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Where's the Bus? Technologies and Tools Provide Real-time Information

Ask any public transit patron what is most important to them and you'll usually hear the following: give us reliable, frequent service that takes us where we need to go. Long gone are the days of paper transit maps and schedules. Much of the riding public is now "connected" via smartphone technology. With this new technology comes the opportunity for transit systems to provide real-time transit information which allows users to know exactly when and where their next ride will arrive. Around the State of Florida we are seeing transit agencies take advantage of these emerging technologies in order to provide innovative ways for passengers to know when and where their next ride will arrive. Both on-board technologies and traveler information systems are needed to provide this real-time travel information.

On-Board Technologies

Miami-Dade Transit partnered with Clever Devices, Ltd. and began installing state of the art equipment in all transit buses, which will allow the riding public to know when and where their next bus will arrive. In addition to bus tracking systems, riders will be able to see real-time bus information on up to 75 signs being installed at bus shelters in high priority areas and high-volume corridors.

LYNX, the Central Florida Regional Transportation Authority, now has real-time bus arrival information for two of its LYMMO lines, also utilizing the services of Clever Devices, Ltd. Twenty-two message boards throughout the routes now display estimated bus arrival times. This service is also available via mobile devices (smartphones). Ultimately LYNX would like to provide real-time arrival information at all system stops. More information can be found at www.LYNXBustracker.com.



As part of the newly approved Route Optimization Initiative (ROI) at the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), NextBus, a mobile application for smartphones, will be rolling out in December 2014 to provide real-time passenger information for all of its routes.

Traveler Information Systems

As transit agencies move to on-board technologies, traveler information systems are emerging to give passengers real-time trip planning capabilities at their fingertips. The transit industry is seeing a surge of mobile computer applications that offer regional trip planning on the go, via smartphones, tablets and desktop

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applications. While many transit agencies are moving to providing a single app for their schedule and services, the market is seeing the development of larger-scale apps that provide information on all the types of transportation available on a regional and even state-wide level.

Trend Toward User-Based Driven Systems

Waze is probably one of the most well know trip planning application available on the mobile market for car-generated trip taking. This user based application works by mobile users running the applications while they are making actual trips, allowing users to take an active role in sharing real-time road conditions and assisting others in making the best choices to get to destinations in the most timely and efficient manner.

Moovit is similar to Waze, however it is solely aimed at public transit trip making. Moovit utilizes schedule-based transit information, and then adds

real-time data from operators and users. Moovit provides real-time information to assist the public in making informed decisions about public transit travel. By using schedule data and data input from users, Moovit allows riders to choose the fastest, least crowded route for every trip, based on real time data. Just by riding with the Moovit application open during trips, passengers help contribute live data back to the transit community. Riders can also send active reports about each trip.

At this time, Moovit covers the Orlando, Tampa-St. Petersburg and Miami-Broward markets within the State of Florida. Watch for more cities and regions to be covered soon. More information can be found at www.moovitapp.com.

In the future, as transit and mobility technologies continue to emerge, the riding public can look forward to arriving at their ultimate destinations more seamlessly and easier than ever.

2014 Florida Public Transportation Association Annual Conference

The 2014 FPTA Annual Conference will take place October 26-28, 2014, at the Naples Grande Beach Resort in Naples, FL.

From FPTA, "The conference promises to be an interesting and enjoyable event with a substantial and diverse program including topics for everyone in the industry. There will be sessions on planning, operations, maintenance, marketing, financial management and professional development. We will also have a Keynote Speaker, Gil Penalosa from 8-80 Cities that you will not want to miss!" The following transit planning related topics will be featured at this year's conference sessions:

First and Last Mile Connection (sponsored by the Florida Transit Planning Network, Monday, October 27)

The "first and last mile" transit connection is a challenge that many transit agencies face. This first and last mile connection gap occurs when riders, whose final origin and destination are outside of the fixed-route service areas and whose schedules



are incompatible with the regular transit schedule, lack transportation services to complete their trip. To resolve these service gaps, several transit agencies across the nation and in Florida have adopted unique strategies and programs aimed to improve "origin – transit stop – destination" connection, complimenting existing fixed routes and expanding transit service coverage. This session will highlight the triumphs and successes of one Chicago transit agency and two Florida agencies in planning, developing and implementing "first and last mile" connection strategies.

Implementation Progress for MAP-21 Transit Requirements (sponsored by the Florida Transit Planning Network, Monday, October 27)

The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) legislation simplifies and consolidates grant programs, emphasizes performance measures

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for transit and streamlines the planning and programming process. Along with these changes are new rules and regulations affecting the transit industry. This session will provide an overview of MAP-21 transit requirement and demonstrate the progress and proposed approaches in implementing these requirements at a state level. This session will update everyone as to the status and issues for transit agencies, MPOs and others in meeting these new requirements.

Analysis of Transit Contracting Models (Tuesday, October 28)

As transit systems are being challenged to operate in the most cost-effective manner, and budgets are being tightened and demand for services increases, there has been renewed interest in the area of

contracting for fixed route service in the United States (U.S.). The presentation will summarize the findings of an effort that involved tasks to inventory and synthesize previous work in the area of types of transit operating contracts in the U.S. and Europe, assess the benefits and drawbacks of each general approach to contracting for transit service, and develop situational guidance for FDOT to help determine if a particular model could be appropriately considered. Additionally, both the Collier Area Transit System and the Lake County Public Transportation System will be sharing their experience with contracting transit services to provide a uniquely Florida perspective.

To register for the conference go to www.floridatransit.org. We hope to see you there!

Gauging Interest in Dedicated Transit Taxes

More Than Two-Thirds of Americans Support Increased Federal Investment in Public Transportation

The American Public Transportation Association recently released a survey that shows the number of Americans that support increasing federal public transportation investment grew to nearly 68 percent. This represents a nearly two point increase over last year. The survey, which was conducted by the Mineta Transportation Institute for APTA, also found that nearly 74 percent of Americans support the use of tax dollars for creating, expanding, and improving public transportation options in their communities. "We believe Congress should move swiftly on a robust long-term funding plan for the next surface transportation bill, and not wait until the extension deadline of May 31," said APTA President and CEO Michael Melaniphy. "Americans understand the importance of investing in public transportation because it is a catalyst to transforming their community."

Seventy six percent of those surveyed agreed with the statement that public transportation investment can help create jobs and pave the way to a stronger economy. When asked about the affordable transportation options for people, nearly 88 percent of respondents agreed that

public transit expands opportunities and provides access to new jobs and careers as well as to medical care, schools, and colleges.

On a statewide level, voters in Alachua, Polk and Pinellas Counties are set to cast ballots this fall on transportation and taxing issues.

Alachua County

The Alachua County Commission voted to put its Moving Alachua County Forward initiative on the November ballot in the hope voters will support it.



The referendum, if approved, would implement an 8-year, 1-cent sales tax to fund various transportation projects throughout the county ranging from road repairs to certain transit improvements.

Polk County

In February, 2014 the Polk County Board of County Commissioners approved an ordinance authorizing

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a referendum to be voted on by Polk County voters in November.

If passed, the referendum would enable a one percent surtax to fund the My Ride initiative. The revenues from the tax would go into a dedicated trust fund, with half of the proceeds to go to the Polk Transit Authority (PTA) and half to go toward roadway maintenance and improvements throughout the County. If the sales tax is approved, the County and the Citrus Connection would not levy the property taxes currently collected for roads and transit.



Pinellas County

The Greenlight Pinellas Plan includes bus improvements and future passenger rail that will significantly enhance public transportation in Pinellas County. If the proposed 1% sales tax referendum passes in November, PSTA would implement the Greenlight Pinellas Plan. The plan would be implemented over a span of 30 years.



Jacksonville Transportation Authority Recognized for Award

The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) was recently recognized for its implementation of TransPortal, its regional scheduling project in partnership with 12 regional counties. The JTA accepted the 2014 Innovate award at this year's Trapeze User Conference held in Tucson, Arizona.

"The JTA is honored to be recognized with this prestigious award" says Brad Thoburn, JTA's VP of Long Range Planning and System Development. "The development of this regional system is the result of the coordinated and dedicated efforts of our many regional partners with the vision to look

outside of their individual agencies and focus on the needs of our customers."

The JTA was recognized for developing a regional transportation system within the Community Transportation Coordinator framework. Since 2006, JTA has been working with its regional partners to coordinate transportation technology as a cornerstone for the development of the TransPortal program. TransPortal is a transportation resource to help citizens in Northeast Florida find the best transportation options to for their unique trip needs (visit www.transportal.net for more information).

Now Available for Download!!! Best Practices in Evaluating Transit Performance

The Florida Department of Transportation, Public Transit Office recently completed a study that explores the best practices for urban fixed route systems in evaluating transit performance. The study reviews current practices in Florida and the US and identifies the most common, and effective performance measures for use by transit agencies. It also provides information on available data sources for use in calculations and measurements to track agency progress in achieving their goals.

The study includes a summary of literature

on performance management frameworks, and an overview of national and Florida case studies encompassing different sized agencies' performance-based programs. The study findings and an overview of the toolbox components were presented in the June 2014 Professional Development Workshop held in Tampa, FL.

To download the full study, please visit www.dot.state.fl.us/transit/Pages/NewTransitPlanningandPerformanceMonitoring.shtm

TBEST Upgrades in 2014

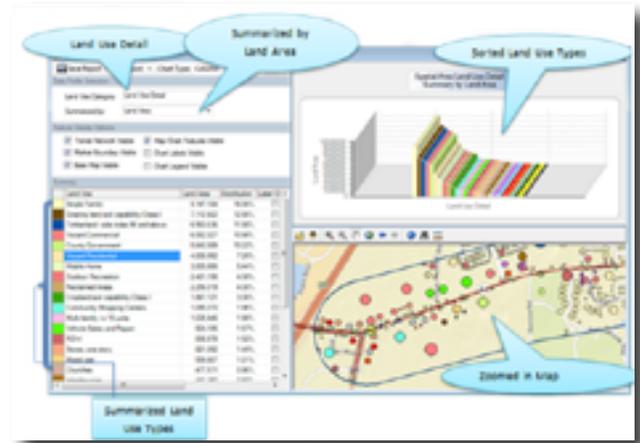
The Florida Department of Transportation Transit Office provides transit agencies with the Transit Boardings Estimation and Simulation Tool (TBEST) software to support transit service ridership estimates and strategic planning methodologies. Originally released in 2004 to provide ridership forecasting capabilities for Transit Development Plans, TBEST has undergone significant adaptations to support a wider variety of data sources and transit planning initiatives.

In FY 2014, FDOT sponsored the creation of three key upgrades to TBEST data development and analysis capabilities which directly support transit agency reporting workflows:

- TBEST Title VI Toolset (available in current TBEST version)
- TBEST Comprehensive Operational Analysis Toolset (available in Fall 2014)
- TBEST Parcel Editor (available in Fall 2014)

The TBEST Title VI Toolset was created to enable TBEST users to produce FTA Title VI analytical reports and maps which satisfy Title VI equity analysis requirements. Traditionally, Title VI reporting for Triennial Review reporting or major service changes has required agency staff to develop and analyze service levels, transit network geography and socio-economic data together within a GIS software or other database and analysis tools. The procedures for data assembly and analysis vary by agency, often with inconsistent results and heavy cost-burden to the agency. The TBEST Title VI Toolset utilizes TBEST socio-economic, network and service level data to construct maps and reports which fulfill the Title VI requirements for designating and mapping minority routes, reporting distribution of minority population and low income households by route, and evaluating Limited English Proficiency populations within the service area and by route. TBEST creates maps and reports that can be exported for inclusion in Title VI reporting.

FDOT constructed the TBEST Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) Toolset to support agencies in evaluating existing and proposed conditions in the context of analyzing service distribution, service performance, service area



markets, and accessibility with the goal of configuring effective and efficient service. The COA Analysis Toolset summarizes observed ridership, estimated ridership, service levels and performance together with key transit oriented socio-economic density variables. A primary feature of this toolset is that it allows planners to assess transit performance within zones, providing a unique perspective on where service may be over or under performing rather than simply a route-level evaluation.

FDOT sponsored the creation of the TBEST Parcel Editor which now allows users to modify land use patterns and density within the service area. This tool allows users to manipulate future year land use patterns for testing new service or modifying land use to assess the travel characteristics of a specific development or large trip generator. It is also a great tool for just evaluating land use distribution within the service area or within a sub area.

In addition to the software upgrades, FDOT released updated socio-economic data to include in local TBEST data. The 2012 Census data, 2013 employment and 2013 parcel data are currently available for download within TBEST.

Basic and advanced TBEST training will be offered in the Spring of 2015.

While final documentation is being constructed, users can access the new COA Analysis Toolset and the Parcel Editor through a TBEST beta version. For more information please contact Gabrielle Matthews at: gabrielle.matthews@dot.state.fl.us.

HART on Route to Sustainability

As an active participant in environmental stewardship and transit agency leadership across the country, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) is moving Florida forward with powerful steps fueled by green initiatives and innovative technologies.

By continuing to reduce its environmental impact while increasing operational efficiency, HART is aggressively working to become Florida's first ISO 14001 certified transit agency in 2015. The certification conveys international recognition that an agency is expertly managing its environmental program. Only nine of the 520 transit agencies in the US have earned the prestigious ISO 14001 certification.

The HART Environmental and Sustainability Management System (ESMS) is a tool for managing every aspect of the agency to hit desired environmental targets. HART is one of 24 transit agencies nationwide that have successfully completed Virginia Tech's special ESMS training program.

As HART Chief Financial Officer and the agency's Sustainability Champion Jeff Seward explains, "The Sustainability Program continues the agency's commitment to protect the environment in which we operate and reduce our carbon footprint and use of electricity and water consumption."

Goals and benefits of the ESMS program include:

- Protection of natural environment
- Enhancement of health and safety within the workplace
- Reduction of overall operating costs

The ESMS program demonstrates the agency's long-standing commitment to environmental responsibility:

Fuels, Vehicles & Emissions

- Reducing vehicle carbon emissions by 4,285 metric tons by the end of FY2018 by transitioning from diesel fuel to cleaner-burning Compressed Natural Gas (CNG).

Energy & Water Conservation

- HART reviewed five years of electrical and water usage data to identify utility efficiency opportunities and develop consumption and expense goals.
- HART is conducting energy audits at all of its operational facilities to further uncover opportunities to reduce its carbon footprint.
- Water conservation initiatives at HART include the installation of more efficient bus washing equipment, sustainable landscape management, use of solar lighting, and appropriate use of reclaimed water.

Last year, for example, HART provided 14.6 million rides, taking thousands of cars off the highways and significantly cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Meanwhile, in 2014 HART continued its progressive and groundbreaking shift toward cleaner-burning CNG which is better for the environment and is produced right here in the USA.

JTA Announces Sustainability Program

The steps you take today, impact your tomorrow. The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) recently announced a new sustainability program that will make necessary changes to build a greener tomorrow.

"The JTA is committed to improving the community of Northeast Florida's economy, environment and overall quality of life, by providing safe, reliable and efficient multi-modal transportation solutions," said JTA CEO Nathaniel P. Ford Sr. "In 2013, I pledged to enthusiastically support the sustainability principles set forth by the American Public Transportation Association."

"As the JTA progresses forward with researching and implementing green initiatives, I have assigned a sustainability committee to ensure our sustainability goals are being met and to build awareness throughout our community," Ford added.

The JTA introduced hybrid electric buses into the fleet in 2013. In addition, as a part of its Blueprint for Transportation Excellence strategic plan, the JTA

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recently distributed a Request for Proposals with an aggressive timeline for the planning and installation of a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) fueling station. 100 buses are slated to be converted to CNG within the next five years.

Other initiatives include recycling programs, bike-sharing programs, LED and solar lighting, solar compact trash receptacles, Transit Signal Priority, promoting Transit Oriented Development and other internal campaigns.

“Our first initiative will kick-off with an internal recycling program, where we will ask our co-workers to commit to making small decisions today that will add up to significant milestones for a more sustainable tomorrow,” stated Mike Sloan, JTA Vice President of Risk Management and Compliance.

The committee is also planning clean-up projects with local organizations that will help build healthier and cleaner communities.

New Transit Planning Resources/Documents

As part of the Florida Department of Transportation’s ongoing support for the Automated Transit Stop Inventory Model (ATSIM), limited technical support is available for free to the Florida transit agencies that are already using ATSIM and for those agencies that would like to start using ATSIM. This support will include remote technical assistance such as phone consultations, emails, and general assistance in the use and management of the ATSIM software system and its data. See ATSIM website for more information: www.ftis.org/atsim.html



[2014 Florida Multimodal Mobility Performance Measures Source Book](#)

[TCRP Report 168 Travel Training for Older Adults](#)

[Who’s on Board: The 2014 Mobility Attitudes Survey](#)

[Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment, 2014 Update](#)

[Infrastructure 2014: Shaping the Competitive City](#)



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Training & Professional Development

Upcoming Events & Conferences:

2014 APTA Annual Meeting & EXPO

October 12-15, 2014

Hilton Americas & George R. Brown Convention Center
Houston, TX.

www.apta.com

2014 Florida Transportation Data Symposium

October 23-24, 2014

Renaissance Orlando at SeaWorld
Orlando, FL

www.fleng.org

40th FPTA Annual Conference

October 26-28, 2014

Naples Grande Beach Resort
Naples, FL

www.floridatransit.org

Upcoming Training Opportunities:

February 4-5, 2015

[NTI's Introduction to Transit Asset Management](#)

Orlando, FL

February 18-19, 2015

[NTI's Quality Assurance and Quality Control in Transit](#)

Orlando, FL

Webinar Presentations:

[NTI's Transit-Planning Related Webinars available on-demand](#)

The [FHWA/FTA Transportation Planning Capacity Building Program \(TPCB\)](#) has established a quarterly webinar series titled the Transportation Planning Information Exchange. These webinars are intended to improve transportation decision-making by providing a convenient program of training, technical assistance, and capacity building for state, local, regional and tribal governments, transit operators, stakeholders, and community leaders.

FDOT is interested in your ideas about resources it can provide in support of your transit planning initiatives and professional development. Please contact Diane Quigley with your suggestions for future training topics or guidance and technical assistance needs.