

LeeTran Transit Development Plan - 2020 Major Update

Public Workshop Questions & Answers

August 2020

Question: *What is the best way to measure transit efficiency? Is it how long it takes a passenger to get from Point A to Point B?*

Answer: By virtue of all the various data that are generated by the provision of fixed-route bus service, there are many performance metrics that transit agencies can and do use to track the effectiveness and efficiency with which they provide their services. When you think about efficiency in particular, the intent is to measure whether resources are being expended productively. Such measures usually include a ratio of some measure of service utilization (like passenger trips) in comparison to a measure of resource utilization (like operating cost or revenue hours of service).

LeeTran typically measures its transit service efficiency by how many passenger trips its service can provide for every dollar the agency spends on that service, and how many trips are taken per every hour that its buses are in service picking up passengers. Because transit agencies always answer to some sort of policy board, these are the most critical measures that are brought up when discussing how effectively an agency is providing its services over time in comparison to its overall budget requirements.

How long it takes a rider to get from point A to point B is yet another important metric when one looks at transit service, but it is important to keep in mind that its focus is from the perspective of the rider, so it is not typically used by transit agencies as a measure of service efficiency. It generally speaks to the quality of the service being provided by an agency, and often is reliant on the availability of sufficient resources to ensure appropriate service levels that will support shorter travel times. However, it is important to recognize that all of an agency's metrics must be considered when assessing performance as they are usually interconnected and often dependent on local policy decisions. Basically, provision of an effective and efficient bus service typically will lead to an overall better quality of service for riders.

Question: *Why are the Routes 240 and 600 not synchronized to enable transfers?*

Answer: It is LeeTran's ongoing goal to maximize transfers when the operational conditions are available. Currently, Routes 240 and 600 have different travel lengths, causing their respective schedules to be uncoordinated with one another. Because of this operational difficulty, LeeTran plans to combine these two routes to remove the transfer altogether. Not only will service improve for riders of the combined routing, the new alignment also will enable every third Route 240/600 vehicle to meet with a Route 140 vehicle, thereby facilitating other transfer opportunities. LeeTran recognizes that this realignment affects the connections with Collier Area Transit (CAT) routes with 90-minute headways. However, with this change, LeeTran is listening to public input and striving to achieve its goal of improving frequency. CAT is working on its TDP and the agency's goal is to improve connectivity and frequency of its routes and connection to LeeTran's Route 600.

Question: Would LeeTran extend the Route 110 to E 12th St. and Joel Blvd. every other hour on Sundays?

Answer: While LeeTran could extend the Route 110 to cover the Route 515 service on Sundays without adding vehicles, this operational design would negatively affect the “cycle time” of Route 110, which is the amount of time it takes for the route to make its full round trip. With a longer round trip, the route’s headway (the interval of time between consecutive buses moving in the same direction on a route) would be impacted so that the route could not keep its current frequency of service. The trade-off is that the additional coverage for Route 110 on Sunday would increase the wait time for the route on each trip. Therefore, LeeTran is prioritizing the Route 110’s frequency over the additional coverage for Route 515 on Sundays.

Question: Would LeeTran build a transfer location on Alico Road for the Routes 50, 60, and 515?

Answer: There are changes proposed for all of these routes that will make such a transfer opportunity unnecessary. First, LeeTran is planning to realign the Routes 50 and 60 to remove the need for a transfer. Specifically, the COA recommends combining Route 50 with the Ben Hill Griffin Parkway portion of Route 60. Moreover, LeeTran also has targeted the San Carlos Park area for Mobility-on-Demand (or MOD) service. A key benefit of this proposed realignment is that it will enable customers in the San Carlos Park and Florida Gulf Coast University areas to travel to the Southwest Florida International Airport without going to US 41 first. Additionally, an MOD zone is being considered for Lehigh Acres, which would replace the existing Route 515.

However, even if the Route 515 were to continue to operate as is, extending the route to Alico Road would significantly increase the route’s wait times. The 40-mile round trip from Lehigh Acres to Alico Road would create at least a three-hour wait time for every Route 515 vehicle. Given that a major goal of LeeTran is to reduce wait times and overall travel times, such a change would not be reasonable. It also would require the addition of more resources (i.e., buses) to accommodate the longer alignment and LeeTran does not have the necessary funding to add vehicles at this time.

Question: Can we change the railroad line in Lee County to a local tram service with bike paths on either side? It may be a great way to connect the north and south of the county.

Answer: The rail line in question is most likely the Seminole Gulf Railway, and more specifically its Fort Myers Line, which runs north and south between Arcadia and Naples. This short-line regional railroad is primarily used for freight transport and passenger excursions (like the Murder Mystery Dinner Train out of Fort Myers). This is an interesting question as the rail line has been the subject of study for potential transit use going back at least 15 years. In 2005, as part of its Long-Range Transportation Plan update, the Lee MPO examined the feasibility of a 15-mile segment of the corridor (from Downtown Fort Myers to Corkscrew Road) for transit service. The study examined various rail modes ranging from heavy rail, to commuter rail, to light rail. It also looked at potential bus-oriented services, like BRT and trolley services. Based on the planning-level feasibility analysis that was conducted, in the future (by 2030) it was recommended to pursue implementation of a busway in the rail corridor that would support BRT service.

A subsequent rail study completed by the MPO in 2013 also determined that the rail corridor was feasible for transit service. Even though it concluded that commuter rail, light rail, BRT, and a multi-use pathway would all be viable alternatives, it did not recommend a specific mode and left that for future studies. Instead, this study strongly recommended that the public sector take steps to preserve the corridor for future transportation use. Then, in 2015, the MPO updated its Long-Range Transportation Plan to the 2040 horizon year, and in its transit element, it indicated a need for passenger rail service in the corridor.

Most recently, in 2017, the City of Bonita Springs and Village of Estero lobbied for State funds to turn the rail corridor into a multi-use trail. So, though there are no definite plans in place for the conversion of the rail line, there has been a lot of interest for many years to use this resource to help meet transportation needs in the community. We would expect that, as local growth continues and north-south corridors like US 41 continue to become more congested, at some point, the County and other stakeholders like FDOT may see merit in pursuing such a resource for future transit growth.

Question: Can you address our concern about our veterans riding for such a long time on the bus if they live south of Veterans Parkway in the Cape? It may take 2 hours for them to get to the VA Clinic on Diplomat.

Answer: The proposed changes to the network will provide persons south of Veterans Parkway who are en route to the VA Clinic with new transportation opportunities. The realigned Route 40 will provide access along Chiquita Boulevard between Cape Coral Parkway and 32nd Street, and along 32nd Street from Chiquita Boulevard to Santa Barbara Boulevard, and along Santa Barbara Boulevard from 32nd Street to the Walmart Neighborhood Market on Pine Island Road/Bayshore Road. From here, riders can transfer to an on-demand service directly to the VA Clinic. A Mobility-on-Demand service zone is proposed for North Fort Myers, including the VA Clinic, that will allow the general public to obtain on-demand service within the zone, including connections to the fixed-route bus network. This is an efficient way to extend the coverage of the fixed-route network and provide greater access to mobility, especially for persons who are not close to a bus route. In addition, the new route network proposed adds additional service and connections to Route 70, which provides service to the commercial activities at Pine Island Road and North Cleveland Avenue, and continues into the Rosa Parks Transit Center downtown. Also recommended is an extension of service along Pine Island Road/Bayshore Road from the Walmart Neighborhood Market to the Publix Shopping Center at Eagle Landing. Furthermore, the new network will also provide a direct route connecting Suncoast Estates to the Rosa Parks Transit Center in downtown.

Question: What about service in NW and NE in Cape Coral? The closest bus stop are in Pine Island Road. Also, why only one day of service to Matlacha and Pine Island?

Answer: Generally due to sprawled development patterns and lower densities, the northern areas of Cape Coral and Pine Island have been difficult to serve with fixed-route bus service historically. For example, one analysis in the TDP to determine transit need based on presence of key demographic characteristics within an area showed these areas as having medium to low transit propensity with very low densities (population below 1,000 people per square mile). This is why current service to Pine Island, for example, runs only on Thursdays off a manifest and operates only if a rider requests a ride. Based on LeeTran ridership data, in 2019, the Pine Island route (Route 160) only had nine trips in the month of December.

While this is insufficient ridership to warrant the use of fixed-route bus service, it can support Mobility-on-Demand (MOD) service, which is why a large portion of northern Cape Coral is recommended for an MOD zone that will operate in an area generally bordered by Del Prado Boulevard N to the north, Chiquita Boulevard N to the west, Pine Island Road to the south, and Slater Road to the east. Along with an MOD zone in Cape Coral centered around Del Prado Boulevard, access to transit will increase in this area.

Unfortunately, the level of transit use exhibited by Pine Island over the years makes even the provision of MOD service difficult. Residents in areas such as Pine Island may be eligible for the transportation-disadvantaged program.

Question: Why do the Routes 20 and 100 both travel on Marsh Avenue?

Answer: A transit agency can enhance the density of service it provides along a major corridor by placing two or more routes along that corridor and offsetting the schedules to effectively create a more frequent overall coverage. In the case of LeeTran, by using two routes to cover the same street, the agency is able to reduce the wait times on Marsh Avenue. However, as Lee County has grown, the population has shifted. As a result, both routes do not have the same productivity as when they were originally planned and implemented. Thus, the COA has recommended straightening the Route 100, so that it travels only on Palm Beach Boulevard. Although the Route 100 will remain on Palm Beach Boulevard, modified versions of Routes 10, 15, and 20 will provide service to the area.

Question: Would LeeTran build a transfer location near Michigan Avenue and Marsh Avenue?

Answer: This suggestion makes sense given the number of routes currently serving these corridors. However, the COA suggests reducing the duplicate services that currently operate along Michigan Avenue and Marsh Avenue because the level of resources being used there is not necessary. Nonetheless, with the proposed changes, riders still will be able to expect regular, frequent service on both Michigan and Marsh. So, rather than constructing an additional facility in this area, LeeTran is focusing more attention on its existing Rosa Parks Transportation Center. In fact, LeeTran is adding more bus bays and making significant interior improvements to this facility within the next three years.

Question: Why is Coralwood Mall a major transfer center, but not the Cape Coral Hospital?

Answer: Officially, neither the Coralwood Mall nor the Cape Coral Hospital is a major transfer center for LeeTran service. Rather, both facilities are transfer locations. While multiple LeeTran routes may serve them, neither has sufficient infrastructure to support such a designation. LeeTran's only major transfer center in Cape Coral is the Cape Coral Transfer Center located on SE 47th Terrace.

However, in the future, should another transfer center be warranted on the Cape, it is likely that, of these two locations, Coralwood Mall would better serve this purpose as it is conveniently located near a major intersection with regional significance due to proximity to the Midpoint Bridge. Moreover, LeeTran's objective is to reduce the number of smaller, private parking lots in which it facilitates transfers. So, although it is an attractor for ridership, Cape Coral Hospital would not be a preferred transfer location.

Question: Instead of worrying about 10 years from now would it not be better to improve current service?

Answer: The transit agencies that tend to have the best understanding of their service areas and continuously serve their constituents well over time are those that successfully plan for the future on a regular basis. This is the key benefit of the TDP process as it affords LeeTran an opportunity to adjust its mobility vision every few years as Lee County continues to grow and evolve. However, it also would be shortsighted for a transit agency to ignore the needs of today because it is constantly keeping its eye only on the future. This is why LeeTran recognized the importance of conducting both a COA and TDP concurrently, so the agency's plans would not sacrifice the improvement of current service for future enhancement, and vice versa.

As you have seen in the presentation, LeeTran's TDP proposes two phases of improvements, one immediately within 0 to 2 years and then another to cover years 3 through 10 of the decade-long plan. And, even though there is still some prioritization to do to formulate the final implementation plan, currently the TDP's draft plan recommends all proposed improvements for implementation between the end of this year and 2030, assuming the necessary additional financial resources become available. So, riders and other potential users will not need to wait 10 years to see benefits.

Question: Would microtransit cost more in operations than fixed-route bus? Isn't the 42 square mile area of service originally conceived now considered to be too large of an area to service, even with two buses?

Answer: First, one must consider the issue of zone size. The service area and the specific operating requirements for the MOD service initially proposed in Lehigh Acres have been identified at a high level for the purpose of submitting a service development grant application to the Florida Department of Transportation for this service. The actual service zone delineation will be defined when funding is identified, as will be the actual operating requirements. The service area and the number of vehicles needed by time of day will depend on both the density of demand and the MOD service model (point-to-point, point-to-hub, etc.), the proposed response times, and the algorithms used to manage the operation.

Now, as for cost, based on the high-level planning analysis completed for the grant application, the proposed MOD would cost less than the current Route 515. This is primarily due to the following factors:

1. Creating a better fit between service demand by time of day and service supplied, rather than operating all day long;
2. Being able to use the lower cost paratransit hourly operating cost rate; and
3. Creating optimized shared-ride solutions to maintain high productivity levels.

Question: Does LeeTran favor having all of its routes run on "clocktime," and would it make it easier to synchronize routes if they were in fact on "clocktime?"

Answer: In transit planning, using "clockface" scheduling means having routes run at consistent intervals, so that buses meet up at major transfer locations at the same time and usually in conjunction with the major minute designations of a clock, like at :10 or :15 minute increments. If the routes in a system were to

have 30-minute frequency and clockface scheduling, coordinated routes would connect at transfer centers at times like 9:00 am, 9:30 am, 10:00 am, and so forth. This helps facilitate transferring and makes it much easier for riders to memorize the bus schedules.

The operating improvements recommended in the COA for LeeTran do include shifting a number of routes to more clockface schedules. Since this often requires investment in frequency improvements, this cannot be achieved in most cases within the agency's existing budget. Over the service improvement period, it is proposed that all LeeTran routes eventually will be shifted to clockface. As noted, while the clockface scheduling will help make services and schedules easier for riders and operators, as well as improve connections between routes at key transfer points, it is important to recognize that this does not mean that all routes will meet at precise times at all bus stops where transfers may occur.

Question: Will LeeTran consider adding to Route 60 to better serve the apartments that are being built on Three Oaks between Alico and Corkscrew Roads?

Answer: Because of the growth of FGCU and the numerous retail and commercial establishments in the surrounding area, the residential growth occurring along Ben Hill Griffin Parkway between Alico and Corkscrew is significant. Even though the COA proposes to eliminate Route 60, it recommends replacing it with a refined Route 50 that will serve the airport, FGCU, and the area between Alico Road south to Corkscrew Road. In addition, a Mobility-on-Demand zone overlay has been proposed that will serve the area east of Tamiami Trail to east of FGCU from Alico Road to the north and Corkscrew Road to the south. LeeTran anticipates that this combination of streamlined fixed-route bus service and the MOD service will significantly improve mobility in this area.

Question: How do you decide where to add more bus transit or where you want to improve how many times buses run every hour? Especially in areas like the area east of US 41 in North Fort Myers.

Answer: LeeTran planning staff regularly collect and analyze transit data to identify where public transportation services are needed in Lee County and the level of services that are needed in the different areas. Some more suburban and rural areas may need only limited services, while busier corridors like US 41 in North Fort Myers may need services with a lot more frequency due to high demand for transit.

In addition to regularly assessing where to provide service and at what level, LeeTran also conducts planning studies, like the TDP, and efficiency assessments, like the COA, from time to time to examine its routes and network more in depth. These studies analyze a lot of data and also engage the community to ask riders and other stakeholders where they see that additional demand may warrant service. Hence, it is an ongoing, thorough, and concerted effort so that LeeTran can make sure its services are provided where they will best meet existing demand and need, and at the levels possible given existing resources.

As far as services in the eastern portion of North Fort Myers, this TDP's needs plan proposes to enhance the services in this area. Both current Routes 590 and 595 are proposed for realignment to better serve the area. It also is proposed to have this area served by an app-based Mobility-on-Demand transit. Additionally, the updated Route 590 now will connect the area to the Rosa Parks Transportation Center, instead of only circulating in North Fort Myers.

Question: Will the TropiCard be integrated with Google Pay and Apple Wallet?

Answer: This question is related to LeeTran’s new farebox project that will enable customers to use new smart cards and a mobile app to pay their fares. Unfortunately, the pandemic has delayed the implementation of the new system. The new LeeTran smart card, called TropiCard, will not be integrated with Google Play or Apple Wallet, as it will require a complete reconfiguration of the new smart card software as well as upgraded smart card reader software for each of the new fareboxes. However, Genfare (the farebox system vendor) is working to add open payment capabilities. At that point, the new fareboxes will be able to accept credit cards directly. Google Pay and Apple Wallet are in development and will be available at later phases for mobile passes only.

In the meantime, LeeTran’s new farebox system will include a mobile app, called LeeFare, which customers will be able to use to purchase fare products any time and then use them on the bus via mobile fare payment. Moreover, customers preferring to use the smart card feature will be able to load the TropiCard online and at ticket vending machines that will be conveniently located at the major transfer centers. In addition to TropiCard and the LeeFare mobile fare payment app, passengers desiring to do so still will be able to pay their fare using cash. The new fareboxes will speed up boarding and provide a streamlined, contactless way to pay your fare. LeeTran will offer a 90-day exchange period, allowing customers to trade in their existing fare media for a new TropiCard with the matching fare free.

Question: How are these maps connected with the bicycle/pedestrian networks?

Answer: In terms of the TDP process, early on, what is called a baseline conditions analysis is conducted to examine demographics and other local data to help better understand the area within which LeeTran operates its services. As part of this process, existing bicycle- and pedestrian-related infrastructure in the service area is reviewed to see how current sidewalks and trails correlate with transit routing. Bicycle and pedestrian connectivity to transit is critical as these are the two alternative modes most used by riders to access the bus in Lee County and throughout Florida. Because of this relationship between these modes, LeeTran prioritizes connections to the existing bicycle and pedestrian network. Agency staff clearly understand the importance of this infrastructure for the overall mobility needs of customers. In fact, in LeeTran’s most recent bus stop improvements, staff have built connections to the surrounding shared use paths and sidewalks, as well as provided bicycle storage racks. Moreover, for all new bus purchases, LeeTran is increasing the number of bike rack spots on the bus from two to three.

Question: Do the micro-transit trips to the bus line count as additional trip/mileage that can be reported in the NTD for a future impact of a bigger share of the operational funding?

Answer: The NTD refers to the National Transit Database, a repository for a wide variety of transit data developed and maintained by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). It was initially set up back in the late 1970s after a Congressional mandate in 1974 to collect and track data about the financial, operating, and asset conditions of transit systems in the US. The NTD is designed specifically to support local, state, and regional planning efforts related to transit and enable governments and other decision-makers to examine transit data over time and across modes and/or agencies. Transit agencies that receive federal funds through FTA grants under the Urbanized Area Formula Program (§5307) or Other than Urbanized Area (Rural) Formula Program (§5311) must submit a prescribed set of data annually to the NTD. FTA then uses specific measures from the current data, like passenger trips, to help determine the following year’s

funding for each agency. Given the importance of this source of revenue to transit agencies, including LeeTran, it is critical for them to regularly submit their data and keep track of how changes in service may impact future year revenues.

This question specifically gets at this last issue and is asking whether a switch to MOD service in some Lee County areas with fixed route will still allow the reporting of passenger tips for NTD purposes. The proposed MOD service will be like other bus services provided by LeeTran, except that it will be provided on demand, so it will be able to be included among LeeTran's NTD statistics each year just as its other bus services. Therefore, the change in the nature of service will not materially change LeeTran's ability to report these data. However, it is believed that MOD service may actually increase demand in the lower density zones where it is being proposed so that ridership will increase, thereby potentially enhancing LeeTran's opportunity for increased grant funding in the future.

Question: Is LeeTran staff involved in the US 41 FDOT FRAME project to provide input in the transit signal priority (you mentioned) and other technology benefits for bus passengers in this corridor?

Answer: To date, LeeTran has not been directly involved in the US 41 FDOT FRAME project. However, the Lee County Department of Transportation (DOT) is currently exploring ways in which LeeTran, Lee County Emergency Medical Services, and Public Safety can partner to bring transit signal priority to all signals located in Lee County. Even though US 41 is a state road, presently, Lee County DOT maintains all signals in Lee County. With that said, LeeTran will coordinate all signal projects on state roads with FDOT to ensure that we are working collaboratively to benefit the public.

Question: What do you have in mind for Enhanced Transit on US 41?

Answer: One of the key focuses in both short- and mid-term TDP plan for LeeTran is the US 41 corridor, especially the portion of the corridor along which Route 140 currently serves. With a very high transit demand currently on that corridor, combined with results from the TDP data analyses and input from the community, LeeTran's goal is to enhance the quality and level of services on US 41 in those areas covered by Route 140. To achieve this, LeeTran is planning to improve frequency to a bus every 8 minutes on Route 140 and add technologies to the corridor such as transit signal priority, or TSP, and queue jumps. As indicated in the TDP presentation, TSP utilizes vehicle location and wireless communication technologies to extend the green phase or shorten the red phase of a traffic signal to allow buses to reduce their delay at intersections. When combined with TSP, queue jump lanes at intersections, which are usually implemented with right-turn lanes, provide buses a head-start over other queued vehicles, letting the buses merge into the regular travel lanes immediately beyond the signal. Another potential component of enhanced transit on US 41 is limited stop service that operates complementary to the local service. The limited stop service would stop less frequently, thereby speeding up the service. Moreover, providing additional passenger amenities at each of the limited stop service's bus stops is yet another way for LeeTran to improve US 41 transit service.

With higher frequency of service and the addition of technologies to help reduce overall travel times and improve on-time performance, LeeTran hopes to attract more riders, including discretionary riders who may opt to use the bus for some or all of their trips, thereby helping to mitigate congestion on this busy corridor.

Question: Any ways that you can extend public input and find creative ways to reach to more people? I have talked to a few people in my community (Fort Myers) and they were not aware of the public input phases.

Answer: Because of strict deadlines for delivery of an approved TDP to FDOT that already have been extended somewhat to accommodate the impact of the pandemic, we are unable to extend the TDP's outreach component. As a result, LeeTran must receive all remaining comments, questions, and input by August 21st.

It is important to recognize, however, that, as indicated in the presentation, LeeTran's TDP process has included two phases of outreach that involved a variety of ways for the public to provide input. The outreach has included an on-board survey for riders, an online survey for the general public, stakeholder interviews, and discussion group workshops, in addition to the project information that has been provided via the study website and through social media releases. The outreach has followed a specific public involvement plan approved by FDOT for the purpose of the TDP, and it is admittedly unfortunate that the pandemic situation has impacted the ability to enhance the process with more face-to-face interaction, as was originally intended for the workshops.

Nonetheless, LeeTran has continued to press forward by switching over to the virtual workshops that were scheduled for this week. Prior to these two public workshops, LeeTran sent multiple media notices to all of the area's major outlets in an effort to reach as many people as possible about the workshops. LeeTran is using email, websites, and social media, like Facebook, to get the word out to people, as well. Their marketing staff have been sending multiple email reminders and re-posting on websites and social media platforms multiple times to ensure that the community would be aware of the events. Given these efforts, it is unfortunate that there still are people in the community with an interest in bettering transit who did not know about them.

Fortunately, though, the opportunity to provide input does not end once these two workshops are over. The narrated workshop presentation, a link to a second online survey for public input, and other pertinent study information will be posted on LeeTran's website for the community to continue to provide feedback. But, as noted, due to the need to finalize and submit this plan to FDOT within the prescribed deadline, it will be necessary to close the comment period on August 21st.

Question: Does this workshop pertain to all modes of transportation?

Answer: As noted in the presentation, the primary purpose of a Transit Development Plan is to set a visionary framework for how a transit agency plans to grow and evolve its various transit services over the next 10 years. Hence, the focus of a TDP is on transit, which is why this workshop primarily discussed recommendations for transit service improvements. However, the planning process for the TDP does consider other modes, like bicycles and walking, since the goal of most transit agencies is to help enhance connectivity among various modes of transportation so that overall mobility in a community can be improved. Additionally, LeeTran also recognizes that its buses share the road with cars and can be impacted by congestion issues just like other vehicles, especially during peak season. This is a key reason why LeeTran also continues to coordinate regularly with FDOT, Lee County MPO, and Lee County DOT, among other community agencies, so that staff can be involved in the development and implementation of other, more wide-ranging mobility solutions, especially on busy corridors like US 41 and Colonial Boulevard.

Question: How does Mobility on Demand (MOD) work?

Answer: Mobility-On-Demand services, also known as MOD, is on-request service that uses a phone app or call-in service for scheduling and connects point-to-point within a defined service zone. The connection can be made to any destination within the zone or to nearby LeeTran bus stops for connecting to routes that travel beyond the zone. On-demand service is like taking a shared-ride service offered by a Transportation Network Company (TNC). It uses a smaller vehicle (9 to 16 passengers) that can negotiate neighborhoods well. It is a viable and attractive service for lower density areas and certain land use patterns that are not readily accessible to larger buses. It also is ADA compliant. The service can be requested immediately through your smart phone and the software will assign a vehicle for your trip, while also optimizing the drop-offs and pickups of other passengers. Because software controls all of the trip scheduling, it is able to maintain an efficient service. For non-smart phone users, a call-center is available to take the request and the ride will be processed in similar fashion. An estimated time of arrival is provided. The rides are short, usually three to five miles, or five to ten minutes. It operates like a rideshare where other passengers may join the ride along the trip. MOD makes it an attractive choice for all riders. The youth/teen market can use it for after-school activities if they do not have a car or their parents are unable to take them. It also is helpful for seniors who may not want to drive each time they need to go to the grocery store. MOD is intended to provide access to mobility for everybody, as needed, to reduce the reliance on driving alone everywhere. As noted, the service is somewhat related to TNC-type service, like Uber or Lyft. The service can be provided through partnerships, as well. However, LeeTran will be operating the service using its own vehicles. It will serve individual trip needs for those trips that, due to capacity constraints or trip length or service area conditions, cannot be accommodated or are difficult to serve.

Question: Any thoughts on a Bonita MOD?

Answer: Initially, to help identify potential areas that may be initially suitable for MOD services, the project team analyzed the county at the Census block group level to identify areas with populations with demographic characteristics that would suggest higher propensity to use transit, areas without current transit service that are projected have high demand, and areas that have higher existing demand for service. Transit propensity characteristics include households with no cars available for use, low-income households, older adult populations, and youth populations. Based on these analyses, Bonita Springs did not stand out as one of the initial areas with existing potential for MOD. However, as the city continues to grow, it is certainly feasible that Bonita Springs, or specific areas of the community, may be a good candidate for an MOD zone in the future.

Question: I live on Gladiolus, near the library, how will I get to Beach Park-and-Ride if the 130 gets eliminated?

Answer: The short-term improvement recommendations resulting from the COA and proposed by this TDP, if implemented, will replace Route 130 with a new Route 170. Those who live near Gladiolus Drive near the library will be able to use the new Route 170 to access the Beach Park-and-Ride or any other adjacent businesses. The new Route 170 will serve the Beach Park-and-Ride, San Carlos Boulevard, Gladiolus Drive, Winkler Road, Daniels Parkway, the Gulf Coast Medical Center, and the South Hub Park-and-Ride.

Question: Will the Bell Tower still be a transfer, or will that be moved to a better area? There are cars that use the road as well. A bus only area would be better.

Answer: The current transfer location at Bell Tower is not really conducive to the service because it does not have the infrastructure to create a transfer or dedicated bus only lane. Since at least 2015, LeeTran has been looking for suitable space for a new facility in that south Fort Myers area. It is a great area to have a facility with a Transfer Center and Park-and-Ride. LeeTran is moving forward with a project across the street at the Supervisor of Elections site on the northwest quadrant of the US 41 and Cypress Trace Drive intersection. Upon completion of the project, the bus stops at Bell Tower will be removed and routed through the new facility. The anticipated time of completion is around 2024.

Question: How do I get on an email list?

Answer: While there is not an official email list of members of the public who have participated in the TDP's outreach process due to privacy concerns, any member of the public can email their questions or comments to the email address for the TDP, leetrانcomment@leegov.com. Additionally, LeeTran's social media and website have updated information about the TDP process and related materials. Please make sure to take the survey that can be found on the LeeTran TDP website (<https://www.leegov.com/leetrان/tdp>) to ensure that your opinion is heard!

Question: Why MOD and not TNC?

Answer: TNC is an acronym for Transportation Network Company, such as Uber or Lyft. TNCs provide a single rider point-to-point service solution that does not serve all members of the general public efficiently. Additionally, employing a TNC zone rather than an MOD zone can present equity issues. For example, if Person A has a higher income, using a TNC will not be a financial burden, but Person B may not be able to afford to use a TNC service and should be afforded the same opportunity by the public transit service provider. Since LeeTran is a public transit service provider, it is necessary for the agency to provide an affordable mobility option that will serve the public efficiently and equitably. LeeTran is confident that the MOD service will allow for the agency to better control the product and ensure that it is equitable.

Please note that LeeTran has held several meetings with TNCs such as Uber and Lyft to better understand their transit service model and partnerships with other transit agencies. LeeTran is always looking to enhance services, which is why staff have continued to have conversations with both entities to see if or how they fit into the agency's strategic plan.

Question: Who or what are stakeholders? What do they do and how are they connected to the LeeTran operations? Do they have a financial stake in LeeTran operations? Who are the stakeholders specifically here in Lee County?

Answer: Generally, stakeholders are representatives of key public and private businesses, organizations, and/or agencies that have an interest in bettering the mobility options within a community. They are not connected in any way to the operations of a local transit agency, nor do they have a financial stake in the agency.

In the case of LeeTran, the transit agency is a department of Lee County and reliant on federal, state, and local sources for its funding. For this TDP, LeeTran staff identified several public and private sector

stakeholders at the start of the study to obtain feedback from them about their perceptions and attitudes toward transit in Lee County. This is a key component of the public involvement effort and helps enhance the understanding of local conditions from the perspectives of the businesses, organizations, and agencies that the stakeholders represent. More information about the specific stakeholders involved in the TDP's outreach process and their thoughts and perceptions about transit will be included in the TDP documentation. Over 50 individuals were identified and asked questions as it pertains to their perception of transit in Lee County.

Question: Will LeeTran try again with electric buses or vans? Technology has improved since Bus 501 and 502.

Answer: Historically, LeeTran has made a concerted effort to employ alternative-powered vehicles in its fleet. In fact, more than half of LeeTran's fixed-route fleet utilizes hybrid diesel-electric technology. Though it is no longer in revenue service, Bus 501 was powered by a gasoline-electric motor. However, Bus 502 is still used in revenue service and has a hybrid diesel-electric motor. Likewise, LeeTran has invested in alternative-powered vehicles for its paratransit fleet. More than half of the paratransit fleet is propane powered.

Question: Any thoughts on a regional fare with Collier?

Answer: LeeTran is amenable to the idea of a regional fare. Other communities in Florida with adjacent transit agencies have been looking into the potential of fare interoperability for several years, so this is indeed a logical evolution in local transit services becoming more regional in scope. However, since such an implementation would require policy action, further direction is required from the two boards of county commissioners. In the meantime, LeeTran will continue to onboard its new farebox technology system to ensure that it is fully operational and able to support a potential regional fare structure in the future.

Question: Running the 100 Bus directly down Palm Beach Boulevard will bypass the Michigan-Marsh neighborhood where the Lee County Health Center and Fort Myers Technical School are located. Furthermore, a Palm Beach route would make it impossible for the 100 Route to make transfers with the 5, 10 and 15 buses at Michigan and Marsh. Doesn't bypassing a neighborhood with such important destinations and where people depend very much on transit to get to and from these important places violate Title VI provisions?

Answer: The COA-recommended changes to the Route 100 still maintain connectivity between this route and Routes 10, 15, and 20 along Palm Beach Boulevard. The proposed Route 10 will travel north-south along Shoemaker Boulevard, which was originally served by Route 100. The change to Route 10 allows LeeTran to serve the same neighborhood with better frequency. The proposed Route 15 also will serve the same neighborhood and maintain connections to Route 100, as well as the intersection of Michigan Avenue and Marsh Avenue. The proposed Route 20 will operate east-west via Michigan Avenue and Marsh Avenue, providing direct access to the Lee County Health Care Center and Fort Myers Technical College, so that these important activity centers still will have service. Additionally, Route 20 also will serve Michigan Avenue and Marsh Avenue, thereby providing additional connections to other routes in the LeeTran network. The proposed changes increase options for residents of this community by providing greater choice of routes, improved service frequency, reduced travel time, and reduced need to transfer. It also is

important to recognize that the equity mandates of the federal Title VI regulations are always an important consideration for transit agencies when there are proposed changes, so the impacts of the proposed COA changes have been examined from this perspective to ensure that no disparate impacts result from them.

Question: During the first TDP Workshop, you said you wanted to run the 50 Route from Bell Tower to the Miromar Mall on Corkscrew Road via Ben Hill Griffin. Will the Airport be serviced on the way? If it takes an hour to make a round-trip between the Bell Tower and Miromar, adding the Airport will make the route more than 60 minutes long. If one of the main objectives of the TDP is to make routes run on clock-time, doesn't the idea of extending the 50 Route down to Corkscrew defeat the idea of running buses on clock time? And won't the headway of the 50 Route be actually greater than it is now?

Answer: The current Route 50 has 70-minute headway on weekdays and Saturday, and 135-minute headway on Sunday. The realigned Route 50 will have 70-minute headway on weekdays, Saturday, and Sunday. In addition, the realigned Route 50 will serve the Southwest Florida International Airport, Florida Gulf Coast University, Gulf Coast Town Center, and Miromar Mall. Currently, Route 60 serves Florida Gulf Coast University, Gulf Coast Town Center, and Miromar Mall on weekdays and Saturday. As of 2019, Route 60 averaged five boardings per hour, which is a low level of utilization and typically not supportive of fixed-route investment. It also operates 85-minute headway on weekdays and Saturday, which is likely a key factor in the low use of the route. Therefore, LeeTran will be able to reallocate the Route 60's resources to other routes.

Question: During the first TDP Workshop, you said neither the Cape Coral Hospital nor Coralwood Mall were major transfer points in Cape Coral -- only Cape Coral Transfer Center. But even at the Transfer Center, only a few buses are able to meet there every few hours. Isn't it better to have more than one transfer area in Cape Coral where all Cape Coral buses could meet regularly throughout the entire day?

Answer: If we examine the response to the original question, we will find that it was said that Cape Coral Hospital and Coralwood Mall are not “major transfer centers.” This is an important distinction as many bus stops can be “transfer points” without being transfer centers. The difference is typically in the level of infrastructure dedicated to transit on the site and the number of concurrent buses that can be served at one time. The major transfer location in Cape Coral is the Cape Coral Transfer Center, which currently has four bus bays. The transfer center also includes parking, park-and-ride, security, real-time transit information, etc.

The COA process made substantial recommendations in Cape Coral that will significantly streamline the network. In addition, as LeeTran transitions over time to clockface schedules, these recommendations will provide more connections in Cape Coral and Fort Myers. More importantly, the recommendations will provide more frequent east-west connections between Fort Myers and Cape Coral via Route 30 and Route 120, which will serve Cape Coral Transfer Center, Coralwood Mall, and the shops at Veterans Parkway and Santa Barbara Boulevard. In addition, though transfers may occur there, the Cape Coral Hospital is not

suitable as an effective transfer location primarily due to the lack of space there for bus layovers and the significant travel time required to loop around the hospital.

Question: At present, Sunsplash Water Park in Cape Coral is not serviced by LeeTran on Sundays, nor is central Cape Coral. Shouldn't public transportation provide access to such recreational facilities on Sunday, and wouldn't it go a long way to helping the City of Cape Coral provide services to the rest of Lee County if LeeTran did provide service to that facility? Isn't it possible to provide that service with a simple restructuring of routes in Lee County on Sunday?

LeeTran aims to provide consistent public transit services throughout Cape Coral. Although LeeTran has modified routes to operate differently on Sundays in the past to provide coverage, it is a practice from which the organization is transitioning away. Instead, LeeTran's goal is to build reliable routes that do not change substantially throughout the week. One example is the addition of Sunday service to the Route 130 in November 2017. This change meant that the Route 50 would no longer deviate from its weekday and Saturday schedule by providing service to Gladiolus Drive and San Carlos Boulevard on Sunday. In addition to consistent routing, LeeTran selected the Route 130 for Sunday service due to its overall ridership trend, communities served, and connections to key activities.

Why is there no bus at the Bell Tower on Sundays that services Cape Coral or travels down Santa Barbara Boulevard?

While the Route 30 operates 60-minute frequency on weekdays and Saturday, passengers can utilize the Routes 140 and 120 to travel from Bell Tower to Cape Coral on Sundays. Though it is not as direct as the Route 30, LeeTran has ensured that the connection between the Fort Myers area and Cape Coral is present seven days a week. As an outcome of the COA, LeeTran is creating a more direct and consistent service throughout the week. Moreover, LeeTran will continue to examine the viability of Sunday services beyond the COA. However, adding Sunday services to the current Routes 30 and 40 is not feasible with LeeTran's current budget.

How many people use the Lehigh bus on Sunday currently?

Due to the effects of COVID-19, current ridership is lower than normal. On Sundays in August 2020, the Route 110 ridership was about 250 trips per day.

It takes LeeTran on average 5.5 hours to get from Lehigh Homestead to FGCU and back. An express route using Daniels Road extension would take less than 1.5 hours to get to FGCU and back from Homestead. If it is the case that it takes so long to get to FGCU and back from Lehigh, why would an FGCU student from Lehigh want to use LeeTran services?

To provide more context around the question, it is important to note that most Route 110 customers are using the route for purposes other than traveling to FGCU. Therefore, it was a strategic move to focus resources on the Route 110 corridor – such as adding Sunday service and reducing the headway from 120 minutes to 60 minutes – rather than diverting already limited resources to a new FGCU route. However,

LeeTran recognizes that traveling from Lehigh Acres to FGCU takes a considerable amount of time and is actively developing solutions to adapt to changing mobility patterns. For example, in the TDP, LeeTran is adding an express service from Lehigh Acres to FGCU as an unfunded need. If additional funding were to become available, LeeTran would consider this express route as a candidate for future service.