are provided as seating and funding allow. Non-prioritized trips are provided to residents living in the non-urbanized areas of Hernando County. With the Hernando County Transit Division's role on the LCB and the Hernando/Citrus MPO planning responsibilities, transportation services to common customer markets and targeted services can be coordinated effectively.

Hernando County 2040 Comprehensive Plan
The 2040 Comprehensive Plan provides guidance and strategies for developing strategic and planned growth for Hernando County. Core strategies to properly plan for growth and that relate to the Hernando TDP include:

- Promote a consistent and coordinated multi-modal transportation system in conjunction with the Hernando/Citrus MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan.

- Include flexibility and innovation for larger new developments to achieve desired land use patterns and efficient infrastructure utilization.

- Implement an efficient infrastructure strategy at all levels – seamless service, proactive funding and implementation, five-year scheduling, and long-term coordination with land use.

The transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan includes the following goals, objectives and strategies relevant to the Hernando TDP:

- Transit System Objective 5.01F: Incorporate a transit system component into the transportation network that provides for the immediate and long-term mobility needs of all segments of the county's population.

- Transit System Strategy 5.01F(1): Planning for future transit needs shall be guided by the adopted TDP to ensure that priority 10-year transit needs can be met.

- Transit System Strategy 5.01F(2): The County should continue to prioritize enhancement of its local fixed-route transit system and special needs ADA service via a process that solicits and responds to frequent user feedback. Enhancements may include route expansions/updates, real-time digital information services, transit vehicle upgrades for users, and other initiatives.

- Transit System Strategy 5.01F(3): Transit system design standards should be implemented at appropriate locations as part of the development review process and transportation work program including such features as: a). ADA-compliant accommodations at all transit stops; b). transit amenities accommodating multi-modal users; c). incorporation of transit bulb-outs or pull-outs in street and development layouts; d). sidewalk and street accommodations that facilitate pedestrian movements; e). appropriate standards for transit connection points, including amenities and park and ride facilities.

- Transit System Strategy 5.01F(4): Long-term transit system planning should be coordinated with land use and economic development, with special emphasis on fixed guideway, rail, and rapid bus transit station locations, and, on local and inter-county bus transfer stations in accordance with adopted regional plans and programs.

- Transit System Strategy 5.01F(5): Long-term transit system planning should be incorporated into the adopted facility design guidelines including standards for bus routes that identify sufficient right-of-way needs for transit stops, stations, and pull-outs.

Situation Assessment: The Hernando Comprehensive Plan provides vision and direction for the Hernando County Transit Division to be involved with mobility and development needs to provide access and capacity to the overall transportation system.

City of Brooksville Comprehensive Plan
The City of Brooksville Comprehensive Plan guides the City's Mission to be a viable, self-reliant and safe community. To achieve this mission, the City's key goals are to:

- Beautify the city and enhance its infrastructure.

- Enhance and sustain a vibrant economy.

- Provide effective and efficient public safety services.

- Stimulate public awareness and social empowerment for citizens of all ages, races, and cultures.
- Establish and maintain organizational integrity and operational efficiency utilizing proven management principles.

The guiding principles adopted by the City for transportation include:

- Encourage multiple transportation options by investing in roads, transit, sidewalks and bikeways.
- Promote the development of a vibrant, walkable and mixed-use central business district.
- Take advantage of the existing rail line by promoting transit-oriented development (TOD) in close proximity to the line, allowing for the establishment of a transit station and increasing public investment toward housing, employment, and entertainment.

Some of the goals, objectives, and strategies to meet this vision include:

- Policy 1-9: Coordinate with Hernando County and the MPO in maintaining a fixed route mass transit system to serve the city's industrial, commercial, and service sectors.
- Policy 1-17: The City will promote high-density, transit friendly, and mixed-use development at planned transit hubs in order to take advantage of existing public transportation facilities and programs.

Situation Assessment: The City of Brooksville's Comprehensive Plan articulates a multimodal approach to developing a transportation system that recognizes transit and land use relationships. The Hernando County Transit Division's program is consistent with the City's plan.

Regional coordination is addressed with Hernando County's relationship as support and membership in the Hernando / Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization. The MPO Board consists of nine elected officials, four from Hernando County, two from Citrus County, one from the City of Brooksville, one from the City of Crystal River, and one from the City of Inverness. A representative of FDOT, District Seven, is a non-voting member of the MPO Board. The MPO Board has the responsibility to develop and adopt plans, and to recommend improvement priorities for the transportation system. Hernando County coordinates various program activities with the MPO in participating with the urban transportation planning process, including the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), the MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the Hernando County Transit Development Plan (TDP). The Hernando County Transit Division also participates with MPO technical and citizen committees as well as the TD program Local Coordinating Board (LCB), which includes numerous human service agencies and advocates.

CHAPTER 5

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Hernando County Transit Goals, Objectives, and Measures

The development, adoption, and institutional usage of a set of Goals, Objectives, and Measures (GOMs) is a key stage in the development of this Major Transit Development Plan (TDP). The GOMs outlined in this chapter are to provide Hernando County with vision and guidance toward addressing and implementing the issues and opportunities recognized throughout this TDP. The development of these GOMs were part of the TDP process that include the situation appraisal to recognize various local and regional plans and programs, the public involvement plan to include stakeholder and public opinions and services requests, the existing service and needs review, the development of service improvement alternatives and the refinement of a 10-year operating and capital program. Most importantly, the following tables provide a management tool for Hernando County Transit staff and leadership to monitor key system performance indicators, service activities, make operational adjustments and provide information for annual TDP update reports. The following sections outline the six GOMs developed specifically for this TDP effort.

Goal 1

- **Ensure the provision of a safe and secure public transportation equipment, vehicles, amenities of customer and employee conditions**

This goal and associated objectives and measures (see Table 5-1 below) relate to the safety, security, maintenance and state of good repair of the Hernando County Transit vehicles, equipment, facilities, and infrastructure. The existing Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) grant compliance requirements and monitoring systems currently utilized by Hernando County Transit form the basis for managing and meeting this set of GOMs. This includes but is not limited to Hernando's Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan and the Public Transit Agency Safety Plan (PTASP) processes and requirements.

Table 5-1. Goal 1

Goal 1: Ensure the provision of a safe and secure public transportation equipment, vehicles, amenities of customer and employee conditions.		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness
	1.1	Maintain Existing Vehicles & Facilities	Meet or exceed annual TAM Performance Measures
	1.2	Ensure that TheBus Services are Maintained and Operated in a Safe and Secure Environment	Meet or exceed annual Safety (PTASP) Performance Measures/Benchmarks
	1.3	Provide Personnel safety and emergency procedure employee training	Meet or exceed annual Safety (PTASP) Performance Measures/Benchmarks

Goal 2

- **Manage and develop effective and efficient transit services that consider customer demand, support County development and community services, enhance accessibility, and complement transit-supportive land use development**

This goal and associated objectives and measures (Table 5-2) address a continuous assessment of transit performance and provide management decision-making information for service adjustments and utilization of funding resources.

Table 5-2. Goal 2

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness
Goal 2: Manage and develop effective and efficient transit services that consider customer demand, support County development and community services, enhance accessibility, and complement transit-supportive land use development	2.1	Increase Annual Ridership on TheBus System	Maintain service/ridership monitoring system of fixed route system
	2.2	Improve Annual Farebox Recovery Percentage	Annual increase in farebox recovery % over previous yr.
	2.3	Provide Optimal Service Frequency	Define and monitor optimal ridership/load levels for each route
	2.4	Improve On-Time Performance (OTP)	Monitor & adjust and services to increase OTP
	2.5	Decrease Travel Times/Delay for Passengers	Monitor & adjust service between major stops/destinations
	2.6	Improve System Accessibility	Regularly monitor & improve passenger accesibility to bus stops
	2.7	Improve System Connectivity to the Community	Maximize connectivity to existing & new destinations in service area
	2.8	Improve Customer Satisfaction	Decrease the annual # of customer complaints and increase annual customer commendations
	2.9	Increase Cost Efficiency of TheBus System	Annual improvements in Cost Per Pass./Rev. Mile/Rev. Hr., Pass. Trip Per Rev. Mile/Pass. Trip Per Rev. Hr.

Goal 3

- **Enhance the quantity and quality of public transportation service in Hernando County**

This goal and associated objectives and measures (Table 5-3) relate to progress toward making transit services and infrastructure improvements in accordance with the TDP and subsequent updates.

Table 5-3. Goal 3

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness
Goal 3: Enhance the quantity and quality of public transportation service in Hernando County	3.1	Introduce New Routes/Service Segments	Implementation of New Route/Segment from 2025-34 TDP Service Plan
	3.2	Increase Weekday Service Span	Weekday AM and/or PM Service Span Expansion
	3.3	Increase Saturday Service Span	Saturday AM and/or PM Service Span Expansion
	3.4	Increase Route Frequencies	Increase to 30-minute Service on Top-Ridership Routes
	3.5	Add Sunday Service	Addition of Sunday Fixed Route Services
	3.6	Add ADA Service to Compliment Fixed Route Service Expansion	Implementation of ADA Service Within 3/4-Mile of New Fixed Routes/Segments, During Span Increases, and on Sundays
	3.7	Addition of New Shelters, Seating, & Bike Racks	Annual Increase in Number of Shelters & Related Amenities Installed
	3.8	Improve ADA Accessibility Around Bus Stops	Annual Increase in ADA Bus Stops Imporvements
	3.9	Develop New Transfer/Maint./Admin. Facilities	Begin Planning/NEPA/Design/Construction Phases for New Transfer/Maint./Admin. Facilities
	3.10	Coordinate Service Delivery with Neighboring Transit Agencies	Maximize service coordination of exsiting and news services with transit staff in Pasco and Citrus Counties
	3.11	Explore Additional Regional Transit Opportunities	Particpate in any regional service studies or pilot projects that assist Hernando County residents with a regional service need

Goal 4

- **Maintain existing and seek new funding partnerships with transportation organizations and authorities at the local, regional, state, and federal level**

This goal and associated objectives and measures (Table 5-4) relate to making progress toward maintaining and increasing funding support for existing and expanded Hernando County Transit services identified in the development of this TDP.

Table 5-4. Goal 4

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness
Goal 4 - Maintain existing and seek new funding partnerships with transportation organizations and jurisdictions at the local, regional, state, and federal level	4.1	Maintain or Increase Local Funding for TheBus	Maintain or increase in annual County funds & local revenue
	4.2	Maintain or increase State Funding for TheBus	Maintain or increase annual state transit funding
	4.3	Maintain or Increase Federal Funding for TheBus	Maintain or increase annual federal transit funding
	4.4	Explore Additional State Operating Grant Funding	Service Development, Urban Corridor, or other State Operating Grants
	4.5	Explore Federal Discretionary Capital Grant Funding	FTA 5307, 5339, other sources in FY 2025
	4.6	Explore Innovative Revenue & Funding Sources	Work with local, state, and federal partners to identify additional and/or new funding opportunities
	4.7	Maintain or Increase Participation & Partnerships with Local, State, & Regional Planning Partners	Attendance at MPO, TDLCB, FDOT, and County Planning meetings and projects that impact TheBus services

Goal 5

- **Increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities of maintaining and expanding Hernando County Transit services**

This goal and associated objectives and measures (Table 5-5) can be recognized as an overall strategic business and marketing plan. The need for additional information on service availability, how to use the service, service partnership opportunities echoed by customers, community agencies and advocates as well as community stakeholders.

Table 5-5. Goal 5

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness
Goal 5 -Increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities of maintaining and expanding Hernando County Transit services	5.1	Increase Outreach with Local & Regional Stakeholders & Public	Annual increase in meetings & outreach meetings with community, business, education, workforce development, and other
	5.2	Develop Marketing & Public Relations Program	Develop Marketing Plan in parternship with the Chamber in FY 2025
	5.3	Develop a Community Transit Speakers Program	Increase in annual community presentations by TheBus staff

Goal 6

- **Explore innovative and industry best practices to operate and develop transit services with focus on customers, employees, technology and financial sustainability**

This goal and associated objectives and measures (Table 5-6) support a focus on continuous service improvements by maintaining awareness and training of new innovative service techniques, equipment and strategies.

Table 5-6. Goal 6

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness
Goal 6 - Explore innovative and industry best practices to operate and develop transit services with focus on customers, employees, technology and financial sustainability	*6.1*	**Explore Further Investment in New Information Technology Improvements**	Conduct an ITS needs assessment and prioritize system investement needs
	6.2	**Improve Customer Service**	Develop training modules for frontline employees that focus on customer sensitivity, safety, and security
	6.3	**Improve Service Delivery Methods & Procedures**	Evaluate on an annual basis innovative service delivery models that address community and emergency mgmt. needs
	6.4	**Enhance Employee Training & Skill Development**	Develop/provide workforce employment training modules that improve employee skillsets and service delivery methods

CHAPTER 6

TRANSIT DEMAND ASSESSMENT

Chapter 6 builds on the foundational analyses from the previous phases of the Hernando County 2025-2034 Transit Development Plan (TDP), focusing on identifying areas of transit demand, evaluating the service of existing and proposed routes to those areas, forecasting ridership and exploring potential service alternatives. This chapter synthesizes insights from census data and maps in Chapter 4, which examined the county's transit environment and demographic characteristics.

Transit Demand Analysis

The transit demand analysis in Hernando County focuses on key demographic indicators to forecast transit needs. The selected indicators include population density, age groups (under 18 and over 60), and zero-vehicle households. Poverty data was excluded due to its significant overlap with zero-vehicle households.

Households without vehicles are a recognized proxy for lower mobility options and are highly correlated with poverty. These households tend to rely more heavily on public transportation compared to households with access to private vehicles. Since the absence of a vehicle is closely tied to limited financial resources, including both zero-vehicle household data and poverty data would have resulted in an overrepresentation of the same population, essentially doubling the count of homes with fewer resources.

By focusing on zero-vehicle households, the analysis captures the essence of poverty's impact on transit demand—limited mobility—while avoiding data redundancy. In Hernando County, zero-vehicle households are concentrated in areas where residents face financial constraints, limited access to employment opportunities, and greater reliance on public transportation. This overlap between poverty and zero-vehicle households allowed for a more streamlined and effective identification of areas with high transit demand, ensuring a more accurate assessment of transit needs.

This methodology provides a robust, data-driven approach to understanding transit needs across Hernando County by analyzing key demographic factors such as population density, age distribution, and zero-vehicle households.

This analysis reveals critical insights into areas with the highest potential for increased transit demand. Block groups were categorized into **Primary**, **Secondary**, and **Tertiary Need** areas, providing a clear framework for prioritizing service enhancements. In the following section, the

analysis results will be presented, highlighting geographic areas with the most significant transit needs and opportunities for service expansion. These findings will guide future decisions regarding new routes, service extensions, and operational improvements to meet the evolving demands of the county's residents.

Map 6-1 illustrates the distribution of transit demand across Hernando County, with block groups categorized by their level of transit need: **primary**, **secondary**, **tertiary**, and **below average**. The map also displays the existing transit routes—**Red**, **Blue**, **Green**, and **Purple**—to visually assess which high-demand areas are served by the current system and where potential gaps in coverage exist.

Table 6-1 lists the block groups along with their **ranking** based on transit demand, detailing which routes serve each area, or identifying those block groups that are **not served** by any route. This table offers a more detailed, structured view of service coverage, complementing the spatial overview provided by the map.

Together, Map 6-1 and Table 6-1 provides a clear understanding of the alignment between transit demand and service coverage, highlighting both well-served areas and gaps in the current system.

Map 6-1. Transit Propensity Block Groups

Hernando County Propensity Block Groups with Existing Routes

Citrus County
Sumter County
Citrus County
Hernando County
Sumter County
Hernando County
Hernando County
Pasco County

0   5   10 Miles

Transit Propensity Block Groups
- Primary Need
- Secondary Need
- Tertiary Need
- Below Average

The Bus Existing Routes
- Blue
- Green
- Purple
- Red

CUTR

TheBus
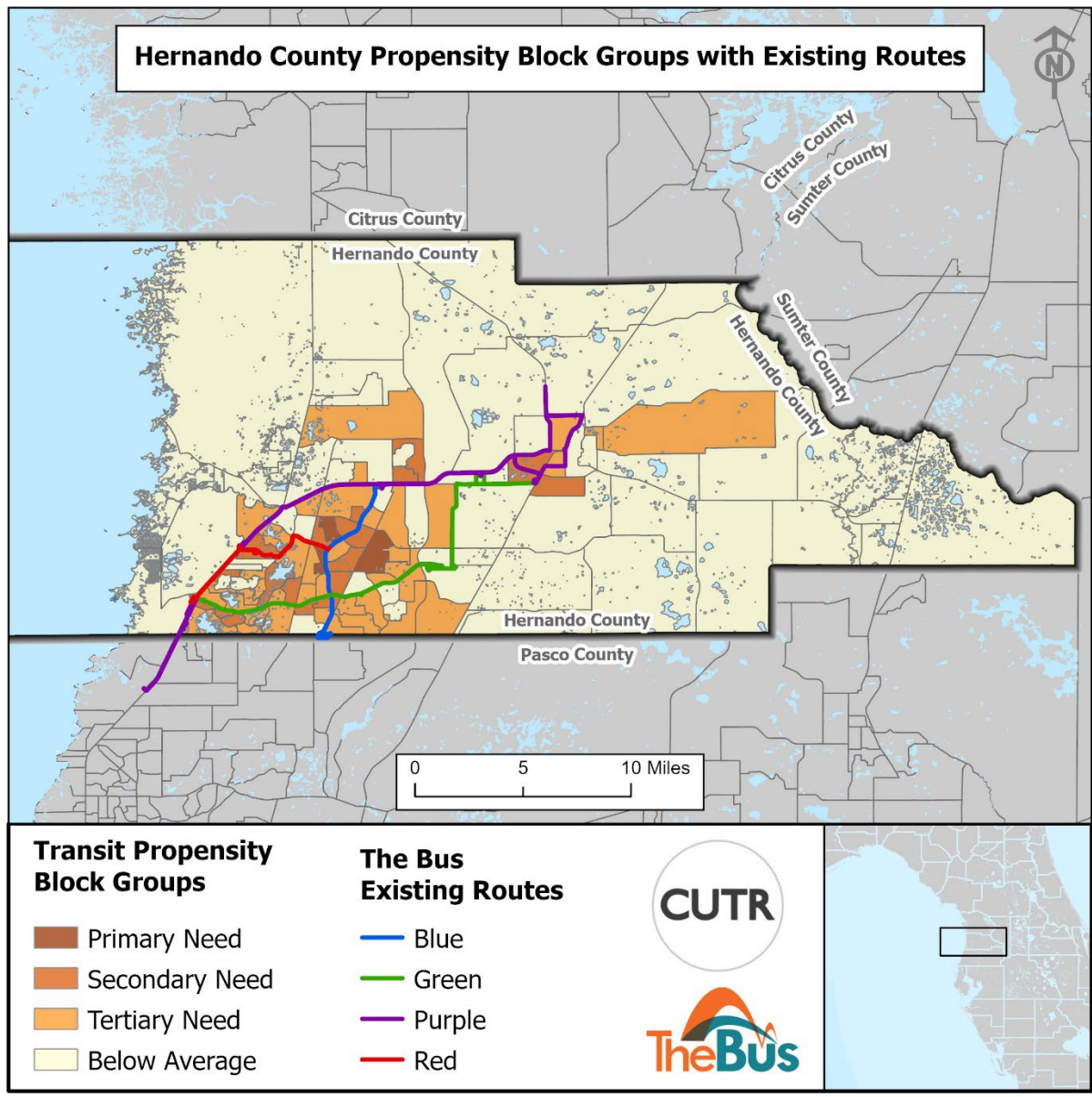
Table 6-1. Transit Propensity Ranking by Block Group Identifier

Block group ID	Existing Route Serving Block	Proposed Route Serving Block
PRIMARY BLOCKGROUPS *(significantly above average)*		
120530411051	Blue, Red	Served by Existing
120530410042	Blue, Red	Eglin-Powell Road
120530409083	Not served	Eglin-Powell Road
SECONDARY BLOCKGROUPS *(far above average)*		
120530408022	Purple	Served by Existing
120530405012	Green, Purple	Brooksville Circulator, Rt 50 / Ridge Manor, US 41 / County Line Road
120530408021	Purple	Barclay Anderson Route
120530412031	Purple, Red	Served by Existing
120530410043	Blue, Red	Eglin-Powell Road
120530412041	Purple, Red	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530410063	Blue	Eglin-Powell Road
120530411062	Blue, Green	Served by Existing
120530410041	Blue	Eglin-Powell Road
120530409014	Blue, Green	Served by Existing
120530410061	Blue	Served by Existing
120530411031	Green, Red	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530411042	Green	Served by Existing
120530414011	Green, Purple, Red	Served by Existing
120530414012	Green	Served by Existing
120530413041	Purple, Red	Served by Existing
120530409013	Green	Served by Existing
120530410031	Blue	Eglin-Powell Road

TERTIARY BLOCKGROUPS BLOCK GROUPS *(above average)*		
120530402021	Not served	Not served
120530405022	Purple	Brooksville Circulator
120530404001	Not served	Not served
120530409091	Purple	Barclay Anderson Route, Eglin-Powell Road
120530409101	Green, Purple	Eglin-Powell Road
120530409062	Green	Barclay Anderson Route
120530409081	Green	Barclay Anderson Route, Eglin-Powell Road
120530409111	Not served	US 41 / County Line Road
120530409064	Not served	Barclay Anderson Route, US 41 / County Line Road
120530409082	Green	Barclay Anderson Route, Eglin-Powell Road
120530414022	Not served	US 41 / County Line Road
120530409131	Blue	US 41 / County Line Road
120530415022	Purple	Served by Existing
120530411052	Blue, Red	Served by Existing
120530411032	Red	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530412032	Purple, Red	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530412013	Purple	Deltona Blvd Connector, Eglin-Powell Road
120530410062	Blue, Red	Served by Existing
120530410032	Blue, Purple	Eglin-Powell Road
120530409121	Green	Served by Existing
120530409132	Blue	US 41 / County Line Road
120530409122	Blue, Green	Served by Existing
120530413051	Green, Purple, Red	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530413033	Not served	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530413022	Green	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530414013	Green, Purple, Red	US 41 / County Line Road
120530411053	Green	Served by Existing

120530411061	Blue, Green	Served by Existing
120530411041	Green	Served by Existing
120530414023	Green	US 41 / County Line Road
120530414021	Green	Served by Existing
120530413042	Not served	Deltona Blvd Connector
120530409012	Blue	Served by Existing
120530413021	Green, Purple, Red	Served by Existing
120530407021	Not served	Barclay Anderson Route
120530410051	Blue	Eglin-Powell Road
120530409072	Green	Served by Existing
120530408012	Purple	Served by Existing
120530405011	Purple	Brooksville Circulator, Rt 50 / Ridge Manor

Scenario Alternatives: Hernando County Transit's Path Forward

As Hernando County plans its transit system's future, it has developed a range of options to meet the community's evolving transportation needs. These options include maintaining existing service levels, expanding route coverage, increasing service frequency, and adding new routes in high-demand areas. Using the Florida Department of Transportation's Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST) modeling platform, Hernando County Transit has analyzed how these alternatives would affect ridership, coverage, and overall system performance. The TBEST modeling platform, available at https://tbest.org/, was used to analyze these scenarios and provide ridership projections. The TBEST model was run for each year during the 10-year TDP Planning Horizon, but for this section of the report, the focus will be on the first and last years to fully illustrate the impacts over the 10 years.

Hernando County has analyzed two potential future scenarios to evaluate the possible outcomes for its transit system. The first scenario, referred to as the "Existing Scenario" or "do-nothing" scenario, models ridership growth if no transit service expansions or improvements are made over the next ten years. The second scenario focuses on phased improvements, with short-term improvements emphasizing expanded service coverage and service hours, and longer-term improvements continuing to broaden coverage while increasing frequency on core routes. Detailed descriptions of each phase can be found in the service alternatives section of the report.

Using these two scenarios, the TBEST platform generated ridership projections for Hernando County. Table 6-2 below highlights ridership estimates for both the Existing and Build-Out scenarios. The Map 6-2 below also accents the improved service coverage with the existing areas with higher propensity of transit usage.

Table 6-2. T-BEST Ridership Estimates – Existing and Build-Out Scenarios

Route Name	Existing Scenario		TDP Build Out Scenario	
	2025	2034	2025	2034
Blue	72,297	88,617	72,077	96,795
Green	192,875	236,072	193,187	257,295
Purple	149,397	180,712	151,843	200,699
Red	35,956	43,948	36,269	48,526
Mermaid	NA	NA	6,148	7,449
Ridge Manor	NA	NA	19,445	23,639
Brooksville Circulator	NA	NA	17,676	23,142
County Line Road	NA	NA	27,861	34,310
Barclay - Sunshine Grove	NA	NA	NA	30,405
Deltona	NA	NA	NA	17,734
Elgin	NA	NA	NA	15,923
US-19 Citrus County	NA	NA	NA	6,056

Map 6-2. Service Planned Improvements

Long-Term Plan (FY 2028-31)
Service Improvements

Existing Routes
— Blue
— Green
— Purple
— Red

Transit Propensity Block Groups
- Primary Need
- Secondary Need
- Tertiary Need
- Below Average

New Fixed Routes Phase 1 & Phase 2
- Mermaid Route
- Brooksville Circulator
- Rt. 50 / Ridge Manor
- US 41 / County Line Rd.
- US 19 / Citrus County

New Fixed Routes Phase 3 & Phase 4
- Barclay-Sunshine Grove Rd.
- Elgin-Powell Rd.
- Deltona Blvd Connector
- US 41 / Spring Hill Dr. Connector

These TBEST-generated ridership projections guide Hernando County in prioritizing transit improvements and securing grant funding. Expanding service to currently unserved areas is seen as essential for sustainable growth in transit and community mobility. The phased implementation approach supports gradual, manageable improvements, enhancing the transit system's reach and responsiveness to community needs.

CHAPTER 7

NEEDS DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

Alternative Development and Evaluation

This section provides alternatives for the development, improvement, and expansion of Hernando County's *TheBus* public transportation system over the next 10 years (2025-34). The needs were developed based on information gathered as part of the baseline data assessment, public outreach efforts, peer/trend analysis, situational appraisal, and transit demand analysis. Also notable, the needs developed as part of this assessment were developed with consideration of reasonable new financial resource availability for the short term, with and a less financially constrained vision for the long-term. A prioritized list of improvements will be developed and is therefore used to develop the 10-Year Transit and Financial Plan (see Chapter 8).

Ten-Year Transit Development Plan (TDP) Alternatives

Consideration of future transit improvements was a key part of the Hernando County 2025-34 Transit Development Plan (TDP) process. This section lists and evaluates possible transit improvements and represents what might be achieved in the next 10 years given new funding and resources. The alternatives reflect the mobility needs of the community, and are inclusive of input received from the following TDP activities conducted in Hernando County in 2024:

1. <u>Transit Surveys</u> – On-board surveys obtained input from the current users of the TheBus services. Input on satisfaction, mobility needs and comfort with system facilities and technologies, provided insights for the recommended alternatives. In addition, two phases of online surveys were provided to the public through public information and social media channels. In-person surveys were also collected at the two public workshops.

2. <u>Public Meetings and Workshops</u> – The public involvement process for the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP included multiple presentations to the Hernando County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Board, Local Coordination Board (LCB), Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). These insights and input were considered in the development of the service alternatives and priorities. Additional public input was gathered at two public workshops held at the West Branch and Spring Hill Libraries.

3. <u>Transit Market Assessment</u> – The current transit markets and activity patterns within Hernando County were examined to best identify the population segments and location of markets for public transportation services.

Public and political opinion underscore the alternative options for Hernando County to improve TheBus services. Separate outreach activities asked for stated preferences for types of service. Continuously, existing users and the general online/social media public surveys indicated a strong interest in expanded service hours, expanded weekend service, new routes/route segments, new Sunday service, improved/safer bus stops, and frequency improvements. Combined, these factors help shape the alternatives suited for Hernando County and the public sentiment of these services.

The identified service and capital improvements were prioritized based on the input and evaluations gathered throughout the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP development process, which are the basis for the recommendations and the 10-year implementation and financial plan outlined in Chapter 8. As Hernando County continues to grow, and as demand for transit follows that same overall growth, the TheBus management and staff will have a list of prioritized service and capital improvements from which to opt from and implement as funding is identified.

Short-Term and Long-Term Planning Horizons

In a limited funding environment, Hernando County must prioritize TheBus service and capital improvements that provide the most benefit to existing and potential transit users. Improvements that directly enhance the existing service and related facilities/amenities have an impact on the customer's mobility needs and are given the highest priority. Combined with community and stakeholder feedback and fiscal constraints related to service enhancements, the following service and capital needs are programmed in a phased approach. The primary focus of this TDP is on the Short-Term (years 1-5) improvements to the existing services and supportive capital infrastructure. Long-Term (years 6-10) improvements are also programmed chronologically for the last five years of the 10-year TDP cycle (see Chapter 8). In addition, there are also Unfunded Needs that were identified but stand outside of the Financial Plan due to their much higher cost than the financially feasible Short-Term improvements. The following section outlines the prioritized short and long-term service and capital improvement needs.

Short-Term Service Improvements (FY 2025-2029)

In the Short-Term (years 1-5 of this plan), Hernando County must work to improve TheBus service quality by increasing the availability of services while also improving and expanding related passenger amenities and facilities. It is recommended that the Short-Term improvements described in this section be implemented within the next in five fiscal Years (FY 2025-29). These are the most critical needs of TheBus system. Some improvements can be implemented in FY 2025 using existing financial resources. Other needs will require additional/new funding to be implemented. Such partially unfunded needs are programmed starting in FY 2026, this allows time for Hernando County to begin to secure new grant funding in FY 2025.

New Fixed Routes/Route Segments

Public input and analysis conducted as part of the TDP development process indicated a strong interest and need for transit service expansion to corridors and areas of Hernando County currently without connections to TheBus system. There were new corridors or other corridor segments that were identified as part of the TDP development process and that were identified by the public. The top new routes or new route segments identified, ranked, and placed in the Short-Term Plan (1-5 years) include:

- **Phase 1 (FY 2025-2026)** - Mermaid Route, Brooksville Connector, Rt. 50/Ridge Manor, US 41/County Line Rd.
- **Phase 2 (FY 2027)** – US 19/Citrus County

With these improvements, TheBus system coverage would expand into key areas of the Hernando County not currently being served, while also providing regional connections to the transit systems in Pasco and Citrus Counties (see Map 7-1 below).

Map 7-1. Short-Term Plan (FY 2025-29) Service Improvements

Short-Term Plan (FY 2025-29) Service Improvements
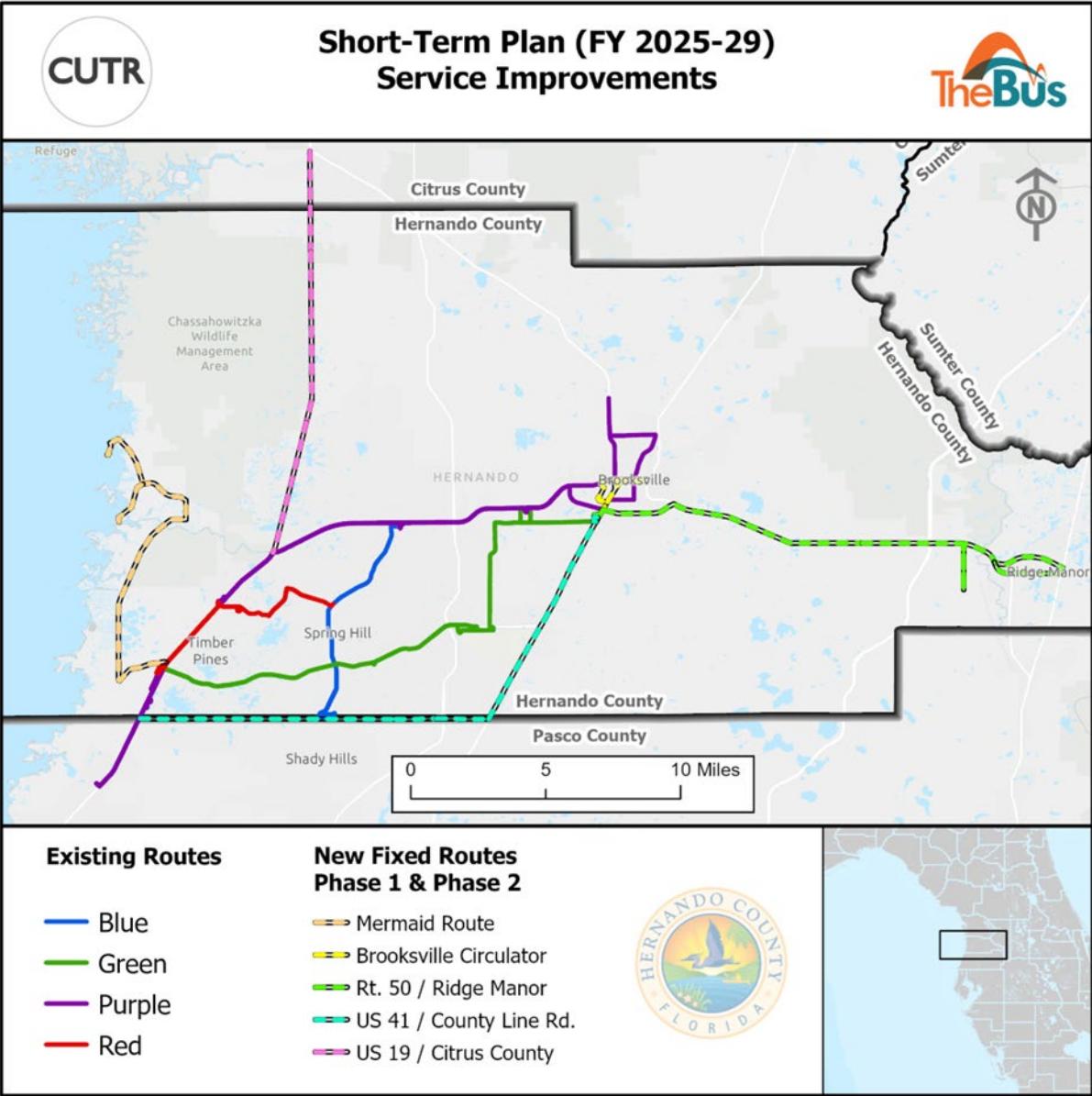
Weekday & Saturday Service Span Expansion

Service Span increases allow TheBus to serve a larger variety of trip purposes and greater flexibility during the day. Throughout the development of this TDP, this was the need that current riders and members of the public requested the most. To accommodate TheBus customers that requested early morning and later evening services, it is recommended that Hernando County extend the

TheBus evening Service Span for all Weekdays and Saturdays (Monday-Saturday). The proposed Weekday and Saturday Service Span expansions are outlined in Table 7-1 below:

Table 7-1. Proposed Weekday & Saturday Service Span Increases

Route	Days of Service	Existing Service Span	Proposed Service Span	Vehicles In Service
Red Route	Mon.-Fri.	5:47 am - 7:43 pm	5:47 am - *8:43 pm*	1
	Sat.	5:47 am - 6:43 pm	5:47 am - *7:43 pm*	
Blue Route	Mon.-Fri.	6:00 am - 7:54 pm	6:00 am - *8:54 pm*	1
	Sat.	6:00 am - 6:54 pm	6:00 am - *7:54 pm*	
Purple Route	Mon.-Fri.	5:20 am - 8:10 pm	5:20 am - *9:10 pm*	3
	Sat.	5:20 am - 7:10 pm	5:20 am - *8:10 pm*	
Green Route	Mon.-Fri.	6:10 am - 8:03 pm	6:10 am - *9:03 pm*	2
	Sat.	6:10 am - 7:03 pm	6:10 am - *8:03 pm*	

New ADA/Paratransit Service for Fixed Route Service Expansion
Hernando County is required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to provide complementary ADA/Paratransit service with 3/4/mile of fixed route services and during the same service span of said fixed route services. This TDP will account for the addition of required ADA/Paratransit service costs in each year that improvements to the existing system or additions to the system are recommended.

Short-Term Capital Improvements (FY 2025-2029)

In the Short-Term Plan (FY 2025-29), there are several critical TheBus capital needs and priorities required to keep the system safe and maintained in a State of Good Repair, while also supporting the customer and service experience and needs identified in this TDP outreach and analysis effort.

Maintenance and Replacement of Existing Vehicles, Equipment, and Facilities
Throughout the Short-Term Plan horizon, Hernando County is tasked to continue to maintain and replace existing capital assets (including but not limited to vehicles, bus shelters, shop equipment, facilities, signage) that have met their "Useful Life" remains a critical priority for the system. By keeping both fleets in a State of Good Repair, Hernando County can meet the annual targets of its Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan and keep maintenance costs manageable. Although this capital priority is not related to an expansion of existing service under the Short-Term Plan (see above sections), inflationary and supply-chair/production factors have raised the costs of purchasing new vehicles, impacting annual operating and capital budget considerations.

New Transfer Center/Garage/Administration Facilities
To improve existing operational challenges and facility restraints critical to implementing the Short-Term Service Improvements, Hernando County will require investment into three major facilities in

the next five years. The need for a centralized Transfer Facility where all TheBus routes meet would allow customers a safer and more reliable way to transfer to/from other routes. In addition, the current garage/operations facility is inadequately sized for current use and expanded services outlined in the Short-Term Service Plan. Finally, having a centralized administrative facility (preferably on the same site as a new transfer/garage/operations facility) would allow for more efficient planning and operations since all TheBus staff would be housed out of one facility.

Hernando County recently completed a *Transit Facility Site Selection & Route Development Study* that outlines the planning and operational basis for such facilities, including a look at several available parcels for consideration. For Hernando County to successfully find the funding for such facilities, a discretionary (competitive) grant application to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will most likely need to be submitted and awarded.

Bus Shelters, Bike Racks and Bus Stop Improvements
The TDP development process identified strong demand for Hernando County to add more bus shelters, bike racks, and continued improvements to the safety and access at bus stops throughout the system. It is recommended that such investments focus first on where the highest ridership locations are, followed by secondary locations that are isolated or have unique site or access issues. Some of these improvements can be made with existing transit capital grant funds, but more funding will need to be identified to fully implement these needs for new routes/route segments recommended in the Short-Term Service Plan.

Modernize and Update Operational and Customer Information Technology Systems
Although Hernando County has demonstrated that its current mobile ticketing and next-bus tracking systems are popular with customers, the overall systems will require additional technology investments to improve scheduling capacity, operational efficiency, and ridership data collection. This includes but is not limited to a modernization of the fixed route and paratransit scheduling and dispatch systems and the installation of automatic passenger counters (APCs) on all fixed route buses. Additional maintenance, security, and yard management systems will also be required, particularly as new facilities are added to the system. A combination of existing capital funding and new transit capital grant funding will be required to meet this important area of need.

Organizational, Policy, & Planning Improvements
Hernando County manages a successful transit system but there are some critical organizational, policy, and planning improvements that can be made to increase the quality and efficiency of TheBus services. Currently, TheBus staff do an excellent job at providing safe and secure transit services to the public. However, it is an agency that remains slightly understaffed for current service (see Chapter 4) and will require additional staff once the service and facilities are expanded. In addition, current and future staff should strive to increase their annual training in safety, security, and customer service moving forward. Finally, TheBus will require additional

planning and development studies to implement the full service and capital needs. These are listed in more detail in Map 7-2below.

Long-Term Service Improvements (FY 2028-2031)

In a limited funding environment, Hernando County must prioritize the Short-Term Service and Capital Needs over those needs identified as Long-Term. In the Long-Term Plan, there are several service and capital improvement needs identified by the public and the overall TDP analysis efforts. However, these improvements, if all implemented, would essentially double the size and cost of the existing transit system. Such an expansion, and after the most important Short-Term Plan needs are implemented, would greatly increase the cost to the County, regardless of state and federal grant opportunities. Typically, such an expansion will require a local government to explore additional revenue opportunities, such as an Ad Valorem Sales Tax.

New Fixed Routes/Route Segments (FY 2028-2031)
Public input and analysis conducted as part of the TDP development process indicated a strong interest and need for transit service expansion to corridors and areas of Hernando County currently without connections to TheBus system. There were new corridors or other corridor segments that were identified as part of the TDP development process and that were identified by the public. New routes that were deemed necessary for growing ridership and optimizing connectivity in the County within the next 10 years or new route segments identified, ranked, and placed in the Long-Term Service Plan (years 4-7 of the plan) include:

- **Phase 3 (FY 2028)** - Barclay/Sunshine Grove
- **Phase 4 (FY 2029-2031)** - Deltona Blvd. Connector, US 41/Spring Hill Dr./Airport Connector, Elgin-Powell Rd.

It is recommended that the Long-Term Service Improvements for FY 2028-31 should only occur once Hernando County is successful in implementing the Short-Term Service Improvements outlined above and in Chapter 9 below. If Hernando County is able to implement both phases of improvements, TheBus system coverage would expand into key areas of the Hernando County not currently being served, while also providing regional connections to the transit systems in Pasco and Citrus Counties (see Map 7-2, below).

Map 7-2.Long-Term Plan (FY 2028-31) Service Improvements

**Long-Term Plan (FY 2028-31)
Service Improvements**

CUTR

TheBus

Existing Routes	New Fixed Routes Phase 1 & Phase 2	New Fixed Routes Phase 3 & Phase 4
Blue	Mermaid Route	Barclay-Sunshine Grove Rd.
Green	Brooksville Circulator	Elgin-Powell Rd.
Purple	Rt. 50 / Ridge Manor	Deltona Blvd Connector
Red	US 41 / County Line Rd.	US 41 / Spring Hill Dr. Connector
	US 19 / Citrus County	
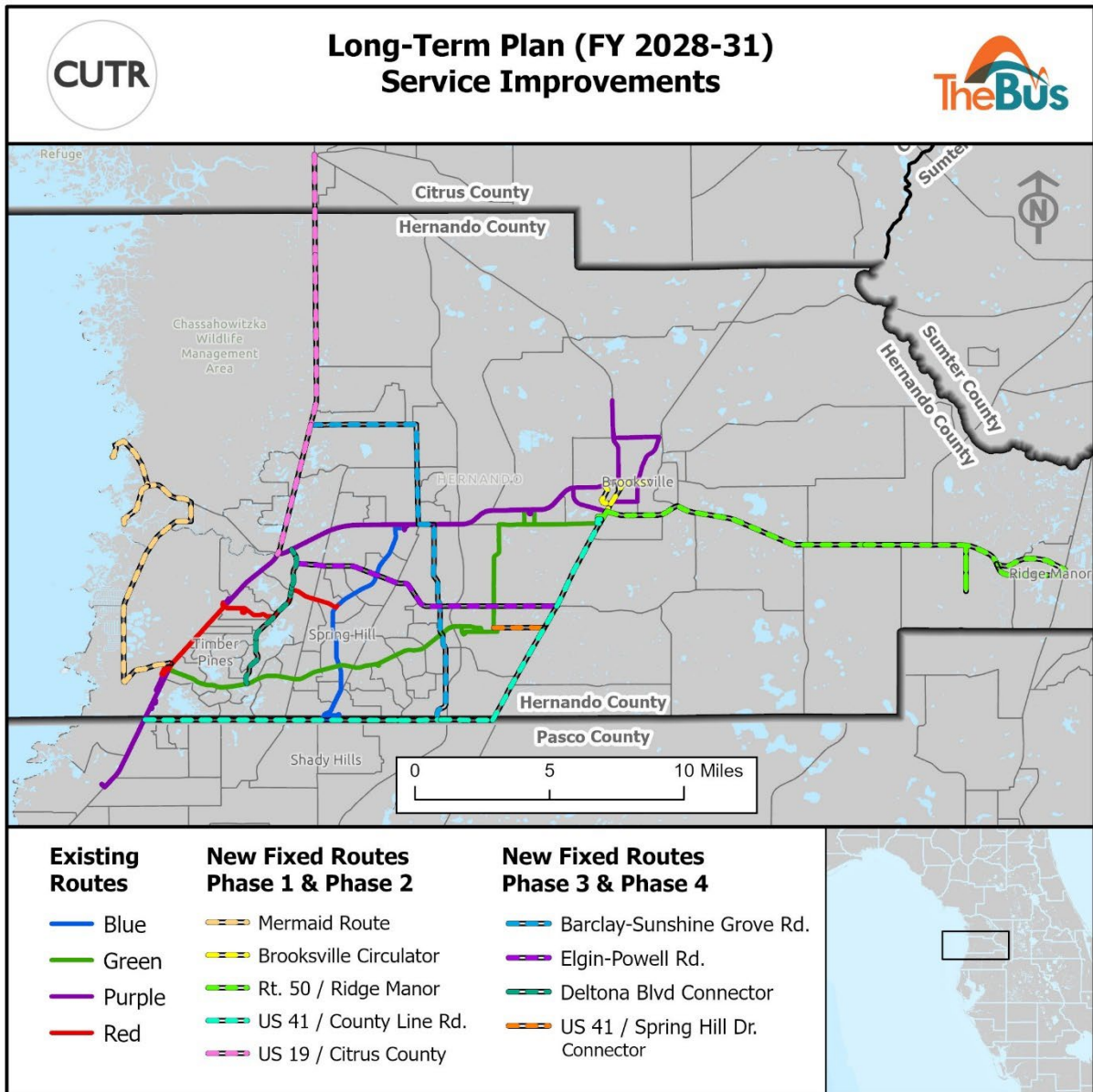
Implement Sunday Service (FY 2029)

Public input in this TDP process indicated some interest in adding transit service to Sundays. Currently, The Bus does not operate any fixed route service on Sundays. Typically, transit service on Sundays is offered at a smaller scale than Weekdays-Saturdays, due to lower demand. However, some riders indicated that they still have work-based or personal trip needs that extend to Sundays. For Hernando County, testing/piloting an on-demand service on Sundays within the

next five years (utilizing the vans allocated for the Monday-Saturday Mermaid and Brooksville Connector) is recommended initially rather than deploying fixed route vehicles and routing.

Unfunded Needs (FY 2031-2034)

In a limited funding environment, Hernando County must prioritize the Short-Term Service and Capital elements of this plan, followed by the Long-Term Service needs (if new sources of funding are secured). However, during the TDP development process, public demand for additional services was noted and follows.

Frequency Improvements

Frequency of transit service is one of the most important determinants of improving convenience and accessibility of transit services for the public. With more frequent service, existing and new transit users can better budget their time and will likely increase their usage of the system. In addition, more frequent transit service ultimately can lead to ridership increases (see Chapter 6), while subsequently attracting new users to the system. For TheBus system, increasing the frequency of buses from 60 minutes to 30 minutes is proposed only for the existing four fixed routes (Purple, Green, Blue, Red).

Frequency improvements are an expensive option to implement for any transit system. The implementation of frequency improvements to the existing routes doubles the size of the existing TheBus system. This implementation would require a much larger investment in the system than what is more cost feasible in the Short-Term Plan outlined above. For this reason, frequency improvements remain an Unfunded Need and will remain outside of the financial plan (see Chapter 8).

Alternatives Evaluation

This section presents the evaluation process that was used to identify the 10-Year TDP Alternatives. The main goal of an Alternatives Evaluation process is to pull together the findings from the previous components of the TDP and formulate them into a set of transit needs that can prioritized based on both qualitative and quantitative criteria.

As highlighted earlier in this section, the basis for developing a concise list of transit operational, capital, and policy needs (Short-Term & Long-Term) was based on summarizing the key findings from the previous sections of this TDP:

- 1.0 – Baseline Conditions Assessment
- 2.0 – Existing Service & Performance Evaluation
- 3.0 – Public Involvement
- 4.0 – Situation Appraisal
- 5.0 – Goals & Objectives
- 6.0 – Transit Demand Assessment

In addition, a series of Evaluation Criteria were adopted to accurately reflect findings identified in previous Sections of the TDP and their importance in assisting in the development of a final set of Alternatives located at the end of this Chapter (see Figure 7-1 and Figure 7-2 below).

Figure 7-1: TDP Alternatives Development and Evaluation Process

2025-2034
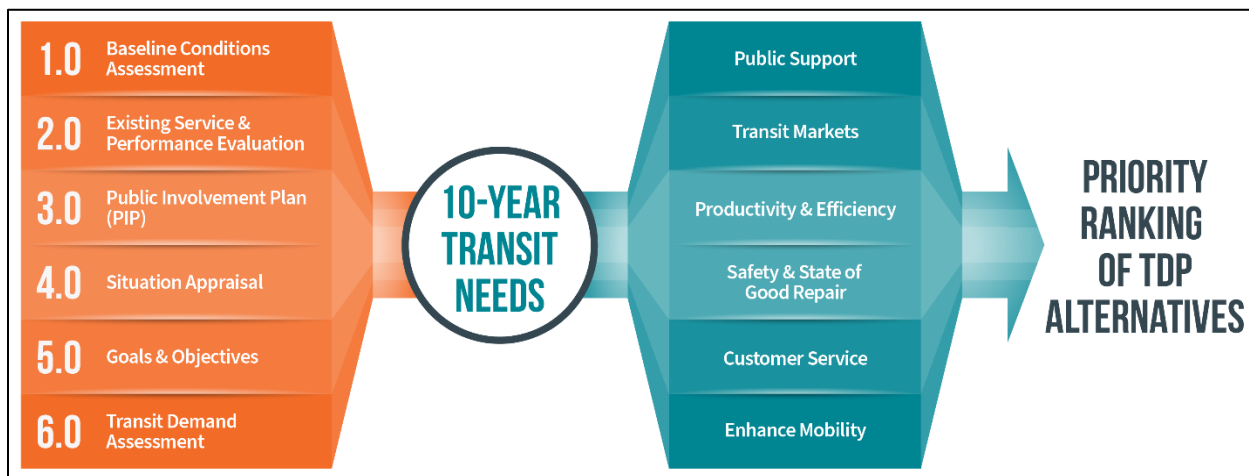
Figure 7-2: TDP Alternatives Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Description
Public Support	Input/findings from public outreach, including members of the public, elected officials, and the MPO Boards and Committees. *– TDP Sources: Chapter 3.0 - Public Involvement Plan, 4.0 Situation Appraisal.*
Transit Markets	Access/connectivity to transit markets including: Travel Patterns/Behaviors, Traditional, Regional, and Equity-Based. *– TDP Sources: Chapter 1.0 Baseline Conditions, 2.0 Existing Service & Performance Evaluation, 3.0 Public Involvement, 4.0 Situation Appraisal, 6.0 Demand Assessment.*
Productivity & Efficiency	Measurements of ridership, service efficiency, and costs as it relates to service needs and proposed service improvements. *– TDP Sources: Chapter 2.0 Existing Service & Performance Evaluation, 4.0 Situation Appraisal, 6.0 Demand Assessment.*
Safety & State of Good Repair	Investments and policies that maximize the safety and long-term useful life of operational and capital aspects of the transit agency. *– TDP Sources: Chapter 2.0 Existing Service & Performance Evaluation, 4.0 Situation Appraisal, 5.0 Goals & Objectives.*
Customer Service	Investments and policies that improve the customer experience. *– TDP Sources: Chapter 2.0 Existing Service & Performance Evaluation, 3.0 Public Involvement Plan, 4.0 Situation Appraisal.*
Enhance Mobility	Investments and policies that increase and improve the mobility service options in the service area. *– TDP Sources: Chapter 2.0 Existing Service & Performance Evaluation, 3.0 Public Involvement Plan, 4.0 Situation Appraisal, 6.0 Demand Assessment.*

Alternatives Summary

A summary of prioritized needs is provided in Table 7-2 and outlines the short and long-term priorities described above. For this planning effort, it is recommended that Hernando County invest in the Short-Term Plan's service (FY 2025-27) and capital (FY 2025-29) recommendations. For the Long-Term Plan Service needs (FY 2028-31), it is recommended that the funding for such service expansion be considered in more detail by the community and elected officials after the Short-Term service and capital improvements are implemented.

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Table 7-2. Hernando County Transit Overall Needs: FY 2025-34

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31	FY 32	FY 33	FY 34	IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
	MAINTAIN EXISTING SYSTEM													
SERVICE	Maintain Existing Fixed Route Service	☑										Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Maintain Existing ADA/Paratransit Service	☑										Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	EXPAND EXISTING SYSTEM													
	Expand Weekday & Sat. Service on Existing Routes Until 9:00 pm		☑									Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for Existing System Expansion		☑			☑						Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Implement Sunday Service					☑						Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Purple Route							☑				Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Green Route								☑			Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Blue Route									☑		Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Red Route										☑	Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	NEW FIXED ROUTES													
	Mermaid Route	☑										Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Brooksville Connector	☑										Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Rt. 50/Ridge Manor	☑										Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	US 41/County Line Rd.	☑										Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for New Fixed Routes	☑		☑	☑		☑	☑				Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	US 19/Citrus County			☑								Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Barclay-Sunshine Grove Rd.				☑							Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Elgin-Powell Rd.						☑					Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Deltona Blvd./Spring Hill Dr. Connector							☑				Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
CAPITAL & INFRASTRUCTURE	**FLEET & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**													
	Replacement Vehicles - Existing Fixed Route Service	☑										Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Replacement Vehicles - Existing ADA/Paratransit Service	☑										Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Bus Stop ADA Improvements	☑										Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	Transit Shelters & Related Amenities	☑										Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	New Transfer Center/Garage/Admin. Facility	☑										Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	New Vehicles - New Fixed Routes & Frequency	☑		☑	☑		☑	☑	☑	☑	☑	Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS**													
	Modernization and Update of Scheduling System	☑						☑				Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 6
	Addition of Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs)		☑									Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 6
	Same-Day Service Scheduling for Same-Day & On-Demand Service				☑							Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 6
	Modernization/Update of Vehicle & Facility Security Systems						☑					Long-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 6
ORGANIZATIONAL, POLICY & PLANNING	**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS**													
	Develop & Implement Marketing Plan	☑										Short-Term	Existing	5
	Staff Education & Training	☑										Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 3, 6
	New Staff for System Growth	☑										Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 6
	Increase Public Outreach Meetings/Events	☑										Short-Term	Existing	5
	Planning Studies: Route Realignment/Operational Analysis, Transit Development Plan (TDP), Bus Stop Infrastructure Program, On-Demand Service, Transfer/Maintenance/Admin. Facility.	☑										Short-Term	Exisiting/New	2, 3, 4, 6

CHAPTER 8

TEN-YEAR TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN

FY 2025-34 Transit Development Plan (TDP)

This section summarizes the recommendations for TheBus system over the next 10 years. The recommendations consider public input, discussions with Hernando County stakeholders and elected officials and TheBus staff and leadership, an analysis of the system and service area needs, and available or potential funding that can assist in implementing these priorities.

The plan calls for improving the current service quality by adding new fixed routes/route segments, expanding Weekday and Saturday service span, adding new capital facilities and customer amenities, updating and expanding information technology systems, and implementing key organizational and planning initiatives that will help improve current and expanded services. This section will also include a summary of assumptions for the capital and operating costs and revenues to support the Short and Long-Term Plan recommendations (financial plan), outline the costs associated with the these and the Unfunded Needs, and provide suggestions on approaches to identifying new funding for both sets of needs.

Recommended TDP Alternative: Short-Term Plan (FY 2025-2029)

As a result of the alternatives evaluation process (see Chapter 7), the following section describes the Recommended Alternative, or Short-Term Plan, for the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP. This includes a summary list of priorities targeted for TheBus system:

- **Phase 1 & 2 Service Enhancements (FY 2025-27)** – Implementation of expanded TheBus service:
  - Addition of a new Mermaid Route (FY 2025)
  - Addition of a new Brooksville Connector (FY 2025)
  - Addition of a new Route 50/Ridge Manor (FY 2025)
  - Addition of a new US 41/County Line Rd. route (FY 2025)
  - All fixed route service enhancements also must include the provision of expanded complementary ADA paratransit service with ¾-mile of each new route and during the Weekday & Saturday span increase (FY 2025-27)
  - Weekday & Saturday Service Span increase to 9:00 p.m. (FY 2026)
  - Addition of new US 19/Citrus County route (FY 2027)
- **Capital & Infrastructure (FY 2025-29)** – Capital improvements to support the existing and expanded TheBus system, including:
  - Bus Stop Safety & Accessibility Improvements (FY 2025-29)
  - Addition of Bus Shelters & Bike Racks at key bus stops (FY 2025-29)
  - New Transfer/Garage-Operations/Admin. Facilities (FY 2025-29)

- o New Vehicles for New Services (FY 2025-27)
- **Information Technology (FY 2025-29)** – Improvements to support existing technologies for improved operations and customer information, including:
    - o Modernization of Scheduling & Reservation Systems (FY 2025)
    - o Addition of Automatic Passenger Counters (FY 2026)
    - o Addition of Same-Day Scheduling Software (FY 2028)
- **Organizational, Policy, & Planning (FY 2025-29)** – Improvements needed to increase the capacity and quality of service being delivered, including:
    - o Develop & Implement a Marketing Plan (FY 2025)
    - o Increase Staff Training & Education Opportunities (FY 2025-29)
    - o Add New Staff for Existing & New Service Delivery (FY 2025-29)
    - o Implement Key Planning Studies (FY 2025-29)

Table 8-1 provides a prioritized and chronological summary list of the Short-Term Plan for the Hernando County TDP for the FY 2025-29 timeframe. A system map of the proposed Service Improvements for FY 2025-29 is outlined in Map 8-1 below.

Table 8-1. Short-Term Transit Development Plan (FY 2025-29)

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR					IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29			
SERVICE	**MAINTAIN EXISTING SYSTEM**								
	Maintain Existing Fixed Route Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Maintain Existing ADA/Paratransit Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	EXPAND EXISTING SYSTEM - PHASE 1								
	Expand Weekday & Sat. Service on Existing Routes Until 9:00 pm		☑				Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for Existing System Expansion		☑				Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	NEW FIXED ROUTES - PHASE 1 & 2								
	Mermaid Route	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Brooksville Connector	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Rt. 50/Ridge Manor	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	US 41/County Line Rd.	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for New Fixed Routes	☑		☑			Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6
	US 19/Citrus County			☑			Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6
CAPITAL & INFRASTRUCTURE	**FLEET & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**								
	Replacement Vehicles - Existing Fixed Route Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Replacement Vehicles - Existing ADA/Paratransit Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Bus Stop ADA Improvements	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	Transit Shelters & Related Amenities	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	New Transfer Center/Garage/Admin. Facility	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	New Vehicles - New Fixed Routes	☑		☑			Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS**								
	Modernization and Update of Scheduling System	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 6
	Addition of Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs)		☑				Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 6
	Same-Day Service Scheduling for Same-Day & On-Demand Service				☑		Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 6
ORGANIZATIONAL, POLICY & PLANNING	**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS**								
	Develop & Implement Marketing Plan	☑					Short-Term	Existing	5
	Staff Education & Training	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 3, 6
	New Staff for System Growth	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 6
	Increase Public Outreach Meetings/Events	☑					Short-Term	Existing	5
	Planning Studies: Route Realignment/Operational Analysis, Transit Development Plan (TDP), Bus Stop Infrastructure Program, On-Demand Service, Transfer/Maintenance/Admin. Facility.	☑					Short-Term	Exisiting/New	2, 3, 4, 6

Map 8-1. Short-Term Plan Service Improvements (FY 2025-29)

Map 8-1. Short-Term Plan Service Improvements (FY 2025-29)
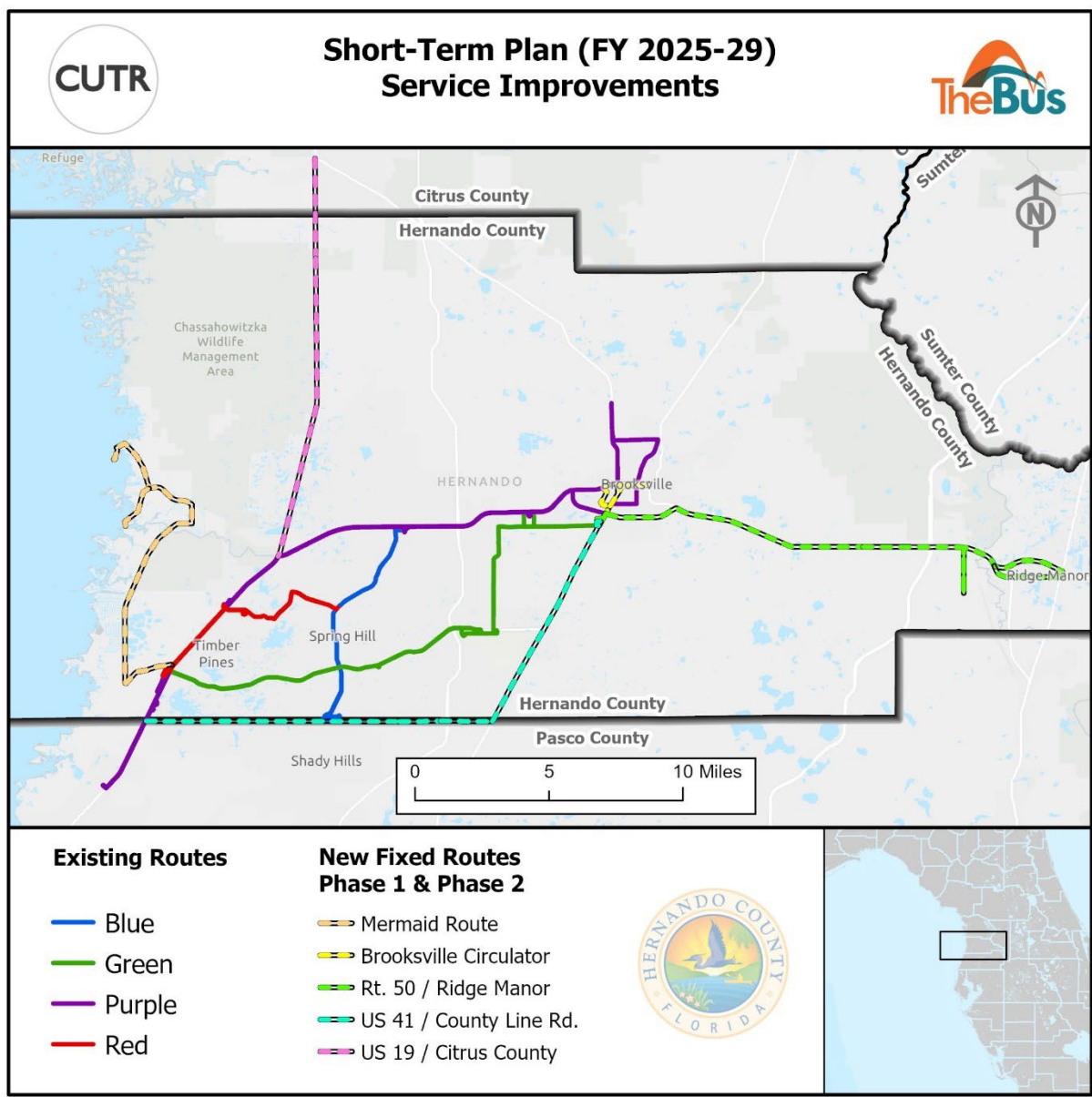
TDP Unfunded Alternatives: Long-Term Plan (FY 2028-2031)

As a result of the alternatives evaluation process (see Chapter 7), the following section and Table 8-2 and Map 8-2 below outline the Long-Term Plan (for FY 2028-31) for the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP. This includes:

- **Phase 3 & 4 Service Enhancements** – Implementation of expanded TheBus service:
  - Addition of a new Barclay-Sunshine Grove Rd. route (FY 2028)
  - Expanded complementary ADA paratransit service with ¾-mile of each new route and during the Weekday & Saturday span increase (FY 2028-31)
  - Addition of Sunday service (FY 2029)
  - Addition of an Elgin-Powell Rd. route (FY 2030)
  - Addition of Deltona Blvd./Airport Connector (FY 2031)
- **Capital & Infrastructure** - Capital improvements to support the Long-Term Plan:
  - New Vehicles for New Services (FY 2028-31)
- **Information Technology** – Technology improvements to support the Long-Term Plan:
  - Modernization of Scheduling & Reservation Systems (FY 2031)
  - Modernization/Update of Vehicle & Facility Security Systems (FY 2030)

Table 8-2. Long-Term Transit Development Plan (FY 2028-31)

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR				IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 28	FY 29	FY 30	FY 31			
SERVICE	**EXPAND EXISTING SYSTEM - PHASE 3**							
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for Existing System Expansion		☑			Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Implement Sunday Service		☑			Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	NEW FIXED ROUTES - PHASE 3 & 4							
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for New Fixed Routes	☑		☑	☑	Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Barclay-Sunshine Grove Rd.	☑				Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Elgin-Powell Rd.			☑		Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Deltona Blvd./Spring Hill Dr. Connector				☑	Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
CAPITAL & INFRA.	**FLEET & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**							
	New Vehicles - New Fixed Routes	☑		☑	☑	Long-Term	New	2, 3, 4, 6
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS**							
	Modernization and Update of Scheduling System				☑	Long-Term	New	1, 2, 6
	Modernization/Update of Vehicle & Facility Security Systems			☑		Long-Term	New	1, 2, 6

Map 8-2. Long-Term Plan Service Improvements (FY 2028-31)

Map 8-2. Long-Term Plan Service Improvements (FY 2028-31)
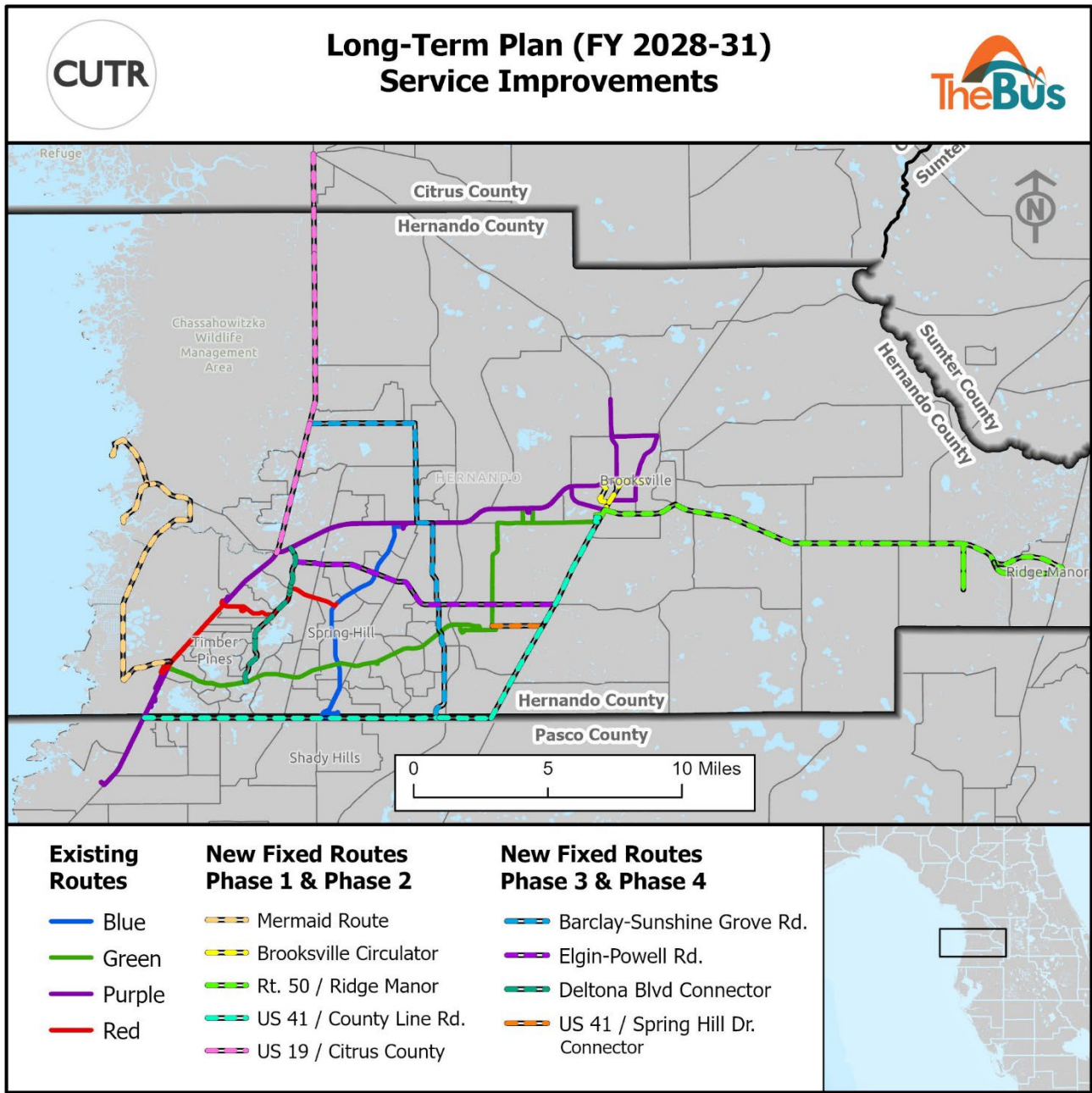
TDP Unfunded Needs Plan (FY 2031-2034)

As a result of the alternatives evaluation process (see Chapter 7) and in a limited funding environment, Hernando County must prioritize the Short-Term Service and Capital elements of this

plan, followed by the Long-Term Service needs (if new sources of funding are secured). However, during the TDP development process, public demand for additional service frequency was notable. However, these needs will remain as unfunded priorities for FY 2031-34 and are therefore left out of the Financial Plan (see below). Frequency Improvements are noted below in Table 8-3.

Table 8-3. TDP Unfunded Needs Plan (FY 2031-34)

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR				IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 31	FY 32	FY 33	FY 34			
	EXPAND EXISTING SYSTEM							
SERVICE	Increase Frequency - Purple Route	☑				Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Green Route		☑			Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Blue Route			☑		Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6
	Increase Frequency - Red Route				☑	Unfunded Need -TBD	New	2, 3, 4, 6

Financial Plan Overview

In the final Financial Plan for the Hernando TDP, operating and capital costs and revenue assumptions are made for all of the Short and Long-Term Plan priorities in addition to the cost of maintaining existing TheBus services over a ten-year period (FY 2025-2034). Notably, the Financial Plan addresses how Hernando County can implement a good portion of the Short-Term Plan priorities with available and feasible new grant-based financial resources.

Cost estimates in the TDP are based on a wide variety of data, including professional experience, recent procurements, peer agency costs, National Transit Database (NTD) data, trend analyses, fleet planning, and Hernando County Transit's approved FY 2025 budget. Revenue projections account for capital and operating revenue from several sources, including state and federal grants, allocated county funding, and advertising sales.

Financial Plan Assumptions
The Financial Plan includes the costs and estimated revenue estimates required to maintain existing TheBus services and the addition of all Short and Long-Term service and capital improvements that the TDP identified as priorities for the community. The Financial Plan is summarized in a ten-year snapshot of the total budget picture covering FY 2025-2034. The Financial Plan is divided into the following categories and related assumptions:

- **Operating Expenses** – estimated operating costs for existing and planned service upgrades in the categories related to operations, including but not limited to salaries and benefits. Other assumptions include:
  - The current hourly cost to operate the existing TheBus services is utilized to project the cost of all new services, regardless of mode.
  - Typically, a 3% inflationary factor is applied annually to each expense category.

- **Operating Revenues** – estimated operating revenues for existing and planned service upgrades utilizing existing and new revenue sources, including revenue from grant funds and an expansion of an advertising program. Assumptions include:
  - Existing grant revenue from state and federal sources (and local match) continues and grow modestly each year.
  - One-time FTA operating funding originating from the COVID-19 Pandemic are expended in FY 2025 and are not available for remaining years.
  - Anticipated new state and federal operating grant revenue sources (and associated local match) are added once new service improvements beginning in FY 2026.
  - Fare Revenue and Program Income (advertising, other sources) are projected to grow robustly starting in FY 2026 onwards.
- **Capital Expenses** – estimated capital costs for existing and planned capital and infrastructure investments required for the delivery of transit services. Assumptions include:
  - Typically, an inflationary factor is applied in five-year increments to each capital expense category.
- **Capital Revenues** – estimated revenues for existing and planned capital and infrastructure investments. Assumptions include:
  - New state and federal operating grant revenue sources (and required local match) are added beginning in FY 2026, which allows an increase FTA 5307 and 5339 revenue allocations to be applied to capital needs.

Short-Term Plan Financial Estimates and Recommendations (FY 2025-29)

The Short-Term Plan Financial Estimates (see Table 8-4 below) provides a 5-year picture of the estimated costs and revenues for the FY 2025-29 timeframe. This Financial Plan offers a look at potential cost and revenue estimates related to implementing all recommended Short-Term Plan service and capital alternatives. From this Financial Plan, some important conclusions can be drawn:

1. **First-Year Budget Balanced:** The financial plan assumes a balanced budget for FY 2025.
2. **Maintain Existing Services & Capital:** Hernando County can maintain existing services for FY 2025-29 if current local, state, and federal funding sources remain committed and adjust for annual inflation.
3. **Operating Shortfalls:**
   - For FY 2026 onward, investments into service expansion would require a local match increase from the County to qualify for/receive any new State and Federal operating grant funding.
   - Operating needs and shortfall for FY 2026-27 could reasonably be met with a minimal local match increase and if additional state and federal operating grants were secured.
   - Operating shortfall beyond FY 2027 will require the identification of a much larger source of local, state and grant funding and is therefore considered less feasible.
4. **Capital Shortfalls:**

- Capital shortfall for FY 2026-29 is due to the cost associated with developing a new Transfer/Garage/Admin. Facility. This project is not cost feasible unless Hernando County is successful in securing a discretionary 5307 or 5339 grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- All other capital needs can be met/funded by current state and federal grant sources.

5. **Potential Grant Funding:** Both Operating and Capital budgets assume that new grant funding will be secured by Hernando County Transit, including but not limited to the following sources:
    - Operating:
        - FDOT Service Development Grant Program
        - FDOT Urban Corridor Grant Program
        - FDOT-administered FTA 5310 (Hernando County currently does not receive this funding)
        - Local Match requirement(s)
    - Capital:
        - Other FTA 5307 and/or 5339 discretionary federal sources
        - FTA funding (potentially flexed from Federal Highway Administration sources)
        - FDOT-administered FTA 5310 (Hernando County currently does not receive this funding)

Table 8-4. Short-Term Recommendations Financial Plan (FY 2025-29)

Cost/Revenue	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Operating					
Costs					
Existing Transit Services	$5,457,903	$5,621,640	$5,790,289	$5,963,998	$6,142,918
New - Earlier/Later Weekday & Saturday Fixed Route Service	$0	$84,609	$87,147	$89,762	$92,455
New - Fixed Routes	$0	$0	$504,812	$1,039,913	$1,071,110
New - Sunday Service	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,071,110
New - ADA Expansion to Support New Fixed Route Service	$0	$46,535	$325,578	$621,321	$1,229,071
Total Costs	**$5,457,903**	**$5,752,784**	**$6,707,826**	**$7,714,993**	**$9,606,664**
Revenues					
FTA 5307	$1,689,563	$1,706,459	$1,731,588	$2,019,056	$2,322,213
5307 ARPA	$310,337	$0	$0	$0	$0
FTA 5311	$393,448	$347,615	$402,470	$462,900	$576,400
FDOT State Block Grant	$1,270,230	$1,035,501	$1,207,409	$1,388,699	$1,729,199
Local Funds (9th Cent)	$1,729,002	$1,746,292	$1,763,755	$1,781,392	$1,799,206
Program Income	$11,544	$115,440	$116,594	$117,760	$118,938
Farebox Revenues	$53,779	$287,639	$290,516	$293,421	$296,355
New - State Service Development Grant	$0	$107,876	$252,406	$259,978	$267,778
New - State Urban Corridor Grant	$0	$0	$504,812	$519,956	$535,555
Total Revenues	**$5,457,903**	**$5,346,822**	**$6,269,549**	**$6,843,162**	**$7,645,644**
Revenues Minus Costs	**$0**	**-$405,962**	**-$438,277**	**-$871,831**	**-$1,961,020**
Rollover from Prev. Year	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Surplus/Shortfall	**$0**	**$405,962**	**$438,277**	**$871,831**	**$1,961,020**
Capital					
Costs					
Vehicles	**$2,893,236**	**$1,170,000**	**$2,506,642**	**$1,786,642**	**$1,336,642**
Replacement - Fixed Route Vehicles	$0	$600,000	$600,000	$600,000	$600,000
Replacement - ADA Vehicles/Vans	$819,852	$450,000	$450,000	$450,000	$450,000
Replacement - Support & Supervisor Vehicles	$0	$120,000	$0	$0	$0
New - Fixed Route Vehicles	$1,800,000	$0	$1,200,000	$600,000	$0
New - ADA Vehicles/Vans	$273,384	$0	$136,642	$136,642	$136,642
New - Support & Supervisor Vehicles	$0	$0	$120,000	$0	$150,000
Other Transit Capital	**$7,050,667**	**$5,380,187**	**$2,172,143**	**$4,557,857**	**$4,575,642**
Stop Amenities/ADA Compliance	$500,000	$500,000	$500,000	$500,000	$500,000
Project Administration	$400,667	$412,687	$425,068	$437,820	$450,954
Transfer Facility/Garage/Admin. Facility	$5,000,000	$3,000,000	$2,000,000	$2,000,000	$2,000,000
Transit Studies/Short & Long Range Planning	$0	$250,000	$250,000	$300,000	$250,000
Preventive Maintenance (Capitalized)	$650,000	$682,500	$716,625	$752,456	$790,079
Misc. Support Equipment	$0	$20,000	$20,600	$21,218	$21,855
Transit Shelter(s) & Amenities	$500,000	$515,000	$530,450	$546,364	$562,754
Total Costs	**$9,943,903**	**$6,550,187**	**$4,678,785**	**$6,344,499**	**$5,912,284**
Revenues					
FTA - 5307	$7,769,390	$2,313,366	$2,382,767	$2,454,250	$2,527,877
FTA - 5307 (CARES & ARPA)	$526,418	$0	$0	$0	$0
FTA - 5311	$501,690	$347,615	$368,472	$390,580	$414,015
FTA - 5339	$1,146,405	$263,000	$273,520	$284,461	$295,839
Total Revenue	**$9,943,903**	**$2,923,981**	**$3,024,759**	**$3,129,291**	**$3,237,732**
Revenue Minus Cost	**$0**	**-$3,626,206**	**-$1,654,026**	**-$3,215,208**	**-$2,674,552**
Rollover from Prev. Year	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**
Surplus/Shortfall	**$0**	**$3,626,206**	**$1,654,026**	**$3,215,208**	**$2,674,552**
Local Option Gas Tax (Ninth Cent)					
Estimated Remaining Reserve	$2,819,643	$2,869,643	$1,919,643	$2,319,643	$2,769,643
10-Year Transit Development Plan					
Total Costs	$15,401,806	$12,302,971	$11,386,611	$14,059,493	$15,518,948
Total Revenues	$15,401,806	$11,897,009	$10,948,334	$13,187,662	$13,557,928
Surplus/Shortfall	$0	($405,962)	-$438,277	($871,831)	($1,961,020)

Transit Operating Grants

To implement the planned service changes in the Short-Term Plan (as highlighted as green in the Operating section of the above table), Hernando County will need to pursue and secure annual

operating funding grants from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). One such program is the State Transit Service Development Program, a discretionary grant program that funds up to 50% of the annual operating cost for new public transportation services. A Local Match of 50% is required to secure a Service Development grant. As described above, the Short-Term Financial Plan assumes that Hernando County will be successful in securing a Service Development grant every three years, which will require an additional annual match from County Funds as indicated in the plan.

Other State discretionary grants, such as the Transit/Urban Corridor Program, are also available for new operating expenses for corridors/service important to a region (such as US 19) and may require some Local Match. In addition, the County can begin to explore the FDOT-administered discretionary 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Person with Disabilities) grant program that could be applied to funding some of the existing and expanded ADA/Paratransit service operating costs.

Transit Capital Grants

For the capital priorities of the Short-Term (FY 2025-29) Financial Plan (as highlighted as green in the Capital section of the above table), there are three important assumptions. First, the capital plan component assumes that Hernando County will be successful in securing FDOT Service Development or Transit Corridor operating grants on an annual basis (see above section) so that the maximum new operating funds can be obtained. By securing these operating funds, the County will be able to apply more of their Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5307 formula funds toward capital needs.

The second assumption is that the County will secure new discretionary funding from the FTA for the Transfer/Garage/Admin. Facility needs/projects. Such funding is generally considered on a competitive basis annually. FTA discretionary grants include FTA Section 5307 and/or 5339. Most new transit facilities do not get programmed until they secure such discretionary grants. Recent examples of this include the TIGER, ARRA, Bipartisan Infrastructure Act, and the Bus and Bus Facilities grant programs from the last ten years. Additionally, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding, as part of the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) process, can be "flexed" to FTA funds if the transit capital projects in the TDP are consistent with the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and if such funds are made available in the MPO planning process.

Third, the County can begin to explore securing FDOT-administered discretionary 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Person with Disabilities) grant program that could be applied to capital components (such as vans, contracting of service) for the existing and expanded ADA/Paratransit service.

Local Funding Match for Operating and Capital Grants

Local funding from Hernando County's Gas Tax plays a critical role in funding TheBus services, as outlined in Table 8-4 above. Additional Gas Tax or other local funding or income (fares, advertising)

can be used as "Local Match", which is required for most State and Federal operating grant programs. To adopt the priority service enhancements in the Short-Term Plan, local funding as a match for State and Federal operating funding grants will need to increase on an annual basis starting in FY 2026.

Long- Term Plan Financial Estimates and Recommendations (FY 2030-34)

The Long-Term Plan Financial Estimates (see Table 8-5 below) provides a 5-year picture of the estimated costs and revenues for the FY 2030-34 timeframe. The Financial Plan offers a look at potential cost and revenue estimates related to implementing all recommended Short-Term Plan service and capital alternatives. From a Long-Term Financial Plan outlook, some important conclusions can be drawn:

1. **Maintain Existing Services & Capital:** Hernando County can maintain existing services for FY 2030-34 if current local, state, and federal funding sources remain committed and adjust for annual inflation.
2. **Operating Shortfalls:**
   - Similar to the Operating shortfall in FY 2028-29 (see above section), operating shortfall for the FY 2030-34 is related to the addition of new services and will require the identification of a much larger source of local, state and grant funding and is therefore considered less feasible.
3. **Capital Shortfalls:**
   Capital shortfall for FY 2030-34 is due to the cost associated with acquiring vehicles and developing bus stop infrastructure for the new service proposed in the Long-Term Plan. It is expected that operating funding for services proposed in FY 2028-31 will be more difficult to secure. Therefore, most of the capital shortfall for the FY 203-34 time period most likely will not come to be since the service it is related to is less likely to be initiated due to operating shortfall (see above).
   - All other capital needs can be met/funded by current state and federal grant sources.
4. **Potential Grant Funding:** Both Operating and Capital budgets assume that new grant funding will be secured by Hernando County staff, including but not limited to the following sources:
   - Operating:
     - FDOT Service Development Grant Program
     - FDOT Urban Corridor Grant Program
     - FDOT-administered Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5310 (Hernando County currently does not receive this funding)
     - Local Match requirement(s)
   - Capital:
     - Other FTA 5307 and/or 5339 discretionary federal sources
     - FTA funding (potentially flexed from Federal Highway Administration sources)
     - FDOT-administered FTA 5310 ((Hernando County currently does not receive this funding)

Table 8-5. Long-Term Plan Financial Estimates (FY 2030-34)

Cost/Revenue	FY 2030	FY 2031	FY 2032	FY 2033	FY 2034	10-Year Total
Operating						
Costs						
Existing Transit Services	$6,327,205	$6,517,022	$6,712,532	$6,913,908	$7,121,325	**$62,568,741**
New - Earlier/Later Weekday & Saturday Fixed Route Service	$95,228	$98,085	$101,028	$104,058	$107,180	**$859,552**
New - Fixed Routes	$1,621,355	$2,141,312	$2,205,551	$2,271,717	$2,339,869	**$13,195,639**
New - Sunday Service	$1,103,243	$1,136,341	$1,170,431	$1,205,544	$1,241,710	**$6,928,379**
New - ADA Expansion to Support New Fixed Route Service	$1,550,905	$1,856,655	$1,912,355	$1,969,726	$2,028,818	**$11,540,963**
Total Costs	**$10,697,937**	**$11,749,414**	**$12,101,897**	**$12,464,954**	**$12,838,902**	**$95,093,274**
Revenues						
FTA 5307	$2,891,606	$3,220,079	$3,536,574	$3,642,671	$3,751,951	**$26,511,759**
5307 ARPA	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	**$310,337**
FTA 5311	$641,876	$704,965	$726,114	$747,897	$770,334	**$5,774,018**
FDOT State Block Grant	$1,925,629	$2,114,895	$2,178,341	$2,243,692	$2,311,002	**$17,404,597**
Local Funds (9th Cent)	$1,817,198	$1,835,370	$1,853,724	$1,872,261	$1,890,984	**$18,089,186**
Program Income	$120,127	$121,329	$122,542	$123,767	$125,005	**$1,093,047**
Farebox Revenues	$299,319	$302,312	$305,335	$308,388	$311,472	**$2,748,535**
New - State Service Development Grant	$275,811	$284,085	$292,608	$301,386	$310,428	**$2,352,355**
New - State Urban Corridor Grant	$551,622	$568,170	$585,215	$602,772	$620,855	**$4,488,958**
Total Revenues	**$8,523,188**	**$9,151,205**	**$9,600,453**	**$9,842,835**	**$10,092,031**	**$78,772,792**
Revenues Minus Costs	**-$2,174,749**	**-$2,598,210**	**-$2,501,444**	**-$2,622,119**	**-$2,746,871**	
Rollover from Prev. Year	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	
Surplus/Shortfall	**$2,174,749**	**$2,598,210**	**$2,501,444**	**$2,622,119**	**$2,746,871**	**$16,320,482**
Capital						
Costs						
Vehicles	**$2,343,758**	**$2,675,928**	**$1,149,750**	**$1,475,738**	**$1,203,024**	**$18,541,360**
Replacement - Fixed Route Vehicles	$630,000	$630,000	$630,000	$630,000	$630,000	$5,550,000
Replacement - ADA Vehicles/Vans	$942,830	$495,000	$519,750	$545,738	$573,024	$5,696,194
Replacement - Support & Supervisor Vehicles	$0	$0	$0	$150,000	$0	$270,000
New - Fixed Route Vehicles	$630,000	$1,260,000	$0	$0	$0	$5,490,000
New - ADA Vehicles/Vans	$140,928	$140,928	$0	$0	$0	$965,166
New - Support & Supervisor Vehicles	$0	$150,000	$0	$150,000	$0	$570,000
Other Transit Capital	**$3,706,213**	**$2,955,941**	**$3,064,516**	**$3,242,770**	**$3,295,915**	**$40,001,851**
Stop Amenities/ADA Compliance	$525,000	$551,250	$578,813	$607,753	$638,141	$5,400,956
Project Administration	$464,483	$478,417	$492,770	$507,553	$522,780	$4,593,198
Transfer Facility/Garage/Admin. Facility	$1,000,000	$150,000	$154,500	$159,135	$163,909	$15,627,544
Transit Studies/Short & Long Range Planning	$285,000	$285,000	$285,000	$350,000	$285,000	$2,540,000
Preventive Maintenance (Capitalized)	$829,583	$871,062	$914,615	$960,346	$1,008,363	$8,175,630
Misc. Support Equipment	$22,510	$23,185	$23,881	$24,597	$25,335	$203,182
Transit Shelter(s) & Amenities	$579,637	$597,026	$614,937	$633,385	$652,387	$5,731,940
Total Costs	**$6,049,971**	**$5,631,869**	**$4,214,266**	**$4,718,507**	**$4,498,939**	**$58,543,210**
Revenues						
FTA - 5307	$2,603,714	$2,681,825	$2,762,280	$2,845,148	$2,930,503	$31,271,121
FTA - 5307 (CARES & ARPA)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$526,418
FTA - 5311	$438,856	$465,187	$493,099	$522,684	$554,045	$4,496,244
FTA - 5339	$307,673	$319,980	$332,779	$346,090	$359,934	$3,929,680
Total Revenue	**$3,350,243**	**$3,466,992**	**$3,588,157**	**$3,713,923**	**$3,844,482**	**$40,223,463**
Revenue Minus Cost	**-$2,699,728**	**-$2,164,877**	**-$626,108**	**-$1,004,584**	**-$654,457**	
Rollover from Prev. Year	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	
Surplus/Shortfall	**$2,699,728**	**$2,164,877**	**$626,108**	**$1,004,584**	**$654,457**	**$18,319,748**
Local Option Gas Tax (Ninth Cent)						
Estimated Remaining Reserve	$3,219,643	$3,669,643	$3,965,143	$4,415,143	$4,865,143	
10-Year Transit Development Plan						
Total Costs	$16,747,908	$17,381,284	$16,316,162	$17,183,461	$17,337,841	$153,636,485
Total Revenues	$14,573,158	$14,783,074	$13,814,719	$14,561,342	$14,590,970	$118,996,255
Surplus/Shortfall	**-$2,174,749**	**-$2,598,210**	**-$2,501,444**	**-$2,622,119**	**-$2,746,871**	**-$34,640,230**

Unfunded Needs (FY 2031-34)

As outlined in Chapter 7, there were additional Unfunded Needs identified in the development of this TDP. These needs specifically included adding 30-minute frequency for the existing TheBus system (4 routes). Total costs for the unfunded need of service Frequency improvements are estimated to be:

- Total Operating Costs (FY 2031-34): $27,264,787

- Total Capital Costs (FY 2031-34): $5,040,000

Although Frequency Improvements were identified as a need in the development of this TDP, these improvements are deemed unfunded and therefore are not placed in the Financial Plan of this TDP. Pursuing these needs is only recommended after implementation of the Short-Term and Long-Term Plan needs.

CHAPTER 9

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION & COORDINATION

Implementing the Hernando County FY 2025-34 TDP

As the population continues to grow and age, and as economic and employment opportunities continue to grow in Hernando County and the region, now is an excellent time to introduce additional mobility options by making key improvements to TheBus system. This section outlines the important steps that must be taken to effectively coordinate and implement the findings and recommendations from this TDP. This includes working with existing local, state, and regional planning and community partners so that all aspects of the service, capital, policy, and planning needs identified in the plan can be implemented.

Introduction

The Transit Development Plan (TDP) development process offers Hernando County an excellent opportunity to continue to make incremental improvements to an already popular and utilized public transportation system (TheBus). As outlined in previous chapters, there is both an interest from varying members of the community and the analysis that now backs up the need for some service and facility improvements, many of which could feasibly be done in the next three years. In addition, the TDP process identified several organizational, policy, and planning efforts that will greatly assist Hernando County in capitalizing on the positive feedback and support received from the public and elected officials regarding the important of TheBus services.

Recommended Improvements: Short-Term Plan (FY 2025-29)

The recommended improvements for the Hernando County FY 2025-34 TDP all emanate from the Short-Term Plan for FY 2025-29, as outlined in more detail in Chapters 7-8. Based on public support, demand, and existing and potential financial resources, the following recommendations present an excellent opportunity to implement incremental but important new transit services to corridors and portions of the Hernando County that currently lack such mobility options. Overall, the Short-Term Plan recommendations focus on service and capital improvements that are potentially cost-feasible and best improve TheBus system's availability, connectivity, and service efficiency and security. Highlights of the Short-Term Plan are outlined in the following sections.

Phase 1 & 2 Service Enhancements (FY 2025-27)

It is recommended that Hernando County implement Phase 1 & 2 Service Enhancements that will improve connectivity and mobility options for existing and new TheBus users (see Table 9-1 and below). Service recommendations include:

- o Addition of a new Mermaid Route (FY 2025)

- o Addition of a new Brooksville Connector (FY 2025)
- o Addition of a new Route 50/Ridge Manor route (FY 2025)
- o Addition of a new US 41/County Line Rd. route (FY 2025)
- o All fixed route service enhancements also must include the provision of expanded complementary ADA paratransit service with ¾-mile of each new route and during the Weekday & Saturday span increase (FY 2025-27)
- o Weekday & Saturday Service Span increase to 9:00 p.m. (FY 2026)
- o Addition of new US 19/Citrus County route (FY 2027)

Table 9-1. Recommended Service Improvements

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR					IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29			
SERVICE	**MAINTAIN EXISTING SYSTEM**								
	Maintain Existing Fixed Route Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Maintain Existing ADA/Paratransit Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	EXPAND EXISTING SYSTEM - PHASE 1								
	Expand Weekday & Sat. Service on Existing Routes Until 9:00 pm		☑				Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for Existing System Expansion		☑				Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	NEW FIXED ROUTES - PHASE 1 & 2								
	Mermaid Route	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Brooksville Connector	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	Rt. 50/Ridge Manor	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	US 41/County Line Rd.	☑					Short-Term	Existing	2, 3, 4, 6
	New ADA/Paratransit Service for New Fixed Routes	☑		☑			Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6
	US 19/Citrus County			☑			Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6

The recommended Phase 1 & 2 Service Improvements will provide Hernando County with a transit system that provides more connectivity and mobility (as outlined in Map 9-1 below) including:

- New access to East County/Ridge Manor.
- New access to tourist and beach areas (Mermaid Route) and in/around downtown Brooksville (Brooksville Connector).
- Regional connections to neighboring transit system/routes in Pasco County (US 41/County Line Rd., US 19).
- Earlier/Later Weekday and Saturday Service Span on all routes.
- Regional connection to neighboring transit system in Citrus County (US 19/Citrus County).

Map 9-1. Short-Term Plan Service Improvements (FY 2025-29)
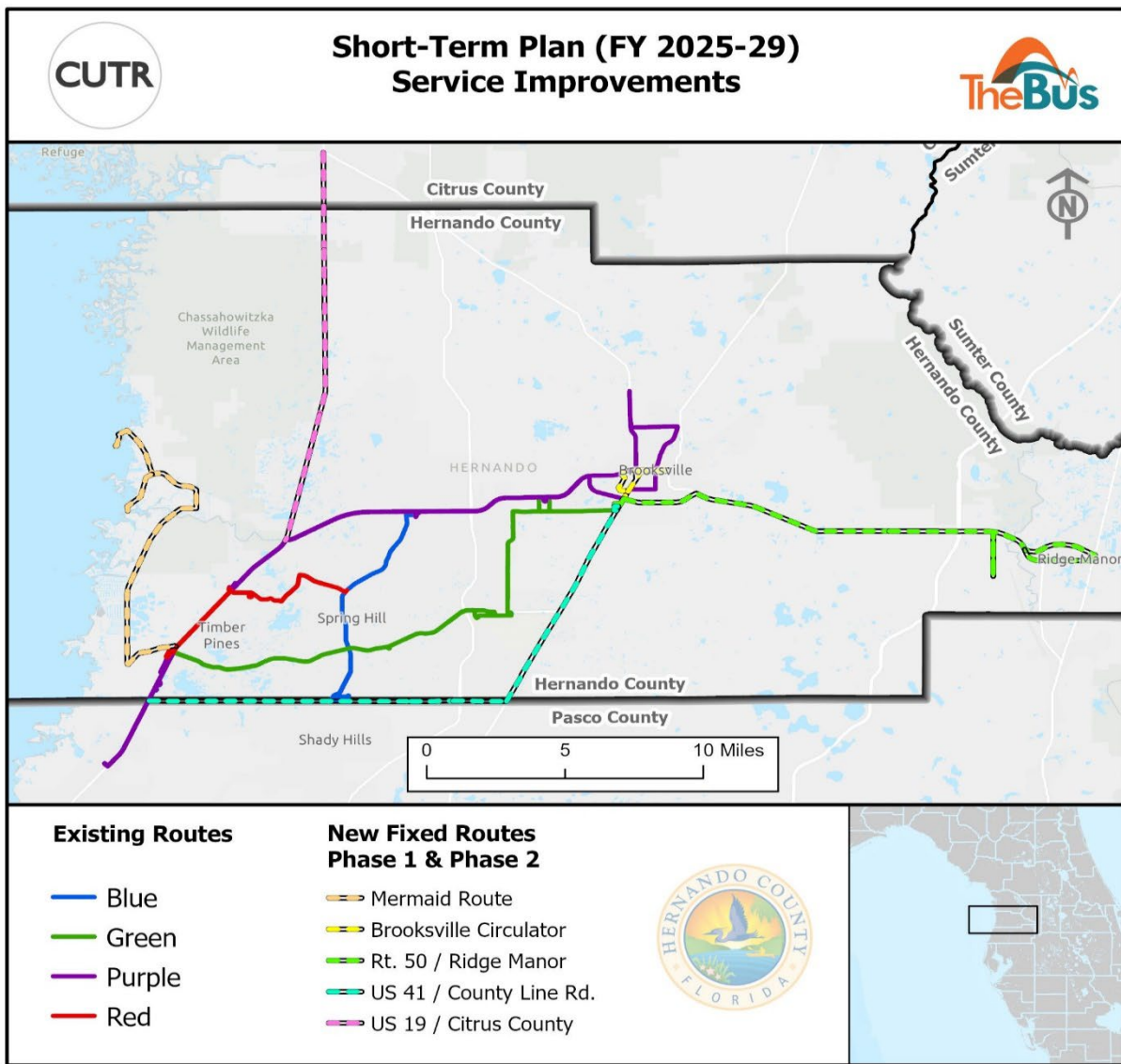
Capital & Infrastructure Improvements (FY 2025-29)

The following are recommended capital improvements to improve the existing TheBus system and are critical for the implementation of the recommended service enhancements (see Table 9-2 below), including:

- o Bus Stop Safety & Accessibility Improvements (FY 2025-29)
- o Addition of Bus Shelters & Bike Racks at key bus stops (FY 2025-29)
- o New Transfer/Garage-Operations/Admin. Facilities (FY 2025-29)
- o New Vehicles for New Services (FY 2025-27)

Table 9-2. Recommended Capital & Infrastructure Improvements

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR					IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29			
CAPITAL & INFRASTRUCTURE	**FLEET & INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS**								
	Replacement Vehicles - Existing Fixed Route Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Replacement Vehicles - Existing ADA/Paratransit Service	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 4, 6
	Bus Stop ADA Improvements	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	Transit Shelters & Related Amenities	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	New Transfer Center/Garage/Admin. Facility	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 4, 6
	New Vehicles - New Fixed Routes	☑		☑			Short-Term	Existing/New	2, 3, 4, 6

Information Technology Improvements (FY 2025-29)

Improvements to support existing and new technology/systems for improved operations, data collection, and customer information (see Table 9-3 below), including:

- o Modernization of Scheduling & Reservation Systems (FY 2025)
- o Addition of Automatic Passenger Counters (FY 2026)
- o Addition of Same-Day Scheduling Software (FY 2028)

Table 9-3. Recommended Information Technology Improvements

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR					IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29			
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS**								
	Modernization and Update of Scheduling System	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 6
	Addition of Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs)		☑				Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 6
	Same-Day Service Scheduling for Same-Day & On-Demand Service				☑		Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 6

Organizational, Policy, & Planning Improvements (FY 2025-29)

Improvements needed to capitalize on the organizational, policy, and planning needs based on public feedback and analysis developed during the TDP process (Table 9-4 below), including:

- o Develop & Implement a Marketing Plan (FY 2025)
- o Increase Staff Training & Education Opportunities (FY 2025-29)
- o Add New Staff for Existing & New Service Delivery (FY 2025-29)
- o Implement Key Planning Studies (FY 2025-29)

Table 9-4. Recommended Organizational, Policy, & Planning Improvements

NEED	PLANNED IMPROVEMENT	IMPLEMENTATION YEAR					IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	REVENUE SOURCE	TDP GOAL/OBJECTIVE
		FY 25	FY 26	FY 27	FY 28	FY 29			
ORGANIZATIONAL, POLICY & PLANNING	**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS**								
	Develop & Implement Marketing Plan	☑					Short-Term	Existing	5
	Staff Education & Training	☑					Short-Term	Existing	1, 2, 3, 6
	New Staff for System Growth	☑					Short-Term	Existing/New	1, 2, 3, 6
	Increase Public Outreach Meetings/Events	☑					Short-Term	Existing	5
	Planning Studies: Route Realignment/Operational Analysis, Transit Development Plan (TDP), Bus Stop Infrastructure Program, On-Demand Service, Transfer/Maintenance/Admin. Facility.	☑					Short-Term	Exisiting/New	2, 3, 4, 6

Long-Term and Unfunded Needs Plans

As outlined in Chapters 7-8, there were additional Long-Term Plan and Unfunded Needs identified in the development of this TDP. Within these plans, there are several phased service and capital improvements important to the full development of a robust long-term public transportation system that benefits an even larger number of users and potential users of TheBus system. However, as outlined in the Financial Plan section (see Chapter 8), the operating funding shortfall is extensive and would require a much larger source(s) of local funding to be identified and allocated toward such needs. Therefore, for the purpose of having an actionable TDP, the Long-Term and Unfunded Needs Plans remain an important but mostly unfunded need and are not recommended for further action unless the funding situation improves. The following sections outline each plan.

Long-Term Plan

As outlined in Chapters 7-8, there were additional Long-Term Plan needs identified in the development of this TDP. For this plan, there were several important service and capital needs identified, mostly for the FY 2028-31 timeframe. As noted in Chapter 8, there are service and capital needs that fall into the unfunded realm of the Long-Term Plan, including highlights such as:

- New Sunday Services
- New routes on Barclay-Sunshine Grove, Elgin-Powell Rd. and important segments like Deltona Blvd. and along Spring Hill Dr./Airport.
- Long-Term IT investments

It is recommended that Hernando County focus on implementing the recommendations for the Short-Term Plan before considering implementing any of the Long-Term Plan needs. This is primarily due to an operating cost shortfall that would begin by FY 2028 and run through each

subsequent year (through FY 2034) based on current available and likely local, state, and federal grant funding. If new funding becomes available, Hernando County can revisit the Long-Term Plan Needs on a case-by-case and priority basis.

Unfunded Needs Plan

As outlined in Chapters 7-8, there were additional unfunded needs identified in the development of this TDP. For TheBus system, improving the Frequency of existing routes (Purple, Green, Blue, Red) from hourly headways to 30-minute headways was identified and prioritized in the TDP development process. As noted in Chapter 8, these improvements were deemed a lower priority, mostly due to the fact of their significant cost and that fact that such investment did not expand the transit system coverage to new areas of the Hernando County.

It is recommended that Hernando County focus on implementing the recommendations for the Short-Term Plan, and, if financially feasible, the Long-Term Plan before considering implementing any aspect of the Unfunded Needs Plan. This is primarily due to the extensive operating cost shortfall that would begin by FY 2028 and into subsequent years (through FY 2034) based on current available and likely local, state, and federal funding. If new funding becomes available, Hernando County can revisit the Unfunded Needs Plan based on their priority.

Metropolitan Planning Process Coordination

The Hernando County FY 2025-34 TDP was developed in coordination with the Hernando/Citrus Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) throughout the project's schedule during the calendar year of 2024. Notably, MPO staff and leadership were supportive in including the TDP process into their Public Participation Plan/Process (see Public Involvement Plan in Chapter 3). This included the MPO facilitating multiple TDP presentations at MPO Committee and the MPO Board meetings.

In addition, the MPO's 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) process was ongoing in 2024, with an October 3rd adoption of the new 2050 Plan occurring. Throughout the development of the LRTP, MPO staff and team were careful to inquire about and include many of the transit needs and priorities from the TDP process (where able to) into the development of a final set of 2050 LRTP Transit Needs. The following section outlines the Transit Needs of the 2050 LRTP and its consistency with the final recommendations of the 2025-34 TDP.

Hernando/Citrus MPO 2050 LRTP: Cost Feasible Transit Plan

The recently adopted Hernando/Citrus MPO 2050 LRTP outlines a Cost Feasible Transit Plan for Hernando County. The 2050 LRTP Cost Feasible Transit Plan was developed based on a transit assessment, a review of available financial resources, input from Hernando County TDP process, and input from the public, MPO Committees, and the MPO Board. Although the MPO LRTP planning process has a somewhat different methodology for identifying whether projects are Cost Feasible compared to a TDP planning process, the 2050 LRTP identifies needs in many areas that correspond to the findings in this TDP effort. The Cost Feasible Transit Plan for Hernando County is broken into five phases of proposed projects and needs, including:

1. **Timeframe 1 (TIP, 2024/2025-2028/2029)**
   - o Fixed route vehicle replacement, bus stop ADA improvements, construction of a transfer facility, bus shelters and amenities, additional vehicle for route to Ridge Manor, and potential service expansion.
2. **Timeframe 2 (2030-2035)**
   - o Replacement vehicles for fixed route and ADA service, administrative and preventative maintenance costs.
3. **Timeframe 3 (2036-2040)**
   - o Maintenance of service, fleet, and facilities from Timeframe 1.
4. **Timeframe 4 (2041-2050)**
   - o Maintenance of service, fleet, and facilities from Timeframe 1.
5. **Aspirational (Unfunded Needs)**
   - o Unfunded transit service needs identified include:
     - Increased frequency (to 30 minutes)
     - South Highway 41 route
     - Mermaid Run
     - East Highway 50
     - North Highway 19
     - ADA-compliant service to support new routes
     - Suncoast Parkway Commuter Express
     - I-75 Regional Express
   - o Unfunded transit capital needs identified include:
     - Bus stop infrastructure
     - Shared Park & Ride facilities
     - Major transfer facility (East County/Rt. 50)
     - New service and replacement vehicles
     - Real-time bus location apps/displays

Overall, the 2050 LRTP identified several Transit Needs for Hernando County (see Map 9-2 below), most of which dovetail well with the service priorities identified in the development of the Hernando County FY 2025-34 Transit Development Plan (TDP).

Map 9-2. 2050 LRTP Transit Needs for Hernando County
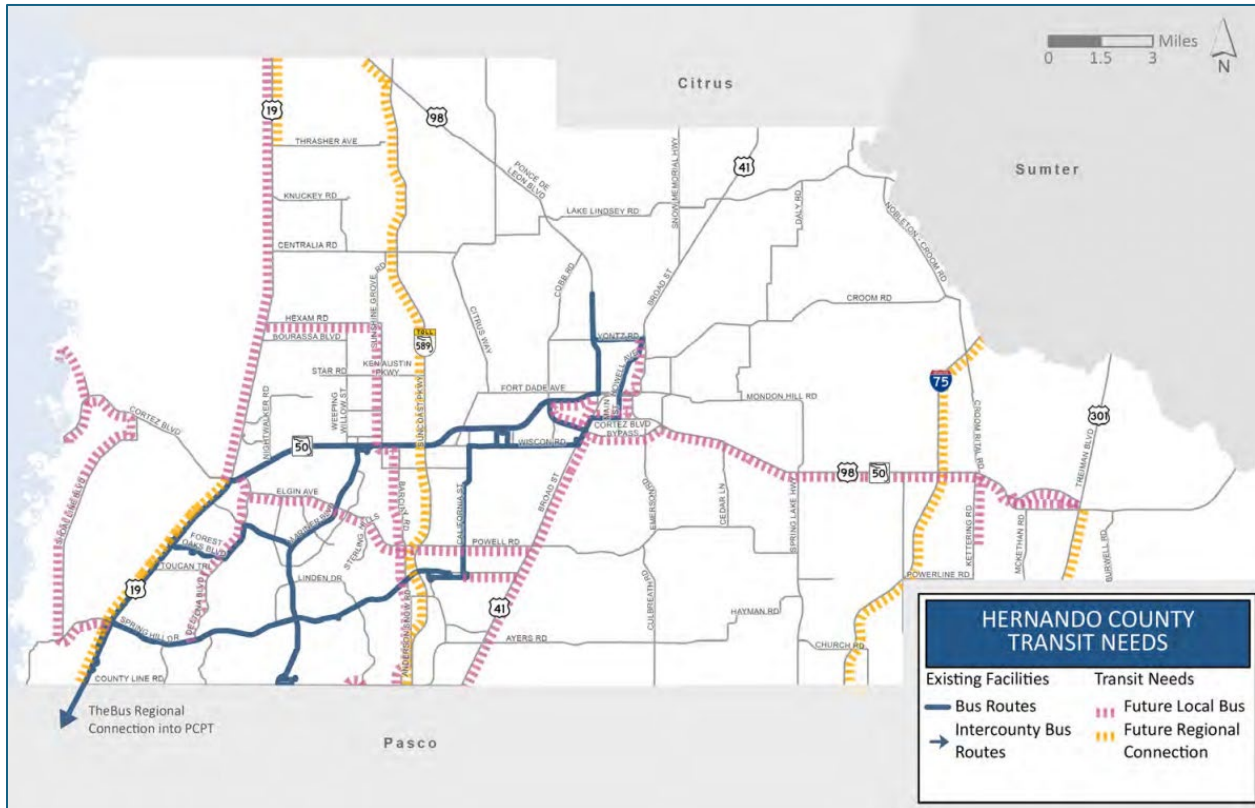
Source: Hernando/Citrus MPO 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Continue Coordination with Hernando/Citrus MPO

With the completion of both the 2050 LRTP and the 2025-34 TDP in 2024, Hernando County is in an excellent position to continue to work closely with the MPO in implementing the transit visions and needs of each plan. For Hernando County, it is important that an updated set/list of service and capital priorities from the TDP process be provided/available for the MPO on an annual basis. By having such a priority list of projects (even if deemed unfunded in the MPO planning process), both partners can be in a good position to demonstrate the prioritized transit needs to local, state, regional, and federal transportation partners.

Coordinate with Other Transportation Partners

With the completion of both the 2050 LRTP and the 2025-34 TDP in 2024, Hernando County is encouraged to work closely with local transit partners (municipal and County planners, You Thrive Florida, Citrus County Transit, Pasco County Transit). Communicating the new priorities of TheBus system with these agencies will allow Hernando County to optimize the service quality, availability, and efficiency.

Another key coordination step for Hernando County will be to communicate the priorities and funding needs of this TDP to critical State transit partners, in this case the Transit and Intermodal staff of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 7 (D7). D7 has always been a

supportive funding and planning partner for Hernando County. With the adoption of this TDP and an established set of service and capital priorities, now is the time to enhance the existing partnership with D7 so that matching funding can be secured and maximized for the public transportation mode.

In addition, it is strongly recommended that Hernando County continue its strong partnership with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) so that key aspects of the Short-Term Plan Recommendations can be implemented. This will be particularly important for the County if they are to pursue a large discretionary grant request for the Transfer/Maintenance/Admin facility needs. Although not successful in securing FTA discretionary grant funding in FY 2024, the adoption of this TDP strengthens their chances for success since it provides a strong planning basis (demonstration of need) based on a thorough analysis and public involvement process.

Performance Measurement and TDP Implementation

It is crucial that Hernando County Transit staff monitor the progress of implementing the Short-Term Plan elements of the FY 2025-34 TDP. To do this, it is recommended that a Performance Measurement process and tracking tool be used that can outline (on an annual basis) the progress of each stated TDP Goal, Objective, and Action (see Chapter 5). As outlined in Table 9-5 and Table 9-6, Hernando County Transit (TheBus) staff can track progress in implementing the stated Goals and Objectives on an annual basis and report this in TDP Annual Progress Reports (APRs).

Table 9-5. Performance Monitoring Tool for the FY 2025-34 TDP – Goals 1, 2, and 3

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness	FY 2024 Performance	Status
Goal 1: Ensure the provision of a safe and secure public transportation equipment, vehicles, amenities of customer and employee conditions.	1.1	Maintain Existing Vehicles & Facilities	Meet or exceed annual TAM Performance Measures	TBD	⬆ ⬅➡ ⬇
	1.2	Ensure that TheBus Services are Maintained and Operated in a Safe and Secure Environment	Meet or exceed annual Safety (PTASP) Performance Measures/Benchmarks	TBD	
	1.3	Provide Personnel safety and emergency procedure employee training	Meet or exceed annual Safety (PTASP) Performance Measures/Benchmarks	TBD	

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness	FY 2024 Performance	Status
Goal 2: Manage and develop effective and efficient transit services that consider customer demand, support County development and community services, enhance accessibility, and complement transit-supportive land use development	2.1	Increase Annual Ridership on TheBus System	Maintain service/ridership monitoring system of fixed route system	TBD	⬆ ⬅➡ ⬇
	2.2	Improve Annual Farebox Recovery Percentage	Annual increase in farebox recovery % over previous yr.	TBD	
	2.3	Provide Optimal Service Frequency	Define and monitor optimal ridership/load levels for each route	TBD	
	2.4	Improve On-Time Performance (OTP)	Monitor & adjust and services to increase OTP	TBD	
	2.5	Decrease Travel Times/Delay for Passengers	Monitor & adjust service between major stops/destinations	TBD	
	2.6	Improve System Accessibility	Regularly monitor & improve passenger accesibility to bus stops	TBD	
	2.7	Improve System Connectivity to the Community	Maximize connectivity to existing & new destinations in service area	TBD	
	2.8	Improve Customer Satisfaction	Decrease the annual # of customer complaints and increase annual customer commendations	TBD	
	2.9	Increase Cost Efficiency of TheBus System	Annual improvements in Cost Per Pass./Rev. Mile/Rev. Hr., Pass. Trip Per Rev. Mile/Pass. Trip Per Rev. Hr.	TBD	

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness	FY 2024 Performance	Status
Goal 3: Enhance the quantity and quality of public transportation service in Hernando County	3.1	Introduce New Routes/Service Segments	Implementation of New Route/Segment from 2025-34 TDP Service Plan	TBD	⬆ ⬅➡ ⬇
	3.2	Increase Weekday Service Span	Weekday AM and/or PM Service Span Expansion	TBD	
	3.3	Increase Saturday Service Span	Saturday AM and/or PM Service Span Expansion	TBD	
	3.4	Increase Route Frequencies	Increase to 30-minute Service on Top-Ridership Routes	TBD	
	3.5	Add Sunday Service	Addition of Sunday Fixed Route Services	TBD	
	3.6	Add ADA Service to Compliment Fixed Route Service Expansion	Implementation of ADA Service Within 3/4-Mile of New Fixed Routes/Segments, During Span Increases, and on Sundays	TBD	
	3.7	Addition of New Shelters, Seating, & Bike Racks	Annual Increase in Number of Shelters & Related Amenities Installed	TBD	
	3.8	Improve ADA Accessibility Around Bus Stops	Annual Increase in ADA Bus Stops Imporvements	TBD	
	3.9	Develop New Transfer/Maint./Admin. Facilities	Begin Planning/NEPA/Design/Construction Phases for New Transfer/Maint./Admin. Facilities	TBD	
	3.10	Coordinate Service Delivery with Neighboring Transit Agencies	Maximize service coordination of exsiting and news services with transit staff in Pasco and Citrus Counties	TBD	
	3.11	Explore Additional Regional Transit Opportunities	Particpate in any regional service studies or pilot projects that assist Hernando County residents with a regional service need	TBD	

Table 9-6. Performance Monitoring Tool for the FY 2025-34 TDP – Goals 4,5, and 6

		Objective	Measures of Effectiveness	FY 2024 Performance	Status
Goal 4 - Maintain existing and seek new funding partnerships with transportation organizations and jurisdictions at the local, regional, state, and federal level	4.1	Maintain or Increase Local Funding for TheBus	Maintain or increase in annual County funds & local revenue	TBD	⬆ ⬌ ⬇
	4.2	Maintain or increase State Funding for TheBus	Maintain or increase annual state transit funding	TBD	
	4.3	Maintain or Increase Federal Funding for TheBus	Maintain or increase annual federal transit funding	TBD	
	4.4	Explore Additional State Operating Grant Funding	Service Development, Urban Corridor, or other State Operating Grants	TBD	
	4.5	Explore Federal Discretionary Capital Grant Funding	FTA 5307, 5339, other sources in FY 2025	TBD	
	4.6	Explore Innovative Revenue & Funding Sources	Work with local, state, and federal partners to identify additional and/or new funding opportunities	TBD	
	4.7	Maintain or Increase Participation & Partnerships with Local, State, & Regional Planning Partners	Attendance at MPO, TDLCB, FDOT, and County Planning meetings and projects that impact TheBus services	TBD	
Goal 5 -Increase awareness of the benefits and opportunities of maintaining and expanding Hernando County Transit services	5.1	Increase Outreach with Local & Regional Stakeholders & Public	Annual increase in meetings & outreach meetings with community, business, education, workforce development, and other	TBD	⬆ ⬌ ⬇
	5.2	Develop Marketing & Public Relations Program	Develop Marketing Plan in parternship with the Chamber in FY 2025	TBD	
	5.3	Develop a Community Transit Speakers Program	Increase in annual community presentations by TheBus staff	TBD	
Goal 6 - Explore innovative and industry best practices to operate and develop transit services with focus on customers, employees, technology and financial sustainability	6.1	Explore Further Investment in New Information Technology Improvements	Conduct an ITS needs assessment and prioritize system investement needs	TBD	⬆ ⬌ ⬇
	6.2	Improve Customer Service	Develop training modules for frontline employees that focus on customer sensitivity, safety, and security	TBD	
	6.3	Improve Service Delivery Methods & Procedures	Evaluate on an annual basis innovative service delivery models that address community and emergency mgmt. needs	TBD	
	6.4	Enhance Employee Training & Skill Development	Develop/provide workforce employment training modules that improve employee skillsets and service delivery methods	TBD	

References

1. U.S. Census Bureau. "B19013: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)." Explore Census Data, accessed May 30, 2024. data.census.gov. https://data.census.gov/map/050XX00US12053$1500000?q=B19013: Median Household Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2022 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars)&layer=VT_2022_150_00_PY_D1&loc=28.5212,-82.6113,z11.3448

2. U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table S1101: Households and Families*. Retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey database.
   U.S. Census Bureau. "Households and Families." *American Community Survey, ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, Table S1101*, 2022, https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1101?q=Households&g=050XX00US12053. Accessed on June 20, 2024.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

ENGINEERING ♦ FACILITIES ♦ REAL PROPERTY ♦ ROADS/BRIDGES ♦ STORMWATER ♦ TRAFFIC ♦ TRANSIT

1525 EAST JEFFERSON STREET ♦ BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34601
P 352.754.4060 ♦ F 352.754.4423 ♦ W www.HernandoCounty.us

April 9, 2024

Chris Leffert, FCCM
Florida DOT - District 7
Modal Development Office
Transit Programs Administrator
11201 N. McKinley Drive
Tampa, FL 33612

Dear Mr. Leffert:

Please accept this correspondence to formally address the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) requirements of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Transit Development Plan (TDP) Rule (Rule no. 14-73.001 Title: Public Transit) that calls for an active public involvement process throughout the development of the Hernando County FY 2025-34 TDP.

I request your approval of the *Hernando County FY 2025-34 TDP PIP* as represented in the attached description of program elements and activities. As delineated in the attached, our TDP team, which includes staff from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) and Madrid CPWG, will utilize a variety of in-person and online outreach efforts to garner public and community input into the short and long-term transit program needs of the Hernando County (*The Bus*) system.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. As always, we appreciate the continued **support and involvement of FDOT District** Seven and the shared efforts to enhance transit and mobility services in Hernando County.

Sincerely,

Darlene Lollie, Transit Administrator
Hernando County Department of Public Works
Transit Division
1525 E. Jefferson St.
Brooksville, FL 34601
O: (352) 754-4060 D: (352) 540-6567 C: (352) 442-3905

cc: Robert Esposito, Executive Director, Hernando/Citrus MPO
       Jonathan Roberson, Project Manager, CUTR
       Martin Catala, Program Manager, CUTR
       Jennifer Flynn, Senior Research Associate, CUTR

From: Leffert, Chris
To: Jonathan Roberson
Cc: Martin Catala; Darlene Lollie; Jennifer Flynn; DeJesus, Maria; Newell, Dave
Subject: RE: Submittal of Hernando Co. 2025-34 TDP Draft PIP
Date: Friday, May 17, 2024 4:05:50 PM
Attachments: image001.png

Jonathan,

I have reviewed the submitted PIP for the FY 2025-34 TDP for Hernando County. The Department concurs that it meets the requirements of FAC 14-73 and have no further comments.

Chris Leffert, FCCM
Florida DOT - District 7
Modal Development
Transit Programs Administrator
11201 N. McKinley Drive
Tampa, FL 33612
P(813) 975-6403

From: Jonathan Roberson <jkroberson@usf.edu>
Sent: Friday, May 17, 2024 2:52 PM
To: Leffert, Chris <Chris.Leffert@dot.state.fl.us>
Cc: Martin Catala <catala@usf.edu>; Darlene Lollie <DLollie@co.hernando.fl.us>; Jennifer Flynn <jmflynn@usf.edu>
Subject: FW: Submittal of Hernando Co. 2025-34 TDP Draft PIP

EXTERNAL SENDER: Use caution with links and attachments.

Chris,

I am hoping this email finds you well.

I am circling back to see if there were any thoughts/comments on the PIP we submitted for the FY 2025-34 TDP for Hernando County.

As a recent update, we will be presenting the TDP at the 5/24 MPO TAC & CAC Meetings, along with the 6/6 MPO Board Meeting.

Please ley me know any thoughts on this PIP submittal and if you have any thoughts or questions.

Regards,

Jonathan Roberson, AICP
Research Associate
Transit Management and Innovation Group
Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida
813.974.4860 | 561.827.2523 | jkroberson@usf.edu | www.cutr.usf.edu

UNIVERSITY of SOUTH FLORIDA

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available to the public and the media upon request.*

From: Jonathan Roberson
Sent: Monday, April 8, 2024 4:23 PM
To: Leffert, Chris <Chris.Leffert@dot.state.fl.us>
Cc: Darlene Lollie <DLollie@co.hernando.fl.us>; resposito@hernandocounty.us; Martin Catala <catala@usf.edu>; Jennifer Flynn <jmflynn@usf.edu>
Subject: Submittal of Hernando Co. 2025-34 TDP Draft PIP

Chris,

I hope this email finds you well.

The Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) is assisting Hernando County in the development of their next major TDP Update for *TheBus* system, which is due later in 2024. We a excited to get started and have begun to develop many of the programmatic components that wil provide a robust update to the last Major TDP effort in 2019.

Please accept this email and the attached correspondence to formally address the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) requirements of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Transit Development Plan (TDP) Rule (Rule no. 14-73.001 Title: Public Transit) that calls for an active publ involvement process throughout the development of the *Hernando County 2025-34 TDP*.

I request your approval of the *Hernando County 2025-34 TDP PIP* as represented in the attached information. The CUTR and Hernando County team will utilize a variety of virtual and in-person

outreach efforts to maximize community and stakeholder involvement in identifying both feasible and visionary mobility needs, programs, and projects.

As always, we appreciate the continued support and involvement of FDOT District Seven in helping us make transit and mobility options successful in Hernando County.

Please let me know if any questions at this time or if you would like to meet to discuss.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Roberson, AICP
Research Associate
Transit Management and Innovation Group
Center for Urban Transportation Research
University of South Florida
813.974.4860 | 561.827.2523 | jkroberson@usf.edu | www.cutr.usf.edu

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[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

INTRODUCTION

Hernando County is preparing its next 10-year transit development plan (TDP) for FY 2025-34, which will serve as a strategic plan for *TheBus* public transportation system in Hernando County, Florida. The 10-year TDP is required to be completed every five years per state statute. This TDP Major Update will cover the transit system needs for Hernando County for the period of 2025-2034.

A key component of any 10-year TDP is the development of a Public Involvement Plan (PIP), which serves as a detailed summary of all public outreach activities that will be performed in support of the development of a TDP. The PIP is designed to comply with state statutes (Rule 14-73.001 – Public Transit), which requires that the preparation of a TDP development process shall include the following:

- A PIP approved by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) or the local metropolitan planning organization (MPO) PIP, approved by both the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA);
- Established time limits for receipt of TDP comments;
- A description of the process utilized and the public involvement activities undertaken;
- A process whereby comments must be solicited from the regional workforce board; and
- Opportunities for the FDOT, MPO, and the regional workforce board to review and comment on the development of the mission, goals, objectives, alternatives, and 10-year implementation program.

Special Accommodations

Public participation in Hernando County is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability, or family status. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), persons with disabilities needing a special accommodation to participate in this proceeding should contact Colleen Conko, Hernando County Administration, 15470 Flight Path Drive, Brooksville, Florida 34604, (352) 754-4002. If hearing impaired, please call 1-800-676-3777.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act

Hernando County upholds a Title VI of the Civil Rights Act program that assures that no person, on grounds of race, color, or national origin, is excluded from participating in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) or the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This adopted Title VI program (see: https://www.hernandocounty.us/departments/departments-n-z/transit-thebus/title-vi-program) extends to the County's identified transit service (*TheBus*) and planned TDP PIP activities.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, all public transportation providers who receive federal funding from the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) must ensure that populations with limited English proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to benefits, information, services, and all other pertinent information on programs and associated activities. As outlined in the Hernando County (TheBus) adopted Title VI Program (see above), *TheBus* staff has outreach programs that reach the major LEP populations in the community.

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016-2020 American Community Survey (ACS) data, Hernando County's adopted Title VI Plan estimates that 10.8 percent (18,100 persons) of the Hernando County

population age 5 and older spoke a language other than English at home. In addition, of the 18,100 persons who speak a language other than English, 7.3 percent speak Spanish, 2.46 percent speak other Indo-European languages, 0.7 percent speak Asian and Pacific Island languages, and 0.3 percent speak other languages. Of the 7.3 percent of persons that speak Spanish, 2.25 percent speak English less than "very well." Based on this information, Hernando County will ensure that Spanish language brochures and transit schedules are available on the vehicles, at county government offices, and on meeting notices related to TDP public meetings and outreach.

Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice (EJ) Executive Order 12898, included as a component of Title VI requirements, guarantees fair treatment for all people regardless of race and income. The Hernando/Citrus MPO, in conjunction with *The Bus* operations, follows EJ standards to ensure that there is no high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Both the MPO and *The Bus*, which are housed as part of Hernando County, are therefore committed to providing services and outreach activities that address the needs of minority populations and low-income communities in Hernando County.

PROJECT TEAM

The Hernando County 2025-34 TDP development and overall process will be steered by three related teams, including:

- **Working Group:** The Working Group (WRG) will help manage the project. The primary role of the WRG is to provide strategic guidance and direction to the CUTR Team and the overall project. The WRG will coordinate with the CUTR Team on a bi-monthly basis, approve major deliverables and other required actions, review and approve public and stakeholder presentation information, and oversee the overall project timeline and schedule. Members of the WRG include key staff from Hernando County and the CUTR Team (see Table 3-1 below).

- **Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) Team:** the CUTR Team, as the project consultant, will manage the day-to-day study activities/analysis, schedule, and budget of the TDP. The CUTR Team will report on a regular basis to the Working Group (WRG) and on a quarterly basis to FDOT D5, Hernando/Citrus MPO, and CareerSource Pasco-Hernando (see below). The CUTR Team will be overseen by Jonathan Roberson, and include Martin Catala, Jennifer Flynn, Vicky Perk, Melissa DeLeon, Jason Jackman, and student assistants from the University of South Florida (USF). In addition, the CUTR Team will include Chris Cochran and Rob Gregg from Madrid-CPWG.

- **Review Team Members:** to ensure that the project advances with the input of key local and regional goals and objectives, consistent coordination (review/comments, interviews) will occur with key partners at CareerSource Pasco-Hernando, FDOT District VII, and the Hernando/Citrus MPO. Members of the Review Team will play a role in the review of major deliverables (Tech Memos 1-4, final draft TDP) and may participate in critical stakeholder interviews or public workshops/meetings during the outreach phase of the project.

Table 3-1: Hernando County 2025-34 TDP PIP Project Team

TEAM MEMBER	ORGANIZATION	TITLE/ROLE
TDP WORKING GROUP (WRG)		
Darlene Lollie	Hernando County - The Bus	Transit Administrator
CONSULTANT TEAM		
Jonathan Roberson	CUTR -TMI Team	Project Manager
Martin Catala	CUTR -TMI Team	Co-Project Manager
Jennifer Flynn	CUTR -TMI Team	Senior Research Asssociate
Chris Cochran	Madrid/CPWG, Inc.	Senior Transportation Planner
Melissa DeLeon	CUTR -TMI Team	Project Planner/Analyst
Jason Jackman	CUTR	Senior Research Associate
Wendy Teague	CUTR	Graphic Designer
REVIEW TEAM MEMBERS		
Chris Leffert	FDOT D7	Transit Programs Manager (review agency)
Bob Esposito	Hernando/Citrus MPO	Executive Director
Jerome Salantino	CareerSource Pasco-Hernando	CEO

STAKEHOLDERS

Hernando County has identified several important individual and agency-based stakeholders who will be given the opportunity to provide input into the development of the FY 2025-34 TDP. A stakeholder is defined as an individual from an agency, community, or elected position who has a direct role in the development and success of public transportation and mobility services in Hernando County. Typically, a stakeholder is familiar with *The Bus* and related mobility services and has a stake in the optimal use and success of said services and related programs.

For the Hernando County FY 2025-34 TDP effort, major stakeholders have been identified initially but are not limited to the following categories:

- Elected officials (county and municipal)
- Workforce development boards
- Chambers of commerce and economic development organizations
- Neighborhood and community organizations
- Health and human services organizations
- Bicycle and pedestrian advisory committees
- Affordable housing advocates
- Non-profit and service organizations
- Local coordinating boards
- School and university/college representatives
- Citizen advisory committees
- Technical advisory committees
- Tourism bureaus
- State and federal agencies (transportation, environmental, planning)
- Neighboring transit agencies (in Pasco and Citrus County)

For this effort, a combination of in-person interviews and meetings will be utilized to receive input regarding the public transportation and mobility needs of the community. The CUTR Team expects to complete up to twenty (20) in-person stakeholder interviews, depending on response and availability, and to complete this task by the end of June 2024.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT OBJECTIVES

The "general public", consisting of residents, transit riders, tourists/visitors, and workers, will be engaged by a variety of in-person listening sessions and online and social media-based outreach methods. The planned public involvement activities for the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP strive to achieve the following objectives:

1. Provide a diversity of in-person and on-line public participation opportunities that maximize citizen and stakeholder involvement.
2. Ensure information sharing and public input opportunities in traditionally underserved, minority, and LEP communities.
3. Provide a schedule and activities that allow citizens and stakeholders to properly review and comment on major study milestones and recommendations.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Several public outreach activities have been selected to maximize citizen participation and involvement in the development of the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP. Throughout the duration of the project, Hernando County will share information about meetings and surveys via their website, email, and social media outlets.

TDP Branding

Throughout the duration of the Hernando County 2025-34 TDP, all plan and public outreach material will maintain the current *The Bus* and "Hop On!" branding, which is known and established in the community.

In-Person Public Outreach Meetings

Several in-person meetings are planned to maximize the opportunities for a diverse group of citizens and stakeholders to provide information and opportunities for public input into the TDP development process (see Table 3-2, below). The CUTR Team will meet with the WRG to identify the meetings, events, and other opportunities that will comprise in-person outreach and stakeholder meetings as schedules become finalized. The goal will be to maximize community involvement, and piggyback onto other important community events when possible. Overall goals include consistent project introduction, funding, and presentations to the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), Hernando/Citrus County MPO Board and committees, and up to two additional public workshops in locations to be determined.

Table 3-2: Hernando County 2025-34 TDP Planned Public Involvement Activities

ACTIVITY	MEETINGS/TIMEFRAME
IN-PERSON MEETINGS	
Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)	Up to 3 Meetings: May 2024 - Nov. 2024
Hernando/Citrus MPO Board of Directors	Up to 3 Meetings: May 2024 - Nov. 2024
* MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)	Up to 3 Meetings: May 2024 - Nov. 2024
* MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)	Up to 3 Meetings: May 2024 - Nov. 2024
* MPO Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB)	Up to 3 Meetings: May 2024 - Nov. 2024
Community Outreach Meetings/Workshops	Up to 2 Meetings: May 2024 - Sep. 2024
SURVEYS	
On-Board Surveys	April - May 2024
Stakeholder Surveys/Interviews	April - June 2024
Online Surveys	April - Sept. 2024
OTHER OUTREACH	
Social Media Outreach: Phase I	April - May 2024
Social Media Outreach: Phase II	Aug. - Sept. 2024

Surveys

Both in-person and online survey techniques will be utilized throughout the duration of the TDP to gain additional input from the public (see Table 3-2). The CUTR Team will complete an on-board survey of *The Bus* system, with statistically significant samples for every route and appropriate days of service (weekdays and Saturday) also expected. The on-board survey instrument is currently under being finalized and is expected to take place in April-May of 2024. In addition, the on-board survey instrument will be provided in both English and Spanish versions.

The CUTR Team will also do in-person surveys/interviews with the Operators and Dispatchers from *The Bus* system. This effort allows the opportunity for valuable information sharing and input for those on the from lines of day-to-day service operations. Two phases of online surveys will be made available throughout the major phases of the study. Overall, the online surveys will allow for public input throughout the duration of the study and provide the potential for *The Bus* to maintain contact with those interested in public transportation.

Website/Social Media Outreach

Hernando County and the CUTR Team will use a variety of online and social media outlets to announce major events and surveys related to the TDP throughout the duration of the study. This includes the use of the following Hernando County social media outlets, including but not limited to:

- **Twitter -** https://twitter.com/HernandoCoGov
- **Facebook -** https://www.facebook.com/HernandoCoGov
- **Instagram -** https://www.linkedin.com/company/hernando-county-government

In addition, partner agencies and stakeholder outreach lists, webpages, and social media outlets will also be utilized where appropriate.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

A project schedule has been developed to allow for timely public comment, board adoption, and FDOT submittal. Before an FDOT submittal of the adopted TDP (before December 1, 2024), a final draft TDP will need to be submitted to Hernando County Administration for review by October 14, 2024. Likewise, a BOCC adoption of the TDP will follow and is tentatively scheduled for November 19, 2024. The schedule can be found below in Figure 3-1.

APPENDIX B

ON-BOARD SURVEY INSTRUMENT (ENGLISH & SPANISH) AND DRIVERS NOTICE

HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSIT (TheBus) SURVEY

V1

DEAR VALUED CUSTOMER: We would like your input to help improve transit service in Hernando County. Your participation in the attached survey is completely voluntary. This survey is anonymous – please DO NOT put your name or other identifying marks on the survey. Even if you are unable to complete the entire survey, please return it to a surveyor or leave it in your seat as you exit the bus. If you do not wish to participate, please return the blank form to the surveyor. Thank you for helping TheBus to serve you better!

1. Where did you come FROM before you got on this bus for this trip?

1___ Home
2___ Work
3___ Doctor/Medical
4___ Shopping/Errands
5___ School/After School Activity
6___ College/Job Training
7___ Visiting/Recreation
8___ Other _____ (please specify)

2. How did you get to the bus for this trip?

1___ Walked 3 blocks or less
2___ Walked more than 3 blocks
3___ Bicycle/Scooter/E-scooter
4___ Drove ___ miles (please specify)
5___ Taxi/Uber/Lyft ride
6___ Transfer from GoPasco bus
7___ Ride from someone
8___ Other ____ (please specify)

3. Where are you going on THIS trip?
(Please select only your FINAL destination)

1___ Home
2___ Work
3___ Doctor/Medical
4___ Shopping/Errands
5___ School/After School Activity
6___ College/Job Training
7___ Visiting/Recreation
8___ Other _____ (please specify)

4. What fare did you pay?

1___ Regular fare ($1.25)
2___ Reduced fare ($0.60)
3___ Regular 1-day pass $3.00)
4___ Reduced 1-day pass ($1.50)
5___ Regular 7-day pass ($10.00)
6___ Reduced 7-day pass ($5.00)
7___ Regular 31-day pass ($30.00)
8___ Reduced 31-day pass ($15.00)
9___ Free

5. IF you paid a FREE or REDUCED fare, please indicate your eligibility:

1___ Senior
2___ Student
3___ ADA
4___ Medicaid

6. After you finish your bus travel, how will you get to your final destination? (Please select only ONE)

1___ Walk 3 blocks or less
2___ Walk more than 3 blocks
3___ Bicycle/Scooter/E-scooter
4___ Drive ___ miles (please specify)
5___ Taxi/Uber/Lyft ride
6___ Transfer to GoPasco bus
7___ Ride from someone
8___ Other ____ (please specify)

7. How often do you ride TheBus? (Please select only ONE)

1___ About 1 day per week
2___ 2 or 3 days per week
3___ 4 or more days per week
4___ Once or twice a month

8. What is the most important reason you ride TheBus? (Select only ONE)

1___ I don't drive
2___ Car is not available
3___ Bus is more economical
4___ Traffic is too bad
5___ Parking is difficult/expensive
6___ Bus is more convenient
7___ I don't have a valid drivers license
8___ Other: _____ (please specify)

9. How would you make this trip if TheBus were not available?

1___ Drive
2___ Ride from someone
3___ Bicycle/Scooter/E-scooter
4___ Walk/Wheelchair
5___ Taxi/Uber/Lyft Ride
6___ Would not make the trip
7___ Other ____ (please specify)

10. How long have you been using TheBus services?

1___ This is my first day
2___ Less than 6 months
3___ 6 months to 2 years
4___ 2 years to 5 years
5___ More than 5 years
6___ Other ____ (please specify)

11. Which three TheBus improvements would be most important to you?

1___ More frequent service
2___ Earlier/later weekday service
3___ Expanded Saturday hours
4___ Sunday service
5___ Expand service to:
6___ More bus shelters/benches
7___ More connecting sidewalks
8___ Need for transfer center
9___ Express service to:
10___ Other ____ (please specify)

12. Do you use a wheelchair or other mobility aid?

1___ Yes
2___ No

13. Your gender is...

1___ Male
2___ Female
3___ Other ____ (please specify)

14. Your age is...

1___ 19 or under
2___ 20 to 29
3___ 30 to 39
4___ 40 to 49
5___ 50 to 59
6___ 60 to 64
7___ 65 or older

15. Your heritage is...(check all that apply)

1___ White/Caucasian
2___ Black/African American
3___ Hispanic/Latino
4___ Asian/Pacific Islander
5___ American Indian/Alaska Native
6___ Two or more races
7___ Other _____ (please specify)

16. What is the range of your total annual household income?

1___ Less than $10,000
2___ $10,000 to $19,999
3___ $20,000 to $29,999
4___ $30,000 to $39,999
5___ $40,000 to $49,999
6___ $50,000 to $59,999
7___ $60,000 to $69,999
8___ $70,000 or over

17. Do you have a valid driver's license?

1___ Yes
2___ No

SURVEY CONTINUED ON BACK →

18. How satisfied are you with the following?

	Please circle the number that best reflects your opinion.	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Very Unsatisfied
A	Your overall satisfaction with TheBus	5	4	3	2	1
B	How often bus comes (frequency)	5	4	3	2	1
C	Your ability to get where you want to	5	4	3	2	1
D	Ease of transfering between buses	5	4	3	2	1
E	How regularly buses arrive on time	5	4	3	2	1
F	The time it takes to make a trip by bus	5	4	3	2	1
G	Easy access to bus route & schedule info	5	4	3	2	1
H	Usefulness of the RouteShout app	5	4	3	2	1
I	Usefulness of the Token Transit app	5	4	3	2	1
J	Buses on weekdays start early enough	5	4	3	2	1
K	Buses on weekday evenings run late enough	5	4	3	2	1
L	Buses on Saturdays start early enough	5	4	3	2	1
M	Buses on Saturday evenings run late enough	5	4	3	2	1
N	How clean the buses are	5	4	3	2	1
O	How clean the bus stops are	5	4	3	2	1
P	Safety at the bus stops	5	4	3	2	1
Q	Safety on the bus	5	4	3	2	1
R	The number of bus stops along the route	5	4	3	2	1
S	Temperature inside the buses	5	4	3	2	1
T	Bus driver's ability to drive the bus	5	4	3	2	1
U	Bus driver's courtesy	5	4	3	2	1
V	Bus driver's knowledge of the routes	5	4	3	2	1

19. Please write down three MOST IMPORTANT issues listed from #18.

1._____

2._____

3._____

20. What other comments or opinions would you like to share?

_____

_____

_____

Please return this survey to the surveyor on board the bus

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THE SURVEY!

ENCUESTA DE HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSIT (TheBus)

v1

ESTIMADO CLIENTE: Nos gustaría conocer su opinión para poder mejorar el servicio de transporte público en el Condado de Hernando. Su participación es completamente voluntaria. <u>Esta encuesta es anónima</u>. NO escriba su nombre u otro tipo de marca identificatoria en la encuesta . Aunque no pueda completar la encuesta en su totalidad, devuélvala al encuestador o déjela en su asiento antes de bajarse del autobús. Si no desea participar, devuelva el formulario en blanco al encuestador. ¡Gracias por ayudar a TheBus a brindarle un mejor servicio!

1. ¿De DONDE venía usted antes de tomar este autobús para este viaje?
1 ___ Casa
2 ___ Trabajo
3 ___ Médico/Salud
4 ___ Compras/Recados
5 ___ Escuela/Actividad extraescolar
6 ___ Facultad/Capacitación laboral
7 ___ Visita/Recreación
8 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

2. ¿Cómo llegó hasta el autobús para este viaje?
1 ___ Caminé 3 cuadras o menos
2 ___ Caminé más de 3 cuadras
3 ___ En bicicleta/*scooter*/ *scooter* eléctrico
4 ___ Conduje ___ millas (especificar)
5 ___ Taxi/Uber/Lyft
6 ___ Transferencia desde el autobús GoPasco
7 ___ Me trajeron hasta el autobús
8 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

3. ¿A dónde se dirige en ESTE viaje? (Seleccione solo su destino FINAL)
1 ___ Casa
2 ___ Trabajo
3 ___ Doctor/Salud
4 ___ Compras/Recados
5 ___ Escuela/Actividad extraescolar
6 ___ Facultad/Capacitación laboral
7 ___ Visita/Recreación
8 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

4. ¿Qué tarifa pagó?
1 ___ Tarifa regular ($1,25)
2 ___ Tarifa reducida ($0,60)
3 ___ Pase de 1 día ($3,00)
4 ___ Pase de 1 día con tarifa reducida ($1,50)
5 ___ Pase de 7 días ($10,00)
6 ___ Pase de 7 días con tarifa reducida ($5,00)
7 ___ Pase de 31 días ($30,00)
8 ___ Pase de 31 días con tarifa reducida ($15,00)
9 ___ Gratis

5. SI usted obtuvo un boleto GRATIS o abonó una tarifa REDUCIDA, indique a qué grupo pertenece:
1 ___ Adulto mayor
2 ___ Estudiante
3 ___ ADA (Ley para Estadounidenses con Discapacidades)
4 ___ Medicaid

6. Después de finalizar su viaje en autobús, ¿cómo llegará a su destino final? (Seleccione solo UNO)
1 ___ Caminaré 3 cuadras o menos
2 ___ Caminaré más de 3 cuadras
3 ___ Bicicleta/*scooter*/*scooter* eléctrico
4 ___ Conduciré ___ millas (especificar)
5 ___ Taxi/Uber/Lyft
6 ___ Trasferencia al autobús GoPasco
7 ___ Me recogerán al bajar del autobús
8 ___ Otro ___ (especificar)

7. ¿Con qué frecuencia utiliza TheBus? (Seleccione solo UNO)
1 ___ Alrededor de 1 día a la semana
2 ___ 2 o 3 días a la semana
3 ___ 4 o más días a la semana
4 ___ Una o dos veces al mes

8. ¿Cuál es la razón más importante por la que viaja en TheBus? (Seleccione solo UNA)
1 ___ No manejo
2 ___ El automóvil no está disponible
3 ___ El autobús es más económico
4 ___ Hay demasiado tráfico
5 ___ Aparcar es difícil/caro
6 ___ El autobús es más conveniente
7 ___ No tengo carnet de conducir válido
8 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

9. ¿Cómo haría este viaje si TheBus no estuviera disponible?
1 ___ Conduciría
2 ___ Alguien más me traería
3 ___ Bicicleta/*scooter*/ *scooter* eléctrico
4 ___ Caminaría/Silla de ruedas
5 ___ Taxi/Uber/Lyft
6 ___ No haría el viaje
7 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

10. ¿Desde cuándo utiliza los servicios de TheBus?
1 ___ Este es mi primer día
2 ___ Menos de 6 meses
3 ___ 6 meses a 2 años
4 ___ 2 a 5 años
5 ___ Más de 5 años
6 ___ Otro ___ (especificar)

11. ¿Cuáles serían las tres mejoras de TheBus más importantes para usted?
1 ___ Servicio más frecuente
2 ___ Servicio más temprano/ tarde de lunes a viernes
3 ___ Ampliación del horario los sábados
4 ___ Servicio los domingos
5 ___ Ampliación del servicio a: ___
6 ___ Más paradas de autobuses/ Bancos
7 ___ Más aceras de conexión
8 ___ Necesidad de un centro de transferencia
9 ___ Servicio exprés a: ___
10 ___ Otro ___ (especificar)

12. ¿Utiliza silla de ruedas u otro dispositivo de asistencia para movilizarse?
1 ___ Sí
2 ___ No

13. Indique su género
1 ___ Masculino
2 ___ Femenino
3 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

14. Indique su edad
1 ___ 19 o menos
2 ___ 20 a 29
3 ___ 30 a 39
4 ___ 40 a 49
5 ___ 50 a 59
6 ___ 60 a 64
7 ___ 65 o más

15. Indique su origen/etnia (marque todo lo que corresponda)
1 ___ Blanco/Caucásico
2 ___ Negro/Afroamericano
3 ___ Hispano/Latino
4 ___ Asiático/Isleño del Pacífico
5 ___ Aborigen de América del Norte/Nativo de Alaska
6 ___ Dos o más razas
7 ___ Otro _____ (especificar)

16. ¿Cuál es el rango de ingresos anuales totales de su hogar?
1 ___ Menos de $10.000
2 ___ $10.000 a $19.999
3 ___ $20.000 a $29.999
4 ___ $30.000 a $39.999
5 ___ $40.000 a $49.999
6 ___ $50.000 a $59.999
7 ___ $60.000 a $69.999
8 ___ $70.000 o más

17. ¿Tiene licencia de conducir válida?
1 ___ Sí
2 ___ No

LA ENCUESTA CONTINÚA AL DORSO →

TheBus
HERNANDO COUNTY TRANSIT
Hop on

18. ¿Qué tan satisfecho está usted con los siguientes temas de la tabla?

Marque con un círculo el número que mejor refleje su opinión.	Muy Satisfecho	Satisfecho	Indiferente	Insatisfecho	Muy Insatisfecho
A	Su satisfacción con TheBus en general	5	4	3	2	1
B	La frecuencia de los autobuses	5	4	3	2	1
C	La posibilidad de llegar a donde usted quiere ir	5	4	3	2	1
D	La facilidad para realizar la transferencia entre autobuses	5	4	3	2	1
E	Con que regularidad los autobuses llegan a tiempo	5	4	3	2	1
F	El tiempo que demora el viaje en autobús	5	4	3	2	1
G	La facilidad para acceder a la información sobre las rutas y los horarios	5	4	3	2	1
H	La utilidad de la aplicación RouteShout	5	4	3	2	1
I	La utilidad de la aplicación Token Transit	5	4	3	2	1
J	Los autobuses circulan lo suficientemente temprano de lunes a viernes	5	4	3	2	1
K	Los autobuses circulan lo suficientemente tarde por la noche de lunes a viernes	5	4	3	2	1
L	Los autobuses circulan lo suficientemente temprano los sábados	5	4	3	2	1
M	Los autobuses circulan lo suficientemente tarde por la noche los sábados	5	4	3	2	1
N	La limpieza de los autobuses	5	4	3	2	1
O	La limpieza en las paradas de autobús	5	4	3	2	1
P	La seguridad en las paradas de autobús	5	4	3	2	1
Q	La seguridad en el autobús	5	4	3	2	1
R	El número de paradas de autobús a lo largo de la ruta	5	4	3	2	1
S	La temperatura dentro de los autobuses	5	4	3	2	1
T	La destreza del conductor para manejar el autobús	5	4	3	2	1
U	La amabilidad del conductor del autobús.	5	4	3	2	1
V	El conocimiento que el conductor tiene sobre las rutas	5	4	3	2	1

19. Escriba los tres temas MÁS IMPORTANTES de la lista del punto 18.

1._____

2._____

3._____

20. ¿Le gustaría compartir otros comentarios u opiniones?

1._____

2._____

3._____

Devuelva esta encuesta al encuestador a bordo del autobús

¡GRACIAS POR COMPLETAR LA ENCUESTA!

May 7th, 2024

Hernando County Transit (TheBus) On-board Surveys

TheBus will be conducting an on-board survey of bus patrons beginning May 8th and ending May 25th, 2024. This announcement has been prepared to inform TheBus operators and dispatchers about the survey process.

SURVEY PROCESS

- Trained surveyors from the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) will be on-board buses administering the surveys to passengers.
- Surveyors will be on all bus routes (Red, Green, Blue, Purple) on Tuesday-Thursdays and on Saturdays from May 8-25.
- The surveyors will be displaying surveyor identification badges (see picture below).
- Surveyors with identification badges are not to pay a fare when they board the buses.
- Surveyors will not be observing operators. The survey work is not intended in any way to gather information on operators, their driving habits, or their conduct.
- Surveyors will be responsible for distributing the survey to riders, answering questions from riders about the survey, and collecting completed surveys.

IMPACT ON DAILY OPERATIONS

Impact on the operation of vehicles should be minimal considering that distribution and collection of surveys will not involve effort on the part of operators. Several measures will be taken to ensure smooth transit operations while the survey is being distributed:

- Passengers will be instructed to return completed surveys to the surveyor. Surveyors will have a firm understanding of their role in the survey process, which will allow for the least amount of disruption to daily transit operations.
- In the case a passenger attempts to return a completed survey to a driver, courteously accept the survey and return it to the surveyor, or your dispatcher, at the end of your workday.

Your assistance with this important effort is greatly appreciated!

Appendix C

Phase 1 & Phase 2 Online/Social Media Surveys & Report

Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Online/Social Media Phase 1 & 2 Survey Report

Summary

Hernando County's Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for TheBus transit service included an online survey conducted in two phases.

Phase I focused on gathering feedback from both riders and non-riders. The survey covered a range of topics, including demographic information, opinions on the current transit service, and a ranking of potential transit improvements. It also explored the use of transit-related mobile apps, the integration of bicycles with transit stops, and other aspects of the ridership experience to gain a deeper understanding of public opinion.

Phase II was a shorter survey, designed to build on the feedback from Phase I. Respondents, both riders and non-riders, were asked to rank proposed new routes, prioritize transit improvements, and provide input on potential locations for new transit routes. This phase also included several open-ended questions to gather more detailed feedback.

Both surveys were made available in Spanish to ensure accessibility for the county's Spanish-speaking population. The surveys were distributed via a QR code and a shareable website link, and both phases were promoted through targeted social media advertisements. Social media insights were used to track audience reach and engagement, with the sponsored ads reaching nearly 49,000 people across Hernando County.

This public engagement effort provided valuable input from a broad cross-section of the community, helping to shape the future of TheBus transit service.
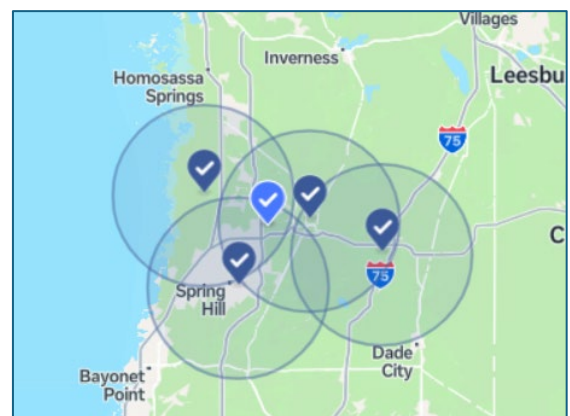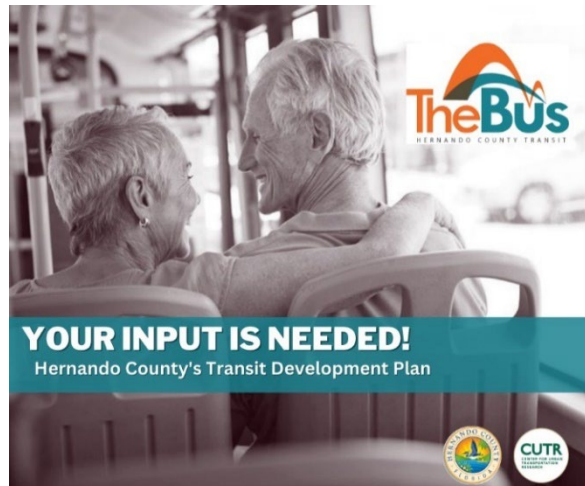
Figure 1: Hernando County Survey Coverage.

Marketing Package (Phase I & Phase II)

2025-2034
ROUTES TO THE FUTURE
HOP ON 2034

2025-2034

We Heard You! *Thank You!*

Now choose YOUR Transit Improvements
by taking TheBus Phase 2 Survey

Hernando County Transit Development Plan, 2025-2034

We Heard You! *Thank You!*

Now choose YOUR Transit Improvements

¡Lo hemos escuchado! *¡Muchas gracias!*

Ahora elige tus mejoras de tránsito

TheBus 2034

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED!
Hernando County's Transit Development Plan

Survey and Advertising Highlights

- **Survey Responses**: There were 190 completed survey responses using the target ad approach.

- **Targeted Ad Reach**: The targeted social media advertisement reached over 25 thousand people in the Hernando County and North Pasco County areas.

- **Non-Rider Opinion of TheBus Service**: Over 50% of non-rider respondents selected the opinion TheBus Service is "Essential" and "Might be Useful" for riders.

- **Ranked Transit Improvements**: "Rider" respondents selected "More Frequent Service", "Expand Saturday" and "Earlier/Later Weekday Service" as their top three ranked Transit Improvement Services.

- **On-Time Arrival**: 68% of respondents use TheBus for work, shopping and errands.

- **Bike to Bus**: 38% of riders responded they have bike to a bus stop to use TheBus.

Rider and Non-Rider Online Survey

An online bus rider survey was conducted in July 2024 to collect information on travel frequency, user satisfaction, and desired future improvements. An 18-question survey was developed in both English and Spanish by the Center for Urban Transportation Research for both bus riders and non-bus riders to gauge their opinions and was distributed via online survey link. A social media targeted advertisement was sent out throughout specific locations in Hernando County and various locations around northern Pasco County. Online surveys were available in English and Spanish. In total, 253 surveys were viewed and/or taken, and 190 surveys were completed. Key findings are organized and summarized below.

Figure 2: Graphic promoting TheBus route map, a bus, and online survey accessibility.

Advertising TheBus Transit Development Plan: Online Survey

The advertising strategy for the online survey included distributing the survey link to local partners in the Hernando County area and launching a targeted social media campaign specifically for this region. The social media advertisements were managed through the Center for Urban Transportation Research's Facebook and Instagram accounts. The first advertisement campaign was scheduled from June 14th to July 19th (35 days), followed by an additional campaign from July 19th to July 30th (11 days).

Throughout the campaign, the advertisements reached over 26,000 people across Hernando and Pasco Counties. Of those reached, approximately 9% engaged with the content, which included actions such as clicking the survey link, sharing the post, commenting, liking, and other forms of interaction. This level of engagement helped to effectively promote the survey within the targeted communities.

Before launching the advertisement, the project team developed a draft communications plan specifically for social media outreach, which was shared with the Hernando County Public Information Officer. Although the primary advertisement was disseminated through the Center for Urban Transportation Research's Facebook platform, Hernando County was also given the opportunity to create and share their own posts on their social media channels. This allowed the county to directly engage with their followers and disseminate the survey information independently, without relying solely on paid advertisement. This dual approach ensured broader visibility and engagement by leveraging both targeted ads and organic/earned social media posts from the county.
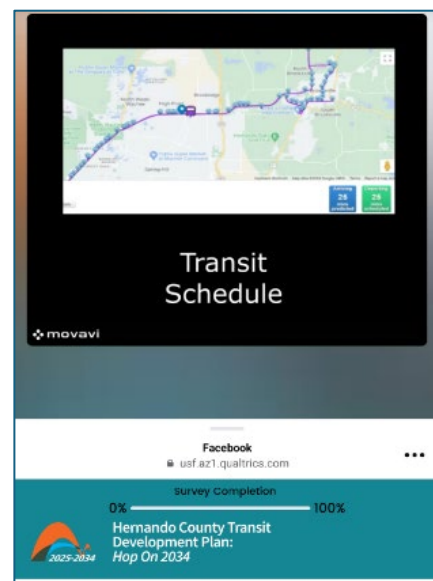

Figure 3: Social media post by Hernando County promoting the

Figure 4: Online survey and video ad through social media platform.

TheBus TDP Informational Video

For the social media advertisement running from July 19th to July 30th, a 24-second video was produced to accompany the survey. The video provided a brief overview of the Transit Development Plan (TDP) and highlighted some of the key topics covered in the survey. The video was designed to engage the audience and provide context, making the survey more relevant and accessible to potential participants.

When users clicked on the advertisement, they were able to watch the video while simultaneously completing the survey, as the survey form was seamlessly integrated into the social media platform's video interface. This integration proved highly effective, as it allowed participants to engage with the content and complete the survey within a single, streamlined experience. The combination of visual content and the interactive survey format enhanced user engagement and encouraged greater participation.
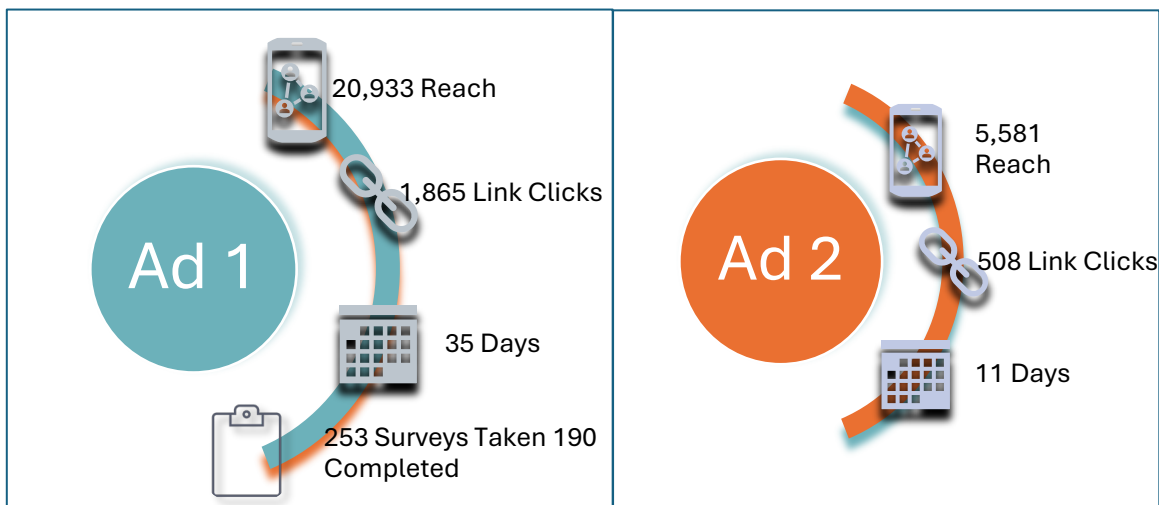

Figure 5: Ad 1 and Ad 2 details

Riders and Non-Riders

The online survey included questions for both transit riders and non-riders. Engaging non-riders through an online survey was a key strategy for gathering feedback from individuals who do not currently use public transit, offering valuable insights on how the system can be improved to attract potential riders. This approach provided an opportunity to reach a broader audience beyond traditional methods like on-board surveys and in-person meetings, which typically engage only current transit users. The use of targeted social media ads significantly expanded the reach of the survey, connecting with individuals who might not usually participate in public involvement efforts related to transit

As a result, the survey was able to capture the opinions and perspectives of people outside the regular transit user base. In fact, among those who responded to the Phase I survey, 58% reported that they had never used TheBus transit service. This feedback from non-riders is critical for identifying potential barriers to ridership and for developing strategies to make public transit more appealing to a wider audience.

Opinion of TheBus Service

The survey included a question asking both riders and non-riders for their

Figure 6: Non-rider & rider responses.

opinions on TheBus service, offering answer options such as "Essential (must be provided)," "Might be useful to others, but I don't use it," "Not essential," and "Sometimes useful." Among riders, 23% indicated that they consider TheBus service essential, meaning it must be provided. Interestingly, 66% of non-riders expressed support for TheBus, with some stating it is essential and others acknowledging it "might be useful to others, but I don't use it."
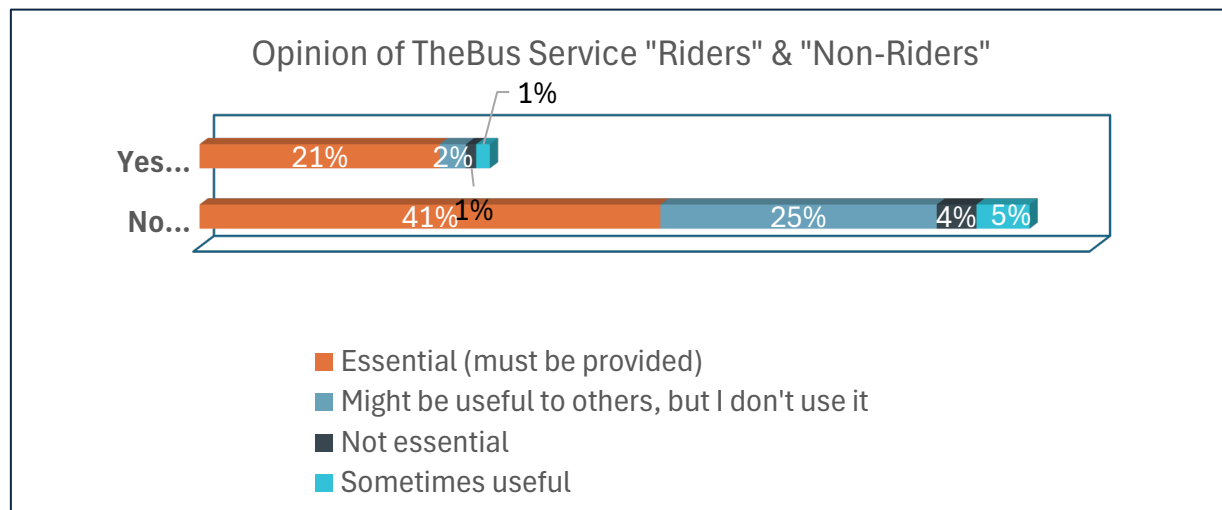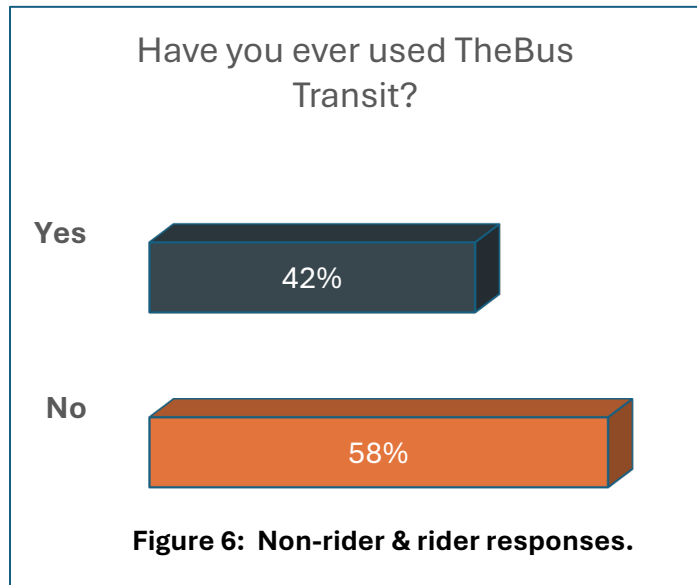

Figure 7: Breakdown of rider/non-rider opinions of TheBus

Reasons You Ride TheBus (Riders)

Figure 8 responses below were directed at current bus riders, asked them to identify their primary reason for using TheBus. Of the responses, 39% indicated that they ride the bus because they do not drive a car. Additionally, a combined 40% of riders stated that they use TheBus either because a car was not available to them or because riding the bus was a more economical option.

These responses highlight the significant demand for public transit, particularly among individuals without access to a personal vehicle. The high percentage of riders who rely on TheBus due to lack of vehicle ownership underscores the essential role that transit plays in providing mobility options for residents, making it clear that expanded transit services could better meet the needs of this population. This data also suggests that enhancing transit accessibility and affordability could be crucial in supporting individuals who depend on public transportation for their daily mobility.
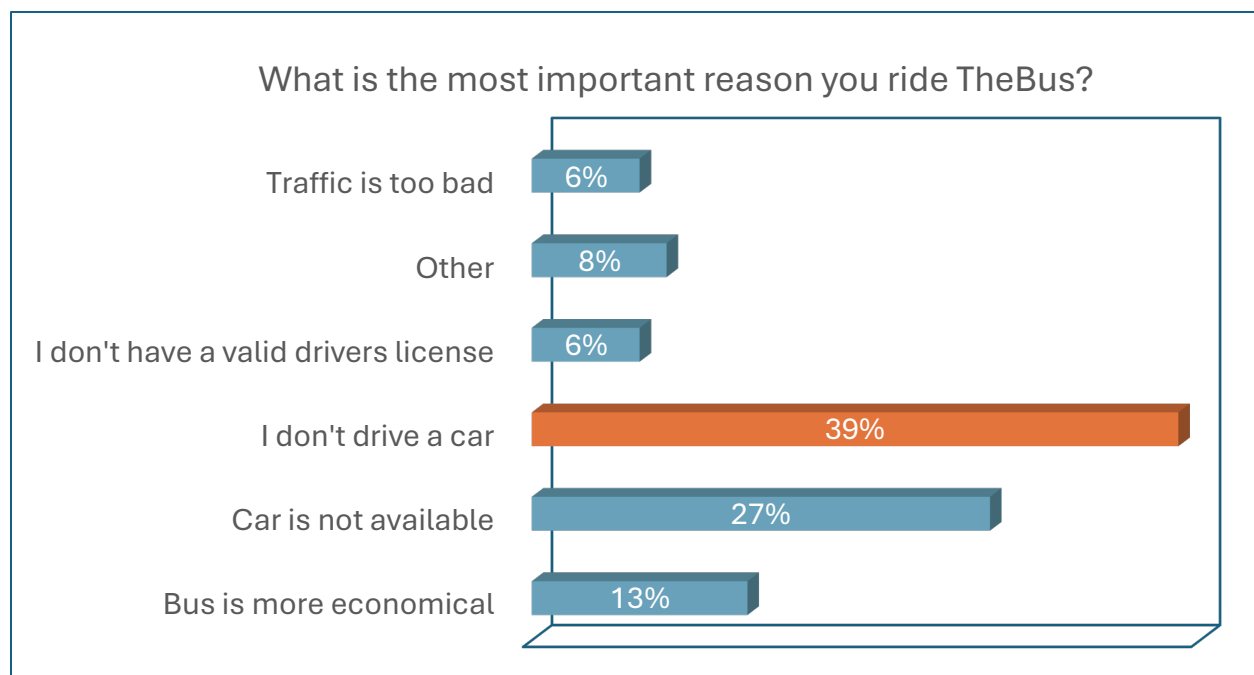

What is the most important reason you ride TheBus?

- Traffic is too bad — 6%
- Other — 8%
- I don't have a valid drivers license — 6%
- I don't drive a car — 39%
- Car is not available — 27%
- Bus is more economical — 13%

Figure 8: Rider's response to reasons they use TheBus

Figure 9 shows strong support for TheBus service among non-riders. The results of a cross-tabulation that asked non-rider respondents if they are familiar with TheBus and whether they know anyone who uses it. According to responses, 38% of non-riders reported knowing someone who rides TheBus and having some awareness about TheBus service.
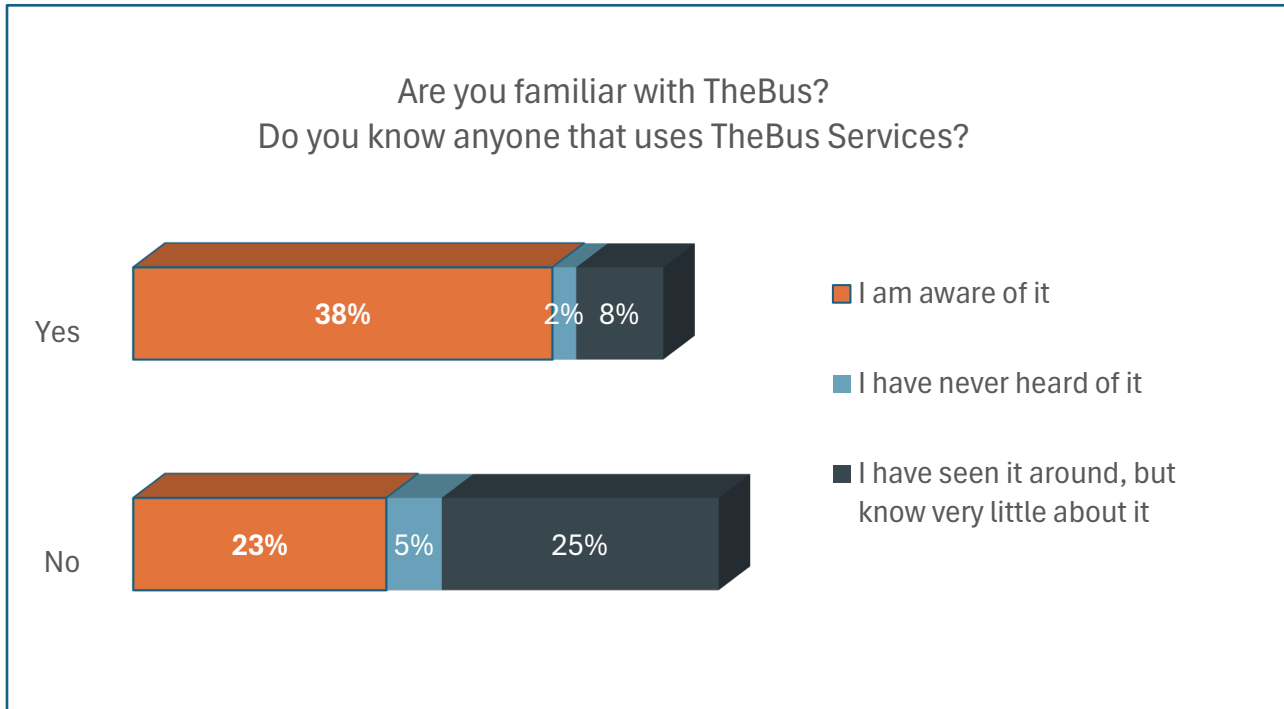
Awareness of TheBus System

Are you familiar with TheBus?
Do you know anyone that uses TheBus Services?

Yes: 38% | 2% | 8%
No: 23% | 5% | 25%

Legend:
- I am aware of it
- I have never heard of it
- I have seen it around, but know very little about it

Figure 9: Thirty- Eight percent of non-riders are aware or have seen TheBus around and know someone that rides TheBus.

Transit System Improvement Rankings

Figure 10 below summarizes the rankings of TheBus transit system based on an online customer survey regarding various services and infrastructure improvements. Respondents were asked to prioritize the transit improvements they considered most important. The rankings were determined using a weighted scoring system that ordered the seven options from most important (Rank 1) to least important (Rank 7).

Among the options, "Earlier/Later Weekday Service," "Expanded Saturday Hours," and "More Frequent Service" emerged as the top priorities. Specifically, "More Frequent Service" was ranked as the most important improvement by 88% of respondents, making it the highest priority. This was followed by "Expanded Saturday Hours," which was ranked as the second most important by 75% of respondents. "Earlier/Later Weekday Hours" was ranked third, with 63% of respondents considering it a top priority.
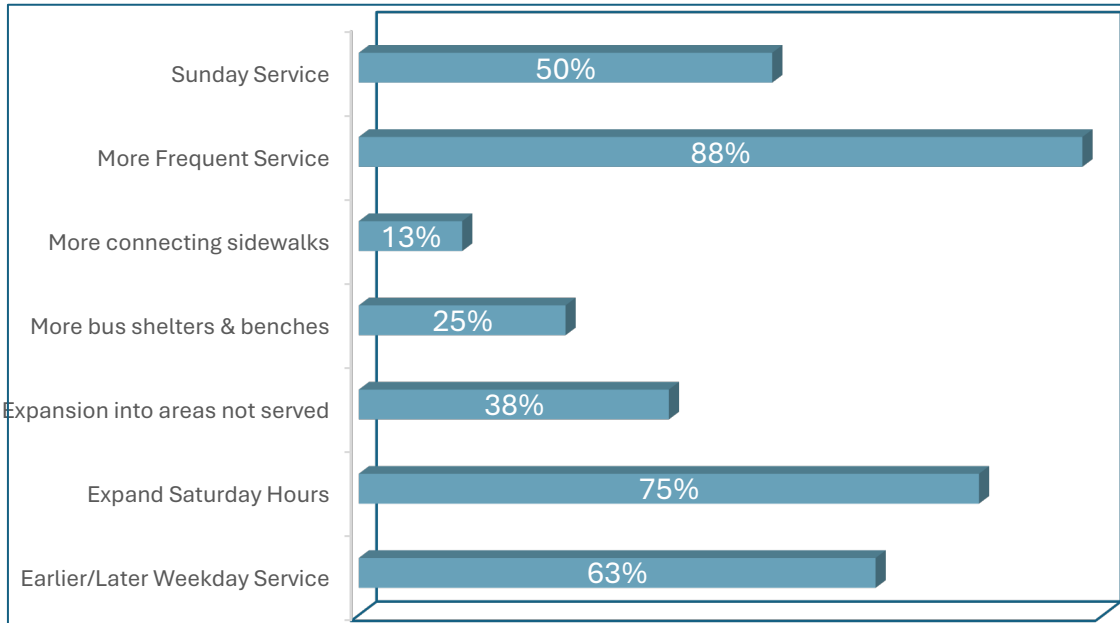
Ranked Transit Improvements "Riders"

Improvement	Percentage
Sunday Service	50%
More Frequent Service	88%
More connecting sidewalks	13%
More bus shelters & benches	25%
Expansion into areas not served	38%
Expand Saturday Hours	75%
Earlier/Later Weekday Service	63%

**Figure 10: Customer improvement rankings for TheBus transit system (Phase I)
Purpose of Transit Trips**

Main Purpose of Your Bus Trips "Riders"

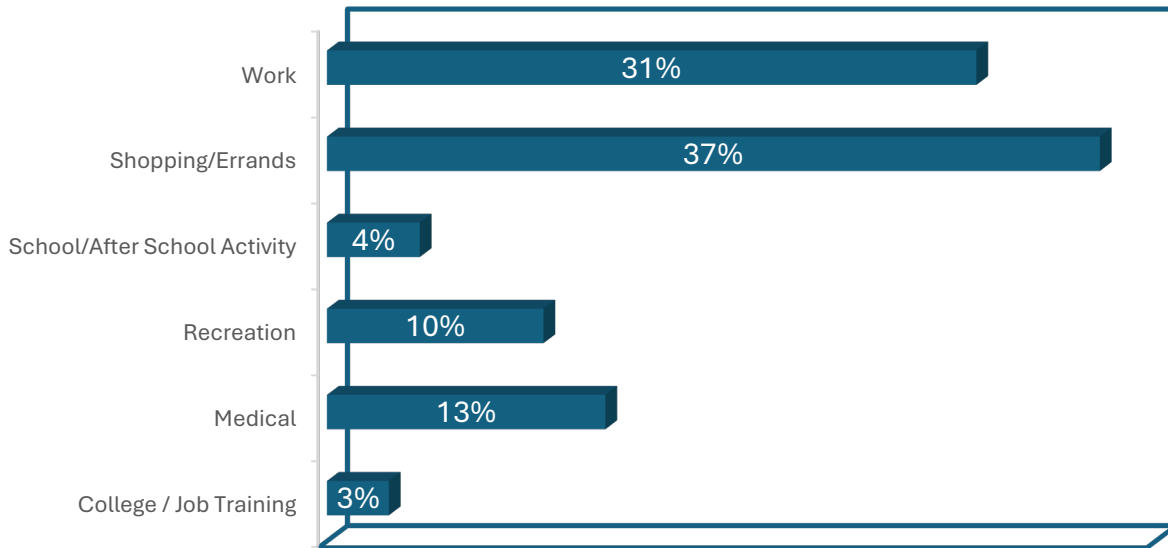| Purpose	Percentage
Work	31%
Shopping/Errands	37%
School/After School Activity	4%
Recreation	10%
Medical	13%
College / Job Training	3%

Figure 11: Main Purpose of Respondents Bus Trips.

Multimodal Trips to Transit Stops

Safe access to and from transit stops is crucial for rider safety. Whether riders are walking or biking to these stops, the surrounding infrastructure must be integrated into future system development plans. Notably, 37% of respondents are transit users who have biked to their stops, highlighting the importance of bike-friendly infrastructure. To improve first-mile/last-mile connectivity, a thorough analysis of mobility access to transit stops should be a key focus of future Hernando County transit studies. As the county experiences population growth and the costs of vehicle ownership remain high, incorporating multimodal transportation options into Hernando County's long-term transit development plans will be essential for creating a more accessible and efficient system.
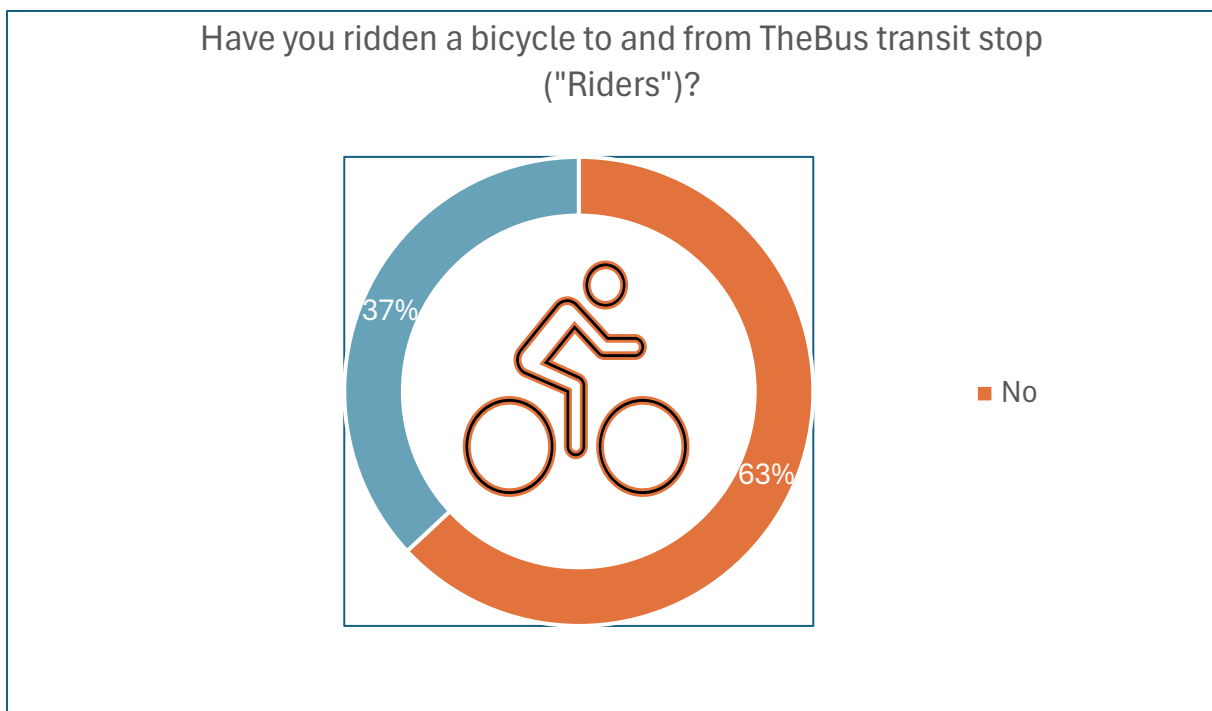

Have you ridden a bicycle to and from TheBus transit stop ("Riders")?

37%

63%

■ No

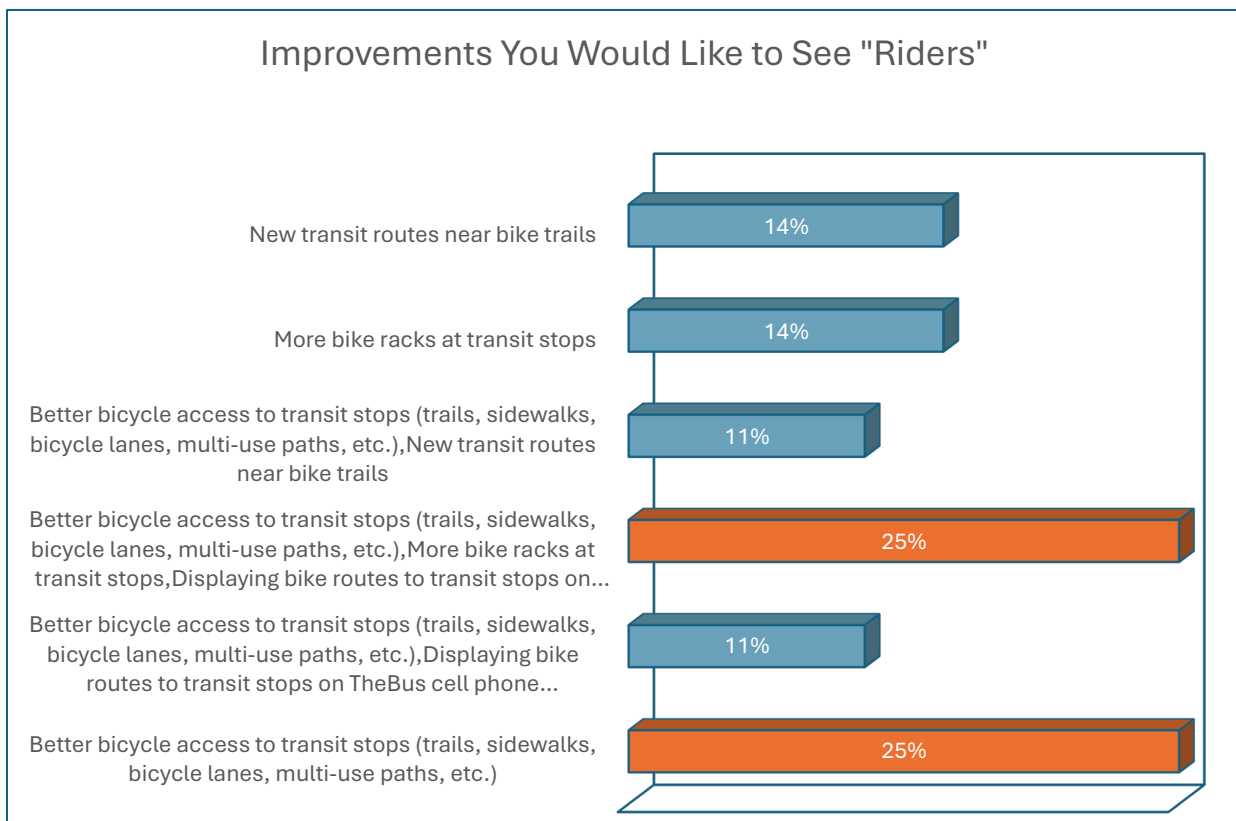**Figure 12: 37% of respondents biked to transit stops.**

Transit Improvements

Figure 13: Transit rider improvement preferences.
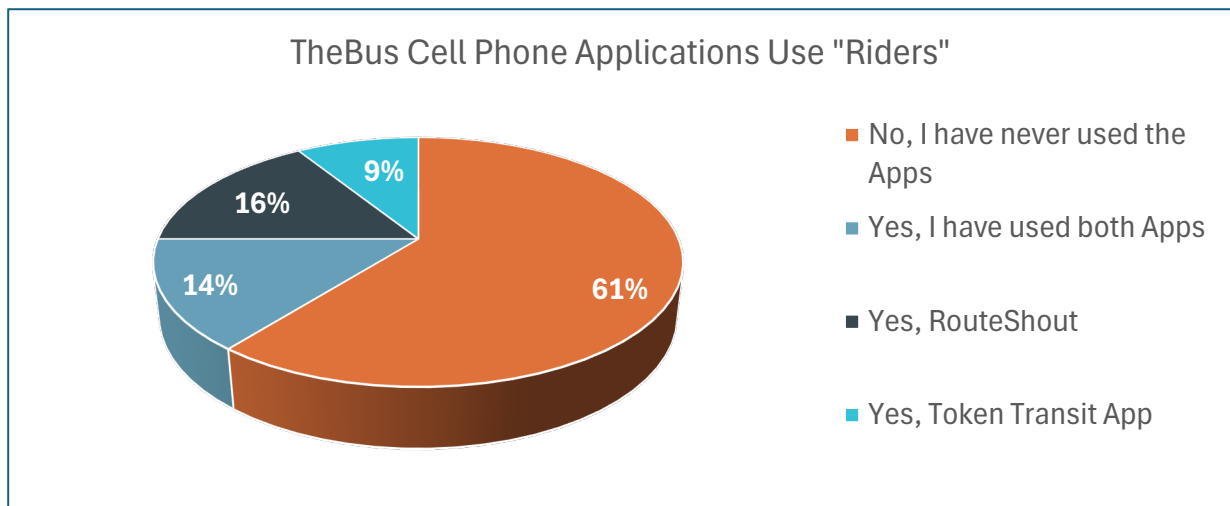
TheBus Transit Cell Phone Applications

TheBus Cell Phone Applications Use "Riders"

- No, I have never used the Apps
- Yes, I have used both Apps
- Yes, RouteShout
- Yes, Token Transit App

61%
14%
16%
9%

Figure 14: Transit cell phone applications usage.

Reasons for Not Using TheBus Application "Riders"

66%   10%   24%

■ I am not aware of it   ■ I don't have a smart phone   ■ Other
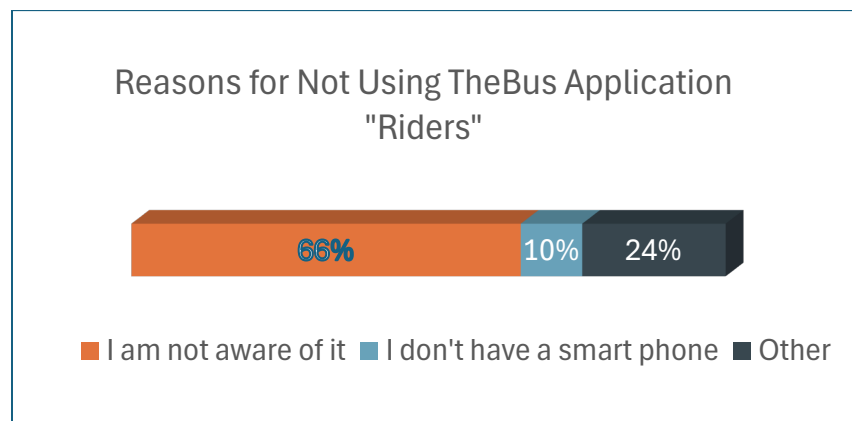
Figure 15: Reasons riders are not using TheBus application.

Demographics

Phase I Social Media Target Ad Demographics

Reach June 14 – July 30

58% Women and 42% Men were reached during this advertisement period.

Figure 16: Social media advertisement demographic reach breakdown by gender.

Reach July 19 – July 30

42% Women and 58% Men were reached during this advertisement period.
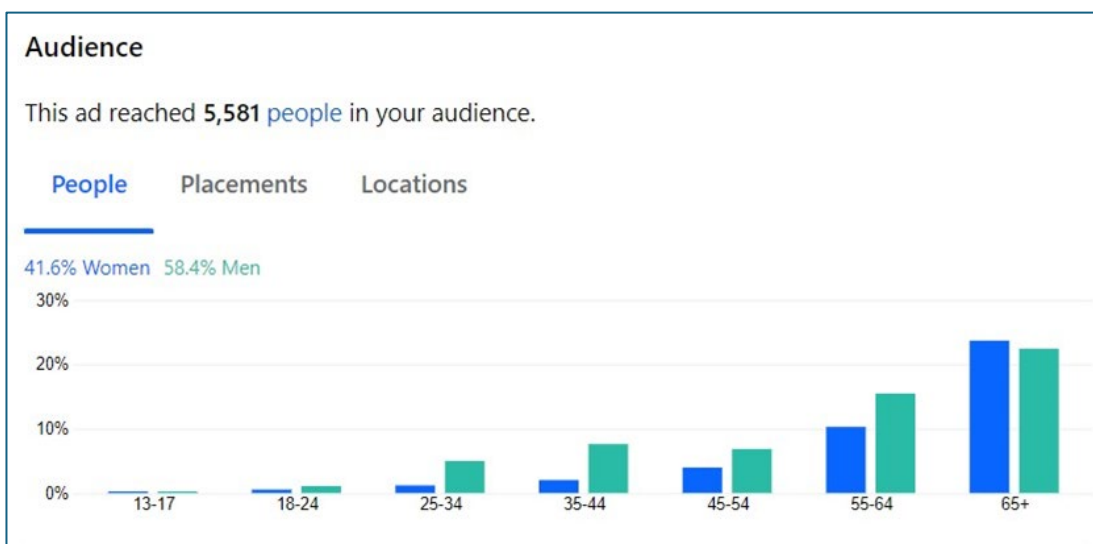

Figure 17: The second social media advertisement demographic reach breakdown by gender.

Survey Response Demographics

Demographic questions were asked for the online survey to provide essential context that helps to understand who is using TheBus transit system, how they are using it, and what their specific needs and challenges and improvements need to be addressed.
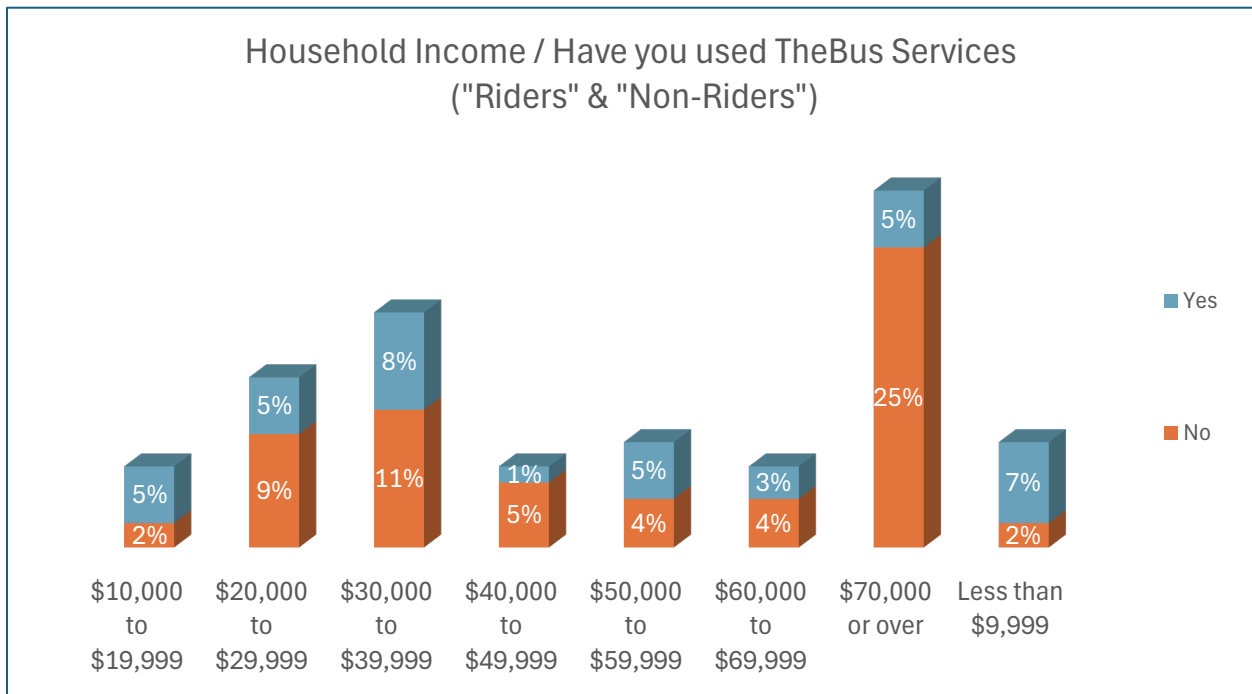

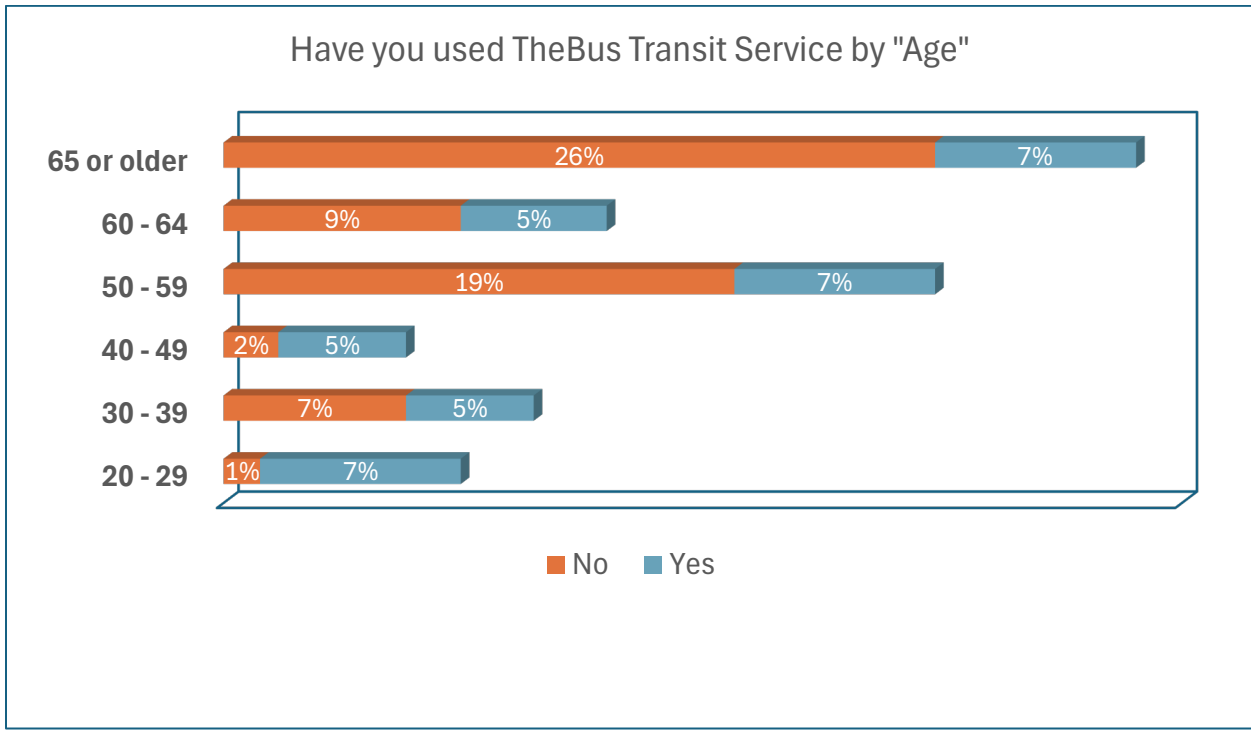**Figure 18: Household income riders and non-riders.**

Figure 19: Transit riders breakdown by age.

Phase II

Survey and Advertising Highlights

- **Survey Responses**: There were 284 respondents to the online surveys

- **Targeted Ad Reach**: The targeted social media advertisement reached over 22 thousand people in the Hernando County and North Pasco County areas.

- **Used TheBus Service**: 60% of respondents used TheBus service.

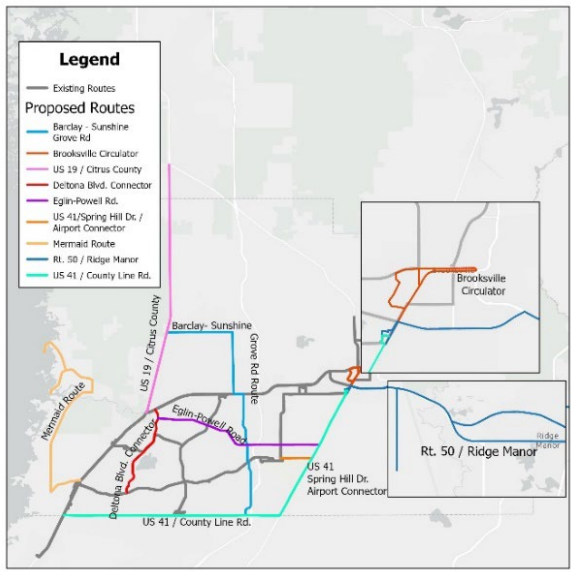- **Spanish speaking respondents:** about 30% of respondents were Spanish speaking.

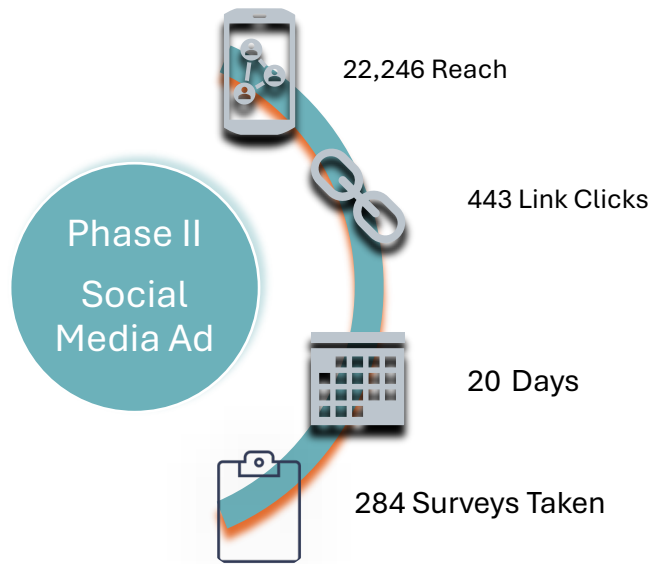**Figure 20: Transit route option map used for survey and outreach printed materials.**

Figure 21: Phase II targeted marketing insights.

Online Survey

The Phase II online survey was developed using the Qualtrics platform and was made available in both English and Spanish. Once the English version of the survey was finalized, it was promptly translated into Spanish to ensure accessibility for a broader audience.

For distribution, a shareable link was generated alongside a QR code specifically designed for printed marketing materials. The survey received 226 clicks from the shareable link and 21 scans from the printed QR code. Additionally, other responses were collected through various online platforms, further expanding the survey's reach and participation.

Hernando County Residents

Your input is needed

TheBus
2025-34 Transportation Development Plan Survey

tinyurl.com/TheBus2024

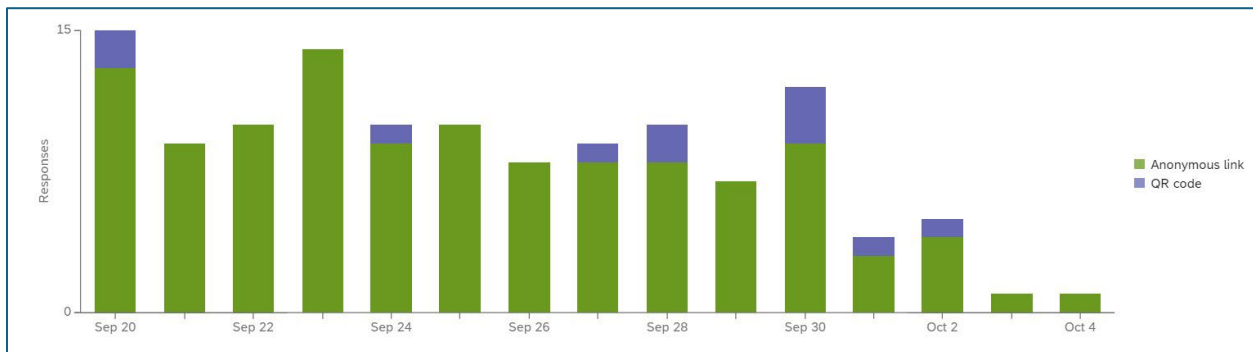**Figure 22: Printed information card with QR for public outreach.**

Figure 23: Qualtrics survey insights for how people accessed the online survey.

Demographics

Phase II Social Media Target Ad Demographics

Reach Sept 13 – Oct 3

47% Women and 53% Men were reached during this advertisement period.
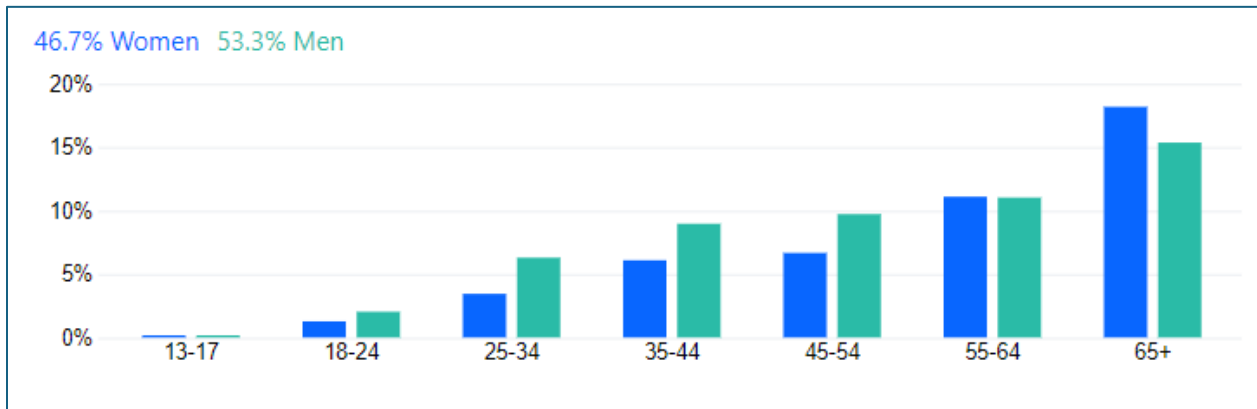
Figure 24: Phase II social media ad demographic breakdown by gender.

Have you ever used TheBus service?
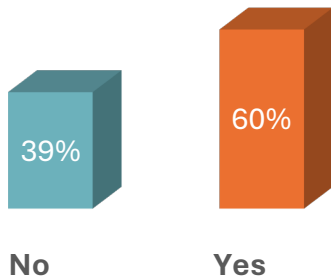
Figure 25: Participants by ridership.

Participants by Language
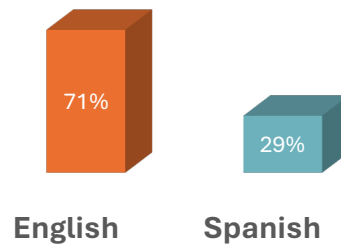
Figure 26: Participants by language.

Proposed Routes Rankings

The table below summarizes the route rankings of TheBus transit system based on the data collected through the online survey. Respondents were asked to rank the bus routes they would like to see implemented. The rankings were determined using a weighted scoring system that ordered the nine options from most important (Rank 1) to least important (Rank 9). Among the options, "Barclay – Sunshine Grove Road," "Brooksville Circulator," and "US19/Citrus County" emerged as the top three selected routes. Specifically, "Barclay – Sunshine Grove Road" was ranked as the highest proposed route by respondents.

Ranked Proposed Routes												
		Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Rank 8	Rank 9	Weighted Score	Rank	Percent Rank
1	Barclay - Sunshine Grove Rd.	34	24	16	13	13	4	4	4	0	16.68518519	1	0.9
2	Brooksville Circulator	21	20	25	14	11	9	5	1	6	15.44444444	2	0.8
3	US19/Citrus County	13	24	23	14	8	4	12	9	5	14.46296296	3	0.7
4	Deltona Blvd. Connector	9	14	10	29	13	17	9	6	5	13.44444444	4	0.6
5	US 41/Spring Hill Dr./Airport Connector	5	11	10	21	12	30	15	7	1	12.61111111	5	0.375
6	Eglin-Powell Rd.	7	8	12	6	35	21	10	9	4	12.40740741	6	0.4
7	US 41/County Line Rd.	15	3	8	5	9	10	12	5	45	9.87037037	7	0.3
8	Mermaid Route	3	2	6	3	6	9	38	23	22	8.574074074	8	0.2
9	Rt.50/Ridge Manor	5	6	2	7	5	8	7	48	24	8.5	9	0.1
	(weighted value)	0.5	0.45	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1			

Figure 27: Survey participants if they have ever used TheBus service.

Ranked Proposed Routes

Legend:
- 9 Rt.50/Ridge Manor
- 8 Mermaid Route
- 7 US 41/County Line Rd.
- 6 Eglin-Powell Rd.
- 5 US 41/Spring Hill Dr./Airport Connector
- 4 Deltona Blvd. Connector
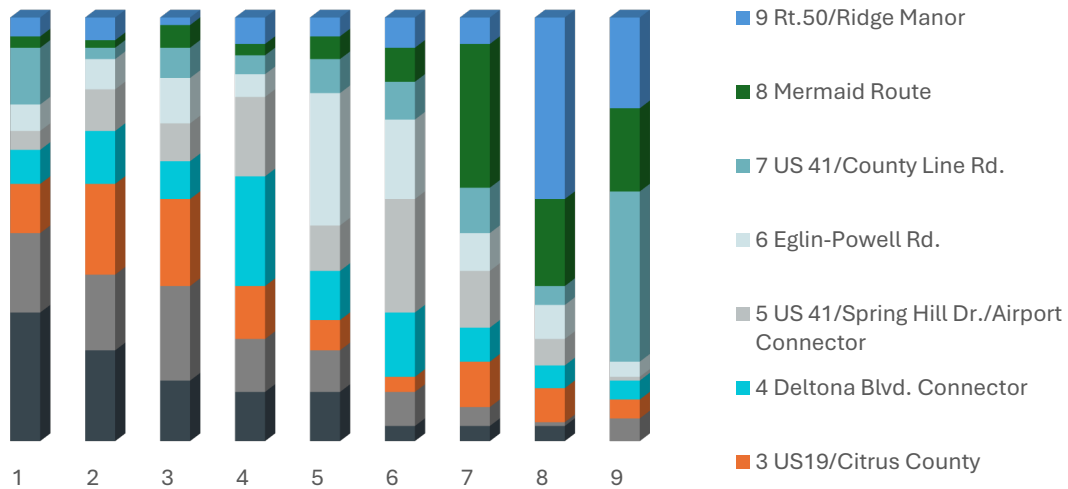- 3 US19/Citrus County

Figure 28: Ranked proposed routes.

Ranked Bus Improvements

The table below summarizes the improvements rankings of TheBus transit system based on the data collected through the online survey. Respondents were asked to rank the bus improvements they would like to see implemented. The rankings were determined using a weighted scoring system that ordered the seven options from most important (Rank 1) to least important (Rank 7). Among the options, "Earlier/Later Weekday Service," "New Routes in Unserved Areas," and "More Frequent Service" emerged as the top three selected improvements. Specifically, "Earlier/Later Weekday Service" was ranked as the highest proposed improvements by respondents.

Ranked Bus Improvements										
	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7	Weighted Score	Rank	Percent Rank
1 Earlier/Later Weekday Service	38	33	24	21	18	3	1	24.77142857	1	0.875
2 New Routes in Unserved Areas	39	23	28	19	13	12	4	23.77142857	2	0.75
3 More Frequent Service	21	23	19	18	33	19	5	20.91428571	3	0.625
4 Earlier/Later Saturday Service	6	29	27	34	24	13	5	20.8	4	0.5
5 Addition of Sunday Service	17	10	15	19	15	42	20	17.62857143	5	0.375
6 More Accessible Bus Stops	13	18	14	8	10	14	61	15.94285714	6	0.25
7 Capital/Facility Improvements	4	2	11	19	25	35	42	14.17142857	7	0.125
(weighted value)	0.4	0.35	0.3	0.25	0.2	0.15	0.1			

Figure 29. Ranked Bus Improvements

Ranked Bus Improvements

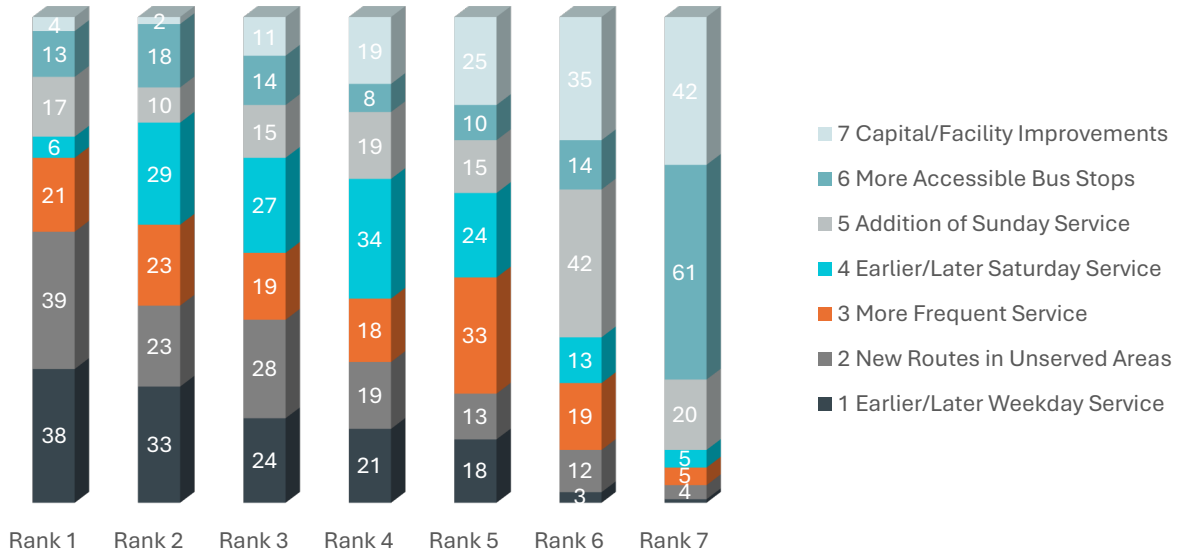|	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Rank 5	Rank 6	Rank 7
7 Capital/Facility Improvements	4	2	11	19	25	35	42
6 More Accessible Bus Stops	13	18	14	8	10	14	61
5 Addition of Sunday Service	17	10	15	19	15	42	20
4 Earlier/Later Saturday Service	6	29	27	34	24	13	5
3 More Frequent Service	21	23	19	18	33	19	5
2 New Routes in Unserved Areas	39	23	28	19	13	12	4
1 Earlier/Later Weekday Service	38	33	24	21	18	3	

Figure 30: Ranked TheBus improvements.

Public Input Using Heat Map Option

Online survey respondents were asked to select up to three regions on the map where you believe more transit services would be beneficial. Using a computer mouse curser or finger/pen for their tablet or phone, respondents were able to select three locations they would like to see additional transit route opportunities in their area that were not previously provided with the ranking questions. A heat map is a great opportunity to use a geographical visual to assist with future decision-making processes, as well as assist with future planning prioritization with new transit routes. Figure 31 below shows hot spots selected by respondents. In addition to the heat map provided, respondents were asked to also list locations they would like the bus service extended.
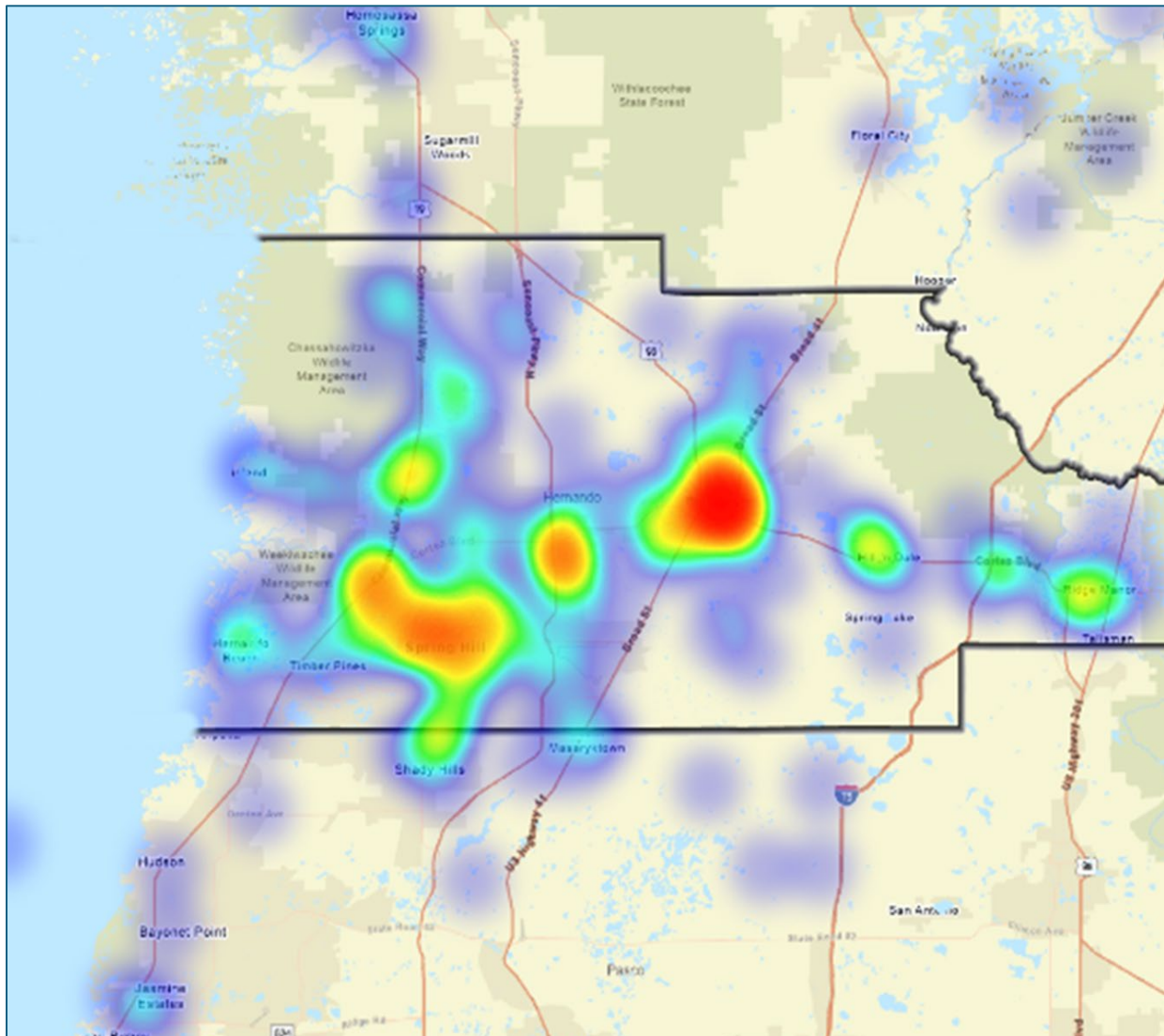

Figure 31: Heatmap showing respondent's input for preferred route locations.

Qualitative Responses

Respondents were invited to suggest additional locations and services where they would like to see expanded transit routes in their area. Below is a list of locations and services that were frequently mentioned by multiple respondents.

Locations
- Spring Hill Drive to US41
- Masaryktown
- Mariner
- Citrus
- Barclay

Services
- More transit frequency
- Transit to popular destinations

Phase I & II Marketing & Online Survey Conclusion and Recommendations

The online survey process was a valuable tool for collecting data from both TheBus riders and non-riders. Survey participants were able to rank potential route locations and service improvements, providing insights that are essential for enhancing the transit system. For non-riders, the survey also served as an opportunity to introduce and promote TheBus service, helping to raise awareness and potentially attract future ridership.

From a marketing standpoint, the social media advertisements for both Phase I and II of the survey reached nearly 49,000 people in the Hernando County area. A total of 474 surveys were completed, providing a solid foundation of both qualitative and quantitative data for the Hernando County transit agency to analyze.

Marketing Recommendations: To expand the reach of future surveys and engagement efforts, a more robust marketing strategy could be employed. This might include using a variety of online platforms—such as local news websites, email newsletters, and community forums—to target a broader audience. Additionally, partnering with other county departments and local agencies to share survey links through their social media channels could further increase visibility and participation.

Other Recommendations:

- Increase efforts to market transit-related applications to the public, ensuring that potential and current riders are aware of available tools that enhance the convenience of using TheBus.

- Incorporate public feedback on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure to support first-mile/last-mile connections, improving access to transit stops for those walking or biking.

- Consider the future growth of Hernando County and the rising costs of vehicle ownership. These factors indicate a growing need for expanded transit services to accommodate residents who may increasingly rely on public transportation for cost-effective mobility.

Overall, the survey initiative provided crucial insights and highlighted the potential to further strengthen TheBus services through targeted marketing and by addressing community feedback on multimodal transportation options.

Phase 1 Online/Social Media Survey Questions

Hernando County Transit (TheBus) General Public Survey

Start of Block: Default Question Block

TheBus Online Survey Hernando County Transit (TheBus) is developing an update to its 10-Year Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP helps determine future transit improvements over the 10 years and provides insight into the role of transit in making Hernando County a great place to live and work. As part of this effort, Hernando County is collecting information about your travel experiences and soliciting your opinions to help improve TheBus public transportation service.

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated and your responses are anonymous.

Page Break

Q1 Have you ever used TheBus transit services?

○ Yes   (1)

○ No   (2)

Skip To: Q15 If Have you ever used TheBus transit services?   = No
Page Break

Q12 What is your main purpose of your typical TheBus trip?

○ Work (1)

○ Medical (2)

○ Shopping/Errands (3)

○ School/After School Activity (4)

○ College / Job Training (5)

○ Recreation (6)
Page Break

Q13 What is the most important reason you ride the TheBus?

○ I don't drive a car (1)

○ Car is not available (2)

○ Bus is more economical (3)

○ Traffic is too bad (4)

○ Parking is difficult/expensive (5)

○ Bus is more convenient (6)

○ I don't have a valid drivers license (7)

○ Other (8) _____

Page Break

Q14
Put in order of importance, which TheBus improvements would be most important to you? (Drag the most important item to the top and the least important to the bottom)
_____ More Frequent Service (1)
_____ Earlier/later Weekday Service (2)
_____ Expanded Saturday Hours (3)
_____ Sunday Service (4)
_____ Expansion into areas not served (5)
_____ More Bus shelters & Benches (6)
_____ More Connecting sidewalks (7)
Page Break

Q18 Have you ever used the following cell phone applications to assist with riding TheBus? Check all the apply:

○ Yes, RouteShout (1)

○ Yes, Token Transit App (2)

○ Yes, I have used both Apps (3)

○ No, I have never used the Apps (4)

Skip To: Q21 If Have you ever used the following cell phone applications to assist with riding TheBus? Check all... = No, I have never used the Apps
Page Break

Q19 What do you like most about the Apps?

○ Functionality (4)

○ Information provided (5)

○ Convenience (6)

○ Helps me locate my next bus (7)

○ Helps with trip planning (8)

○ Digital fare options (9)

○ Transferrable digital passes (10)

○ Other (11) _____
Page Break

Q20 What other features would you like to see in the TheBus App(s)?

_____

Skip To: Q4 If Condition: What other features would y... Is Equal to . Skip To: Have you ever used any of the followi....
Page Break

Q21 Why haven't you used the TheBus App?

○ I am not aware of it (1)

○ I don't have a smart phone (2)

○ It doesn't work well (3)

○ I don't have WiFi and/or data plan (4)

○ Other (5) _____

Page Break

Q22 Describe any other reasons you have not used TheBus App.

_____

Page Break

Q15 Do you know anyone that uses TheBus Service?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Page Break

Q16 How familiar are you with TheBus Service?

○ I am aware of it (1)

○ I have seen it around, but know very little about it (2)

○ I have never heard of it (3)

Page Break

Q2 What is your opinion of TheBus service?

○ Essential (must be provided) (1)

○ Sometimes useful (2)

○ Might be useful to others, but I don't use it (3)

○ Not essential (4)

Page Break

Display This Question:
If Have you ever used TheBus transit services?   = Yes

Q4 Have you ever used any of the following transportation services instead of using TheBus transit (check all that apply)?

☐ Taxi (1)

☐ Uber/Lyft (2)

☐ Trans Hernando (Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.) (3)

☐ Other Medical transportation (please specify) (4)

☐ Other (specify) (5) _____

☐ No other services (6)

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Have you ever used TheBus transit services?   = Yes

Q5 What were the reasons that you chose to use another service instead of using TheBus transit? (select all that apply)

☐ Convenience / time required to schedule service (1)

☐ Destination is outside the service area of Hernando County (2)

☐ Cost (3)

☐ Not eligible for Transportation Disadvantaged services (4)

☐ Other (specify) (5) _____

Page Break

Display This Question:

If Have you ever used TheBus transit services?   = No

Q17 Have you ever used any of the following transportation services?

☐ Taxi (1)

☐ Uber/Lyft (2)

☐ Trans Hernando (Mid Florida Community Services, Inc.) (3)

☐ Other Medical transportation (please specify) (4)

☐ Other (specify) (5) _____

☐ No other services (6)

Page Break

Q6 What is your age?

○ 19 or under (1)

○ 20 - 29 (2)

○ 30 - 39 (3)

○ 40 - 49 (4)

○ 50 - 59 (5)

○ 60 - 64 (6)

○ 65 or older (7)

Page Break

Q7 What was the range of your household income in 2023?

○ Less than $9,999 (1)

○ $10,000 to $19,999 (2)

○ $20,000 to $29,999 (3)

○ $30,000 to $39,999 (4)

○ $40,000 to $49,999 (5)

○ $50,000 to $59,999 (6)

○ $60,000 to $69,999 (7)

○ $70,000 or over (8)

Page Break

Q8 Do you own a valid driver's license?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Page Break

Q9 Do you own a smart phone and what is your preferred method for receiving information?

○ Yes, text (10)

○ Yes, email (11)

○ Yes, phone call (12)

○ Do not own a smart phone (13)

Page Break

Q10 Please use the space below for additional comments, questions, or concerns about TheBus transit services.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Default Question Block

Phase 2 Online/Social Media Survey Questions

Transit Rider Survey

Hernando County is exploring improvements to TheBus transit services, and we need your input! By sharing your opinions and ranking what matters most to you, you'll help shape how TheBus can better serve our community and address your specific transit needs.

1. **Have you ever used TheBus transit services?**
   ___ Yes   ___ No

2. **Put in order of importance, which TheBus improvements would be most important to you (1 most important, 7 least important)?**
   _____ Earlier/Later Weekday Service (4:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.)
   _____ Earlier/Later Saturday Service (4:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.)
   _____ New Routes in Unserved Areas (e.g., Route 50, Route 19, Barclay Avenue)
   _____ Capital/Facility Improvements (New Transfer & Maintenance Facilities)
   _____ More Frequent Service
   _____ Addition of Sunday Service
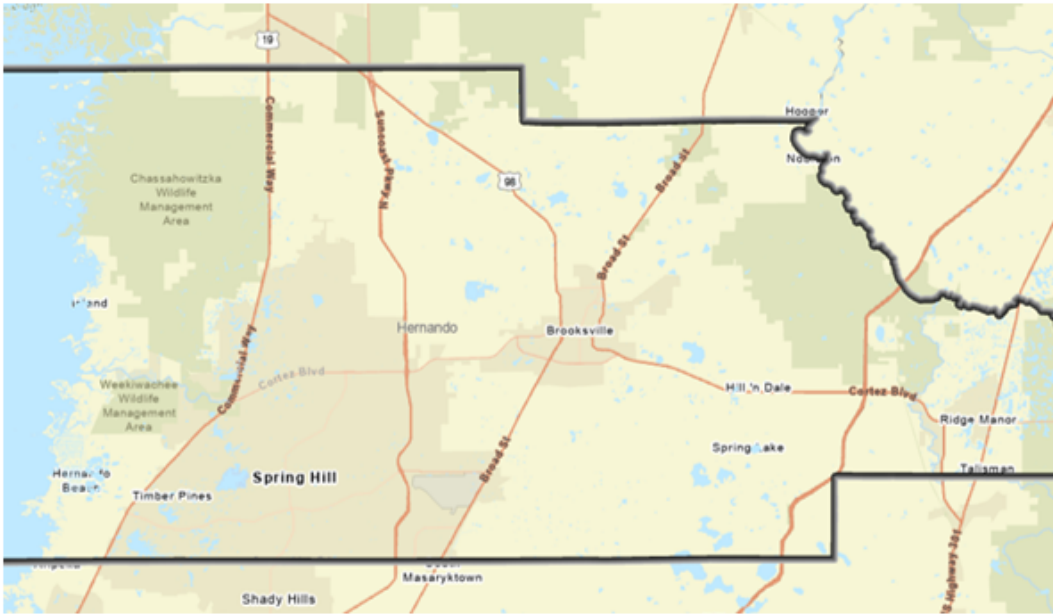   _____ More Accessible Bus Stops (Shelters, Sidewalks, Bike Racks)

3. **Rank the proposed routes in order of importance (1 highest, 9 lowest)?**

   _____ Barclay - Sunshine Grove Rd.
   _____ Brooksville Circulator
   _____ US19/Citrus County
   _____ Deltona Blvd. Connector
   _____ Eglin-Powell Rd.
   _____ US 41/Spring Hill Dr./Airport Connector
   _____ Mermaid Route
   _____ Rt.50/Ridge Manor
   _____ US 41/County Line Road

4. **If applicable, write down the location where you would like to see TheBus service extended to:**

   _____

5. Select up to 3 locations on the map where you believe more transit services would be beneficial. (Place an "X" at 3 locations within the Hernando County boundary.)

6. Please use the space below for additional comments, questions, or concerns about TheBus transit services.

_____

_____

_____

_____