

REGIONAL TRANSIT ACTION PLAN

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Prepared for:

WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA MPO CHAIRS' COORDINATING COMMITTEE



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REGIONAL TRANSIT ACTION PLAN

The purpose of this Action Plan is to recommend specific steps that advance the regional transit recommendations of the West Central Florida (WCF) 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). While the LRTP identifies where regional transit routes and service will be provided, it does not provide guidance on how the region can develop and operate the service. Currently, there are several transit agencies in the region but none have a truly regional orientation. There are a few regional routes but ridership concerns on these routes are making it difficult for agencies to divert additional resources for further development. Therefore, there are challenges for regional transit.

This Action Plan begins with a summary of existing transit operations in the region, then presents an overview of the transit element of the WCF LRTP. Section three presents the gaps between existing services and what is envisioned by the LRTP and explores the various dimensions of the gaps. The final section presents options for addressing the gaps and recommends which options make the most sense given existing conditions and political realities. The key recommendations are:

- **Establish and recognize leadership** – A policy board should assume the leadership role for implementing the regional transit element of the WCF LRTP. The WCF MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee and the Florida Department of Transportation should immediately agree on who should assume leadership and provide guidance on its charge. This Action Plan recommends the Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority take the leadership. This would require a change in the state legislation that created the Authority to expand its role and function.
- **Hire professional staff** – To ensure continuity of its program from the outset, the Commuter Transit Authority should hire an executive director. This could be a part-time position initially and could be provided through staff sharing with an MPO in the region or FDOT. The MPOs that are part of the CCC and FDOT should provide the funding support for the position.
- **Define the vision and mission** – Once recognized for its leadership, the Commuter Transit Authority and other transportation agencies and stakeholders in the region should craft a vision and a mission statement that clearly articulate what regional transit is and how it differs from local transit. From the vision and mission statements, goals, objectives and policies can be developed to provide a policy framework for governing, planning/developing and operating regional transit. With that framework, funding initiatives for regional service would carry more weight. Furthermore, the vision can be used to create a unique identity, or

brand, for regional transit to both create a sense of legitimacy and to help market the service to the target audience.

- **Develop a Regional Transit Development Plan (TDP)** – The TDP should focus exclusively on regional service and be consistent with the content and format of TDPs required by FDOT. The TDP will provide detailed guidance of the steps the Transit Authority will take to develop the regional system over the next five years.
- **Agree on the roles and coordination** – The Transit Authority and local operators must quickly develop inter-local agreements on how existing regional routes will be operated and how proposed routes will be planned and developed. The Authority, local policy boards and local transit operators must also reach a long-term agreement on how the region will ultimately coordinate regional and local services.
- **Provide short-term funding** – In the short term, the Transit Authority should provide a portion of the funding needed to develop and operate regional routes. This is important to both broker participation among funding-strapped local operators and ensure these routes serve the regional mission as closely as possible. The MPOs that make up the CCC and FDOT should consider diverting a portion of their funding to the Authority for this purpose. A portion of the funding could also be used to pay for professional staffing. SIS funding may be an appropriate source for FDOT, given that regional routes will likely serve SIS facilities/hubs.
- **Develop a dedicated funding source** – In the long term, the Transit Authority must develop a dedicated funding source for regional transit, with a sales tax being the best option available. Regardless of the source, the Transit Authority must work with FDOT and localities to agree on the funding source and, if political or voter approval is needed, the strategy for gaining approval. This will not be an easy sell, especially at the regional level; the strategy will require careful thought.
- **Establish the proper context** – Transit agencies alone cannot ensure the success of a regional transit system. Local public works departments and FDOT can demonstrate how road development projects can incorporate transit features. Local land planning agencies can establish a transit-supportive context by developing transit-oriented development plans. Focusing on one of the regional transit corridors early would provide a demonstration project for how such strategies can be implemented region-wide.
- **Take advantage of immediate opportunities** – The Transit Authority should take advantage of several immediate opportunities for regional coordination, such as convening local commuter service agencies to identify how they can plan for and provide coordinated regional service, identifying ways in which transit enhancements can be incorporated into the regional ITS infrastructure, and promoting improved inter-county coordination among Community Transportation Coordinators for the Transportation Disadvantaged.

EXISTING TRANSIT OPERATIONS IN THE REGION

The first task of the WCF LRTP was an assessment of existing travel conditions in the region and how development patterns over the next 20 years will influence travel. The assessment included an inventory of existing transit services in the region. Public transit operators in the region are listed below. Fixed routes are shown on Map 1.

- The Hernando Express (THE Bus) – provides fixed route service in Hernando County, with four routes serving Spring Hill and Brooksville. TransHernando, a service of Mid-Florida Community Services Inc., provides paratransit service throughout the county.
- Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HARTline) – provides fixed route and demand responsive service in Hillsborough County. HARTline also provides ADA – complementary paratransit and demand responsive service within the county.
- Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) – is operated by and receives some local funding from Manatee County, with most routes operating west of I-75 and an Island Trolley serving the beach communities. MCAT also provides paratransit services.
- Pasco County Public Transportation (PCPT) – is operated and funded by Pasco County, with routes operating in the western portion of the county and along US 301 in eastern Pasco County.
- Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) – provides fixed route, express and demand responsive service in Pinellas County. The board includes elected officials from Pinellas County and most of the cities in the county. Fixed routes serve the entire county and the agency provides paratransit service.
- Plant City – the city has contracted with HART to operate two circulator routes but plans to bring operations in-house in 2005.
- Polk County Transit Services, Winter Haven Area Transit (W.H.A.T.) and Citrus Connection (Lakeland Area Mass Transit District) – operate fixed routes in and around Lakeland and Winter Haven. PCTS also provides paratransit services.
- Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) – is operated by and receives some local funding from Sarasota County, with routes operating west of I-75. SCAT also provides paratransit service.
- St. Petersburg – operates trolleys between downtown parking garages, the St. Petersburg Pier and Williams Park. The service was formerly known as the Looper.

Commuter assistance and transportation disadvantaged coordinated trip programs are also provided in the region, by the following agencies:

- Bay Area Commuter Services (BACS) – is one of nine commuter assistance programs funded by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and is responsible for providing vanpooling, ridesharing, guaranteed rides home and other services within FDOT District 7.
- Sarasota-Manatee Commuter Assistance Program – is operated by Sarasota County with funding from FDOT.
- There are Community Transportation Coordinators for each of the counties in the West Central Florida region that are responsible for coordinating services for special needs populations through the state’s Transportation Disadvantaged program. Most of these trips are sponsored by health and human services agencies such as Medicaid and Lighthouse for the Blind. Trips are typically provided on a reservation-based system for medical, ambulatory, shopping and other essential needs. Barriers can exist at the county lines, but some arrangements have been worked out between several adjacent jurisdictions to enable travel between counties.

Other transportation agencies in the region include:

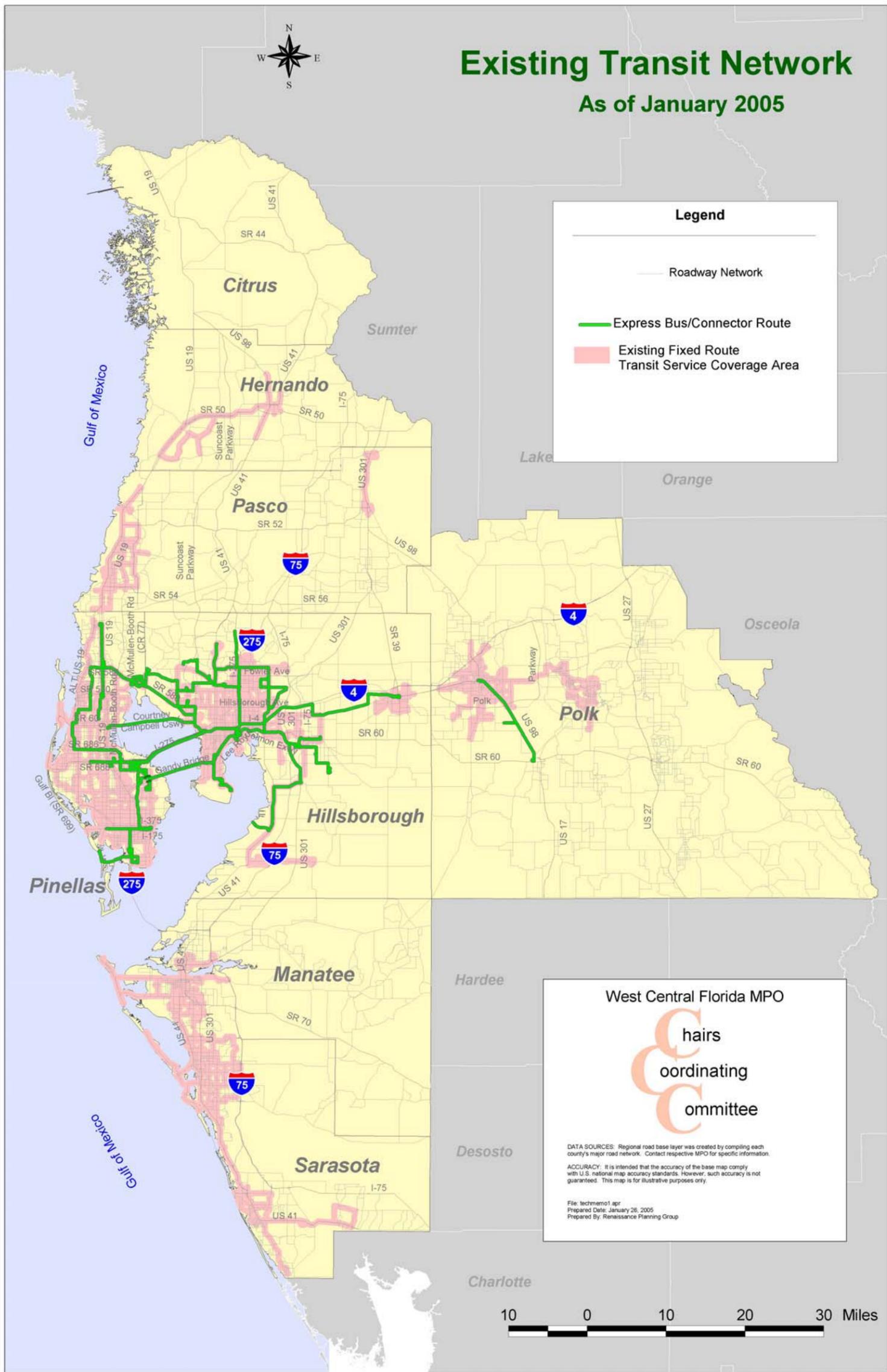
- Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority – enabled by state legislation, with responsibility to oversee regional commuter rail and ferry service. The Authority is able to issue revenue bonds.
- Florida High Speed Rail Commission – oversees high speed rail (future uncertain because of repeal of the constitutional amendment)
- MPOs and FDOT – provide state and federal funding, long range planning and interagency coordination

EXISTING COORDINATION

Results of the regional transit assessment in the WCF LRTP found that the transit agencies provide fixed route service in nearly all areas of the region with development densities sufficient for such service. Yet, because of the lack of funding, headways are 30 minutes or worse for most routes. Thus, coverage is reasonable, but frequency is lacking, which is typical throughout Florida as determined through Transit Quality and Level of Service evaluations. Furthermore, there are very few regional transit routes available, making it difficult to travel via transit among most of the counties in the region. Transit riders can only make four (Sarasota / Manatee, Pinellas / Hillsborough, Pinellas / Pasco

and Pasco / Hillsborough) out of 28 possible county to county connections in the region. The low availability of regional service is related to historically low ridership on such routes; service operators indicated that it is difficult to divert resources needed elsewhere to the underperforming regional routes. It is also related to the relatively low amount of transit service available even on shorter, local routes.

Figure 1 – Fixed Route Transit Routes in West Central Florida



Because of the limited regional service provided, coordination among the region's transit operators also is limited. The Sarasota and Manatee systems are coordinating for interlined service along US 41 that links downtown Palmetto with downtown Sarasota, and the Sarasota/Manatee MPO recently completed a study that outlines options for further coordination, including potential consolidation as a single regional transit authority. The Pinellas and Hillsborough systems coordinate with each other to provide three commuter bus routes across Tampa Bay, and have recently coordinated on the Universal Pass program where a single fare is paid to ride these routes. Polk is looking to consolidate its three systems as a regional authority. There are other similar examples of coordination among agencies, but there are no widespread efforts to coordinate at the West Central Florida regional level.

Providing effective and productive regional transit service will not be a simple modification of existing operations. Transit operators currently have little reason to focus resources on regional services. In order for such an added layer to work there must be a commitment at the regional level for funding such a layer and for providing overall direction for regional service.

WEST CENTRAL FLORIDA MPO REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The West Central Florida MPO Regional Long Range 2025 Transportation Plan (LRTP) includes a transit element that identifies long term regional improvement needs based on existing and future conditions and deficiencies (the Needs Assessment) and determines which of those needs can be funded over the next 20 years (the Cost Affordable Plan). The LRTP sets as policy: "Encourage the prioritizing of public transportation and high occupancy vehicle solutions in those regional corridors that connect transit-supportive areas to the greatest extent possible."

The Needs Assessment of the LRTP identifies transit services needed to serve regional markets, concentrating the most intense service in the most transit-supportive areas. The Cost Affordable Plan relies on existing revenue streams to address those needs and, as discussed above, regional transit is not often the highest priority; the projects identified as affordable are those that can reasonably be expected to be funded subject to existing constraints. Highlights of the LRTP's Cost Affordable transit element are:

- **Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)** – the centerpiece of the PMI is an elevated guideway transit system that forms a loop between St. Petersburg and Clearwater within Pinellas County. The loop will significantly influence the route structure of PSTA, and somewhat influence connections with regional routes, as shown in the

Needs Assessment. An additional sales tax levy in Pinellas County is anticipated to fund the PMI.

- **Special purpose lanes** – The Needs Assessment calls for adding two lanes in each direction along I-4, I-75 and I-275 for special travel markets, which might include: through traffic only; transit; high occupancy vehicles during congested commuting times; tolls; etc. Express bus service using the lanes would have the advantage of bypassing congestion on general purpose lanes to provide competitive travel times with autos.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** – in the regional transit emphasis/priority corridors, existing or new bus routes will be augmented with improvements that allow buses to travel faster along the corridor and to add a sense of permanence to the route. The improvements can include traffic signal pre-emption and/or prioritization, intersection by-pass lanes and permanent transit stops. Ultimately, the BRT could run in its own travel lane to bypass traffic congestion. Major BRT initiatives are planned for the SR 688/I-275 and I-4 corridors in Hillsborough County, the Ulmerton and McMullin-Booth corridors in Pinellas County and the US 41 corridor in Sarasota and Manatee Counties.
- **Express bus** – long distance commuter oriented bus routes, with infrequent stops, will run between outlying areas in the region into major activity centers, such as downtown Tampa and Westshore. The proposed express bus service will connect Pasco and Hernando with Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties; Polk with Hillsborough and Orange Counties; and Manatee with Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties.

Figure 2 presents the Needs Assessment and Cost Affordable projects. A list of the Cost Affordable projects is provided in the Appendix. Of interest on the map is how most of the unfunded needs are routes crossing county (and hence service) boundaries. The regional transit projects and services are assumed to be supported by networks of local services that are documented in local plans.

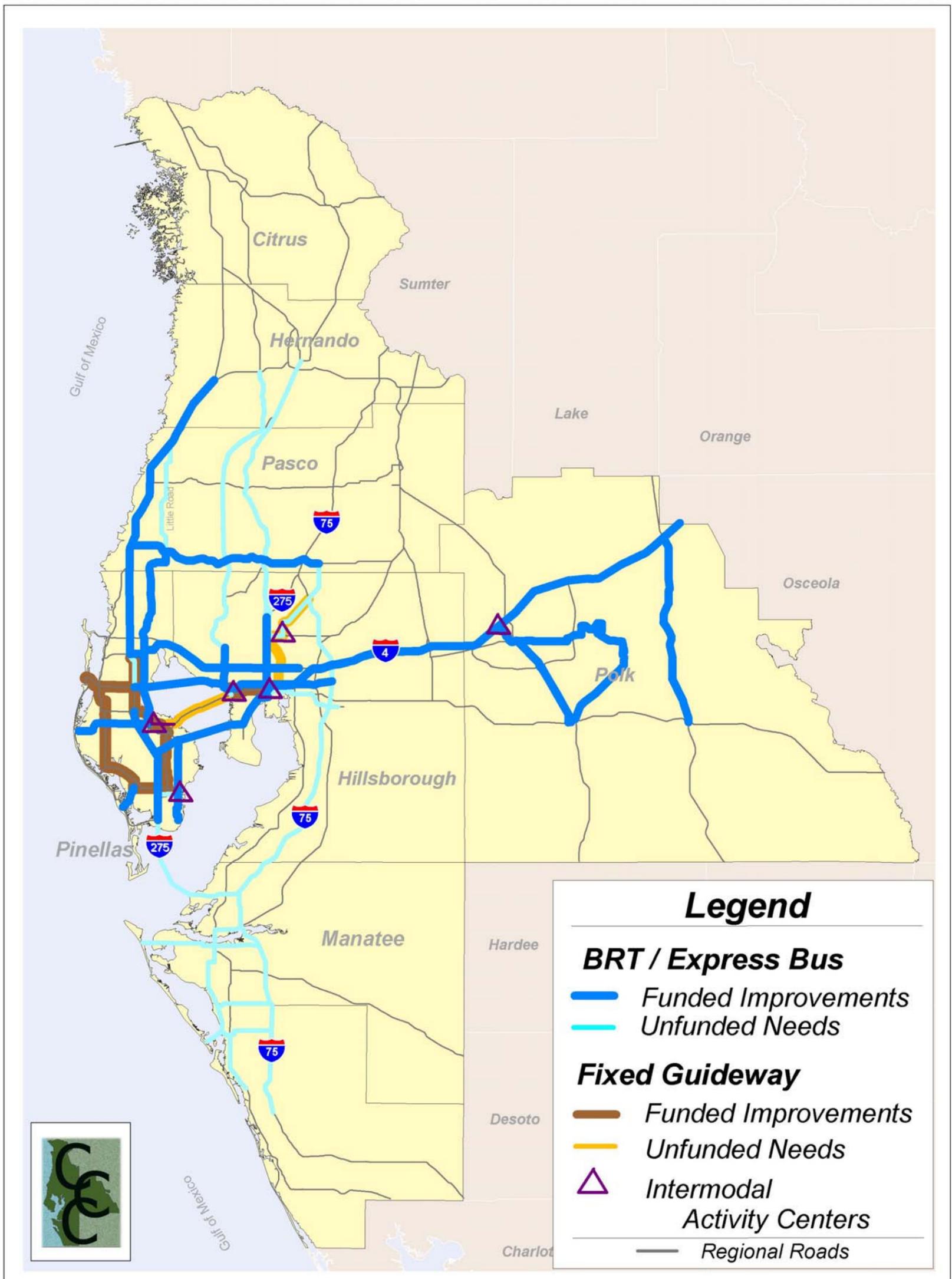
IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

The WCF Needs Assessment significantly increases the number of regional routes from what is available today. This impacts not only transit operations, but raises governance, funding and planning and development questions that need to be addressed. Attendees at a Regional Transit Roundtable meeting on August 6, 2004 were asked to identify what they thought were the most important challenges that face regional transit. Their thoughts and comments were:

- Governance

- Lack of courage to lead, need paradigm shift, who takes first step?
- Better vision
- Need change in attitude
- Politics and parochialism
- Increase in public awareness
- Lack of public support (they don't see the benefit)
- Educate the public on transit benefits

Figure 2 – West Central Florida Needs Assessment and Cost Affordable Plan



Notes:

Intermodal centers may be funded in one or more of the activity centers shown on the map pending results of the current Project Development and Environmental Study.

Regional programs that are not mapped include:

- **Region-wide commuter assistance:** customer information and outreach; carpool matching; vanpool, emergency ride home, and telework.
- **ITS/APTS for regional transit:** seamless fare mechanisms; regional data sharing and control center; transit friendly software; interface with highway ITS components and ITS “spot treatments” for transit.

- Operations and service
 - Operational deficiencies, increase cooperation between operators
 - Need regional routes with adequate headways
 - Need seamlessness between systems
 - Better connectivity between tourist facilities and regional activity centers
 - Make transit inviting
- Funding
 - Money – the region is falling behind on roads, need alternatives
- Planning and development
 - Geography and land use, sprawl, lower density than some areas, transit oriented development (TOD) can help
 - Excessive parking at major destinations
 - Highway system needs to support transit and alternatives
 - Is high speed rail coming or not?

These barriers, or “gaps,” between where regional transit is now versus where it will be under the WCF LRTP are summarized below to help set the stage for the Action Plan.

- **Governance** – While the WCF Needs Assessment and Cost Affordable Plan provide a detailed list of regional transit improvements, neither provides clear direction about who will direct the development and operations of regional transit. The governance barriers raised at the Roundtable discussion indicated a need for a leader to “take the first step” by creating a vision to overcome politics and parochialism and to educate the public about the benefits of regional transit. *Who is in the best position to take on such a leadership role and what initial steps should they take to move forward?*
- **Operations** – Nearly all of the operational barriers noted at the Roundtable discussion involved improving connectivity. The regional routes in the Needs Assessment do just that but they operate within the service areas of two or more transit operators. *Who should take responsibility for and fund such routes?* Just as importantly, the Roundtable discussion recognizes the unique mission of regional service differs from the primary mission of service currently operated in the region, with much more emphasis on attracting riders who have other options. *How does this unique mission influence regional operations and how will it influence existing operations?*

- **Funding** – The differences between the Needs Assessment and Cost Affordable Plan reflect the shortfall of revenues available for transit. If the region can find transportation funding above and beyond existing sources, then more of the unfunded Needs Assessment projects can be completed. Funding is an issue for transit at all levels, but the funding issue for regional transit has several unique challenges. *First, because it operates across local political boundaries, what is a fair way for localities to contribute? Second, because of the differing mission of regional transit, should the funding sources be different?* For instance, should such service depend more on generating revenues through fares paid by those who use the service?
- **Planning and development** – Many of the regional transit improvements in the Needs Assessment and Cost Affordable Plan require significant capital and operational funding that will come from a variety of sources, including fare box receipts. Higher ridership per revenue mile provided will help ease the funding strains, and more riders can be attracted if land development patterns around stations are transit oriented. *How can development patterns be oriented to transit around regional stations and what can the region and localities do to promote such patterns?* Furthermore, transit becomes an attractive option if routes are direct and fast, which requires transit operating out of the congested traffic stream. One way of minimizing the cost of such improvements is incorporating transit lanes into roadway improvement projects. *What are the opportunities for creating a transit envelope within roadway alignments along the transit corridors in the region?*

DIMENSIONS OF GAPS

The “gap analysis” and discussions with the Regional Transit Committee identify the regional transit issues this Action Plan must address. The dimensions of the gaps are presented first, leading to recommendations about how best to address the gaps.

GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

As noted above, there are currently a number of transit agencies providing service within the region and, because of the limited overlap in service, there is not a compelling reason for the agencies to coordinate in more than a limited way. With the introduction of routes that provide connectivity among the service areas, the need for **coordination and management** will have to expand beyond where it is today. Furthermore, there will be a need for **clear regional direction** because of the fundamental differences between the missions of regional versus local transit.

COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT

Each transit agency in the region has its own management structure, financial system and territory, and each operates its routes according to a logic that has been fine tuned to address local needs with limited resources over the years. Superimposing a new service and operations logic that alters both the primary mission and existing operations of agencies is not an easy task. As noted by the Transit Roundtable, it will need a concerted and focused effort that requires both policy and, most likely, day-to-day management changes. The fundamental coordination issues to address include:

- **Who is responsible for operating regional routes?** – Regional routes will operate within two or more service areas so there will be questions about who is responsible for each route. Should one agency operate regional routes and coordinate with others? Should agencies jointly operate regional routes? Should a third entity operate the routes and coordinate with others? Or, should there be a combination of agreements, each based on the situation at hand?
- **How will fares be collected and allocated?** –To a large extent, the answer to the fare collection question depends on how operational questions are answered. For example, if an agency is solely responsible for operating a route, it should also be responsible for collecting and keeping revenues.
- **How will regional routes interface with existing routes?** – The answer to this question depends on the location and nature of the regional route. As each regional route is developed, agencies will have to coordinate with each other to create the most effective interface possible regardless of who takes operational responsibility.

CLEAR REGIONAL MISSION

Each existing transit agency in the region is guided by a set of policy directives from its governing board, and the overarching mission for each is to maximize accessibility for those without a car. Attracting those with other options is a secondary goal, but clearly not the primary focus for how and where service is provided.

While the need to provide accessibility for “captive” riders is a consideration at the regional level, it is difficult to make a strong case that regional connections are essential when nearly all necessary travel destinations, such as jobs, shopping and services, are available within each transit agency’s service area. The exception is providing captive riders an opportunity to seek jobs elsewhere in the region, but even this is of marginal benefit when the commute by transit can take hours.

Thus, regional fixed route transit service, as envisioned in the WCF LRTP, is fulfilling a different mission: to provide travel options for choice riders in an effort to shift travelers out of cars to help reduce congestion on regional roads and improve the region's air quality. In order to accomplish this mission, the focus shifts from maximizing accessibility to maximizing mobility. Greater mobility means regional routes must be able to effectively compete with auto travel by bypassing roadway congestion, providing direct service with few, if any, transfers and limiting stops. This has implications beyond operations; it requires major shifts in how both the transportation system and land uses are planned and developed. It will also take major funding commitments. In sum, a differing mission significantly influences governance, operations, funding and planning and development.

OPERATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The vision and mission of regional transit versus the primary mission of local transit creates a number of operational dilemmas because operators must make trade-offs given limited funding. Those trade-offs include:

- **The location of routes** – Service oriented to a captive market will locate routes in areas with high concentrations of low income and elderly households. It will also seek to serve as many destinations as possible to maximize accessibility, which results in routes that extend coverage at the expense of convenience. Service oriented to choice riders must be more focused, creating a fundamental difference in the approach to transit routing.
- **Span of service** – Both captive and choice markets prefer longer service periods, but a longer span of service is more of a necessity for captive riders. Choice riders primarily rely on transit for the morning and evening commute to work. Because they have options beyond commute times, they are more willing to sacrifice a longer span of service in exchange for other service improvements.
- **Frequency of service** – Not by choice, captive riders arrange their daily schedules according to transit schedules. Because choice riders have options, transit must be readily available, which means headways must decrease. Shifting resources to reduce headways reduces the area served and limits accessibility for captive riders.
- **Route operations** – Again, choice riders will not choose transit if travel times are considerably slower than by auto, which means routes must avoid traffic congestion and limit stops. This requires routes operating within their own right of way. Developing such a transit guideway is an expensive proposition that will divert resources.

- **The “image” of service** – Rightly or wrongly, many travelers with a choice decide not to use transit because of negative perceptions of transit, such as a lack of cleanliness and comfort. To overcome this perception, the quality of transit vehicles and stops must be upgraded, and a unique identity created, which will divert resources.
- **The context for transit** – transit currently operates in a transportation system and urban development pattern that is purposely designed to accommodate automobiles. Buses run on roadways with no different status than cars even though buses are carrying more passengers. The areas around bus stops are designed for easy access to parked cars, not stops, so transit riders have to walk further (usually through parking lots) to get to their eventual destinations. Creating a transit context rather than auto context must be the top priority in transit corridors during corridor planning and design and development review in order to make transit a viable option for choice riders. Details of how to do this are provided below.

These differences can divide agencies and create friction because they force decisions about how to use limited resources to operate the system.

FUNDING CONSIDERATIONS

There are two key funding questions, *who provides the funding and where does the money come from?* The “who” question relates to the fare discussion above; who funds regional routes and service will depend mostly on who takes responsibility for the routes. The more daunting is the where question. Given the poor performance of regional transit in the past, it is doubtful whether any of the transit agencies in the region will be willing to shift already meager resources to underperforming service.

The WCF Cost Feasible Plan has partially answered the where question. The bulk of the total cost of the Cost Feasible Plan is for constructing and implementing the PMI, which serves only Pinellas County and will receive its local funding share only from Pinellas County. Another large share of the funding is for the bus rapid transit routes in Hillsborough County, which serve and are funded by the county. These improvements are deemed regional because their expense is high relative to other transit service and because their focus is on attracting choice riders, but their scope is not truly regional. Taking these improvements out of the Cost Feasible Plan results in very little funding for regional projects.

The Needs Assessment does include regional fixed guideway/BRT routes, such as an extension of the PMI fixed guideway across Tampa Bay into Hillsborough County to

connect it with BRT and potential fixed guideway route service operating in Hillsborough. With such a connection, the PMI and the BRT corridors will become part of a larger regional system. But the question remains, who will take the lead on such a major investment and, again, where will the money come from?

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

As noted above, the vision and mission of regional transit is attracting choice riders, which requires dense, diverse and well designed development (the “three Ds” of transit oriented development) around transit stations. In this context, well designed does not refer to an architectural aesthetic, rather to properly organizing travel paths and buildings within the station area to enhance the walkability and transit friendliness of places.

There are only a few areas in the Tampa Bay region that have the “three Ds” in place, and all were developed during the pre-automobile, streetcar era. Development patterns in these places may need fine tuning, but wholesale changes are not necessary. Development patterns around other potential station areas will need to be dramatically modified. Most have high density and development diversity; the missing ingredient is proper design.

Promoting proper development patterns around stations is a challenge for transit agencies because they have no jurisdiction over land planning and regulation. Therefore, they must rely on partnerships with local planning commissions and departments to change plans and regulations in ways that provide the needed modifications. As noted above, the very mission of regional transit requires a definitive notion of the plans and regulations for localities to consider as well as the locations of station areas where transit oriented development should take place. The WCF LRTP presents regional transit corridors and potential intermodal center locations for initial guidance regarding station locations, but does not provide guidance about what changes are needed in these areas.

In addition, partnerships with FDOT and localities during roadway improvement projects provide a cost effective opportunity to develop the guideways needed by transit to reduce travel times and avoid traffic congestion. Again, transit agencies should have a definitive notion of expectations for how to incorporate transit envelopes into existing roadways or roadway improvement projects and be aware of where those envelopes should be included.

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Despite the many challenges facing regional transit, there are viable options the region can use to move forward. The following sections present the options and recommend specific actions.

GOVERNANCE OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANIZATIONAL OPTIONS

In large urban areas with successful transit operations, there are two types of organizational models. The most common is a single transit authority responsible for providing all types of service across the entire region. This structure is used in the Washington, Dallas and Denver regions that once had local systems which merged into a single, regional agency. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) illustrates how a single transit authority was formed.

“The Authority was created in 1967 by an Interstate Compact to plan, develop, build, finance and operate a balanced regional transportation system in the National Capital area. Construction of the Metrorail system began in 1969. Four area bus systems were acquired in 1973. The first phase of Metrorail began operation in 1976. The final leg of the original 103-mile rail network was completed in early 2001.”

The second model is a tiered structure, with a regional authority providing guidance to sub-authorities. The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) in Chicago illustrates how such a model was formed and operates today.

“The RTA was established in 1974 to oversee local transportation operators in the six-county Chicago metropolitan area. The RTA's primary responsibility became financial and budget oversight of CTA, Metra and Pace. The RTA also was given responsibility for regional transit planning issues. The RTA's oversight responsibility is guided by the RTA's Board of Directors, who approve an annual budget and two-year financial plan. The Board consists of 12 members and a chairman appointed from the six-county region. The RTA Board also is required annually to review and approve a five-year capital plan, which is a blueprint of the capital activities to be funded by the RTA and executed by the CTA, Metra, and Pace.”

“CTA, Metra and Pace are each led by a Board of Directors which determines levels of service, fares and operational policies. The CTA is governed by the

Chicago Transit Board whose seven members are appointed by the Mayor of Chicago and the governor. Metra's Board consists of seven members appointed by the region's county boards and the Mayor of Chicago. Pace is governed by a 12-member Board made up of current and former suburban village presidents and mayors.”

Given the strong tradition of transit agencies in the Tampa Bay region, particularly PSTA and HARTline, it is unlikely that the first organizational model will be politically acceptable. The Chicago model or a variation of this tiered structure is a more likely option for the region.

LEADERSHIP OPTIONS

Because regional transit will be a public endeavor that relies primarily on public funding, accountability to elected officials in the region is necessary. Representation on the policy board must include elected officials from each of the counties in the region. This need for multi-county representation precludes any of the existing transit agencies from becoming the policy board for the region.

The West Central Florida MPO Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC) is an existing regional body that could oversee regional transit, but the group currently focuses on planning, and would have to expand its focus to include transit operations. Another option is the Florida High Speed Rail Commission established by the state legislature after Florida voters approved a constitutional amendment to build high speed rail between the major cities in Florida. The fate of high speed rail and the Commission is now unclear because of a recent vote to rescind the amendment, and the Commission's scope (statewide) and mission (building high speed rail) are not consistent with providing regional transit in the Tampa Bay region, therefore this does not appear to be a feasible option.

The most obvious option is the Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority established by the Florida Legislature in the late 1990s to oversee the development of commuter rail in the region. Since its inception, the role of the Authority was expanded to include ferry services as well, not just commuter rail, and its name was changed accordingly. The Authority does not have taxing powers, but can issue revenue bonds to generate funding for improvements. The Authority has not been active over the past few years, primarily because of a lack of regional transit initiatives and, more importantly, a clear vision and mission.

The final option is creating a new policy body, yet its scope and mission would overlap considerably with the Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority and it is not clear how such a policy board would fare any differently than the Authority.

STAFFING OPTIONS

For the Authority to be effective in exerting leadership, professional staffing support will be needed. There are several options available: either relying on staff from other agencies, much like the CCC currently does, hiring full or part time staff, or using consulting services. Of the three options, relying on agency staff is recommended because of the limited amount of funding available. If this option is chosen, then it is strongly recommended that senior staff be provided by each of the transit agencies in the region and that one of those staff persons be put in a position of leadership. The leadership role can be rotated among agencies over time to ensure equal representation. The appointed staff director will be responsible for preparing agendas, coordinating the flow of information from the Authority to technical staff and others and ensuring that work products are assigned appropriately and completed as scheduled. As the responsibilities of the Authority increase and funding becomes available, the Authority should hire an independent director.

OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

As noted above, the most politically feasible option for the region is a tiered governance structure with a regional policy board coordinating with local authorities. Under such a structure, the policy board will need to determine how it will oversee the operation of regional routes. The options are:

- **Forming an operator of regional transit** – the regional authority could opt to take on responsibility for operating regional routes. The primary benefit of this option is the ability to ensure the mission for regional transit is met. While local agencies certainly have the wherewithal to meet the mission, there will be a dual focus that may negatively impact regional routes. The primary downside of regional operations is the somewhat duplicative effort of maintaining another level of staffing and management that can add to the overall cost of providing transit regionally. Two levels of operations also require on-going coordination among agencies that may not always go smoothly because of differing missions and other factors.
- **Contracting with each of the local operators** – the primary benefit of contracting with each of the local operators where regional service is provided is taking advantage of existing transit management and operations capabilities. Relying on

local operators could make coordinating regional service less complicated once agreements are reached about how regional service is provided but, as noted above, local agencies will still have to trade-off their local objectives with that of regional agency, which could negatively impact the regional mission.

- **Contracting with a single local operator** – this option combines the first and second options, with one of the local operators taking on all of the operations for regional routes. The advantage of this option is the relative simplicity of implementation; it avoids duplication of management and it puts regional operation under a single management structure. The downside is the dual regional / local focus and, more importantly, determining which local agency will provide the service. The “which agency” question could be a positive if agencies are required to compete to provide the regional service, thereby keeping the selected agency attuned to attaining the regional mission. It could also have a downside of potentially creating the perceptions of a single dominant transit agency, which could have political consequences.
- Private contractor hired by FDOT – FDOT would solicit bids to operate regional service, which may include marketing, management and other administrative aspects in addition to bus drivers and maintenance workers. There are many variations on this concept, and could include private or public contractors.

Contracting regional operations to either a single agency or multiple agencies in the region appears to be the best option in the near term because it does not require as much initial investment of time or money, both of which are scarce at the regional level. Furthermore, it allows the region to ease into regional operations and, should the arrangement not work, this approach allows the regional policy board to take on regional operations if needed. Of the two local contracting options, contracting with each of the operators appears to be the best option initially because it reflects the limited coordination currently occurring and better fits the limited scope of regional routes. As regional routes become more common, the regional authority can opt to contract with a single agency in the region.

Given the third contracting option, it is recommended that the Authority become a party to inter-local agreements for all regional routes and services. Of course, local operators will have to agree to this arrangement and may be more willing to do so if the Authority can bring funding to the table. The inter-local agreements will address how the regional route will achieve the regional mission, possibly through performance standards. They will also address operational specifics, including how funding is apportioned, equipment and personnel are provided, fares are collected, etc.

FUNDING OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As noted above, the most effective way the regional policy board can ensure local operators pay attention to regional routes and serve the regional mission is for the regional authority to bring funding to the table. Local operators simply do not have the financial wherewithal to divert resources in a meaningful way to regional transit.

Transit funding above and beyond existing sources can come from three primary sources, local tax revenues, state funding/grants and federal funding / grants. State and federal funding and grants are normally limited to paying a portion of capital improvement costs with localities picking up the remaining capital costs and all operations expenses. Because most transit service requires operating revenues above and beyond fare box receipts, local funding is necessary for operations.

Sales and gasoline taxes are the two most likely revenue sources for transit, with sales taxes the only real option of generating the levels of revenues needed for fixed guideway or bus rapid transit. Nearly all large regional systems with fixed guideway service rely on sales taxes to provide a constant and sufficient revenue stream for both capital and operational expenses.

In Florida, sales tax increases must be approved by voter referendum. Pennies can be added to gas tax with a majority vote of a county commission, but the amount of total revenue generated is not normally sufficient for major transit projects. The challenge in the Tampa Bay region is getting each of the counties to pass such a tax increase multilaterally with either all or a portion of the tax increase devoted to regional transit.

Getting regional agreement on local funding is extremely important. If Pinellas County unilaterally passes an additional penny sales tax for transit, as is contemplated for the PMI, then it would be difficult to make a case that any of that revenue should be diverted to regional improvements. If both Pinellas and Hillsborough raise a penny, then it is much easier to make a case for diverting some of that money to build and operate a connection between the fixed guideway improvements contemplated in each county. This concept can be expanded to any counties in the region that decide to raise taxes for transit improvements.

But public approval for raising taxes to pay for transit, much less regional transit, is a difficult task requiring a clear and convincing case for the benefits of regional routes. The region is not in a good position now to make such a case, but that does not mean that the groundwork should not get started now.

While raising the local sales tax is the only realistic option for building a system oriented to choice riders, there are other funding sources that can minimize the amount of money needed from the sales tax, such as:

- Piggy-backing fixed guideway/BRT improvements on roadway improvement projects, such as incorporating bus bypass lanes into intersection improvements or adding a bus only lane for the entire length of the improvement.
- Taking advantage of existing Intelligent Transportation Systems or proposed improvements to piggy-back transit oriented features, such as signal prioritization for buses, or incorporating transit schedules into traveler information
- Seeking federal and state funding, such as Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts funding that can pay up to 50 percent of the total capital costs.
- Leverage improvements from land developers through impact fees, concurrency or other exactions. This would require changes to existing systems, but those changes are supported by Florida Statutes. Furthermore, the region would have to work with local agencies to incorporate such provisions into their land development regulations.
- Seeking private and public partnerships, such as working with Amtrak or Greyhound to provide commuter rail service.

The most likely source of non-local funding for regional transit will come from the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is committed to devoting a large portion of its available funding to developing and maintaining the SIS, including improvements to regional transit on the SIS. For example, SIS funding could be used to connect local choice-oriented transit routes planned in the region, such as the fixed guideway route in the WCF Needs Assessment that connects the fixed guideway system in Pinellas and BRT corridors in Hillsborough. The key to SIS funding is identifying the state-wide and regional need of such regional transit projects.

Laying the groundwork for local sales tax funding will require paying attention to the other funding source opportunities listed above, particularly those that can be tapped into immediately, such as funding related to planning and developing the transit element of the SIS. Other less likely short term possibilities include raising local gas taxes or diverting existing local funding to regional transit. Again, these options will require a clear statement of need and benefit in order to gain political support.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

As noted above, fundamental changes in development patterns around transit stations and how roadway improvements are made in regional transit corridors are needed to make regional transit feasible. The regional authority will need to partner with local governments to modify local plans and land use regulations. This partnership will benefit if the regional authority takes the initiative to provide local governments with information regarding where transit oriented development should take place as well as providing model plans and regulations for the TOD areas. It is recommended that the regional authority provide the funding for a locality or MPO to conduct a study of one of the regional transit corridors identified in the WCF LRTP to provide specifics for how development patterns in the corridor can be modified to be more transit supportive. The benefits of this approach are twofold: plans and guidelines from this initial work can be used in other corridors, and it provides tangible evidence that the regional authority is moving forward toward its vision.

The same approach can be used to demonstrate how transit can be incorporated into road improvement projects. A roadway planning and design project in one of the regional transit corridors can be modified to include a transit envelop as well as other needed transit features. Preferably, the land use and roadway planning and development projects can occur in the same corridor to illustrate the overall concept.

Funding for the groundwork land use and roadway planning projects can come from a number of sources, but the most logical sources are the MPOs in the region and FDOT District's 1 and 7.

ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

A meeting was held with the CCC's Transit Subcommittee on November 5, 2004 to discuss the gap issues noted above and others affecting this Action Plan as well as to explore short and long range opportunities for implementing the Needs Assessment. The discussion provided additional action steps the region can take and included:

- **Expanding and normalizing regional van and car pooling programs** – Currently, there are two agencies providing van and car pooling services in the WCF region, Bay Area Commuter Services and Sarasota/Manatee Commuter Assistance Program. The two agencies currently coordinate, but will need to normalize their operations so that operations can occur regionally. Initial discussions regarding normalizing operations should lead to agreements about program policies at the regional level and financing regional operations.

- **Greater reliance and use of ITS** – a regional ITS architecture has been developed by FDOT District 7 for the Tampa Bay region and by FDOT District 1 for the Sarasota/Manatee and the Polk County areas. Improved awareness of the architecture and opportunities for incorporating transit should be explored. Specifically, opportunities for including transit in traffic management, traveler information (including 511 service) and electronic payment should be explored.
- **Focus on expanding/enhancing existing and emerging regional routes** – This recommendation dovetails with the short term governance and operational recommendations above. Currently HARTline and PSTA provide cross-bay routes and have implemented the Intercounty Bus Pass or “Passport” – a fare collection strategy for the routes. Expanding one of the routes east to Brandon or west to downtown Clearwater could be an enhancement that increases ridership. SCAT and MCAT are interlining routes along US 41 to eliminate the transfer at the county line, and recently completed a study that identified additional improvements to make along the corridor to improve service. By working with existing operators, the regional transit authority should explore and exploit similar opportunities.
- **Finding dedicated funding sources for regional transit** – Currently the only dedicated regional transit funding source is revenue bonds that may be issued by the Commuter Transit Authority. Given the Authority’s lack of activity and the inability to back the bonds, this is not a likely funding source. However, as noted above there are several options for finding dedicated sources. In the short term, FDOT’s funding for the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) may provide a substantial source of revenue for planning and developing regional transit projects, especially if the region develops clear regional transit plans and policies. These efforts will help lay the groundwork for justifying additional funding for regional transit.
- **Improving the performance of regional transit** – The lack of ridership on regional routes is not surprising given the comparatively poor travel times of transit relative to autos, which is exacerbated with longer travel distances. If the region is committed to providing regional service, then transit must effectively compete with autos, meaning that regional transit routes must operate wholly or mostly within their own right of way to avoid congestion. Furthermore, transit supportive land uses should be provided around the stations for these regional routes, making it easier for people to access transit. Expanding emergency ride home service also provides a much needed back-up for those using transit and could encourage more to use transit. This performance issue is important because it defines the vision and mission for regional transit, and both are needed to “kick-start” the region’s development of a regional transit system.

- **Better defining coordination and governance of regional transit** – As noted above, regional transit routes do not currently attract much ridership, making it difficult for transit agencies to shift their limited resources to such routes. Without regional routes, there is little need for agencies to coordinate, so there is not much experience with coordination among agencies. There are a host of coordination issues to address with regional routes and service, including who operates and funds the route, who collects fares and how they are allocated equitably among providers, etc. The governance and operations recommendations help answer some of these questions.

TAKING THE FIRST STEPS

Given the governance options available and/or possible, the Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority is well positioned to provide policy direction for regional transit. To move forward, the Authority (or whatever governing body is ultimately responsible for regional transit) will need to focus on moving forward quickly by addressing several key questions in each of the following areas:

- **Establishing leadership** – the WCF MPO CCC and FDOT should quickly agree on who will take the leadership role for regional transit. This Action Plan recommends the Tampa Bay Commuter Authority, but the CCC, another existing entity or a new entity could provide direction. The CCC and FDOT should also provide the leadership group with clear direction regarding its charge. This Action Plan could be part of that direction.
- **Defining a clear mission for regional transit** – The overall direction for regional transit should be established for the appointed leadership group by **formalizing both a vision and mission** for the service. The vision is a concise statement of what regional transit will do; the mission is a statement of how regional transit will accomplish the vision. Both will require complementary goals, objectives and policies that provide clear direction for planning and implementing regional transit. One of the most important policy considerations is how regional transit will coexist with existing transit service in the region. This has been an on-going discussion among planners and operators in the region and it must be addressed as the vision and mission statements are crafted. Clearly, transit routes and services that extend across service areas are regional in scope, but there is also the distinction in the market served by regional versus local transit (choice versus captive riders). Therefore, the region must agree on whether the distinction between regional and local is purely geographic or whether the service orientation dimension is a factor as well. That decision will make all others easier.

- **Taking tangible and visible implementation steps** – There are existing regional routes operated through inter-local agreements between local operators. The Transit Authority should immediately work with those agencies operating regional routes to determine how the Authority can provide financial, operational, coordination support in the short term with an eye on how the coordination will occur over the longer term. Inter-local agreements should be signed to formalize the relationships. The recently adopted WCF LRTP identifies cost affordable regional transit projects. The Transit Authority should work with local MPOs (for funding) and transit operators to **initiate projects in the Cost Affordable Plan**. To ensure that implementation moves forward, the Authority must **hire/contract professional staff** quickly, with funding provided by FDOT or the WCF MPO.
- **Funding** – Without money, regional transit cannot move forward. It is doubtful whether funding for regional transit is available from existing agencies, so other sources are needed. Immediately, the CCC and FDOT should provide the leadership group with funding for professional staff and other operational expenses. The Transit Authority must begin working with the WCF MPOs and others to develop a **strategy for securing dedicated funding** for regional transit service. As noted above, given the cost of regional improvements, the Transit Authority will need to work with FDOT on securing SIS funding and with locals on devoting a portion of their exiting revenues to transit or raising new taxes, most notably sales taxes.
- **Planning and development** – The regional transit improvements in the WCF LRTP will benefit from a reorientation of land development patterns along transit corridors. They will also benefit from incorporating transit envelopes into roadway improvement projects. The Transit Authority should work with FDOT, MPOs and localities on creating policies, procedures and regulations that can ensure these actions are taken. A **pilot corridor planning effort** is recommended to help the Transit Authority and others develop the needed implementation strategies and tools. Furthermore, the Transit Authority should work with FDOT, MPOs and transit operators to develop a five year **Transit Development Plan (TDP)** that provides even more specificity of the actions that will be taken to develop the regional system.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this Regional Transit Action Plan is to recommend those steps the region can take to develop and operate regional transit as envisioned in the West Central Florida Regional 2025 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). The regional transit

improvements in the plan reflect a sizable commitment and will require a governance and operational structure that does not currently exist in the region.

The report begins with the identification of gaps between where the region currently is and where it will be according to the Regional LRTP. Perhaps the most important gap to bridge is defining the mission of regional transit and how it relates to local transit. Transit service can have two distinct functions; one to serve those without a travel choice (captive riders) and the other to serve those with a choice of modes (choice riders). The functional differences influence all aspects of service delivery, from how routes are structured to the look of the transit vehicle and stations. Currently, the primary mission of local operators is providing service for captive riders. Conversely, for a number of reasons, regional transit will focus on choice riders. Therefore, there are fundamental differences in the very nature of local versus regional transit that go beyond crossing service boundaries. Complicating this are the initiatives by some local agencies to expand their mission to provide service to attract choice riders, which will create both internal challenges and coordination issues with the regional mission.

These functional and geographic differences influence governance, operations, funding, and planning and development in the following ways:

- **Governance** – Currently, there is no regional transit agency to coordinate regional transit operations. There is a policy body, the Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority that was established by the Florida Legislature in the 1990s. While there are other regional bodies, including the WCF Chairs Coordinating Committee (CCC), that can provide representative leadership, there is not a compelling reason why the Transit Authority should be replaced. The Authority has not been active in recent years mainly because of the lack of focus, direction and projects. The Transit Authority is in a good position to oversee the development and implementation of the regional transit system envisioned by the WCF Regional LRTP.
- **Operations** – As noted above, there is no single regional operator, rather a number of local transit operators and the service areas are limited to sub-areas in the region. Regional routes cross service area boundaries, creating a need for the coordination of regional and local service. In addition, the fundamental differences in mission noted above also pose operational problems. These differences influence how, when and where service is provided.
- **Funding** – Currently, there are no dedicated funding sources for regional transit. Significant investments in fixed guideway service are needed because transit service must compete with the auto in terms of travel time, cost and convenience.

Further, regional fixed guideway transit will cost even more because of the length of the routes. In nearly all regions with significant investments in fixed guideway routes, sales taxes are used to provide local funding, and this will likely be true in the West Central Florida Region. So ultimately, the Authority will need to lay the ground work for raising sales taxes in some or all of the counties in the region. In the near term, the Authority must find ways to fund the limited work it will do.

- **Planning and Development** – Part of the challenge of successful regional transit is reorienting development patterns and transportation improvement to be transit supportive. Currently, only a few areas in the region have enough development density, diversity and design to generate the levels of ridership needed to make fixed guideway transit service economically feasible. Development densities along regional transit corridors will need to change to create the proper context for transit. Furthermore, roadway improvement projects provide an opportunity for developing right of way envelopes and other design enhancements for transit.

This Action Plan recommends both short and long term steps the Regional Authority can take to address the gaps. Highlights are:

- **Establish and recognize leadership** – As noted above, the Tampa Bay Commuter Transit Authority is in the best position to assume a leadership role for implementing the WCF LRTP and recommendations in this Action Plan. Acknowledgement of that role from the WCF CCC and the Florida Department of Transportation would provide the Authority with assurances that its work should and will move forward.
- **Define the vision and mission** – Once recognized for its leadership, the Authority and other agencies and stakeholders in the region must craft a vision and a mission statement that clearly articulate what regional transit is and how it differs from local transit. From the vision and mission statements, goals, objectives and policies can be developed to provide a policy framework for governing, planning/developing and operating regional transit.
- **Agree on the roles and coordination** – The Authority and local operators must quickly develop inter-local agreements on how existing regional routes will be operated and how proposed routes will planned and developed. The Authority, local policy boards and local transit operators must also reach a long term agreement on how the region will ultimately coordinate regional and local services.
- **Provide short-term funding** – In the short term, the Authority should provide a portion of the funding needed to develop and operate regional routes. This is important to both broker participation among funding-strapped local operators and ensure these routes serve the regional mission as closely as possible. The CCC and FDOT should consider diverting a portion of their funding to the Authority for

this purpose. A portion of the funding could also be used to pay for professional staffing. SIS funding may be an appropriate source for FDOT.

- **Develop a dedicated funding source** – In the long term, the Authority must develop a dedicated funding source for regional transit, with the most likely option being sales taxes. Sales tax increases in Florida must be approved through referendum and the track record of increases for transit is not good. Furthermore, regional transit will require coordinated action with increases passed among some or all of the counties in the region. In order for a sales tax referendum to pass multiple counties, the Regional Transit Authority will have to lay the proper groundwork for the investment.
- **Establish the proper context** – To set the context for regional transit, the Authority should coordinate with local land planning agencies to develop transit-oriented development plans and regulations and with FDOT and localities to demonstrate how road development projects can incorporate transit features. Focusing on one of the regional transit corridors early would provide a demonstration project for how these strategies can be implemented region wide.
- **Take advantage of immediate opportunities** – The Authority should take advantage of several immediate opportunities for regional coordination, such as convening local commuter service agencies to identify how they can plan for and provide coordinated regional service and identifying ways in which transit enhancements can be incorporated into the regional ITS infrastructure.

APPENDIX – COST AFFORDABLE TRANSIT PROJECTS

Appendix: 2025 Regional LRTP Cost Affordable Transit Project Costs

Project Name	Description	Facility	Limits	County	TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS			ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	
					Annual Operating cost (thousands)	Capital Cost (thousands)	Improvements Include	Capital (thousands)	Improvements Include
Bartow to Lakeland	BRT Corridor	US 98 (Bartow Rd)	SR 60A in Bartow to Downtown Lakeland terminal	Polk	Polk: \$60	Polk: \$900	15-30 min hdwy	\$0	
Bruce B Downs Super Express	BRT Corridor*	CR/SR 581 (Bruce B Downs Blvd) Fowler Ave.	SR 56 in Pasco to BRT on Florida Avenue	Hillsborough Pasco`	HART: \$297 PCPT: \$128	HART: 4 buses ⁵ PCPT: 1 bus	60 min hdwy	HART: \$5,585	*P&R's and easy on/off *signal prioritization, stop amenities
Central Ave BRT	BRT Corridor*	Central Avenue	Williams Park in Downtown St. Pete to US 19	Pinellas	PSTA: \$553	PSTA: \$1,200		\$48,589 ¹	
Fourth St BRT	BRT Corridor*	4 th Street North (SR 92(54 th Ave S to Downtown St Pete and Gandy Blvd	Pinellas	PSTA; \$795	PSTA: \$701		\$9,488	
Gandy-Crosstown Super Express	BRT Corridor*	Gandy Blvd, Selmon Crosstown Exwy	US 19 in Pinellas to Downtown Tampa, and Downtown Tampa to Brandon	Hillsborough, Pinellas	HART: \$297	HART: 4 buses ⁵	15-60 min hdwy (combined)	HART: \$5,585	*reduced tolls for bus/HOV *P&R's with easy on/off * signal priority * stop amenities
Gulf to Bay-Columbus BRT	BRT Corridor*	SR 60, Courtney Campbell Cswy, Spruce St/Columbus Ave (parallels I-275 and I-4)	I-75 and Downtown Tampa in Hillsborough to US 19 in Pinellas (continuing to Park St Terminal in Clearwater if no PM)	Hillsborough, Pinellas	HART: &1,003 PSTA: \$738	HART: 3 buses ⁵ PSTA: \$2,400	15 min hdwy on Columbus	HART: \$12,048 for infrastructure , ROW, ITS	*shoulder use to queue-jump * signal priority * far-side stops, bus bays, bus stop amenities
HSR Feeder BRT, Lakeland	BRT Corridor*	To be determined	Downtown Lakeland terminal to HSR Station in I-4 Corridor	Polk	Polk: \$60	Polk: &900	15 min hdwy	\$9,493 ¹	
McMullen Booth – Little BRT	BRT Corridor*	McMullen-Booth Rd (CR 77), Little Rd (CR 1)	Ulmerton Rd in Pinellas to SR 54/Little Road in Pasco	Pinellas, Pasco	PSTA: \$1,607	PSTA: \$6,458		\$16,004	

Project Name	Description	Facility	Limits	County	TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS			ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	
					Annual Operating cost (thousands)	Capital Cost (thousands)	Improvements Include	Capital (thousands)	Improvements Include
PMI Feeder BRT Lines	BRT Corridor*	Corey Cswy (66 th St. N), Tom Stewart Cswy	Gulf Blvd to Tyrone Blvd in Pinellas	Pinellas	PSTA: \$553	PSTA: \$1,200		\$19,154 ¹	
SR 54/56 Express	Express Bus not in BRT Corridor	SR 54 and SR 56	US 19 to CR/SR 581 in Pasco	Pasco	PCPT: \$257	PCPT: 4 buses		\$2,222 ¹	
SR 580 - Hillsborough BRT	BRT Corridor*	SR 580, Hillsborough Ave.	Countryside Mall in Pinellas to 56th St in Hillsborough	Pinellas, Hillsborough	HART: \$910	HART: 2 buses ⁵	20/30 min hdwy on Hillsborough Ave.	HART: \$12,048 for infrastructure, ROW, ITS	* shoulder use to queue-jump * signal prioritization * far-side stops, bus bays, busstop amenities
Ulmerton BRT	BRT Corridor*	Ulmerton Road (SR 688)	Indian Rocks to 40th St in Pinellas	Pinellas	PSTA: \$553	PSTA: \$1,200		PSTA: \$963	
US 19 BRT / Express	BRT Corridor*/ Express Bus	US 19	Express Bus from SR 50 in Hernando to Pinellas, BRT in Pinellas connecting to PMI, Express bus from PMI on Roosevelt Blvd to 54th Ave.	Hernando, Pasco, Pinellas	PCPT: \$869 PSTA: \$738 Hernando: \$85	PCPT: \$4,430 Hernando: 1 bus	\$15,641 ¹		US 19 BRT / Express
US 41 North BRT	BRT Corridor*	Florida Ave and Nebraska Ave (parallels I-275), US 41	Downtown Tampa to Bearss corridor	Hillsborough	HART: \$743	HART: 2 buses ⁵	15-30 min hdwy on Florida Ave. and Nebraska Ave.	HART: \$24,096 for infrastructure, ROW, ITS	* signal prioritization * far-side stops, bus bays, stop amenities

Project Name	Description	Facility	Limits	County	TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS			ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	
					Annual Operating cost (thousands)	Capital Cost (thousands)	Improvements Include	Capital (thousands)	Improvements Include
Veterans BRT	BRT Corridor - Limited Access Hwy**	Veterans Exwy	Westshore Business District in Hillsborough to Suncoast Parkway	Hillsborough	PD&E Study by Turnpike District			Not estimated	* reduced tolls for bus/HOV * P&R's with easy on/off * signal priority * stop amenities
Orlando - Polk Express	Express Bus not in BRT Corridor	I-4	SR 559 in Polk to Walt Disney World	Polk	Polk: \$231 ³	Polk: \$497 ³	60 min hdwy		
Tampa - Plant City - Polk Express	Express Bus not in BRT Corridor	I - 4	Downtown Tampa to Plant City to N Socrum Loop Rd in Polk	Hillsborough, Polk	Polk: \$53	Polk: \$1,200	60 min hdwy		
US 17 Express (Bartow - Winter Haven)	Express Bus not in BRT Corridor	US 17	SR 60A in Bartow to Winter Haven terminal	Polk	Polk: \$55	Polk: \$900			
US 27 Express	Express Bus not in BRT Corridor	US 27	Eagle Ridge Mall to I-4	Polk	Polk: \$85	Polk: \$900			
US 92 Express (Lakeland - Winter Haven)	Express Bus not in BRT Corridor	US 92	Downtown Lakeland terminal to Winter Haven terminal	Polk	Polk: \$72	Polk: \$900			
Tampa Rail - West Leg	Fixed Guideway	Downtown Tampa Cruise Terminals to TIA North Terminal	Extend Streetcar to Whiting Street and study further extension northward.	Hillsborough	THSI: \$65	HART: \$8,470			
Tampa Rail Stations	Fixed Guideway	Downtown Tampa to USF; Downtown Tampa to Westshore	Support for city right-of-way acquisition efforts.	Hillsborough		HART: \$1,000			
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway		Downtown Clearwater to Clearwater Beach	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$1,244	\$64,056 ⁴			

Project Name	Description	Facility	Limits	County	TRANSIT SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS			ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS	
					Annual Operating cost (thousands)	Capital Cost (thousands)	Improvements Include	Capital (thousands)	Improvements Include
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway	SR 60 (Gulf to Bay Blvd) Corridor	Downtown Clearwater to US 19	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$3,687	\$189,906 ⁴			
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway		US 19 & Gulf-to-Bay Blvd to Roosevelt & 28th St	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$3,687	\$189,906 ⁴			
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway		Roosevelt & 28th St to Downtown St Pete	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$8,002	\$412,176 ⁴			
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway	Central Ave Corridor	Downtown St Pete to First Ave S & 66th St S	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$2,477	\$127,604 ⁴			
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway		First Ave S & 66th St S to Tyrone Blvd/ Park St	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$2,477	\$127,604 ⁴			
Pinellas Mobility Initiative (PMI)	Fixed Guideway	US 19 Corridor	US 19 & SR 580 (Countryside Mall) to US 19 & Gulf to Bay Blvd	Pinellas	Pinellas MPO: \$3,326	\$171,345 ⁴			
High Speed Rail	Fixed Guideway	Roosevelt/Ulmer ton, I-275, I-4	Downtown St. Pete, St. Pete Clearwater Airport area to Osceola County Line	Pinellas, Hillsborough	HSRA: \$40 - \$59	HSRA: \$2,212,000 - \$2,464,000			
Downtown Tampa Hub ⁶	Intermodal Center	High Speed Rail, Tampa Rail, Columbus BRT, Crosstown BRT, US 41 North BRT	I-275 Corridor at Downtown Tampa	Hillsborough	PD&E and Design Studies funded by FDOT	HART: \$2,760			
Lakeland District Hub	Intermodal Center	High Speed Rail, HSR Feeder BRT	I - 4 Corridor at SR 539	Polk		Component of High Speed Rail			
Gateway District/ St. Pete-Clearwater Airport Hub ⁶	Intermodal Center	High Speed Rail, PMI, Ulmerton BRT, Fourth St BRT	Roosevelt/Ulmerton/I-275 at St. Pete Clearwater Airport	Pinellas	PD&E and Design Studies funded by FDOT	PSTA: \$2,000			

Region wide Commute Assistance - Customer Information & Outreach, Carpool Matching, Vanpool, Emergency Ride Home, Telework	Program	n/a	Rideshare programs by Bay Area Commuter Services, Sarasota-Manatee MPO, and Transportation Management Associations in St. Petersburg, Tampa, Westshore, and USF		FDOT D-1: ? FDOT D-7: \$700 Hills MPO: \$2,213 Pin MPO: ?	HART: \$5,430 for vanpool vans (federal funds)			
ITS/ APTS for Regional Transit – Seamless fare mechanisms, regional data sharing and control center, transit-friendly software interface with highway ITS components, ITS "spot treatments" for transit	Program	n/a							

* "BRT Corridor" projects include transit prioritization treatments on the roadway, and a mix of express, limited-stop, and/or frequent-stop services as appropriate for the transit market in that corridor.

** "BRT Corridor - Limited Access Hwy" projects include transit prioritization treatments appropriate for limited-access roads, such as easy on/easy off access at Park & Ride lots, or bus use of reinforced shoulders in congested areas.

Notes:

1 - Capital costs for the highway system were developed based on a review of national sources including the *Mass Transit: Bus Rapid Transit Shows Promise* published by the General Accounting Office and *Bus Rapid Transit: Case Studies in Bus Rapid Transit* published by the Transit Cooperative Research Program.

2 - Transit capital and operating costs were developed based on a review of national sources including the *Mass Transit: Bus Rapid Transit Shows Promise* published by the General Accounting Office and *Bus Rapid Transit: Case Studies in Bus Rapid Transit* published by the Transit Cooperative Research Program and information available from local sources such as LYNX in Orlando.

4 - Capital cost for the PMI are from the construction for each segment and proportionate share of the vehicles and the construction program costs based on the construction costs. Operating costs are also based on the proportionate share of the construction costs.

5 - Fleet expansion to support regional and local service improvements is planned by HART using \$8.64 million in federal funding 2010-2025 to acquire 25 diesel and hybrid buses.

6 – Selection of Downtown Tampa and Gateway as preferred intermodal center locations for further study is contingent on acceptance of the Environmental Assessment for the Tampa Bay Intermodal Centers.

