SunTran

RIDING INTO THE FUTURE

SunTran Transit Development Plan

Final Report FY2023 to FY2032

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1. Introduction

Since 1998, SunTran has provided fixed-route service with the sole purpose of providing safe, comfortable, and accessible transit services as a viable means of mobility to the citizens and visitors of Ocala and Marion County. The City of Ocala is the administrative agency for SunTran and has contracted with RATP Dev to perform operational and maintenance activities. SunTran provides fixed-schedule service on seven routes operating on Weekdays and Saturdays with six of the seven routes meeting at the centrally located Downtown Transfer Station.

SunTran has initiated a 10-Year Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update to cover the 10-year horizon plan from FY2023 to FY2032 as required by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) per Florida Administrative Code (FAC) 14-73.001. The TDP supports the development of an effective multimodal transportation system in the City of Ocala and Marion County and serves as the basis for defining public transit needs, which is a prerequisite to receive state funds. The central objective of this effort is to improve transit opportunities and create a robust, multimodal connection experience for the SunTran service area users. The SunTran TDP will provide a roadmap for how to improve and build upon Marion County's transit system over the next 10 years, providing a plan for transit and mobility needs, cost and revenue projections, and community transit goals, objectives, and policies.

The *Riding Into The Future* initiative represents the City of Ocala's efforts toward improving the SunTran system. The key outcome of this TDP will be a community-driven plan that enhances the current system and builds a transit network to meet the needs of current and future users.

1.1 Organization of the Report

This report is organized into eight overall sections:

- **Baseline Conditions**: A review of the City of Ocala and Marion County's trends in population, employment, and socioeconomic variables; analyses of population and employment densities and their relation to transit propensity; analyses of current and future land use; and an analysis of travel patterns.
- **Existing Services and Performance Evaluation:** Provides an overview of the SunTran system, both fixed-route and paratransit services; capital and infrastructure projects; and a summary of other regional transportation providers. The performance evaluation included a trend analysis of service performance, as well as comparisons to selected peer agency fixed-route services.
- **Situation Appraisal:** Considers plans and studies that impact the City of Ocala and Marion County and their potential effects on the development of SunTran's TDP, and details the current successes, opportunities, and barriers that impact the optimal delivery of public transportation services in Ocala.
- **Public Involvement**: Summarizes and incorporates public opinion into the development of goals, objectives, system alternatives, and prioritization.
- **Goals and Objectives:** Assesses SunTran's services, such as how they are developed and implemented, through the review of the agency's existing mission, vision, core values, and goals.
- **Alternatives Development:** Develops service alternatives to meet the current and future needs within the transit service area.

- **Alternatives Evaluation:** Evaluates the proposed alternatives against the goals & objectives, public opinion, and equity, market, and efficiency performance measures.
- **10-Year Plan**: Presents the plan, including estimates of operating/capital expenditures and revenue sources along with the implementation schedule.

1.2 TDP Checklist

The TDP Checklist ensures that the TDP Update meets the requirements set forth by Federal and FDOT guidance. **Table 1-1** provides the checklist for each of the requirements and their locations within the TDP.

Table 1-1 | SunTran TDP Checklist

Public Involvement Process		TDP Section
	FDOT Approved Public Involvement Plan (PIP)	Appendix A
	TDP Project Review Committee Including FDOT, RWB, and MPO	Chapter 5
	TDP Visioning with elected officials/boards	Chapter 5
	Advance Notice for events open to the public	Chapter 5
	Opportunities for public involvement outlined in PIP	Appendix A
	Solicitation of comments from Regional Workforce Board (RWB)	Chapter 5
	Notification to FDOT, RWB, and MPO about public meetings	Chapter 5
	Provision of review opportunities to FDOT, RWB, and MPO	Chapter 5
	Pre-TDP outreach and post-adoption public outreach	Chapter 5
Situational Appraisal		
	Plans and Policy Review	Chapter 4
	Socioeconomic Trends	Chapter 2
	Travel behavior/patterns	Chapter 2
	Land Use	Chapter 2
	Community Feedback	Chapter 5
	Organizational Issues	Chapter 4
	Technology/Innovation	Chapter 4
	Funding	Chapter 9
	Transit-friendly land use and urban design efforts	Chapter 2
	10-Year transit ridership projections	Chapter 7

Agency Vision, Mission, Goals & Objectives Checklist		
	Mission and vision	Chapter 6
	Goals and Objectives	Chapter 6
	Guiding Principles	Chapter 6
	Provision of opportunities for FDOT, RWB, and MPO to review and comment	Chapter 5
Alternatives Development & Evaluation Checklist		
	Documentation of development of transit alternatives	Chapter 8
	Provision of opportunities for FDOT, RWB, and MPO to review and comment	Chapter 5
	Provision of opportunities for public to review and comment	Chapter 5
	Documentation of evaluation of transit alternatives	Chapter 8
10-Year Implementation Plan		
	10-year program of improvements and policies	Chapter 8
	Maps indicating areas to be served and types and levels of service	Chapter 8
	10-year financial plan showing funding sources and expenditures of funds*	Chapter 9
	Provision of opportunities for public to review and comment	Chapter 5
	Provision of opportunities for FDOT, RWB, and MPO to review and comment	Chapter 5
	Documentation of monitoring program to track performance	Chapter 9
	Marketing program	Chapter 8
	Implementation plan with projects and/or services to meet the goals and objectives in the TDP	Chapter 9
	List of unfunded needs	Chapter 9

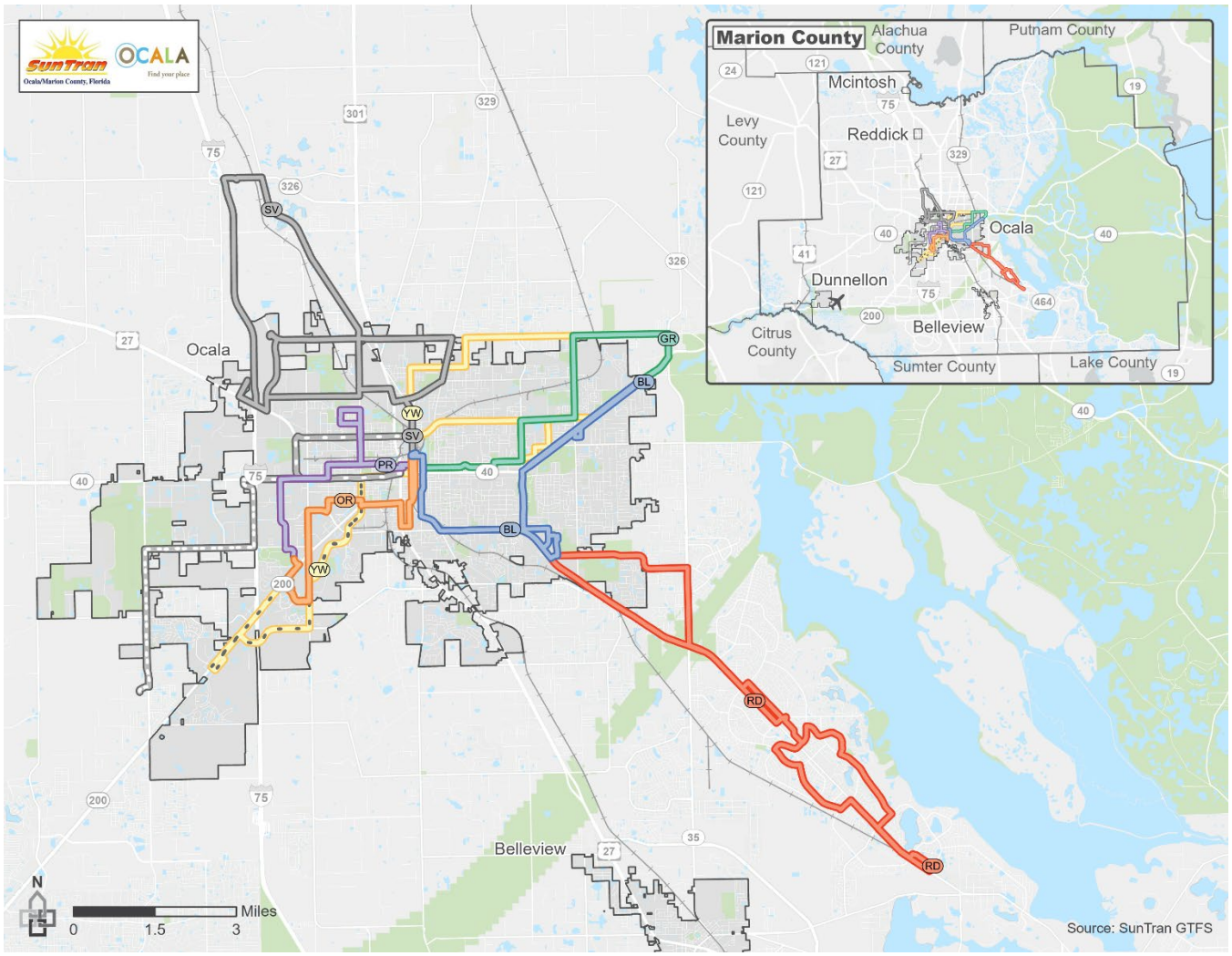
2. Baseline Conditions

The Baseline Conditions chapter reviews the socioeconomic, land use, and travel conditions for the City of Ocala in Marion County, Florida. This analysis examines recent trends in demographic characteristics with special emphasis given to the populations with a higher propensity to use transit. A demographic and spatial analysis identifies the locations where transit is most likely to be successful. This demographic analysis is complemented by a forward-looking examination of changes to land use and a consideration of travel flows in the region. The findings of this Baseline Conditions assessment are complemented by the evaluation of transit services in the Existing Services & Performance Evaluation chapter and further analysis of conditions affecting SunTran's ability to effectively provide transit services in the Situational Appraisal chapter.

2.1 Service Area Overview

SunTran serves the Ocala urbanized area with seven fixed routes and accompanying paratransit services, largely focused on the City of Ocala (**Figure 2-1**). Located in north central Florida, the Ocala urbanized area is located within Marion County, a geography spanning 1,663 square miles. In addition to Ocala, Marion County encompasses the cities of Belleview and Dunnellon and towns of McIntosh and Reddick.

Figure 2-1 | Study Area



2.2 Population and Employment

Addressing transit needs begins with an assessment of regional travel patterns within the region. Population and demographic characteristics provide the foundation for understanding present and future demand for transit services throughout the planning area. The following sections provide an overview of these population and demographic trends in Marion County based on U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates, Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD), and the Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan.

2.2.1 Population Trends

Marion County is home to a growing and increasingly diverse population. Though Florida's recent population growth has outpaced Marion County, from 2015 to 2020, the county added over 23,000 residents across approximately 13,000 households, constituting a 6.9 percent growth (**Table 2-1)**. During this period, the nonwhite population of Marion County grew by over 16,000 residents, accounting for approximately 70 percent of all population growth. **Figure 2-2** depicts 2020 population by Census block.

More recent population figures, published by Applied Geographic Solutions, suggest that this impressive population growth may be underrepresented in the latest ACS release, estimating that Marion County's population surpassed 379,000 residents in 2021.[1]

The Ocala Marion TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan forecasts Marion County's population will continue to grow, projecting a 20.9 percent increase in population from 2020 to 2040 (**Table 2-2**). **Figure 2-3** depicts predicted population growth by transportation analysis zone (TAZ) between 2020 and 2040. The overwhelming majority of population growth is forecasted for areas outside Ocala, with the largest population gains predicted for southwest Marion County.

Table 2-1 | Population Trends

	2015		2020		Percent Change (2015–2020)	
	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida
Total Population	336,811	19,645,772	360,210	21,216,924	6.9%	8.0%
Total Households	132,287	7,300,494	145,863	7,931,313	10.3%	8.6%

Source | US Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates

Table 2-2 | Marion County Population Projections

	2020	2040	Percent Change (2020–2040)
Total Population	356,135	430,584	20.9%

Source | Ocala Marion TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

[1] Applied Geographic Solutions,https://appliedgeographic.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AGS-Estimates-and-Projections-Methodology-2021B.pdf

Figure 2-2 | Marion County Population by Census Block Group, 2020

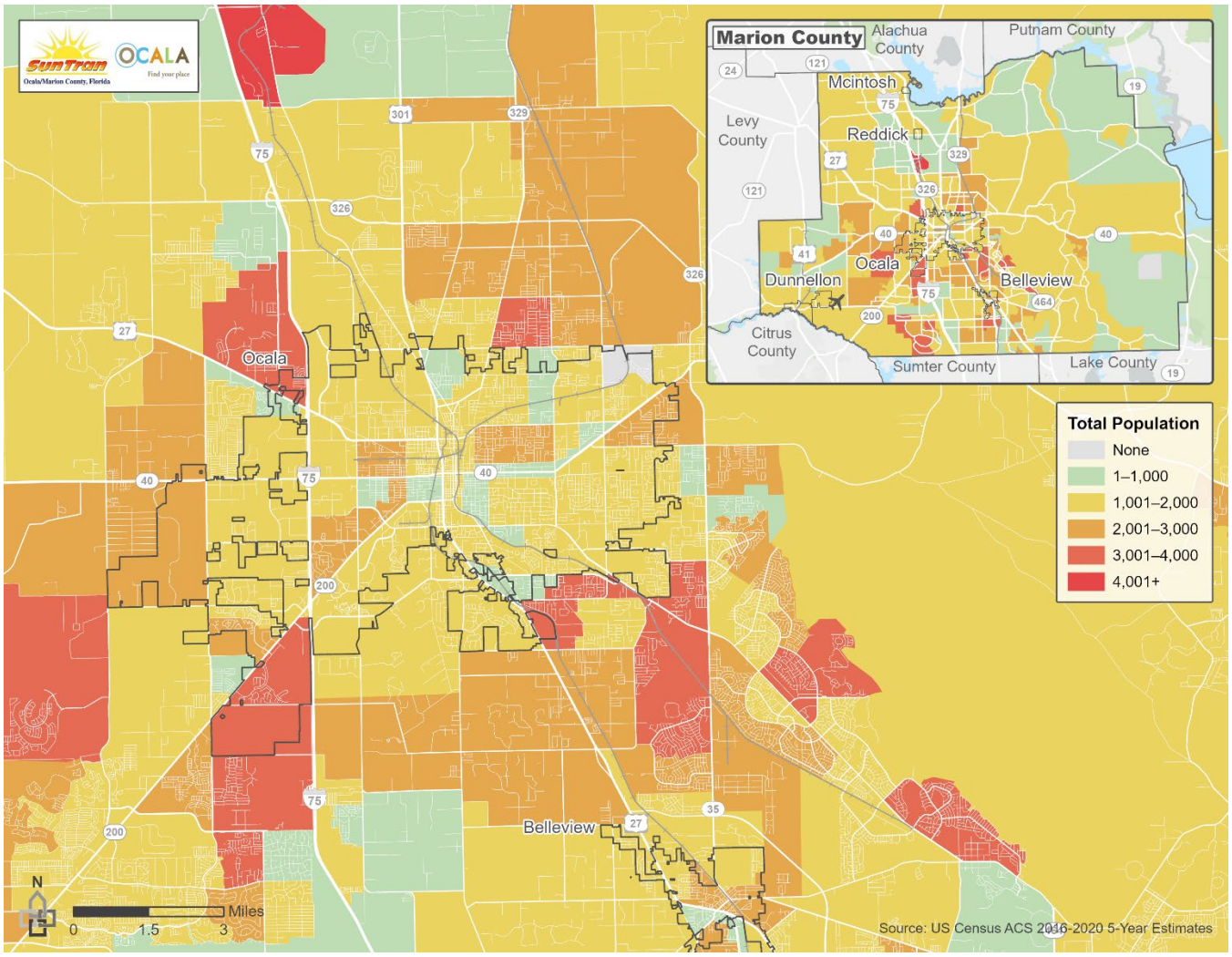
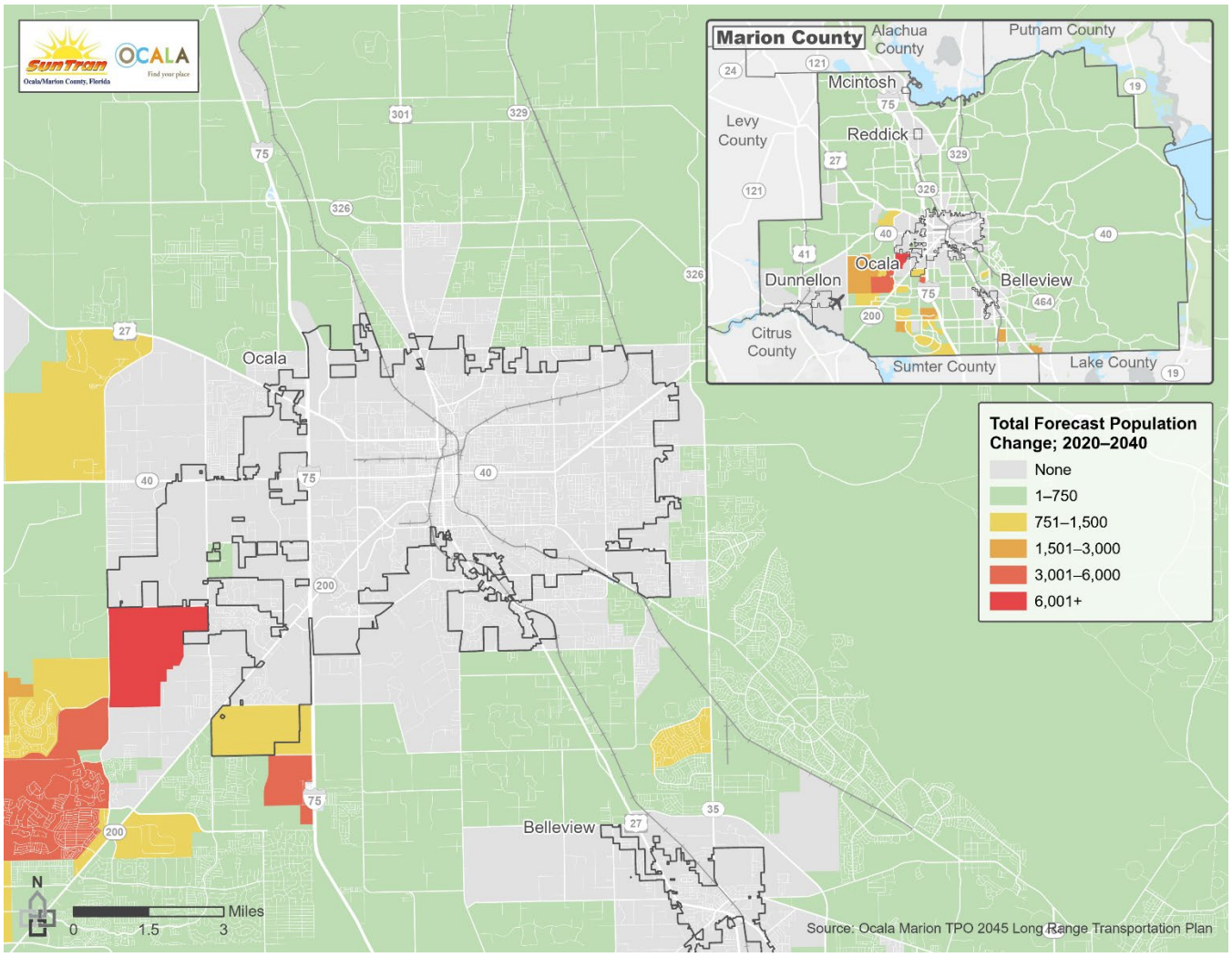


Figure 2-3 | Forecast Population Growth by TAZ, 2020–2040



2.2.2 Employment Trends

From 2015 to 2019, Marion County added over 8,000 jobs. This impressive gain, constituting an 8.3 percent growth, reflects Florida's 10.2 percent growth over the same period, as shown in **Table 2-3**. **Figure 2-4** depicts 2019 employment by Census block.

More recent employment figures, published by Applied Geographic Solutions, suggest that Marion County's job growth may significantly outpace what is reflected in the latest ACS release, estimating that more than 123,000 individuals were employed in the county in 2021.[2]

The Ocala Marion TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan predicts Marion County will continue to add jobs; between 2020 and 2040, a 33.5 percent increase in employment is forecasted to add over 40,000 jobs (**Table 2-4**). **Figure 2-5** depicts predicted job growth by TAZ between 2020 and 2040. Moderate employment growth is forecast for Ocala, notably in the west and southwest. However, the largest employment gains in Marion County are expected north of Belleview, and in and around Marion Oaks.

Table 2-3 | Employment Trends

	2015		2019		Percent Change (2015–2019)	
	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida
Total Jobs	97,258	8,010,018	105,308	8,830,193	8.3%	10.2%

Source | US Census Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics 2015 AND 2019

Table 2-4 | Employment Projections

	2020	2040	Percent Change (2020–2040)
Total Employment	123,059	164,072	33.5%

Source | Ocala Marion TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

[2] Please see the methodology underlying these estimates for more information on how they were developed: https://appliedgeographic.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/AGS-Estimates-and-Projections-Methodology-2021B.pdf

Figure 2-4 | Marion County Jobs by Census Block Group, 2019

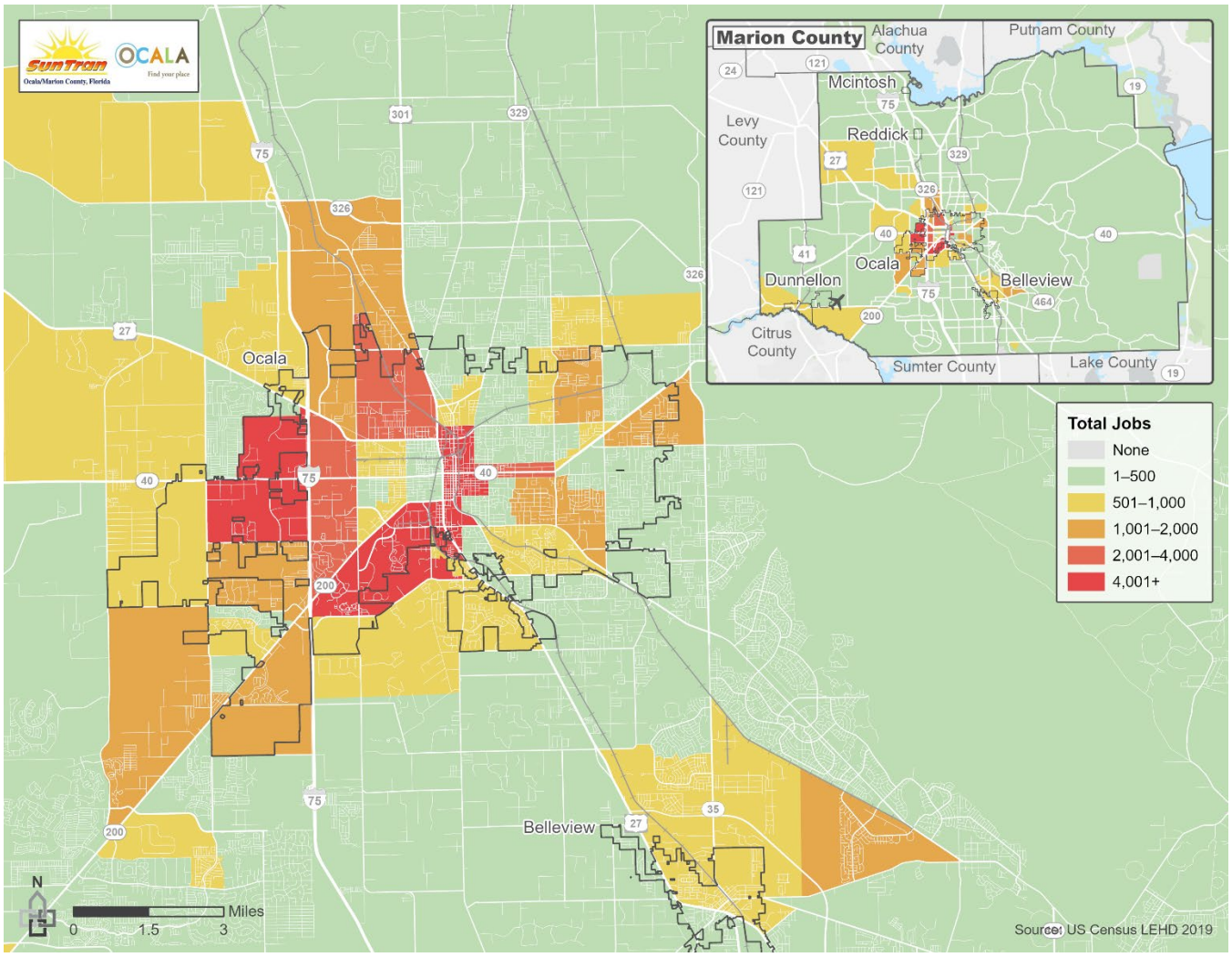
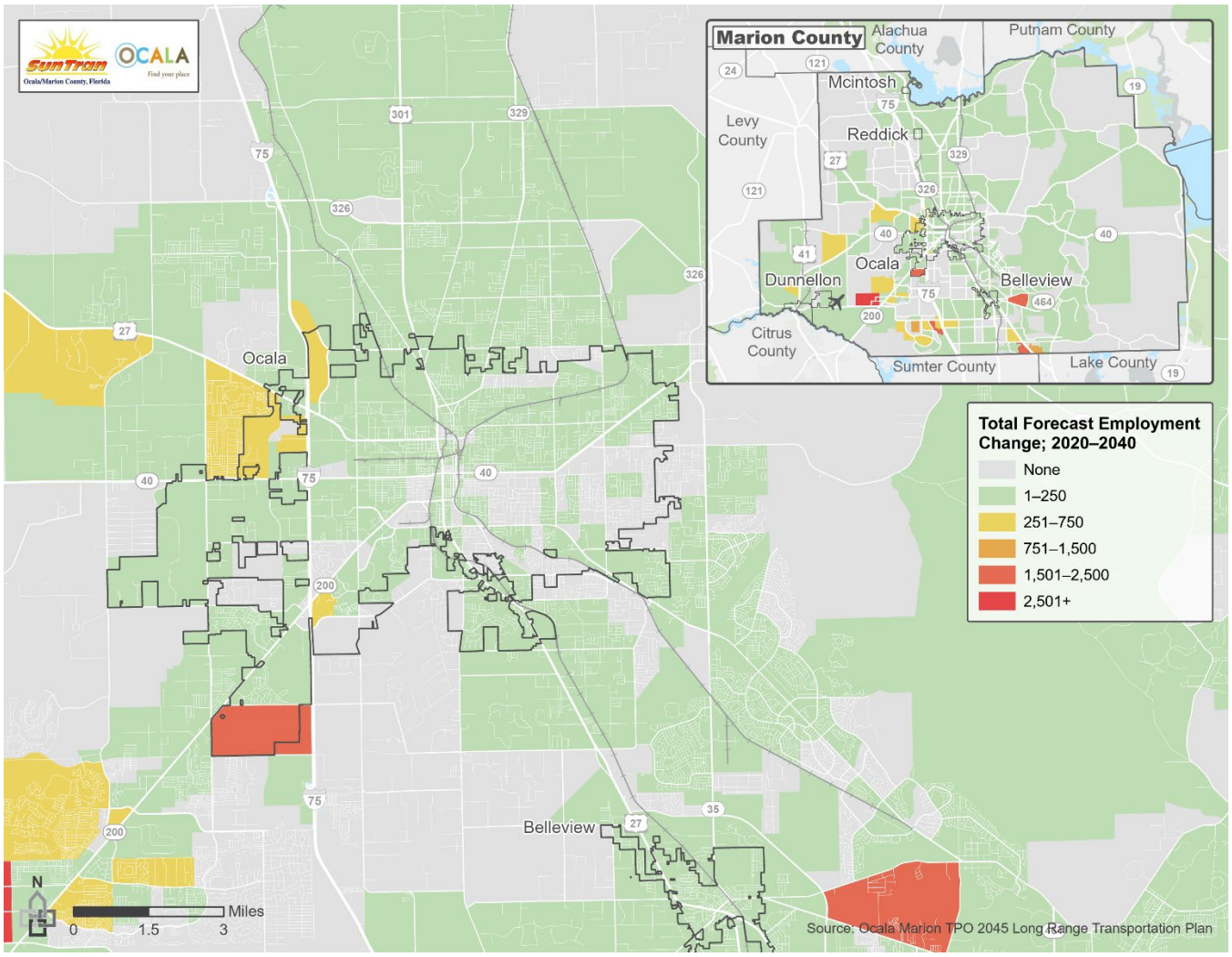


Figure 2-5 | Forecast Employment Growth by TAZ, 2020–2040

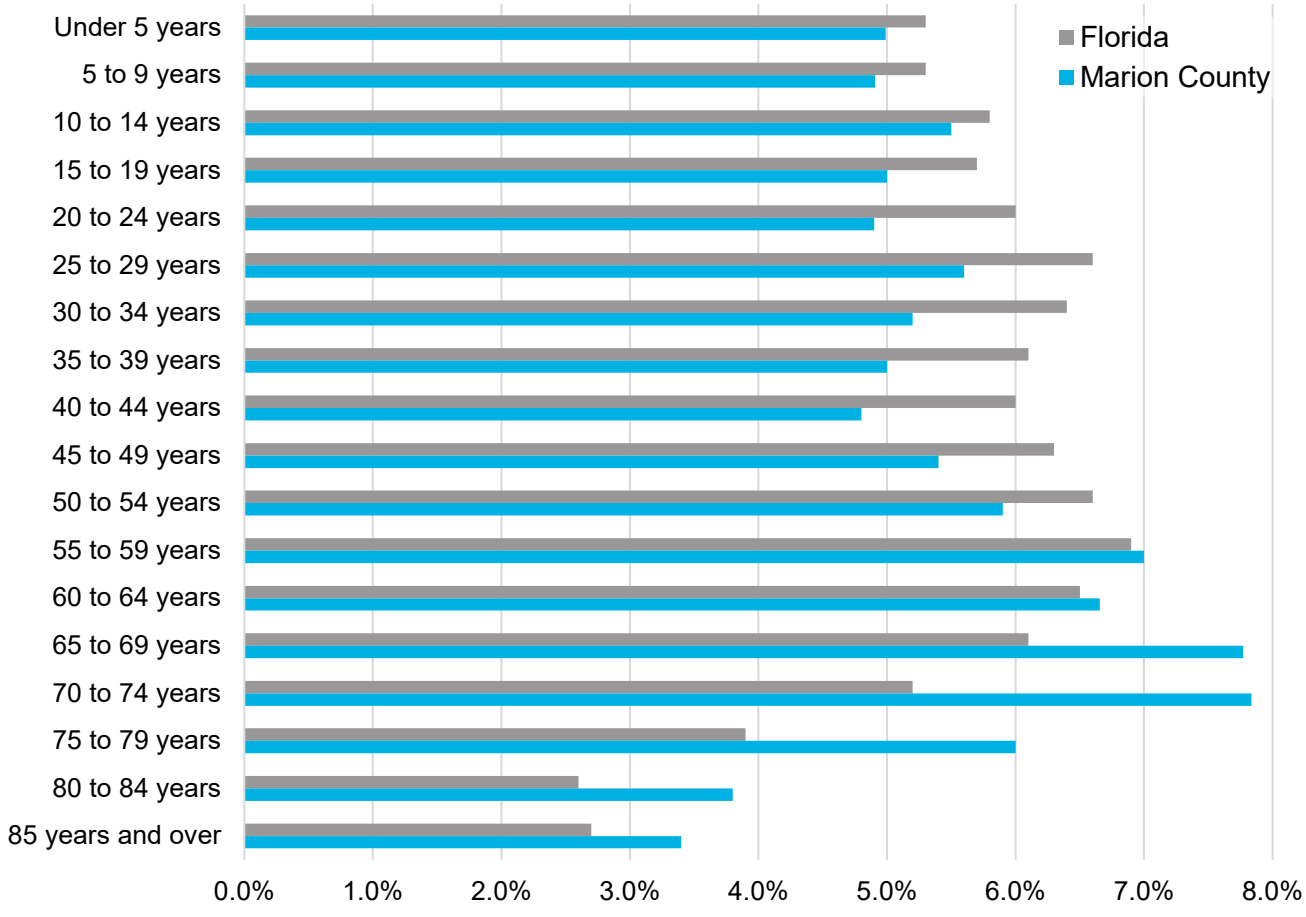


2.2.3 Socioeconomic Trends

Residents' Age

Older residents make up a larger portion of Marion County's residents when compared to Florida as a whole. **Figure 2-6** depicts the age distribution of Marion County and Florida populations. The median age of Marion County residents is 48.7, compared with 42.2 statewide. This trend corresponds with the presence of several retirement communities within the county, most notably The Villages, a Census-designated place spanning Marion, Sumter, and Lake counties.

Figure 2-6 | Residents' Age as a Percent of Total Population, 2020

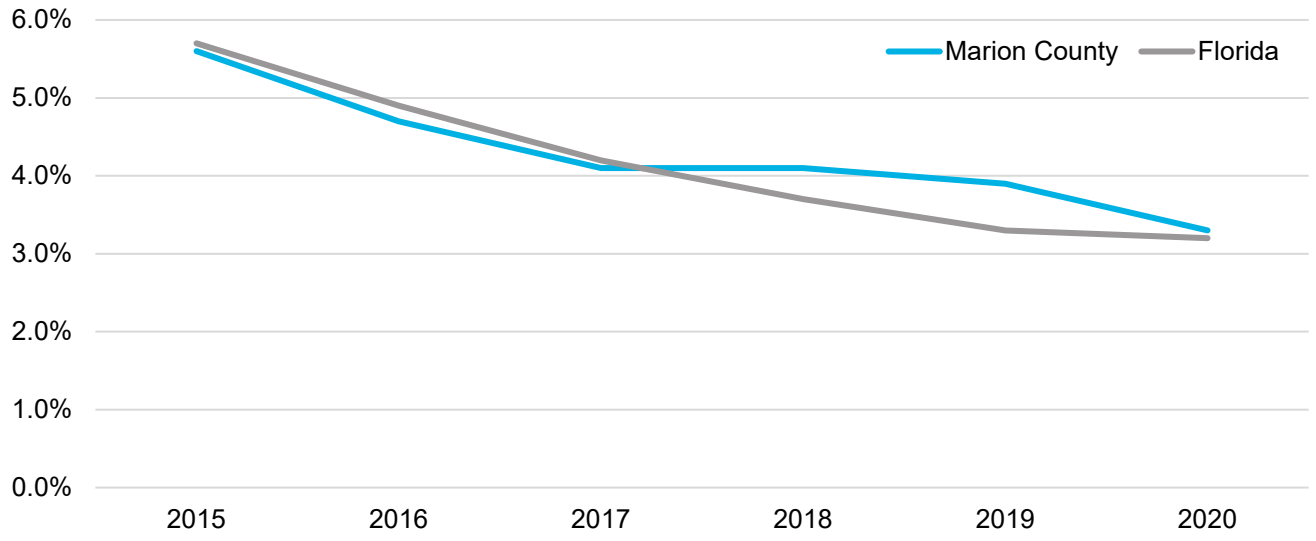


Source | US Census American Community Survey 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates

Unemployment Rate

In both Marion County and Florida, the rate of job growth has outpaced population growth. Reflecting this trend, unemployment declined an estimated 2.3 percent in Marion County and 2.5 percent in Florida between 2015 and 2020. **Figure 2-7** depicts this trend.

Figure 2-7 | Annual Average Unemployment Rate; 2015–2020



Source | US Census American Community Survey 2011-2015, 2012-2016, 2013-2017, 2014-2018, 2015-2019, and 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates

Population Below 150 Percent of Poverty Line

Transit plays a critical role in ensuring transportation equity. Low-income individuals are more likely to rely on transit because as income falls, the cost of owning and operating a private automobile becomes more burdensome. Since disposable income is largely a factor of household size and income, this metric considers household income and the number of members in the household to identify low-income individuals. **Table 2-5** shows the number of residents living in households earning less than 150 percent of the poverty line, a commonly used threshold for identifying low-income individuals, within Marion County and Florida.

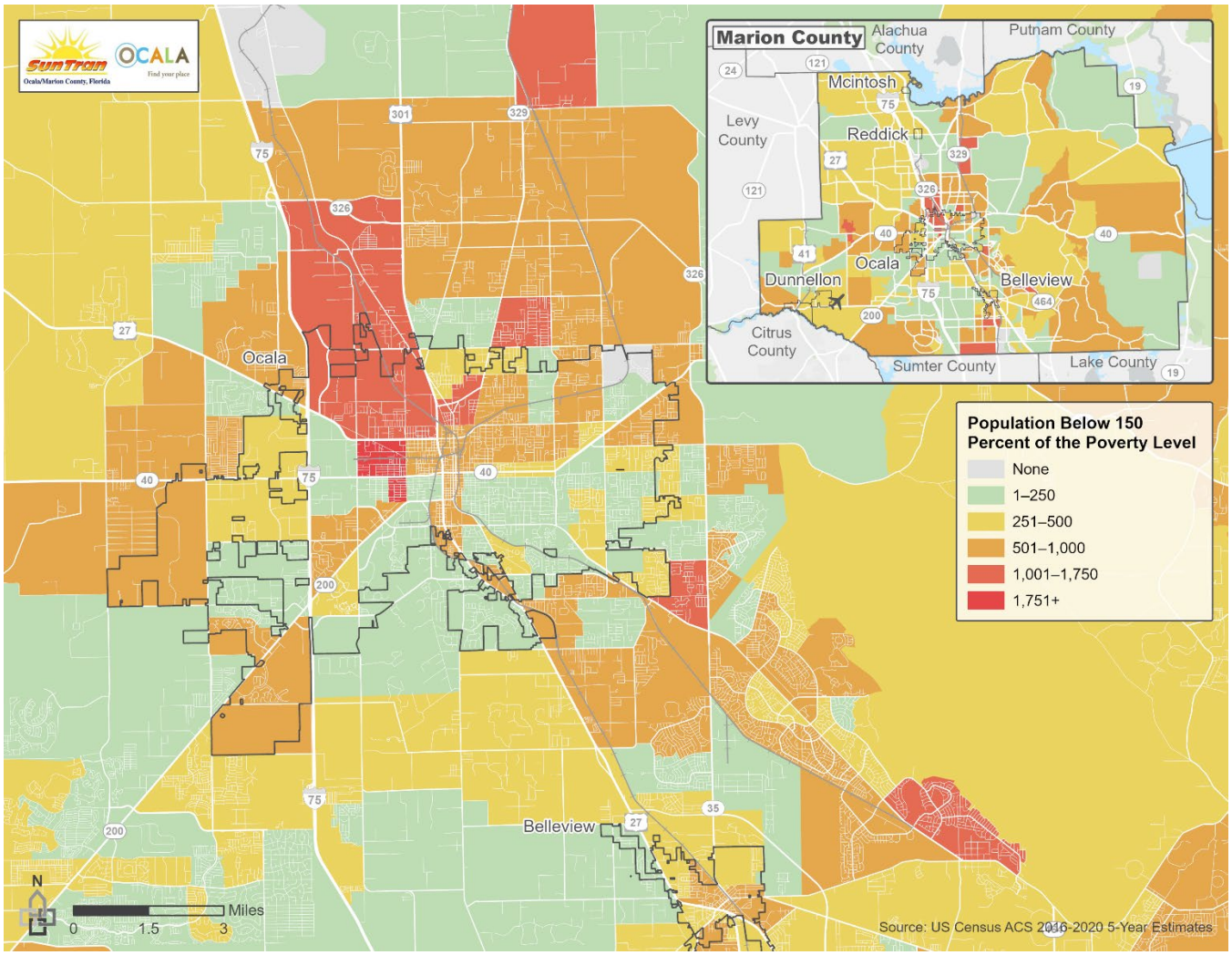
Table 2-5 | Population below 150 percent of the poverty Line

	2015		2020		Percent Change (2014–2019)	
	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida
Total Population below 150% Poverty Line	100,118	5,275,020	92,930	4,749,614	-7.2%	-10.0%
Share of Population below 150% of Poverty Line	29.7%	26.9%	25.8%	22.4%	-3.9%	-4.5%

Source | US Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 and 2016-20 5-Year Estimates

The population of low-income individuals living in Marion County decreased 7.2 percent between 2015 and 2020. **Figure 2-8** depicts the population living in households earning less than 150 percent of the poverty line by Census block. This population is relatively scattered throughout the SunTran service area, larger numbers of low-income individuals reside in West Ocala and Silver Springs Shores.

Figure 2-8 | Population Below 150 Percent of the Poverty Line; 2020



Zero-Car Households

Understanding the quantity and distribution of zero-car households is critical to transit planning, as this population is likely to rely on transit as their primary travel mode, either by choice or due to necessity. **Table 2-6** shows the number of zero- and one-car households in Marion County and Florida.

While the number of zero-car households in Marion County decreased 13.7 percent between 2015 and 2020 (more than double the percent change in Florida), the number of one-car households increased 4.5 percent. **Figure 2-9** depicts zero-car households by Census block; these households exist throughout the county, though larger numbers are found in and around Ocala and Dunnellon. **Figure 2-10** depicts one-car households by Census block; while there are far more of these households, they are more geographically concentrated in and around Ocala.

Table 2-6 | Zero- and One-Car Households

		2015		2020		Percent Change (2015–2020)	
		Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida	Marion County	Florida
Zero-Car Households	Total Households	8,076	516,293	6,971	485,183	-13.7%	-6.0%
	Share of Total	6.1%	7.1%	4.8%	6.1%	-1.3%	-1.0%
One-Car Households	Total Households	60,417	3,022,760	63,158	3,102,212	4.5%	2.6%
	Share of Total	45.7%	41.4%	47.7%	39.1%	2.1%	-2.3%

Source | US Census American Community Survey 2011-2015 and 2016-2020 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2-9 | Zero-Car Households; 2020

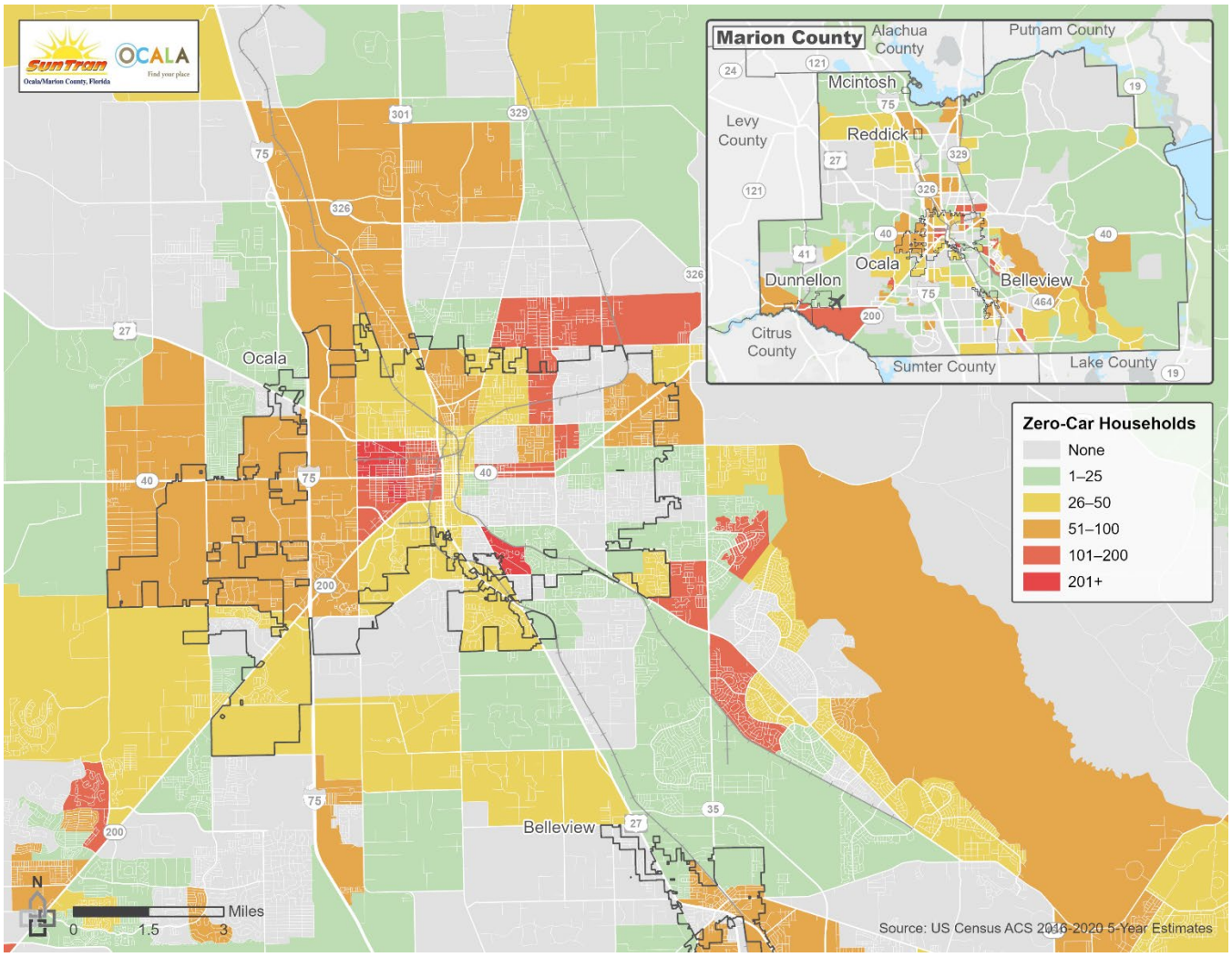
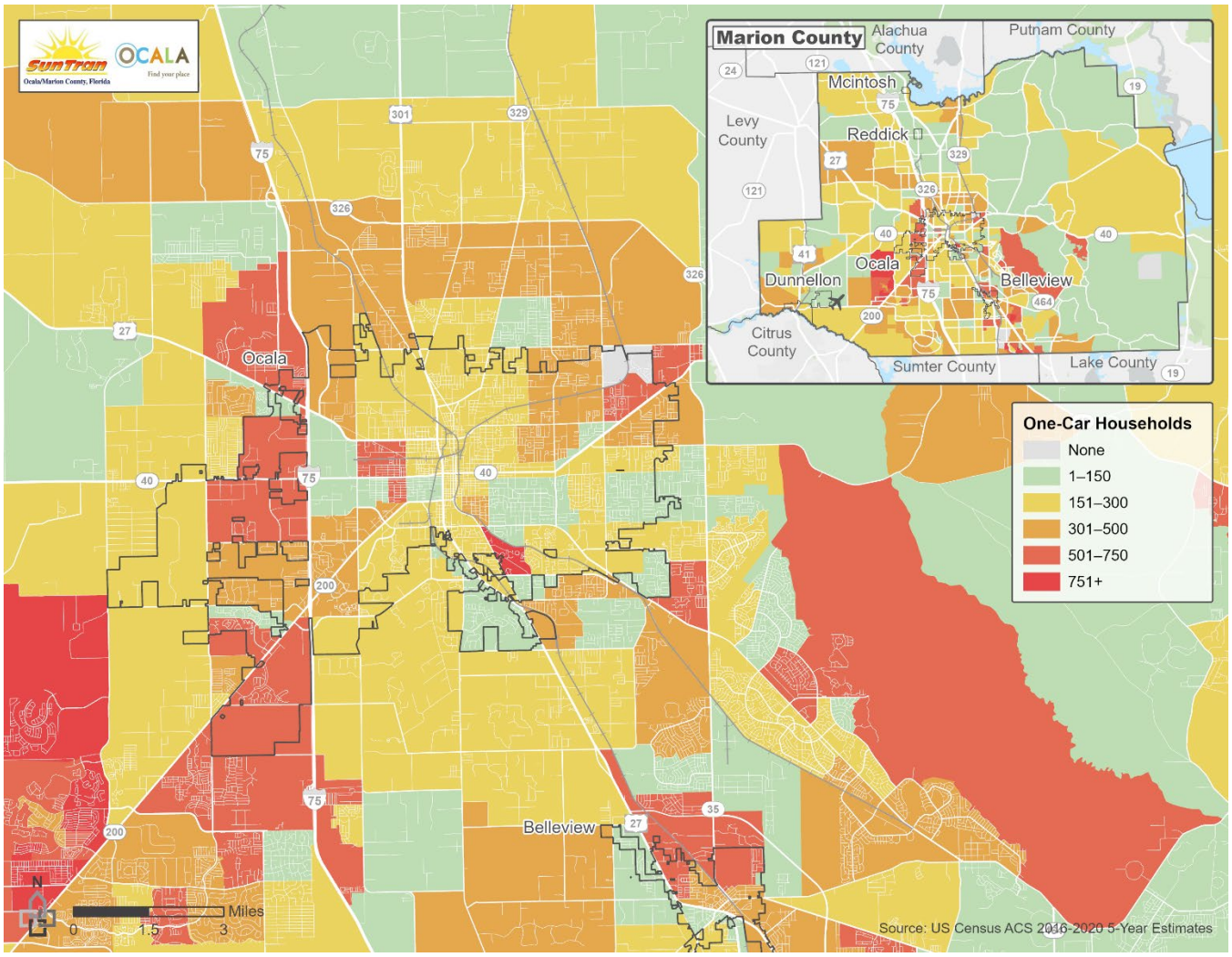


Figure 2-10 | One-Car Households; 2020



2.3 Demographic and Employment Spatial Analysis

2.3.1 Transit Potential

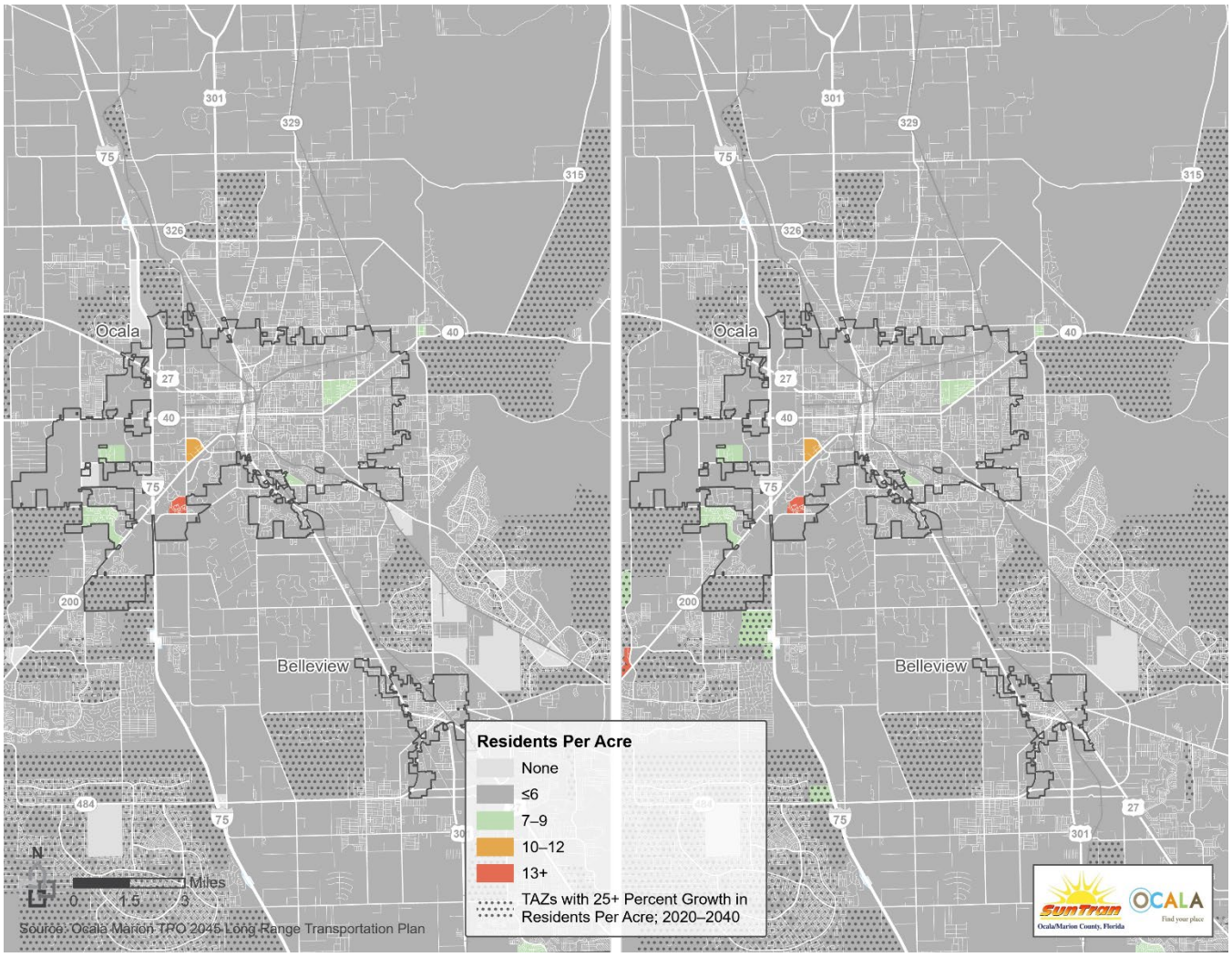
Transit service is most likely to be sustained in areas where significant concentrations of population and employment exist. Combining population and employment densities depicts a measure of transit potential suggesting the overall viability or even level of service of transit service within an area.

Population Density

Most transit riders will access bus routes by walking to a stop; accordingly, the geographic areas served by transit are generally considered to be those within a quarter- or half-mile distance of a bus stop (approximately a 10-minute walk). Denser residential areas have more people living within walking distance of a bus stop, making these stronger markets for transit. According to the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition, densities of three households per acre (approximately six people per acre) can support hourly fixed-route transit service.

Figure 2-11 depicts current (left) and forecast (right) population density by TAZ in SunTran's service area, with TAZs expected to see upwards of 25 percent growth in population density stippled. Transit-supportive population densities (depicted in color) are primarily found in Ocala, though some areas southwest of the city also feature population densities high enough to support hourly fixed-route transit service.

Figure 2-11 | Population Density; 2020 (Left) and 2040 (Right)

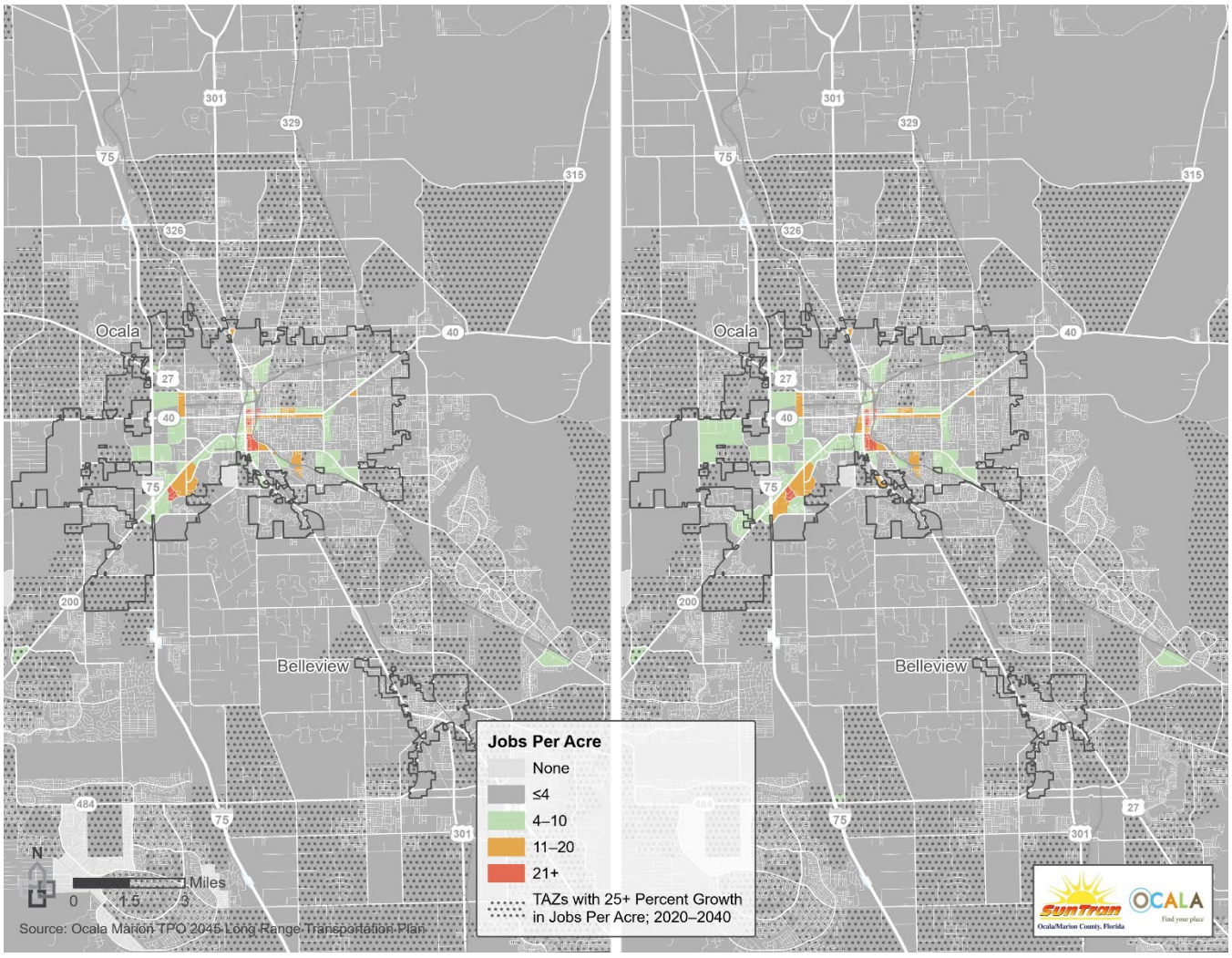


Employment Density

Trips to and from work account for the largest single segment of transit trips in most markets; accordingly, the location and number of jobs are strong indicators of transit demand. Transit that serves areas of high employment density also provides opportunity in the form of access to jobs. The TCRP Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition, indicates that an employment density of four jobs per acre or more can support hourly fixed-route service; areas with higher densities can also support greater transit frequencies.

Figure 2-12 depicts current (left) and forecast (right) employment density by TAZ in SunTran's service area, with TAZs expected to see upwards of 25 percent growth in employment density (shown stippled). Transit-supportive employment densities (depicted in color) are almost exclusively found in Ocala.

Figure 2-12 | Employment Density; 2020 (left) and 2040 (Right)

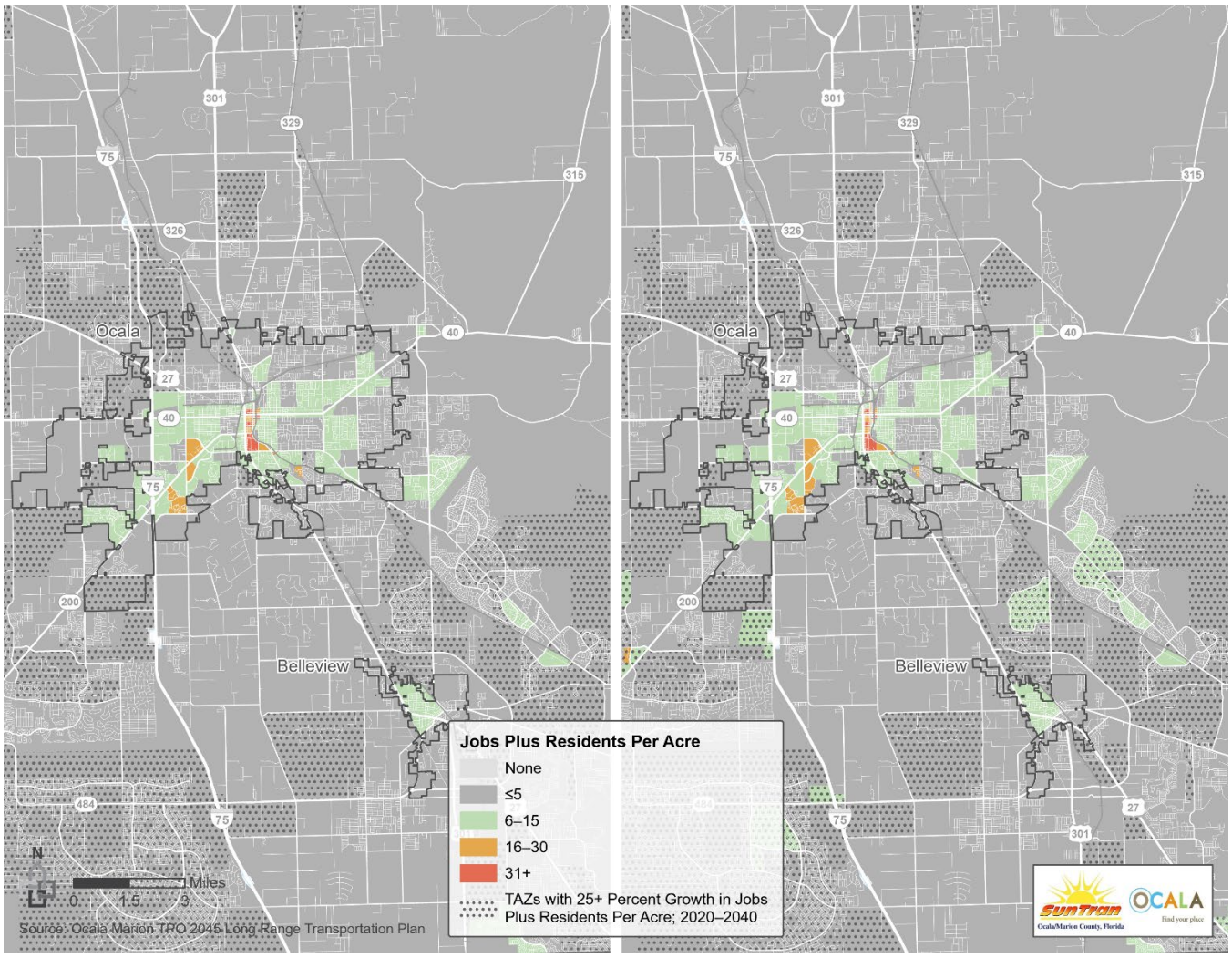


Population and Employment Density

Combining both population and employment density measures, provides an understanding of where the overall viability of transit service is highest. Blocks with densities over five jobs plus population per acre are areas dense enough to support fixed-route transit, while blocks with densities between one and five jobs plus population per acre may still benefit from alternative transit options such as flexible or on-demand service.

Figure 2-13 depicts current (left) and forecast (right) population and job density by TAZ in SunTran's service area, with TAZs expected to see upwards of 25 percent growth in population density (shown stippled). Transit-supportive densities (depicted in color) are concentrated in: Ocala, Silver Springs Shores, Belleview, Huntington, and Marion Oaks.

Figure 2-13 | Population and Employment Density; 2020 (left) and 2040 (Right)



2.3.2 Transit Propensity

While some individuals use transit only to commute between home and work, others rely on transit as a lifeline to services such as shopping, medical appointments, and government services. These transit propensity indices identify four key transit markets: transit-oriented populations, commuter populations, employment destinations, and activity destinations.

Methodology

The indices draw on demographic, employment, and geographic characteristics from the U.S. Census ACS 2016–2020 5-Year Estimates and LEHD 2019 datasets (**Table 2-7**). These measures are then weighted based on their relevance to transit ridership to generate each index's score. Together with other information on transit potential and travel flows, these indices form a basis for planning transit service in and around Ocala.

Table 2-7 | Transit Propensity Indices

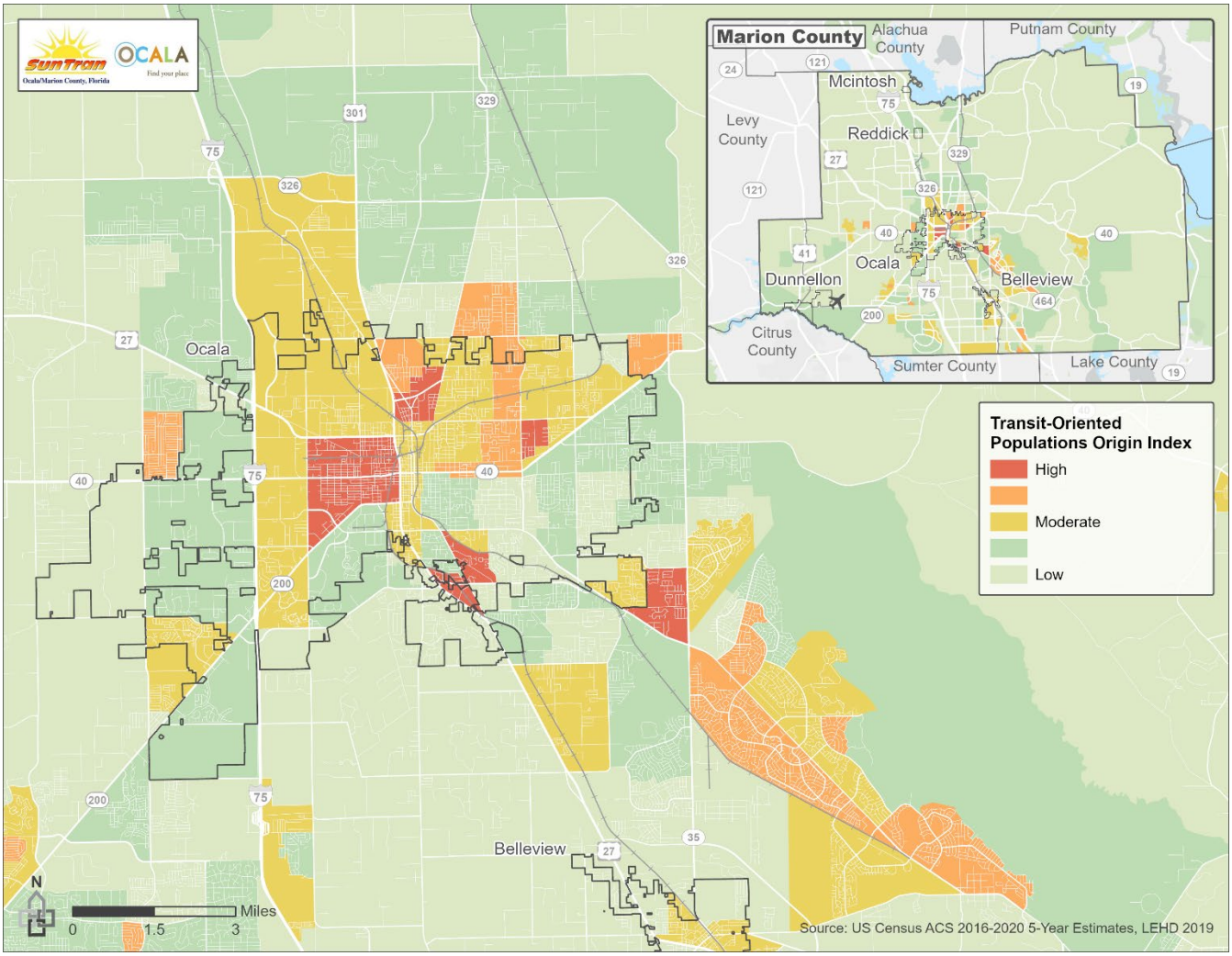
Index	Description	Metrics	Data Sources
Transit-Oriented Populations Origin Index	The transit-oriented populations origin index shows where residents who are likely to use transit live	Population, age, income, vehicle ownership, and disability status	ACS 2016–2020 5-Year Estimates
Commuter Origin Index	The commuter origin index identifies areas likely to serve as the origin of a transit commute	Labor force and non-single occupancy vehicle commute mode	ACS 2016–2020 5-Year Estimates
Employment Destination Index	The employment destination index shows where jobs in all sectors are concentrated	Employment	LEHD 2019
Activity Destination Index	The activity destination index illustrates where residents might use transit to travel either for non-work trips or for service jobs that are more likely to be held by low-income workers	Retail and restaurant, recreation, healthcare and social assistance, education, government, and labor force	LEHD 2019

Transit-Oriented Populations Origin Index

The Transit-Oriented Population Origin Index (**Figure 2-14**) shows residents who are likely to use transit. This includes populations of young and senior citizens, low-income residents, households with one or fewer cars, and persons with disabilities. Areas with high concentrations of these populations are most in need of all-day, local transit services, providing access to downtown and crosstown destinations. In SunTran's service area, transit-oriented populations are concentrated in:

- Neighborhoods surrounding Downtown Ocala
- Silver Springs Shores

Figure 2-14 | Transit-Oriented Populations Origin Index

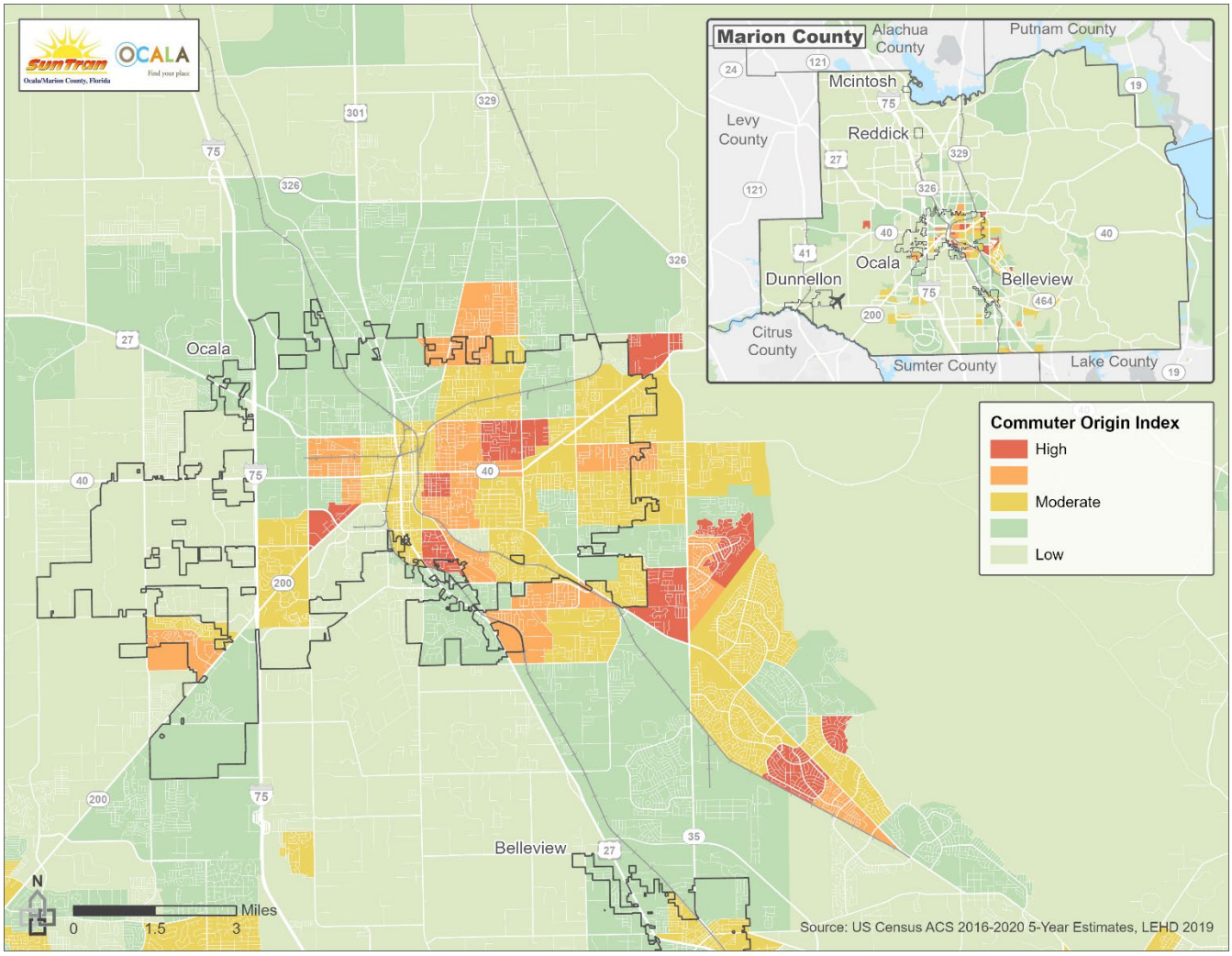


Commuter Origin Index

The Commuter Origin Index (**Figure 2-15**) details where commuters live. The data sources for this index include residents who are in the labor force or are employed, with a special emphasis on individuals who commute by transit or by means other than driving alone. Areas with high commuter origin propensity are most suitable for peak period, commuter, or limited stop service connecting employment centers to high density residential areas. In SunTran's service area, commuter origin index scores are highest in:

- Downtown Ocala and the surrounding neighborhoods
- Silver Springs Shores
- Belleview
- Marion Oaks

Figure 2-15 | Commuter Origin Index



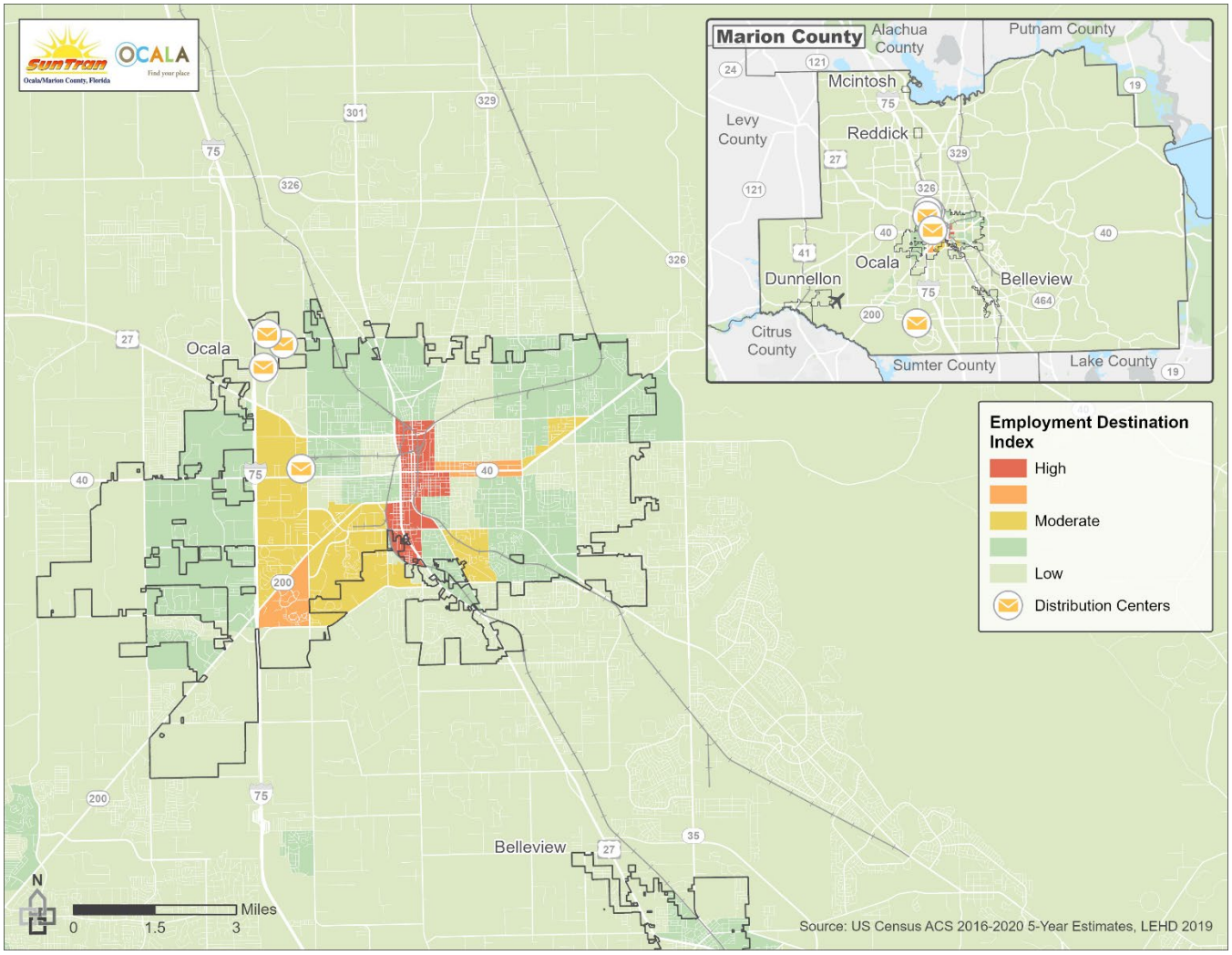
Employment Destination Index

The Employment Destination Index (**Figure 2-16**) shows where jobs in all sectors are heavily concentrated in the region. Areas with high employment destination propensity are most suitable for peak period, commuter, or limited stop service to job centers, but also serving high-density residential and employer locations. In SunTran's service area, job density is highest in:

- Historic District and the neighborhoods to the north and south
- North Magnolia Business District

Another important consideration when considering employment destination is the concentration of distribution centers along NW 35th Avenue.

Figure 2-16 | Employment Destination Index

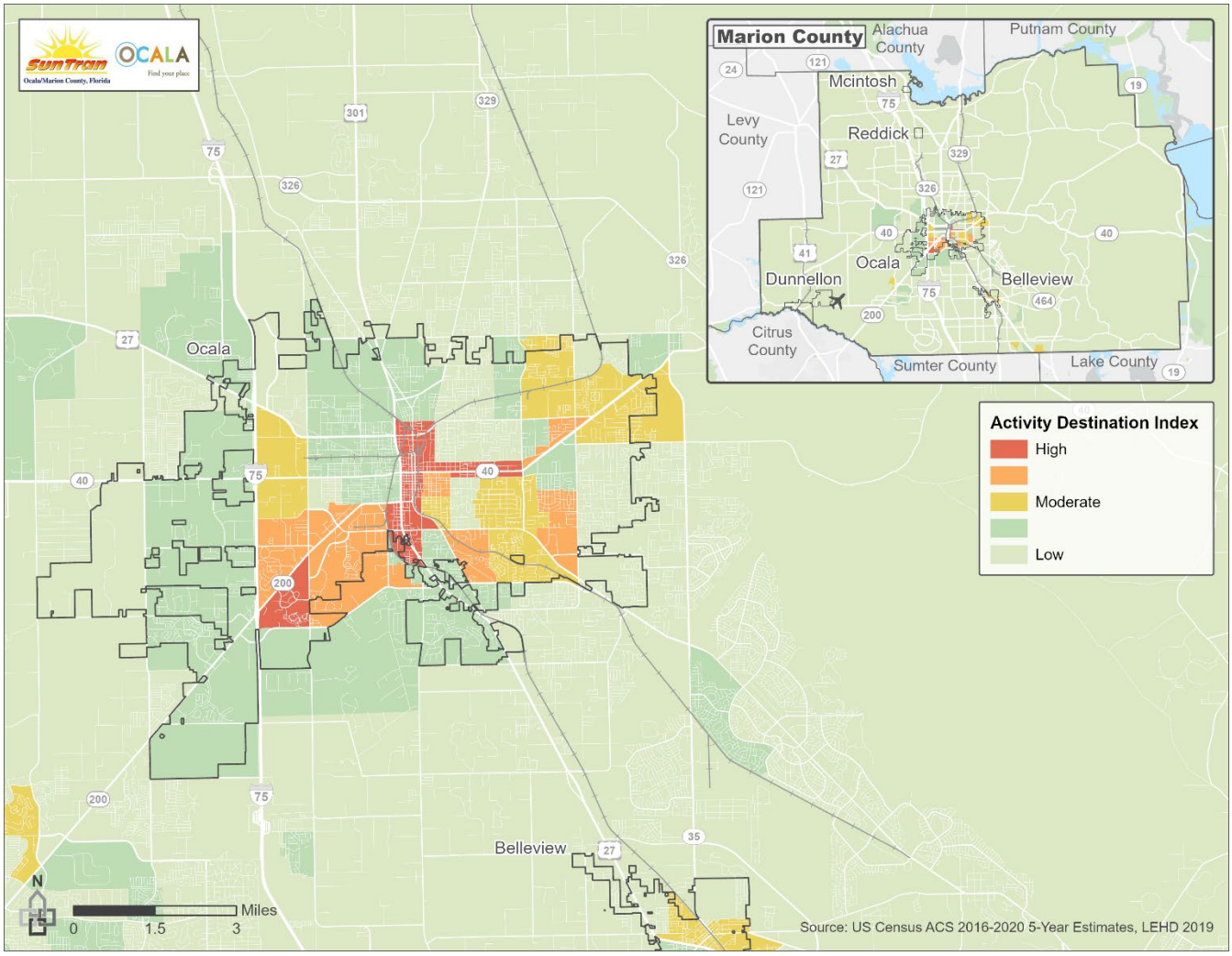


Activity Destination Index

The Activity Destination Index (**Figure 2-17**) illustrates other work destinations where residents might use transit to travel either for non-work trips or for lower-income service jobs. These destinations include retail, health care, social assistance, education, government facilities, recreation, and restaurants. Areas with high activity destination propensity benefit from both all day local service and peak hour high frequency service. In SunTran's service area, Activity Destination Index scores are highest in:

- Downtown Ocala and the surrounding neighborhoods
- The area southeast of State Route (SR) 200 between I-75 and SW 27th Avenue

Figure 2-17 | Activity Destination Index



2.4 Land Use/Growth Characteristics

Examination of the existing and future land use, as well as employment characteristics, provides insight into the growth and development of the region. These characteristics are highlighted in this section along with an examination of major developments in the region.

2.4.1 Employment by Type

Analyzing employment by type informs an understanding of transit ridership markets and helps determine when/where service will best serve the needs of residents living in SunTran's service area. **Table 2-8** shows the number of individuals employed by the type of employment for Marion County in 2020, 2030, and 2040. While commercial employment is forecast to grow the most between 2020 and 2040 (59.1 percent growth is predicted), service employment is expected to remain the largest employment sector, accounting for 60.7 percent of all jobs in Marion County in 2040.

Table 2-8 | Major Employers and Industries

Type	2020	2030	2040	Percent Change (2020–2040)
Industrial	20,427	23,096	25,308	23.9%
Commercial	24,577	31,915	39,100	59.1%
Service	78,055	89,744	99,664	27.7%

Source | Ocala Marion TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan

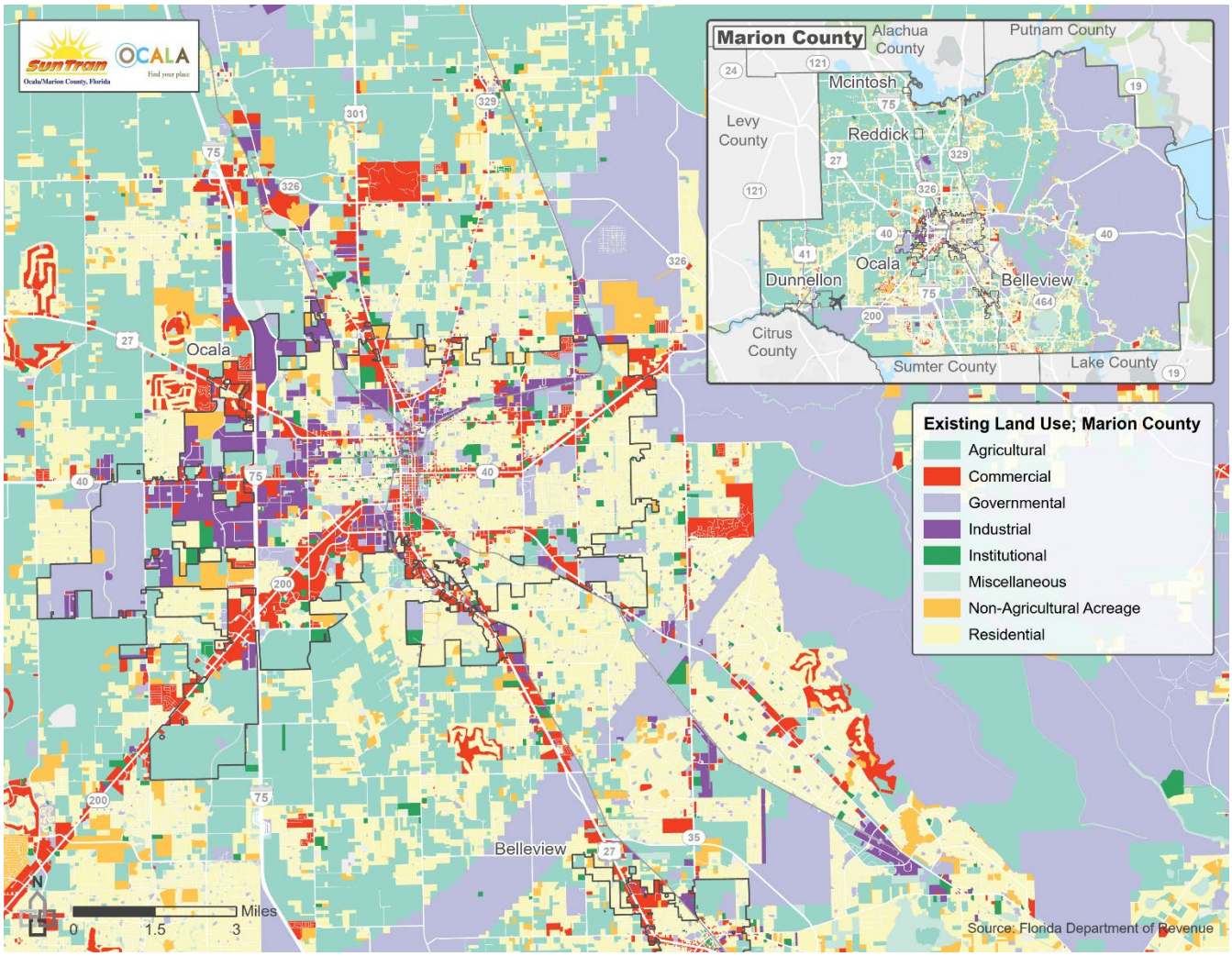
2.4.2 Land Use Patterns and Scenarios

Examination of land use patterns and scenarios aids in providing a comprehensive picture of growth in a region and allows for the identification of both the types of future growth demanding transit service, and how much service will be needed.

Existing Land Use

Figure 2-18 depicts existing land use, providing an overview of existing development and the allowed uses on each parcel. Residential land is most common within SunTran's service area while agricultural and governmental (preservation) land uses dominate the periphery of Marion County. Other notable land use patterns include the concentration of commercial development along SR 200 in Southwest Ocala, the concentration of commercial and governmental land uses in downtown Ocala, and the cluster of industrial parcels, that includes several distribution centers, spanning I-75 in West Ocala.

Figure 2-18 | Existing Land Use



Future Land Use

Figure 2-19 depicts future land uses derived from the City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Element. **Figure 2-20** depicts future land uses derived from the Marion County Comprehensive Plan. Collectively, these plans guide the density and intensity of development. Within Ocala, the Neighborhood designation accounts for the most land area (35 percent). Low Intensity and Employment Center land uses account for the second and third most land area, with 29 and 22 percent of total land area dedicated, respectively. Residential uses account for most Marion County future land use designations within the SunTran service area; commercial designations along corridors to the north and southeast/southwest of Ocala are also notable.

Figure 2-19 | Future Land Use; Ocala

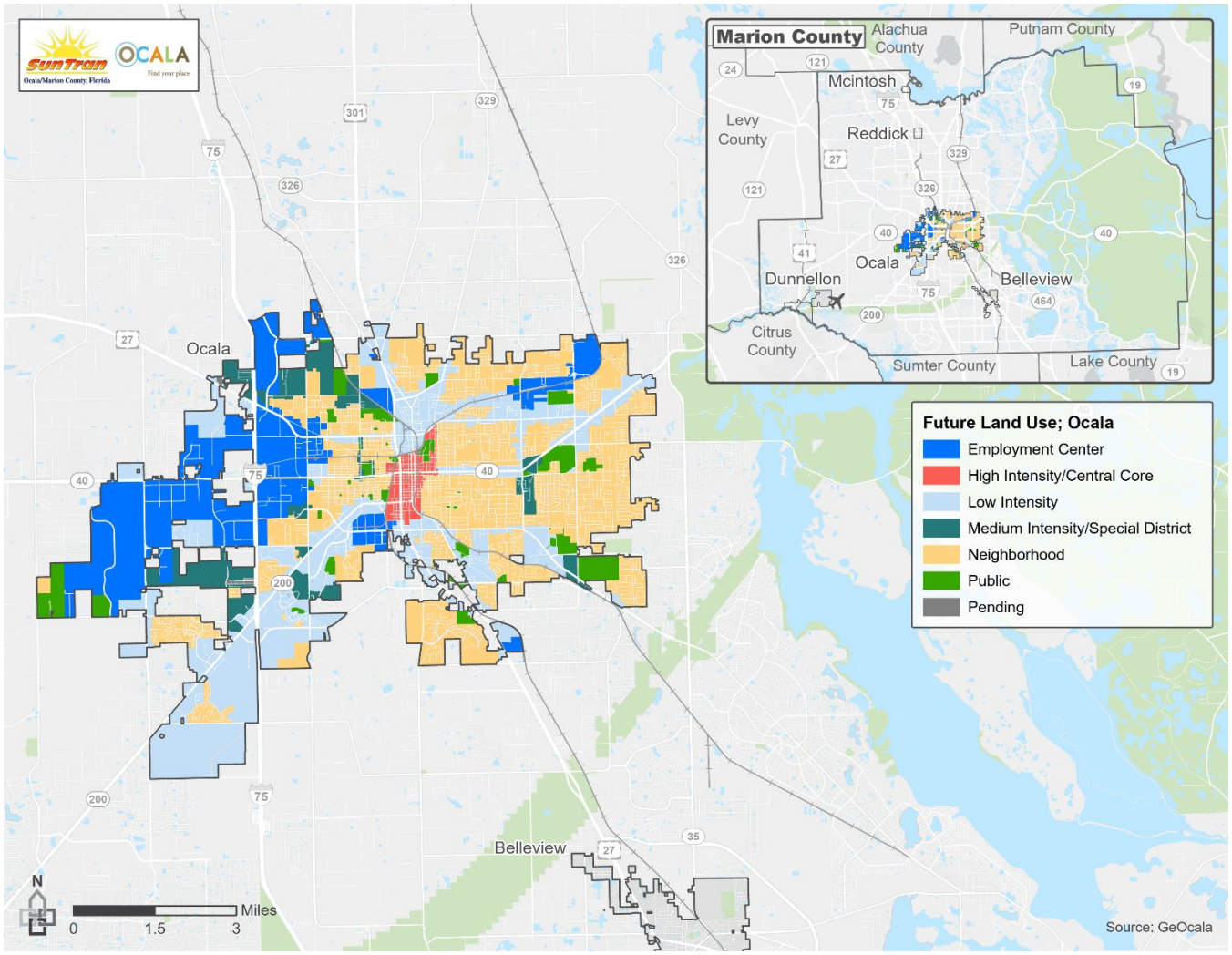
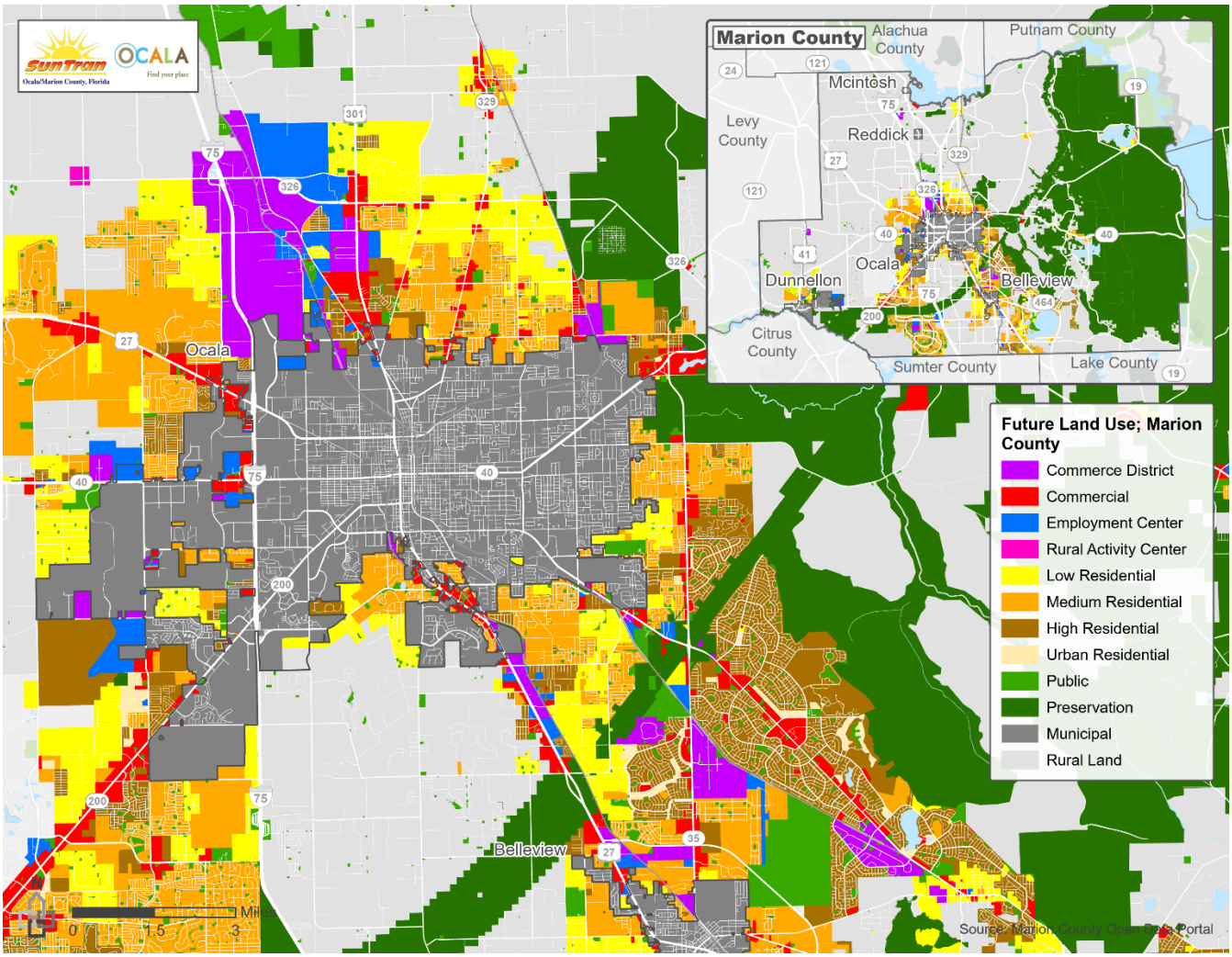


Figure 2-20 | Future Land Use; Marion County



2.4.3 Activity Centers

Ensuring transit connects residents with points of interest including hospitals, medical offices, apartments, affordable housing, retail destinations, schools, intercity bus stations, distribution centers, and civic buildings is critical. **Figure 2-21** depicts these destinations within Marion County. While points of interest are concentrated in Ocala, within the SunTran service area, numerous retail destinations, apartment complexes, and schools are found in Silver Springs Shores. Notable clusters of attractions include numerous retail destinations along SW College Road (SR 200) and Chewy, FedEx, and AutoZone distribution centers east of I-75 in North Ocala.

Marion County is projected to continue attracting development that will impact the transportation needs of residents within SunTran's service area. In particular, numerous large employment centers are under development. To plan for projected transit needs, upcoming employment centers in the area were identified. A map of upcoming employment centers in the county is shown in **Figure 2-22.**

Figure 2-21 | Points of Interest

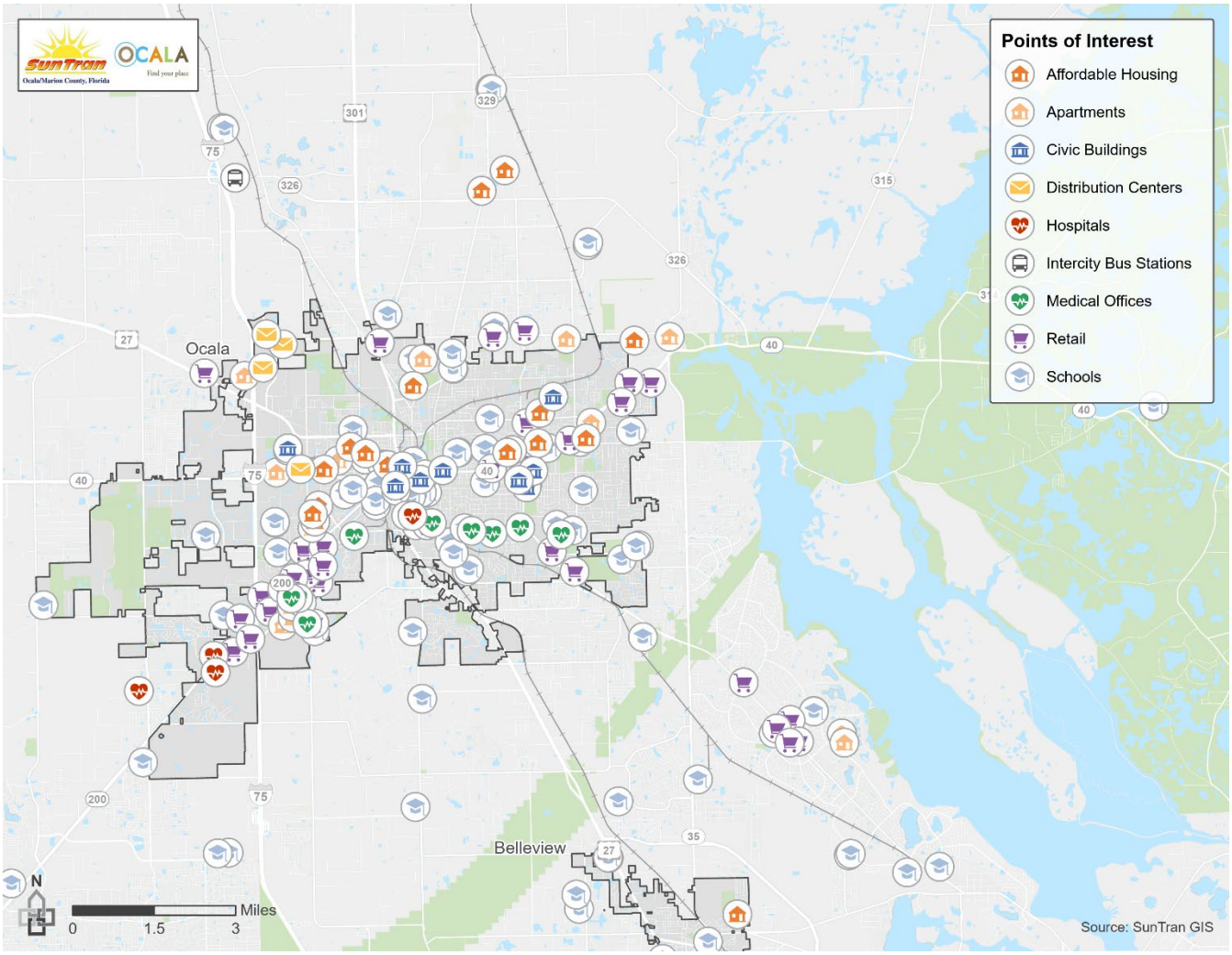
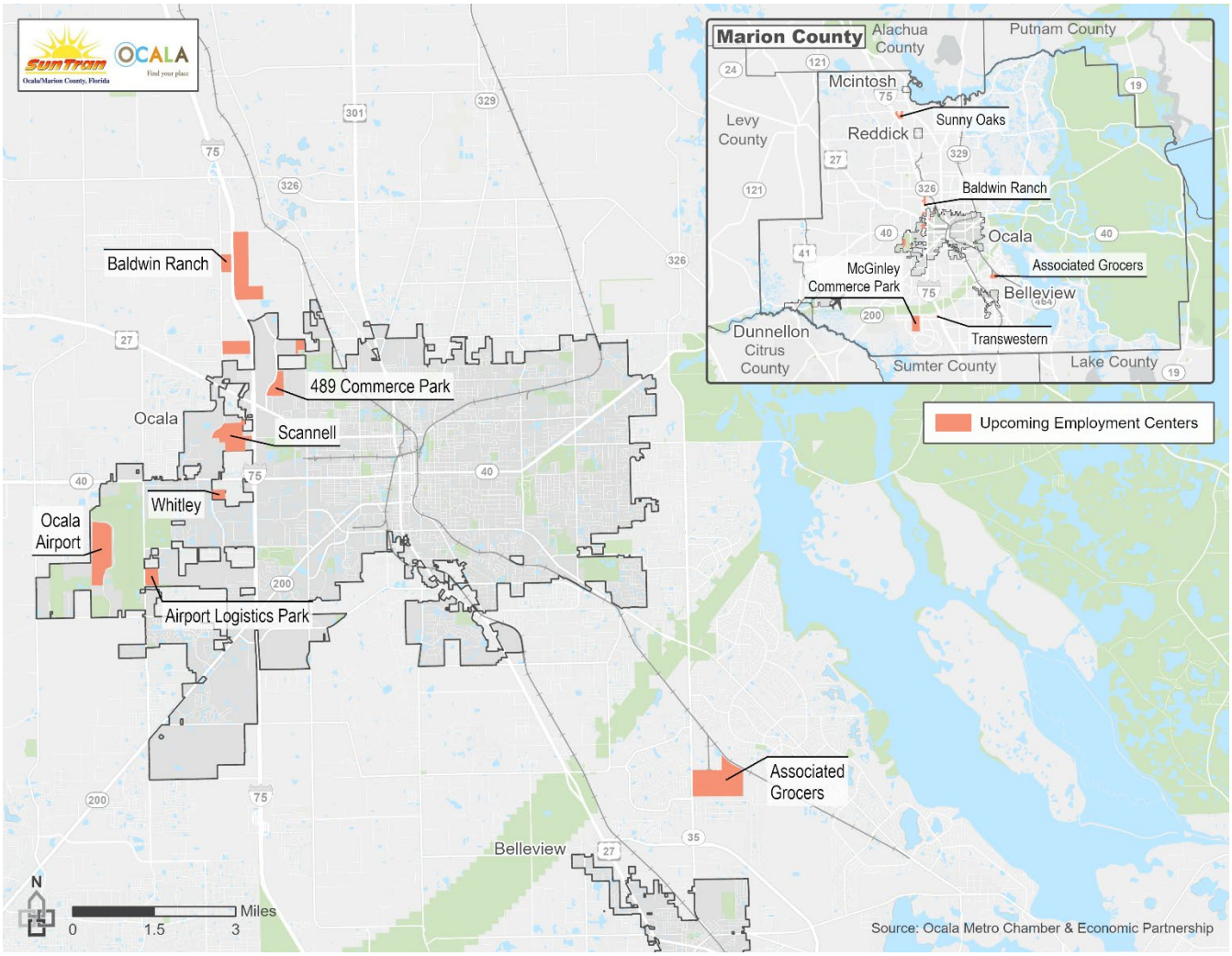


Figure 2-22 | Upcoming Employment Centers



2.5 Travel/Mobility Characteristics

The final part of assessing where transit should serve is an examination of current and future mobility trends; that is, where trips are predominantly beginning and ending. All current trends are from March-May 2021 and are based on outputs from Replica, which utilizes a proprietary activity-based model to estimate travel demand. The study examined both peak and off-peak travel within the county and then common origins and destinations outside of the county for Marion County visitors and residents.

2.5.1 Peak Period Travel

Figure 2-23 through **Figure 2-26** show the origins and destinations during the AM and PM Peak periods (6:00-9:00 a.m. and 3:00-6:00 p.m., respectively). These maps utilize transportation analysis zones (TAZs) from the 7th version of the Central Florida Regional Planning Model (CFRPM7), which is maintained by the FDOT. Activity concentrations remain consistent throughout the four maps, with the most active TAZs occurring in Downtown Ocala and along SR 200 between downtown and immediately west of I-75. Outside of this area, activity primarily happens in the southern part of the county, with important corridors being SR 200, US 27, State Route/ County Route (SR/CR) 464, SR 40, and SR 35. Besides downtown, activity centers on which to focus are the Paddock Mall area, The Villages along the border with Sumter County, Silver Springs Shores, Belleview, Marion Oaks, the industrial district east of the Ocala International Airport, the retail strip southwest of Silver Springs, and On Top of the World Communities.

Figure 2-23 | AM Peak Origins

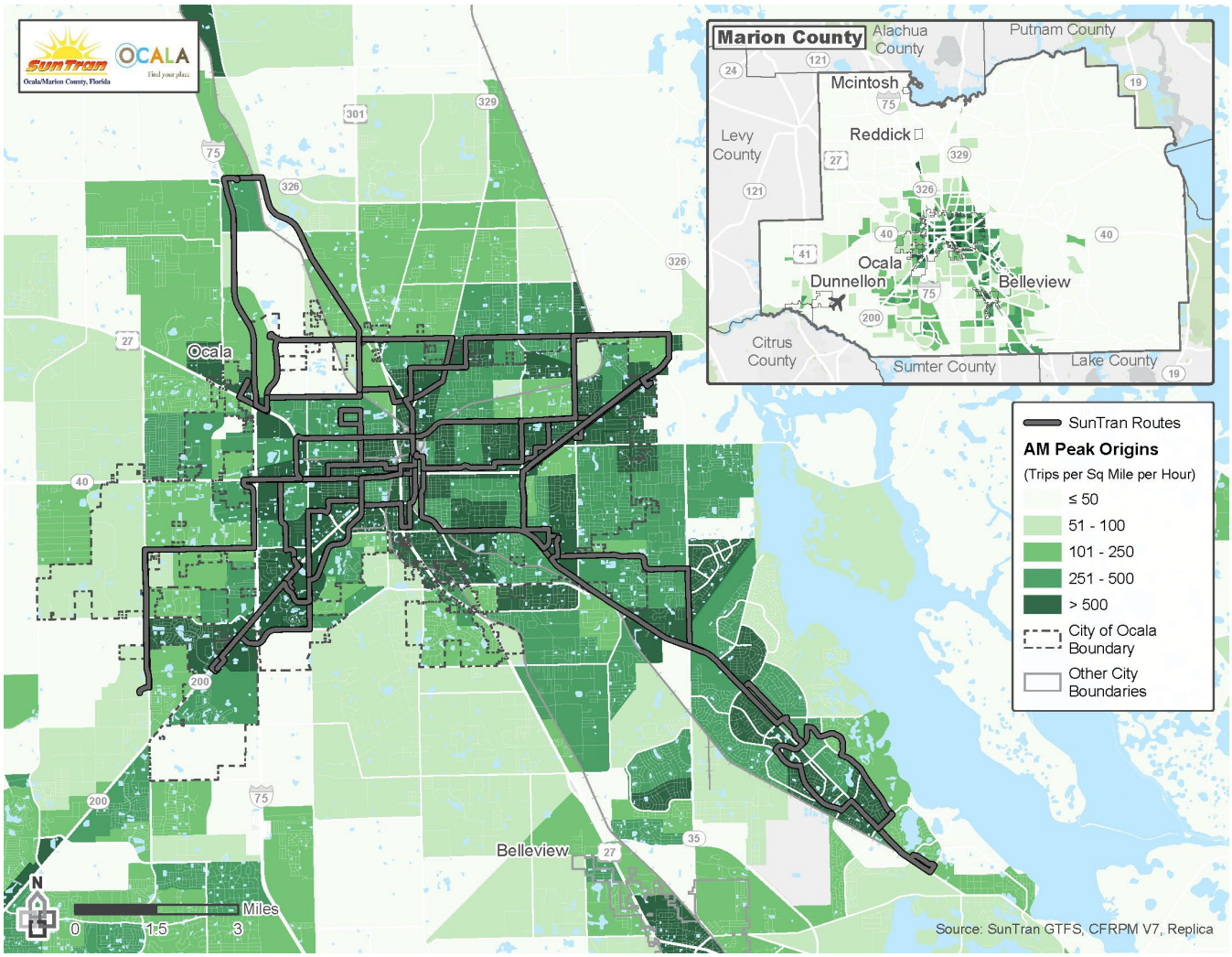


Figure 2-24 | AM Peak Destinations

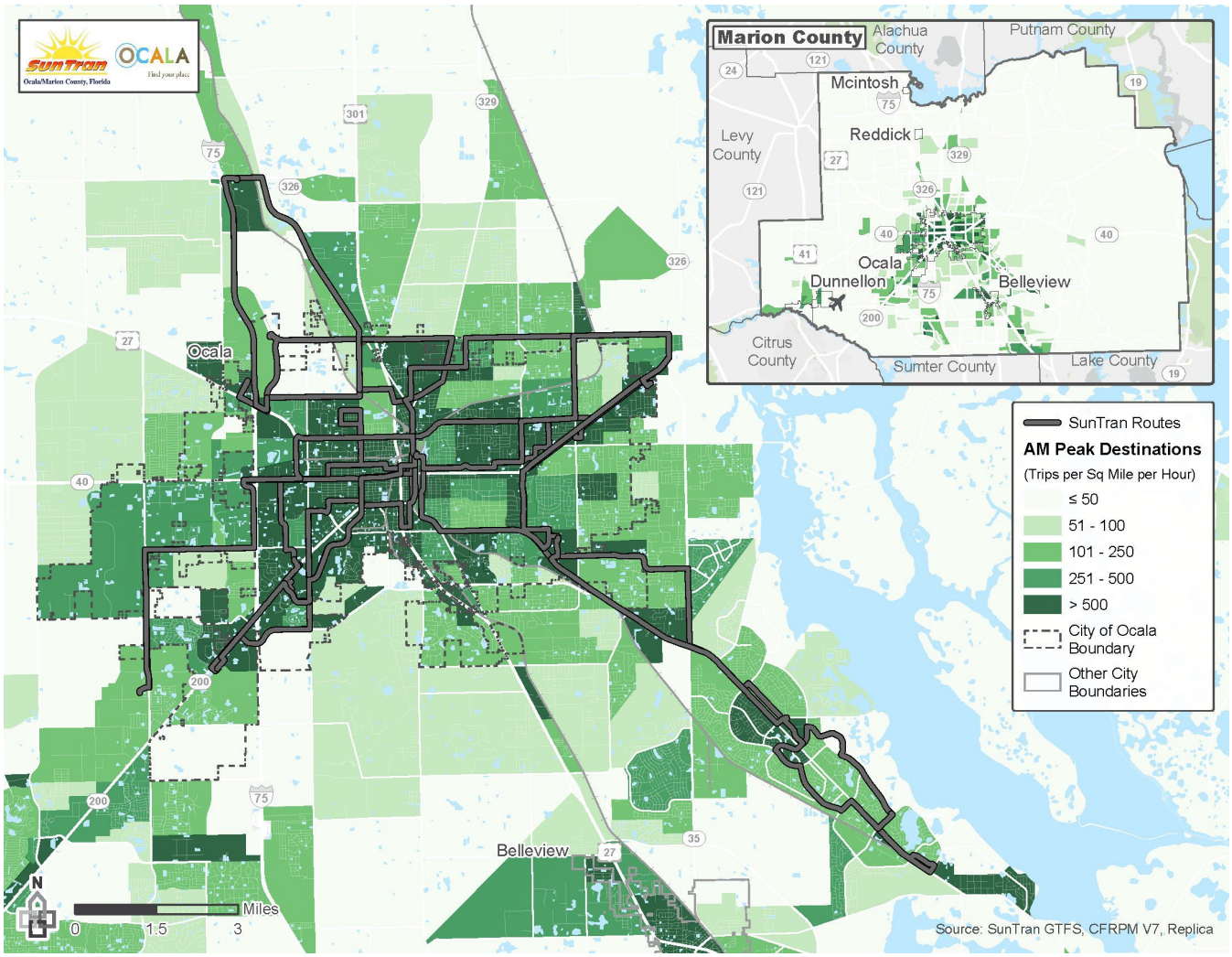


Figure 2-25 | PM Peak Origins

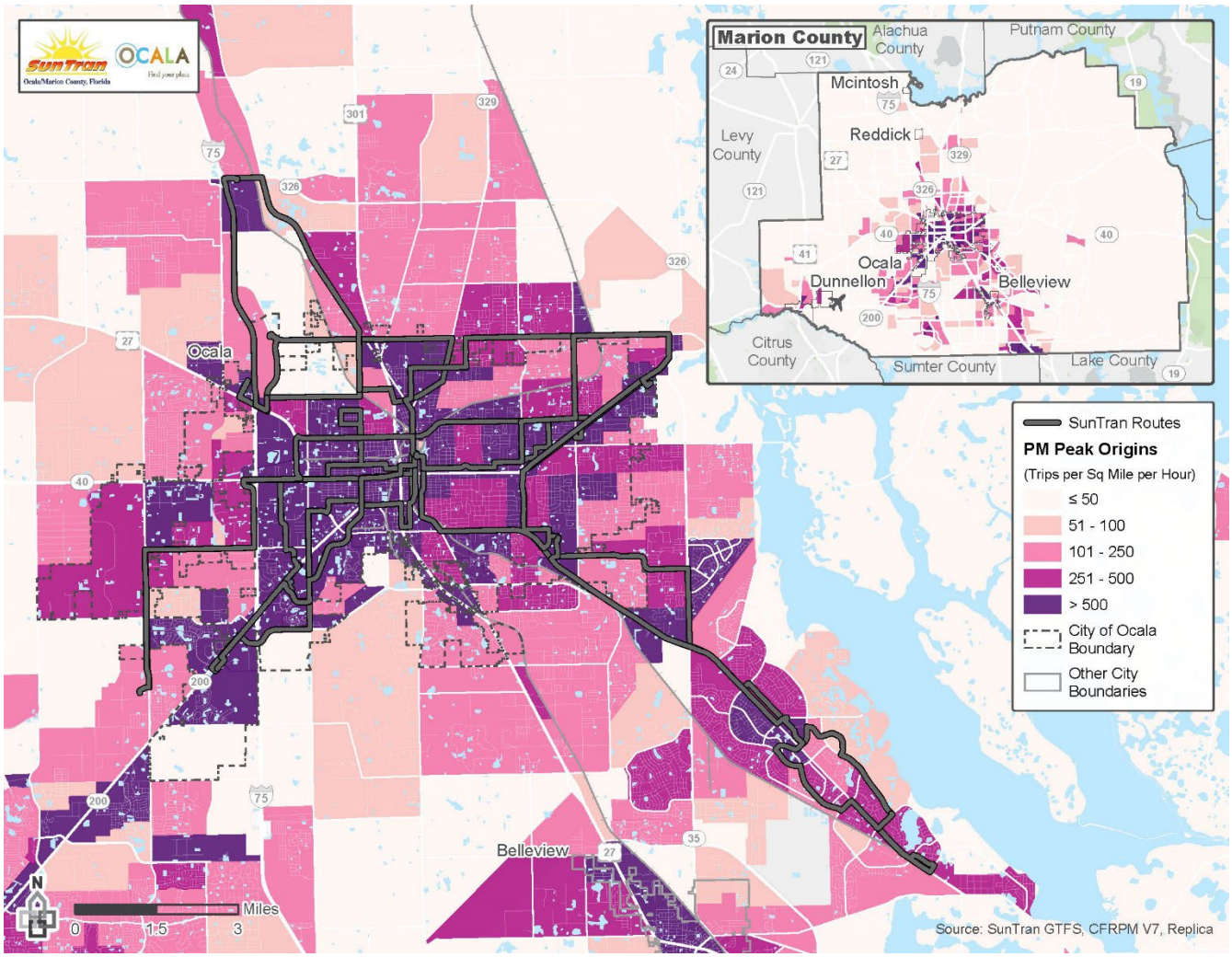
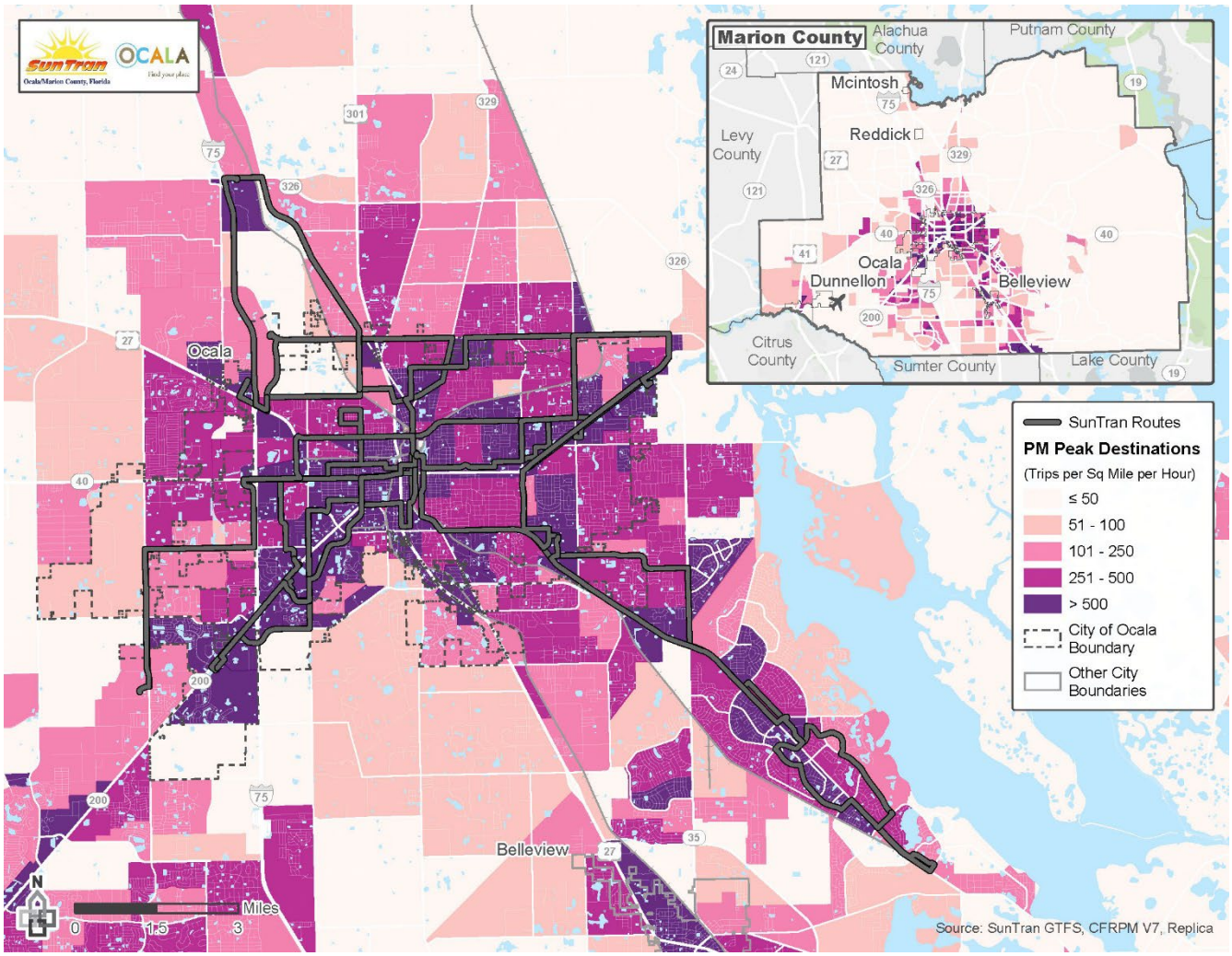


Figure 2-26 | PM Peak Destinations



2.5.2 Off-Peak Period Travel

The three off-peak periods examined are midday (9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.), nighttime (6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.), and Saturday. Origins and destinations for these periods are shown in **Figure 2-27** through **Figure 2-32**. Notably in the off-peak period travel maps, On Top of the World Communities differ in their travel patterns in that they show the most activity in the midday rather than the AM Peak, which reflects it being a retirement community. Overall, all maps within the county provide consistency in showing corridors and areas important to serve with transit.

Figure 2-27 | Midday Origins

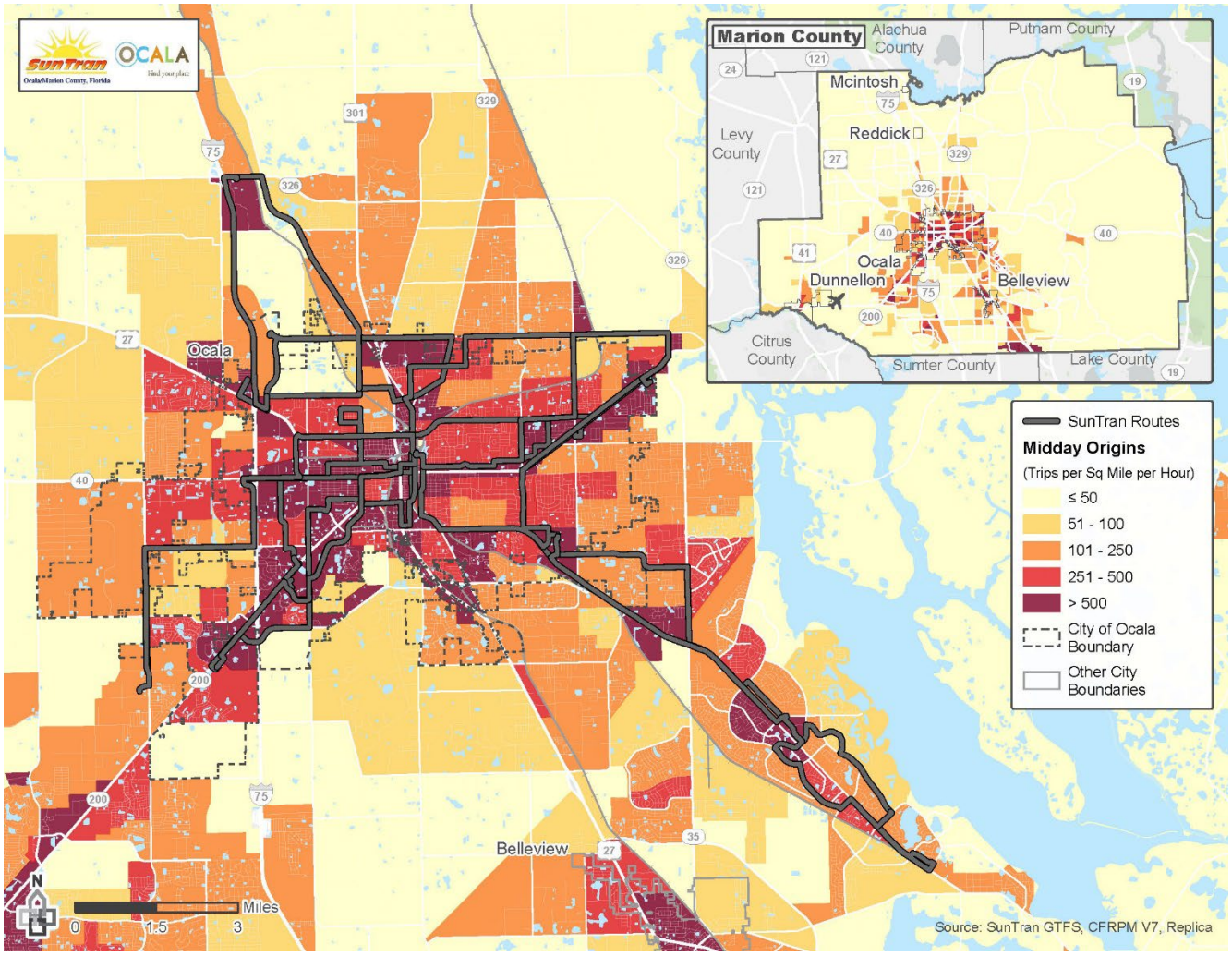


Figure 2-28 | Midday Destinations

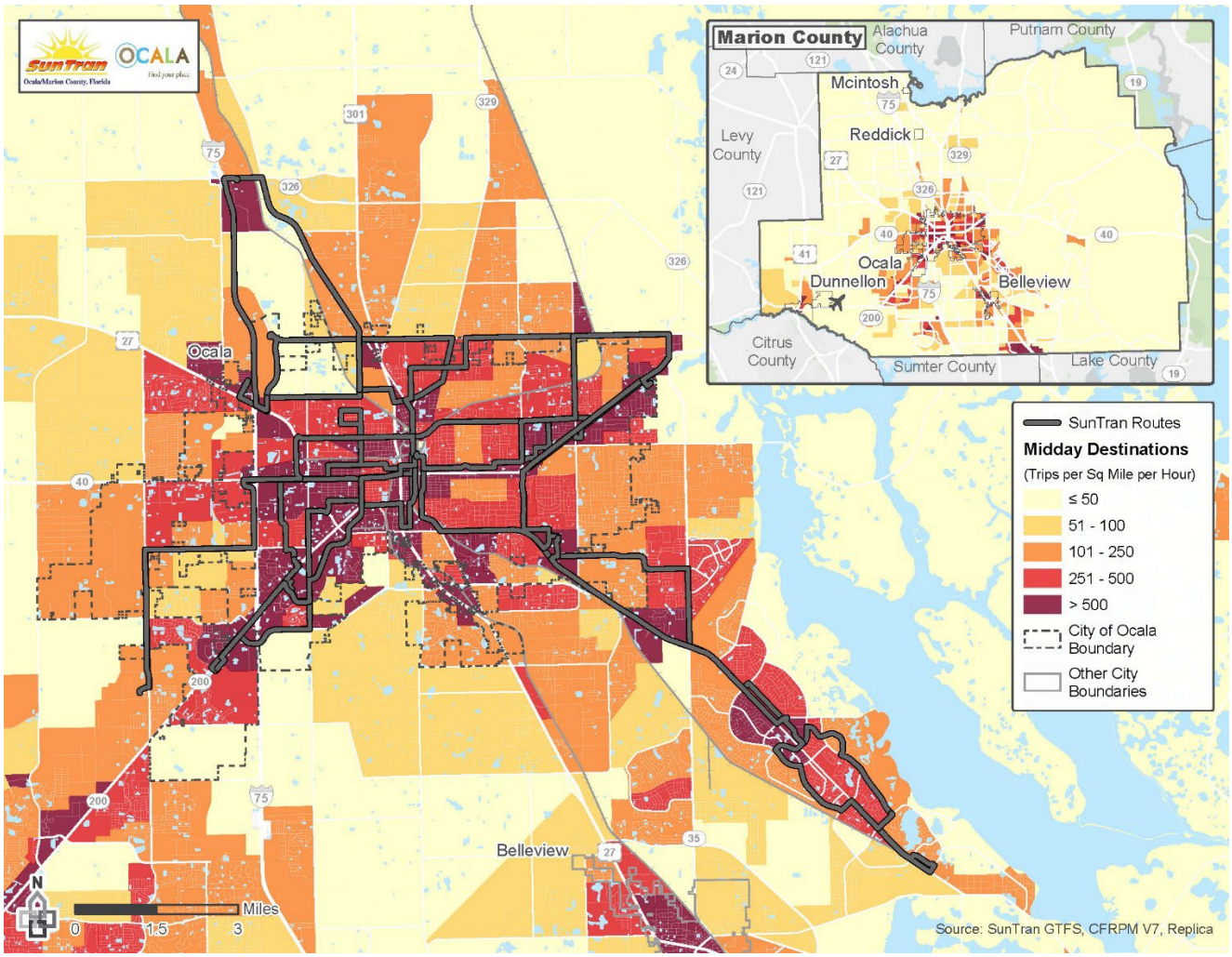


Figure 2-29 | Nighttime Origins

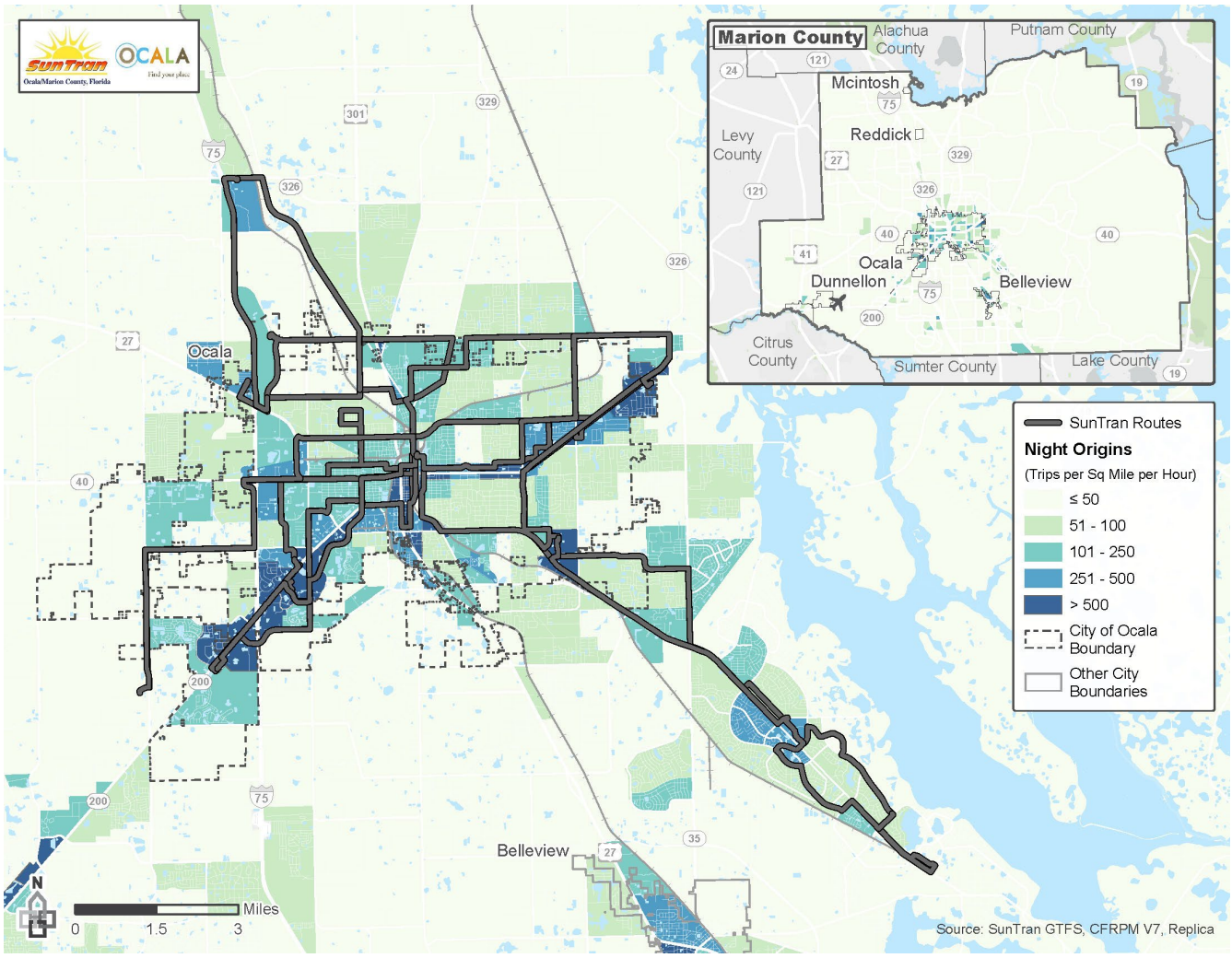


Figure 2-30 | Nighttime Destinations

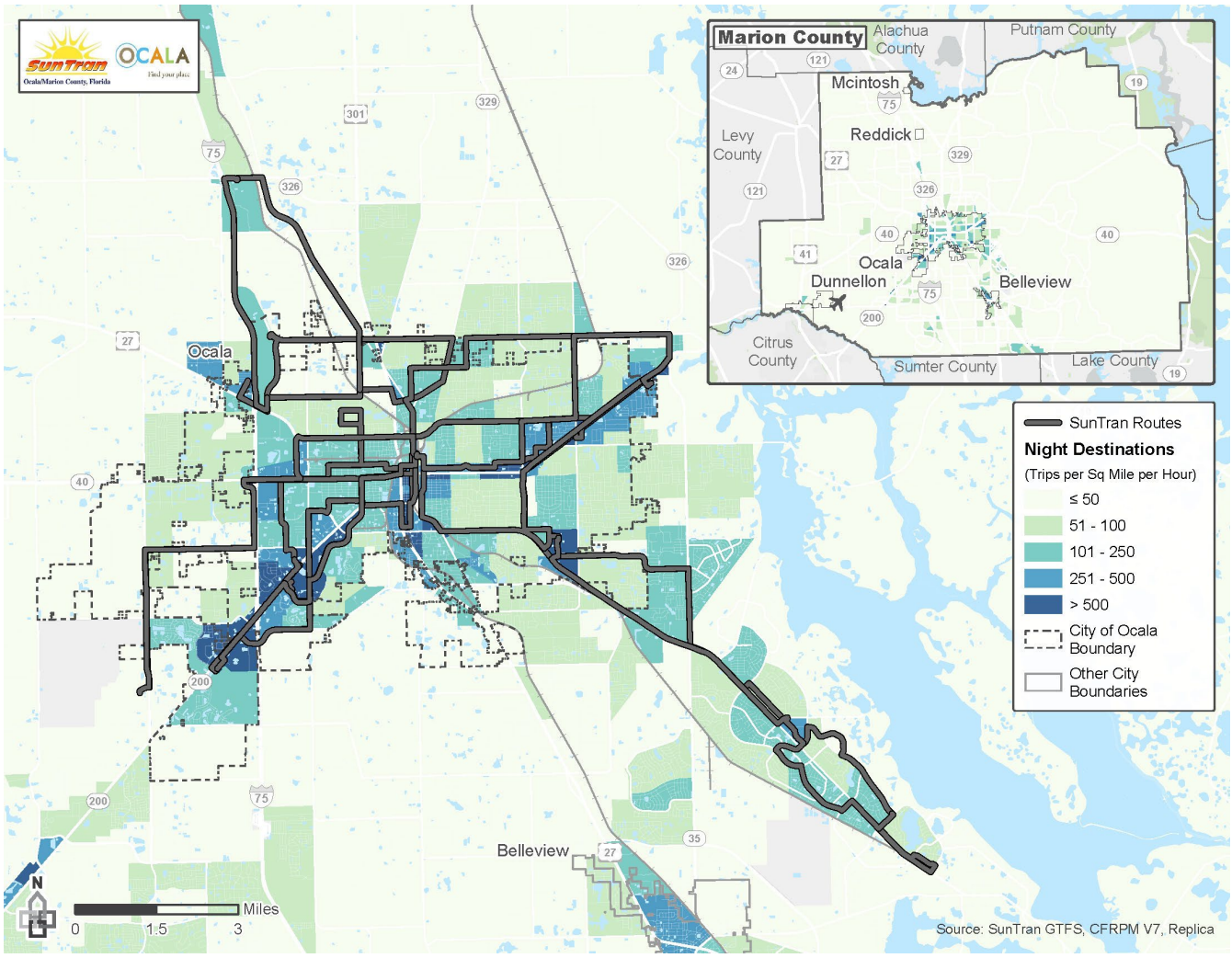


Figure 2-31 | Saturday Origins

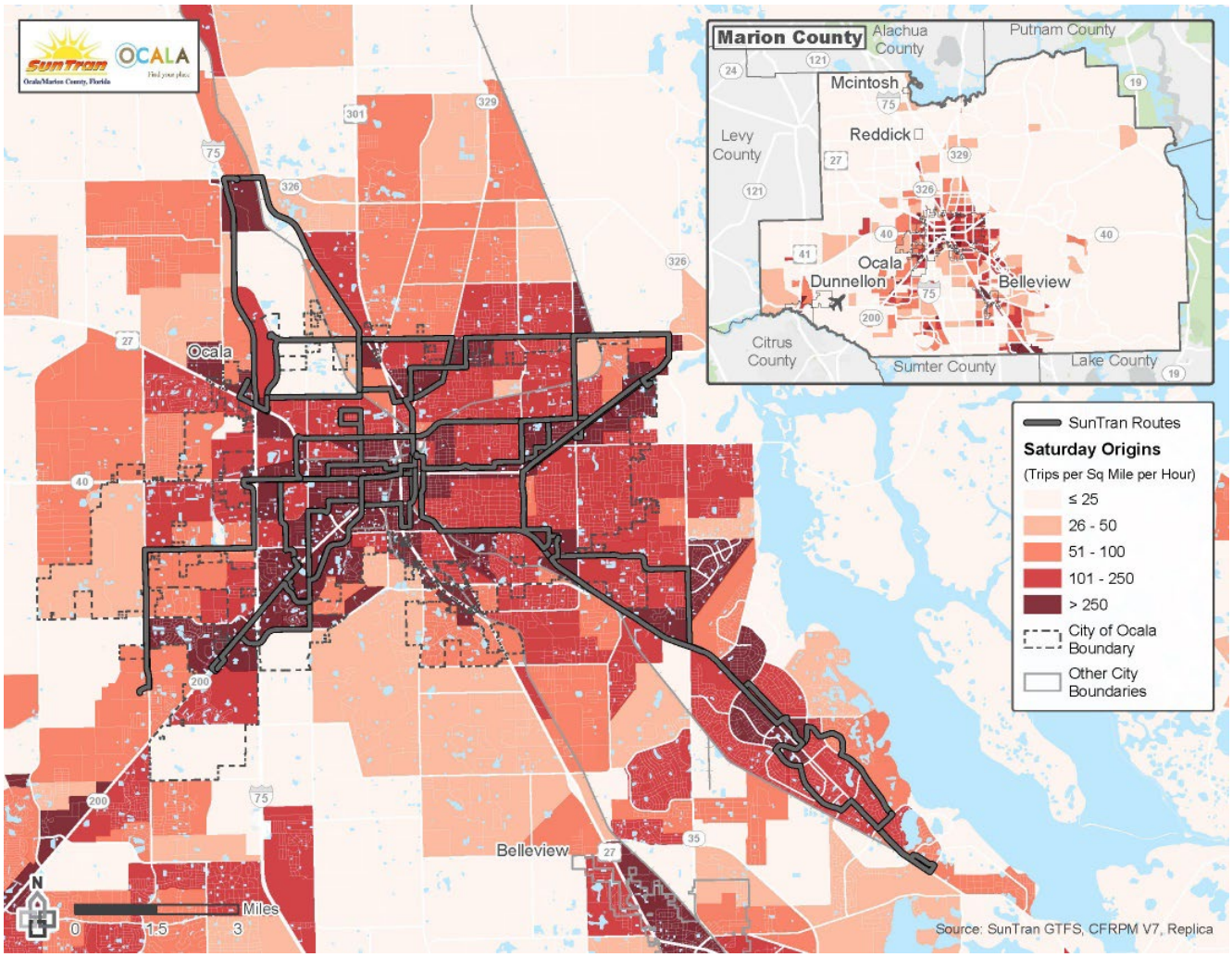
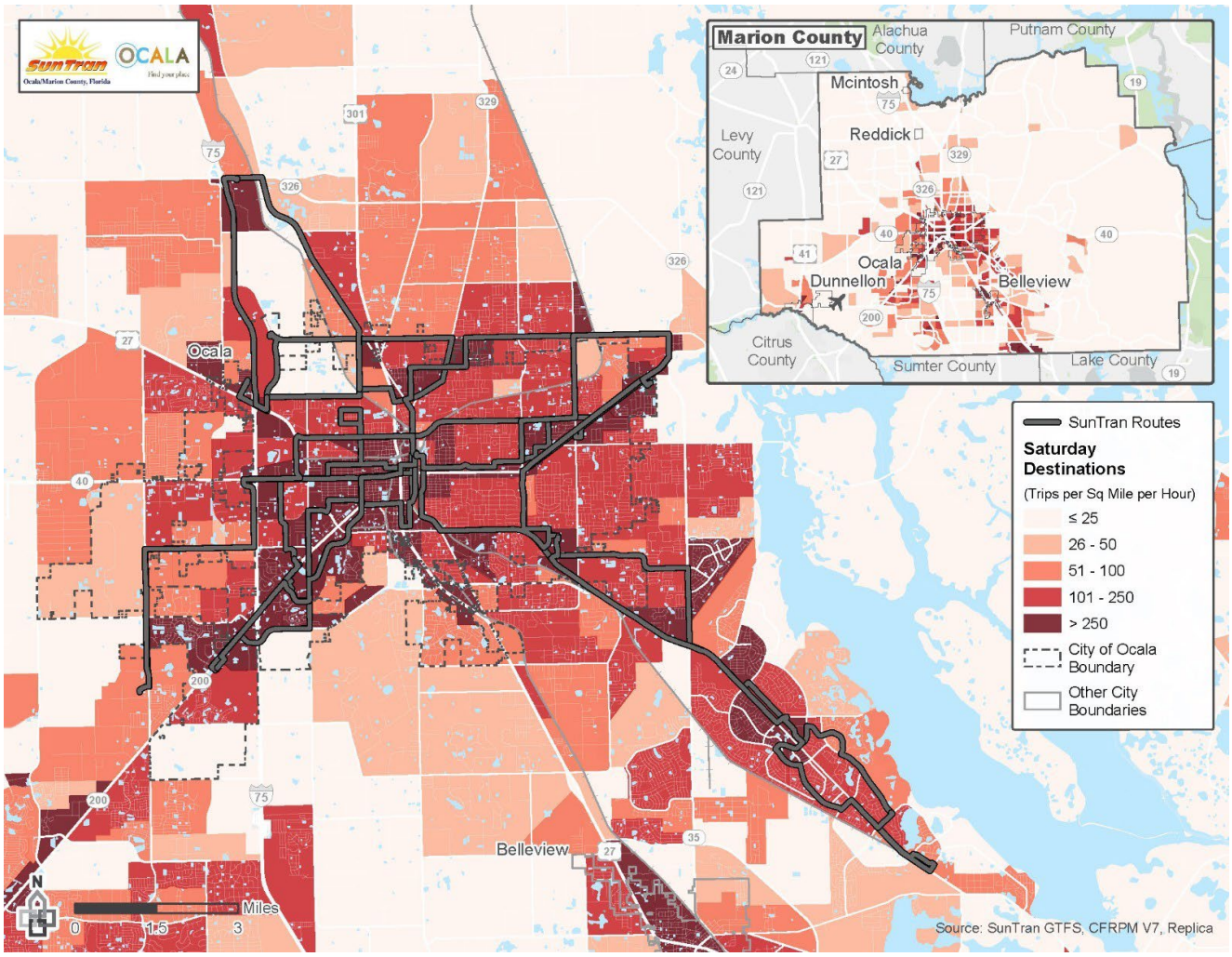


Figure 2-32 | Saturday Destinations



2.5.3 External Trips

Figure 2-33 and **Figure 2-34** show weekday trips occurring between Marion County and the surrounding area, ranging from Tampa to Jacksonville, by zip code. **Table 2-9** clusters these zip codes and lists the top five clusters for external trips. Far exceeding other external locations are The Villages area and northwest Lake County, suggesting that the southeast US 27 corridor may be a priority for linking with other transit systems. The remaining top areas are northeast Citrus County, Gainesville, and Williston. While external trips occur in all directions, the highest share occurs toward the south.

Figure 2-33 | Origins of Trips to Marion County

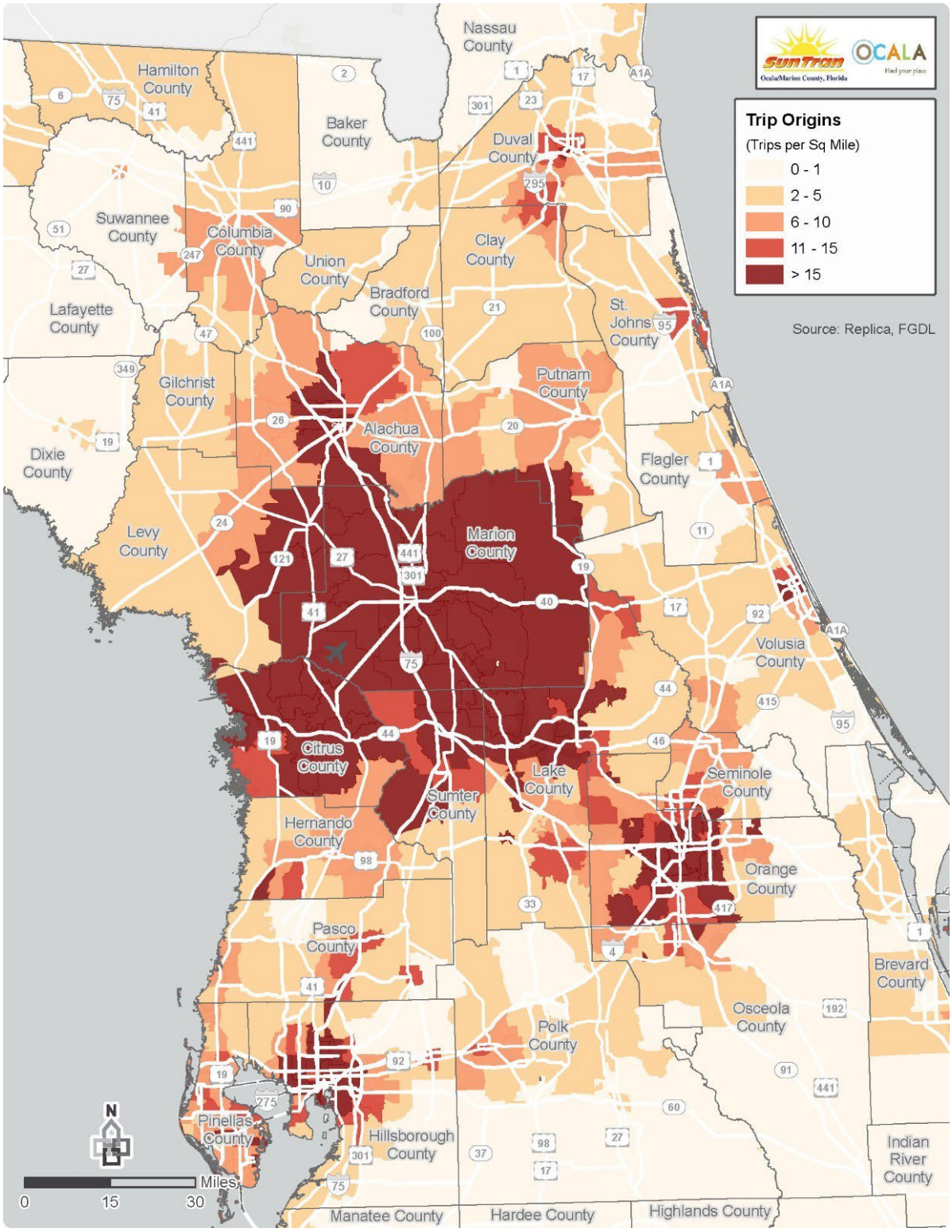


Figure 2-34 | Destinations of Trips from Marion County

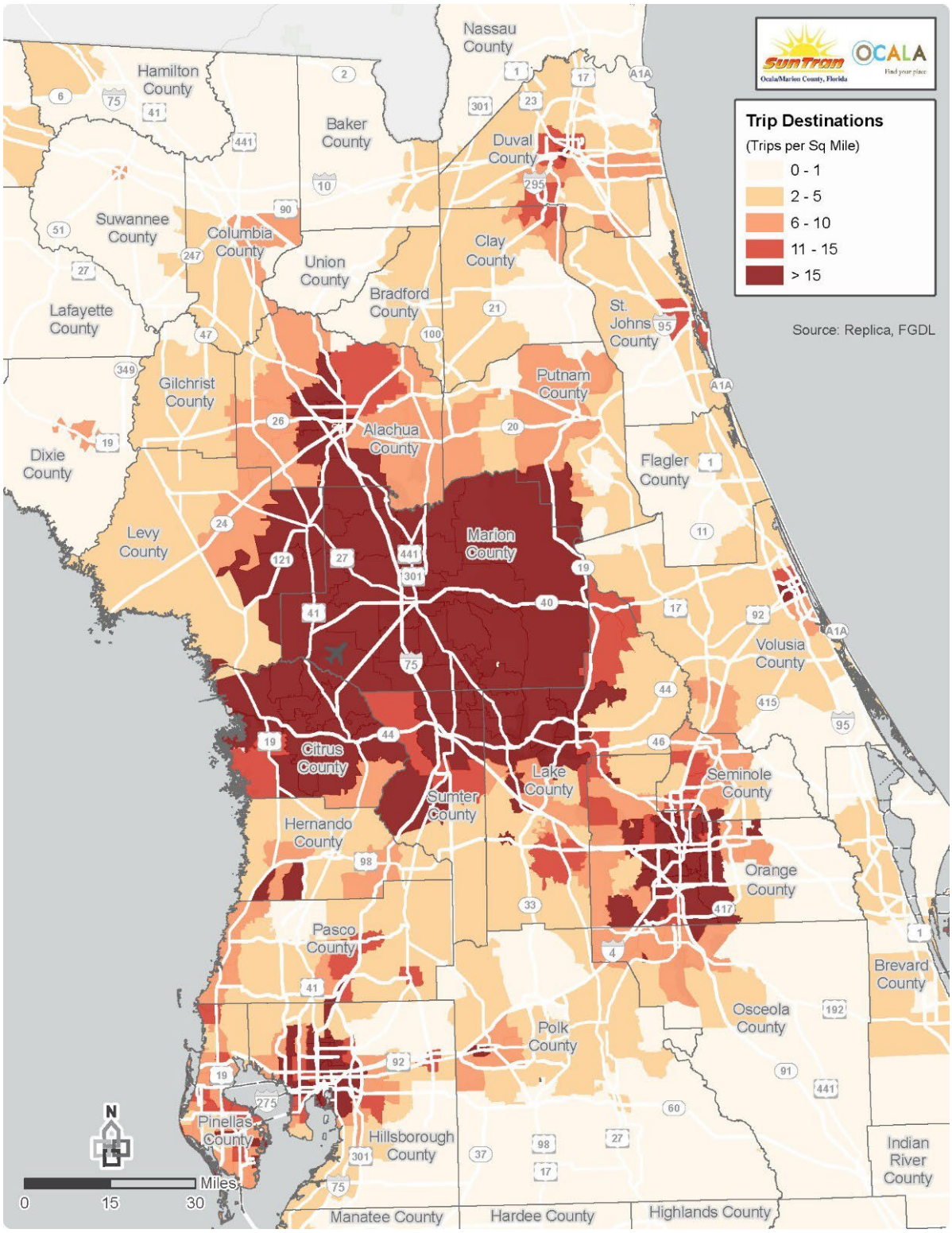


Table 2-9 | Top External Locations

Cluster	Communities	Total Trips	Sq Miles	Trips per Sq Mile
The Villages & North Sumter	The Villages, Oxford, Wildwood, Coleman, Lake Panasoffkee	87,098	231.18	376.75
Northwest Lake County	Lady Lake, Fruitland Park, Leesburg, Umatilla, Tavares, Grand Island, Okahumpka, Yalaha	80,588	329.37	244.67
Northeast Citrus County	Dunnellon (Citrus County side), Holder, Beverly Hills, Hernando, Lecanto, Inverness	43,459	339.05	128.18
Gainesville	Gainesville	31,856	314.33	101.35
Williston	Williston	11,609	138.62	83.75

2.5.4 Future Trips

To predict future travel, pre-existing outputs from the CFRPM7, the region's travel demand model, for the year 2045 were utilized. **Figure 2-35** through **Figure 2-42** show desire lines representing modeled intracounty origin-destination TAZ pairs for each period. The N value in the figure caption is the minimum number of trips that each line represents. Lines increase in thickness with more trips. For each period, the first figure shows the entire county, while the second shows a zoomed-in version of the south-central part of the county, where demand mainly occurs.

For all time periods, the analysis shows the highest demand in the southwest part of the county and in the southeast along US 27. Notably, desire line volumes do not control TAZ size, so trips to Downtown Ocala may be underrepresented. Nevertheless, the analysis highlights potential growth areas where transit could possibly serve in the future. Several large new developments are planned: (1) along the SR 200 corridor to the southwest, (2) near where I-75 meets CR 484, and (3) to the east of the SE 92nd Loop on the outskirts of Belleview. Existing centers, such as Dunnellon and the southeastern retirement communities, are also highlighted with the desire lines. The southeastern retirement communities include The Villages, Spruce Creek, and Stonecrest. The analysis supports expanding transit service to southern parts of the county.

Figure 2-43 and **Figure 2-44** show daily future trips between the County and external areas. Most of the common external origins and destinations are also external to the CFRPM, as they are outside of FDOT's District 5. Such trips are represented by external stations, which are nodes outside of the model's coverage area capturing all trips in each direction. The most common such trips go into Citrus, Alachua, Levy, and Hernando counties. The most common origin and destination is external to the County, but internal to the CFRPM is The Villages and surrounding area. Much interaction is forecasted to occur especially between it and the southeastern retirement communities in Marion County. The analysis guides efforts to connect SunTran to transit systems in adjacent counties.

Figure 2-35 | AM Peak Future Intracounty Trips – Entire County (N=25)

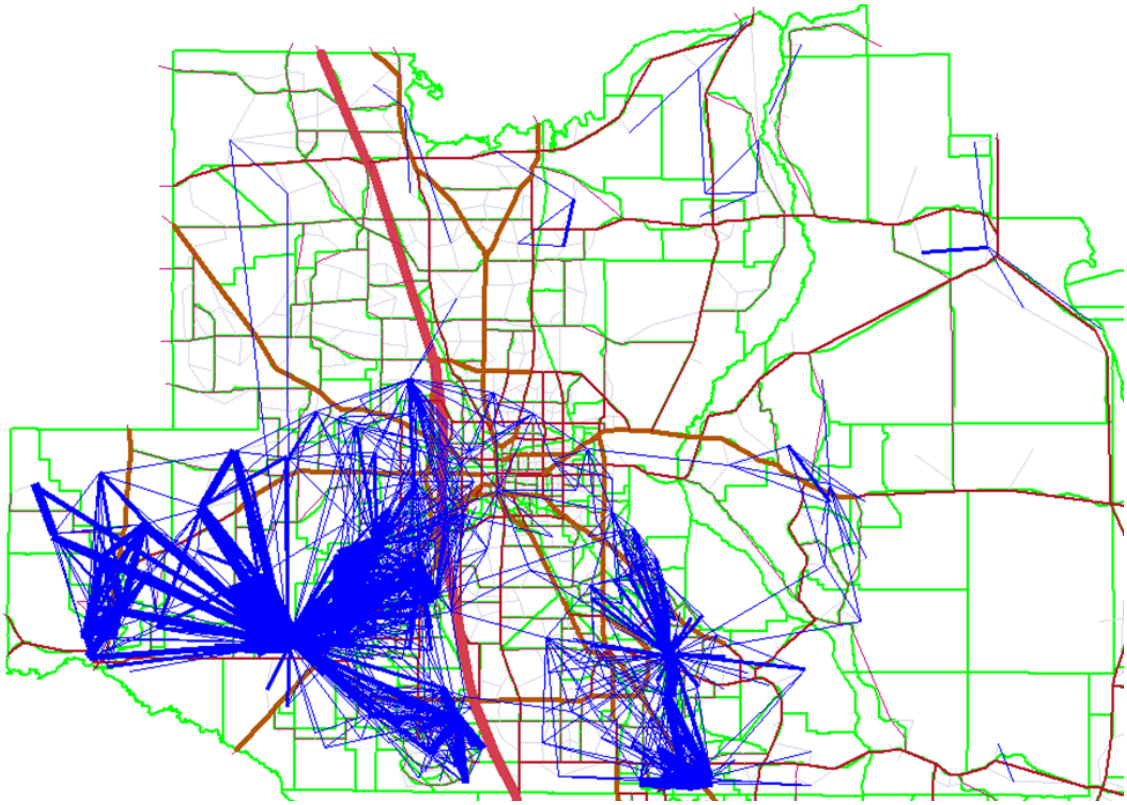


Figure 2-36 | AM Peak Future Intracounty Trips – South County (N=25)

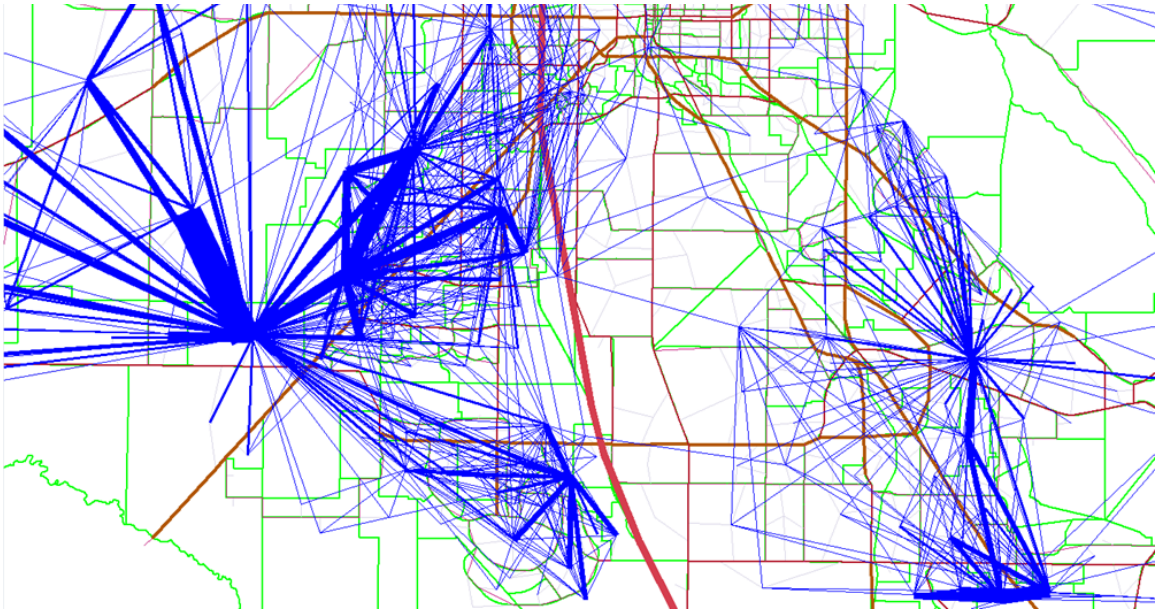


Figure 2-37 | Midday Future Intracounty Trips – Entire County (N=50)

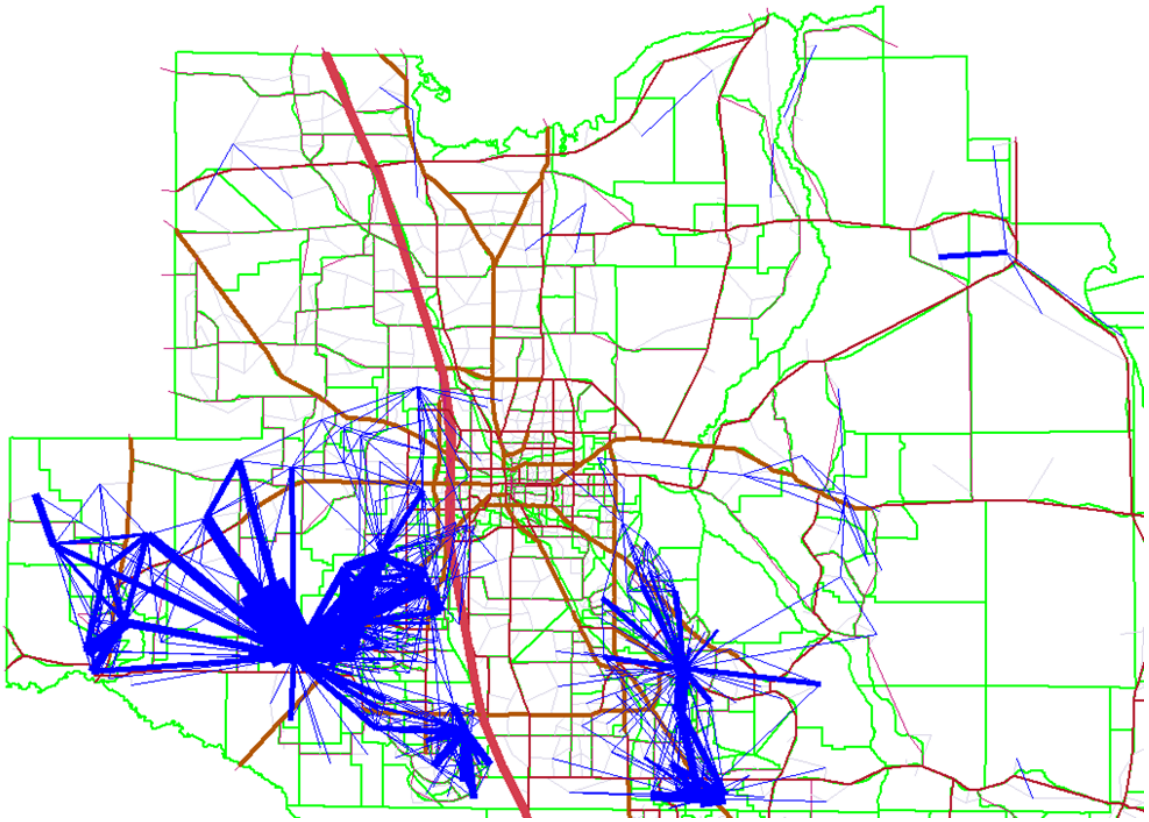


Figure 2-38 | Midday Future Intracounty Trips – South County (N=50)

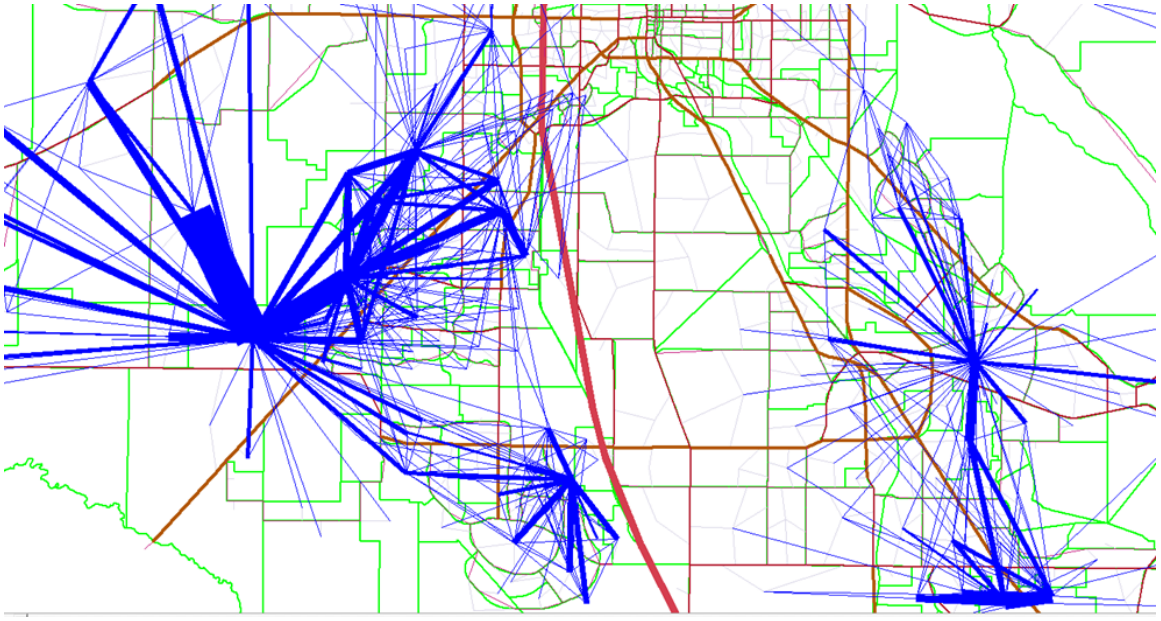


Figure 2-39 | PM Peak Future Intracounty Trips – Entire County (N=50)

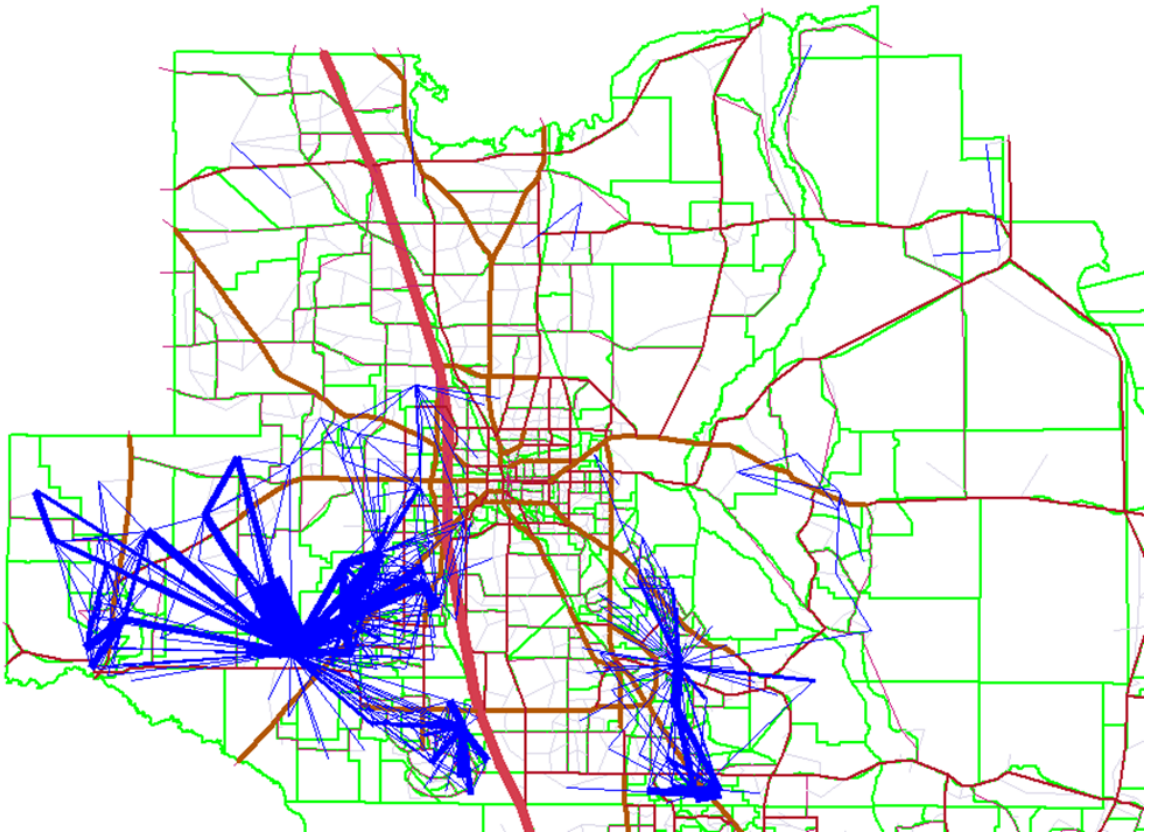


Figure 2-40 | PM Peak Future Intracounty Trips – South County (N=50)

Figure 2-41 | Nighttime Future Intracounty Trips – Entire County (N = 50)

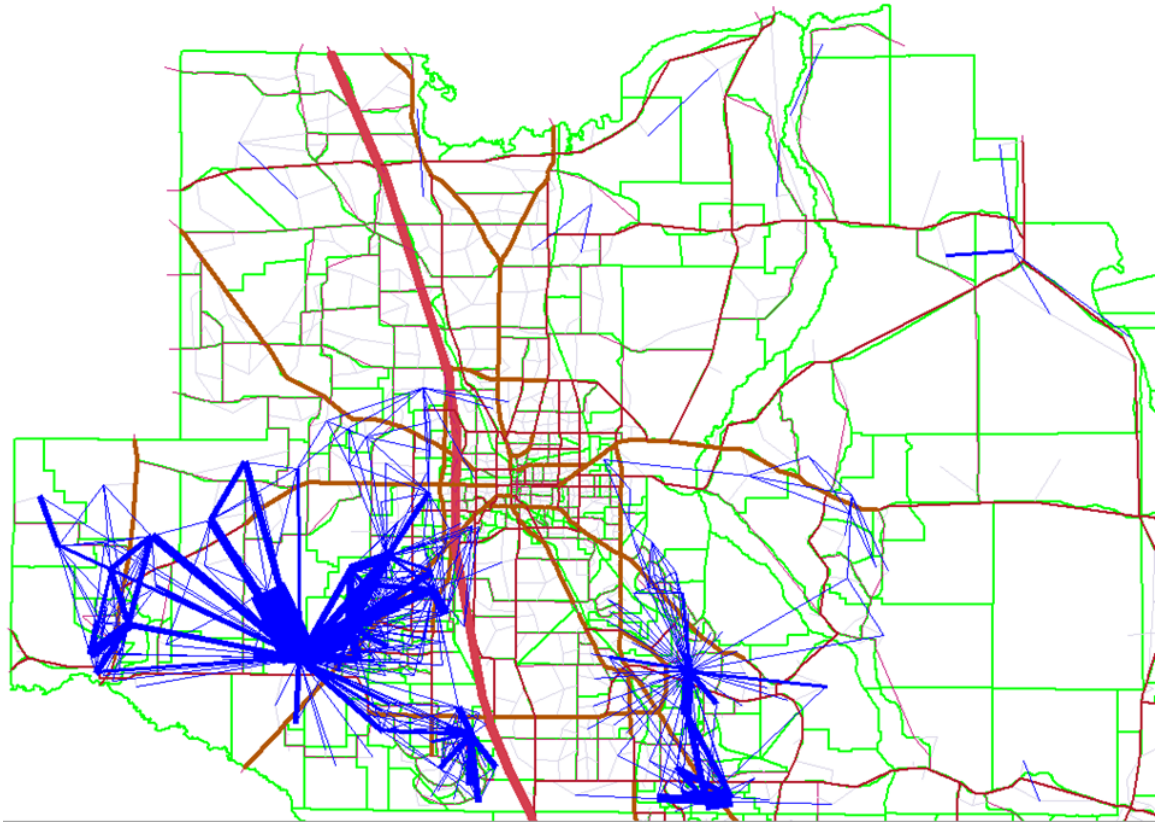


Figure 2-42 | Nighttime Future Intracounty Trips – South County (N=50)

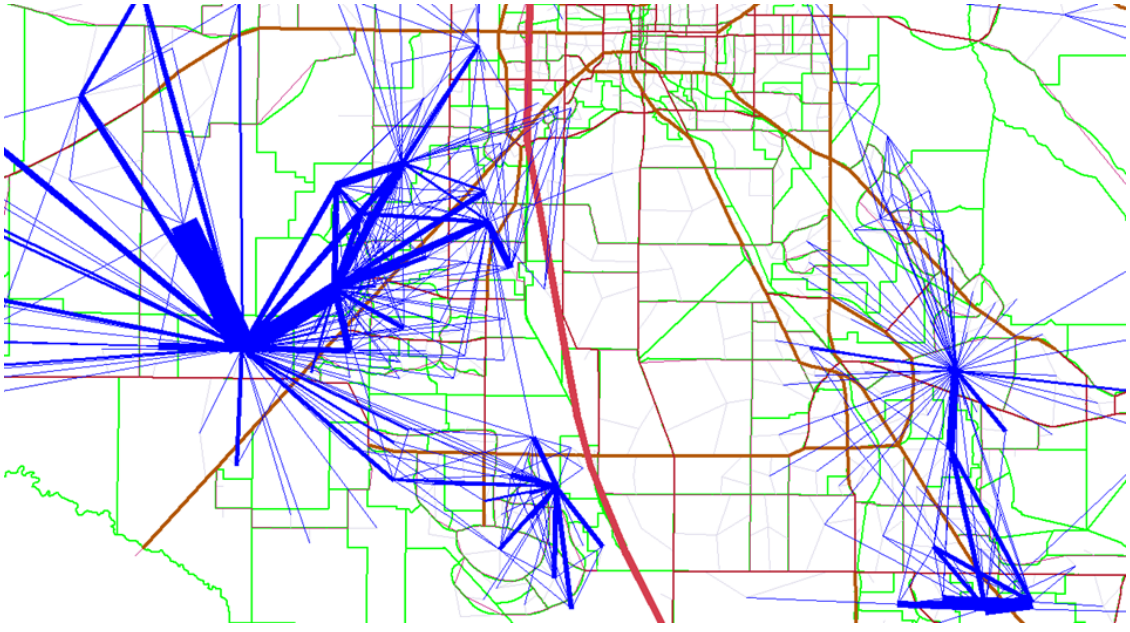


Figure 2-43 | External Future Origins to Marion County (N=100)

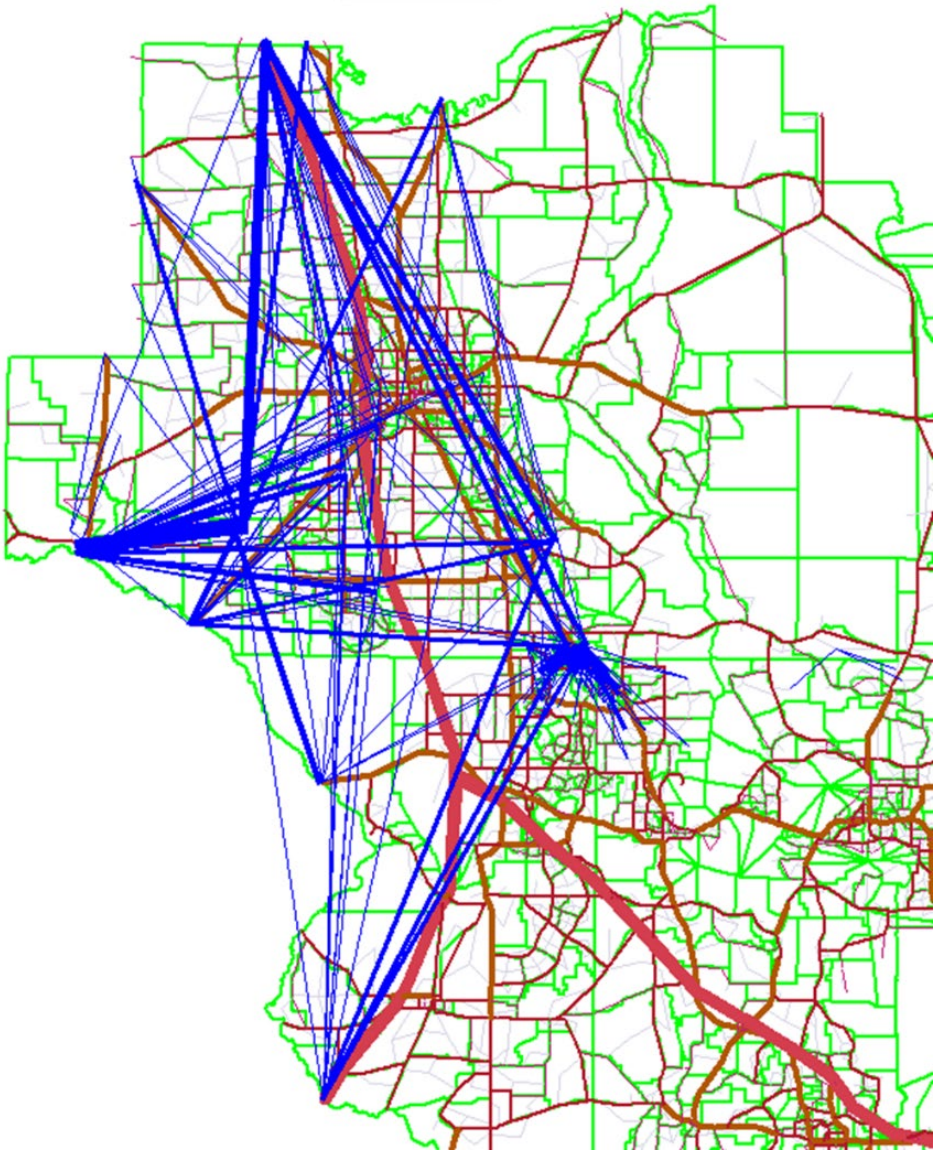
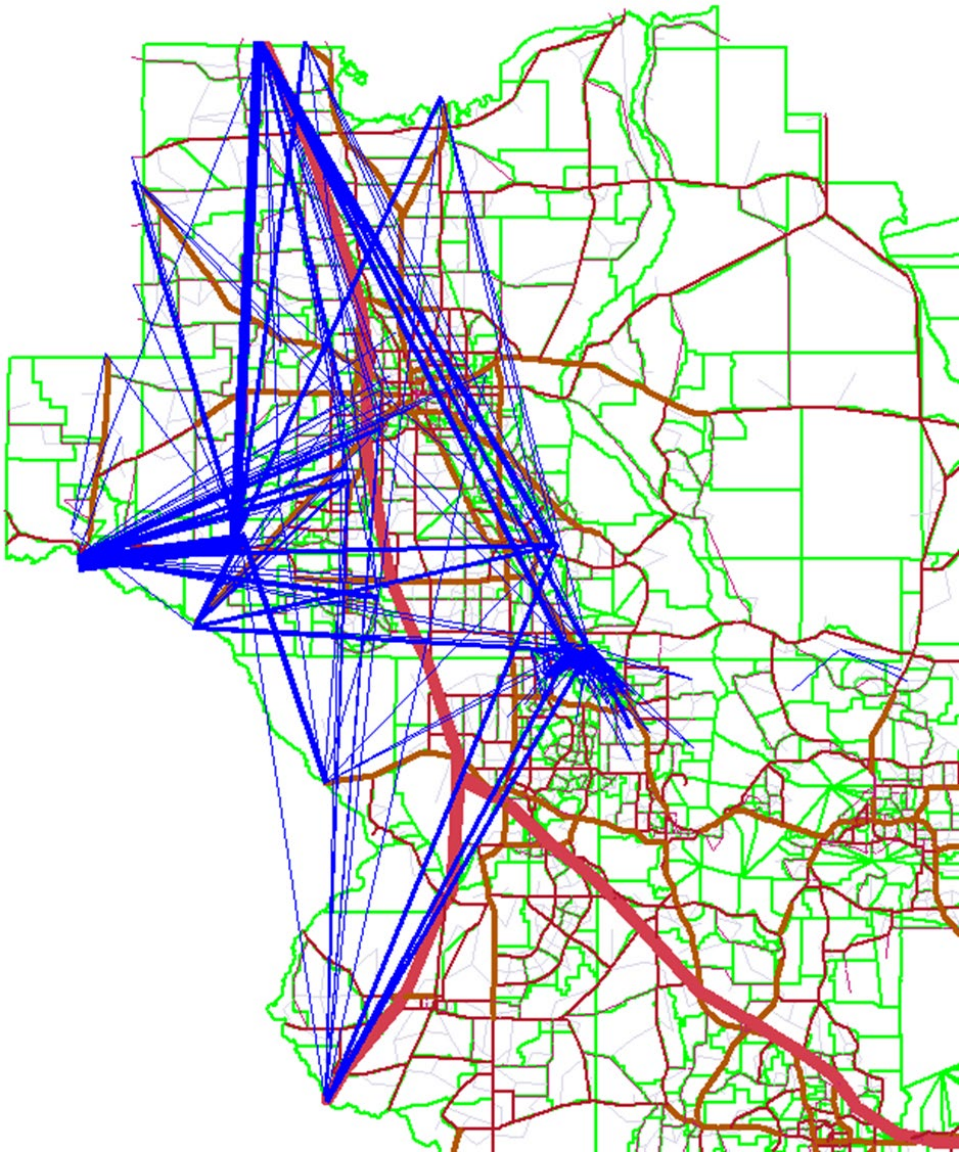


Figure 2-44 | External Future Destinations from Marion County (N=100)



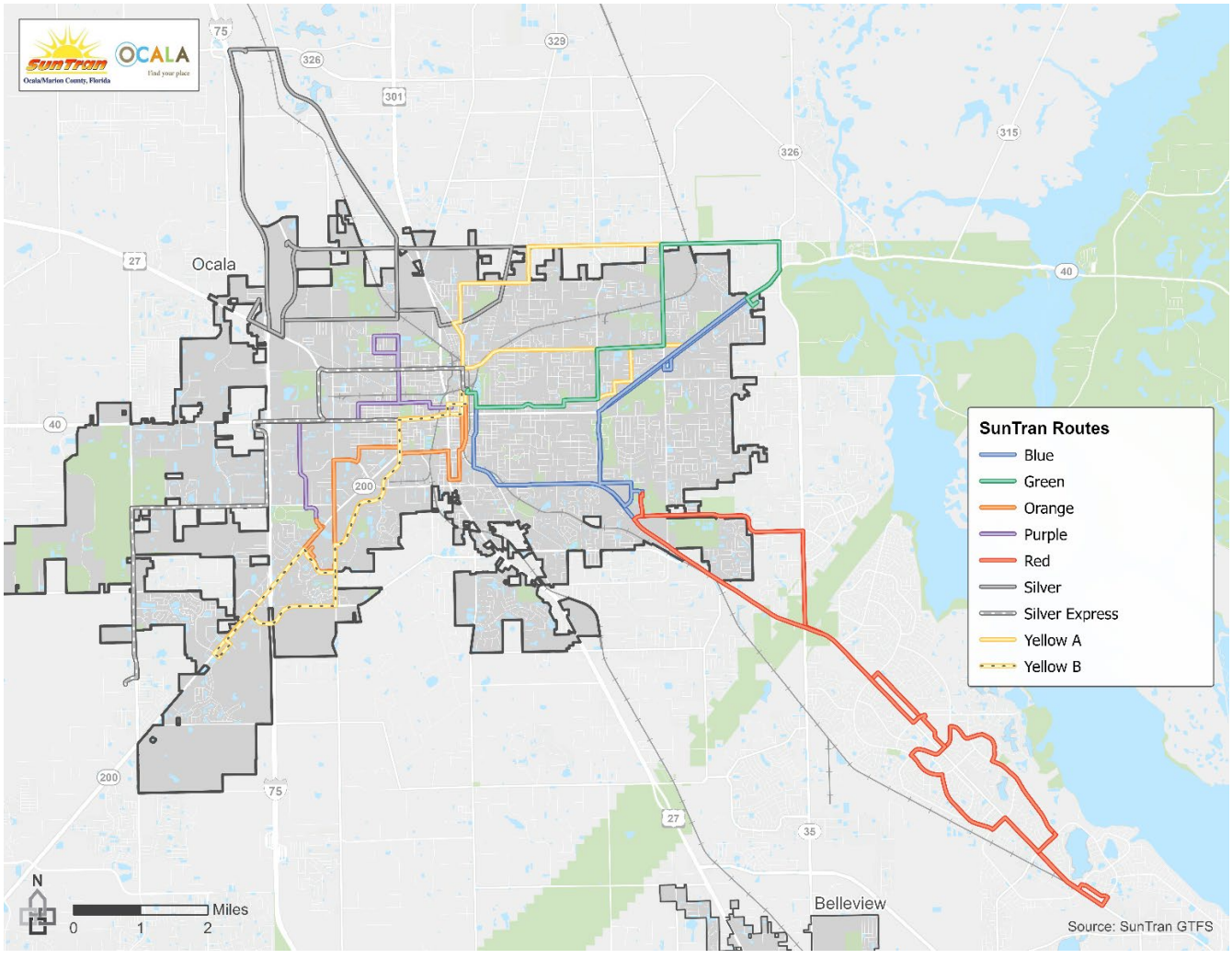
3. Existing Services & Performance Evaluation

3.1 Existing System Profile

3.1.1 Service Overview

Existing public transportation services in Marion County include both fixed-route and paratransit services. SunTran, the fixed-route bus system, is governed by the City of Ocala. Marion Transit Services, the Transportation-Disadvantaged (TD) service provider in Marion County, contracted through RATP Dev to provide ADA paratransit service for SunTran. The City of Ocala is the administrative agency for SunTran and has contracted with RATP Dev to perform day-to-day operations and management for the system. SunTran has been operating since 1998 and currently operates a fixed-route system six days per week (**Figure 3-1**). The service is marketed to riders of all age groups. The regular full cash fare is $1.50, with discounts offered for youth, students, older adults, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. In addition, a monthly pass is offered at a rate of $45 per month; reduced rate passes are available for youth, older adults, and individuals with disabilities as well.

Figure 3-1 | SunTran Service Map



SunTran provides fixed-schedule service on seven routes in Marion County, mostly centered in Ocala, with one route operating from Ocala to the Silver Springs Shores area southeast of Ocala and another to the Amtrak station northwest of Ocala. Most routes operate between 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Headways run between 60 and 90 minutes (**Table 3-1**).

Table 3-1 | SunTran Operational Characteristics

Route	Hours of Operation	Frequency					
		Early	AM Peak	Midday	PM Peak	Evening	Late
Green	Monday – Saturday 5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.	60	70	70	70	70	60
Blue		60	70	70	70	70	60
Purple		60	70	70	70	70	60
Orange		60	70	70	70	70	60
Red	Monday – Saturday 5:45 a.m. – 8:15 p.m.	70	70	60	70	70	-
Yellow	Monday – Saturday 5:00 a.m. – 7:45 p.m.	60	70	70	70	70	60
Silver	Monday – Saturday 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.	-	70	120+	70	-	-

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

Operational and financial productivity measures evaluate how efficiently each SunTran route utilizes agency resources. While efficiency should not be the only metric used to evaluate service, it provides valuable insight into the allocation of limited resources. On-time performance provides insight into the customer's perspective on the service. If a rider cannot rely on a bus to consistently arrive on time, their trust in the service erodes, and they will seek other modes of transportation. This assessment evaluates SunTran performance on five metrics:

- **Passengers per revenue hour:** the average per revenue service hour;
- **Passengers per revenue mile:** ridership generated per revenue service mile supplied;
- **Farebox recovery ratio:** revenues as a percent of operating costs;
- **Subsidy per passenger:** the total subsidy for a route is the net of operating cost and fare revenues; and
- **On-time performance:** departure from a timepoint no earlier than scheduled and less than five minutes late.

Table 3-2 includes SunTran performance for each of these measures at the route and system level. The Green Route performs better than every other route with respect to productivity measures (i.e., highest number of passengers per revenue hour/mile and highest farebox recovery/lowest subsidy per passenger). Conversely, the Silver Route underperforms every other route with respect to productivity measures (i.e., passengers per revenue hour/mile and farebox recovery ratio/subsidy per passenger). However, it is important to note that some of this poor productivity may be partially attributable to signal reception issues that result in an unknown number of uncounted trips on this route. While all routes fail to meet the agency's on-time performance standard of 95 percent, and only 76.3 percent of all timepoint departures occur no earlier than and less than five minutes after scheduled, some routes perform much better than others with respect to this measure. The Green Route performs best, with 84.6 percent of stops occurring on-time, while the Red Route performs worst with only 67.8 percent of stops occurring on-time. Notably, the Red Line also features the earliest departures (16.4 percent), which are far more problematic than late arrivals, as people arrive at the bus stop on time only to find out they have missed the bus and must wait an hour for the next bus. A detailed service analysis of route-level performance, highlighting each route's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities for improvement, is contained in **Appendix B.**

Table 3-2 | Transit Service Performance[3]

Route	Passengers per Revenue Hour	Passengers per Revenue Mile	Farebox Recovery Ratio	Subsidy per Passenger	On-Time Departures
Green	9.90	0.49	9.1%	$7.47	84.6%
Blue	6.09	0.33	5.6%	$12.62	77.6%
Purple	4.65	0.34	4.3%	$16.77	80.0%
Orange	7.56	0.49	7.0%	$10.02	75.8%
Red	3.88	0.19	3.6%	$20.25	67.8%
Yellow	3.91	0.25	3.6%	$20.08	71.0%
Silver[4]	0.99	0.05	0.9%	$81.15	77.0%
System	**5.51**	**0.31**	**5.1%**	**$14.03**	**76.3%**

3.1.2 ADA Paratransit Service Profile

Marion Transit Services (MTS) provides door-to-door paratransit services to meet transportation needs for medical, life-sustaining, educational, work, business, and recreational activities for Marion County's TD citizens as well as members of other program recipients in Marion County. Trip prioritization is established by the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB), a subcommittee of the MPO.

MTS began serving the transportation needs of older adults in Marion County in 1976, and service has since expanded to include TD and Medicaid clients. Since 1983, MTS has been designated by the MPO as the Marion County Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for all non-emergency medical transportation and for those

[3] Revenue hours and miles are based on April 2022 service data; ridership and on-time performance are based on APC and AVL data from October 18, 2021–March 18, 2022.

[4] A signal reception issue resulted in an unknown number of uncounted trips on the Silver Route; accordingly, passengers per revenue hour/mile and farebox recovery ratio measures are likely greater than calculated while subsidy per passenger is likely lower than calculated.

needing wheelchairs or other assistance in the Ocala/Marion County area. As the CTC, MTS is responsible for ensuring coordination of local paratransit services to the maximum extent feasible. The Ocala/Marion County TPO accepted the responsibilities of being the Designated Official Planning Agency for the TD program and established the Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board (TDLCB) in 1990 to assist MTS in the pursuit of providing services for transportation-disadvantaged patrons.

MTS services must be reserved at least 72 hours prior to a trip, and appointments should be made between 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, with certain exceptions made for patients with eligible medical conditions. Appointments for persons living in outlying areas should be made between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. Fares are $2.00 for a one-way trip, and fare waivers are available for qualified individuals. By providing MTS capital needs of two cutaways, RATP Dev also contracts with MTS to provide complementary Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) service to fixed-route riders traveling from and to locations within ¾ mile of existing fixed bus routes. SunTran ADA Paratransit performance measures are detailed in **Table 3-3**.

Drivers can assist passengers from their doorway into the vehicle and from the vehicle to the main entrance of their destination. All buses are ADA accessible; however, drivers cannot assist passengers with wheelchairs traveling over more than one step or curb. Accommodations can be made for Certified Service Animals; however, MTS must be notified when a reservation is made. Additionally, an escort accompanying a passenger due to a medical necessity can be accommodated if details are provided at the time of reservation.

Table 3-3 | SunTran ADA Paratransit Performance

Passengers per Revenue Hour	Passengers per Revenue Mile	Farebox Recovery Ratio	Subsidy per Passenger	Cost per Passenger Mile
1.69	0.14	9.11%	$19.94	$4.66

Source | SunTran ADA Paratransit Performance Annual Report (FY 2021)

3.1.3 Capital/Infrastructure Overview

The Downtown Transfer Station (**Figure 3-2**) serves as the central stop for six of the seven routes. The Ocala Health Department serves as the transfer location that connects the Blue route running from the Downtown Transfer Station and the Red route running to Silver Springs Shores.

Figure 3-2 | Downtown Transfer Station

The SunTran Administrative and Maintenance Facility (**Figure 3-3**) is located at 1805 NE 30th Ave, Ocala, Florida 34470. The facility is divided into administrative (main) and maintenance (side) buildings. The main building contains offices which house management and supporting activities for overall transit operations such as accounting, finance, engineering, legal, safety, security, customer service, scheduling, and planning. There is also an area in the main building designated for drivers to rest between work shifts, which includes a kitchen and a quiet room. The side building serves as general purpose maintenance where mechanics perform routine maintenance and repairs. It contains two bus bays, a pantry room, and an office room for the maintenance director's office.

Figure 3-3 | Maintenance Facility

3.1.4 Other Transportation Providers

Other private and public entities offer transportation services in the study area, as shown in **Table 3-4.**

Table 3-4 | Other Ocala-Area Transportation Providers

Name	Type	Ownership	Service Area
Amtrak	Fixed-route bus shuttle	Intercity bus/train	All U.S.
Greyhound Bus	Fixed-route bus	Intercity bus	All U.S.
Lake Limo Shuttle, LLC	Livery services, airport transportation	Private	SW Marion County, Central FL
Leopard Medical Transport	Non-emergency medical transport	Private	Central FL
Pronto Limousine Service	Livery services, airport transportation	Private	Marion County
Stagecoach Transportation	Livery services, airport transportation	Private	Central FL
Uber/Lyft	Rideshare	Private	Ocala and surrounding areas

3.2 System Performance Evaluation

The system performance evaluation will assess the performance of fixed route and paratransit systems in Ocala as compared to the performance of peer systems. Comparisons are drawn using metrics reported to the National Transit Database (NTD) to ensure consistency with peer agencies. The analysis is based on four general categories of evaluation measures, which are explained in further detail within subsequent sections: service productivity, maintenance productivity, cost efficiency and effectiveness, and service coverage.

3.2.1 Peer Comparison and Trend Analysis

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

Data used as the basis for this analysis was taken from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which maintains a comprehensive database of operational and financial information for each transit agency receiving FTA funding, known as the National Transit Database (NTD). Data is compiled annually, with strict requirements on how it is reported to the NTD. Due to the level of detail and information included, it provides consistent information that can be used to examine the same factors across various agencies. This trend analysis uses NTD data for fiscal years 2015–2019. Using the same measures, the peer system review analysis was conducted to compare various SunTran performance characteristics to a group of transit peers using the most recent pre-pandemic data at the time of the analysis, 2019 NTD data. Various performance measures were used to present the data that relate to overall system performance. Three categories of indicators and performance measures were analyzed for the trend and peer analysis of the existing transit service:

- General performance measures indicate the quantity of service supply, passenger and fare revenue generation, and resource input.
- Effectiveness measures indicate the extent to which the service is effectively provided; they can be used to implement goals towards improving the quality of service and customer satisfaction and increasing the market share of transit.
- Efficiency measures indicate the extent to which cost efficiency is achieved (i.e., costs in relation to benefit); they can be used to implement goals toward long-term viability and stability of the service.

The trend and peer system review analyses are organized by the type of measure or indicator and include statistics, figures, and tables to illustrate SunTran's performance over the past five years and how SunTran compares to selected peers.

3.2.2 Peer Agency Selection

While Suffolk Transit is not established as a peer in FTIS, the system was used for the purpose of this peer analysis because the agency operates an on-demand service similar to the services being considered by SunTran.

Table 3-5 lists the selected peer systems for the peer comparison and trend analysis. Peer agencies were selected from the Florida Transit Information System (FTIS) and refined by client and stakeholder feedback.

Table 3-5 | Agency Peers

Agency	Jurisdiction	State	Transit Service
Hernando County Transit	Hernando County	FL	TheBus
Lake County Transit	Lake County	FL	LakeXpress
Pottstown Area Rapid Transit	Borough of Pottstown	PA	PART
Metropolitan Area Transit	City of Moorhead	MN	MATBUS
Suffolk Transit	City of Suffolk	VA	Suffolk Transit

Table 3-6 defines the urban and service area characteristics of the City of Ocala and selected peer agencies. These metrics are used to understand similarities and differences in peer agencies. Of the peer agencies, PART and Suffolk Transit are most like Ocala in service area size and population, while TheBus in Hernando County has the most similarly sized urban area.

Table 3-6 | Urban and Service Area Characteristics Peer Comparison, FY2019

Metric	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Service Area (sq-mile)	**55**	59	89	71	26	34	73
Service Population	**64,655**	80,705	116,315	97,497	48,036	54,000	87,677
Urban Area (sq-mile)	**112**	175	115	94	70	79	515
Urban Population	**156,909**	400,716	148,220	131,337	176,676	107,682	1,439,666

3.2.3 Performance Measures

To assess Ocala and peer agencies in system performance, a variety of performance measures have been included to understand system operations, funding, and capital needs. Performance measures for comparison include expense and revenue measures, vehicle measures, and service effectiveness.

Service Effectiveness Measures

To assess service effectiveness, a variety of measures including service operated (passenger trips, revenue hours, and revenue miles), and passenger trips per vehicle, revenue mile, and revenue hour are shown in **Table 3-7** for fixed-route service and **Table 3-8** for demand response service. SunTran also exceeds most of its peers in fixed-route passenger trips per vehicle in maximum service, per revenue mile, and per revenue hour, indicating a high level of effectiveness as compared to its peers.

Table 3-7 | Fixed-Route Service Effectiveness Measure Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Passenger Trips	**377,825**	265,863	140,220	353,945	482,667	223,639	128,845
Total Revenue Hours	**32,036**	25,698	21,816	34,221	34,812	19,041	18,602
Total Revenue Miles	**480,893**	412,519	408,854	567,788	477,934	260,365	347,652
Passenger Trips per Vehicle in Maximum Service	**53,975**	36,392	20,031	35,395	60,333	44,728	21,474
Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile	**0.79**	0.64	0.34	0.62	1.01	0.86	0.37
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	**11.79**	9.86	6.43	10.34	13.86	11.75	6.93

Table 3-8 | Demand Response Service Effectiveness Measure Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Passenger Trips	**18,458**	**29,862**	13,208	118,750	10,172	5,614	1,565
Total Revenue Hours	**10,098**	**16,782**	5,603	68,036	6,505	2,911	853
Total Revenue Miles	**136,188**	**249,731**	111,397	1,039,601	74,339	15,394	7,925
Passenger Trips per Vehicle in Maximum Service	**9,229**	**3,384**	3,302	3,831	3,391	5,614	783
Passenger Trips per Revenue Mile	**0.14**	**0.19**	0.12	0.11	0.14	0.36	0.20
Passenger Trips per Revenue Hour	**1.83**	**1.89**	2.36	1.75	1.56	1.93	1.83

Vehicle Measures

Fleet sizes are compared in **Table 3-9** SunTran operates nine vehicles in maximum service, slightly lower than Hernando County and Moorhead (11 vehicles), and slightly higher than Pottstown and Suffolk, who operate six and eight vehicles during maximum service, respectively. The peer average is likely skewed by Lake County, with 41 vehicles.

Table 3-9 | Agency-Wide Fleet Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Bus Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	**7**	7	7	10	8	5	6
Demand Response Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	**2**	8	4	31	3	1	2
Total Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	**9**	15	11	41	11	6	8

Vehicle measures are included in **Table 3-10** for fixed-route and **Table 3-11** for demand response comparison to assess fleet capacity and restraints as it relates to service operations. SunTran fixed-route service outperforms the peer average in vehicle trips per capita and revenue miles per vehicle in maximum service. SunTran's fixed-route revenue miles per vehicles in maximum service (68,699) is the highest of all reporting peers, who average just under 57,000 revenue miles per vehicle in maximum service. SunTran's fixed-route vehicles are older than the peer average, but their demand response vehicles are newer than the peer average.

Table 3-10 | Fixed-Route Vehicular Measures Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Average Age of Fleet (years)	**8.2**	7	6.4	7.3	5.3	13.5	3.4
Vehicle Trips per Capita	**5.8**	4.10	1.2	3.6	10.0	4.1	1.5

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Revenue Miles per Vehicles in Maximum Service	**68,699**	56,989	58,408	56,779	59,742	52,073	57,942

Table 3-11 | Demand Response Vehicular Measures Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Average Age of Fleet (years)	**0.0**	2.30	2.6	2.7	3.2	2.0	1.0
Vehicle Trips per Capita	**0.29**	0.33	0.11	1.22	0.21	0.10	0.02
Revenue Miles per Vehicles in Maximum Service	**68,094**	21,104	27,849	33,536	24,780	15,394	3,963

Expense and Revenue Measures

The expense and revenue measures shown provide a picture of the agency's financial situation. SunTran's agency-wide financial data for Fiscal Years 2015 through 2019 are shown in **Table 3-12**. Over the five-year period, operating expenses and operating funds have decreased, though capital funds have fluctuated, increasing by nearly $500,000 in Fiscal Year 2018, before dropping by nearly $600,000 in Fiscal Year 2019.

Table 3-12 | SunTran Agency-wide Expenses and Revenue

	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	Percent Change (FY2015 - FY2019)
Operating Expenses	$2,966,590	$2,731,125	$2,520,604	$2,508,030	$2,726,005	-8%
Operating Funds	$2,966,590	$2,731,125	$2,692,135	$2,646,537	$2,744,226	-7%
Capital Funds	$0	$0	$462,661	$934,756	$378,824	-18%

SunTran's agency-wide operating revenues for Fiscal Years 2015 to 2019 are shown in **Table 3-13**. Within this timeframe, SunTran saw a 23 percent increase in local revenue and state funds, as well as a 46 percent decrease in other funds, such as grants. A 21 percent decrease in federal funding occurred from 2015 to 2019, as well as a 23 percent decrease in passenger fare revenue.

Table 3-13 | SunTran Agency-wide Operating Revenue, FY2015 - FY2019

	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	Percent Change (FY2015 - FY2019)
Local Revenue	$490,768	$474,640	$520,915	$527,451	$601,674	23%
State Funds	$489,971	$474,640	$520,915	$527,451	$601,673	23%
Federal Assistance	$1,519,854	$1,383,498	$1,284,016	$1,216,126	$1,203,348	-21%
Other Funds	$95,043	$35,180	$35,113	$37,283	$50,978	-46%
Passenger Fare Revenue	$370,954	$363,167	$331,176	$338,226	$286,553	-23%

SunTran capital revenue for Fiscal Years 2015 through 2019 is shown in **Table 3-14.** SunTran was primarily funded through federal assistance, with intermittent local revenue in Fiscal Years 2017 and 2019, and state funding in Fiscal Year 2017. Federal assistance more than doubled between 2017 and 2018, however Fiscal Year 2019 federal funding ($303,059) was slightly lower than that of Fiscal Year 2017 ($370,129).

Table 3-14 | SunTran Agency-wide Capital Revenue, FY2015 - FY2019

	FY2015	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	Percent Change (FY2015 - FY2019)
Local Revenue	$0	$0	$46,266	$0	$75,765	64%
State Funds	$0	$0	$46,266	$0	$0	-100%
Federal Assistance	$0	$0	$370,129	$934,756	$303,059	-18%

Agency-wide expenses for all peers, as well as SunTran, are included in **Table 3-15**. SunTran's operating expenses are on par with peer agencies, except in capital funds. Of its peers, SunTran's capital funds ($378,824) trended lower than peers with an average of about $700,000 in capital funds.

Table 3-15 | Agency-wide Expenses and Revenue Peer Comparison, FY2019

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Bus Operating Expenses	**$2,344,377**	$2,090,345	$1,472,114	$3,360,356	$2,478,901	$1,995,531	$1,144,825
Demand Response Operating Expenses	**$381,628**	$1,057,266	$586,894	$3,988,841	$459,619	$201,768	$49,208
Total Operating Expenses	**$2,726,005**	$3,147,611	$2,059,008	$7,349,197	$2,938,520	$2,197,299	$1,194,033
Operating Funds	**$2,744,226**	$3,216,385	$2,059,008	$7,483,287	$3,045,197	$2,299,398	$1,195,034
Capital Funds	**$378,824**	$697,754	$1,372,686	$1,241,707	$184,149	$0	$690,230
Local Revenue	**$677,439**	$630,609	$528,339	$1,784,341	$1,676	$89,791	$748,898
Passenger Fare Revenue	**$286,553**	$247,693	$138,020	$248,809	$423,386	$340,938	$87,314

Efficiency Measures

Table 3-16 outlines several efficiency measures including operating expense per capita, per passenger trip, and per revenue hour. SunTran's operating expenses per passenger trip and per revenue hour are lower than the peer average, indicating a higher level of efficiency in these metrics for both fixed-route and demand response. SunTran's fixed-route service is less efficient in its operating expenses per capita ($36.26) than its peers, though these metrics are varied across agencies. SunTran's demand response service (**Table 3-17**) is more efficient than the peer average across all three metrics.

Table 3-16 | Fixed-Route Efficiency Measures Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Operating Expense Per Capita	**$36.26**	**$29.75**	$12.66	$34.47	$51.61	$36.95	$13.06
Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	**$6.20**	**$8.59**	$10.50	$9.49	$5.14	$8.92	$8.89
Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	**$73.18**	**$80.65**	$67.48	$98.20	$71.21	$104.80	$61.54

Table 3-17 | Demand Response Efficiency Measures Comparison

	Ocala (SunTran)	Peer Average	Hernando County (TheBus)	Lake County (LakeXpress)	Moorhead (MATBUS)	Pottstown (PART)	Suffolk (Suffolk Transit)
Operating Expense Per Capita	**$5.90**	**$11.96**	$5.05	$40.91	$9.57	$3.74	$0.56
Operating Expense per Passenger Trip	**$20.68**	**$38.12**	$44.43	$33.59	$45.18	$35.94	$31.44
Operating Expense per Revenue Hour	**$37.79**	**$72.21**	$104.75	$58.63	$70.66	$69.31	$57.69

4. Situation Appraisal

Planning for transit services through the development of a TDP requires consideration of other transportation plans and policies affecting the region. This chapter considers plans and studies that impact the City of Ocala and Marion County and their potential effects on the development of SunTran's TDP. In addition, the chapter details the current successes, opportunities, and barriers that impact the optimal delivery of public transportation services in Ocala.

4.1 State and Local Transportation Plans

Various state, regional, county, and local plans were reviewed during the analysis and key findings have been outlined in **Table 4-1**.

Table 4-1 | State and Local Transportation Plans

Plan/Policy	Geography	Last Update	Overview	Key Considerations for Situation Appraisal
Florida Transportation Plan	State	2020	Plan designed to grow Florida's economy into a more competitive market, and to make communities more livable. Using a 50-year transportation planning horizon, this plan calls for fundamental change in how and where state investments in transportation are made.	▪ In addition to route alignment changes, recommendations to improve service in form of short-term and long-term implementation plans are included in this document. ▪ Short-term recommendations: ○ Increase Green Route and Orange Route frequencies to two buses per hour ○ Adjust current/proposed Purple Route alignment for one-way loop ○ Focus on ADA connections between stops and medical uses ○ Discontinue last Red Route trip ▪ Long-term recommendation: ○ Convert Red Route to Flex Zone
Ocala/Marion TPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan	County	2020	A 20-year guide for transportation improvements within the urbanized area, which is updated every 5 years. This plan provides year-by-year approaches for reaching program goals and is consistent with state and federal requirements to maintain funding.	▪ This plan considers service improvements for all existing SunTran routes that would reduce headway to 30 minutes. ▪ Due to limited funding, service improvements included in Cost Feasible Plan limited to reducing frequency to 45 minutes on Blue, Green, Orange, and Purple routes. ▪ This plan also includes continued operation of existing fixed route and ADA service and $2.41 million for ADA bus shelter accessibility improvements.
Marion County Comprehensive Plan	County	2014	This comprehensive plan guides the development, land use decisions, and preservation of existing transportation infrastructure and transportation improvements.	▪ Plan states that Marion County must coordinate with TPO to: ○ Undertake action to serve transportation disadvantaged persons with an efficient transit system ○ Provide for development of rational and integrated multimodal transportation system; preserve options to promote development of long-range transit alternatives ▪ Marion County also created urban growth boundary and density bonus incentive program to promote more transit supportive environment.

Plan/Policy	Geography	Last Update	Overview	Key Considerations for Situation Appraisal
SunTran Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA)	Local	2016	Assessment to identify opportunities for improving productivity and efficiency of transit agency's public transportation services.	▪ In addition to route alignment changes, this plan includes recommendations to improve service in form of short-term and long-term implementation plans. ▪ Short-term recommendations: ○ Increase Green Route and Orange Route frequencies to two buses per hour ○ Adjust current/proposed Purple Route alignment for one-way loop ○ Focus on ADA connections between stops and medical uses ○ Discontinue last Red Route trip ▪ Long-term recommendation: ○ Convert Red Route to Flex Zone
Ocala 2035 Vision	Local	2010	This guide describes how the City of Ocala and its community would like the city to look and function in the future.	▪ Transit and mobility related strategies split are among four different design topics: ○ *General* – community redevelopment ○ *Urban Form & Open Space* – identify and acquire open spaces around the city ○ *Building & Site Design* – create incentive program to encourage infill, development, or redevelopment ○ *Mobility & Connectivity* – develop Streetscape Master Plans, Complete Street evaluations, establish citywide sidewalk improvement program
City of Ocala Comprehensive Plan	Local	2009	This document details land use, transportation, and various other planning-related matters for Ocala.	Plan goals which may impact transit services and/or planning: ▪ Create and maintain safe, efficient, and aesthetic transportation system that encourages multimodal transportation (Goal 1) ▪ Provide efficient and safe public transit system accessible to all citizens (Goal 3) ▪ Direct growth to Transportation Concurrency Exception Area/Urban Redevelopment Area to discourage urban sprawl; reduce development pressure on rural lands; maximize use of existing public facilities; centralize commercial, governmental, retail, residential, and cultural activities (Goal 4) ▪ City implemented parking exemption in central business district and allows for alternative transportation programs to mitigate deficient road conditions including but not limited to transit systems, carpools, vanpools, limited parking, and staggered work hours (subject to approval).

4.2 Land Use

While an analysis of transit potential finds limited areas with population and employment density high enough to support hourly, fixed-route transit service, within SunTran's service area, much of this existing/planned development is concentrated in and around Downtown Ocala. Where this density occurs outside of this area, it falls along key corridors, including SW College Road (SR 200) and SE Maricamp Road (SR 464). Accordingly, opportunities exist for transit to connect residents with points of interest including retail destinations, medical facilities, and civic buildings. These services should heavily focus on serving areas identified in the Transit-Oriented Populations Origin Index to maximize their impact.

4.3 Socioeconomic Trends

To better assess the impact of population trends on public transportation needs, it is important to understand the trends and markets that could be impacted or may benefit from public transportation services. Key findings from an assessment of socioeconomic trends are summarized as follows:

- Marion County's population is growing and diversifying; between 2014 and 2019, the county added nearly 19,000 residents, 14,000 of which identify as nonwhite. As the population continues to grow (forecasts estimate upwards of 20 percent growth by 2040), additional transit services will be necessary to meet increasing demand.
- Older residents make up a larger portion of Marion County's residents when compared to Florida as a whole. The median age of Marion County residents is 48.7 compared with 42.0 statewide; this trend corresponds with the presence of several retirement communities within the county. Older individuals may be more likely to use transit and it is important to consider their needs in evaluating how well SunTran serves Marion County's residents.
- While the number of low-income residents has declined substantially in recent years, meeting the needs of this population is critical to promoting transportation equity. While low-income residents reside throughout the county, large numbers reside in West Ocala and Silver Springs Shores; SunTran service should ensure connections between these individuals and jobs, retail destinations, and services.
- Though the number of zero-car households within Marion County significantly declined in recent years, the number of one-car households increased. Larger households with only one car tend to rely more heavily on transit to meet their transportation needs, and they are found throughout the county, though larger numbers reside in and around Ocala and Dunnellon. Working to improve transit connections between one-car households and activity centers is critical to transit planning efforts.

4.4 Organizational Issues

The City of Ocala is the administrative agency for SunTran and currently contracts with RATP Dev to perform day-to-day operations and management for the system. SunTran is currently the only fixed-route public transit provider in Marion County. The City of Ocala has the role of coordinating with the county to locate, permit, and build bus stops and other transit infrastructure/amenities within the right-of-way of the roadways along SunTran routes. Marion County Senior Services is a non-profit, charitable social agency whose mission is to provide

supportive care services to older adults, persons with disabilities, and otherwise disadvantaged residents of Marion County. It is funded by several non-profit and government agencies, including FDOT, CTD, and the Marion County Commission. Marion County Senior Services has contracted with Marion Transit Services to provide public transportation to TD persons within all of Marion County, Florida. RATP Dev, the City of Ocala fixed-route operations subcontractor, has an agreement with Marion Transit Services to provide its complementary ADA paratransit service to residents who live within a ¾ mile buffer of the fixed-route services and cannot walk to a bus stop. Certification of ADA riders is performed by The Center for Independent Living.

Additionally, one barrier facing SunTran is a lack of funding to support the hiring, training, and retention of qualified staff. Available funding is not growing at a rate that matches increased rates of inflation and rising fuel costs, making it difficult to provide competitive compensation packages to bus operators. The lack of qualified operators has created organizational inefficiencies by requiring supervisory level employees to fill the role of bus operator to meet service demand. As of 2022, 7 of the 18 total bus operator positions remain unfilled. The City of Ocala is working to raise the existing bus operators' salaries to match local labor market rate.

4.5 Technology

SunTran is responsible for implementing the Bus Technology Improvements Program and has implemented wireless technology on all buses. This technology provides in-vehicle service to all passengers and improves the customer service experience. At the end of 2013, SunTran equipped all its buses with automatic passenger counters (APCs) and automatic vehicle locator (AVL) devices. The data collected using this technology can improve the accuracy and reliability of tracking transit ridership over traditional methods of manual accounting and/or surveying. This will enhance the rider experience, which has the potential to attract new discretionary riders. SunTran has incorporated its General Transit Specification Feed (GTFS) with the Google Maps trip planning tool to enable riders to access route information and travel times. Currently, SunTran is developing an appropriate data processing methodology to certify APC data for NTD reporting.

In the past, the TPO has considered implementing queue jump lane technologies at selected intersections in Ocala. These lanes provide priority treatment to transit by allowing buses to bypass long queues at congested intersections. The technology uses special priority lanes, often right-hand turn lanes, and is often combined with a priority signal for buses that permit transit through movements at intersections. While the 2045 LRTP did not identify the exploration of queue jump lane technologies, as Marion County continues to grow and traffic congestion levels rise, transit priority treatments should be further evaluated as cost-effective methods that can improve transit speed and reliability while also potentially reducing operating costs.

SunTran is currently exploring the purchase of electric buses, which can reduce the carbon footprint of the transit system while also providing a quieter and more comfortable ride for customers while also having the potential to reduce operating costs as petroleum-based fuel costs rise over time. SunTran is also looking into incorporating enhanced technologies to implement microtransit on-demand services. By leveraging technology and widespread adoption of smartphones, microtransit can offer a cost-effective alternative to or complement for traditional fixed-route transit, particularly in lower density areas and locations where the street network makes deployment of larger buses challenging.

4.6 Transit-Friendly Land Use & Urban Design Efforts

4.6.1 Assessment Framework

The land use and urban design patterns in a transit agency's service area can support or hinder the transit use. This assessment identifies overall strengths and weaknesses in current conditions and in local policies that influence land use and development in and around the SunTran service area. It also recognizes policies identified by the City of Ocala to foster a more transit-friendly operating environment.

SunTran's service area is characterized by low-density development that challenges the viability of fixed-route transit service. Nevertheless, Downtown Ocala, Silver Springs Shores, and the SW College Road corridor feature transit-supportive population and employment densities. Additionally, over the next several years, numerous major multi-family developments are planned in Marion County. Several of these planned projects feature relatively dense, transit-supportive multi-family development; in particular, surrounding SW College Road (SR 200) and SW 60th Avenue and Marion Oaks. Consideration should be given to service expansion to serve these developing areas.

4.6.2 Current Conditions in the City of Ocala

Downtown Ocala is characterized by commercial and governmental land uses. Commercial land uses emanate from downtown along US 27, SR 200, and SR 40, while residential land uses occupy most of the remaining land. Also of note is a cluster of industrial parcels spanning I-75 in West Ocala.

Transit-supportive population densities are scattered throughout Ocala, loosely following the SW College Road (SR 200) corridor. Transit-supportive employment densities are much more common in Ocala, occupying most of the SW College Road (SR 200) and much of the Silver Springs Boulevard (SR 40) corridors. Other clusters of transit-supportive employment densities are found in downtown, Southeast, and West Ocala. Combining both population and employment density, much of Ocala's geography supports hourly fixed-route transit service.

5. Public Involvement

It is important to remember that people are at the core of the transit system and their input is a vital part of the TDP as we work to meet their needs and improve their quality of life. The goal for the plan's public involvement campaign was to channel the public input as the driving force for the alternatives developed and subsequently suggest improvements to be implemented within this plan.

To garner the most public participation, the team worked closely with SunTran staff to develop an extensive Public Involvement Plan (PIP) that looked into previous outreach efforts and tactics that would resonate with the community and introduce new measures to maximize input.

The PIP is a strategic guide for the SunTran public participation approach, in compliance with federal and state regulations. The PIP offers a platform for the public, existing riders, and stakeholders to engage with the planning process and obtain information on the progress and findings generated from the project. Once approved by FDOT, the PIP helped guide the outreach process for the length of the project. Each of the planned initiatives and outreach activities informed SunTran customers and the community about the benefits of transit and the proposed service alternatives that were being developed as part of the process. The PIP can be viewed as **Appendix A.**

Figure 5-1 | SunTran TDP Logo- "Riding into the future"

In order to tie public outreach efforts to the TDP process, the team developed a mini-brand – "*Riding into the Future.*" The mini-brand incorporated SunTran's existing colors on all graphics and promotional items as well as a logo that paid tribute to the area's equestrian history with a horse paving the way into the future alongside a SunTran bus. All materials included the logo for SunTran, the City of Ocala, and the Ocala Marion TPO.

5.1 Promotional Materials and Campaign Brand Outreach

Confronted with the challenge of collecting input from people who live, work, and play in Marion County, a toolkit of promotional materials and tactics that would help maximize engagement efforts was developed.

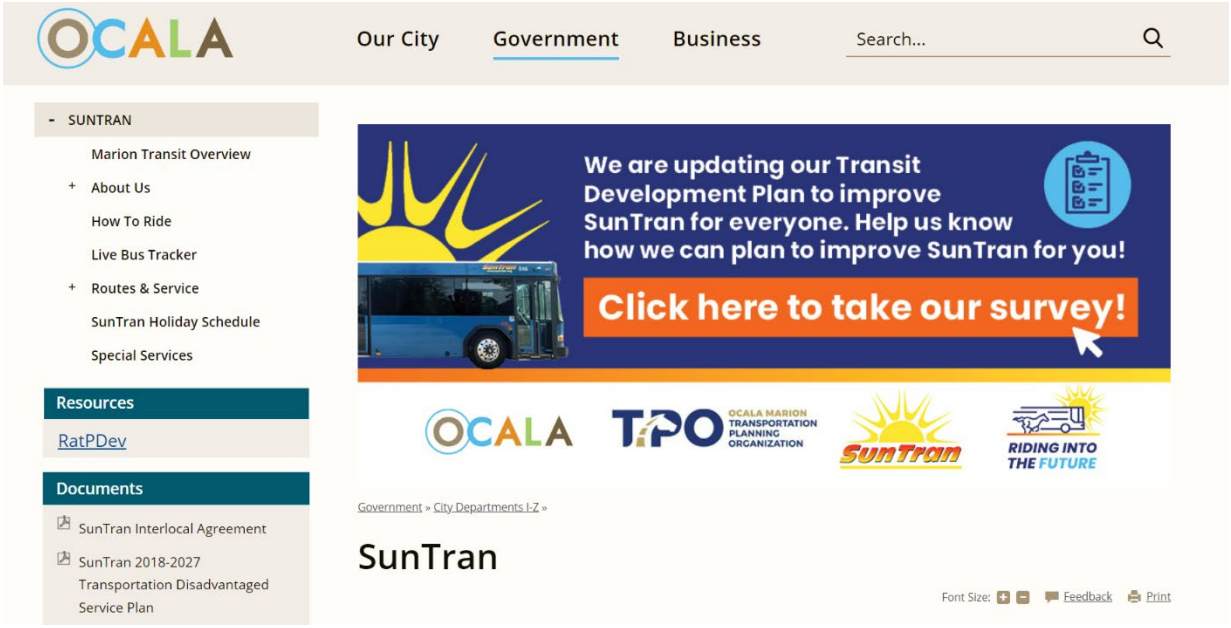
5.1.1 Website, Social Media, and Media Releases

A JotForm Survey was developed for each phase of the TDP process. Online surveys were available in English and Spanish. The Survey was linked to a banner posted on the SunTran.org website as well as the Public Meeting registration. Media releases were posted on the city's website and they were distributed via electronic notification to website subscribers. Notifications were also forwarded to mailing lists provided by the Ocala Marion TPO or their advisory groups.

Promotional graphics and announcements were periodically posted to the City of Ocala's Facebook account, the social media account that the city primarily uses to engage with residents. Selected posts were also shared to the

city's Instagram and Twitter account. Partners of the City of Ocala such as Marion County, Ocala Marion TPO, Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership, and CareerSource Citrus Marion Levy were asked to share the city's posts with their followers. Sharing the city's social media posts with partnering agencies increased exposure of the TDP and also reached additional potential survey participants.

Figure 5-2 | Website Banner Linked to Survey

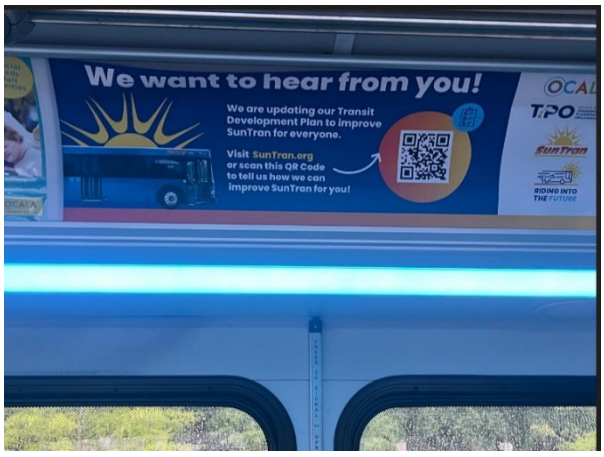


5.1.2 Printed Material

Outreach efforts were conducted in an equitable way by providing the public with access to paper surveys for those that do not have internet access or preferred to submit a paper survey. Translated surveys were also available if the participant did not want to take a Spanish online survey. Paper surveys were distributed and collected by bus operators to transit riders on every route. Participants also had the option to mail their completed surveys to SunTran offices.

With the aim of spreading awareness for this survey and maximizing coverage, yard signs and bus ads with QR codes were created. The QR codes led interested scanners to the SunTran website where participants could access the survey online. Fifteen yard signs were strategically placed around the county at areas with targeted demographics, and these yard signs had paper surveys attached to the back for anyone that could not access the survey digitally.

Figure 5-3 | Bus Ad



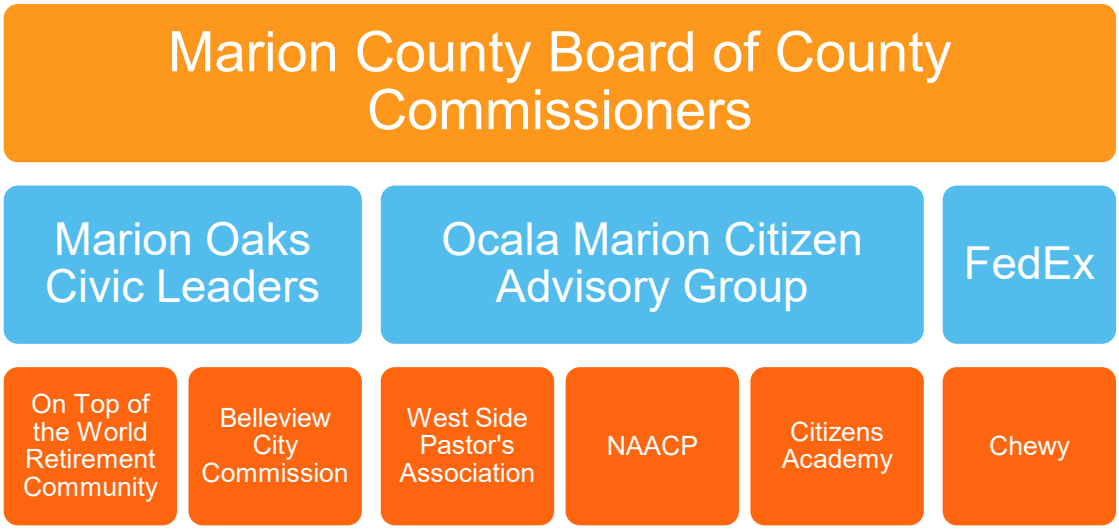
Postcards were utilized to announce in-person and virtual public meetings. These postcards served the dual purpose of informing the public about the TDP and its purpose.

5.1.3 In-Person Engagement

While developing the PIP, the team saw the value of connecting with the SunTran customer in person. The TDP team and SunTran staff participated in three ride-along sessions throughout the public engagement period. During ride-along sessions, staff encouraged riders to complete surveys. Staff offered the various options for riders to participate in providing their input – paper, online, or verbal. Promotional items such as SunTran branded umbrellas and pens were utilized to incentivize participation.

Figure 5-4 | In-Person Ride Along

SunTran staff provided in-person presentations to select key groups throughout the county, including businesses with large employee bases, civic groups, and homeowner associations.



Staff also attended a Levitt AMP Ocala Music Series 2022 concert and provided the audience with information on the TDP and how to access the survey.

Two public meetings were held – one in-person and one virtually. The in-person public meeting was held at the MLK First Responder Campus Community Building, 615 NW MLK Jr. Avenue, Ocala, Florida, 34475 on June 29, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. ET. This westside location was strategically selected as a way to represent this population with historically low engagement. A virtual meeting was held on June 30, 2022, on GoTo Webinar for the broader

community and for those that were not able to attend the in-person meeting. Promotion for these informational public meetings was done through stakeholder presentations by staff and through announcements on social media.

Figure 5-5 | SunTran Director, Steven Neal, Presenting at the Public Meeting

5.2 Phase 1 & 2

Phase 1 & 2 of the TDP focused on outreach to existing riders of the transit system and to the community at large, respectively. Capturing the voice of the existing rider is important as they are current users of the system and it is beneficial to improve their quality of life, while creating options for additional potential riders.

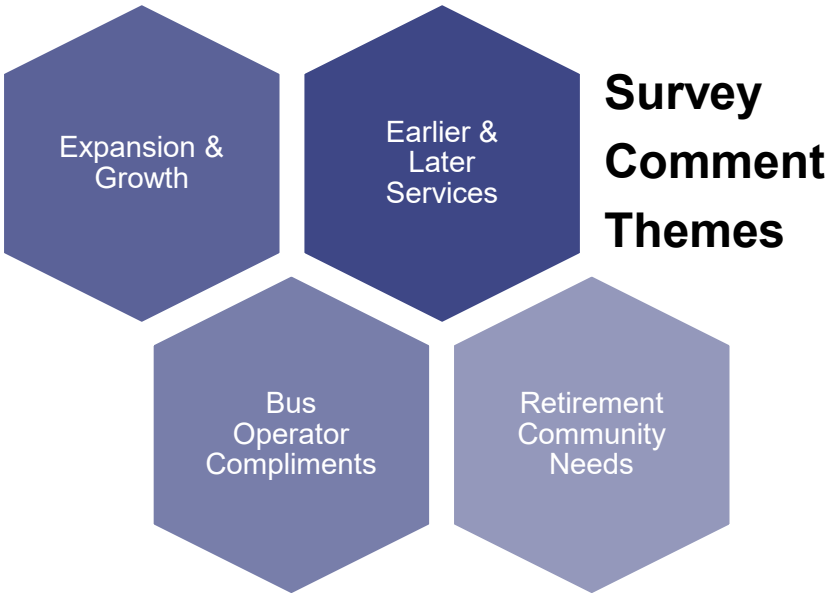
Efforts during these phases were kicked off by an extensive hybrid survey that was available to the public from May 20, 2022, to June 8, 2022. The survey asked to make a distinction between transit riders and non-transit riders and based on this answer, a series of pointed questions were asked about their experiences, preference, and demographics. Existing riders were given the opportunity to express what they value most and non-transit riders shared what would encourage them to use SunTran. The team crafted this initial input survey to best capture the needs and wants of the SunTran and Marion County communities and used the feedback received as the driving force to formulate the alternatives suggested within this TDP.

5.2.1 Phase 1 & 2 Survey Results

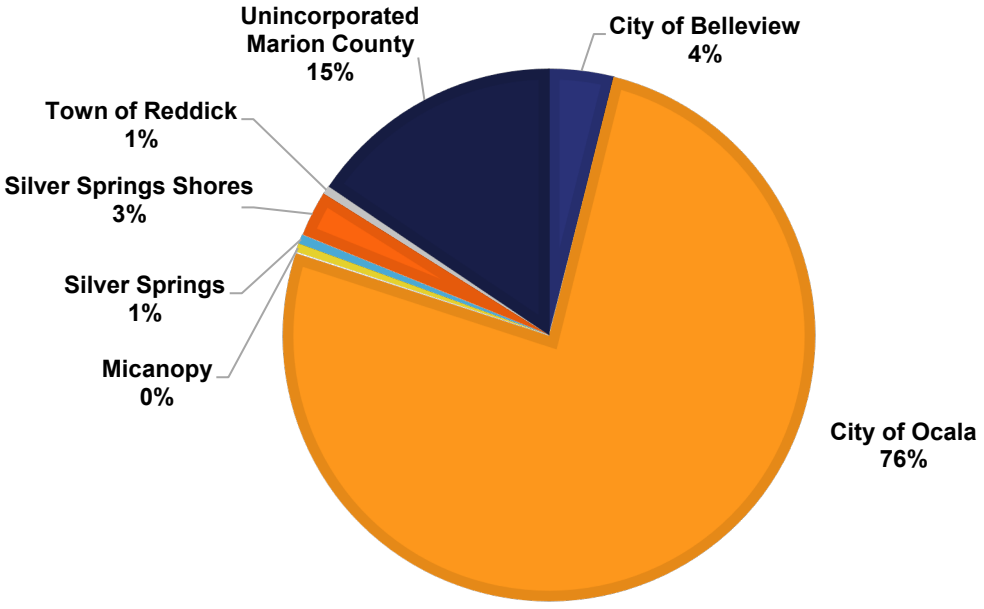
A total of 182 survey submissions were received for the Phase 1 & 2 surveys. Of those, 78 were online and 104 were paper. The submissions received surpassed the PIP goal of 100 submissions. Select findings displayed in this

report are based on submissions received per answer and some participants chose to not answer certain questions. Key comment themes received were desires for expansion and growth especially to the City of Belleview, earlier/later service schedules, bus operator compliments, and accommodations and services to retirement communities.

Figure 5-6 | Survey Comment Themes

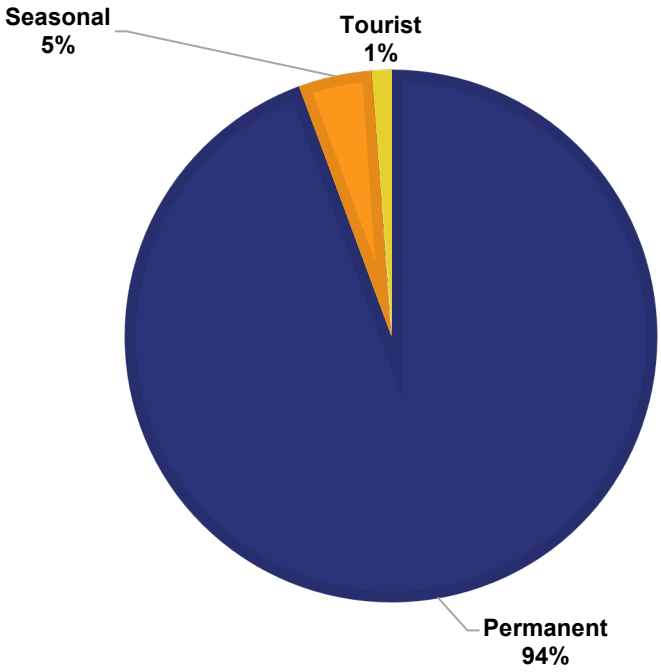


What Jurisdiction do you Live in?

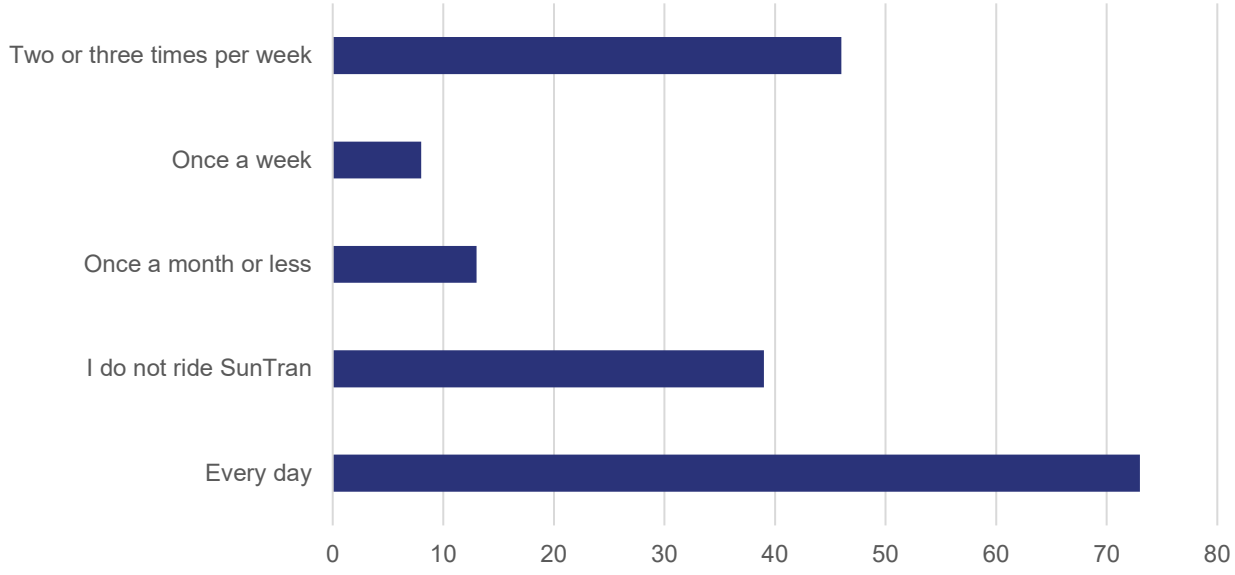


The majority of survey respondents were permanent residents of the City of Ocala followed by permanent residents of Unincorporated Marion County.

What Type of resident are you?

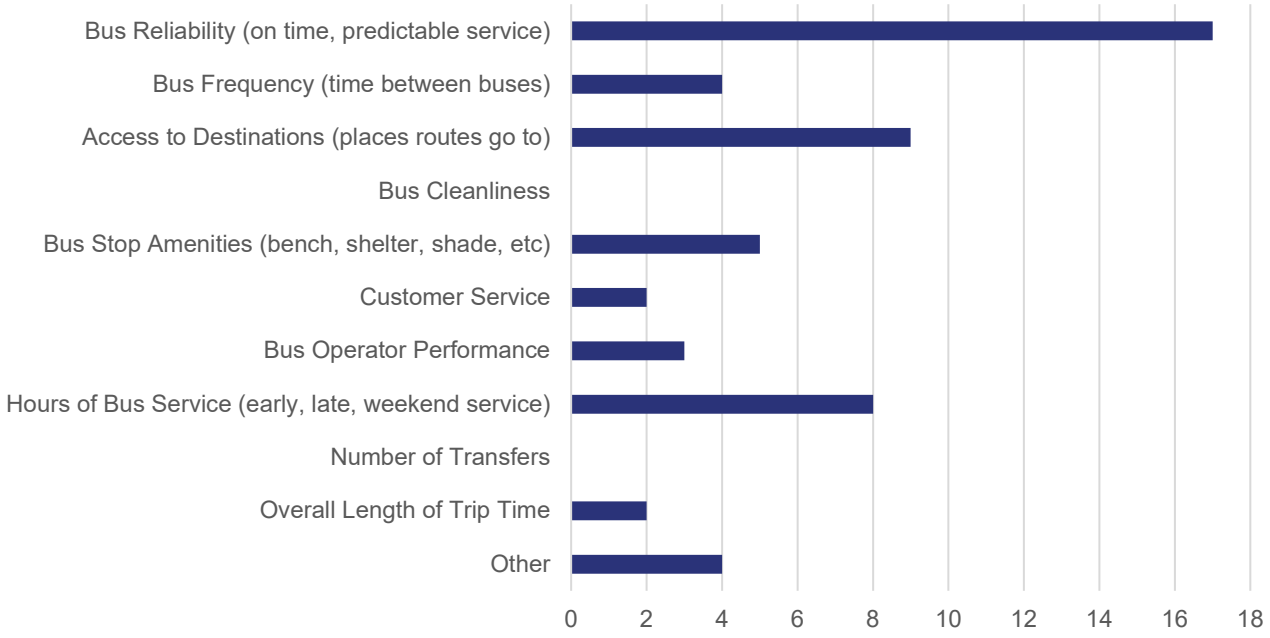


How often do you ride SunTran?



The majority (40%) of survey participants rode the bus every day, the second highest frequency was two or three times per week at 25%. The survey did have a high level of participation from non-riders as well at 21%. The data deduces that these individuals do not ride SunTran because of distance from their home to the bus stop or lack of service to desired destinations including first/last mile connections from the transit stop. A desire for service to the City of Belleview was mentioned by several non-riders.

What is the most important part of your experience as a SunTran rider?

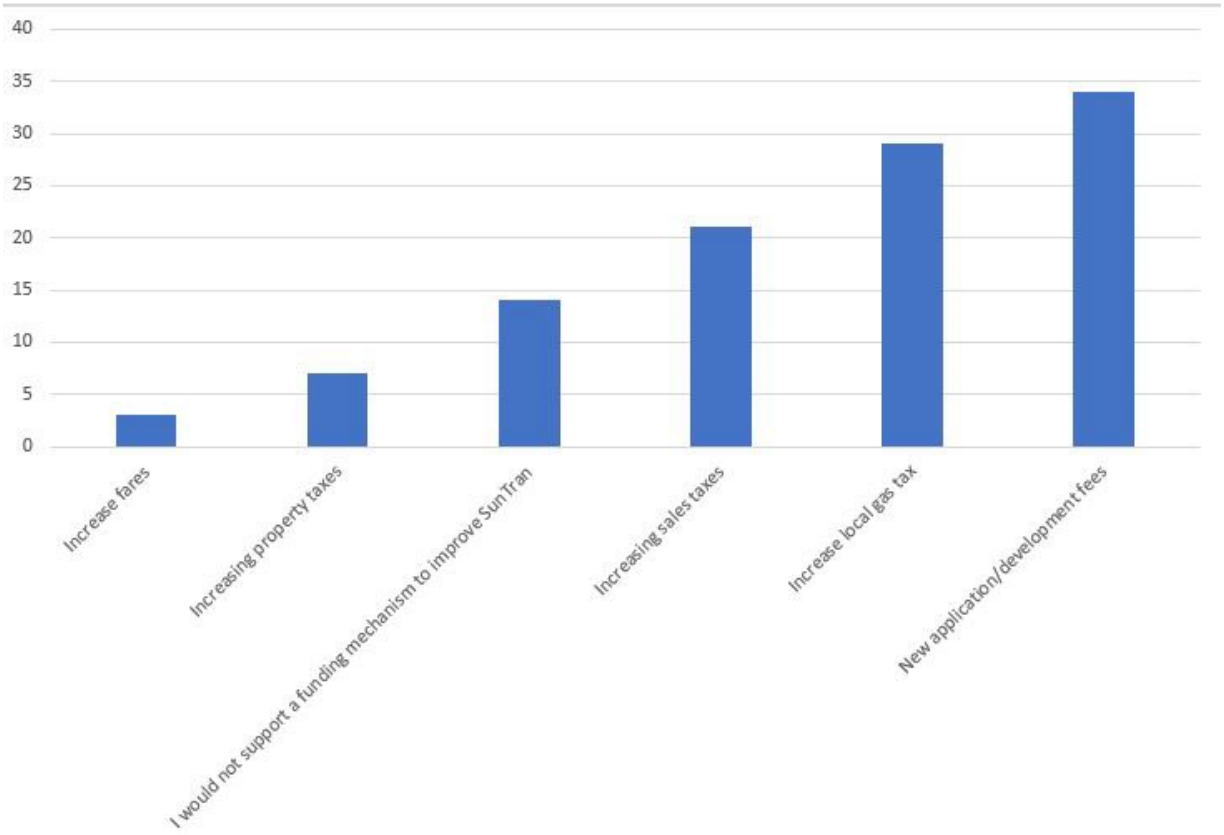


Bus reliability, including on time and predictable service, was the most important part of riders' experience, followed by access to destinations and additional hours of bus service. Components that were of least concern to riders included number of transfers and bus cleanliness.

Participants were asked to choose between expanding the system to new service areas or improving the existing system based on limited financial resources and a majority of respondents (60%) were in favor of expanding to new service areas.

When asked to recommend funding mechanisms to support improvements, participants selected increasing the local gas tax as the most popular option, followed by new application/development fees.

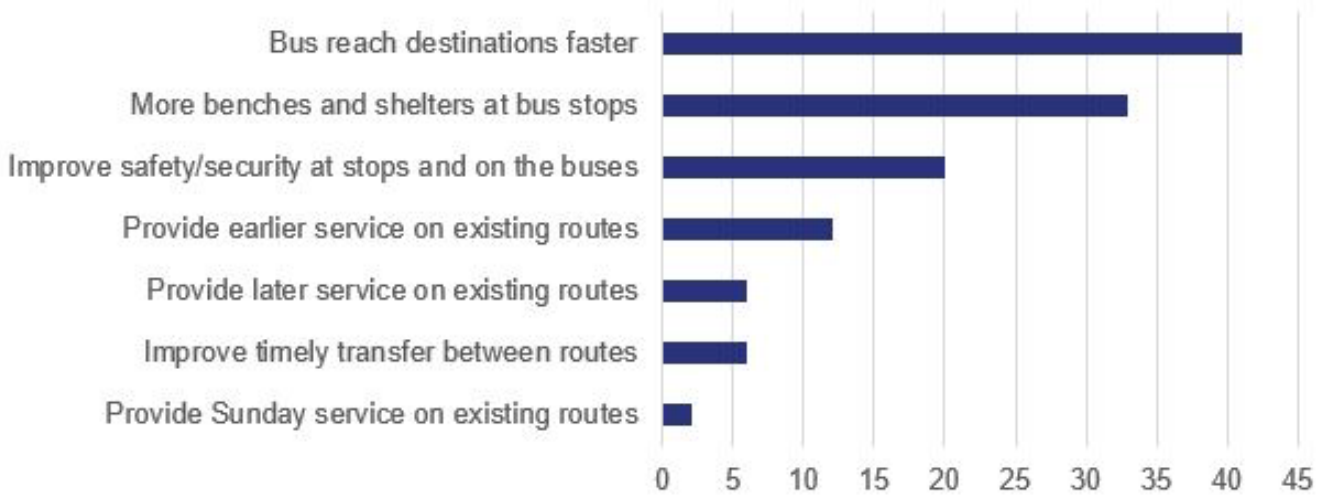
Making the improvements you identified may require additional funding for SunTran. Which funding mechanisms would you support?



Participants were asked what top three service improvements they considered to be the most important for SunTran to implement. The most popular improvements selected were buses reaching destinations faster, more benches and shelters at bus stops, and improved safety/security at stops on buses. Changing timing on existing routes were not as popular.

Figure 5-7 | Examples of existing SunTran stops and benches

Please select the top three (3) service improvements you think are most important for SunTran?



5.2.2 Stakeholder Interviews

The project team reached out to select community stakeholders for interviews regarding the transit system, its current standing within their community, and opportunities that they believe exist for SunTran. A consensus was demonstrated among those interviewed about the growth and expansion of the system and how various employers are vocal about the health of the transit system due to employee usage. The area's population is growing quickly and younger workers on the outskirts of the city center could benefit from reliable service to the workplace. There was mention of making connections with housing authorities as a way to tie improvements to upcoming affordable housing developments.

Stakeholders Interviewed
City of Ocala Mayor Kent Guinn
Ocala City Council President Ire Bethea Jr.
Marion County Commissioner Michelle Stone
CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion – Director of Operations Cory Weaver (RWB)
Ocala/Marion County Chamber & Economic Partnership – President & CEO Kevin Sheilley

5.2.3 City Council Meetings

In addition to individual stakeholder interviews, the Ocala City Council had an opportunity to provide comment as a group during three different meetings. The first meeting was held on June 7th, 2022, to discuss the initial goals and objectives that were developed at the beginning of the TDP process to guide the development of the report. The second meeting was held on July 19th, 2022, to present the developed alternatives. The last meeting will be held on October 4th, 2022 to approve the final TDP.

5.3 Phase 3

Phase 3 used the information gathered during Phases 1 & 2 and developed the proposed alternatives for the plan. A new survey was created for Phase 3 to ask questions focused on potential routing and operational modifications. Public outreach for this phase took place from June 28, 2022, to July 20, 2022. This included in-person bus interviews on July 13, 2022. A total of 12 alternatives were presented to survey participants as improvements; they were asked to evaluate their approval for each. Alternatives were described in easily understood terms and

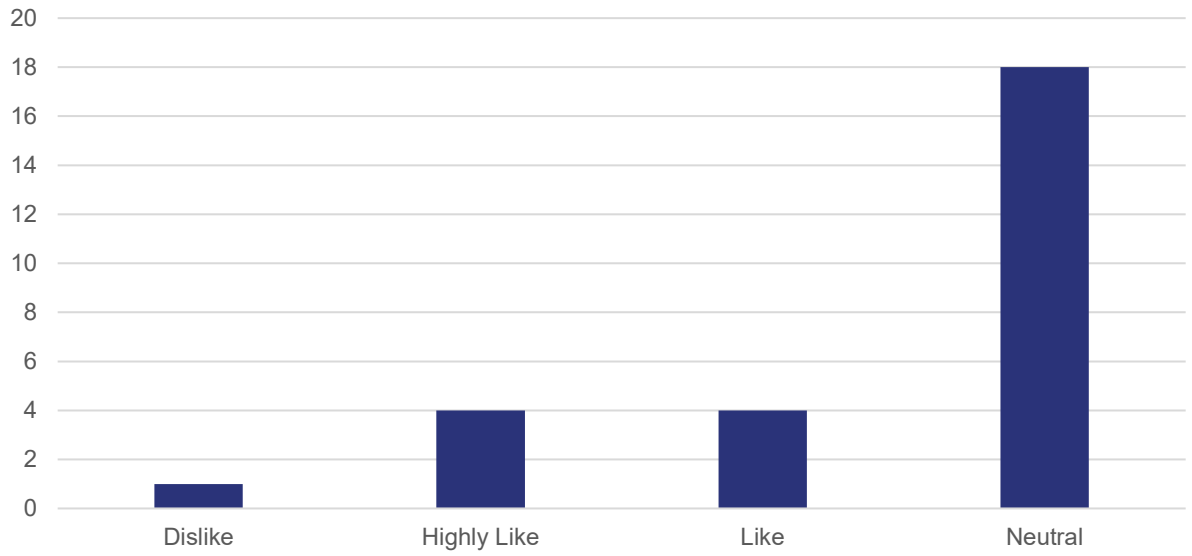
"microtransit" was defined for participants to understand the use and function of this concept. Promotion for the Phase 3 survey mirrored the efforts deployed for Phases 1 & 2 with the addition of two public meetings that focused on explaining the alternatives developed and to put out a community call to action for survey participation.

Figure 5-8 | Phase 3 Survey Introduction

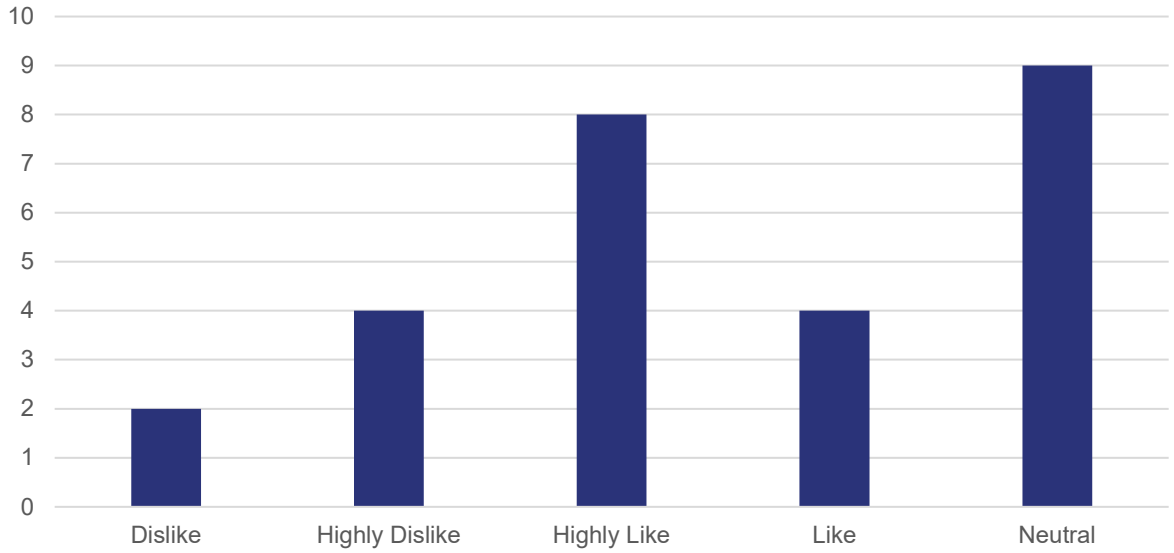
5.3.1 Phase 3 Survey Results

A total of 27 submissions were received for Phase 3 surveys. Unfortunately, the PIP goal of 100 submissions for this phase was not achieved. Although this phase did not receive the participation that was anticipated, the alternatives developed were based on the projected needs from the high level of participation from Phases 1 & 2. A summary of the survey responses is depicted in the bar graphs below. No alternatives were highly disliked; conversely, microtransit, Sunday service, and service route extensions were popular among participants.

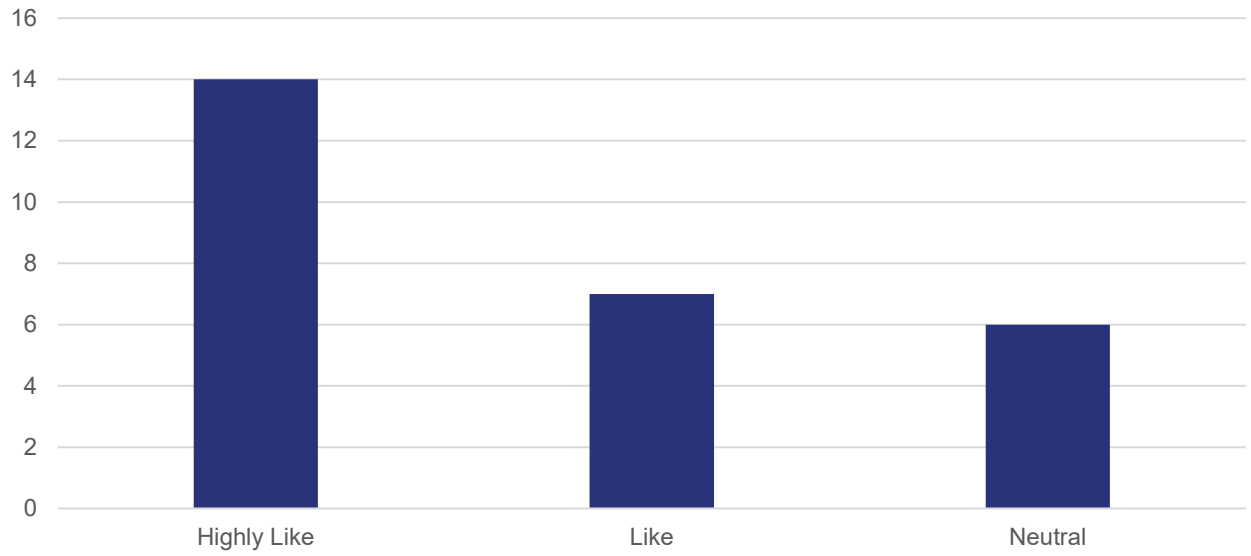
Serve the Florida Center for the Blind with the Green Route instead of the existing Yellow Route A.



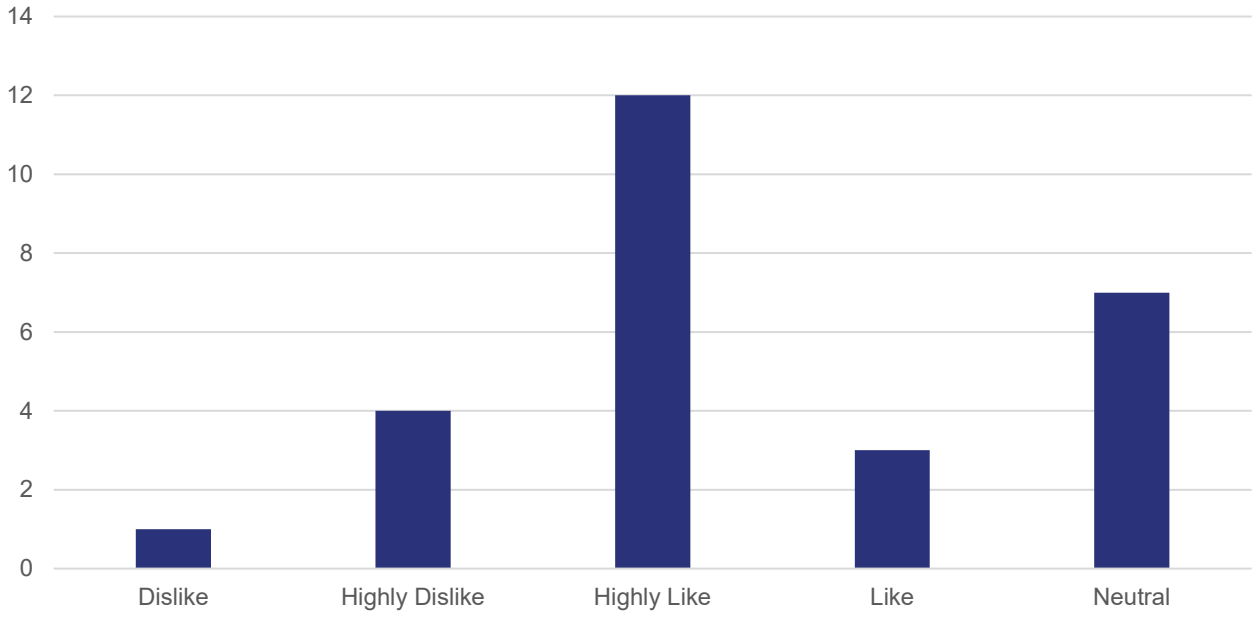
Change the northernmost stops of the Silver Route to serve the Compassion Food Bank and Landfair Homes on Old US Highway 301 at NE 77th Street



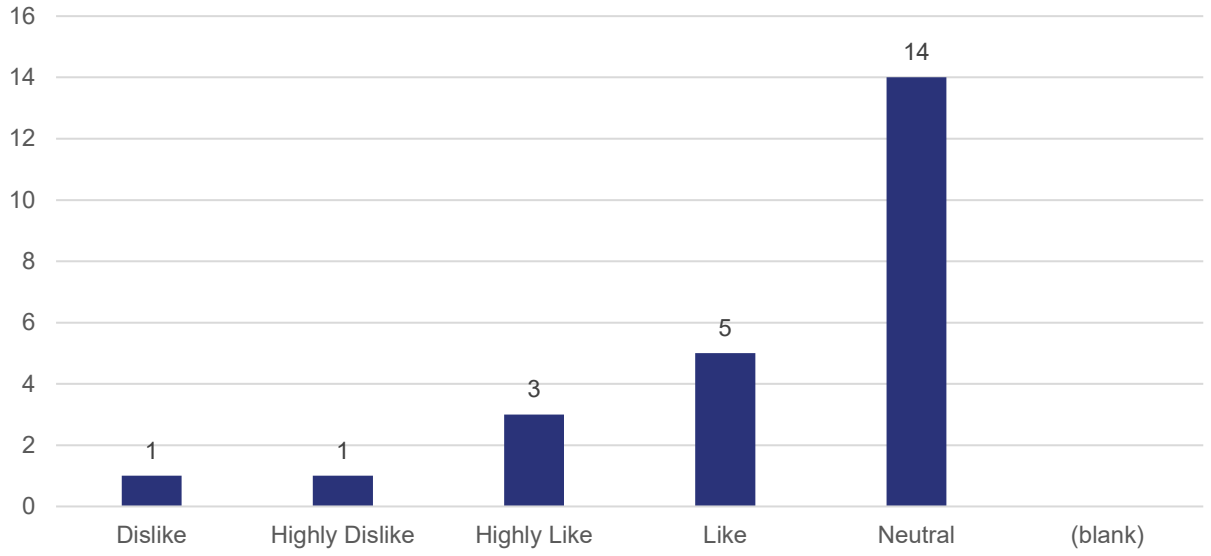
Extend the Silver Express Route to the upcoming planned developments in the area of SR 200 and SW 60th Avenue.



Extend the Yellow B Route to serve Marion Oaks. This improvement would provide residents of Marion Oaks with a connection to Downtown Ocala.

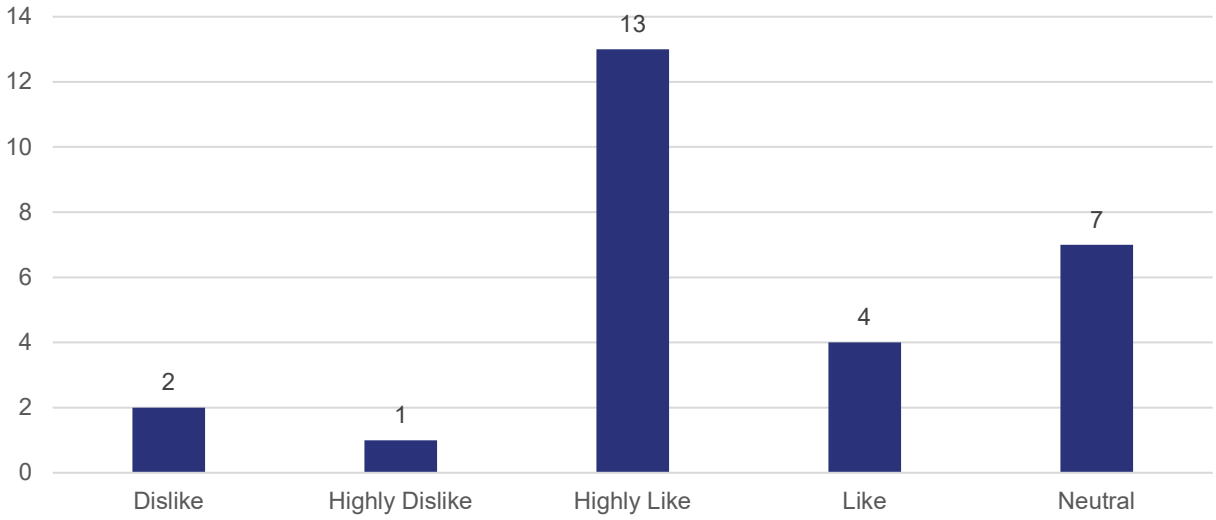


Update the Red Route by removing service along SE Maricamp Road between Baseline Road and SE 24th Street



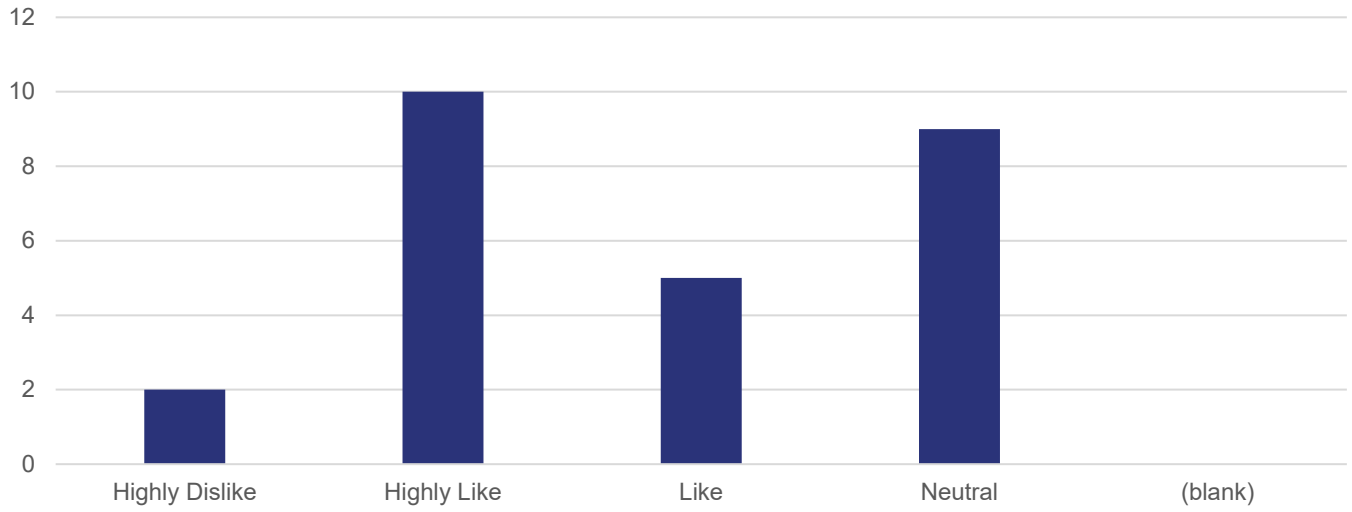
Most survey participants were neutral to updating the Red Route to remove service along SE Maricamp Road. This update would make service easier to use and more focused on the most popular segments of the route. Service along SE Maricamp Road would be maintained by the Belleview Route.

Implement microtransit in Northwest Ocala (area between Highway 326 to the north, I-75 to the west, SR 326 to the south, and US 301/441 to the east).

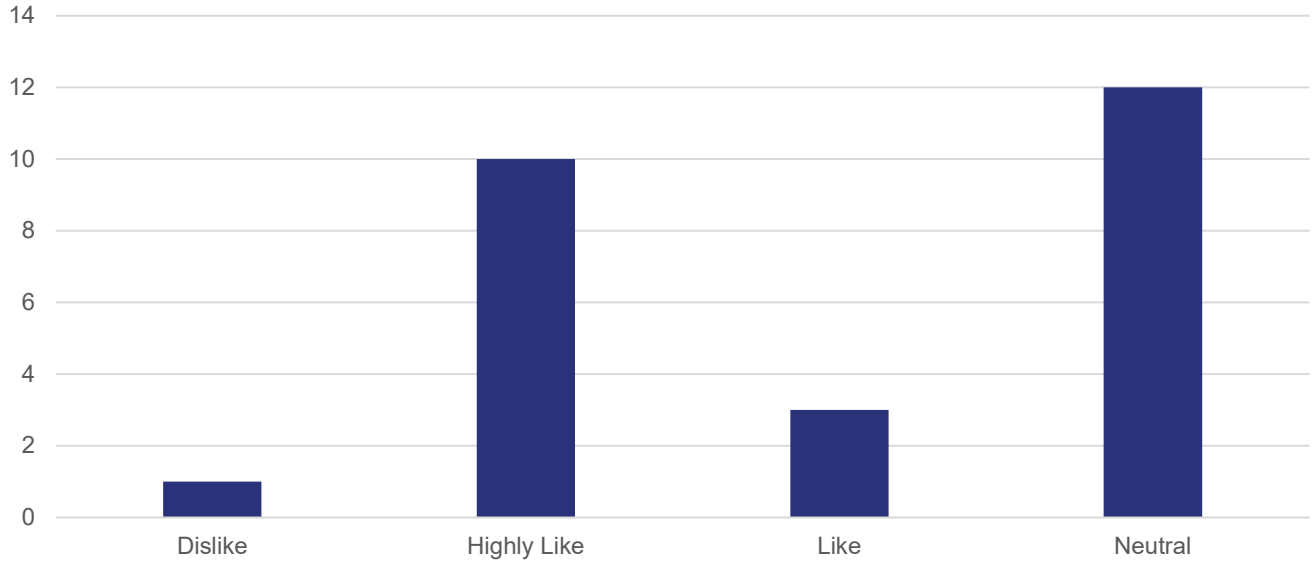


Survey participants highly like the idea of implementing microtransit in Northwest Ocala (area between Highway 326 to the north, I-75 to the west, SR 326 to the south, and US 301/441 to the east). This less populated microtransit zone would serve to connect residents with jobs at the distribution centers along NW 35th Avenue, as well as with the Ocala Greyhound Bus Station.

Implement microtransit service in Belleview. This microtransit zone would cover the City of Belleview, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Belleview Sports Complex

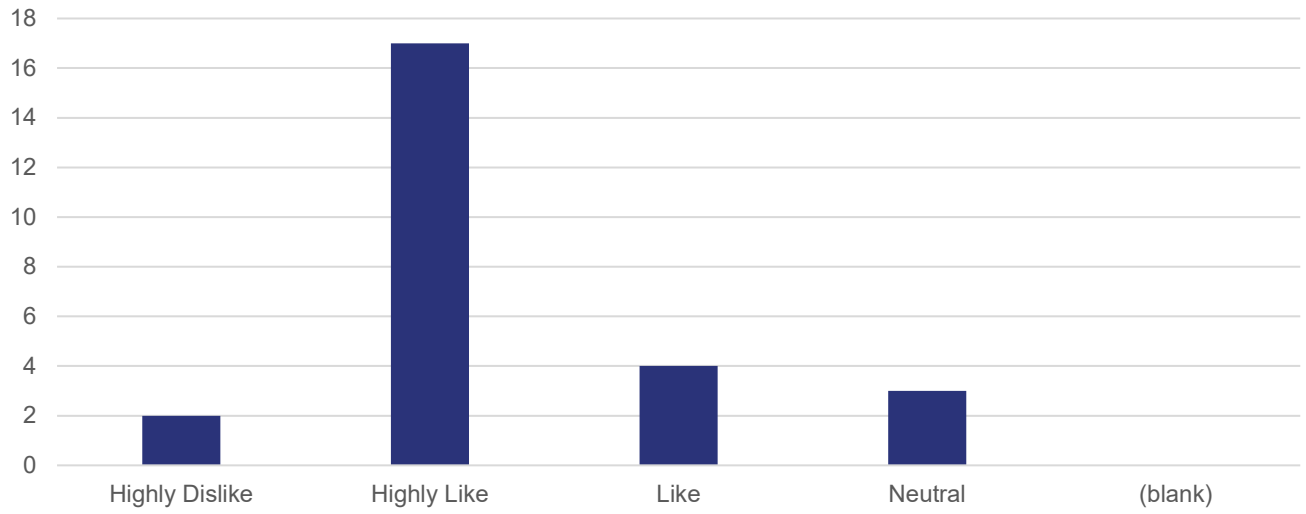


End service on the Red Route at the Silver Springs Shores Walmart, while serving the rest of the existing route with microtransit service.



Respondents were either neutral or decidedly liked the modification of ending service for Silver Springs Shores Walmart on the Red Route. This microtransit area would cover Silver Springs Shores from the Walmart to SE 110th Street, providing transit options to an area with limited pedestrian infrastructure.

Provide Sunday service with microtransit to the areas served by the Green, Blue, Orange, and Purple routes. This would ensure that SunTran riders along these routes could use transit to meet their transportation needs every day of the week.



5.4 Steering Committee Meetings

Representatives from the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and the Regional Workforce Board (RWB) were invited to attend four separate steering committee meetings to allow members to provide comment during each stage of the TDP process.

The following participants were invited to attend each of the steering committee meetings:

- Steven Neal, SunTran
- Ji Li, SunTran
- Andrea Bailey, Ocala Metro Chamber and Economic Partnership
- Cory Weaver, Career Source
- James Haynes, City of Ocala Community Development Services
- Keith Fair, Housing Finance Authority Marion County
- Tamara Fleischhaker, Ocala Metro Chamber and Economic Partnership
- Carlos Colon, FDOT

The meetings were held on the following dates:

- Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting, April 27th
- Public Engagement and Goals and Objectives, May 24th
- Alternatives Development, June 21st
- And Financial and Implementation Plan, July 28th

The TPO Director, Rob Balmes, also attended the April 27th Kick Off meeting, where the project timeline and data needs was discussed. Subsequent TPO involvement consisted of presentations to the TPO Board and

Subcommittees (Citizens Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee) at the May and August 2022 meetings by SunTran staff along with periodic discussions between the departments. All social media content prepared for the project encouraging survey participation and notification of the public meeting was also shared with the TPO for distribution. TPO staff attended the June 29, 2022, public meeting.

5.5 Measures of Effectiveness

The PIP outlined the goal of 100 survey submissions per phase as a successful public outreach campaign. Although the submissions for Phase 3 did not meet the goal that was set out for the TDP, the campaign was successful in generating exposure for the SunTran system as a whole and in making the connection for the City of Ocala as the operating agency for the transit system since the shift from the Ocala Marion TPO.

As a result of the *Riding into the Future* campaign, some tactics generated quantitative numbers that the City of Ocala can use as a baseline for future outreach campaigns.

Table 5-1 | Riding into the Future Campaign Analytics

Riding into the Future Campaign Analytics	
Media Release Electronic Notifications	3,629 Subscribers
Organic Facebook Posts	5, 598 people reached
	71 engagements
Organic Twitter Posts	676 people reached
	28 engagements
Organic Instagram Posts	586 people reached
	3 engagements
Website Survey Banner Interactions	46 viewers
Website Public Meeting Banner Interactions	24 viewers
In-Person Public Meeting	5 attendees
Virtual Public Meeting	3 attendees

5.6 Ongoing Public Involvement Recommendations

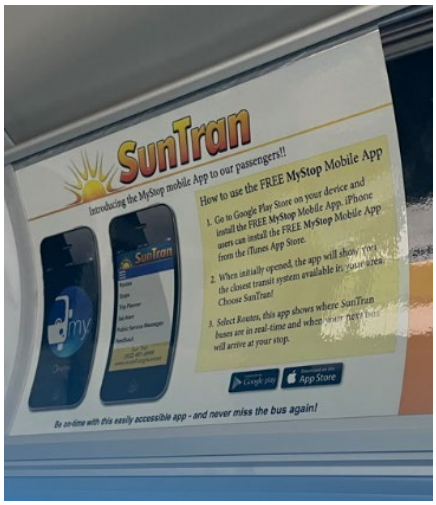
Due to budget and time constraints, efforts were made to prolong the life of printed materials throughout the outreach campaign. As a result, survey participants may not have been aware that there were multiple surveys to be taken throughout the life of the planning process and this may have been the reason for low participation during Phase 3. For future outreach efforts, it would be beneficial to allocate resources for the updating of printed announcements of bus advertisements and similar with new language updating the community on the availability of new surveys.

SunTran's *Riding into the Future* campaign is an excellent opportunity to make the most of public engagement to create a comprehensive rider and public strategic communications plan. Riders and the public would be excited to see that their input made a difference in the future of the transit system. Foundational communication through current resources like websites, social media, and on-bus messaging/branding could create that foundation.

On-bus outreach opportunities like monitors or message boards to inform riders of upcoming route changes, new benches, or explanation of microtransit opportunities would be an initial step. The flexibility of the monitors would also allow for additional language and visual opportunities.

Presently, SunTran partners with the MyStop app. However, the riders seem unaware of how this app works or its benefits. As there are changes to routes, partnering with MyStop to promote the use of this app and ensuring the changes are manifested correctly would be an advantage. This partnership could make it possible to receive usage data to measure whether the outreach was successful.

Figure 5-9 | Onboard Mobile App Banner



6. Goals and Objectives

This chapter summarizes the guiding mission as well as the core values, goals, and objectives, developed for public transit services in Ocala/Marion County for the next 10 years. The goals and objectives support a cohesive community vision and provide direction when planning for the future.

6.1 Mission Statement

The mission statement communicates the organization's purpose and direction to employees, customers, and community stakeholders. The mission statement is as follows:

> *"Our mission is to provide safe, comfortable, and accessible transit services as a viable means of mobility to the citizens and visitors of Ocala/Marion County."*

6.2 Core Values

To guide the development of the goals and objectives, the plan established six core values presented in **Figure 6-1**.

Figure 6-1 | Core values

6.3 Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives summarized in this section were prepared based on a review of existing conditions, local and regional transportation planning documents that were reviewed as part of this TDP process, and feedback received during the stakeholder engagement process. The comprehensive list of goals and objectives are presented in **Table 6-1.**

Table 6-1 | Goals and Objectives

ENVIRONMENT AND EQUITY
Goal 1: Enhance the integration of transit services to support environmental sustainability and address equity issues within the community.
Objective 1.1: Objective Develop a Zero Emissions Fleet Transition Plan by 2023.
Objective 1.2: Pursue funding opportunities to assist with the purchase of Electric Vehicles and related Infrastructure.
Objective 1.3: Develop and implement a strategy to promote transit-supportive development patterns within the service area by 2023.
Objective 1.4: Develop a methodology to assess transit system equity based upon best practices by 2023.
ACCESSIBILITY
Goal 2: Expand transit services to maximize access to opportunities.
Objective 2.1: Continue to proactively seek partnerships with surrounding county governments, agencies, and private employers to increase connectivity between counties.
Objective 2.2: Pursue additional funding opportunities that support improved bus stops and shelters and service extensions to underserved areas with strong transit propensity.
Objective 2.3: Proactively partner with the business community and the regional workforce development board to continuously develop and refine services to meet their needs.
USABILITY
Goal 3: Make the system more convenient and useful for residents and visitors.
Objective 3.1: Design, implement, and maintain an annual survey program that includes both system user and on-route employer surveys to assess the community need for transit services on weekdays, Saturday, and Sunday.
Objective 3.2: Determine the feasibility of implementing Sunday morning services.
Objective 3.3: Improve system security and user comfort by making strategic investments in bus stop amenities (lighting, security cameras, signage, etc.)
EFFICIENCY
Goal 4: Maximize the productivity and financial efficiency of transit operations.
Objective 4.1: Assess the feasibility of modifying or eliminating underperforming routes to improve the cost-efficiency of the system.
Objective 4.2: Prioritize investments in those routes that have the highest ridership to improve productivity (effectiveness) of the transit system.
Objective 4.3: Evaluate the feasibility of automated, connected, electric and shared (ACES) vehicles and other emerging technologies that may reduce operational costs.
Objective 4.4: Complete a systemwide 'hot spot' analysis using AVL data and bus operator input to identify recurrent delays and identify transit priority treatments to address by 2023.
PRESENCE
Goal 5: Engage the community to improve service awareness and support.
Objective 5.1: Utilize public meetings and annual Elected Official Briefings to garner public support from area stakeholders.
Objective 5.2: Maintain and document an ongoing public involvement process through surveys, discussion groups, interviews, public workshops, and participation in public events, with an emphasis on gathering input from traditionally underrepresented populations.
Objective 5.3: Continue to evaluate and enhance marketing material to provide printed and web-based transit information that is customer-friendly and attractive.

7. Transit Demand Analysis

Transit demand estimation for the fixed-route transit system was performed using the Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST) software, developed by the FDOT. This program produces estimates for ridership, revenue hours and miles, vehicle requirements, costs, and other service and service area metrics.

This section summarizes the 2022 TBEST base year scenario configuration, including its socioeconomic data sources, transit service characteristics, and system operational characteristics such as fares and vehicle capacity. Ridership estimates in the 2022 base year scenario are validated against observed ridership data, which allows the TBEST model to generate future year estimates of transit service developed for the SunTran Transit Development Plan (TDP).

7.1 Forecast Ridership Analysis

The current SunTran system was run through TBEST and projected for the 2022 base year, 2027 for the short-term horizon, and 2032 for the long-term horizon to provide a baseline comparison for the proposed alternatives recommended through the TDP. The resulting weekday ridership projections from TBEST are shown in **Table 7-1**. Over the next five years (by 2027), system ridership is projected to increase by almost 3 percent; the Green Route would see the highest percent increase at approximately 6 percent. The system is projected to have an overall 7 percent increase in ridership between 2022 and 2032, with the Green and Orange routes seeing the most growth at 10 and 8 percent increases in ridership, respectively. **Appendix C** provides a detailed description of assumptions and attributes that went into the TBEST model. This includes the Socioeconomic Data Development, Network Data Development, and Model Validation.

Table 7-1 | TBEST Ridership Projections

Route	Projected 2022	Projected 2027	% Change 2022 - 2027	Projected 2032	% Change 2022 - 2032
Blue	102	105	3%	109	7%
Green	138	146	6%	152	10%
Orange	113	117	4%	122	8%
Purple	81	79	-2%	80	-1%
Red	52	53	2%	55	6%
Silver	23	23	0%	24	4%
Yellow	59	61	3%	63	7%
Totals	**568**	**584**	**3%**	**605**	**7%**

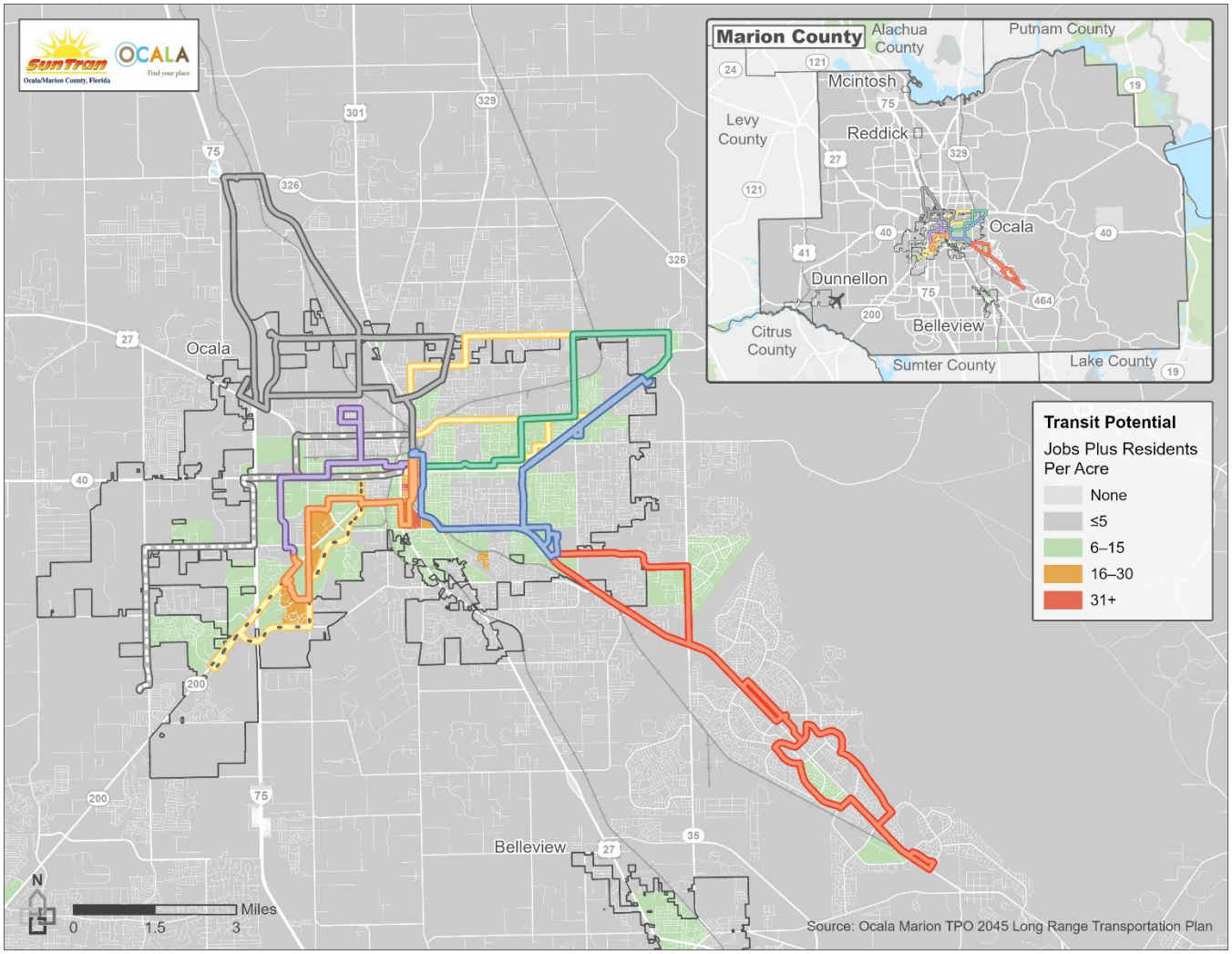
7.2 Market Assessment

To assess the efficiency of public transportation, population and employment centers must be connected for people to easily access bus stops. The size of a transit travel market is directly related to an area's population density and total population, as the transit catchment area is typically limited to a 10-minute walk, or within one quarter to one half mile of a bus stop. According to the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) *Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 2nd Edition,* an employment density of four jobs per acre or a population density of approximately six people per acre (three households per acre) can support hourly fixed route transit services.

7.2.1 Transit Potential Analysis

As mentioned in the *Current and Future Conditions Chapter,* Marion County population grew by 6.9 percent between 2015 and 2020 and is projected to increase by 20.9 percent from 2020 to 2040. Additionally, Marion County had an 8.3 percent growth in employment between 2015 and 2019 and is projected to increase employment from 2020 to 2040 by 33.5 percent. Currently, the Orange Route serves most areas with the highest transit potential with greater than 16 jobs plus residents per acre. Other areas with higher transit potential (6-15 jobs plus residents per acre) can be found along 25th Avenue, 36th Avenue, and 17th Street and are also served by the current SunTran system. One area that could benefit from expanded transit coverage based upon its potential is Belleview which 6 to 15 jobs plus residents per acre throughout portions of the area. **Figure 7-1** illustrates transit potential (job and residents per acre combined) within the service area compared to the existing fixed route bus services.

Figure 7-1 | Transit Potential Compared to Existing Service

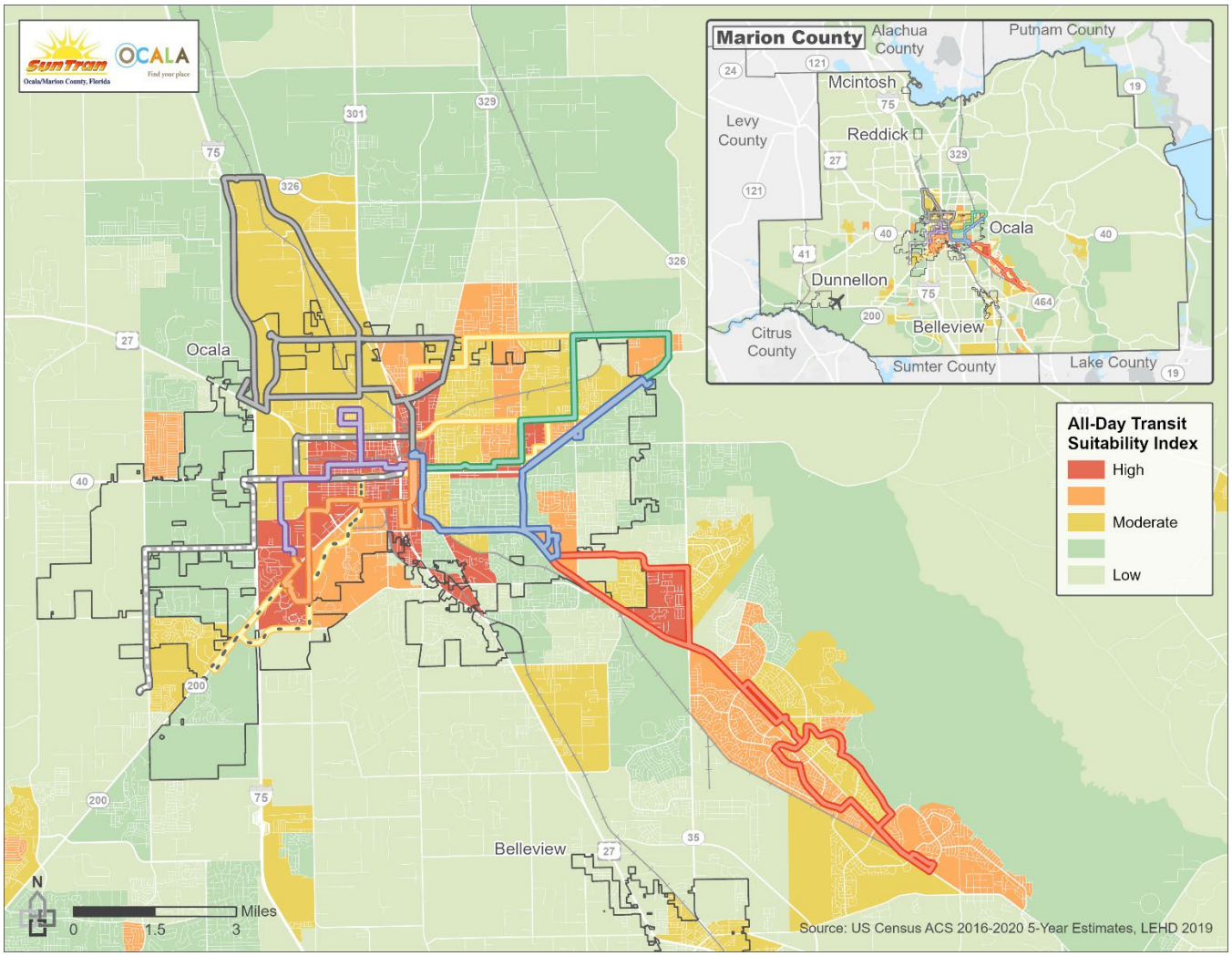


7.2.2 Service Gaps Analysis

Three suitability indices were created to illustrate where all-day transit services, peak-period services, and microtransit services could be supported throughout the SunTran service area.

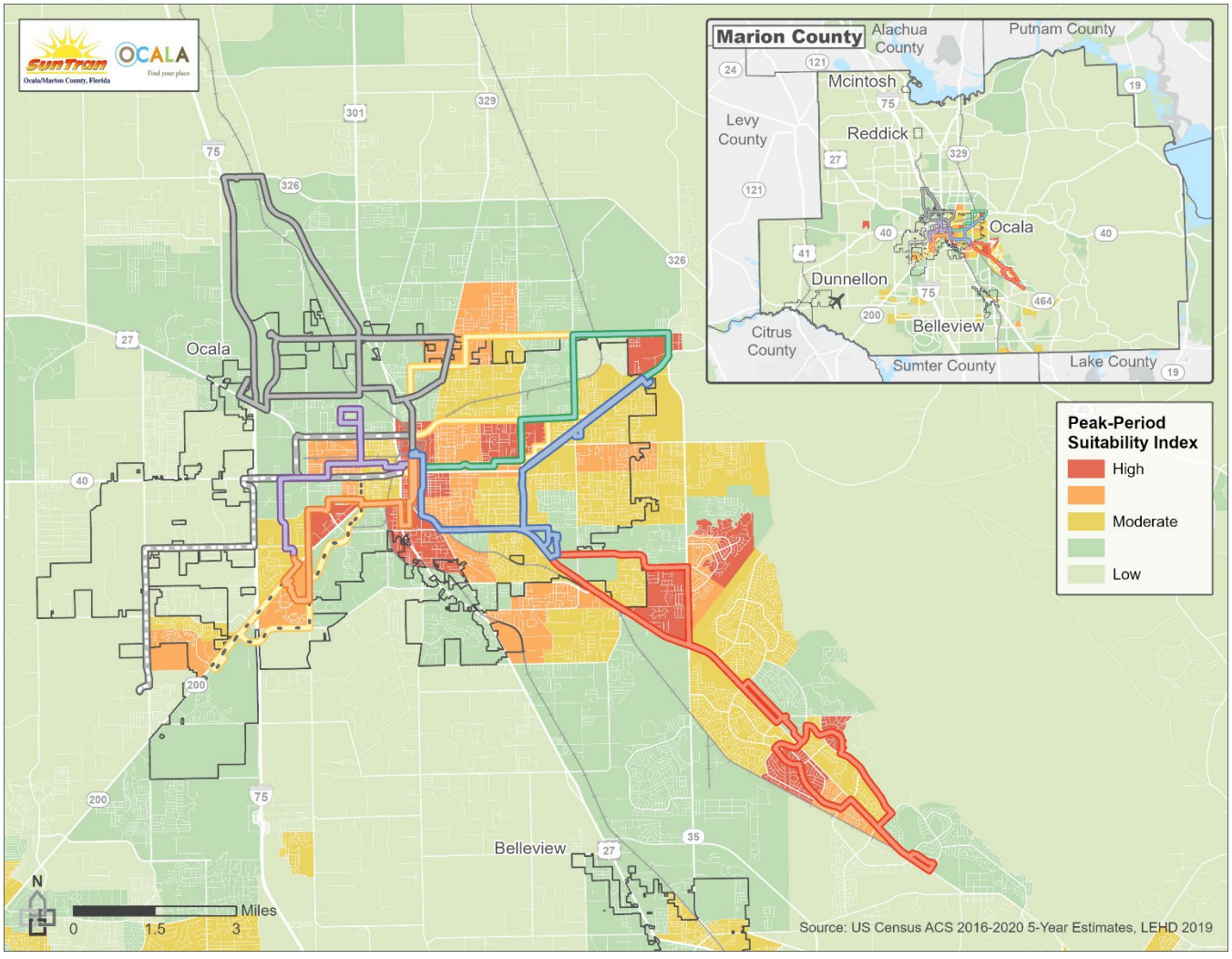
The All-Day Transit Service Suitability Index indicates where all-day transit service would be most successful. It highlights where transit-oriented populations live and the areas with higher concentrations of activity destinations. This index shows where a rider is most likely to rely on transit for general everyday trips and take trips outside of peak service hours. **Figure 7-2** illustrates the All-Day Transit Service Suitability Index as well as the existing transit services. The region surrounding South Pine Avenue (south of the Blue and Orange Routes) has a high potential for all-day service but is not fully served by the existing bus route services.

Figure 7-2 | All-Day Transit Service Suitability Index



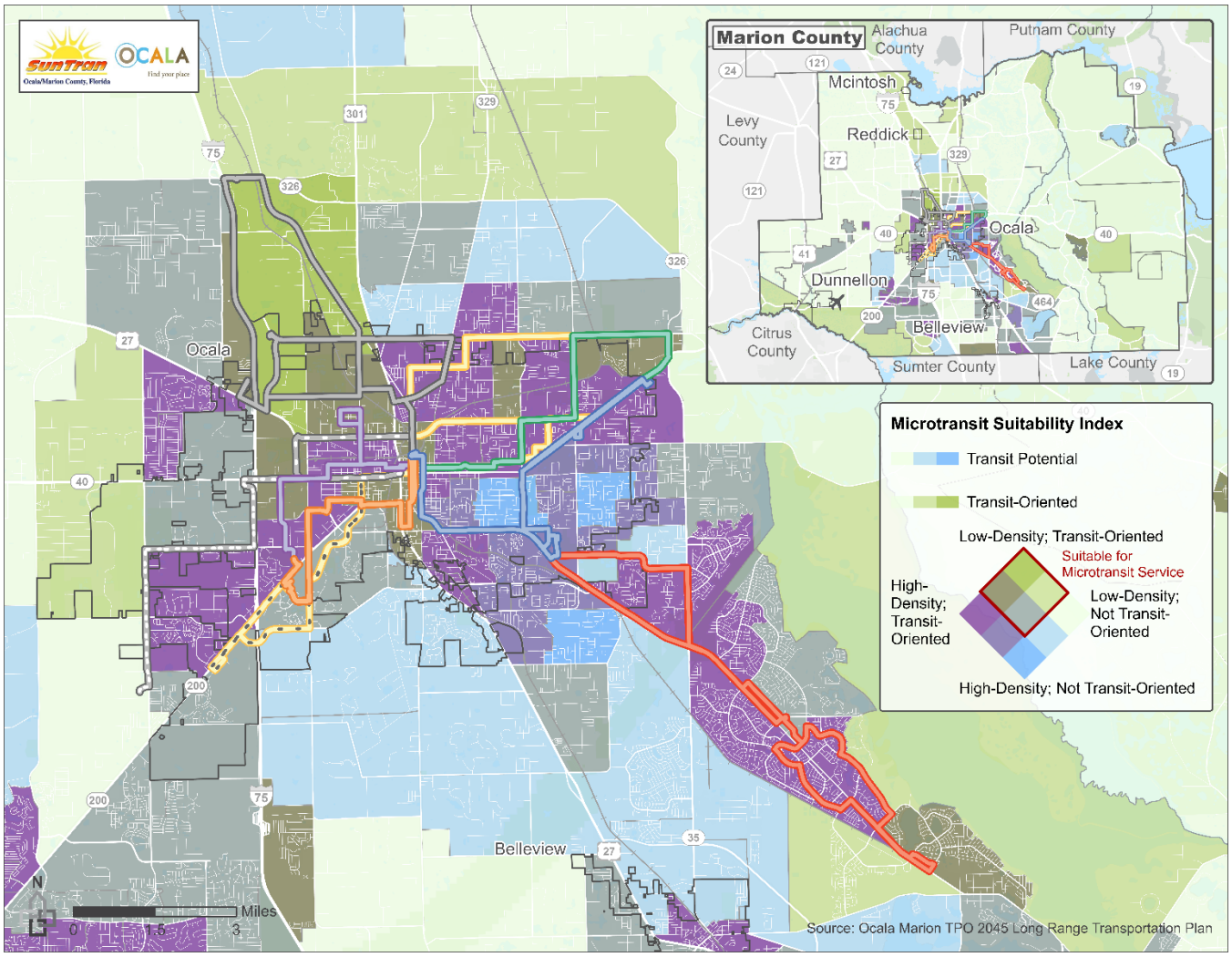
The Peak-Period Suitability Index highlights areas with where commuters live and where jobs are concentrated, to identify areas suited for commuter-oriented services. **Figure 7-3** shows the Peak-Period Suitability Index compared to existing SunTran services. Most areas with high level peak-period suitability are served by the existing bus routes. The region east of SE 58th Avenue ranges from moderate to high levels of peak-period suitability but is not fully served by the Red Route. Additionally, regions south of the Orange and Blue routes of US 27 are not currently served by any of the existing bus routes but have moderately high to high peak-period suitability.

Figure 7-3 | Peak-Period Suitability Index



The Microtransit Suitability Index (shown in **Figure 7-4**) is a bivariate analysis that considers the transit-oriented populations origin index and transit potential (population and employment density) of an area. To identify areas that could potentially be successful with microtransit service, it focuses in on areas with lower densities of people and jobs, but in areas with higher densities of populations who tend to be more reliant on public transportation services. The area north of NW 35th Street and along NW 35th Avenue Road, which is currently served by the existing Silver Route, shows the highest potential for microtransit service. Other potential areas for this new type of alternative transit service include South Silver Spring Shores and east of Marion Oaks.

Figure 7-4 | Microtransit Suitability Index



8. Alternatives Development & Evaluation

This Alternatives Analysis chapter documents the process to develop alternatives for the SunTran system and proposes recommendations for the TDP's 10-year horizon. Taken together, these recommendations address opportunities to strengthen the agency's fixed-route services and develop and integrate on-demand services to efficiently serve Marion County's growing population.

Service alternatives are prioritized based on how they fulfill TDP goals and objectives, stakeholder feedback, equity goals, efficiency metrics, and demographic needs. Subsequently, the results of these analyses inform the development of the 10-year TDP implementation and financial plans.

8.1 Recommendation Development Process

Recommendations to improve SunTran's transit network were developed through a process of detailed route performance evaluation, a situational appraisal, peer comparison, transit demand analysis, and stakeholder engagement. This holistic review identified performance highlights and shortcomings among existing routes, opportunities to implement new transit services, and long-term concepts for the future of the system. Methods used to develop recommendations are summarized below.

8.1.1 Route Performance Evaluation

The analysis of existing SunTran routes identified opportunities to modify routes to enhance performance and informed the development of adjusted existing service alternatives. An evaluation of passengers per revenue hour, passengers per revenue mile, farebox recovery ratio, subsidy per passenger, and on-time performance informed an understanding of how routes perform relative to one another and the systemwide average. An analysis of boarding and alighting patterns helped to interpret these findings and develop recommendations to better meet the needs of Marion County residents. See the Current and Future Conditions chapter for a summary of SunTran's existing services. Route-level summaries of this data and the strengths and weaknesses of each route are documented in **Appendix B**.

8.1.2 Situational Appraisal

A review of plans and studies that impacted the City of Ocala and Marion County focused on their potential impact on SunTran's operations. An assessment of socioeconomic trends, existing and future land use, and organizational and technological factors relative to the delivery of public transportation services in Marion County, was used to contextualize planning for TDP's 10-year horizon.

8.1.3 Peer Comparison

A peer comparison and trend analysis compared the service performance of SunTran over time and against peer agencies. SunTran compares very favorably to its peers with respect to key performance measures such as passenger trips per revenue mile and passenger trips per revenue mile while maintaining an operating expense per passenger trip well below its peer average.

8.1.4 Transit Demand Analysis

Estimates developed using the FDOT Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool software, allow for an understanding of both existing and future demand for transit services.

These estimations included ridership, revenue hours and miles, vehicle requirements, costs, and other service metrics that were used to develop transit alternatives. The baseline TBEST model forecasted the SunTran ridership could increase by almost 3 percent by 2027 and almost 7 percent by 2032.

8.2 Service Improvements

SunTran service alternatives are based on four guiding principles:

- **Bidirectional service:** Routes should provide service in both directions of travel, operating along the same alignment in both directions to make it easy for riders to know how to get back to where they started their trip.
- **Strong anchors:** Routes should serve well-defined markets; the purpose of a route should be clear, and each should include strong anchors and a mix of origins and destinations.
- **Regular frequencies:** To the greatest extent possible, service should operate at regular intervals. Riders can more easily remember transit schedules that use consistent amounts of time between buses at a given stop. Schedules that are irregular are more difficult to remember.
- **Coordination:** Service should be well coordinated; at major transfer locations (e.g., the Downtown Transfer Station and Marion Department of Health), schedules should be coordinated to the greatest extent possible to minimize connection times, particularly for the most common transfer flows.

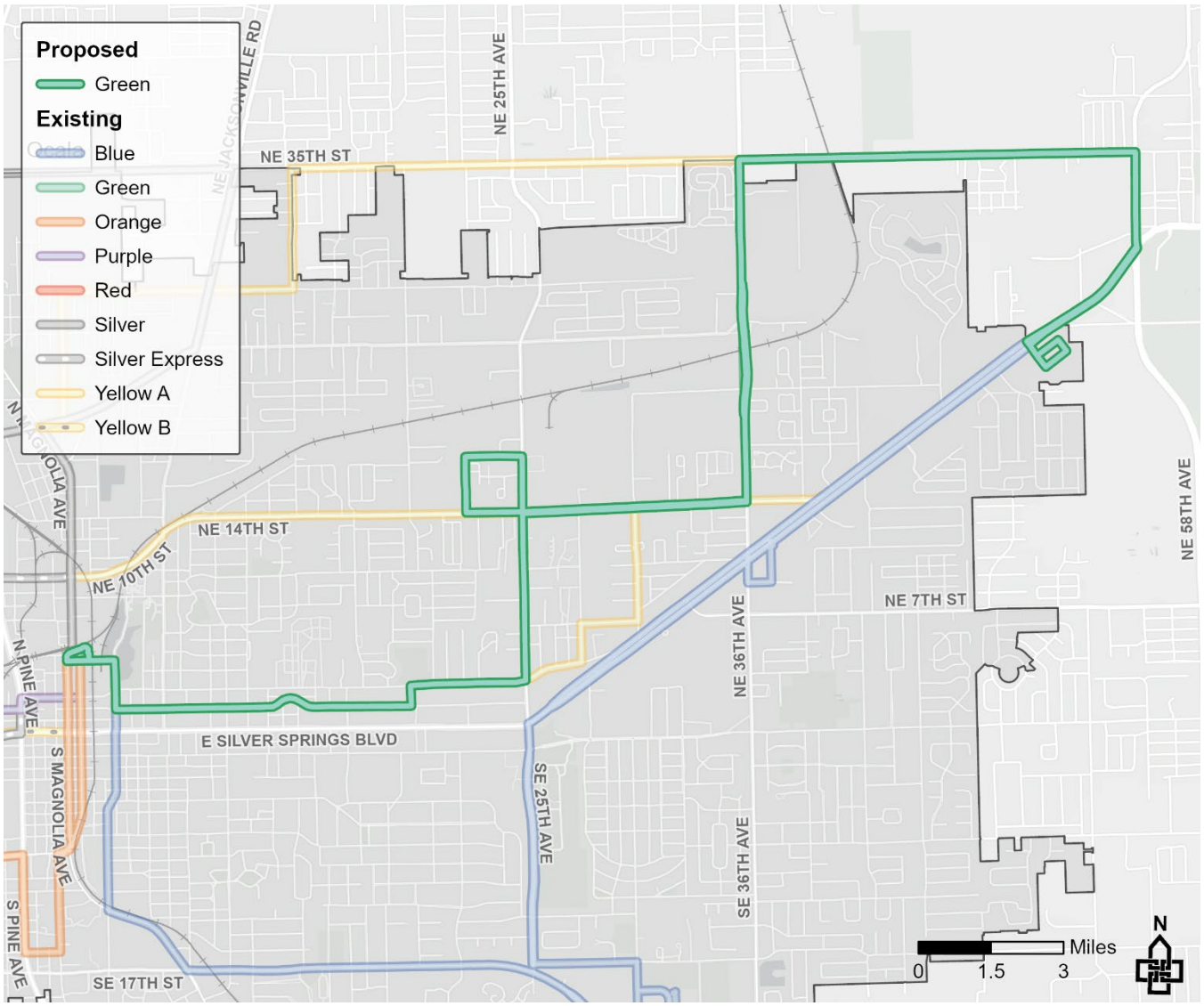
Service alternatives also seek to fulfill environment and equity, accessibility, usability, efficiency, and presence goals, enhancing the integration of transit services to support environmental sustainability and address equity issues within the community; expand transit services to maximize access to opportunity; make SunTran more convenient and useful for residents and visitors; maximize the productivity and efficiency of transit operations; and engage the community to improve service awareness and public support.

8.2.1 Improvements to Existing Routes

The following improvements relied heavily on the results from the previously mentioned analyses, but in particular, the existing service analysis and public and stakeholder engagement.

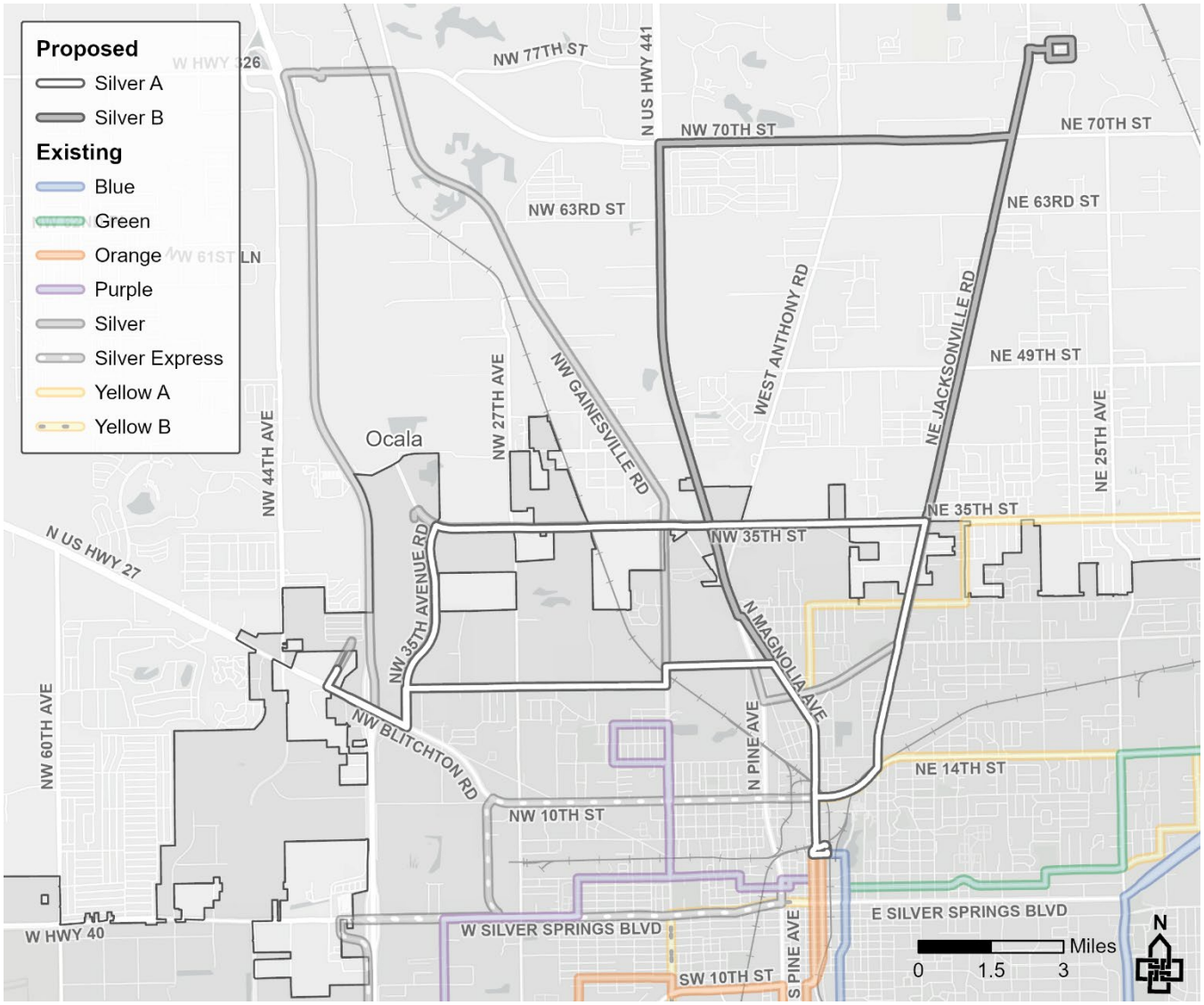
- **Enhance the core routes** by increasing the frequency of service on the Blue, Green, Orange, and Purple routes.
- **Serve the Florida Center for the Blind with the Green Route** by making a clockwise loop along NE 14th Street, NE 22nd Avenue, NE 17th Place, and NE 25th Avenue on both outbound and inbound trips (**Figure** 8-1). This also supports the implementation of bidirectional service along NE 35th Street using the Yellow A Route.

Figure 8-1 | Green Route Alignment Adjustments



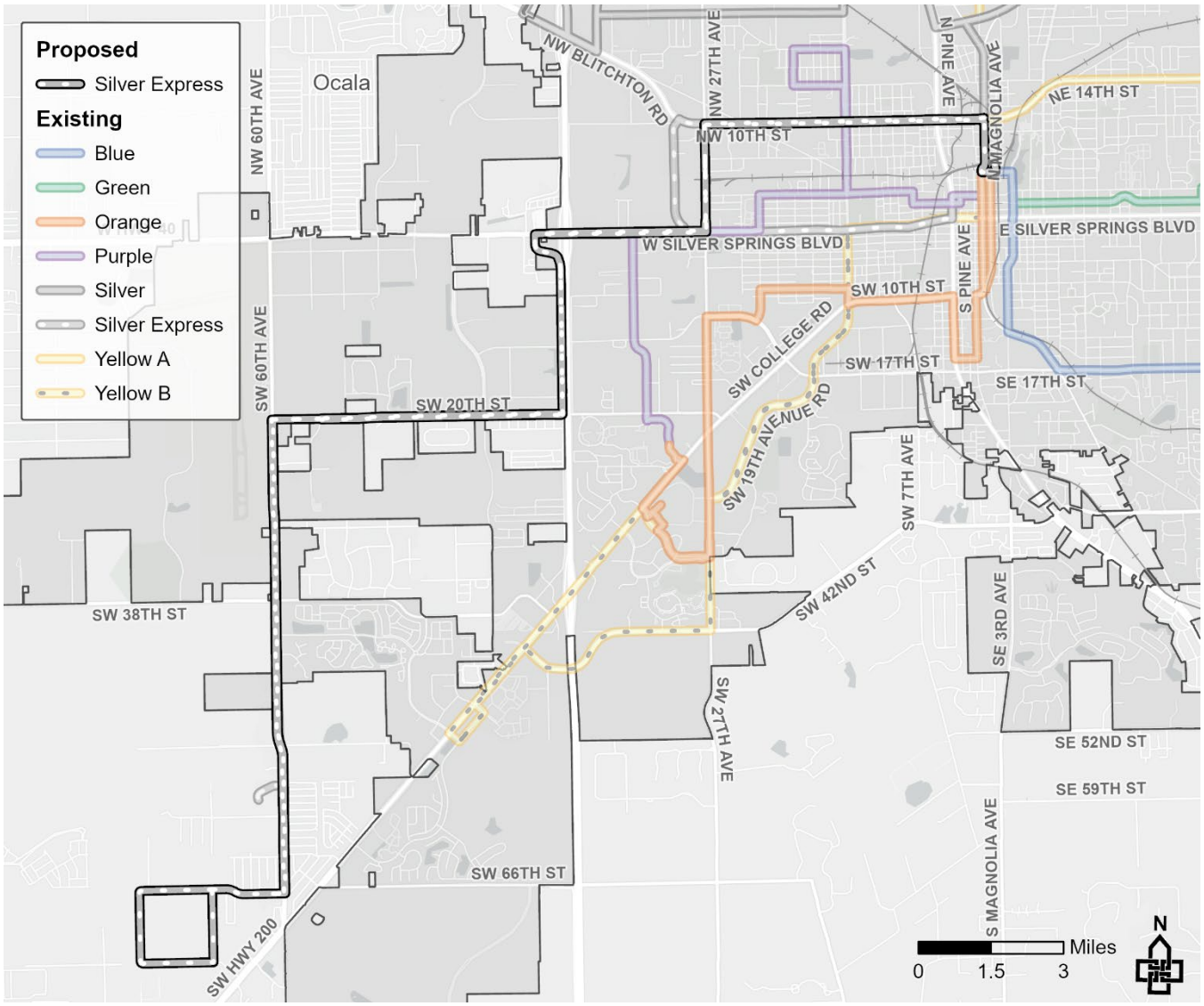
- **Change the northernmost stops of the Silver Route** to serve the Compassion Food Bank, and Landfair Homes on Old US Hwy 301 at NE 77th Street and the distribution centers on NW 35th Avenue (**Figure 8-2**). This would stop service to the Ocala Greyhound Bus Station. This redirects resources from a segment of the Silver Route that sees very little ridership, focusing on destinations that better serve the needs of SunTran riders.

Figure 8-2 | Silver Route Alignment Adjustments



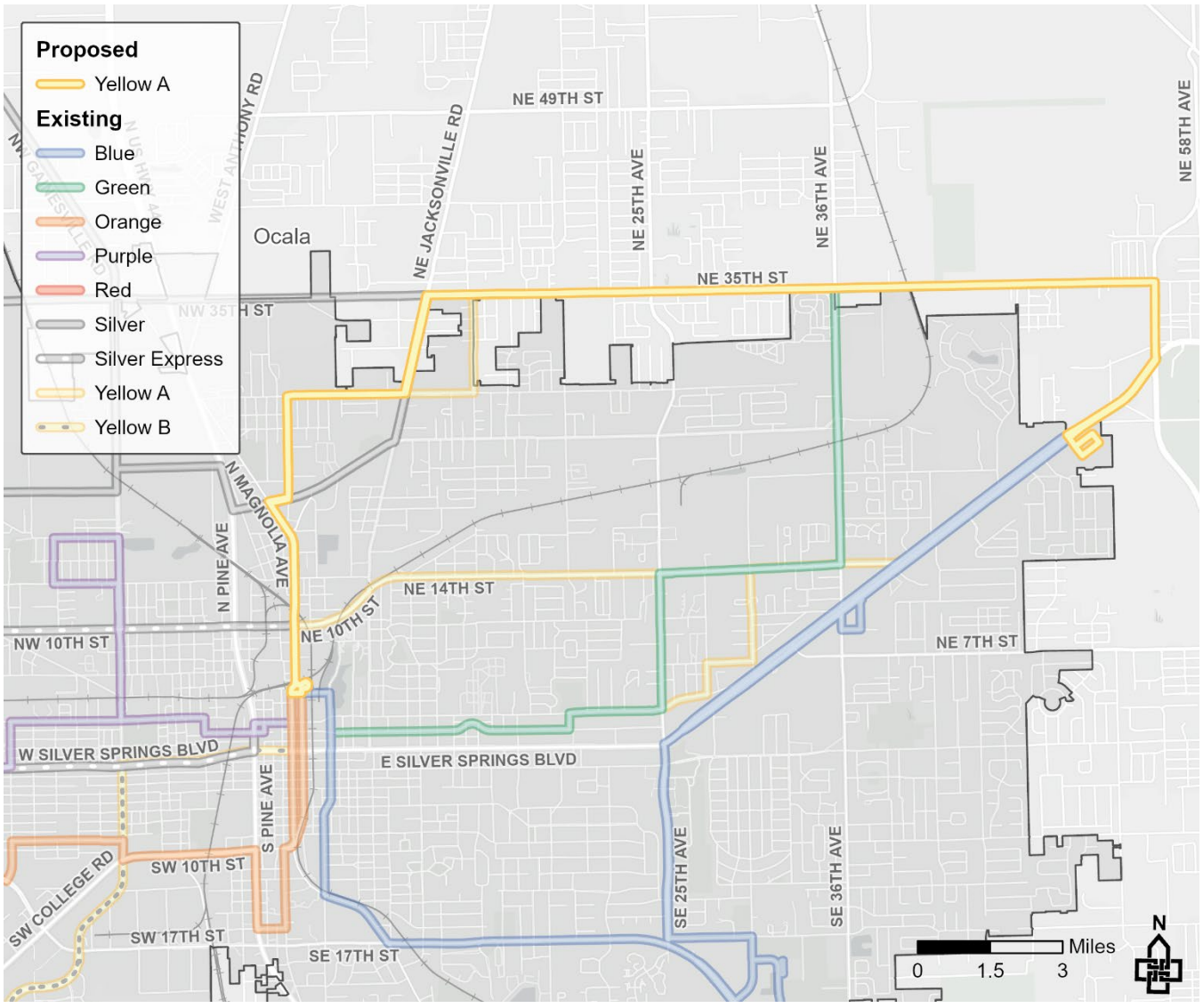
- **Extend the Silver Express Route** to the planned developments in the area of SR 200 and SW 60th Avenue (**Figure 8-3**). This connects a rapidly developing portion of Marion County with Downtown Ocala.

Figure 8-3 | Silver Express Route Alignment Adjustments



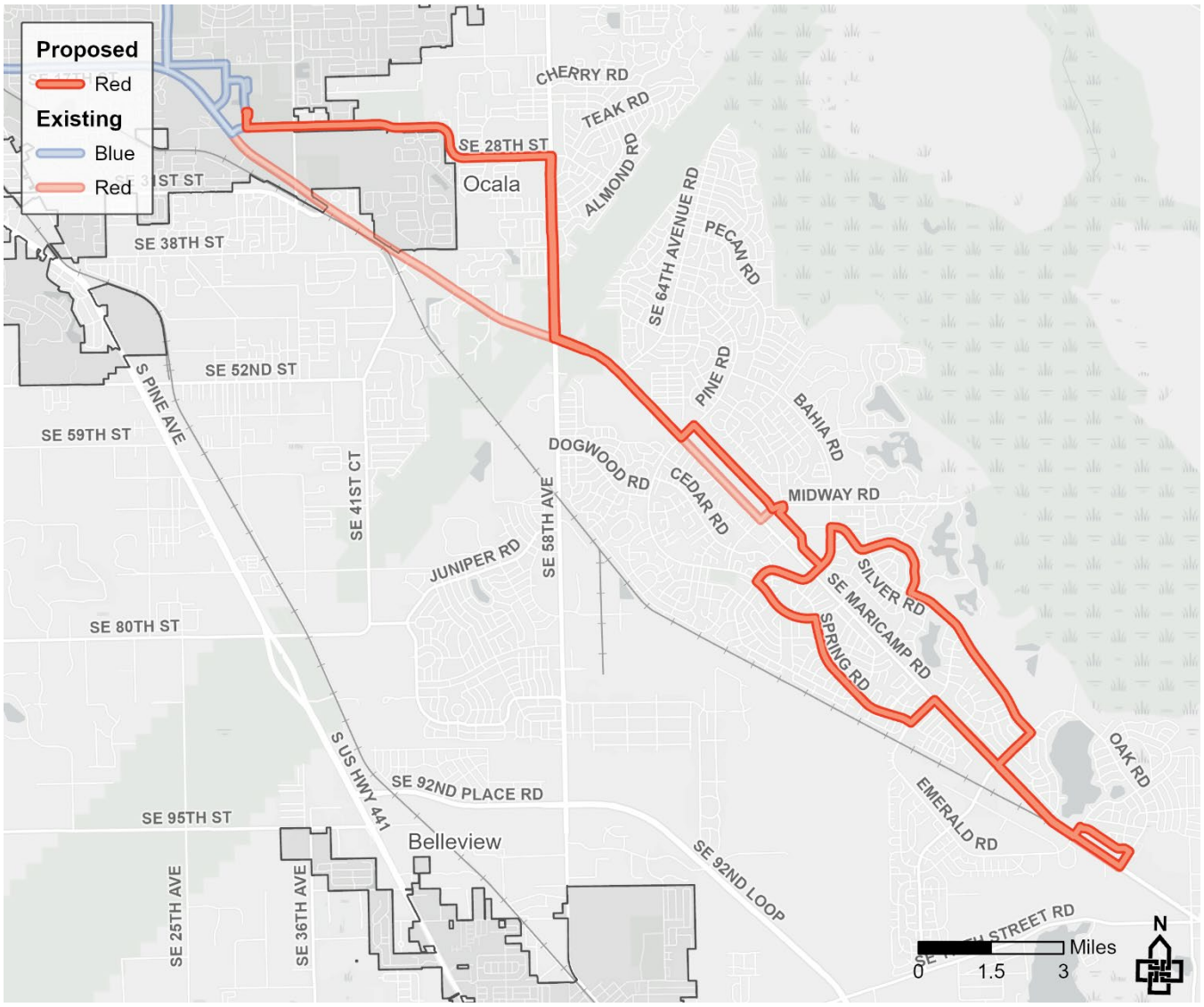
- **Operate Yellow A Route along NE 35th Street** (**Figure 8-4**). This change would introduce bidirectional service on the most popular segments of the Yellow A Route while eliminating redundant portions of the Yellow A Route. Currently the Yellow A Route overlaps with the Green Route on NE 14th Street and the Blue Route on E Silver Springs Boulevard.

Figure 8-4 | Yellow A Route Alignment Adjustments



- **Streamline the Red Route** by removing service along SE Maricamp Road between Baseline Road and SE 24th Street (**Figure 8-5**). This would make service easier to use and more focused on the most popular segments of the route. This is contingent upon the operation of the Belleview Route, which would maintain service along the segment of SE Maricamp Road no longer served by the Red Route.

Figure 8-5 | Red Route Alignment Adjustments

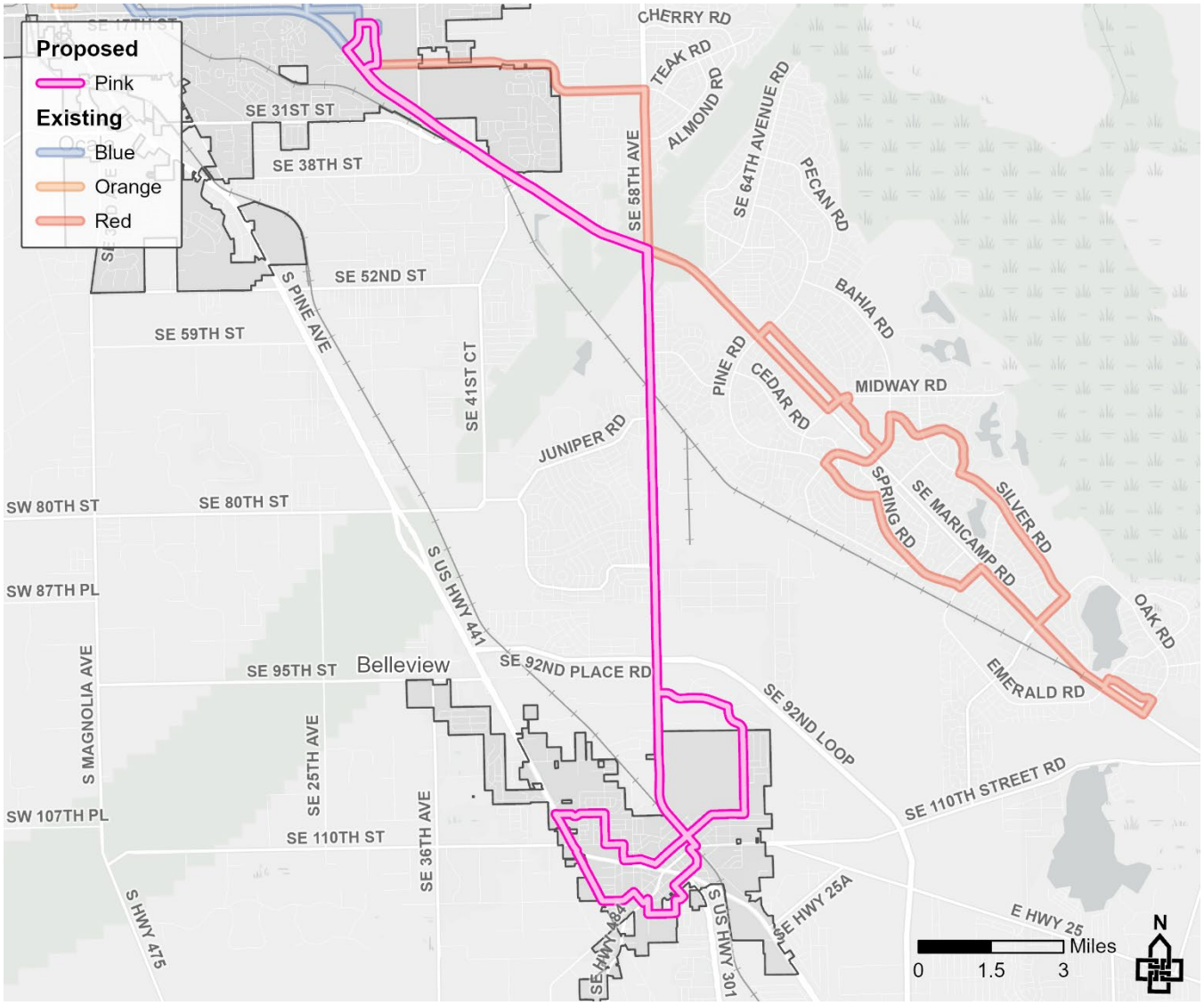


8.2.2 New Service Concepts

New service concepts focused on the results of the situational appraisal and market assessment, addressing where growth in the County is expected to occur in the future years. As well as the results of public and stakeholder engagement efforts that detailed a need for expanded service to both Belleview and Marion Oaks. These new service concepts also incorporate recommendations for a new service delivery method (microtransit) to enhance efficiency of the system and expand service to Sundays.

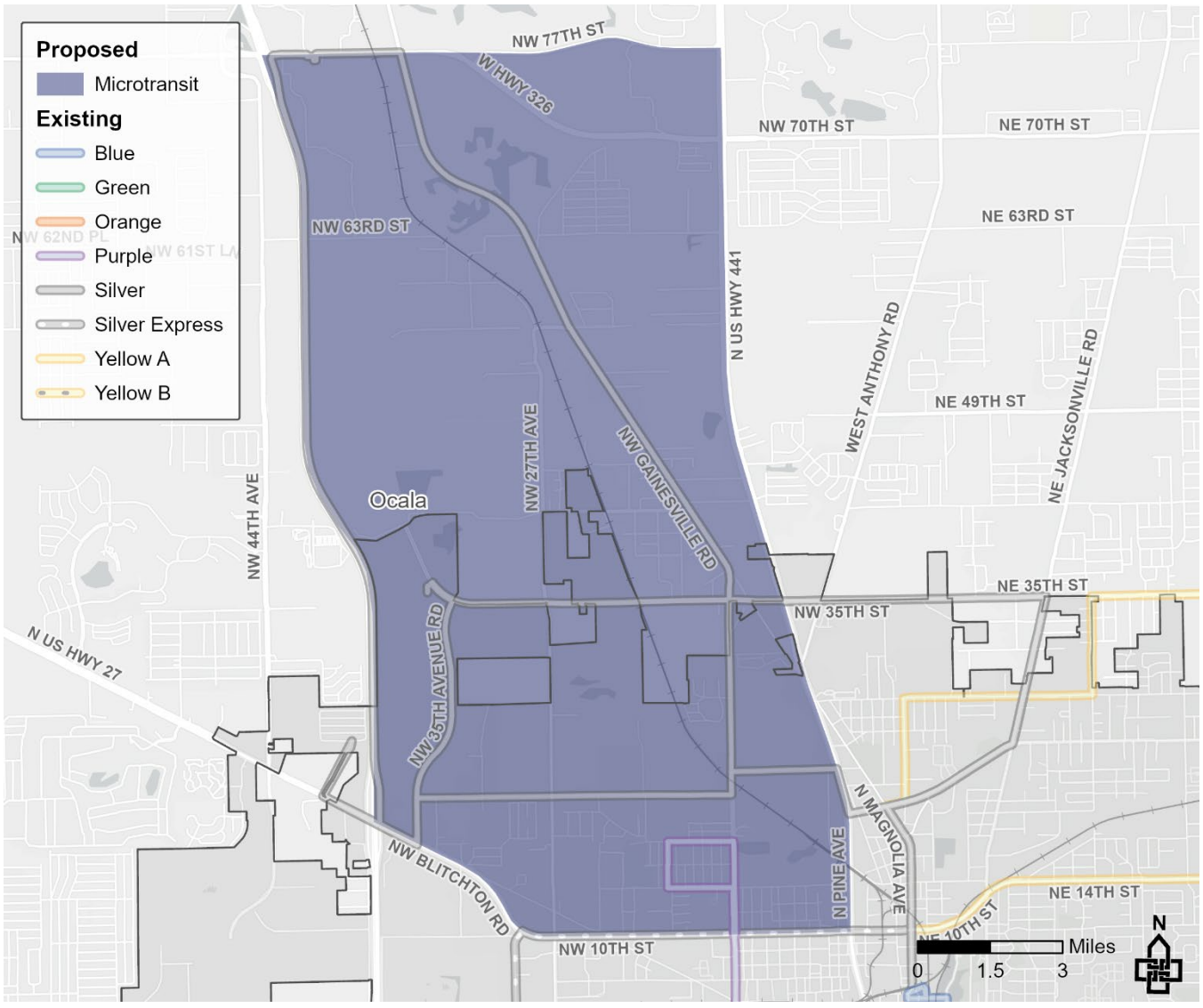
- **Provide service to Belleview** along SE Maricamp Road and SE 58th Avenue (**Figure 8-6**). This route would connect with the Blue Route at the Health Department Transfer Station. This provides a fast-developing portion of Marion County with access to the City of Ocala via transit.

Figure 8-6 | Proposed Belleview Route



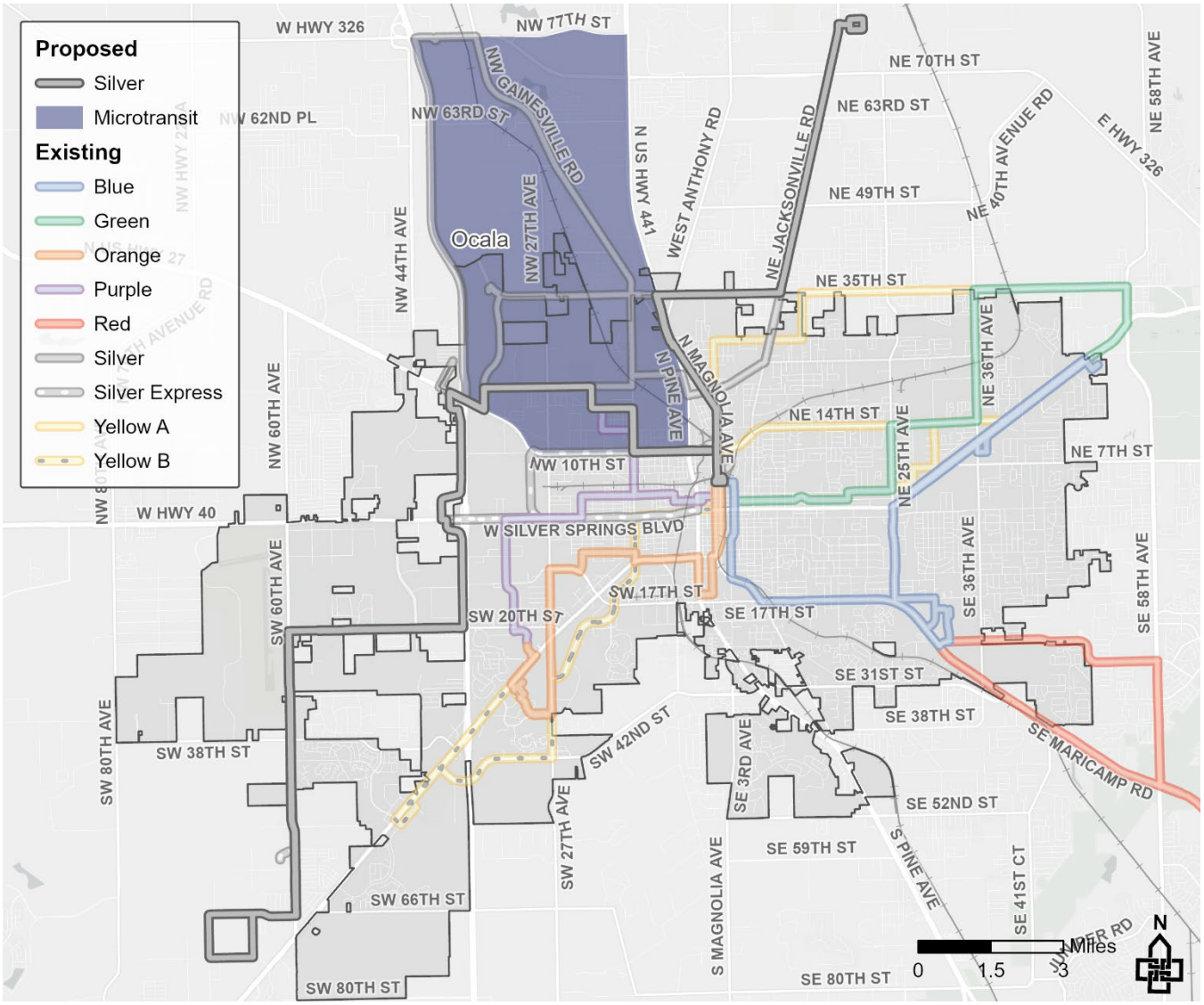
- **Implement microtransit in Northwest Ocala** between Highway 326 to the north, I-75 to the west, SR 326 to the south, and US 301/441 to the east (**Figure 8-7**)**.** This microtransit zone more efficiently serves transit-oriented populations in this low-density area, connecting residents with jobs at the distribution centers along NW 35th Avenue, as well as with the Ocala Greyhound Bus Station.

Figure 8-7 | Proposed Northwest Ocala Microtransit Zone



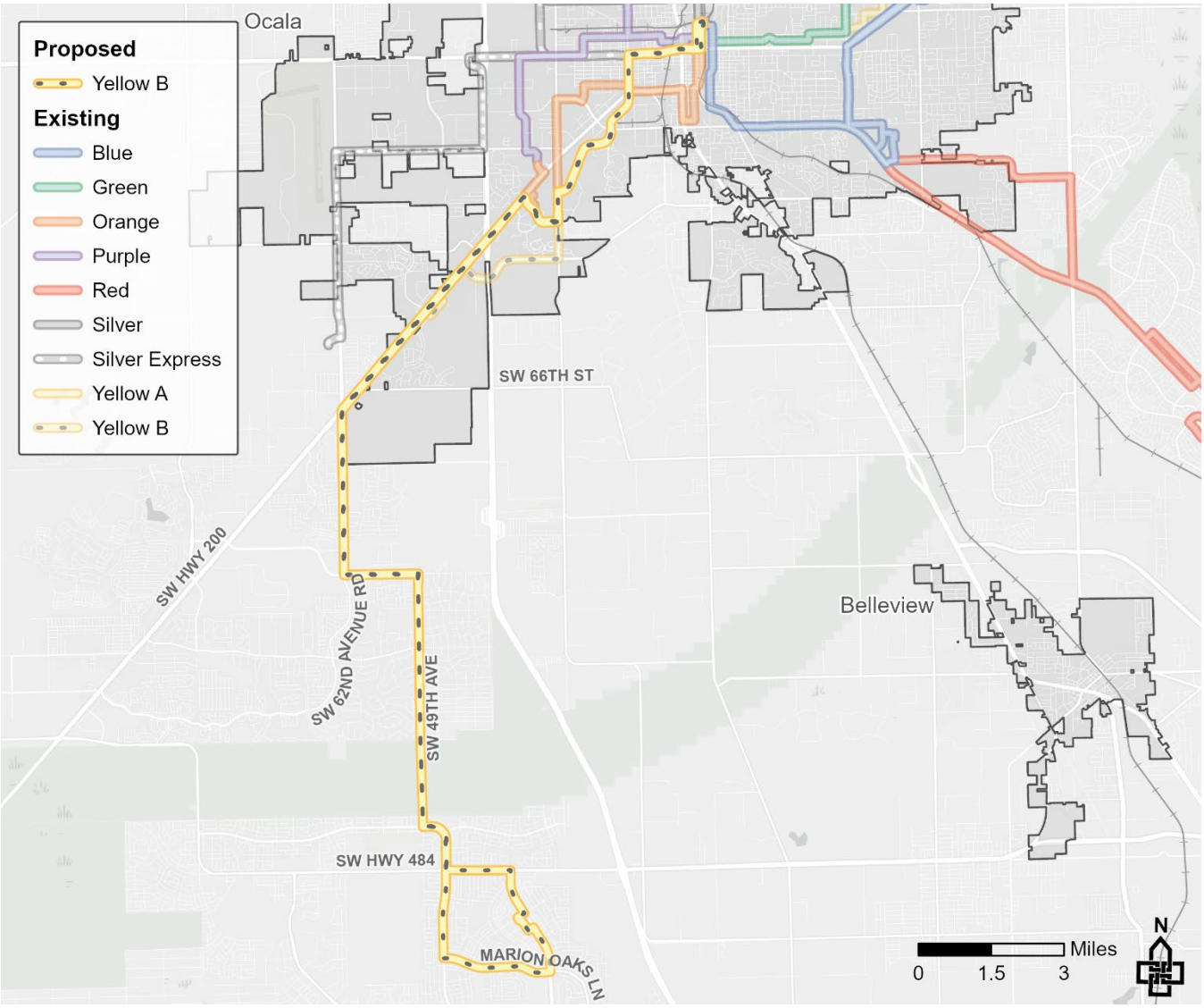
- **Streamline and connect the Silver Express and Silver Routes,** to serve the upcoming planned developments in the area of SR 200 and SW 60th Avenue, the Mary Sue Rich Community Center, Downtown Transit Center, and the Compassion Food Bank (**Figure 8-8**). Serving these destinations with a single route would dramatically increase the north-south connectivity of SunTran's service. This longer-term plan would be based on the success of microtransit in Northwest Ocala.

Figure 8-8 | Silver Route Realignment



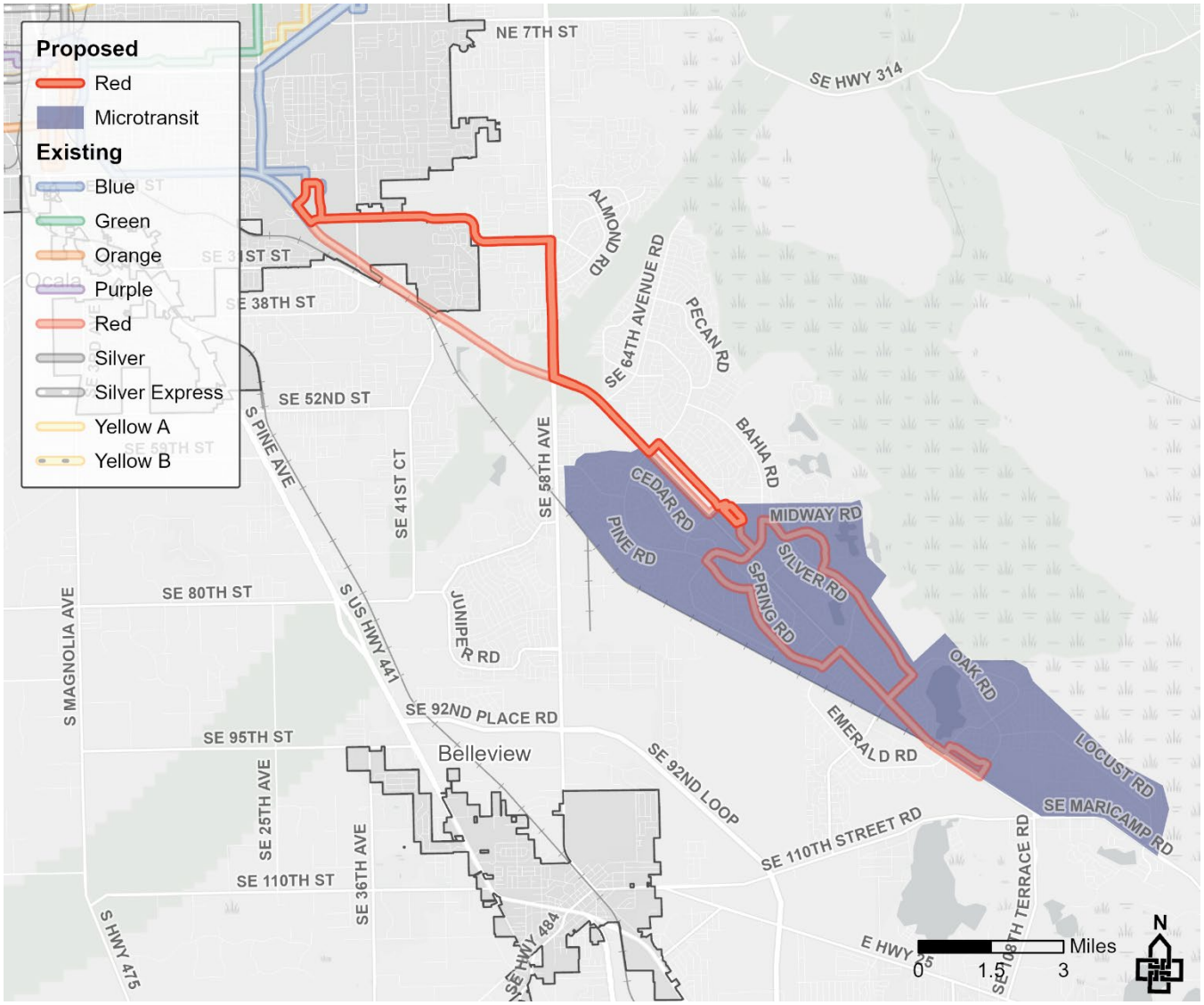
- **Extend the Yellow B Route to serve Marion Oaks** (**Figure 8-9**). This improvement would provide residents of Marion Oaks with a connection to Downtown Ocala. Though initially envisioned as a peak-period service, this could be eventually offered all day if demand exists.

Figure 8-9 | Proposed Marion Oaks Route



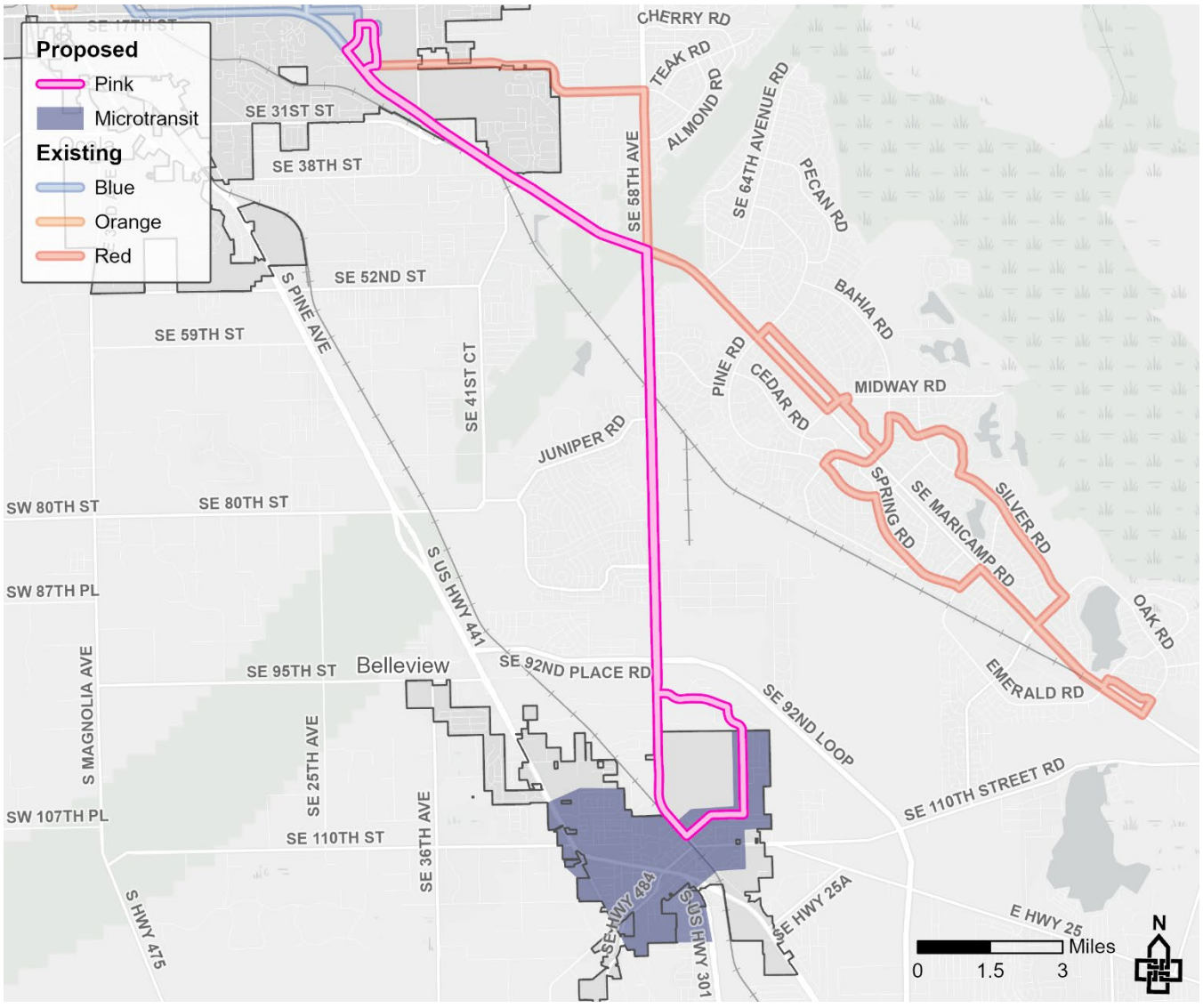
- **End service on the Red Route at the Silver Springs Shores Walmart, while serving the rest of the existing route with microtransit service** (**Figure 8-10**). This microtransit area would cover Silver Springs Shores from the Walmart to SE 110th Street, providing transit options to an area with limited pedestrian infrastructure and more efficiently serving riders in this area, allowing for the possibility of increasing the frequency of fixed-route services to Silver Springs Shores.

Figure 8-10 | Red Route Realignment and Silver Springs Shores Microtransit Zone



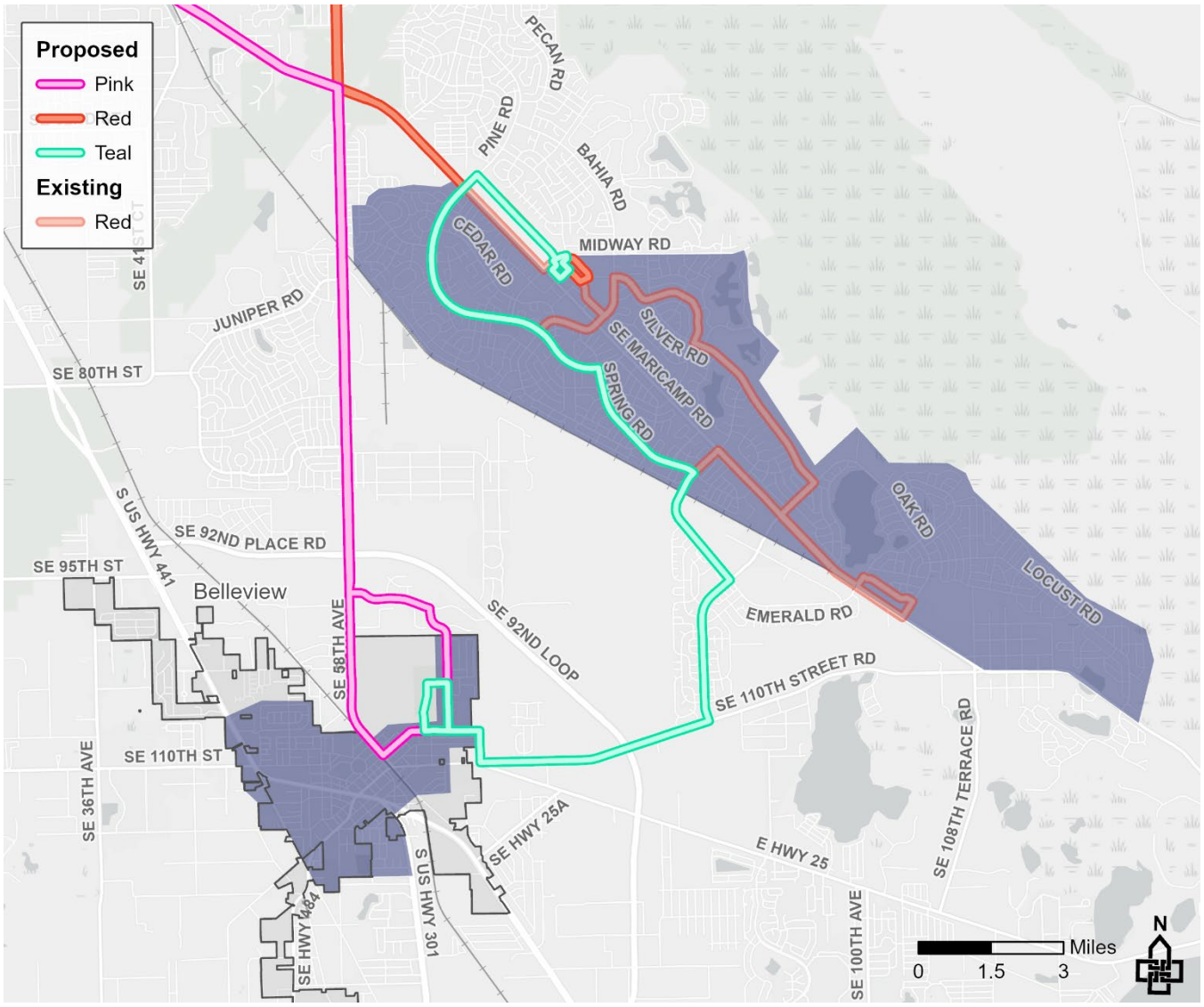
- **Implement microtransit service in Belleview** (**Figure 8-11**). This microtransit zone would cover the City of Belleview, surrounding neighborhoods, and the Belleview Sports Complex, more efficiently serving riders in this area, allowing for the possibility of increasing the frequency of fixed-route services connecting to this area.

Figure 8-11 | Belleview Route Realignment and Belleview Microtransit Zone



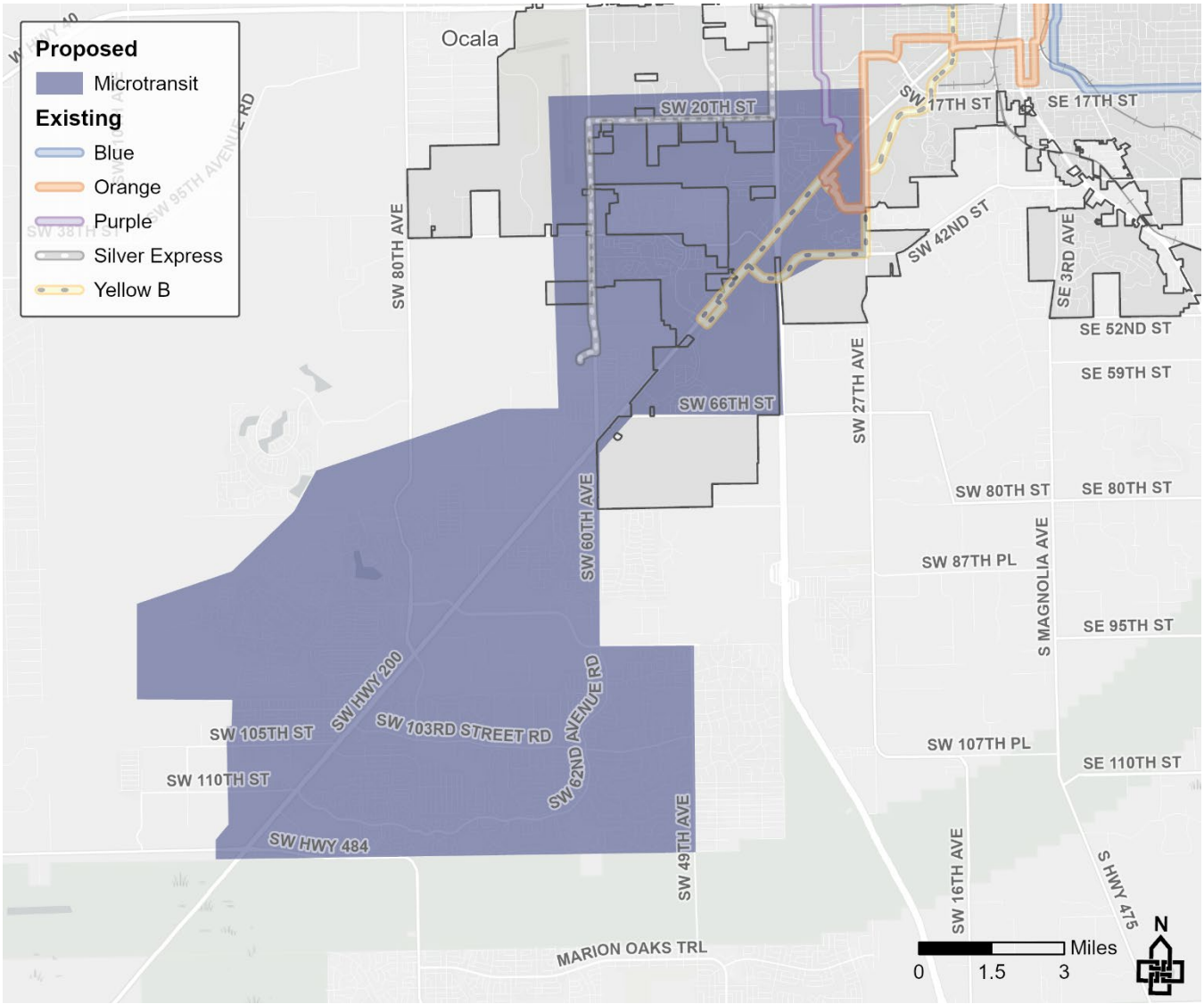
- **Provide service connecting Silver Springs Shores and Belleview** (**Figure 8-12**). This is contingent upon the operation of the Belleview Route, as well as the Belleview and Silver Springs Shores microtransit zones. It would provide a connection between Belleview and Silver Spring Shores as identified through stakeholder engagement.

Figure 8-12 | Proposed Silver Springs Shores and Belleview Route



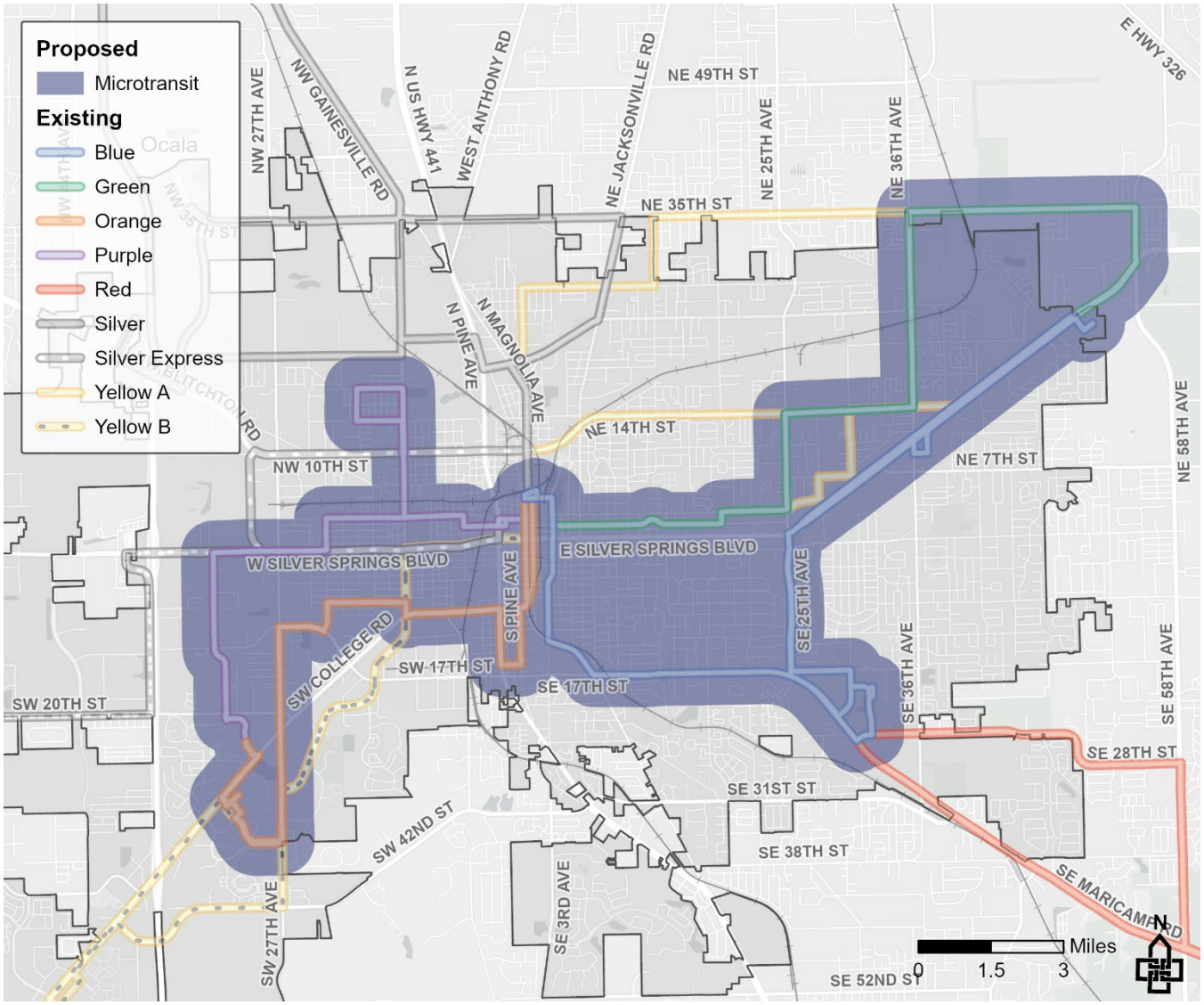
- **Provide microtransit service along SR200 (Figure 8-13**) – Current and future development patterns indicate growth along the SR200 corridor. This alternative would include three separate microtransit zones in key neighborhoods along the fixed-route service. The purpose of this alternative would be to connect the residents in these communities to the fixed-route system and nearby shopping. This alternative was developed based on input provided by the Board of County Commissioners.

Figure 8-13: Proposed Microtransit SR200



- **Provide Sunday service with microtransit to the areas served by the Green, Blue, Orange, and Purple routes** (**Figure 8-14**). The service area of the core routes would be broken up into three independent microtransit zones, West Ocala, the Historic District, and Silver Springs, which would serve areas within a quarter mile of these core routes. Ensuring that riders of SunTran's core routes could use transit to meet their transportation needs every day of the week.

Figure 8-14 | Proposed Sunday Microtransit Zone Area



8.3 Capital/Infrastructure Improvements

The four capital asset categories as defined by FTA are: equipment (nonrevenue vehicles); rolling stock (revenue vehicles); infrastructure (signals and systems), and facilities. Recommended capital/infrastructure improvements include the following:

- **Expand and improve bus stop infrastructure -** SunTran should continue to improve infrastructure at bus stops, including benches, and shelters to maintain ADA compliance and improve customer accessibility.
- **Fleet Electrification -** The rapid investment in electric vehicle technology and continued emphasis on reducing statewide emissions means that SunTran should continue to pursue fleet electrification and related infrastructure. The Low or No-Emissions Bus Program provides nearly $5.6 billion to support the purchase or lease of zero-emission or low-emission transit buses as well as acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities.
- **On-Demand/Microtransit -** As policies at the federal and state level evolve to account for innovative transit and its benefits, the funding available for microtransit projects has seen significant growth. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) began recognizing microtransit as public transportation in 2016, allowing formula funds to be used towards microtransit projects. FTA also supports microtransit and Mobility on Demand initiatives through several competitive grants including Accelerating Innovative Mobility (AIM), Enhancing Mobility Innovation (EMI), Integrated Mobility Innovation (IMI), and the Mobility on Demand (MOD) Sandbox program. SunTran should pursue funding to support the acquisition of On-Demand Software and the purchase of micro-transit vehicles.

8.4 Technology Improvements

Technological advancements have and will continue to reshape mobility and have the potential to greatly enhance the attractiveness and usefulness of public transportation. As addressed in substantial detail in the preceding sections, there is clearly a role for traditional fixed route transit services within Marion County. The analysis also indicates that considerable portions of the SunTran service area (and beyond) are not well suited to traditional fixed route transit due to a mix of factors including low-density land uses, street networks that are not amenable to full-size transit buses, suboptimal pedestrian connectivity that makes it difficult and in some cases unsafe for transit customers to access the nearest transit stop, and more. The advent of microtransit service over the past several years as an alternative means of providing access and mobility to a community, enabled by the use of advanced technology, creates an opportunity to provide transit services within Marion County with increased efficiency, added coverage, and improved levels of convenience for customers.

Microtransit is a type of on-demand mobility service that can be dispatched directly by riders using a smartphone application, similar to Uber or Lyft. It is typically operated with smaller vehicles, such as vans, although transit systems nationwide have deployed a wide range of vehicle types for this service. Riders can use a smartphone or similar device with a dedicated 'app', visit the transit agency's website, or even call the transit agency on a landline (in the event they do not have a smartphone) to schedule a trip, often within a near 'on-demand' timeline of less than 30 minutes, for travel within a microtransit zone. Microtransit is not an "anywhere to anywhere" service due

to cost constraints and the need to manage demand, but instead is offered within predefined zones. Microtransit zones are defined in advance and take into consideration potential demand, likely origins and destinations, and are designed to cover a limited area to maintain service quality and reliability and manage costs. Customers can schedule a trip within the zone or to a connection point, typically a bus stop or transit center, where they can connect to the broader fixed route transit system. Microtransit fares can be the same as standard route fares, or in some cases can be higher based on transit agency policy and goals for the service. The technology supporting microtransit service is not limited to the customer interface, but also extends to the backend systems. This allows for more efficient scheduling of trips and optimization of routing to maximize the number of passengers per vehicle and to coordinate trip requests to strike an appropriate balance between travel time for customers and the efficiency of the service.

As SunTran moves toward the development and implementation of microtransit service, it is suggested that clear goals and performance metrics be established by which to gauge the usefulness of the service. This is an important practice for any transit service, but due to the relative newness of microtransit and the tendency for stakeholders to view it as a 'silver bullet' solution that should be applied systemwide, it is particularly true for microtransit so that there is increased clarity as to why the agency is using this form of mobility, what it hopes to accomplish and how it will know if it is successful or not. One additional note is that microtransit can serve as a predecessor to fixed-route service over time as land uses change and ridership develops.

In addition to microtransit, SunTran has already initiated transitioning of the fleet to electric propulsion technology. In addition to the clear environmental benefits for both local air quality and climate change mitigation, electrically powered vehicles also bring direct benefits in the form of a quieter ride, faster acceleration, substantially reduced parts inventory requirements, and other advantages. Electric buses can also help change the public perception of the transit system by eliminating visible emissions, reducing noise, and generally promoting a more modern and sustainable approach to mobility.

8.5 Policy/Other Improvements

As SunTran moves forward, the agency should seek to build upon its already strong relationships with the community, including the development community, the City of Ocala and Marion County, to bolster transit-supportive development practices. The reason is that transit does not operate in a vacuum, but instead is largely dependent on the infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, public spaces, bike facilities, etc.) and development patterns (sprawl vs. compact, mixed-use development, auto-dependent vs. walkable, pedestrian-friendly vs. pedestrian-hostile, etc.) that exist and are being built within the community it serves. Coordination with the TPO is also recommended to assess network accessibility to identify potential gaps or barriers that limit the ability of neighborhoods or key destinations use the transit network. With the tremendous growth that Ocala and Marion County expect over the next decade and beyond, making the case for more transit-supportive development and infrastructure can yield many benefits and help support increased ridership and a more useful and convenient transit system.

SunTran also strongly supports the role of public transportation in advancing equity in Marion County and would welcome the opportunity to discuss a joint system-wide equity study with TPO. Such a study may identify

additional opportunities to expand the microtransit zones and/or transit service to improve access for disadvantaged communities.

SunTran will continue to improve and expand the ongoing marketing program. As new services are introduced and existing services are made more efficient, it is increasingly important to continue to engage the public and include them in the decision-making process. Marketing is equally important to establish a presence and increase visibility in the community.

8.6 Short- and Long-Term Plans

Figure 8-15 and **Figure 8-16** combine the alternatives into short- and long-term plans. The short-term plan would be accomplished within the next five years (2023-2027), while the long-term plan would be accomplished in the subsequent five years (2028-2032). Both short- and long-term alternatives are summarized in **Table 8-1**. Notably, the table includes three microtransit zones along SR-200 that were devised in the later stages of the planning process.

Figure 8-15 | Short-term Service Concept

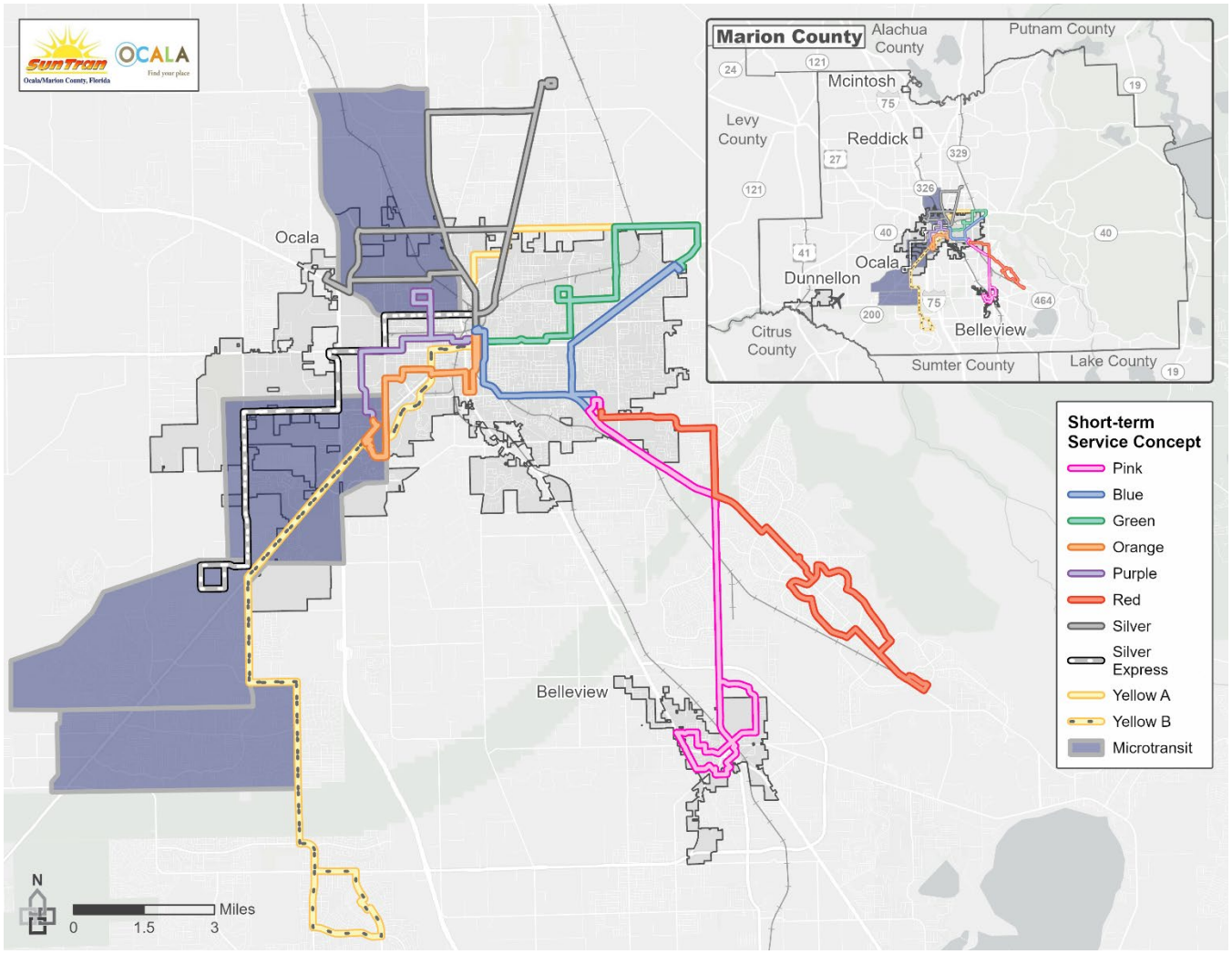


Figure 8-16 | Long-term Service Concept

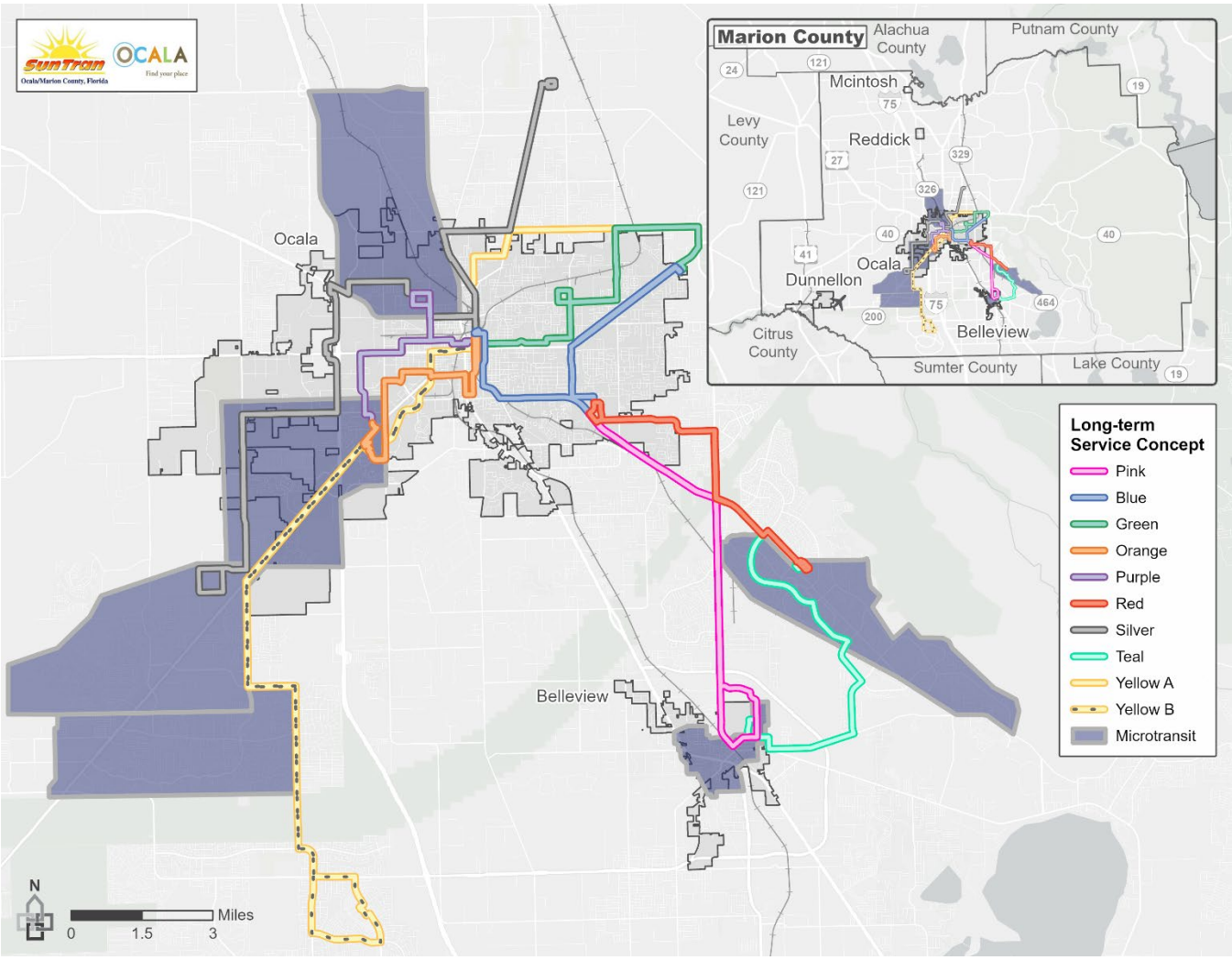


Table 8-1 | Short- and Long-Term Alternatives Summary

Alternative	Description
Short Term	
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	Increase frequency to every 52 minutes; serve the Florida Center for the Blind; incorporate electric vehicles
Yellow Route improvements	Increase peak frequency on the Yellow A route to 70 minutes; streamline route
Marion Oaks service	Run a new route to Marion Oaks
Silver Route revamping with microtransit	Reroutings on Silver and Silver Express routes; northwest microtransit zone
Red Route streamlining	Simplify route to focus on west part of route on SE 24th St
Belleview service	Run a new route to Belleview
Microtransit – Sunday A	Run microtransit in northeast part of Ocala on Sundays
Microtransit – Sunday B	Run microtransit in western part of Ocala on Sundays
Microtransit – Sunday C	Run microtransit in Downtown and southeast part of Ocala
Microtransit – SR 200 South	Run microtransit along SR 200, in the vicinity of the Walmart near CR 484 and neighborhoods to the east
Microtransit – SR 200 Central	Run microtransit along SR 200, in the vicinity of On Top of the World Communities and west of SW 60th Ave
Microtransit – SR 200 North	Run microtransit along SR 200, between SW 60th Ave and the College of Central Florida / Paddock Mall
Long Term	
Green-Blue-Orange-Purple interline frequency increase	Increase frequency to 35 minutes
Yellow A Route improvements	Increase frequency and span
Yellow B and Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	Consolidate Yellow B and Marion Oaks service into a single Marion Oaks route
Silver Route – consolidate	Consolidate the Silver and Silver Express routes into a single streamlined route
Red Route shortening + microtransit	Shorten the Red Route. Add microtransit in Silver Springs Shores
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	Shorten the new Belleview Route. Add microtransit in Belleview.
Southeast Crosstown	Run a new crosstown route between the Silver Springs Shores and Belleview microtransit areas

8.7 Evaluation of Alternatives

To guide the prioritization of alternatives, an evaluation is conducted based on stakeholder feedback, a transit market analysis, and ridership forecasts. **Table 8-2** shows the five evaluation criteria for scoring the alternatives. Each alternative is given a percentage score for each criterion based on its relative performance to other alternatives. Criteria scores then are weighted and totaled to provide a composite score.

Table 8-2 | Evaluation Criteria

#	Criterion	Description	Weight
1	Goals & Objectives	The alternative is credited for each objective met in the goals and objectives.	50%
2	Public Input	This criterion measures the degree to which the alternative is publicly supported.	12.5%
3	Equity	Utilizing the Transit Oriented Populations Origin Index in **Section 2.3.2**, the alternative is given an average score, weighted by area, of land within the alternative's area of influence. The area of influence for fixed route is ¼ mile from the route.	12.5%
4	Market Analysis	Within the appropriate area of influence, this criterion assesses (1) population and employment, (2) shares of transit-oriented populations, and (3) the level of activity. The area of influence for fixed route is ¼ mile from the route.	12.5%
5	Efficiency	This criterion assesses the degree to which the alternative increases system efficiency. Components assessed were (1) straightness of the route, (2) number of stops per mile, and (3) ridership per mile.	12.5%

8.7.1 Criteria Scoring Methodology

This subsection details the scoring of each criterion. **Table 8-3** provides the methodology for evaluating the alternatives against the first criterion: Goals & Objectives. For each objective, a score of 0 or 1 is given, based on whether the alternative supports the fulfillment of this objective. Not all goals and objectives are shown, as some do not apply in evaluating alternatives. The scores are then added, and then the sum is divided by the maximum achieved score to provide a percentage. The highest-scoring alternative will automatically be at 100%, while the remaining percentages are based on proximity to the highest score.

Table 8-3 | Goals & Objectives Scoring

#	Objective Name	Objective Full Text	Credit Requirement
Goal 1: Environment and Equity			
1-1	**Zero Emissions**	Develop a Zero Emissions Fleet Transition Plan by 2023.	Supports a transition to a zero-emission fleet.
1-2	**Electric Vehicles**	Pursue funding opportunities to assist with the purchase of Electric Vehicles and related Infrastructure.	Supports the utilization of electric vehicles.
1-4	**Equity**	Develop a methodology to assess transit system equity based upon best practices by 2023.	Promotes equity in some way.

#	Objective Name	Objective Full Text	Credit Requirement
Goal 2: Accessibility			
2-1	**Intercounty Connectivity**	Continue to proactively seek partnerships with surrounding county governments, agencies, and private employers to increase connectivity between counties.	Promotes connectivity outside of Marion County.
2-2	**Underserved Areas**	Pursue additional funding opportunities that support improved bus stops and shelters and service extensions to underserved areas with strong transit propensity.	Serves areas scoring medium or above on the Transit-Oriented Populations Origin Index.
2-3	**Meet Business Community Needs**	Proactively partner with the business community and the regional workforce development board to continuously develop and refine services to meet their needs.	Serves areas scoring high on the Commuter Origin Index or Employment Destination Index.
Goal 3: Usability			
3-1	**Meet Existing User & Employer Needs**	Design, implement, and maintain an annual survey program that includes both system user and on-route employer surveys to assess the community need for transit services on Weekday, Saturday, and Sunday.	Benefits existing users or employers
3-2	**Sunday Morning Service**	Determine the feasibility of implementing Sunday morning services.	Provides Sunday service
Goal 4: Efficiency			
4-1	**Modify Underperforming Routes**	Assess the feasibility of modifying or eliminating underperforming routes to improve the cost-efficiency of the system.	Addresses low ridership on one or more routes
4-2	**Prioritize High Ridership Routes**	Prioritize investments in those routes that have the highest ridership to improve productivity (effectiveness) of the transit system.	Increases service on routes with high ridership
4-3	**ACES / Emerging Technologies**	Evaluate the feasibility of automated, connected, electric and shared (ACES) vehicles and other emerging technologies that may reduce operational costs.	Supports the use of ACES vehicles or other emerging technologies
4-4	**Addresses Delays**	Complete a systemwide 'hot spot' analysis using AVL data and bus operator input to identify recurrent delays and identify transit priority treatments to address by 2023.	Improves a route with a relatively low on-time performance

Table 8-4 shows the scoring methodology for the Public Input criterion. A survey was administered, in which respondents were asked to express their level of support for each alternative, ranging from "Highly Dislike" to "Highly Like." The responses were then converted to a score of 0 to 4. Based on respondent percentage for each score, a weighted average score is derived. That score is then converted to a percentage by dividing it by the maximum score. The highest score thus automatically receives 100%, while the other percentages are based on proximity to the maximum.

Table 8-4 | Public Input Scoring

Response	Highly Dislike	Dislike	Neutral	Like	Highly Like
Score	0	1	2	3	4

Table 8-5 debriefs the scoring of the Equity criterion. It is based on a weighted average of the Transit-Oriented Population Origin Index.

Table 8-5 | Equity Scoring

Metric Averaged	Fixed Route Buffer	Average Weighting Factor
Transit-Oriented Population Origin Index	0.25 mile	Square miles

Table 8-6 details the scoring methodology of the Market Analysis criterion. The area of influence for fixed route alternatives is assumed to be ¼ mile from the route(s). The scoring occurs in three components of equal weight. The percentages are then added into a composite percentage, then converted into a new percentage based on the maximum.

Table 8-6 | Market Analysis Scoring

Component	Description	Scoring
Transit Potential	Population and jobs.[5]	The population and number of jobs is added, then divided by the area to compute the density. A percentage is then derived based on the maximum density.
Transit Oriented Population	The following disadvantaged groups were included: senior citizens, youth, low-income population, zero-car households, and people with disabilities.	Percentages were computed for each subgroup. Most percentages are with respect to total population, though zero-car households are with respect to the total number of households. The percentages are then averaged. Subsequently, a new percentage is derived based on the maximum percentage.
Activity	Activity Destination Index	The weighted average of the Activity Destination Index was computed. A percentage is then derived based on the maximum average.

[5] As the area of influence overlaps Census block groups, population and jobs for each block group is scaled down to the overlap area, assuming uniform distribution. The scaled numbers of each block group are then summed.

Table 8-7 shows the scoring methodology of the Efficiency criterion. Like with Market Analysis, it is broken into three components. A percentage is derived for each, based on where its score falls relative to the minimum and maximum.[6] The three percentages are then averaged into a composite score.

Table 8-7 | Efficiency Scoring

Component	Description	Scoring
Route Straightness	The ratio of the straight-line distance between termini to the route length. The straight-line distance is multiplied by 2, and the route length is round trip. This component is only evaluated for fixed route alternatives.	The straightness is computed for both the existing and improved route(s). The difference is then computed by subtracting the new straightness from the old straightness. A percentage is then derived based on the minimum and maximum.
Stops per Mile	The number of stops divided by the round-trip route length. This component is only evaluated for fixed route alternatives.	The stops per mile is computed for both the existing and improved route(s). The difference is then computed by subtracting the old from new stops per mile. A percentage is then derived based on the minimum and maximum.
Ridership per Mile	The number of riders divided by the round-trip route length.[7]	The ridership per mile is computed for both the existing and improved scenarios. The difference is then computed by subtracting the new from old ridership per mile. A percentage is then derived based on the minimum and maximum.

8.7.2 Results

The results of the evaluation are presented below, with **Table 8-8** providing the summary results, and **Table 8-9** through **Table 8-13** showing greater detail for each criterion. The Sunday microtransit alternatives perform very strongly, as they meet the objectives of providing Sunday service and emerging technologies, are popular with the public, and serve areas with a high transit propensity. Alternatives to improve the Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline also perform quite well, as electric vehicles would be deployed, it has strong ridership, and it serves transit-oriented populations. Service to Marion Oaks and Belleview, along with the SR 200 microtransit alternatives, perform relatively low, as the land traversed to reach these areas is sparsely developed. The Belleview long-term alternative with microtransit scores higher. The scoring of these alternatives provides guidance in the sequence of implementation, as further discussed in the ten-year financial plan.

[6] For other criteria, the percentage is computed by dividing the raw score by the maximum. This is inapplicable for the Efficiency criterion, though, as raw numbers can be negative. Thus, the percentage is computed by subtracting the minimum from the score, then dividing this difference by the difference between the minimum and maximum.

[7] For microtransit, the "route length" equivalent is computed by dividing the area by 0.5 mile.

Table 8-8 | Evaluation Summary Results

Alternative	Goals & Objectives (50%)	Public Input (12.5%)	Equity (12.5%)	Market Analysis (12.5%)	Efficiency (12.5%)	Score
Short Term						
Microtransit – Sunday B	88%	100%	100%	86%	100%	**92%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	100%	73%	75%	90%	37%	**84%**
Microtransit – Sunday C	88%	100%	49%	100%	69%	**84%**
Microtransit – Sunday A	88%	100%	66%	63%	70%	**81%**
Yellow Route improvements	88%	83%	68%	75%	19%	**74%**
Silver Route revamping w/ microtransit	88%	91%	59%	47%	48%	**74%**
Red Route streamlining	75%	72%	68%	43%	32%	**64%**
Microtransit – SR 200 North	63%	N/A	51%	56%	69%	**61%**
Marion Oaks service	50%	85%	56%	56%	49%	**56%**
Microtransit – SR 200 South	50%	N/A	50%	45%	43%	**48%**
Belleview service	50%	88%	42%	41%	12%	**48%**
Microtransit – SR 200 Central	38%	N/A	40%	42%	40%	**39%**
Long Term						
Silver Route – consolidate	75%	88%	57%	46%	35%	**66%**
Red Route shortening + microtransit	75%	89%	69%	38%	27%	**65%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline frequency increase	63%	N/A	75%	90%	24%	**63%**
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	63%	87%	43%	42%	67%	**61%**
Yellow B & Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	63%	85%	56%	56%	39%	**61%**
Southeast Crosstown	75%	N/A	60%	40%	14%	**56%**
Yellow A Route improvements	63%	N/A	66%	63%	10%	**54%**

Table 8-9 | Goals & Objectives Results

Alternative	Goal 1: Environment & Equity	Goal 2: Accessibility	Goal 3: Usability	Goal 4: Efficiency	Raw Score	Percentage Score
Short Term						
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	3	2	1	2	**8**	**100%**
Microtransit – Sunday A	1	2	2	2	**7**	**88%**
Microtransit – Sunday B	1	2	2	2	**7**	**88%**
Microtransit – Sunday C	1	2	2	2	**7**	**88%**
Yellow Route improvements	1	2	1	3	**7**	**88%**
Silver Route revamping w/ microtransit	1	3	1	2	**7**	**88%**
Red Route streamlining	0	2	1	3	**6**	**75%**
Microtransit – SR 200 North	1	2	1	1	**5**	**63%**
Microtransit – SR 200 South	1	2	0	1	**4**	**50%**
Marion Oaks service	1	2	1	0	**4**	**50%**
Belleview service	1	2	1	0	**4**	**50%**
Microtransit – SR 200 Central	1	1	0	1	**3**	**38%**
Long Term						
Silver Route – consolidate	1	2	1	2	**6**	**75%**
Red Route shortening + microtransit	1	2	1	2	**6**	**75%**
Southeast Crosstown	1	2	1	2	**6**	**75%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline frequency increase	1	2	1	1	**5**	**63%**
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	1	2	1	1	**5**	**63%**
Yellow B & Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	1	2	1	1	**5**	**63%**
Yellow A Route improvements	1	2	1	1	**5**	**63%**

Table 8-10 | Public Input Results

Alternative	Highly Dislike (0)	Dislike (1)	Neutral (2)	Like (3)	Highly Like (4)	Weighted Average	Percentage Score
Short Term							
Microtransit – Sunday (all alternatives)	8%	0%	12%	16%	64%	**3.28**	**100%**
Silver Route revamping w/ microtransit	6%	5%	26%	19%	46%	**2.98**	**91%**
Belleview service	8%	0%	28%	24%	40%	**2.88**	**88%**
Marion Oaks service	12%	4%	27%	12%	46%	**2.78**	**85%**
Yellow Route improvements	4%	4%	42%	15%	35%	**2.73**	**83%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	0%	4%	65%	15%	15%	**2.39**	**73%**
Red Route streamlining	4%	4%	58%	21%	13%	**2.35**	**72%**
Long Term							
Red Route shortening + microtransit	0%	0%	48%	12%	40%	**2.92**	**89%**
Silver Route – consolidate	0%	0%	42%	27%	31%	**2.89**	**88%**
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	8%	0%	32%	20%	40%	**2.84**	**87%**
Yellow B & Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	12%	4%	27%	12%	46%	**2.78**	**85%**

Table 8-11 | Equity Results

Alternative	Transit-Oriented Population Origin Index Weighted Average	Percentage Score
Short Term		
Microtransit – Sunday B	55.22	**100%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	41.39	**75%**
Yellow Route improvements	37.67	**68%**
Red Route streamlining	37.65	**68%**
Microtransit – Sunday A	36.33	**66%**
Silver Route revamping w/ microtransit	32.64	**59%**
Marion Oaks service	31.08	**56%**
Microtransit – SR 200 North	28.33	**51%**
Microtransit – SR 200 South	27.80	**50%**
Microtransit – Sunday C	27.14	**49%**
Belleview service	23.04	**42%**
Microtransit – SR 200 Central	22.11	**40%**
Long Term		
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline frequency increase	41.39	**75%**
Red Route shortening + microtransit	38.04	**69%**
Yellow A Route improvements	36.53	**66%**
Southeast Crosstown	32.92	**60%**
Silver Route – consolidate	31.58	**57%**
Yellow B & Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	31.08	**56%**
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	23.52	**43%**

Table 8-12 | Market Analysis Results

Alternative	Population + Jobs		Transit-Oriented Populations		Activity		Composite Score	
	Total Density	Relative Percentage	Average Percent	Relative Percentage	Weighted Average	Relative Percentage	Average Percentage	Relative Percentage
Short Term								
Microtransit – Sunday C	6,209	100%	18%	80%	49.67	100%	**93%**	**100%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	5,401	87%	20%	88%	33.22	77%	**84%**	**90%**
Microtransit – Sunday B	3,721	60%	23%	100%	40.48	81%	**80%**	**86%**
Yellow Route improvements	3,290	53%	20%	88%	33.80	68%	**70%**	**75%**
Microtransit – Sunday A	2,707	44%	19%	85%	23.00	46%	**58%**	**63%**
Marion Oaks service	2,216	36%	17%	76%	22.01	44%	**52%**	**56%**
Microtransit – SR 200 North	2,161	35%	17%	73%	23.87	48%	**52%**	**56%**
Silver Route revamping w/ microtransit	1,235	20%	20%	89%	11.10	22%	**44%**	**47%**
Microtransit – SR 200 South	1,544	25%	20%	89%	5.71	11%	**42%**	**45%**
Red Route streamlining	1,956	32%	18%	79%	4.88	10%	**40%**	**43%**
Microtransit – SR 200 Central	1,152	19%	20%	86%	6.71	14%	**39%**	**42%**
Belleview service	1,400	23%	16%	71%	10.32	21%	**38%**	**41%**
Long Term								
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline frequency increase	5,401	87%	20%	88%	38.22	77%	**84%**	**90%**
Yellow A Route improvements	2,776	45%	21%	94%	18.68	38%	**59%**	**63%**
Yellow B & Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	2,216	36%	17%	76%	22.01	44%	**52%**	**56%**
Silver Route – consolidate	1,185	19%	21%	90%	10.05	20%	**93%**	**46%**
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	1,441	23%	16%	71%	10.88	22%	**39%**	**42%**
Southeast Crosstown	1,517	24%	18%	77%	4.73	10%	**37%**	**40%**
Red Route shortening + microtransit	1,851	30%	15%	66%	5.54	11%	**36%**	**38%**

Table 8-13 | Efficiency Results

Alternative	Straightness		Stops per Mile		Ridership per Mile		Average Percentage
	Gain (Loss)	Relative Percentage	Loss (Gain)	Relative Percentage	Gain (Loss)	Relative Percentage	
Short Term							
Microtransit – Sunday B	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13.30	100%	**100%**
Microtransit – Sunday A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9.00	70%	**70%**
Microtransit – Sunday C	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.84	69%	**69%**
Microtransit – SR 200 North	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.77	69%	**69%**
Marion Oaks service	0.0020	47%	0.4464	88%	0.58	12%	**49%**
Silver Route revamping w/ microtransit	0.1200	84%	0.0722	52%	(0.01)	8%	**48%**
Microtransit – SR 200 South	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5.00	43%	**43%**
Microtransit – SR 200 Central	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4.67	40%	**40%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline improvements	(0.0159)	41%	0.1082	56%	0.81	14%	**37%**
Red Route streamlining	(0.0428)	33%	0.0861	54%	0.20	9%	**32%**
Yellow Route improvements	0.0088	49%	(0.4683)	0%	0.06	9%	**19%**
Belleview service	(0.1472)	0%	(0.3358)	13%	2.03	22%	**12%**
Long Term							
Belleview Route shortening + microtransit	0.1694	100%	0.5664	100%	(1.17)	0%	**67%**
Yellow B & Marion Oaks Routes – consolidate	0.0006	47%	0.1320	58%	0.43	11%	**39%**
Silver Route – consolidate	(0.0211)	40%	0.1217	57%	0.08	9%	**35%**
Red Route shortening + microtransit	0.0627	66%	(0.4111)	6%	0.23	10%	**27%**
Blue-Green-Orange-Purple interline frequency increase	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2.32	24%	**24%**
Southeast Crosstown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.85	14%	**14%**
Yellow A Route improvements	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.24	10%	**10%**

9. Ten Year Financial Plan

This section presents the 10-year implementation program and finance plan based upon feedback collected from all three phases of public engagement and those performance metrics evaluated as part of the alternatives analysis.

9.1 Operating Cost Assumptions

- The annual operating cost to maintain the existing service includes both the total salary and fringe benefits as well as anticipated maintenance costs.
- The annual operating cost to maintain the existing service is expected to increase by 5.5 percent between 2022 and 2023 and 5.4 percent annually every year thereafter.
- Annual Operating costs for future service enhancements are based on the projected annual service hours and cost per revenue hour of $96.69. The cost per hour was derived using historical cost per revenue hour data for existing services as reporting in the 2021 FDOT Transit and Performance Handbook.
- The annual operating cost for future services is calculated using the estimated costs less the existing service route that would be improved/modified. This means, in some instances, implementing a service improvement may be cost neutral or may represent a cost savings.
- The annual operating cost for microtransit alternatives is calculated based on forecasted ridership assuming a $12 cost per trip. This may fluctuate depending on project implementation parameters. For example, microtransit that is phased in gradually or pilot programs may be operated at a lower cost than what is presented in this plan.

9.2 Capital Cost Assumptions

- An annual inflation rate of 3 percent was used for all capital cost projections.
- The cost of an electric vehicle is $1,000,000.
- The cost of an engine and transmission rebuild is $68,000.
- The cost of a cutaway bus is $130,000.
- The cost of a Lowflow Diesel bus is approximately $550,000.
- Microtransit will operate using cutaway buses with the exception of Southeast and Belleview Microtransit service which will operate using Diesel Lowflow buses.
- 20 percent of bus stops would include a shelter and related amenities.
- Bus stops without amenities are expected to cost $400 per stop.
- Bus stops with amenities cost approximately $32,000.
- Capital costs will be incurred 1 year prior to the project alternative to allow time for the procurement.

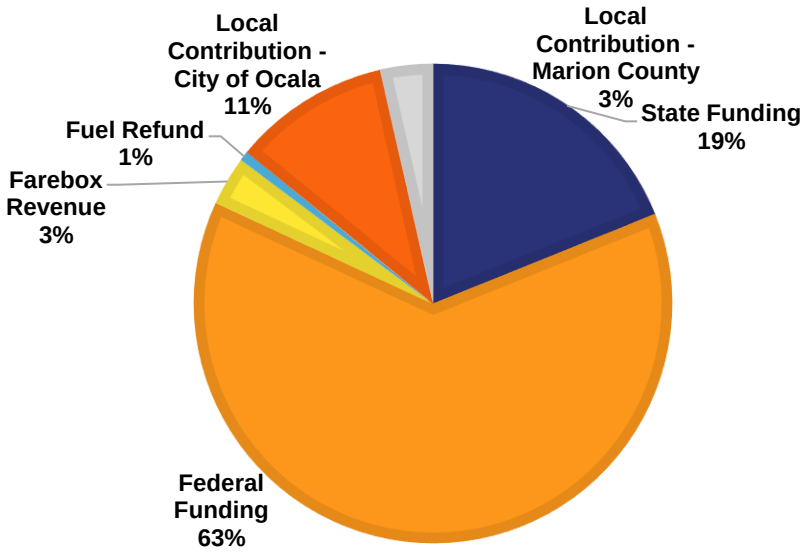
9.3 Revenue Assumptions

- The State Block Grant funding for the next 5-year period was collected from the Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Transportation Improvement Plan. After this time, the anticipated growth is based on the annual inflation rate of 3 percent.
- Urbanized Area Formula Funding program (5307) funding is expected to grow at a rate of 3 percent annually.

- Two electric buses will be partially funded through a DEP Electric Transit Bus Grant for year 2023 and 2024.
- The cost of fare for microtransit service will be equal to the rate of paratransit services.
- The Carbon Reduction Program funding will be $333,970 for 4 years starting in 2024.
- The fuel refund is $2,500 annually.

Revenues for fixed-route service are based on information from a number of state and local agencies and assumptions for different revenue sources, including the following:

Figure 9-1: Existing Revenue



9.4 Implementation Plan

The implementation plan in **Table 9-1** outlines improvements that are included in the Cost-Feasible Plan from 2023 through 2032, as well as unfunded needs for FDOT's transportation deficiency assessments. The table also shows implementation years, operating and capital costs associated with each improvement, and whether existing or new revenues are anticipated to fund the improvement. It is important to emphasize that the schedule shown in the as well as the TDP as a whole, are both dynamic and will be re-evaluated annually as part of the TDP annual update. As priorities and the availability of funding change, this project implementation schedule will be adjusted.

Table 9-1: 10-Year Implementation Plan

Service	Implementation Schedule	Annual Cost (2022 Dollars)	Total Capital Cost (2022 Dollars)	Existing or New Revenues	Goal and Objective
Existing Service					
Maintain Existing Service	Existing	$3,050,410	$11,122,000	Existing	
Short-Term					
Green (OB)	2024-2028	$1,069,457	$550,000	Unfunded	4.2
Blue (OB)	2024-2028	$1,069,457	$550,000	Unfunded	4.2
Purple (OB)	2024-2028	$533,160	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Orange (OB)	2024-2028	$533,160	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Red	2026-2027	$454,754	$0	Unfunded	4.1
Silver A	2025-2027	$373,212	$68,400	Unfunded	4.1
Yellow A	2024-2031	$291,670	$618,400	Unfunded	4.2
Yellow B (Marion Oaks)	2027-2030	$291,670	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Belleview	2026	$285,398	$34,400	FDOT Urban Corridor	1.3
Microtransit (NW)	2025-2027	$44,064	$130,000	Unfunded	4.3
Microtransit (Sunday A)	2025-2027	$59,400	$260,000	FDOT Service Development	3.2/4.3
Microtransit (Sunday B)	2023-2027	$79,800	$260,000	FDOT Service Development	3.2/4.3
Microtransit (Sunday C)	2023-2027	$46,200	$260,000	FDOT Service Development	3.2/4.3
Microtransit (SR200 1-South)	2025-2032	$348,840	$260,000	Unfunded	4.3
Microtransit (SR200 1-Central)	2025-2032	$411,264	$260,000	Unfunded	4.3
Microtransit (SR200 1-North)	2025-2032	$682,992	$390,000	Unfunded	4.3
Long-Term					
Green (OB)	2029-2032	$1,069,457	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Blue (OB)	2029-2032	$1,069,457	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Purple (OB)	2029-2032	$1,069,457	$550,000	Unfunded	4.2
Orange (OB)	2029-2032	$1,069,457	$550,000	Unfunded	4.2
Silver (Alt)	2028-2032	$752,697	$550,000	Unfunded	4.1
Yellow A	2032	$548,841	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Yellow B (Marion Oaks)	2031-2032	$548,841	$0	Unfunded	4.2
Red (Alt)	2028-2032	$454,754	$550,000	Unfunded	4.1
Teal	2030-2032	$500,230	$550,000	Unfunded	1.3
Microtransit (NW)	2028-2032	$47,736	$0	Unfunded	4.3
Microtransit (SE)	2030-2032	$308,448	$1,100,000	Unfunded	4.3
Microtransit (BV)	2030-2032	$77,112	$550,000	Unfunded	4.3
Microtransit (Sunday A)	2028-2032	$61,200	$0	FDOT Service Development	3.2/4.3
Microtransit (Sunday B)	2028-2032	$82,200	$0	FDOT Service Development	3.2/4.3
Microtransit (Sunday C)	2028-2032	$47,400	$0	FDOT Service Development	3.2/4.3

9.5 10-Year Implementation Plan and Unfunded Needs

The detailed 10-year Cost Feasible Finance Plan is presented in **Table 9-2** and **Table 9-3**.

Table 9-2: 10-Year Cost Forecast

Alternatives	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	Total
Maintain Existing Service	$4,753,195	$5,381,253	$3,803,356	$4,562,382	$4,263,174	$5,170,476	$6,328,840	$5,060,417	$11,008,009	$5,673,970	$56,005,074
Green (OB) (ST)	$0	$602,583	$638,738	$677,062	$717,686	$760,747					$3,396,815
Blue (OB) (ST)	$0	$602,583	$638,738	$677,062	$717,686	$760,747					$3,396,815
Purple (OB) (ST)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Orange (OB) (ST)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Green (ST) Bus	$566,500	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$566,500
Blue (ST) Bus	$566,500	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$566,500
Red (ST)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
Silver A (ST)	$0	$0	$332,442	$352,389	$373,532						$1,058,364
Silver Route (ST) Bus Stop	$0	$7,638	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$7,638
Silver Route (ST) Bus Stop with Shelter	$0	$101,846	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$101,846
Yellow A (ST)	$0	$169,146	$179,295	$190,052	$201,456	$213,543	$226,356	$239,937	$254,333		$1,674,117
Yellow (ST) Bus	$566,500	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$566,500
Yellow Route A (ST) Bus Stop	$4,532	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$4,532
Yellow Route A (ST) Bus Stop with Shelter	$65,920	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$65,920
Yellow B (Marion Oaks) (ST)	$0	$0	$0	$0	-$159,486	-$169,055	-$179,198	-$189,950			-$697,689
Marion Oaks (ST) Bus Stop	$0	$0	$0	$16,207	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$16,207
Marion Oaks (ST) Bus Stop with Shelter	$0	$0	$0	$288,130	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$288,130
Belleview (ST)	$0	$0	$0	$360,308	$381,926	$404,842	$429,133	$454,881	$482,174	$511,104	$3,024,368
Belleview (ST) Bus Stop	$0	$0	$2,623	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$2,623
Belleview (ST) Bus Stop with Shelter	$0	$0	$34,967	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$34,967
Microtransit (NW) (ST)	$0	$0	$52,481	$55,630	$58,968						$167,078
Microtransit (NW) (ST) Bus	$0	$137,917	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$137,917
Microtransit (Sunday A) (ST)	$0	$0	$70,746	$74,991	$79,491						$225,228
Microtransit (Sunday A) (ST) Bus	$0	$275,834	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$275,834
Microtransit (Sunday B) (ST)	$84,588	$89,663	$95,043	$100,746	$106,791						$476,831
Microtransit (Sunday B) (ST) Bus	$267,800	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$267,800
Microtransit (Sunday C) (ST)	$48,972	$51,910	$55,025	$58,327	$61,827						$276,061
Microtransit (Sunday C) (ST) Bus	$267,800	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$267,800
Green (OB) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$806,392	$854,775	$906,062	$960,425	$3,527,654
Blue (OB) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$806,392	$854,775	$906,062	$960,425	$3,527,654
Purple (OB) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$806,392	$854,775	$906,062	$960,425	$3,527,654
Orange (OB) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$806,392	$854,775	$906,062	$960,425	$3,527,654
Orange (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$656,729					$656,729
Purple (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$656,729					$656,729
Silver (Alt)(LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$529,409	$561,173	$594,844	$630,534	$668,366	$2,984,326
Silver (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$637,601	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$637,601
Yellow A (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$730,148	$730,148
Yellow B (Marion Oaks) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$233,139	$247,127	$480,266
Red (Alt) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$70	$0	$0	$0
Red (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$637,601	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$637,601
Teal (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$797,290	$845,128	$895,835	$2,538,253
Teal (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$676,431	$0	$0	$0	$676,431
Microtransit (NW) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$67,714	$71,777	$76,084	$80,649	$85,488	$381,713
Microtransit (SE) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$437,539	$463,792	$491,619	$521,116	$552,383	$2,466,450
Microtransit (SE) (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,275,201	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,275,201
Microtransit (BV) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$122,905	$130,279	$138,096	$391,280
Microtransit (BV) (LT) Bus	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$676,431	$0	$0	$0	$676,431
Microtransit (Sunday A) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$86,813	$92,022	$97,544	$103,396	$109,600	$489,375
Microtransit (Sunday B) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$116,602	$123,598	$131,014	$138,875	$147,208	$657,298
Microtransit (Sunday C) (LT)	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$67,238	$71,272	$75,548	$80,081	$84,886	$379,026
Microtransit (SR200 1- South)	$0	$0	$415,474	$440,402	$466,827	$494,836	$524,526	$555,998	$589,358	$624,719	$4,112,141
Microtransit (ST) (SR200 1- South) Bus	$0	$275,834	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$275,834
Microtransit (SR200 1- Central)	$0	$0	$489,822	$519,211	$550,364	$583,386	$618,389	$655,492	$694,822	$736,511	$4,847,998
Microtransit (ST) (SR200 1- Central) Bus	$0	$275,834	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$275,834
Microtransit (SR200 1- North)	$0	$0	$813,454	$862,262	$913,997	$968,837	$1,026,967	$1,088,585	$1,153,901	$1,223,135	$8,051,139
Microtransit (ST) (SR200 1- North) Bus	$0	$413,751	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$413,751
TOTAL EXPENSES	$7,192,307	$8,385,793	$7,622,204	$9,235,162	$11,284,641	$11,807,133	$14,937,076	$13,671,309	$20,570,041	$16,270,278	$120,975,944

Table 9-3: 10-Year Revenue Forecast

Revenue Sources	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	Total
Federal											
FTA 5307	$1,891,824	$2,978,579	$3,067,936	$3,159,974	$3,254,773	$3,352,417	$3,452,989	$3,556,579	$3,663,276	$3,773,174	$32,151,521
FTA 5339 (c) LoNo	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,275,201	$1,313,458	$676,431	$0	$0	$0	$3,265,090
Misc. Federal Capital Grant	$2,690,770	$2,891,275	$1,082,479	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$6,664,524
State											
State Block Grant	$552,000	$755,610	$778,278	$801,626	$825,675	$850,445	$875,959	$902,237	$929,304	$957,184	$8,228,318
FDOT Urban Corridor	$0	$0	$0	$360,308	$381,926	$404,842	$429,132	$454,880	$482,173	$511,104	$3,024,365
FDOT Service Development	$133,560	$560,720	$1,702,590	$1,671,419	$1,245,249	$770,653	$1,108,670	$1,753,094	$1,194,066	$1,135,223	$11,275,244
DEP Electric Transit Bus Grant	$300,000	$300,000	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$600,000
Misc. State. Capital Grant	$2,690,770	$2,891,275	$1,082,479	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0	$1,233,575
Local											
Farebox Revenue (Maintain Existing Service)	$120,000	$120,600	$121,203	$121,809	$122,418	$123,030	$123,645	$124,264	$124,885	$125,509	$1,227,363
Farebox Revenue (Alternatives)	$20,900	$20,900	$88,940	$110,513	$110,513	$21,573	$21,573	$21,573	$21,573	$21,573	$459,631
Local Contribution - City of Ocala	$414,000	$453,366	$466,967	$480,976	$495,405	$510,267	$525,575	$541,342	$557,583	$574,310	$5,019,791
Local Contribution - Marion County	$138,000	$302,244	$311,311	$320,650	$330,270	$340,178	$350,383	$360,895	$371,722	$382,873	$3,208,527
Fuel Refund	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$2,500	$25,000
Carbon Reduction Program		$333,970	$333,970	$333,970	$333,970						
TOTAL REVENUE	$7,497,129	$8,719,763	$7,956,174	$7,363,745	$8,377,901	$7,799,876	$7,677,370	$7,827,878	$7,457,595	$7,593,963	$78,271,395
TOTAL COST	$7,192,307	$8,385,793	$7,622,204	$9,235,162	$11,284,641	$11,807,133	$14,937,076	$13,671,309	$20,570,041	$16,270,278	$120,975,944
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	$304,822	$333,970	$333,970	($1,871,418)	($2,906,740)	($4,007,257)	($7,259,706)	($5,843,431)	($13,112,446)	($8,676,314)	($42,704,549)
CARRYOVER SURPLUS/SHORTFALL	**$304,822**	**$638,792**	**$972,762**	**($898,655)**	**($3,805,395)**	**($7,812,652)**	**($15,072,358)**	**($20,915,789)**	**($34,028,235)**	**($42,704,549)**	

Appendix A: Public Involvement Plan (PIP)

Florida Department of Transportation

RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

719 S. Woodland Boulevard
DeLand, Florida 32720

JARED W. PERDUE, P.E.
SECRETARY

April 22, 2022

Mr. Steven Neal
Transportation Manger
City of Ocala
201 Southeast 3rd Street
Ocala, Florida 34471

RE: Public Involvement Plan
SunTran FY 2023-32 Transit Development Plan Major Update – FDOT Technical Assistance Comments

Dear Mr. Neal:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Five has reviewed the Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for SunTran's FY 2023-32 Transit Development Plan (TDP) major update. FDOT commends SunTran for preparing a Public Involvement Plan outlining a phased approach and a variety of outreach strategies for stakeholder involvement.

Multimodal transportation choices including high quality public transportation services is a primary objective of the FDOT as memorialized in the Florida Transportation Plan. In furtherance of this objective and as a TDP Project Team partner, FDOT has reviewed the PIP and determined that it meets the requirements of Florida Administrative Code 14-73.001 for public involvement, which includes a description of the process used and the public involvement activities. FDOT offers the following technical assistance comments to enhance the public involvement process of the TDP update.

- According to Florida Rule 14-73.001, the TDP process requires solicitation of comments and notification of outreach activities from the local Workforce Development Board. The PIP identifies CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion as a Community Representative in page 4; however, does not reference the agency later on under the Schedule of Outreach Activities. Please ensure proactive outreach with the local workforce agency remains during the TDP process as they are a major stakeholder and represent current and potential riders' interests.
- The PIP commits to compliance with Ocala Marion County TPO's Title VI Plan to ensure meaningful participation of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations. The PIP does not reference any efforts related to availability of materials in other languages spoken by community residents. Consider adding additional text to the

PIP to address distribution of public outreach materials in other languages (as applicable) during the outreach process.

- The PIP commits to compliance with Ocala Marion County TPO's Title VI Plan to ensure meaningful participation from traditionally underserved and low-income populations throughout the TDP process. Please ensure meeting locations and times are sensitive to the needs of the community and maximize participation.
- Based on other TDPs previously submitted to the Department, representation at public meetings and online surveys have largely been by non-riders. This leads to input on potential alternatives primarily from non-riders. The Department encourages SunTran to maximize participation opportunities from current riders, traditionally underserved populations and people with limited access to online resources, as much as possible.

Thank you for providing FDOT with the opportunity to review and comment on the Public Involvement Plan of the FY 2022-31 TDP Major Update. If you have any questions, please contact me at (321) 319-8173 or Carlos.Colon@dot.state.fl.us.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Carlos Colon
90462CF203F4435...

Carlos Colon,
Transit Project Coordinator
Office of Modal Development
FDOT District Five

CC: Jo Santiago*, Transit Intermodal Supervisor, District Five Office of Modal Development*
Luciana Taylor, Transit Programs Administrator, District Five Office of Modal Development
Holly Lang, Financial Manager, City of Ocala

SunTran Transit Development Plan

Public Involvement Plan

Riding into the Future

2022 Major Plan Update

Updated: April 26, 2022

CONTENTS

TABLES

INTRODUCTIONS

The City of Ocala has initiated a 10-year Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update for their SunTran Transit System. This update is the first since the city took over as the transit system operator in 2019 from the Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization.

A TDP is a Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) required, 10-year horizon plan. The TDP is intended to support the development of an effective multimodal transportation system in Marion County and serves as the basis for defining public transit needs, which is a prerequisite to receive state funds.

The focus of the TDP will be to reimage the fixed-route network to offer users more frequent and reliable options. This plan also seeks to integrate innovative transportation concepts such as, but not limited to, expanded fixed route service, flexible routes, Mobility on Demand, bike sharing, as well as other modes. The central objective of this effort is to improve transit opportunities and offer a robust, multimodal connection experience for the SunTran service area. To inform and assist with the facilitation of this study, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) will be implemented and is comprehensively outlined in this document.

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN (PIP)

The PIP is a strategic guide for the SunTran public participation approach, in compliance with federal and state regulations. This PIP offers a platform for the public, existing riders, and stakeholders to engage with the planning process and obtain information on the progress and findings generated from the project. Once approved by the SunTran TDP Project Team (Project Team), this PIP will guide the outreach process for the length of the project. Each of the planned initiatives and outreach activities will inform SunTran customers and the community about the benefits of transit and the new services that will be developed as part of the process.

PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

The impact of the TDP in Marion County will guide the operation and growth of the transit system for the next 10 years. This study also recognizes the importance of involving community leaders throughout the planning process. The SunTran staff and Project Team are committed to engaging stakeholders, existing riders, and the public all while keeping them updated on progress and ensuring they have a voice.

A database of stakeholders will be maintained by the Project Team and include representation from the agencies described in the following sections. To ensure consistency and compliance with local jurisdiction requirements and community preparedness, this project will connect with stakeholders from the following:

County & Cities:

Marion County, City of Ocala, City of Belleview, City of Dunnellon, Town of McIntosh, and Town of Reddick

Transportation Agencies:

Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District 5 and Ocala Marion Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)

Community Representatives:

Community Redevelopment Agencies, College of Central Florida, Ocala/Marion County Visitors and Convention Bureau, Ocala Downtown Development District, CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion – the local workforce development agency, Community Development Services, Economic Development Councils, Social Service Agencies, and Chambers of Commerce

OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

On November 15, 2021, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) was signed into law. New programs under the IIJA focus on key infrastructure priorities including rehabilitating bridges in critical need of repair, reducing carbon emissions, increasing system resilience, removing barriers to connecting communities, and improving mobility and access to economic opportunity. Under this new law, Florida would expect to receive about $2.8 billion over five years to improve public transportation options across the state. In the first year, this represents about a 33% increase over 2021 Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act formula transit funding levels. [1]

The IIJA builds on the FAST Act, allowing states and local governments to move forward with critical transportation projects with confidence that they will have a federal partner long term. It also recognizes that public involvement in transportation planning is critical for a transparent community development process and is established in legal framework throughout jurisdictions. These legislative

[1] https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-will-deliver-florida

changes will improve innovation and efficiency in the development of projects from the planning and environmental review process, through project delivery.

In tandem with the above, the PIP was created to provide a quality public outreach process during the TDP process. This plan will ensure the community is offered ample opportunity to engage in the process, participate in project dialogue, and assist with informing leadership of the local perspective related to project elements. In accordance with established PIP standards from the FDOT TDP Handbook (2022), the goals of the SunTran PIP include:

- Promote greater awareness and understanding of the SunTran Transit System and the TDP process;
- Encourage inclusive and comprehensive public input throughout the TDP planning process;
- Develop the SunTran TDP around the public feedback received through the process; and
- Enhance the SunTran public participation process through continued observation and incorporation of new approaches.

Accompanying these goals are specific objectives and engagement strategies, which will be completed over the course of the project timeline. These tasks, which are detailed in the next section, range from presentations to key stakeholders and public meetings, surveys, social media, grassroots community outreach, and electronic and in-person engagement.

Stakeholder Engagement & Outreach Strategies

To accomplish the goals of the PIP, specific engagement and outreach strategies will be undertaken, including in-person engagement, presentations, ridership surveys, meetings, visual content creation, and strategic digital communications. The following describes these efforts in more detail.

Objective #1: Public Feedback

The PIP plans to obtain public input from the community, existing and prospective riders, and stakeholders on the current SunTran transit experience through the following means. This objective will be divided into three phases:

- Phase One will focus on understanding current conditions and desires through Origin & Destination Surveys, Customer Satisfaction Surveys, and stakeholder engagement.
- Phase Two will focus on creating a better transportation system and developing different scenarios for analysis by prioritization surveys, interviewing key stakeholders, Chambers of Commerce, and targeted key organizations representative of the community.
- Phase Three will focus on TDP approval and will consist of showing the plan to existing and potential riders and garner feedback through a final survey.

Two public meetings will be held throughout each phase – one virtual and one in-person meeting. Public meetings will be informational to the TDP process and public comments will be collected at all meetings via the surveys. Public comments will be encouraged during the entire TDP process.

Several communication methods will be used to garner public input. These methods include existing ridership surveys, one-on-one stakeholder interviews, and engaging agency partners/civic organizations. Where opportunities exist, the PIP will also seek to piggyback on community events to garner public feedback throughout the process.

Public Engagement Tools

A variety of tools will be utilized to obtain public input. These tools include:

In-Person

- On the bus and/or at the transfer points (Transfer Station – Stop 2100). Engagement to include information about the "Riding into the Future" purpose and process, survey solicitation by project team and bus operators, and other open feedback opportunities. Yard signs with information on how to access online surveys will be displayed at key transfer locations to maximize rider input. Yard Signs to be displayed at other strategic locations around the city as identified by the project team. These strategic efforts will maximize input from existing transit riders.
- Up to 6 public meetings with 2 at each phase – One virtual and one in-person. In-person public meetings will be conducted at the E.D. Croskey Recreation Center at times that are sensitive to the needs of the community and maximize participation.
- Public engagement surveys during all phases. Surveys may be completed by one of three methods: online using the City of Ocala website, in-person with someone from the Project Team, or by paper when surveys are being administered.
- Stakeholder engagement – 10 virtual interviews to be conducted during Phase 2
    - Interviews with stakeholder list as determined by the Project Team, in compliance with Florida Administrative Rule 14-73 (3)a.
    - Operator engagement during all phases. These interviews are intended to get operators' unique perspective on system performance.

Online

- Each survey will remain active on the City of Ocala website for a minimum of 14 days from any in-person events that administer the survey during each phase.
- Comments from social media will be accepted throughout the study periods and will be reviewed and recorded as they are posted.

Schedule of Public Outreach Activities

Table 1 provides the outreach schedule including details and tentative dates.

Table 1 Schedule of Public Outreach Activities

Phase	Activity	Target Audience	Timeframe	Promotion
1	Surveys	Existing and Potential Riders	April 26 – May 13 +1 week	Website, Social Media, On-Site Engagement by project team and bus operators, On-Site Signage; Promote Upcoming meetings and surveys at local businesses, City events, and public locations
	Transfer Point Engagement	Existing Riders	April 26 – May 13	Project Team Staff located at select transfer point engaging with existing riders – soliciting survey responses
	2 Public Meetings* - 1 Online & 1 In-Person	All Audiences (existing riders, potential riders, community liaisons, young professionals, stakeholders, etc.)	April 26 – May 13	Website, Social Media, On-Site Engagement, On-Site Signage; Promote Upcoming meetings and surveys at local businesses, City events, and public locations
2	Surveys	Existing and Potential Riders	May 23 – June 10	Website, Social Media, On-Site Engagement by project team and bus operators, On-Site Signage; Promote Upcoming meetings and surveys at local businesses, City events, and public locations
	Transfer Point Engagement	Existing Riders	May 23 – June 10	Project Team Staff located at select transfer point engaging with existing riders – soliciting survey responses
	2 Public Meetings - 1 Online & 1 In-Person	All Audiences (existing riders, potential riders, community liaisons, young professionals, stakeholders, etc.)	May 23 – June 10	Website, Social Media, On-Site Engagement, On-Site Signage; Promote Upcoming meetings and surveys at local businesses, City events, and public locations
	10 Stakeholder Interviews	Stakeholders Identified by SunTran Staff & Project Team (to include SunTran Operators, Elected Officials, Agency Department Heads, Career Source Representative, community leaders, social services representatives, major employers, etc.)	May 23 – June 10	E-mail, Phone Call, Virtual Platforms
3	Surveys	Existing and Potential Riders	June 20 – July 8	Website, Social Media, On-Site Engagement by project team and bus operators, On-Site Signage; Promote Upcoming meetings and surveys at local businesses, City events, and public locations
	Transfer Point Engagement	Existing Riders	June 20 – July 8	Project Team Staff located at select transfer point engaging with existing riders – soliciting survey responses
	2 Public Meetings -	All Audiences (existing riders, potential riders, community	June 20 – July 8	Website, Social Media, On-Site Engagement, On-Site Signage;

	1 Online & 1 In-Person	liaisons, young professionals, stakeholders, etc.)		Promote Upcoming meetings and surveys at local businesses, City events, and public locations

*Public meetings will be advertised at least seven (7) days prior to the scheduled event.

Objective #2: Promotion & Outreach

To create community interest and support for the SunTran TDP.

Promotional Materials

The TDP will build awareness around the "Riding into the Future" brand established during the TDP process. The "Riding into the Future" TDP materials will be developed and distributed to the community. These materials include:

- Informational postcards
- Social media posts
- Bus advertisements
- Website – graphics, branded content, key updates

These materials will be distributed or displayed at community events, central bus stops, on the SunTran website and social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Nextdoor), bus advertisements, and/or county government buildings. Additionally, presentation materials will be formulated using the brand and made available for all meetings and activities.

Survey and Website Information

An online survey will be developed, through which the public can engage and provide feedback. Surveys can be completed by one of three methods: online using the SunTran.org website, in person with someone from the Project Team, or by paper when surveys are being administered.

Visually, the web page will be designed to maximize public engagement. An interactive call-to-action (i.e. - survey completion) will be prominently placed on the SunTran.org home page. The survey will capture participant contact information for continued follow-up and education with individuals throughout the project. Each survey will be made available on the SunTran.org website for a minimum of 14 days during all phases. The SunTran.org website will also include a dedicated space to highlight public workshops and/or event schedules.

As the project progresses, key reports and findings will be provided on the SunTran.org website for resident review and feedback. Tracking and detailed analytics capabilities will be conducted using advanced tools to ensure all data is captured to produce a public participation summary. Tracking will be set up through Google Analytics and will allow monthly reports on number of site visits, length of time on site, pages visited, and number of surveys completed.

Measures of effectiveness for the website will include:

- Number of visitors to website

- Number of surveys completed via the website
- Geography of site visitors

Organic Social Media

Organic social media postings will be utilized to drive project awareness and participation in the study. Social media postings will be crafted for distribution on the City of Ocala's Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Nextdoor accounts. Calls-to-action will coincide with the appropriate phase and will include approved graphics for visual continuity. Social media measures of effectiveness will include:

- Impressions
- Reach
- Engagements (likes/comments/shares)

Requests will be made to other stakeholders to repost the City of Ocala's social media posts in order to maximize exposure of the online surveys.

MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

Table 2 provides measures of public engagement success.

Table 2 Measures of Effectiveness

Public Involvement Objective	Strategy	Activity	Measures	Targets
Objective #1: Public Feedback	Obtain Public Input from the Community, Existing and Potential Riders, and Stakeholders	Surveys	Number of Surveys Completed	100 surveys completed
		Public Meetings	Number of Public Meetings Advertised	6 Public Meetings Advertised (3 In-Person and 3 Virtual) - 2 per phase
		Stakeholder Interviews	Number of Interviews	10 Projected Interviews Completed
		Optional Special Event Engagement	Number of Special Events Attended	3 Special Events-Attended (One per phase)
		Social Media	Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Nextdoor Postings	Recorded Comments, Impressions, Reach, Likes, Shares
Objective #2: Promotion & Outreach	To create community interest and support for the SunTran TDP	Promotional Materials	Distribution of Informational Postcards, Signage, Bus Advertisements (Ad)	Branding Package, 500 Post Cards Distributed, 10 Yards Signs posted, Ad on one bus on every bus route
		Social Media	Addition of TDP efforts on SunTran.org website, Posts on City of Ocala's Facebook, Instagram, Twitter,	SunTran.org Website additions, 15 posts on each social media channel (5 per phase),

			and Nextdoor Accounts	15 stakeholder agency reposts (5 per phase)

REQUIREMENTS

The public outreach process for this project will take place in compliance with federal law (§450.316, Code of Federal Regulation), and Florida rules and statutes (Rule 14-73 (3)a, and Section 286, F.S.S.), which both require the public involvement process to provide reasonable opportunity for comment from a wide array of diverse groups represented in the community. This approach also aligns with the Ocala Marion TPO Title VI Policy Statement and Public Participation Program guidelines. This includes the Ocala Marion County TPO's Title VI Plan which identifies the Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations in its service area and provides guidelines for TPO staff to help ensure that information and services are accessible to LEP persons. According to the TPO's Title VI Plan, 3.2% of the population 5 years and over speak English less than "very well." Considering the low number of individuals that live in the planning area who have Limited English Proficiency, the probability of interaction with LEP individuals is very low. Any translation services deemed necessary for all outreach materials will be made available upon request.

The Project Team is committed to supporting and engaging Marion County citizens within the public involvement process. Diverse public participation is crucial for quality decision-making regarding this project and efforts will be made to reach all members of the community, including traditionally underserved populations, and provide opportunities for contribution to the planning process.

Public input will be encouraged throughout each phase of the project. Feedback will be incorporated into the development of the study and the final plan will be posted on the project website. Anyone requesting hard copies of the project documentation will be able to do so upon request to City of Ocala staff.

PUBLIC RECORD OF MEETINGS

Florida's Sunshine Law requires minutes of local government meetings be recorded at all public meetings. Meetings with boards and commissions will also be open to the public and properly noticed. The Project Team will take minutes of public meetings and distribute them to associated board and committee members as well as post the minutes to the SunTran.org website, once approved, and offer hard copies upon request.

Appendix B: Route Profiles

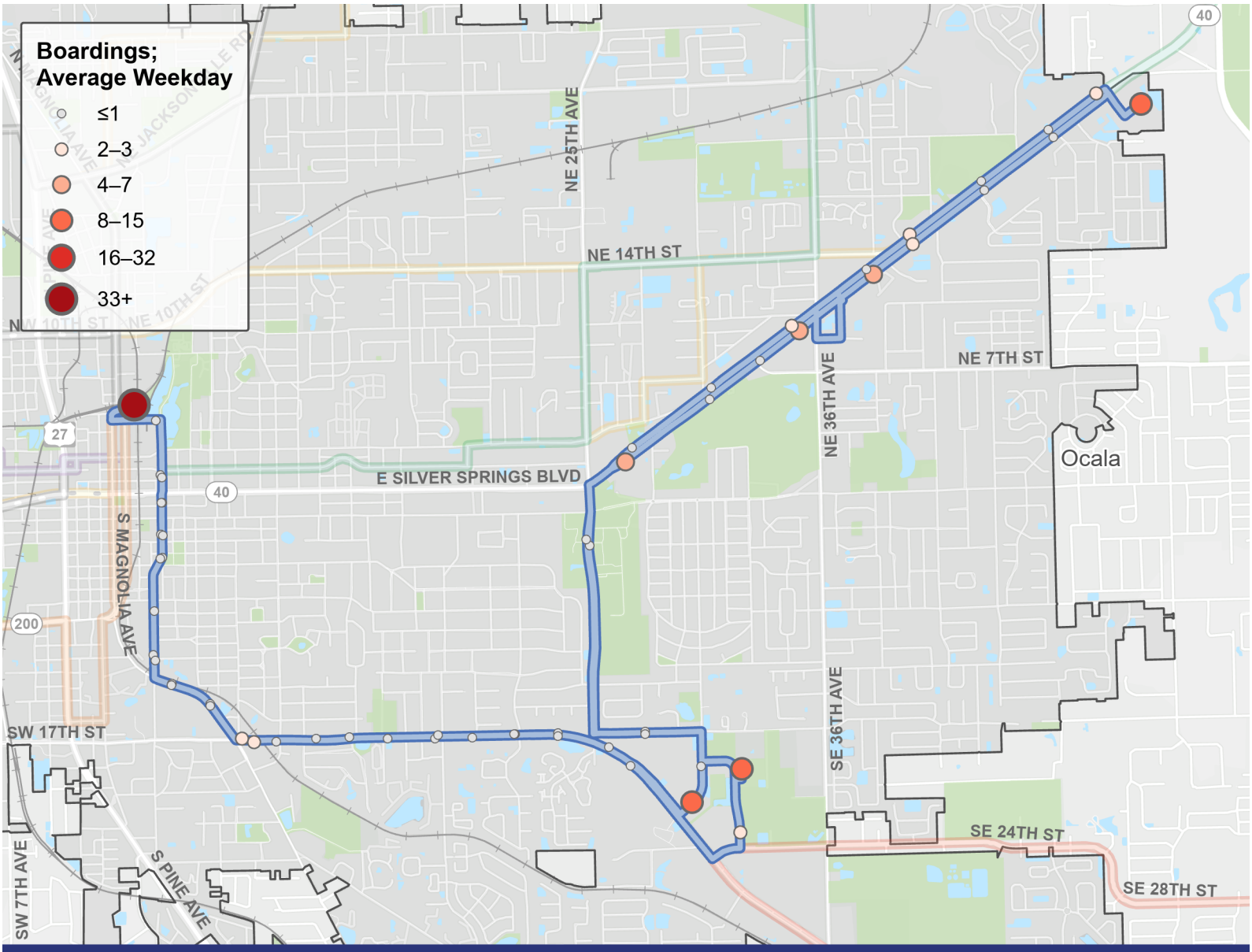
Blue Route

Key Points of Interest: *Downtown Transfer Station, City Hall, Ocala Regional Medical Center, Churchill Plaza, Magnolia Family Urgent Care, the Marion County Health Department (with timely transfer to Red Route for select trips), Marion County Department of Motor Vehicles, Marion County Tax Collector, Marion County Public Library, and the Silver Springs Walmart*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	60



Blue Route
Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3

N

Blue Route

Route Analysis

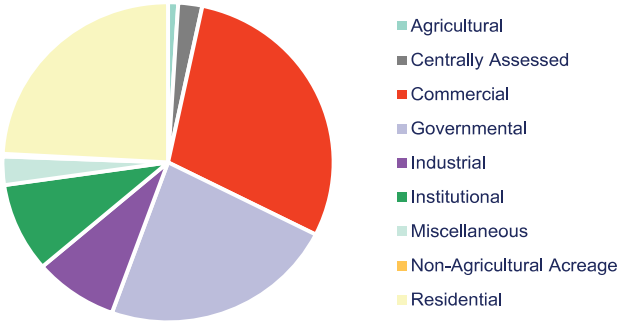
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• Serves strong trip generators including the Ocala Public Library, Publix, and Walmart	• Frequencies may be confusing for new or occasional riders	• Streamline alignment around Health Department Transfer Station with extension of Red Route downtown (long term)
• Connects Red Route riders with downtown Ocala and destinations along E Silver Springs Boulevard		• Modify/increase frequency of service
• Ridership is evenly distributed along alignment		•Consider Sunday service

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	7,809	2.2%
Population 65 and Older	1,799	1.7%
Population Under 18	1,676	2.5%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	1,787	1.9%
Non-White Population	1,567	1.4%
Jobs	13,378	12.7%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 5 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	4,888	2 of 7
Revenue Miles	89,216	1 of 7
Operating Cost	$397,848	2 of 7
Ridership	29,765	3 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	5.6%	3 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	102.4	69.0	3 of 7	3 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	6.5	4.4	3 of 7	3 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.4	0.2	4 of 7	3 of 7

On-Time Performance

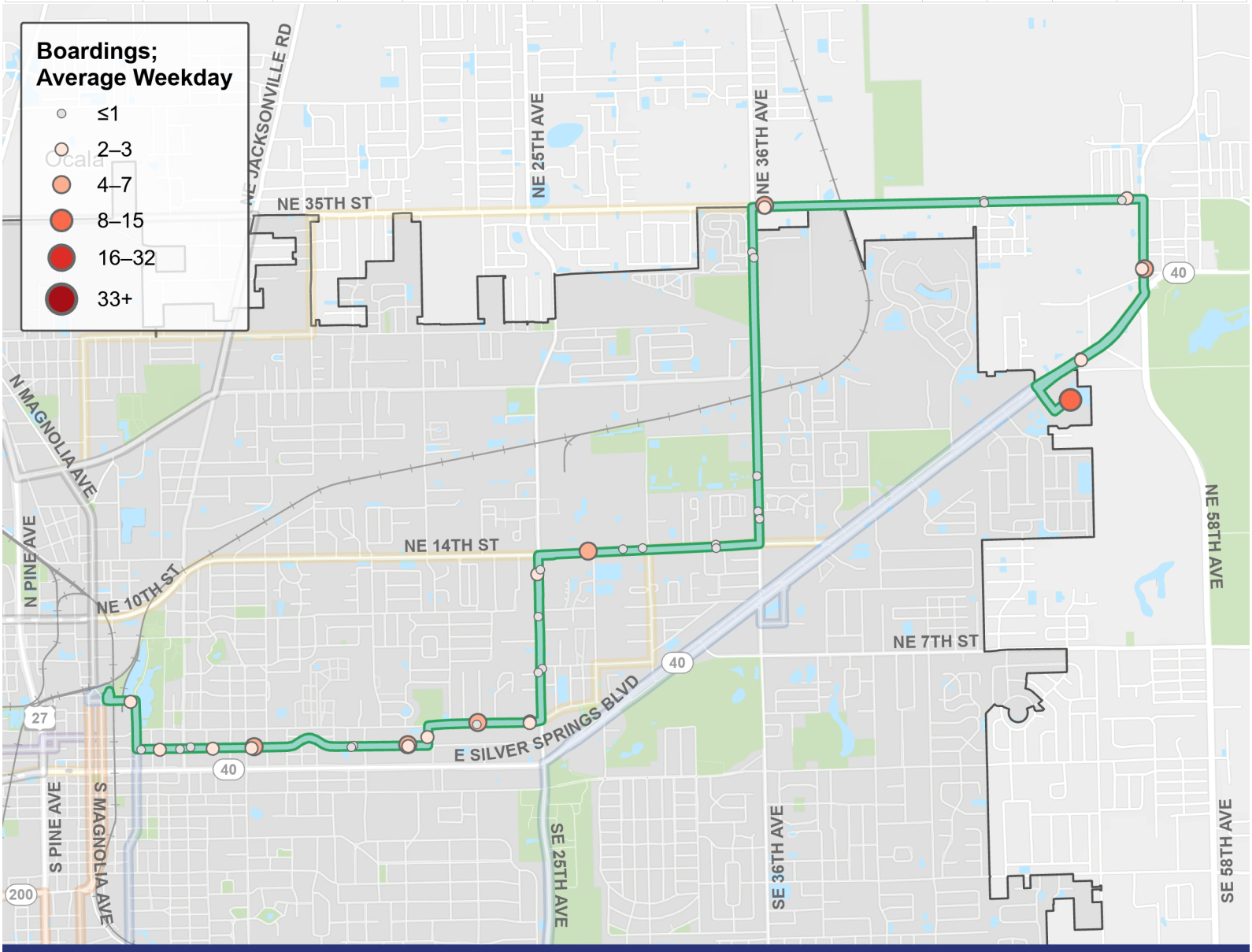
Green Route

Key Points of Interest: *U.S. Social Administration, the Cascades Office Complex, MTI High School, Ocala Shopping Center, Skylark Plaza, One-Stop Work Force Center, Booster Stadium, the Villas at Spanish Oaks, Coehadjoe Park, Silver Springs USPS, and the Silver Springs Walmart*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	60



Green Route

Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3

N

Green Route

Route Analysis

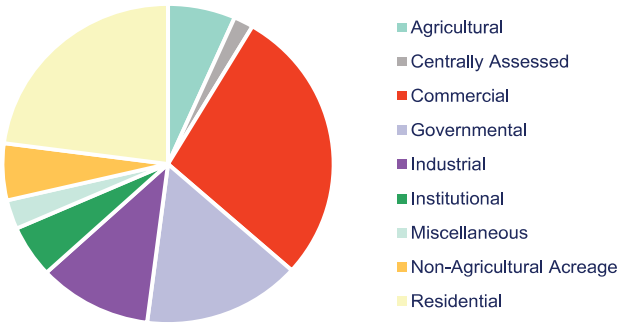
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• High number of passengers per mile and hour	• Frequencies may be confusing for new or occasional riders	• Serve the Florida Center for the Blind
• Direct alignment serving Walmart and multiple affordable housing complexes		• Modify/increase frequency of service
• Serves areas with demand for all-day transit service (NE 2nd Street and NE 14th Street)		• Consider Sunday service

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	7,994	2.2%
Population 65 and Older	1,323	1.3%
Population Under 18	1,869	2.8%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	2,997	3.2%
Non-White Population	2,815	2.6%
Jobs	9,656	9.2%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 3 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

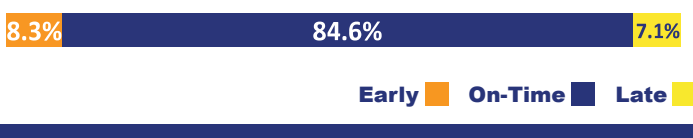
	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	3,956	6 of 7
Revenue Miles	79,708	3 of 7
Operating Cost	$321,970	6 of 7
Ridership	40,663	1 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	9.5%	1 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	139.0	98.8	1 of 7	1 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	11.0	7.8	1 of 7	1 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.5	0.4	1 of 7	1 of 7

On-Time Performance



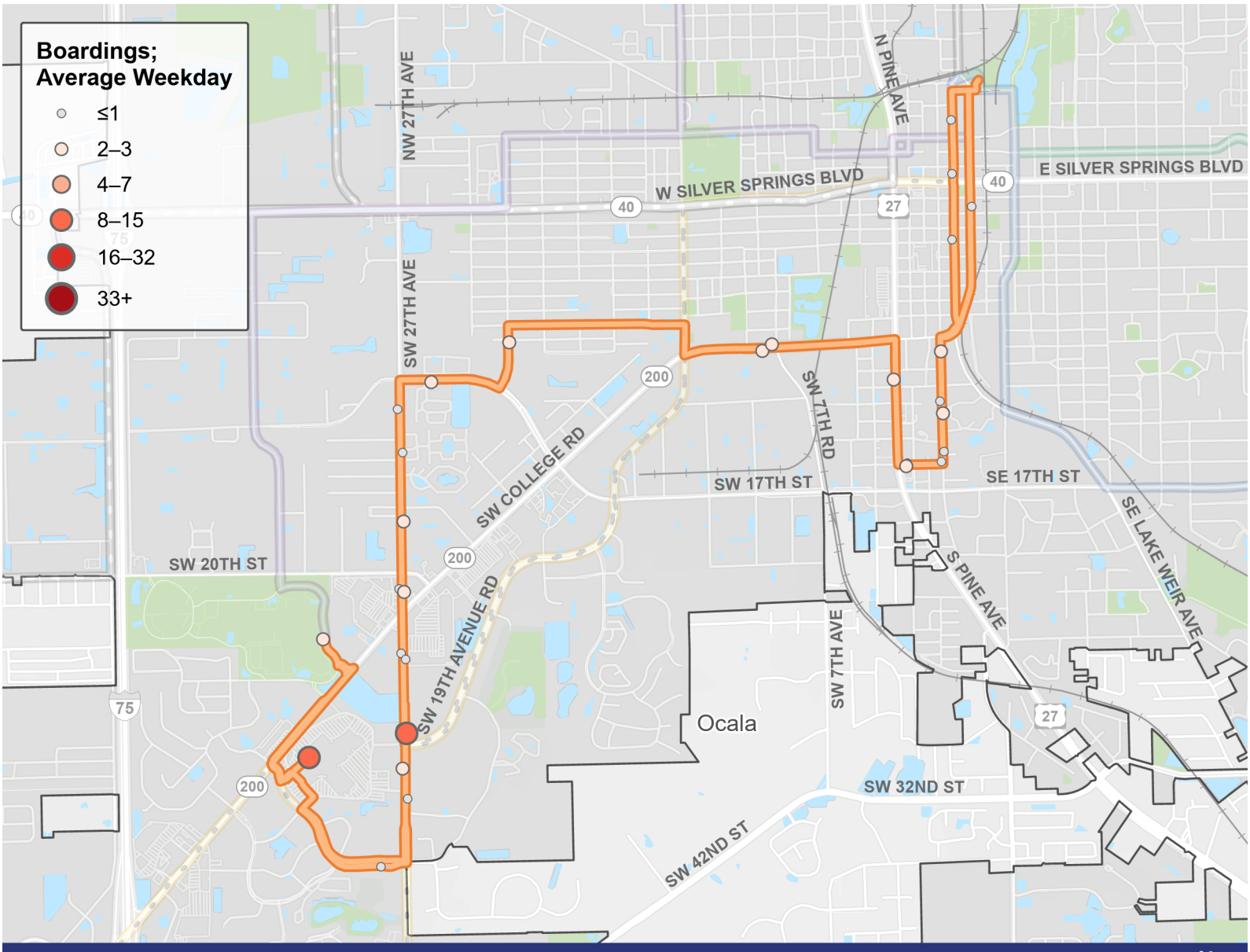
Orange Route

Key Points of Interest: *Downtown Transfer Station, the Downtown Square, Munroe Heart/Ocala Regional Medical Center, Marion Technical College, Dr. NH Jones Elementary School, Gaitway Plaza, Walmart Supercenter, Paddock Mall, and Central Florida Community College*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	60



Orange Route
Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3
N

Orange Route

Route Analysis

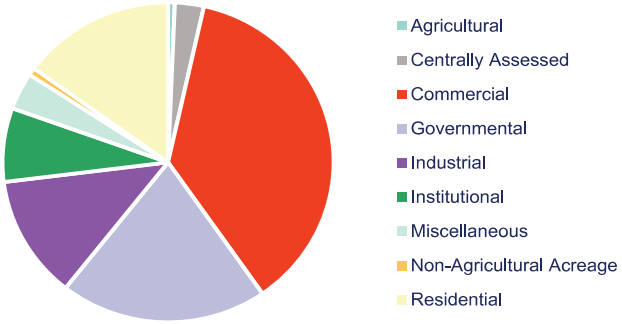
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• High number of passengers per mile and hour	• Somewhat circuitous alignment	• Modify/increase frequency of service
• Serves strong trip generators including hospitals, Paddock Mall, and the College of Central Florida Ocala Campus	• Frequencies may be confusing for new or occasional riders	• Consider Sunday service
• Serves areas of high populations and employment densities		

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	5,610	1.6%
Population 65 and Older	1,088	1.0%
Population Under 18	1,225	1.8%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	1,898	2.0%
Non-White Population	3,291	3.0%
Jobs	14,455	13.7%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 1 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

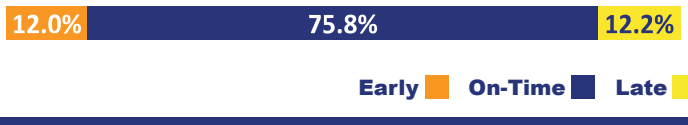
	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	4,384	4 of 7
Revenue Miles	67,816	6 of 7
Operating Cost	$356,833	4 of 7
Ridership	33,144	2 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	7.0%	2 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	113.1	81.5	2 of 7	2 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	8.0	5.8	2 of 7	2 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.5	0.4	2 of 7	2 of 7

On-Time Performance



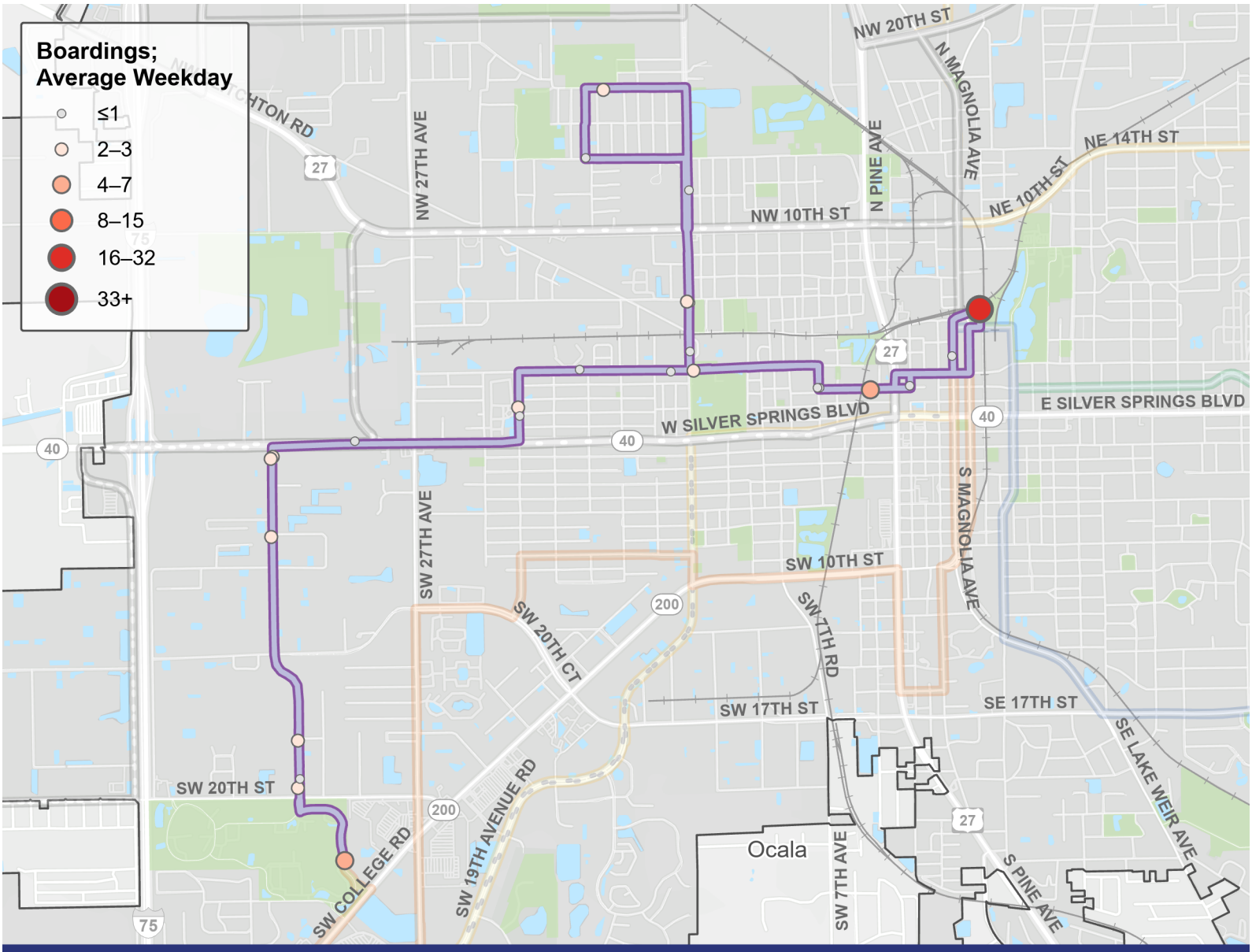
Purple Route

Key Points of Interest: *Court House, Interfaith Emergency Services, Howard Academy, the Hampton Aquatic Fun Center, Madison Street Academy of Arts, Howard Middle School, Lillian Bryant Park, Mary Sue Rich Community Center, the Ocala Housing Authority, Balcony Gymnastics, and Central Florida Community College*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (5:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	60



Purple Route
Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3

N

Purple Route

Route Analysis

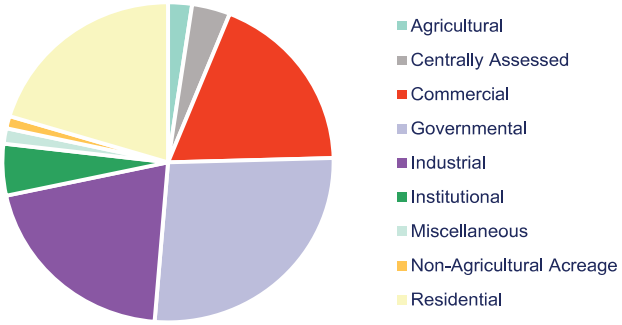
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• Serves transit-oriented populations in West Ocala	• Long deviation up NW MLK Jr Avenue to 17th Place	• Remove deviation along NW MLK Jr Avenue and extend route to Paddock Mall
• Ridership is evenly distributed along alignment		• Modify/increase frequency of service
		• Consider Sunday service

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	4,930	1.4%
Population 65 and Older	709	0.7%
Population Under 18	1,231	1.8%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	2,495	2.7%
Non-White Population	3,577	3.3%
Jobs	7,098	6.7%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 2 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

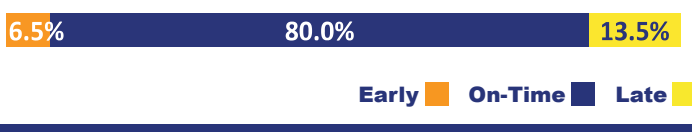
	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	5,014	1 of 7
Revenue Miles	69,482	5 of 7
Operating Cost	$408,102	1 of 7
Ridership	23,297	4 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	4.3%	4 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	80.7	50.8	4 of 7	4 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	5.0	3.2	4 of 7	5 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.4	0.2	3 of 7	4 of 7

On-Time Performance



Red Route

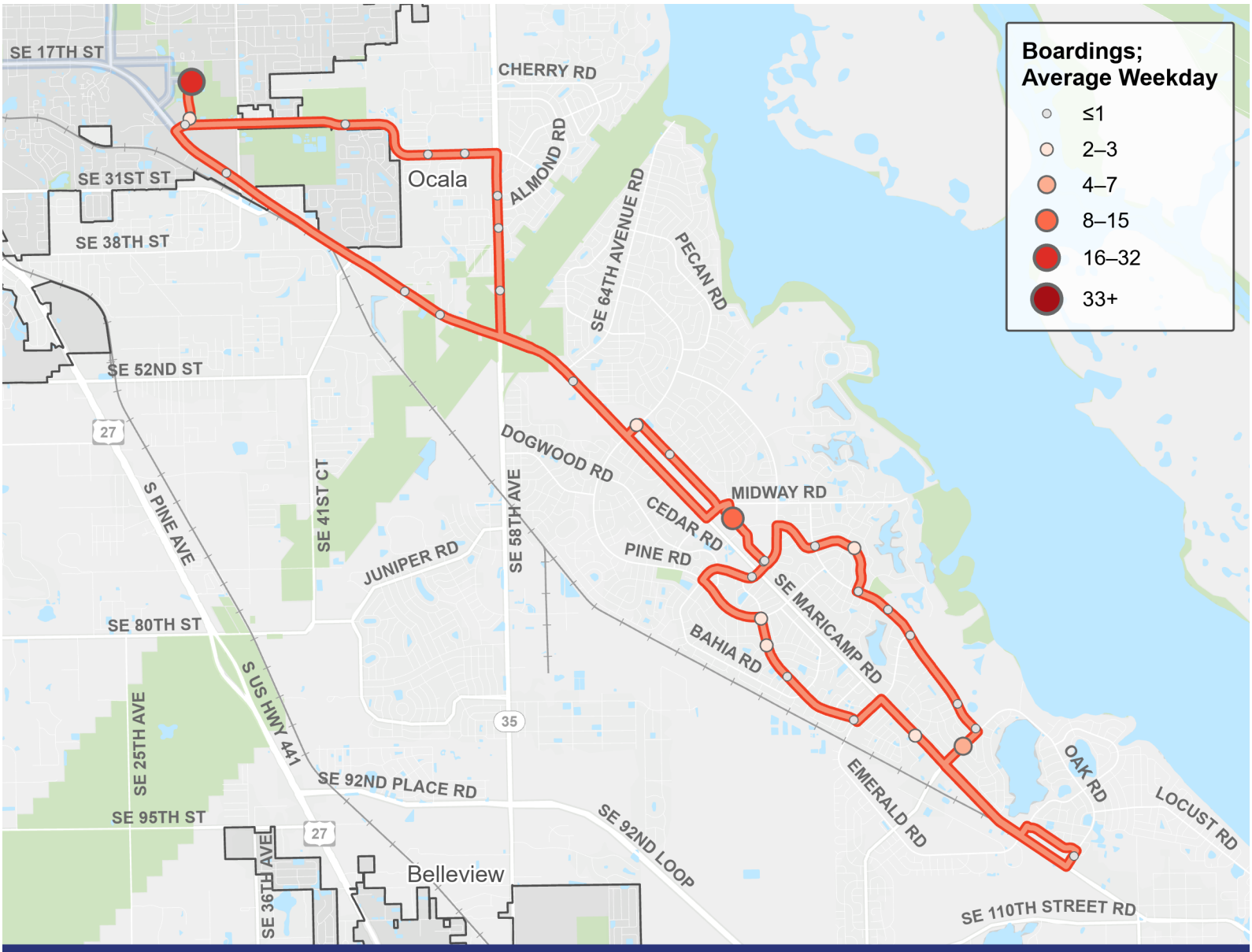
Key Points of Interest: *Outbound: Marion County Health Department, Park View Commons Shopping Mall, Forest High School - Ocala, the Rotary Sportsplex, USPS o ice, the Silver Springs Shores Walmart, and Lockheed Martin; Inbound: Silver Springs Shores Presbyterian Church, Silver Springs Shores Community Center, Silver Springs Shores Walmart, the Baseline Road Trailhead, Whispering Sands Neighborhood, Silver Springs Marine Institute, and the Marion County Health Department*

Key Observation: *[placeholder]*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	70	70	70	70	60	60	60	60	60	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	-



Red Route
Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3

N

Red Route

Route Analysis

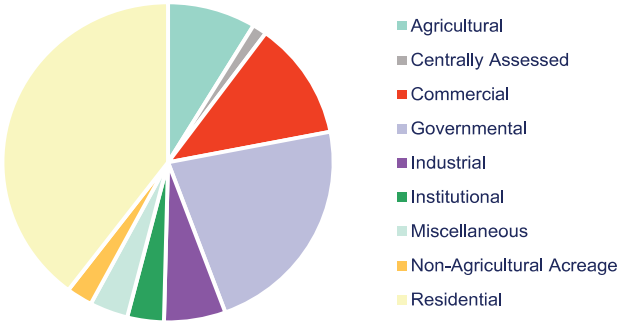
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• Serves transit-oriented populations along SE Maricamp Road and areas with significant concentrations of commuters in Silver Springs Shores	• Does not serve the Downtown Transit Center	• Streamline northern loop, maintaining service on SE 28th Street, and serving that portion of SE Maricamp Road with the proposed Belleview Route
	• Lack of bidirectional routing on various segments	• Truncate route at Silver Springs Shores Walmart and extend service to the Downtown transit Center; implement alternative service along southern portion of the alignment (long-term)

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	15,130	4.2%
Population 65 and Older	2,310	2.2%
Population Under 18	3,665	5.5%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	4,151	4.5%
Non-White Population	7,295	6.7%
Jobs	1,946	1.8%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 6 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

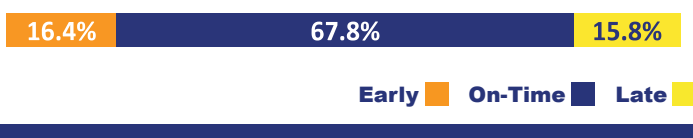
	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	3,966	5 of 7
Revenue Miles	82,852	2 of 7
Operating Cost	$322,790	5 of 7
Ridership	15,372	6 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	3.6%	6 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	51.9	40.5	6 of 7	5 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	4.1	3.2	6 of 7	4 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.2	0.2	6 of 7	6 of 7

On-Time Performance



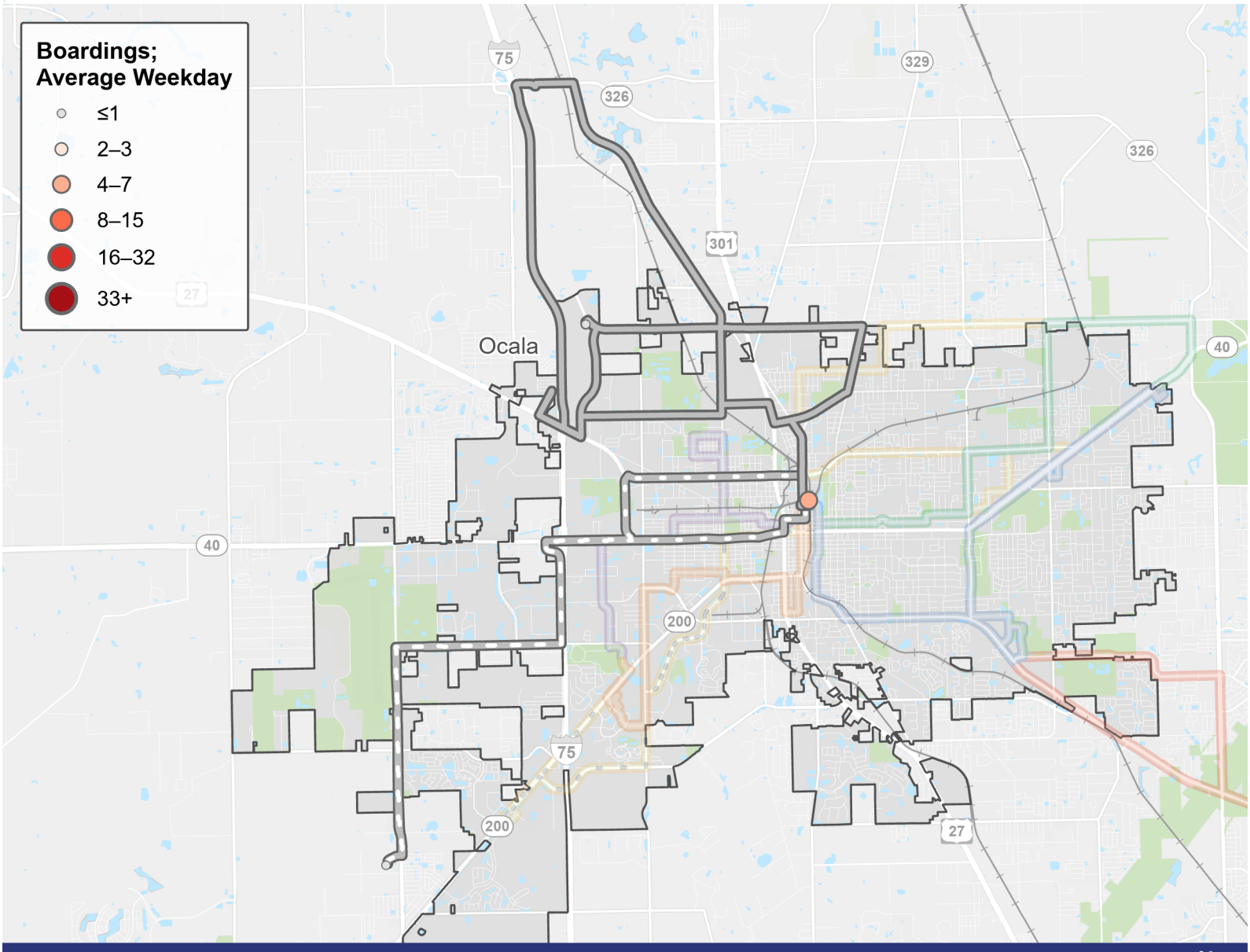
Silver Route

Key Points of Interest: *Silver: 301 Plaza, Ocala North Shopping Center, Commerce Park (Chewy, Fed-Ex and Auto Zone) - alternating service to Ocala Greyhound Station and Oak Tree Village Camp; Silver Express: Howard Middle School, Marion County Sheriffs' Office, Saving Mercy, DCF Access, Signature Brands LLC, Saint Leo University Ocala Center, the Centers, the Court House, and the Downtown Transfer Station*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	-	70	70	70	120+	120+	120+	120+	120+	120+	70	70	70	-	-	-	-



Silver Route

Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3

N

Silver Route

Route Analysis

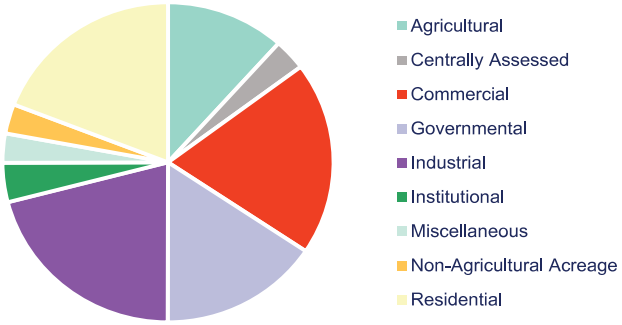
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• Serves intercity bus station and numerous distribution centers	• Circuitous alignment	• Implement microtransit; northwest Ocala is well suited for this service as it is sparsely populated by transit-oriented populations
	• Serves areas with low population and employment densities	• Serve Compassion Food Bank and planned developments in the vicinity of SR 200 and SW 60th Avenue
	• Frequencies may be confusing for new or occasional riders	• Modify/increase frequency of service

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	12,900	3.6%
Population 65 and Older	2,374	2.3%
Population Under 18	2,960	4.4%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	5,865	6.3%
Non-White Population	7,433	6.8%
Jobs	16,890	16.0%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 7 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

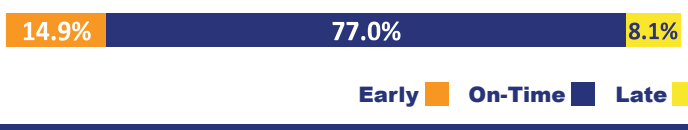
	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	2,500	7 of 7
Revenue Miles	54,262	7 of 7
Operating Cost	$203,436	7 of 7
Ridership	2,484	7 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	0.9%	7 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	8.8	4.4	7 of 7	7 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	1.1	0.5	7 of 7	7 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.1	0.0	7 of 7	7 of 7

On-Time Performance



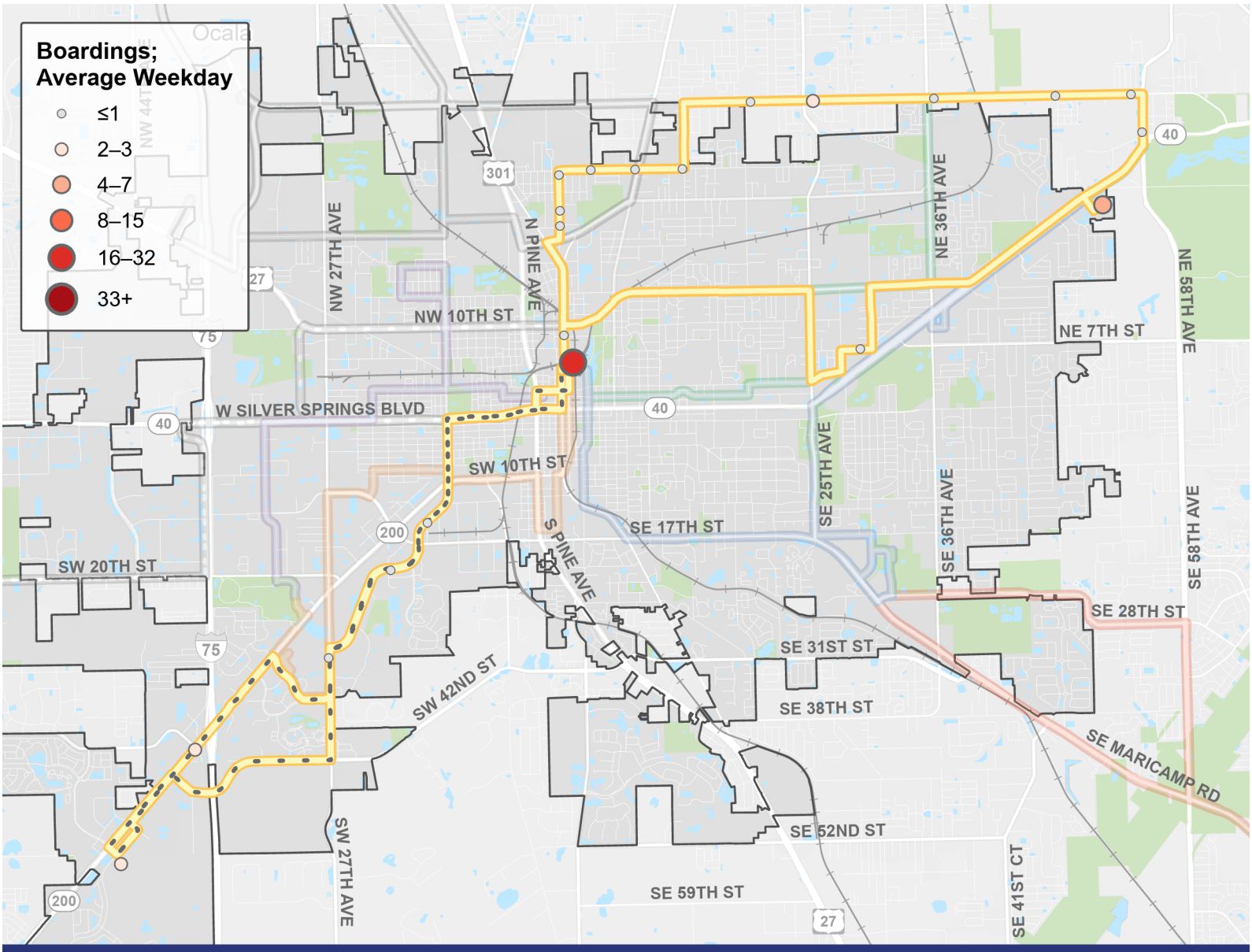
Yellow Route

Key Points of Interest: *Yellow A: Downtown Transfer Station, Vanguard High School, Oakcrest Elementary School, Pearl Britain Plaza, several industrial sites along NE 35th St, USPS Office, the Silver Springs Walmart, Six Gun Plaza, Appleton Museum Art, the Florida Center for the Blind, and First Assembly Christian School; Yellow B: Downtown Transfer Station, Salvation Army, Rasmussen University of Nursing, Target, Ocala West Shopping Mall, Walmart Supercenter, Grand Oaks Town Center, Rasmussen University – Ocala, the New Veterans Clinic, Market Street at Heath Brook Shopping Mall, Paddock Mall, Walmart Supercenter, Ocala West Shopping Mall, Target, Rasmussen University of Nursing, and the Court House*

Route Frequency, Operating Hours, and Map

Monday – Saturday (5:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.)

	5:00 a.m.	6:00 a.m.	7:00 a.m.	8:00 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	10:00 a.m.	11:00 a.m.	12:00 p.m.	1:00 p.m.	2:00 p.m.	3:00 p.m.	4:00 p.m.	5:00 p.m.	6:00 p.m.	7:00 p.m.	8:00 p.m.	9:00 p.m
Frequency in Minutes	60	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	70	60



Yellow Route
Average Weekday Ridership

Miles
0 1.5 3

N

Yellow Route

Route Analysis

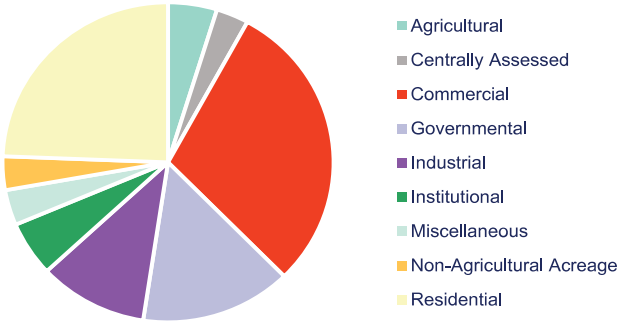
Strengths	Weaknesses	Potential Opportunities
• Serves numerous strong trip generators including Walmart, the Paddock Mall, and affordable housing complexes	• Duplicative of other services	• Combine Yellow B with proposed peak-period service to Marion Oaks
	• Lack of bidirectional routing	• Streamline alignment of Yellow A along NE 35th Street

Socio-economic Analysis

Demographics

Estimates based on a quarter mile buffer of the route	Total Served	Percent of County Total
Population	18,827	5.2%
Population 65 and Older	3,326	3.2%
Population Under 18	4,503	6.7%
Population in Households with Income Less than 150 Percent of the Poverty Line	6,817	7.3%
Non-White Population	8,219	7.5%
Jobs	19,069	18.1%

Land Use



Equity Index Ranking: 4 of 7

Determined by the populations and destinations served

Annual Data

Annual Operating Statistics

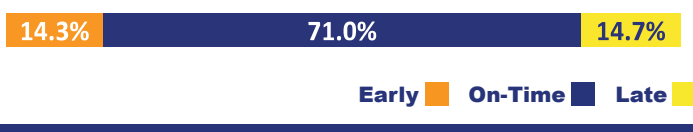
	2022 (Forecast)	Rank
Revenue Hours	4,460	3 of 7
Revenue Miles	70,070	4 of 7
Operating Cost	$362,985	4 of 7
Ridership	17,431	5 of 7
Farebox Recovery Ratio	3.6%	5 of 7

Daily Data

Daily Operating Statistics

	Weekdays	Saturdays	Weekday Rank	Saturday Rank
Total Boardings	59.4	43.4	5 of 7	5 of 7
Passengers Per Hour	4.2	3.0	5 of 7	6 of 7
Passengers Per Mile	0.3	0.2	5 of 7	5 of 7

On-Time Performance



Appendix C: TBEST Model Inputs

Socioeconomic Data Development

The Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST) uses zonal data to estimate boardings based on socioeconomic and land use characteristics of the areas adjacent to each transit stop.

TBEST Base Data

For Florida transit agencies, TBEST provides pre-configured base data, including parcel-level population and land use data. Socioeconomic data sources available through TBEST are:

- Population totals and characteristics American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2015-2019)
- Employment totals and characteristics from the Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program (2019)
- Employment totals from InfoUSA (2020)
- Parcel data (2020)

Central Florida Regional Planning Model Data

The project team also imported Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ)-level socioeconomic data from the Central Florida Regional Planning Model (CFRPM). The variables Total Households, Households with Zero Vehicles, and Households with One Vehicle were calculated from other variables present in the TAZ dataset.

- Total Population (TOT_POP_20)
- Multi-family Population (MF_POP_20)
- Total Households (TO_HHLD_20)
- Households with Zero Vehicles (ZC_HHLD_20)
- Households with One Vehicle (OC_HHLD_20)
- Classified Employment:
    - Industrial Employment (IND_EMP_20)
    - Commercial Employment (COM_EMP_20)
    - Service Employment (SVC_EMP_20)

TBEST allows for zonal employment forecasts to be used in lieu of Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) data. For this modeling effort, the project team interpolated CFRPM TAZ employment data to the 2022, 2027, and 2032 forecast years.

Mean Annual Person Wage

The Census reports a mean annual wage of $41,697 (in 2019 dollars) for Marion County based on 2019 Florida State Bureau of Economic Analysis data, the recommended source for TBEST applications in Florida. This value is used to estimate a value of time that affects the willingness of persons to travel on transit in the TBEST model.

Socioeconomic Data Sync

To incorporate CFRON socioeconomic estimates into the base TBEST Census, LEHD, parcel data, and employment datasets, the *TBEST Socioeconomic Data Sync* tool was employed. This tool updates the base TBEST Census and LEHD population, households, and employment counts to match the CFRPM regional travel demand model base year counts in 2020.

Socioeconomic Growth Rates

For the 2022 Base Year forecast, the synced 2020 socioeconomic figures are scaled to year 2022 using the variable-level compound growth rates by TAZ from 2020 to 2025. Future year forecasts scale socioeconomic data to the forecast year using a similar process. Zonal employment figures for 2022, 2027, and 2032 were scaled outside of TBEST by the project team using a similar process of variable- and zone-level compound growth rates.

Not all socioeconomic variables used by TBEST are present in the CFRPM zonal forecasts. For variables such as average household income, per-capita income, and median household income, a 1.41% compound growth rate between 2020 and 2025 is assumed. This rate is the medium-band estimate of population growth for Marion County in that period. This rate is suggested by TBEST as a placeholder growth rate value when local growth rates for these figures are not available.

Network Data Development

TBEST manages transit network data, system operational characteristics, and transit market data at a detailed level, including route, segment and stop locations, service levels, fare structure, and special generator/amenity locations. Within the SunTran transit system, the “2022 Base Year” scenario houses all of the base year network conditions, system operational characteristics, network attributes, and market data.

GTFS Network Import

The TBEST GTFS Network Import tool was utilized to import network attributes defined in SunTran's GTFS (General Transit Feed Specification) file into the “2022 Base Year” scenario. Before the feed was input into TBEST, the feed was run through a GTFS feed validation tool that analyses for errors and discrepancies that would have an impact on the modeling scenario. Minor inaccuracies in GTFS feed "shapes" were addressed within TBEST to ensure speeds and travel distances could be accurately calculated. Spans, headways, and travel times were consistent with recent posted schedules.

The GTFS Network Import tool automatically codes route definitions, route service span, headway, in-vehicle travel time (IVTT), and stop locations for each TBEST time period. TBEST manages each imported route by direction and also by unique pattern/deviation by direction. Based on the schedule, the TBEST GTFS Network Import tool assigns the service span, number of trips and headway to each pattern by TBEST time period. The GTFS feed used for SunTran included service beginning 10/18/2022 and ending on 3/18/2022.

System Operational Characteristics

Fare

SunTran’s systemwide base fare is $1.50 per trip with no transfer discount or free transfers. While posted fares can be entered into TBEST, in practice many transit riders will pay less than the posted fare due to the discounts

SunTran offers. Higher fares result in lower ridership, all else equal. As a result, using posted fares in TBEST may limit fare sensitivity within ridership estimations. To simplify fare structures, the project team inputted the SunTran systemwide average fare rather than posted fares into TBEST. Average fares were calculated by dividing the agency's FY21 fare revenue ($157,533) by total unlinked passenger trips used for NTD reporting (209,733). This resulted in an average fare of $0.75. In the TBEST model, this average fare is applied as both the base fare and the transfer fare.

Operating Costs

Operating costs in TBEST do not bear on ridership estimates but can be used for high-level estimates of the cost of service changes. For the SunTran TDP, operating costs are calculated outside of TBEST. Nevertheless, the agency's FY21 $81.39 average cost per revenue hour was entered into TBEST.

Layovers

For all systems and routes, a 10 percent minimum layover time is assumed. This layover percentage affects operating cost estimates but does not affect service levels, which are drawn from GTFS.

Vehicle Capacity

Vehicle capacity imposes an upper-bound constraint on TBEST's ridership estimates. Vehicle size by route was provided by FCDOT staff, along with maximum allowable load factor. Total capacity was calculated from these two inputs. SunTran vehicles have a seated capacity of 32 and a standing passenger capacity of 18, which yields a total capacity of 50.

Interlined Routes

Interlined routes allow passengers to make connections between routes without transferring between vehicles, which can make more trips feasible within the model. SunTran provided data on routes that are interlined (see Table 1).

Table 1 | Interlined SunTran Routes

Sets of Interlined Routes
Blue Route, Green Route, Orange Route, Purple Route

Route Types

All routes were coded as Radial types, with the exception of Red, which is coded as a crosstown route. These designations were present in the base SunTran transit system provided by TBEST. These classifications are used for calculating applied validation factors for future year routes in a process described further in Section 0 Model Validation Results**.**

Network Attributes

The following network characteristics are entered by the user within the TBEST network coding environment.

Special Generators

TBEST allows the assignment of special ridership generators (such as a university) to the stop-level. Special designations can help to adjust stop-level ridership estimates when ridership cannot be explained by local employment, population, and network characteristics alone. Special generator and amenity designations include airports, shopping malls, recreation parks, event centers, universities, primary schools, and hospitals. TBEST also allows agency to record stop amenities such as shelters in TBEST, but these do not bear on the ridership model.

Special generators were already coded in the SunTran TBEST scenario provided by FDOT. After the import of the GTFS feed used for the 2022 Base Year scenario, the project team ensured these stop-level generators were still present and added several additional ones in existing categories. The special generators present in the model include:

- University: Stops adjacent to Central Florida College
- Hospital: Stops adjacent to the Ocala Regional Medical Center, the Vines Hospital, the VA Clinic at SW 49th Road, and Ocala Health Department

Transfer stations are a special kind of special generator that are described in detail below.

Transfer Stations

The bus stops associated with the Downtown Transfer Station and the Ocala Health Department were coded as transfer stations in TBEST. Transfer Stations are a distinct type of special generator that limits the amount of transfer time experienced by a passenger when transferring between two stops. Transfer Stations are coded within TBEST by coding a unique Timepoint identifier for all stops that access the transfer station. The identifier makes stops at that timepoint available to flag as a Transfer Station in the Network Properties dialog.

Model Validation

The 2022 Base Year scenario was validated using SunTran ridership data from late 2021 to early 2022 and the TBEST 2018 land use model.

Model Validation Data Sources

TBEST model estimates are validated against observed ridership for an average Weekday and Saturday. This validation is performed at the route level. Section 6.6 of the TBEST 4.7 User Guide provides a detailed description of the process for entering observed ridership and validating the model.

Automated Passenger Counter (APC) data five-month period from October 18, 2021, to March 18, 2022, are used to validate the 2022 Base Year model are based on. During this period, Silver Route ridership was artificially low due to connectivity problems faced by Automatic Vehicle Locator/Automatic Passenger Counters on vehicles operating on that route. Alternative ridership data sources for the route were not available because of recent changes to the route's alignment and the only recent introduction of AVL/APC devices. As a result, Silver Route observed ridership was not used to validate the TBEST model's ridership estimates. The following section discusses the implications of this for future year forecasts. The observed ridership values used for validation are listed in Table 2.

Table 2 | 2022 Ridership Data USED

Route	Weekday	Saturday	Notes
Green	139	42	
Blue	102	69	
Purple	81	51	
Orange	113	48	
Red	52	40	
Yellow	59	14	
Silver			Not included in baseline validation

Model Validation Results

The model's estimate of ridership for each collection is compared to observed ridership to generate a set of adjustment factors. If the model forecasts ridership exactly, a route collection's validation factor will be equal to one. For future year forecasts, the adjustment factors are applied to initial forecasts based on changes to the system or transit market. This process allows for forecast sensitivity to the equation coefficients while maintaining a basic fit of predictions with the base year. Therefore, validation factors closer to 1 (whether above or below one) are more reliable for estimating ridership impacts of transit service changes such as realignments, new routes, or changes in level of service. Factors are calculated for Weekdays and Saturdays. The Silver Route did not have usable ridership data for the baseline validation, so its applied validation factor for future years based on the average validation factor of other routes of the same type (i.e., all routes except Red).

At the route level for SunTran, Weekday predicted variation from observed ranged from a factor of 0.1 (observed ridership approximately 10 times less than predicted) to a factor of 0.39 (observed ridership 2.6 times less than predicted). The median ratio between SunTran pre-validation predictions to observed ridership is a factor of 0.18, such that ridership on the median route is overpredicted. Because Ocala ridership is generally low, small differences between estimated and observed ridership can produce large differences in validation factors.

Table 3 shows validation factors across SunTran routes and service days.

Table 3 | Validation Factors

Route	Observed		Validation Factor	
	Weekday	Saturday	Weekday	Saturday
Green	139	42	0.34	0.16
Blue	102	69	0.21	0.24
Purple	81	51	0.15	0.16
Orange	113	48	0.15	0.10
Red	52	40	0.39	0.42
Yellow	59	14	0.10	0.04
Silver*	--	--	*0.18*	*0.13*

Appendix D: Farebox Recovery Report

Current Farebox Recovery Ratio

The farebox recovery ratio (FRR) for SunTran, the public transportation provider for the City of Ocala, was 5.1 percent for all fixed-route services in fiscal year (FY) 2021. This number reflects a 61 percent decrease over the five-year period from FY 2017 to FY 2021.

Prior Year Fare Studies and Changes

SunTran fares were last increased in January 2009 based upon recommendations included in the 2008 Transit Development Plan Update. The base fare was increased to $1.50; the student fare was increased to $1.10, and the senior/disabled fare was increased to 75¢. Children 5 and under are free when accompanying a paying adult.

Proposed Fare Changes for the Upcoming Years

No additional fare increases are proposed.

Strategies That Will Affect the Farebox Recovery Ratio

The 2023-2032 Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update identifies strategies that will be used to maintain or increase the farebox recovery ratio, including the following:

- Monitor key performance measures for existing fixed route corridors.
- Increase ridership while maintaining costs to operate and administer transportation services.
- Evaluate fare structure to analyze opportunities for instituting additional passes.
- Work with key employers, community-based contacts and homeowner associations with enhanced marketing concepts to continue increasing ridership and revenue for the fixed route system.
- Improve fare collection options by exploring media outlets such as app-driven technology and exploring new locations for pass sale outlets.
- Partner with educational institutions to fund free bus passes for K-12 students.
- Continue to monitor and evaluate major activity centers to determine cost feasibility for expansion of transit services to these areas.
- Hold maintenance costs at less than 20% of total system costs by performing scheduled maintenance activities for all transit vehicles.

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