



MANATEE COUNTY AREA TRANSIT

2017 Transit Development Plan

Progress Report



July 2017



Manatee County Area Transit

2017 Progress Report
for the
2013 Transit Development Plan Major Update

Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)
2411 Tallevast Road
Sarasota, Florida 34243



Section 1: Introduction

The State of Florida Public Transit Block Grant Program was enacted by the Florida Legislature to provide a stable source of funding for public transit. The Block Grant Program requires public transit service providers to develop, adopt, and annually update a Ten-Year Transit Development Plan (TDP). Under legislation that became effective February 20, 2007, the TDP must undergo a Major Update every five years. In the interim years, an update is to be submitted in the form of a progress report on the ten-year implementation program of the TDP. Major updates involve more substantial reporting requirements than annual progress reports. Each update must be submitted to the appropriate Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Office by September 1st.

The most recent major update of the Manatee County TDP, *Manatee Connect*, was adopted by the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) in September 2013. This document comprises Manatee County's annual progress report for the 10-year period from 2017 through 2026 and meets the requirement for a TDP annual progress report in accordance with Rule Chapter 14-73, Florida Administrative Code (FAC). Table 1-1 lists the TDP requirements from Rule 14-73.001 for annual progress reports and indicates whether or not the item was accomplished in this TDP.

Table 1-1: TDP Progress Report Checklist

Annual Progress Report Checklist Item	Related Section
Past year's accomplishments compared to the original implementation program	Section 2 - Progress Report
Analysis of discrepancies between the plan and its implementation for the past year and steps that will be taken to attain or modify original goals and objectives	Section 2 - Progress Report
Any revisions to the implementation program for the coming year	Section 3 - Implementation and Financial Plan
Revised implementation program for the new tenth year	Section 3 - Implementation and Financial Plan
Added recommendations for the new tenth year of the updated plan	Section 3 - Implementation and Financial Plan
A revised financial plan	Section 3 - Implementation and Financial Plan
A revised list of projects or services needed to meet the goals and objectives	Section 3 - Implementation and Financial Plan

Source: Transit Development Plan Review Guidance for FDOT Districts, August 2009.



Identification of the Submitting Entity:

Agency: Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT)

Telephone Number: (941) 747-8621

Mailing Address: 2411 Tallevast Road, Sarasota, FL 34243

Authorizing Agency Representative: Mr. William Steele, Transit Division Manager

For more information about this plan, please contact Mr. Ryan Suarez, Planning Manager, Manatee County Area Transit, at the phone number or address above.

Organization of the Report: This TDP progress report is organized into the following sections:

Section 1: Introduction – This section outlines the requirements of a TDP and includes contact information for the submitting agency.

Section 2: Progress Report – This section includes the progress report on past year’s accomplishments and milestones achieved including the status of plan goals and objectives.

Section 3: Implementation and Financial Plan – This section presents the revised implementation and financial program including the integration of new recommendations.



Section 2: Progress Report

Over the last year, MCAT has achieved a number of milestones consistent with the adopted work program in *Manatee Connect the TDP Major Update*. The progress report included in this section is organized into two major categories: 1. Transit capital and infrastructure projects, and 2. Service planning and operations projects. Each project or activity is briefly described and the milestone or accomplishment achieved is summarized. Discrepancies between the *Manatee Connect* implementation plan and the activity described are noted and steps to be taken to modify the corresponding goal or milestone are presented. An additional subsection is included which presents the status of MCAT goals and objectives identified in *Manatee Connect*.

PROGRESS REPORT ON MILESTONES

There is significant progress on a number of ongoing efforts since the TDP major update adoption in September 2013. These efforts help MCAT accomplish priority goals and work objectives.

Transit Capital and Infrastructure

Bus Buys

Staff continues to utilize an effective replacement program for the bus fleet. The average age of the MCAT fleet in 2016 was 5.98 years. The Manatee County Fleet Division has a replacement plan for purchasing new fixed routes buses using federal grant funds. New vehicles contribute to the attractiveness of the service, ensure service reliability, and support efforts to reduce maintenance costs. Paratransit vehicle replacement occurs typically using the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5310 program and in FY 2016/17, five new paratransit buses were received at MCAT. This procurement keeps the paratransit fleet current on replacement. Two (2) transit coaches are programmed for order in late 2017 to replace buses that are reaching end-of-useful life status.

ADA Compliant Bus Stop Pads and Branded Amenities

The effort to “brand” new passenger amenities and the refurbishment of existing stop infrastructure continues. At the same time, MCAT initiated a project to place passenger amenities at every bus stop and ensure construction of concrete boarding pads that comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act.

Using two different contractors, as well as coordination with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Six hundred and sixty-two (662) MCAT bus stops are now ADA compliant. Another 61 stops are currently under contract for ADA compliance upgrades, and work is currently underway on many of those stops. Six main route corridors, Manatee Avenue/SR 64, Cortez Rd, US Highway 301 in Palmetto, 15th Street



East, US Highway 41, and 9th Avenue East are now complete and the MCAT Logistics team is working with a contractor to install concrete pads and shelters along 26th Street West and 43rd Street West in Bradenton.

Efforts are underway to further incorporate the County “brand” as part of a refurbishment effort for Palmetto Station and Desoto Station. A general contractor will be utilized to complete the refurbishment and paint work. Once the project is complete, all MCAT facilities and vehicles will carry the County logo and color scheme. Together with the purchase of new benches and shelters, the rebranding of existing infrastructure ensures that MCAT has an inventory of station and stop infrastructure available for improving passenger comfort, increasing service attractiveness, and enhancing the visibility of the fixed-route service.



MCAT bus and shelter with new branding, 2014

Quantum Wheelchair Securement Pilot Project

Manatee County Area Transit, in conjunction with Q’Straint, has installed new state-of-the-art wheelchair securement equipment to assist wheelchair passengers. The Quantum wheelchair securement technology is being piloted on one MCAT fixed-route bus and that bus is being placed as often as possible on a very popular fixed route, Route 3/Manatee Avenue. The device enables passengers that utilize wheelchairs or powered scooters to independently activate a securement device that locks down their mobility equipment in less than 30 seconds by simply pushing a button. This new technology allows for quick, effective, and safe securement of wheelchairs and scooters, without the assistance of the Transit Operator. On all other vehicles, the bus operator secures every wheelchair device with old-fashioned securement straps and four-point tie-downs. The Quantum pilot includes demonstrations at PSTA, HART, and the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) Workshop in June 2017. The Quantum technology is very well received and well-positioned for inclusion in the next statewide bus procurement contract in the state of Florida.



Manatee County Transit Fleet Facility

In 2016, construction was completed on the new Transit administration, maintenance and operations facility, known officially as the Manatee County Transit Fleet Facility (MCTFF), located on US Highway 301 in southern Manatee County. The Manatee County Public Works Transit Division and select Fleet Division staff moved into this facility in November 2016. The facility incorporates many state-of-the-art features including a new farebox probe as well as a dedicated farebox revenue counting room, a new, more robust, bus wash and chassis wash facility and a design that accommodates future use of compressed natural gas (CNG) fuel. The MCTFF incorporates safety and security features including gated entry for the bus yard as well as secured employee parking and a comprehensive array of security cameras. The new Transit Fleet Facility will provide MCAT with the ability to expand in phases over time as growth and development continue in Manatee County.

Revenue Vehicle Detailing Program

In 2017, the Transit Division began a vehicle detailing program for all revenue vehicles in the fleet. An independent vehicle detailing contractor will be brought on board that will carefully clean and disinfect the interiors of each vehicle twice a year, at minimum. This service will greatly enhance the customer experience and will improve the overall appearance and attractiveness of the Fixed-Route and Handy Bus services. An additional contract is already in place for enhanced, specialized pest control service, and thereby address specific pest control issues on all fleet vehicles.

Transit Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Project

An ITS initiative is currently underway that will allow the Transit Division to integrate state-of-the-art technology into bus service operations and customer service. The Business Plan for the ITS project outlines a robust deployment of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies that will enhance both the fixed-route and paratransit service programs. It was the desire of Transit Division staff to implement ITS technologies that would advance a number of customer service, safety, operational efficiency, and mobility objectives. In addition, the technology improvements are designed to assist the Transit Division in delivering a much more reliable transit service and enhance the user experience with predictive bus arrival times.

Automatic Passenger Counters (APC)

The implementation of the ITS initiative is divided into phases beginning with installation of Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) equipment on the entire MCAT fixed-route fleet. The APC installation is now complete and this equipment enables the Transit Division to improve fixed-route service efficiency, track on-time performance, improve system reliability, comply with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) National Transit Database (NTD) reporting requirements, and support the process for selecting the proper array of bus



stop amenities based upon daily ridership counts, throughout the service area. In addition, the APC system allows MCAT to engage in detailed service performance adjustments and system planning since Transit Division staff now have access to accurate, up-to-date, stop level ridership data as well as precise running time information. The accurate schedule adherence data allows the MCAT Planning Team to create optimized bus schedules with very precise running times between established timepoints. The optimized route schedules, implemented effective November 2016, resulted in a greater than 10 percent improvement in on-time performance across the entire fixed-route system.

APC Validation Process

In addition to optimized route schedules, the MCAT Transit Planning staff completely calibrated and validated APC data for National Transit Database (NTD) Passenger Miles reporting purposes. By comparing sample APC data with the matching sample data from manual ridechecks, staff completed necessary adjustments to the APC software programming. Following completion of the benchmarking and calibration period, the software is now providing reliable and consistent ridership and operating data, which led to an application to FTA requesting approval to use APC data for NTD reporting. The approval, received from FTA in January 2017, affords the opportunity to redirect staff time previously dedicated to time-consuming manual onboard data collection efforts.

ITS Pilot Project

In 2016, the Transit Division conducted an ITS pilot project premised on integration with the on-board bus APC equipment, where real-time location information would be collected from the APC/GPS system and used to support audio and visual stop announcements, on-board advertising, and smartphone application for real-time bus arrival information. For the pilot, hardware was installed on two transit buses and one trolley bus which were assigned to routes that are part of Manatee County's "core" network including: Route 99 on US Highway 41 between downtown Sarasota and Bradenton, Route 3 on Manatee Avenue and SR 64, and the Anna Maria Island Beach Trolley on Gulf Drive. Hardware included a mobile GPS antenna, a 15-inch monitor to display on-board advertising, a visual sign to display stop locations and station names, and an automated audio system to announce scheduled bus stops. After a year of testing, staff determined that implementation of a fully involved computer aided dispatch/automatic vehicle location (CAD/AVL) system was needed to support all of the desired customer service and operational functionality outlined in the ITS Business Plan. As a result, the ITS pilot project concluded in early 2017.

Fixed Route Modems/Routers

In early 2016, the Transit Division purchased "onboard mobile gateway" (OMG) modems for the fixed route vehicle fleet. These onboard mobile gateways facilitate multiple on-board operating systems, and allow the



future expansion of various ITS features for the entire fixed route fleet. These gateways enhance the communication between the buses and the IT network infrastructure for the advent of Real Time Bus (arrival) Information; and the OMG hardware will facilitate defining the location and on-time performance of the Transit Division fleet along the prescribed fixed route. Installation of this hardware is complete.

Integrated Vehicle Location Technology System Project

Given the results of the ITS pilot project, the Transit Division is now pursuing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a CAD/AVL system for the fixed route fleet. Using the AVL technology, the Transit Division seeks to improve operations both internally and externally, and improve the predictability of fixed-route services. The end goal is to enhance the bus rider experience through improved service reliability and consistency as well as through the availability of real-time bus-location information. The Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) technology will provide passengers with accurate, real-time information about the next bus arriving at their stop and will also facilitate automated audio and visual next-stop annunciations. The AVL technology also provides transit dispatchers more precise information about bus location and speed without relying on operators for information. Real-time route and vehicle information will be made available via a web-based interface for use both within transit operations and by the riding public and that real-time bus location information will be made available to the public for use on mobile applications. A qualified transit technology vendor is anticipated to be under contract in Spring 2018 and implementation of the full integrated vehicle location technology system is expected to be underway in Summer, 2018.

Interactive Voice Response System

The Transit Division's introduction of an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) System for Paratransit (i.e., Handy Bus) customers is now complete. The IVR system provides electronic notifications (i.e., calls, emails, and text messages) to Handy Bus and Longboat Key Shuttle clients regarding their scheduled trips and real-time alerts for their bus arrival times. While users can sign up for the IVR service at any time, the new IVR system features went "live" on April 15, 2017. The IVR system allows passengers to customize their notifications by calling a Customer Service Representative, and such customizations include alerts on pending bus arrivals as well as receiving periodic updates on pre-paid fare account balances. The IVR system also benefits Handy Bus customers in the event of an emergency, since the system provides mass notification regarding suspension of regular service and the evacuation of clients to shelter locations, or to update operating procedures. In the aftermath of tropical weather events, the IVR system provides the ability to communicate quickly and effectively with all clients regarding the resumption of regular Handy Bus service. The voice response menu has also been translated into Spanish for Spanish-speaking customers.



Trapeze Software Upgrade

The Transit Division fixed-route and paratransit scheduling software was upgraded to Trapeze Version 13 in Fall 2014 to improve workflow, operational functionality, and prepare for a planned ITS system deployment in the future. Next, the Transit Division is proceeding to upgrade to Trapeze Version 16 in late Summer, 2017.

Wi-Fi at Transfer Stations

With the assistance of the Manatee County Information Technology team, wireless Internet access is now available at the Downtown Transfer Station in Bradenton. The current limited use of the wireless internet connectivity at the Downtown Transfer Station, indicates that Wi-fi access at other locations is unnecessary until usage is sufficient for expansion.

Capital Asset Management Plan

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has recognized that capital equipment asset management is the cornerstone for effective performance management. As defined by FTA, asset management is a strategic process through which transit agencies procure, maintain, and replace transit assets to manage performance, risks, and operating and maintenance costs over time. As part of its efforts to encourage good stewardship of grant-funded assets, the FTA is rolling out the Transit Asset Management (TAM) Rule. FTA issued its final rule for the National Transit Asset Management (TAM) System and the final notice for the National Transit Database Asset Inventory Module in the Federal Register on July 26, 2016 (81 FR 48971). Consistent with that Rule, Transit Division staff prepared and submitted performance measures for two groups of capital assets, rolling stock and facilities, to the Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in June 2017. The FTA requires formal submittal of a completed Transit Asset Management Plan in 2018. Transit Division staff are collaborating with Fleet Division staff to produce the final Plan now. Asset management planning ensures safe, cost-effective, and reliable service delivery, both now and in the future. A template for a comprehensive Ten-Year capital asset management plan is also updated every year, and components of that template are incorporated into the financial plan for the TDP Progress Report. This effort furthers ongoing efforts with the County Transit and Fleet Divisions to fine tune bus replacement and engine overhaul programs, in order to maintain an accurate capital asset management template and program FTA capital funding in TDP updates and Long Range Plans.

Baseline Assessment and Security Enhancement (BASE) Review

To ensure the resiliency of bus services in the event of a major security event, a baseline security review was completed in 2017 and compared to the original BASE in 2016. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) BASE assessment team gathered information including a review of policies, procedures, training



documents, and observations of system operations to determine adherence in 17 categories of security and emergency action items for transit agencies. The 2017 BASE review includes improvements, written protocols for monitoring security program goals and objectives, training programs and functional drills, annual review of the Security Program Plan, and strong written policies for security and emergency management incidents.

Service Planning and Operations

Skyway ConneXion

On Friday, April 1, 2016 MCAT began operating a new intercounty Regional Transit Service (RTS), the *Skyway ConneXion*, between Bradenton and southern Pinellas County including access to the Bay Pines Veterans Administration (VA) Hospital. The service connects three Manatee County Transfer Stations (Desoto Station, Downtown Bradenton and Palmetto Station) with stop locations in Pinellas County. Stops in Pinellas County include 54th Avenue South, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's (PSTA's) Grand Central Terminal area, Tyrone Square Mall Transit Center and the C.W. Bill Young Veterans/Bay Pines VA Hospital. For the express portions of the route within Manatee and Pinellas County, the fare is \$3.00, and service across the Sunshine Skyway Bridge is \$5.00. MCAT also developed a special unlimited ride daily pass available for \$10, good for a 24 hour period on the *Skyway ConneXion* and all local MCAT routes.

The Transit Division worked closely with Manatee County Community Services to ensure that trips to the Veteran's Administration Hospital continue without interruption. Community Services is now providing veterans with the \$10.00 unlimited ride daily passes in advance through the Salvation Army and other social service providers in the community.

By using an innovative service delivery approach, Manatee County was able to supply this service using no additional operating funds, a win-win-win for the County, area Veterans, and residents and visitors of both Manatee and Pinellas Counties. This service delivery approach was recognized by the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) in December 2016 and was awarded the 2016 FPTA Innovation Award. The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council (TBRPC) also recognized the *Skyway ConneXion* for its contribution to regional mobility in the Tampa Bay area and awarded Manatee County the 2017 "Future of the Region Award" in Transportation and Mobility.

Manatee Connect Service Improvements

Transit Division staff continues to move forward with plans to complete implementation of Phase I and Phase II of the *Manatee Connect* service improvements. The implementation status for several of those projects is provided below.



- **Route 3 (FY 2017)** – Improve Route 3/Manatee Avenue service frequency from 60 to 30 minutes. Beginning on Saturday, November 12, service frequency on Route 3/Manatee Avenue improved from every 60 to every 30 minutes. Route 3 is an east/west fixed-route that operates on Manatee Ave/SR 64, serving one of the major transportation corridors in the County. It ranks third in terms of ridership following Route 99 and the AMI Trolley, which are the only two other MCAT routes that operate with service frequencies better than 60 minutes. This investment of operating resources in Route 3 resulted in average monthly ridership increases by approximately 10 percent, during the first four months of expanded service.
- **Lakewood Ranch (FY 2017)** – New Service to Lakewood Ranch. In 2016, a thorough evaluation of the ridership and productivity on the eastern segment of Route 6 on State Road 70 east of Interstate 75, revealed that ridership at the Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine (LECOM) was fewer than 4 people per day (over 10 daily bus trips/runs). Following that ridership demand evaluation, staff restructured Route 6 to service Cortez Road from DeSoto Station to Coquina Beach, every 60 minutes. The bulk of ridership for Route 6 services are west of DeSoto Station along the Cortez Road corridor. However, fixed route service continues along State Road 70 from DeSoto Station, east to the Walmart in Lakewood Ranch near Interstate 75. This new route, Route 12, began service on November 12, 2016, and dedicated service detours into Manatee Technical College (MTC) continue on select trips via Route 12.
- **Route 6 (FY 2018)** – Improve Route 6/Cortez Road service frequency from 60 to 30 minutes. Route 6 currently operates hourly on Cortez Road between DeSoto Station and Coquina Beach. The Cortez Road corridor is a major transportation corridor in Manatee County and the section of Cortez Road on which Route 6 operates has been identified by the County as a major “Urban Corridor.” The County is working on land development regulations to improve opportunities for infill, redevelopment, and development within a group of specific urban corridors in the County that will result in increased densities and mixed-use development patterns that are transit and pedestrian-friendly. System-wide, Route 6 ranks fourth in terms of ridership productivity. Public involvement indicates strong support for 30-minute service frequency. In addition to serving major shopping and employment destinations on the mainland, improving the service frequency on Route 6 will facilitate travel to and from the Anna Maria Island (AMI) beach communities, which continue to struggle with congestion related issues. Combined with the very ridership productive AMI Trolley service, the additional capacity and connecting service to the beach areas provides an alternative to the vehicular congestion on the already constrained multimodal connector and beach corridor. Additional operational funding is necessary to make the service enhancement a reality.



FY 2017 Service Optimization and Restructuring Plan

At the direction of County Administration, Transit Division staff completed an internal and comprehensive operational analysis of the efficiency of the existing fixed route service. The genesis of the analysis stemmed from a desire amongst staff to take a fresh look at the existing fixed-route service and envision a new and more efficient design using the same set of resources (i.e., bus operators, buses, revenue hours of service, and operating budget), the key objective being continued development of the “core network” of fixed route service (i.e. US Highway 41, SR 64, SR 684 and Gulf Drive) as the “core network” comprises 71% of system wide ridership for the fixed route system.

The proposed optimization and efficiency modifications identified through the analysis included review through a public outreach process facilitated in Spring/Summer 2016 which included public workshops, social media outreach, and a survey instrument. The public outreach efforts guided the implementation of Phase 1 optimization and efficiency modifications, effective on November 12, 2016.

- **Route 3 (Manatee Ave)** – Route 3 now has increased service frequency, from 60 to 30 minutes. That change is very well received by passengers, with monthly ridership increasing since its implementation. Typically, frequency improvements tend to build ridership slowly as more and more people become aware and adapt to the improved service options. In addition to enhancing frequency, Route 3 service to Blake Hospital was replaced with restructured Route 4 service in order to improve the on-time performance for “core network” service along the Manatee Avenue Corridor.
- **North County/Palmetto** – Buses serving the areas north of the Manatee River underwent major restructuring in November 2016 as well. Routes 1, 13 and 201 were reconfigured to replace 30-minute service previously provided by Route 99 along U.S Highway 41 between the Palmetto Transfer Station and the Downtown Bradenton Transfer Station. The North County restructuring means that all three North County routes connect to the fixed route system in Downtown Bradenton. Service on Route 13 and Route 201, typically some of the least productive routes in the fixed route system, now operate every 120 minutes, six days a week. Route 201, serving the Rubonia area and Holy Cross Manor was previously available three days per week, however the restructuring makes the Route 201(North County ConneXion) available for six trips each day, Monday through Saturday. Route 1 now provides a one-seat connection between Downtown Bradenton and the Ellenton Mall.
- **Route 99 (US 41)** – Truncating northbound Route 99 service at the Downtown Bradenton station affords a longer cycle time for the U.S. Highway 41 service and, in turn, enhances the on-time



performance of the route, and thereby making connections at both DeSoto Station and Downtown Station more reliable for passengers. The effects of the on-time performance improvement are felt throughout the entire system of fixed-route services, as the Route 99 serves as the backbone and trunkline for the entire fixed route bus service network.

- **Route 9 (26th Street West)** – The analysis of APC data revealed that Route 9 (26th St W/State College of FL) ridership volume is less than half of regular weekday ridership volume on Saturday. Given that many Route 9 users are high school and college students making school trips and that schools/colleges along the Route offer only limited Saturday curriculum, the decision was made to discontinue Saturday service on Route 9. Average daily weekday ridership volume on Route 9 remains consistent despite this service modification.
- **Route 4 (9th Avenue East and West)** – Route 4 was restructured to replace Blake Hospital connections previously provided by Route 3. The restructured Route 4 service at Blake Hospital and diversion to Manatee Avenue means that passengers can use Route 4 to connect to the 30-minute service on Route 3 (Manatee Avenue).
- **Anna Maria Island Trolley** – The Anna Maria Island Trolley schedule was adjusted to every 30 minutes from 6:00a.m. to 8:00p.m, Monday through Sunday.
- **Route 6 (Cortez Road/State Road 70)** – The less productive service was discontinued along provided State Road 70 east of Interstate 75 and Lakewood Ranch Boulevard effective November 12, 2016. At the same time, Route 6 was split into two routes, with Route 6 continuing to operate between DeSoto Station and Coquina Beach and new Route 12 operating from DeSoto Station to the Lakewood Ranch Walmart via State Road 70. Ridership has been steady on the new Route 12 but less productive than the western segment of Route 6. Operationally, the Route 12 bus runs behind schedule during the afternoon peak hours, so the operations team supplements the single bus service on Route 12 with an additional peak hour “tripper” bus whenever staffing is available; and a minor route schedule adjustment implemented as a corrective action in April 2017 to improve schedule adherence.

Longboat Key Shuttle

As part of Phase 2 of the Service Optimization strategy, MCAT launched a new service delivery model for the Longboat Key area called the “*Longboat Key Shuttle*.” The *Longboat Key Shuttle* began operation on Saturday, April 15, 2017, and the concept of the *Longboat Key Shuttle* was developed through consultation with Town of Longboat Key staff, Aging in Paradise, area residents, and Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT). The



Longboat Key Shuttle provides curb-to-curb, next day reservation-based service between Coquina Beach and the Bay Isles Shopping Center on Longboat Key. Riders schedule their trips in advance at least by 5p.m. the day before using the MCAT Customer Service Center. South of the Bay Isles area, hourly bus service continues to be provided by SCAT’s Route 18, linking Longboat Key to St. Armands Circle and Downtown Sarasota. The early results of Shuttle operations indicate that 10 to 15 passenger trips per day are being scheduled by those who commute to/from the Coquina Beach Transfer Point to Longboat Key. This innovative service concept optimizes limited operating resources while benefitting Longboat Key residents and visitors alike.

US 301 ConneXion

The US 301 ConneXion was implemented in conjunction with the move to the MCTFF located on US Highway 301 in southern Manatee County. The service ensures public transit access to the MCTFF and allows passengers to interact with Transit Division staff with respect to issues, concerns, and appeals that impact service delivery, retrieve personal items which are left on buses, and attend open house public events. The service operates as a demand-responsive “feeder” service from and to two key bus stops, Goodwill on 15th Street East and the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport. Passengers can register for subscription service and use pre-paid fares to utilize this service.

How Will We Grow? A Conversation with the Community

“How Will We Grow?” is the guide for future growth decisions and policies in Manatee County. In June 2013, the BCC approved Manatee County staff recommendations to move forward with various changes in land use and infrastructure planning consistent with Alternatives 2 and 3 from How Will We Grow? Those scenarios each have an impact on public transportation in the County and Transit Division staff continue to work with County administration and planning staff in the implementation of recommendations and strategies from “How Will We Grow?”

County Transit Division staff are working to ensure consistency with the recommendations from “How Will We Grow?” such as focusing on the “core network” of transit routes, which coincide with the “Urban Corridors” specifically identified in the “How Will We Grow?” Project for infill, redevelopment and multi-modal transportation improvements which benefits public transportation ridership growth in the long-term.

Development Review

The Manatee County Public Works/Transit Division staff are making efforts to participate in the plan review process including periodic reviews of projects that appear on the Manatee County Current Case List. Staff also reviews projects on the Review Agency Meeting agenda and the bi-monthly Development Review Committee, whenever possible. Currently, comments are provided on development projects through the staff



of the Building and Development Services Department when projects are likely to impact bus stops or future bus route planning or design.

“How To” Videos and MCAT Website Update

With the assistance of a professional video development and marketing consultant team, several “How To” and instructional videos are now available on the County’s YouTube channel and also on the updated County/MCAT website. The instructional videos educate new and existing bus riders on key bus use topics including how to ride the bus when traveling with your bike, the MCAT passenger “code of conduct”, how to use MCAT services for persons with disabilities, how to use the Longboat Key Shuttle, and also a general “How-To-Ride” video which includes instructions for route schedule use, farebox transactions, and how and where to board the bus. These videos received a Marketing Award from the Florida Public Transportation Association (FPTA) in 2016.

In January 2016, MCAT premiered a new website, which better organizes and simplifies the volume of information posted on the previous website. The new website features the new Manatee County logo and branding as well as picture-based quick links to access the most frequently visited website content. The new website incorporates updated Title VI information, paratransit program applications, and Spanish language materials. In 2017, MCAT added special web pages to the website that allow visually impaired passengers to access MCAT bus schedules using screen reader technology.

Universal Pass Agreements for Colleges and Universities

In June 2016, the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) approved Universal Access Pass (i.e., U-Pass) access agreements with two local colleges, Ringling College of Art and Design and New College of Florida. Each agreement is a three-party agreement between Manatee County, Sarasota County, and the college that allows students, faculty, and staff to ride Manatee County and Sarasota County fixed route bus service for free when presenting a valid College-issued photo identification when boarding. Each college pays both Manatee and Sarasota County a pre-paid, lump sum, annual fee to cover fare revenue.

A similar agreement was approved in November 2015 between the University of South Florida Sarasota-Manatee, Manatee County and Sarasota County. The U-Pass Program serves a number of purposes including broadening access to public transportation service for area college students, faculty and staff throughout Manatee and Sarasota counties, assisting in meeting agency goals in regards to facilitating ridership growth, adding an additional source of operating revenue for transit service, and expediting the boarding process at key bus stops. The next targeted educational institution for U-Pass program implementation is State College of Florida (SCF) and discussions are already underway.



Extra Board Staffing

On May 23, 2017, the Manatee County Board of County Commissioners approved the first-ever Transit Bus Operator “Extra Board” for Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT). The “Extra Board” provides added staffing which is designed to cover open work assignments whenever regularly scheduled operators are on leave or for operator position vacancies. The County Commission authorized the addition of 16 full-time transit bus operator positions to serve as the "Extra Board" for the Transit Division, as well as one additional transit attendant.

This added operator staffing will support the service delivery schedule **and will relieve the pressure on the existing workforce who struggle to meet daily service needs given that staff must often work on their normal days off or double shifts, in order to maintain service delivery. The chronic under-staffing of transit bus operators created a cascade effect that impacts supervisors, superintendents and service attendants; and the addition of the Extra Board is step forward in improving the work environment and morale in the Public Works Transit Division.** A consultant validation study is now underway to validate the scheduling/staffing process and size for the Extra Board, and to address Operator compensation, salary progression, and operator retention issues.

FCTD Mobility Enhancement Grant Award

In July 2016, Manatee County/MCAT was awarded a \$90,000 grant award from the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (FCTD). These funds provide bus passes to low-income households in the community when individuals cannot afford transportation for medical appointments. The grant application was developed as a partnership between the Public Works/Transit Division, the Manatee County Community Services Department and several area healthcare providers who provide necessary health care services to low-income patients in Manatee County.

The Mobility Enhancement Grant award enables the expansion of Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) service to eligible clients who are able to utilize the fixed route service. In addition to increasing public transit ridership on fixed route services, the grant award also promotes positive public health outcomes by reducing medical appointment no-shows and cancellations due to lack of adequate transportation. Patients who did not have the means to travel to primary care appointments will be more likely to attend regular medical follow-up visits if transportation is readily available.

Transportation Disadvantaged Low-Income Eligibility and Bus Pass Program

Effective August 1, 2017, all new TD program eligibility determinations are based on annual household income, where an eligible client’s annual household income is at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty



Level. Customers who qualify for the TD program based on income and who are not able to use the fixed-route service due to their disability will be eligible to use the Handy Bus door-to-door service. Currently, Handy Bus program eligibility for TD program participants is based on age and disability only.

In addition to introducing TD income-based eligibility, a discounted monthly bus pass is available to those TD-eligible clients who are able to use the fixed-route service. The new discounted bus pass will work in concert with the new income-based eligibility process and may benefit existing Handy Bus users who can transition to the fixed-route service. **It also affords an opportunity to receive assistance for those on the waiting list for TD Handy Bus service, and thereby, reduce the growing demand for limited door-to-door service.** Eligible clients will be able to purchase monthly bus passes at a reduced cost of \$20. The current cost for a Regular Monthly Pass is \$40. Reimbursement from the Commission from the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) will cover the difference in bus pass cost, resulting in no net loss of revenue for the sale of discounted TD monthly bus passes.

Travel Training

A new in-person travel training program is available in Summer 2017, which supports the transition of Handy Bus applicants to the fixed-route service. The travel trainer provides one-on-one, group, and train-the-trainer training services to benefit individuals and the social service organizations who support ADA and TD-eligible clients. Travel training efforts will further assist the voluntary transition of Handy Bus applicants and, potentially, current users to the fixed-route service, further reducing the demand for the door-to-door service.

Handy Bus Standard Operating Procedures

In an effort to improve the efficiency and on-time performance of the Handy Bus service for all customers, stricter enforcement of three key service procedures is underway effective July 1, 2017. **Those key service procedures include, the five minute pick-up wait time, the policy on same-day service requests, and carry-on packages.** Over time, the desire to provide the highest level of customer service has deteriorated the integrity of the daily scheduling process and, consequently, enforcement of Handy Bus procedures is necessary to enhance on-time performance, efficient service delivery, and route scheduling. Enforcement of the three noted procedures will improve service delivery for all customers throughout the course of each day.

Paratransit Pre-Paid Fare Program

In 2015 and 2016, MCAT implemented an award winning paratransit prepaid fare program that allows paratransit (Handy Bus) service customers to open an account with MCAT from which to draw funds for paratransit trips rather than paying a cash fare for each trip. Public Works/Transit Division staff developed internal accounting and operational procedures to implement the new program that ensure proper



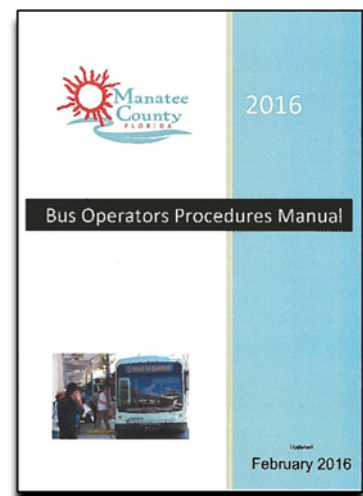
accounting and reconciliation records are kept and that ensure only eligible paratransit customers benefit from such an account. The pre-paid fare program began in summer 2015 as a pilot program, graduated to full implementation, and participation has increased continuously since its implementation. Currently, in Fiscal Year 2016- 2017, a total of 10,633 passenger trips were paid using the pre-paid fare program. The pre-paid fare program also includes a “sponsorship” program where community transportation donors are matched with paratransit passengers needing financial assistance to fund the costs of their trips.

New Bus Operator Training Program

The Transit Division continues to refine the new bus operator training program. Manatee Technical College (MTC) has created a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training program for the public and staff is working with MTC program staff to encourage program graduates to apply for operator and related positions with Manatee County. In addition, the Transit Division expanded the new bus operator training program to include applicants who have not yet received their Commercial Driver’s License. Applicants selected must therefore acquire their CDL “permit” before starting work and are allowed to use staff expertise and equipment to practice and obtain their full CDL. Participants who fail to pass the CDL test during probations simply do not continue in the remainder of the new Operator Training Program. This expanded opportunity to train operators is designed to assist in attracting a larger pool of applicants, decrease driver attrition during new bus operator training, and reduce the bus operator position vacancy rate throughout the year. On Manatee County staff are two CDL third-party administrators who provide the required training/testing for the CDL. By providing operators with a more in-depth training program, the Transit Division continues to realize improvements in daily operations, incident reporting, customer service, and public relations.

Bus Operator Procedures Manual

In Summer 2017, MCAT published a revised Bus Operators Procedures Manual. The manual contains standard protocols for drivers, supervisors, and management in regard to day-to-day operations, revenue accounting, on-time performance, incident/accident reviews, and state and federal regulatory compliance. The manual includes the MCAT organizational structure, a description of Transit/Trolley and Paratransit services, relevant personnel information, guidelines for customer service, incident/accident reporting, and also requirements for operating vehicles safely. Special emphasis is placed on procedures for incident/accident reviews in the manual in order to ensure consistency throughout the Transit Division for all modes of operation (Transit, Trolley, and Paratransit).





Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Triennial Review

Every three years, the FTA conducts a comprehensive compliance audit of each recipient of FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area grant funds. The compliance audit consists of 17 subject areas which cover Procurement and Satisfactory Continuing Control, Civil Rights, and several other federal mandates. The process generally consists of two steps, a desk review conducted off-site by the FTA consultant reviewer and then a formal site visit. The previous Triennial Review for Manatee County was conducted in 2015. Staff is now preparing for the upcoming 2018 Triennial Review.

Quality Assurance Reviews

Transit Division customer service staff continue to conduct daily quality assurance surveys for paratransit (Handy Bus) clients. Customers are called daily based on the previous day's trip manifests and are asked to answer a brief survey regarding the quality of the paratransit services they received. The questionnaire includes a host of questions regarding the quality of the service and the proficiency and helpfulness of Reservationists and Operators. Results of that phone survey indicate that current Handy Bus customers rate the service with a composite 9.4 out of 10 score. The survey effort is important to assess the quality of the paratransit service, ensure that the needs of paratransit users are met, and to find ways to further improve the existing service.

Fixed-route quality assurance is being performed by staff who board vehicles that are in service and observe and record customer service, vehicle cleanliness and appearance, and listen for stop announcements as required by ADA implementing regulations.

Bus Schedules Formatted for the Visually Impaired

In 2017, the Transit Division published newly formatted bus schedules for the visually impaired on the County's website. The schedules are formatted for compatibility with the computer screen readers used by the visually impaired for the readability of written text. While Manatee County offers both door-to-door transportation for the visually impaired, as well as fixed route bus transportation, many passengers value the ability to travel independently and at their convenience, using the regular bus system. The new webpages make it easier for the visually impaired to retrieve bus schedule information and plan their trips. When preparing the new online schedules, the Transit Division worked closely with staff from the Lighthouse of Manasota, a community resource for the visually impaired community in Sarasota and Bradenton. The accessible bus route schedules are another example of the continuing effort on the part of Manatee County to build strong partnerships with community-based organizations for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.



Additional Transit Ticket Outlets

As part of an ongoing public-private partnership, MCAT bus passes are now available for purchase at the newest area Goodwill store, located at 3465 Cortez Road West in Bradenton. The Goodwill ticket outlets enhance access to the fixed-route service and complement the other ticket purchase options including the tickets-by-mail program and in-person ticket sales at MCAT Bus Transfer Stations.



EVALUATION OF *MANATEE CONNECT* GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are an integral part of any transportation plan because they provide the policy direction to achieve the community’s vision. As part of the planning process, goals, objectives, and policies were established in *Manatee Connect*. The resulting goals and objectives are consistent with the 10-year priorities and long-term improvements laid out in the plan which included operations, planning, policy and procedures, new technology, and capital and infrastructure priorities.

An assessment of MCAT’s goals, objectives, and policies, as outlined in *Manatee Connect*, was conducted as part of this progress report. Table 2-1 presents the goals and objectives, and policies for *Manatee Connect* and additional columns in the table document if the corresponding measure was achieved and/or is “in progress” and implemented over time.



Table 2-1: Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Goal 1 – Increase Ridership			
Objective 1.1	Increase the number of one-way, fixed-route passenger trips by an average of five percent annually, from 1.77 million in FY 2011/12 to 3.18 million in FY 2023/24.	In Progress	Ridership decreased by 6.4%, from 1,760,790 to 1,648,120 between FY 2015 and FY 2016. This trend is consistent with regional and national trends in transit ridership.
Policies for Objective 1.1			
Policy 1.1	Continue to operate and maintain existing service levels.	Yes	New fixed route service connecting to Pinellas County began in 2016. Due to low productivity, the Lakewood Ranch Boulevard area was removed from service coverage in November 2016.
Policy 1.2	Implement frequency, later service, and Sunday service priorities in the core service area consistent with high priorities identified in Manatee Connect.	In Progress	Improved frequency on Route 3, and restructuring of the three North County routes implemented in November 2016.
Policy 1.3	Implement new and expanded services based on level of service standards and operating characteristics outlined in the MCAT vision plan.	Yes	Fixed route service was expanded into Pinellas County via the <i>Skyway ConneXion</i> route, implemented on April 1, 2016.
Policy 1.4	Maintain/create APC system for tracking ridership and bus stop utilization data.	Yes	All APC hardware continues to function well providing daily ridership data for all bus stops in the fixed route system.
Policy 1.5	Evaluate and modify fixed-bus route service that falls below 75 percent of the system-wide average for passenger trips per revenue hour.	Ongoing	Transit planning staff conducts monthly evaluations of service levels and productivity. Statistics are reported to the BCC via a monthly Transit Division Dashboard Report. Service modifications for routes and trips that fall below 75% of the system-wide average implemented in FY 2017.
Policy 1.6	Coordinate with Sarasota County Area Transit staff in regard to improving service frequency on US 41.	In Progress	Service modifications on Route 99 which serves the U.S. Highway 41 corridor in both Sarasota and Manatee counties implemented on November 12, 2016 and these actions have improved on-time performance and system connectivity.
Policy 1.7	Establish partnerships with local institutions of higher education and/or major employers for pre-paid transit fares.	Yes	The BCC approved pre-paid fare agreements with the University of South Florida, Ringling College of Art & Design and New College of Florida for students to benefit from pre-paid fares. Bulk sale discounts continue to be available.
Policy 1.8	Track service levels in identified Title VI communities as they relate to passenger loads, vehicle assignments, service frequency, stop infrastructure, and transit access.	Yes	The Title VI report submitted in 2016 was approved by the FTA.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Policy 1.9	Conduct Comprehensive Operational Assessment of fixed-route services.	In Progress	A system-wide operations analysis of routes was conducted internally by Transit Planning staff using APC equipment. The Service Optimization and Restructuring Plan Phase I, was implemented November 12, 2016. Phase II, the Longboat Key Shuttle, began operation on April 15, 2017.
Goal 2 – Wide Urban and Suburban Coverage			
Objective 2.1	Maintain fixed-route service coverage for areas of Manatee County that have a population density of 2,000 people per square mile.	Yes	New fixed route service connecting to Pinellas County began in 2016. Due to low productivity, the Lakewood Ranch Boulevard area was removed from service coverage in November 2016.
Policies for Objective 2.1			
Policy 2.1	Continue to operate and maintain existing service levels.	Yes	Fixed Route service levels on the “core network” increased in FY 2016 including 30-minute service on Route 3 (Manatee Avenue.)
Policy 2.2	Implement frequency, later service, and Sunday service priorities in the core service area consistent with high priorities identified in Manatee Connect.	In Progress	Improved service frequency on Route 3 and restructured service in the northern part of Manatee County were implemented November 12, 2016.
Policy 2.3	Implement new and expanded services based on level of service standards and operating characteristics outlined in the MCAT Vision plan.	In Progress	Service expansion into Pinellas County was achieved by the <i>Skyway ConneXion</i> route, which began on April 1, 2016.
Policy 2.4	Complete feasibility studies for service to areas outside of the urban core such as Port Manatee, Rubonia, and/or Parrish in context with County planning activities.	Yes	The North County ConneXion, connecting Rubonia to Palmetto, was incorporated into regular weekday service, as part of an overall restructuring of routes north of the Manatee River, implemented in November 2016.
Policy 2.5	Continue to monitor and maintain involvement in County land use planning efforts.	Ongoing	Planning staff regularly participates in county land use and economic development efforts.
Policy 2.6	Participate and/or facilitate vanpool service to commuters and areas that do not meet population density standards.	In Progress	The Transit Division has reached out to FDOT District 1 and TBARTA to discuss opportunities for vanpools to areas with longer distance commutes and to areas outside of the MCAT service area.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Policy 2.7	Maintain countywide on-demand service coverage for qualified individuals consistent with the adopted Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan.	Yes	Because of limited operational resources, the daily allotment of Transportation Disadvantaged trips continues to be closely monitored in FY 2017. Two additional operators were incorporated into the on-demand mobility team in FY 2017 to stabilize weekday service levels. New income-based eligibility requirements will be implemented beginning August 1, 2017.
Goal 3 – Safe, Comfortable, and Attractive Services, Facilities, and Passenger Amenities			
Objective 3.1	Install shelters at the top 50 percent most active stops and benches at 75 percent of the most active stops by 2024.	In Progress	MCAT is proceeding with its bus stop amenities program. Work on several major corridors (US 41, Manatee Ave, Cortez Rd, US 301/10 th Street in Palmetto and 15 th Street East) is complete. To date, over 121 shelters have been installed along with 295 benches and trash cans, and these efforts continue.
Objective 3.2	Expend a minimum of \$100,000 on ADA compliant bus shelters and transit infrastructure each year through 2024.	In Progress	MCAT has implemented a comprehensive bus stop improvement program that addresses ADA compliance and passenger amenities system-wide.
Objective 3.3	Complete construction of the new administration and operations facility.	Yes	The Transit Division and Fleet Division moved into the new Manatee County Transit Fleet Facility building in November 2016.
Objective 3.4	Operate a fixed route fleet of vehicles with an average age of between 5 to 7 years each year through 2024.	Yes	The MCAT average vehicle age was 5.98 years in FY 2016. In FY 2016, the Transit Division received four new paratransit vehicles.
Objective 3.5	Improve run-time and on-time performance by 25 percent by 2024.	Ongoing	MCAT has calibrated the Automatic Passenger Counter (APC) devices on the entire fixed route fleet. The MCAT Planning Section monitors on-time performance by route/run on a monthly basis. Phase 1 of the Service Optimization & Restructuring Plan, implemented in November 2016, has improved system-wide on time performance by 10%.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Policies for Objectives 3.1 through 3.5			
Policy 3.1	Maintain and routinely update inventory of transit stops and stop infrastructure.	Ongoing	Consistent with changes made through the bus stop improvement program, MCAT is continually updating its amenity database of transit stops after completion of each “batch” of improvements.
Policy 3.2	Prioritize bus stop and facility improvements, including ADA enhancements, utilizing bus stop inventory.	Ongoing	Bus stop facility amenities and improvements are being made consistent with the MCAT bus stop amenities procedure. APC stop ridership data is now being utilized to prioritize stop amenities; and seating is provided at each bus stop once ADA upgrades are completed.
Policy 3.3	Continue implementation of stop amenity and rebranding plan.	Ongoing	MCAT continues to implement its comprehensive bus stop improvement, rebranding and refurbishment program; and refurbishment/rebranding of Stations is scheduled for FY 2018.
Policy 3.4	Complete ITS plan by 2014 to include assessment of ITS needs, costs, and programming for passenger information systems, AVL, video surveillance, and Wi-Fi technologies.	In Progress	An ITS Business Plan is complete and MCAT is working to implement projects and initiatives identified in that plan. MCAT is currently proceeding with an ITS procurement for a complete CAD/AVL system with predictive bus arrival information for customers.
Policy 3.5	Maintain and implement fleet inventory and replacement plan.	Ongoing	MCAT works closely with the County Fleet Management Division to ensure the Capital Asset Management Plan, including the fleet replacement plan, is consistently and effectively implemented; and revised as necessary.
Policy 3.6	Maintain capital asset inventory to ensure transit infrastructure and facilities are in a state of good repair.	Ongoing	County staff have completed a comprehensive capital asset management plan, which is incorporated into the TDP 10-Year Financial Plan.
Policy 3.7	Establish park and ride lots and remote transfer centers as needed in support of regional transportation efforts and in coordination with FDOT and other regional partners.	Yes	Park and Ride service concepts are utilized for the new <i>Skyway ConneXion</i> limited express RTS.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Goal 4 – Excellent Customer Service			
Objective 4.1	Reduce the number of complaints by one percent annually each year through 2024.	In Progress	MCAT has developed a Citizen Complaint database to track and address customer feedback. Quality assurance reviews are underway now for Handy Bus trips/customers and fixed-route services. A composite rating of 9.4 on a scale from 1-10 indicates excellence in daily Handy Bus service provision.
Policies for Objective 4.1			
Policy 4.1	Establish a procedure for obtaining and tracking customer feedback.	In Progress	MCAT has developed a Complaint database to track and address customer feedback. Quality assurance reviews continue for Handy Bus trips/customers. In addition, MCAT now uses social media to disseminate information and gather public comment.
Policy 4.2	Create a social media presence for MCAT to facilitate public comment and enhance community relations.	Yes	MCAT now has a Facebook and Twitter feed where interested persons can post comments. In addition, MCAT published four award-winning “How-To” videos on the County’s YouTube channel and the MCAT website. MCAT added special web pages for visually impaired customers to its website in 2017.
Policy 4.3	Provide public meeting notice of meetings and planning efforts through the county’s website, on-board buses, at stations, and through press releases.	Yes	Staff conducted a successful public outreach campaign for FY 2017 service modifications. Staff outreach included public workshops, direct customer outreach at transfer stations and an on-line survey instrument. A total of 102 people participated in the on-line survey about the proposed service modifications.
Goal 5 – An Environmentally Sound Transportation Alternative			
Objective 5.1	Reduce carbon footprint and fuel costs.	Ongoing	MCAT has incorporated cost-effective environmental impact mitigation technology, materials, and processes as part of its new Transit Fleet Facility project along with clean diesel technology and a select number of hybrid-electric buses for the Transit Fleet. Manatee County is now the first platinum certified green government in the State of Florida.
Policies for Objective 5.1			
Policy 5.1	Conduct financial assessment of fueling options for future bus procurements.	Ongoing	MCAT evaluated environmental concerns as part of the design of the Transit Fleet Facility and will continue to do so as part of any future vehicle procurements. The MCTFF has CNG fueling capability.
Policy 5.2	Continue to monitor and maintain involvement in county land use planning efforts that encourage transit-supportive land uses and redevelopment in core areas.	Ongoing	Transit planning staff regularly participates in county land use and economic development efforts.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Goal 6 – Increase the Profile of Transit			
Objective 6.1	Install shelters at the top 50 percent most active stops and benches at 75 percent of the most active stops by 2024.	In Progress	Consistent with changes made through the bus stop improvement program, MCAT is continually updating its amenity database(s) of transit stops after completion of each “batch” of ADA stop improvements.
Objective 6.2	Ensure that at least one MCAT representative is in attendance at all local and regional economic development, land use planning, and transportation planning meetings.	Ongoing	Transit planning staff regularly participates in county land use and economic development efforts.
Objective 6.3	Conduct a minimum of 10 public outreach and community involvement events each year through 2024.	Ongoing	Transit Division staff completed five outreach events related to the new service delivery model, the Longboat Key Shuttle, with staff and residents of Longboat Key.
Policies for Objectives 6.1 through 6.3			
Policy 6.1	Maintain and routinely update inventory of transit stops and stop infrastructure.	Ongoing	Transit Division staff coordinate new, removed, and/or relocated bus stops and regularly update the County’s City Works database and Google Transit data.
Policy 6.2	Prioritize bus stop and facility improvements, including ADA enhancements, utilizing bus stop inventory.	Ongoing	Consistent with changes made through the bus stop improvement program, MCAT is continually updating its amenity database(s) of transit stops after completion of each “batch” of ADA stop improvements.
Policy 6.3	Continue implementation of stop amenity and rebranding plan.	Yes	Bus stop facility amenities and improvements are being made consistent with the MCAT bus stop amenities procedure. APC stop ridership data is now being utilized to prioritize stop amenities.
Policy 6.4	Continue to coordinate with other transportation planning agencies in the county and region in regard to improving transportation system connectivity including neighboring transit agencies, TBARTA, the Sarasota/Manatee MPO, as well as public and neighborhood organizations within Manatee County.	Ongoing	Transit Division staff participate in MPO, TBARTA, and other regional transportation planning meetings and efforts. The recent Skyway ConneXion service improvement is effectively coordinated with PSTA, TBARTA, and the TBRPC.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Goal 7 – A Fiscally-Sound Transportation Alternative			
Objective 7.1	Maintain local support for the fixed-route bus service consistent with the Manatee Connect 10-year financial plan.	In Progress	An increase in fixed route in service levels occurred in FY 2016. The Transit Division is working with County Administration to fund implementation of FY 2018 (Route 6) service enhancements, and fund an Extra Board comprised of 16 Transit Operators in FY 2018.
Objective 7.2	Improve farebox recovery rate to 20 percent by 2024.	In Progress	A new fare structure was implemented October 2014 which contributed to an increase in farebox revenues. Cumulative fixed route, trolley, and paratransit revenues are higher in FY 2015 than in the two previous fiscal years. Without including the Anna Maria Island Trolley, cumulative fixed route farebox recovery reached 18% in FY 2016.
Objective 7.3	Maintain increase to operating costs per revenue hour to less than 5 percent of the FY 2012 cost of \$73.67 through 2024.	Ongoing	In FY 2015, MCAT changed the way costs and operating expenses are reported, adding additional expense categories including preventative maintenance to the cost of operating expenses. Those changes are reflected in an increase in operating costs as calculated in FY 2016 NTD to \$86.89 per revenue hour for fixed route service.
Policies for Objectives 7.1 through 7.3			
Policy 7.1	Continue to actively participate in the county budget process through the development of annual performance reports that include relevant financial measures and trends for transit service.	Ongoing	Transit Division staff provides monthly ridership and revenue reports to County Administration to report on the performance of the fixed-route service and is actively involved in the FY 2017/18 budget process. The possible addition of 16 new operator positions to serve as the fixed route and handy bus Extra Board will reduce division overtime costs and staff burnout.



Table 2-1 (continued): Manatee Connect Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Objective/ Policy	Description	Implemented (Yes/No)	Assessment
Policy 7.2	Conduct a fare policy assessment which includes an evaluation of current fares, fare collection policies, and also the opportunity for advanced fare collection technologies.	Yes	A Fare Study was completed in December 2013. Recommendations from the study received BCC approval in June 2014 and a new fare structure for the fixed-route service was implemented in October 2014. Universal Pass, or U-Pass agreements are in place now with USF, Ringling College and New College; these agreements promote lump sum, pre-paid fare revenues. A new \$10 unlimited ride daily pass is currently in use for <i>Skyway ConneXion</i> passengers. A pre-paid fare program is now in place for on-demand, paratransit users.
Policy 7.3	Submit grant applications/requests for capital and operating funding available through federal, state, and local sources.	Ongoing	County staff continue to apply annually for FTA Section 5310 and Section 5307/5339 funds to provide for new and replacement vehicles and other capital needs. Two new service development grants were approved by FDOT for FY 2016 services. In addition, Manatee County was awarded a CTD grant for a new bus pass program for TD-eligible individuals to increase indigent care access to area Medical Clinics using fixed route service.
Policy 7.4	Conduct Comprehensive Operational Assessment of fixed-route services.	In Progress	The comprehensive analysis of fixed routes conducted internally by Transit Planning staff using APC equipment is now complete. This comprehensive assessment effort is known as the Service Optimization and Restructuring Plan. The first phase of that plan was implemented on November 12, 2016 and the second phase was implemented in April 2017.



Section 3: Phased Implementation and Financial Plans

The purpose of *Manatee Connect*, Manatee County’s 10-year Transit Development Plan (TDP), is to provide direction for transit service improvements in Manatee County. This direction was developed through extensive public outreach and consideration of the 25- Year long-range Vision Plan for transit, land use and growth projections, and past performance of transit service in Manatee County. The resulting plan consisted of a 10-year phased implementation plan. Progress on the implementation of service improvements and expansion in the 10-year plan, along with an updated implementation and financial plan, is included in this section.

MANATEE CONNECT 10-YEAR PHASED IMPLEMENTATION AND FINANCIAL PLAN

For the 10-Year Plan horizon, a three-phased implementation plan is outlined in *Manatee Connect* for service improvements that were high priorities and that satisfy weekday and peak period ridership demand, while serving key growth areas. The 10-year implementation plan is presented in Table 3-1. *Manatee Connect* service improvements can be categorized into two different areas: improvements to existing service and service area expansion. Improvements to existing service include enhancing frequency, adding later service hours, and adding service on Sundays for key routes. Enhancing frequency and expanding the service area require increased operational funding and capital funding required for the purchase of new buses. Adding later service hours and Sunday service primarily involves using the existing fleet and adding service hours for enhanced operations. Service alternatives under each category considered local plans and policies, existing land uses, and were vetted extensively through the public outreach process in 2013 and 2014.

As indicated in Section 2 of this report, substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the 10-year implementation plan. Progress on Phase I and Phase II service improvements includes:

- The award-winning *Skyway ConneXion* service was implemented on April 1, 2016.
- Service enhancements identified through the optimization and efficiency analysis included improved frequency on Route 3/Manatee Avenue from 60 minutes to 30 minutes as well as various service efficiency, on-time performance improvements. Those improvements are summarized in Section 2 of this report.
- A new curb to curb, reservation-based service, The Longboat Key Shuttle, was implemented on April 15, 2017 to replace the Longboat Key Trolley. The Shuttle service operates on Longboat Key between Bay Isles Parkway and Coquina Beach.
- Staff continues to work to find ways to improve frequency on Route 6. Route 6/Cortez Road continues to be a vital “core network” route.



- The most recently adopted MPO Priority Projects report includes the US 41 Multi-Modal Enhancement Corridor (MMEC) project which will fund the fleet expansion needed to improve service frequency on Route 99 to 20 minutes.

**Table 3-1
Manatee Connect Implementation Plan**

Proposed Improvement	Description	Proposed Year	Days of Service
Phase 1³			
SR 70 Extension/Route 6	New service along SR 70 east corridor	2015	Monday - Saturday
Manatee Ave on Route 3	Improve frequency to 30 minutes/Extend service hours	2016	Monday - Saturday
Lakewood Ranch	New service in Lakewood Ranch	2017	Monday - Friday
Phase 2			
Route 6/Cortez Rd	Improve frequency to 30 minutes/Extend service hours	2017	Monday - Saturday
Route 99	Improve frequency to 20 minutes/Extend service hours	2021	Monday - Saturday
Phase 3			
Sunday Service ¹	Add Sunday service on high performing routes with 60 minute frequency	2020	Sunday
Evening Service ²	Extend service hours on feeder routes	2021	Monday - Friday

¹ Sunday service includes a 9 hour service span for higher performing routes

² Additional service span is 1.5 hours per weekday per route

³ The 6 vehicles required for Phase 1 are included in existing fleet



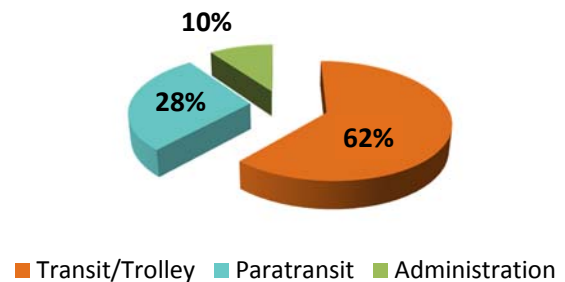
TEN-YEAR MANATEE CONNECT COSTS AND REVENUES

Capital and operating costs and revenues in this progress report are consistent with the information and assumptions prepared for *Manatee Connect*. All key assumptions are documented in the 2013 Major Update report. Cost estimates in *Manatee Connect* are based on a wide variety of data, including professional experience, recent procurements, peer agency costs, NTD data, trend information and analysis, fleet planning, and discussions with Transit Management staff. Revenue projections take into account capital and operating revenue from several sources, including state and federal grants, allocated county general fund, passenger fares, and advertising sales.

Every year, MCAT operates using a fiscally constrained, balanced budget to provide a basic level of transit service for Manatee County. The FY 2017 adopted operating budget for MCAT is shown in Table 3-2. That table illustrates the distribution of costs among the three major operating budget categories, transit/trolley operations, paratransit operations, and agency administration and is inclusive of depreciation and in house transfers. The table below does not include preventative maintenance costs.

Table 3-2
MCAT FY 2017 Adopted Operating Budget

Category	Operating Cost
Transit Operations	\$ 3,886,534
AMI Trolley	\$ 1,018,572
Longboat Key Trolley	\$ 303,820
Transit/Trolley	\$ 5,208,926
Paratransit	\$ 2,391,979
Administration	\$ 838,814
MCAT Total	\$ 8,439,719



The updated *Manatee Connect* 10-year Financial Plan for this TDP Progress Report is shown in Table 3-3. Revisions to the FY 2015 *Manatee Connect* financial plan are based upon County operating expenses, existing state and federal grant awards, the MCAT capital asset plan, fully-allocated operating costs, and revenue growth assumptions. A balanced operating budget is reflected in the first two years of the plan assuming continued funding from the County’s Transportation Trust Fund. Shortfalls in operating are due to two reasons, cost escalation rates exceeding revenue escalation rates and the full expenditure of Route 3 FDOT Service Development funding in FY 2019. MCAT staff is working to reconcile operating shortfalls in future years using a combination of local and state revenue services and repurposing existing services. Shortfalls on the capital side are due to the Phase II expansion of the Transit Fleet Facility. However, the capital project cannot move forward without the County securing a discretionary grant.

**Table 3-3
Manatee Connect 10-Year Financial Projection**

Cost/Revenue	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Totals***
Operating												
Costs												
Maintain Existing Fixed-Route	\$7,329,000	\$7,441,000	\$7,589,000	\$7,741,000	\$7,896,000	\$8,054,000	\$8,215,000	\$8,379,000	\$8,547,000	\$8,718,000	\$8,892,000	\$81,472,000
Maintain Paratransit Service	\$2,358,000	\$2,405,000	\$2,453,000	\$2,502,000	\$2,552,000	\$2,603,000	\$2,655,000	\$2,708,000	\$2,763,000	\$2,818,000	\$2,874,000	\$26,333,000
Service/Frequency Improvements	\$459,000	\$468,000	\$477,000	\$493,000	\$505,000	\$515,000	\$526,000	\$536,000	\$547,000	\$558,000	\$569,000	\$5,194,000
Total Costs*	\$10,146,000	\$10,314,000	\$10,519,000	\$10,736,000	\$10,953,000	\$11,172,000	\$11,396,000	\$11,623,000	\$11,857,000	\$12,094,000	\$12,335,000	\$112,999,000
Revenues												
Federal for Operating (5307 & 5310)	\$652,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$5,152,000
State Funding (Corridor/Service Development Grants)	\$643,000	\$649,000	\$655,000	\$433,000	\$440,000	\$446,000	\$453,000	\$460,000	\$467,000	\$474,000	\$481,000	\$4,958,000
State Operating Funds (Block Grant)	\$885,000	\$929,000	\$960,000	\$1,008,000	\$1,058,000	\$1,111,000	\$1,128,000	\$1,145,000	\$1,162,000	\$1,179,000	\$1,197,000	\$10,877,000
Transfer from Transportation Trust Fund	\$5,194,000	\$5,423,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$5,541,000	\$55,292,000
Miscellaneous Revenues (Advertising, Fuel Tax, Etc.)	\$792,000	\$804,000	\$816,000	\$828,000	\$840,000	\$853,000	\$866,000	\$879,000	\$892,000	\$905,000	\$919,000	\$8,602,000
Transportation Disadvantaged	\$578,000	\$586,000	\$595,000	\$604,000	\$613,000	\$622,000	\$632,000	\$641,000	\$651,000	\$661,000	\$671,000	\$6,276,000
Fare Revenue	\$1,402,000	\$1,423,000	\$1,452,000	\$1,482,000	\$1,512,000	\$1,542,000	\$1,573,000	\$1,605,000	\$1,637,000	\$1,670,000	\$1,703,000	\$15,599,000
Total Revenues	\$10,146,000	\$10,314,000	\$10,519,000	\$10,396,000	\$10,504,000	\$10,615,000	\$10,693,000	\$10,771,000	\$10,850,000	\$10,930,000	\$11,012,000	\$106,604,000
Revenues Minus Costs	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$340,000)	(\$449,000)	(\$557,000)	(\$703,000)	(\$852,000)	(\$1,007,000)	(\$1,164,000)	(\$1,323,000)	
Rollover from Prev. Year	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$340,000)	(\$789,000)	(\$1,346,000)	(\$2,049,000)	(\$2,901,000)	(\$3,908,000)	(\$5,072,000)	
Surplus/Shortfall**	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$340,000)	(\$789,000)	(\$1,346,000)	(\$2,049,000)	(\$2,901,000)	(\$3,908,000)	(\$5,072,000)	(\$6,395,000)	
Capital												
Costs												
Vehicle Replacement for Existing Service	\$1,334,294	\$1,730,563	\$640,211	\$787,460	\$3,273,815	\$3,338,912	\$3,289,254	\$2,441,527	\$2,620,333	\$833,175	\$936,043	\$21,225,587
New Operations and Maintenance Facility (Phase II)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,060,624	\$8,448,558	\$10,824,715		\$21,333,897
Preventative Maintenance	\$1,750,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	\$16,750,000
Infrastructure, Technology and Planning	\$1,004,238	\$2,948,011	\$2,031,870	\$1,487,488	\$1,000,813	\$893,629	\$1,179,942	\$2,903,901	\$1,453,690	\$1,590,968	\$932,214	\$17,426,764
Total Costs	\$4,088,532	\$6,178,574	\$4,172,081	\$3,774,948	\$5,774,628	\$5,732,541	\$5,969,196	\$8,906,052	\$14,022,581	\$14,748,858	\$3,368,257	\$76,736,248
Revenues												
Federal 5307 for Capital	\$3,480,000	\$3,539,700	\$3,600,296	\$3,661,800	\$3,724,227	\$3,787,590	\$3,851,904	\$3,917,183	\$3,983,440	\$4,050,692	\$4,118,952	\$41,715,785
Federal 5339 for Capital	\$395,000	\$400,925	\$406,939	\$413,043	\$419,239	\$425,527	\$431,910	\$438,389	\$444,965	\$451,639	\$458,414	\$4,685,989
Federal 5307 & 5309 Carryover	\$7,542,849	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,542,849
Federal 5310****	\$659,402	\$329,701	\$337,580	\$333,640	\$335,610	\$334,625	\$335,117	\$334,871	\$334,994	\$334,933	\$334,964	\$4,005,437
Total Revenue	\$12,077,251	\$4,270,326	\$4,344,814	\$4,408,483	\$4,479,075	\$4,547,743	\$4,618,932	\$4,690,443	\$4,763,399	\$4,837,264	\$4,912,330	\$57,950,060
Revenue Minus Cost	\$7,988,719	(\$1,908,248)	\$172,732	\$633,535	(\$1,295,552)	(\$1,184,799)	(\$1,350,264)	(\$4,215,609)	(\$9,259,182)	(\$9,911,594)	\$1,544,073	
Rollover from Prev. Year		\$7,988,719	\$6,080,471	\$6,253,203	\$6,886,738	\$5,591,186	\$4,406,387	\$3,056,123	(\$1,159,486)	(\$10,418,668)	(\$20,330,262)	
Surplus/Shortfall	\$7,988,719	\$6,080,471	\$6,253,203	\$6,886,738	\$5,591,186	\$4,406,387	\$3,056,123	(\$1,159,486)	(\$10,418,668)	(\$20,330,262)	(\$18,786,189)	

*Total operating costs plus preventative maintenance are consistent with NTD totals and reporting and exclude depreciation and in-house transfers.

**A balanced budget is reflected in the first three years using Transportation Trust Fund funding.

***Capital totals reflect 11-year totals (FY 17 - FY 27) in order to account for grant carryover balances.

****Includes FY 16 award and FY 17 request.



CONCLUSIONS

Over the past year, Manatee County continues to make substantial progress on implementing the priorities with respect to the adopted 10-Year Major TDP Update, *Manatee Connect*, adopted in 2013. Key accomplishments include:

- Implementation of a new Regional Transit Service, the *Skyway ConneXion*, providing weekday service to St. Petersburg along with a new limited stop/express fare structure and daily unlimited use bus pass to effectively serve passengers.
- Service and calibration of APC equipment for the entire fixed-route transit fleet, and a pilot ITS project using the APC GPS system, and approval to utilize APC equipment for required NTD reporting to the FTA.
- Implementation of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of a comprehensive Service Optimization and Restructuring Plan developed using APC operating and ridership information. The implementation of the plan includes service frequency improvements for “core network” routes; specifically Route 3 (Manatee Avenue/SR 64) and Route 6 (Cortez Road/SR 684).
- Implementation of Wi-Fi access at the Downtown Transfer Station.
- Public roll out of a new Manatee County/Transit Web Page with updated passenger information and four award-winning, “How To” instructional videos.
- Continuation of the Bus Stop Upgrade/Passenger Amenity Program including ADA bus stop enhancements; completion of stop improvements along all primary and several secondary transit route corridors.
- Completion and move-in to the new Transit Fleet Facility on US Highway 301 in southern Manatee County.
- Launch of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology for paratransit service passengers, including *Longboat Key Shuttle* passengers.
- Initiation of an award winning pre-paid fare program for paratransit passenger; and pre-paid, lump sum fare Agreements with unlimited access for fixed route passengers at USF, Ringling and New College (U-Pass).
- New, innovative recruitment and training programs to attract new Bus Operators.
- Approval to proceed with an “Extra Board” comprised of 16 Transit Operators, which ensures daily pullout and service delivery; and a consultant review of compensation and wage scale progressions to retain operators in the long term.

The 10-year TDP was created to ensure that limited public funds are being allocated in the most efficient way possible and to ensure that investment is still reflective of the values of the people of Manatee County. Continued diligence and service optimization efforts ensure that MCAT continues to provide the highest possible value to county taxpayers/residents and visitors. Execution of the phased TDP implementation plan will assist the agency in achieving those objectives. As MCAT services continue to expand in a phased,



measured, incremental, and cost effective approach, the full vision for Manatee County/MCAT can be achieved over the course of time, thereby enhancing economic development and the agency's overall value to the community.