



March 15, 2010

AGENDA ITEM 5 B

REGIONAL TRANSIT STUDY (RTS) FINAL

REQUESTED BY: CRTPA Staff

TYPE OF ITEM: Action

STATEMENT OF ISSUE

Formally initiated at the March 16, 2009 CRTPA meeting, the Regional Transit Study (RTS) is now complete. Consultants for the project will present the study's findings. Staff is seeking Board acceptance of the RTS.

RECOMMENDATIONS BY CRTPA SUBCOMMITTEES

The CRTPA's three (3) subcommittees (Citizens Advisory Committee, Multimodal Advisory Committee and Technical Advisory Committee) recommended CRTPA acceptance of the RTS at their respective meetings on March 2, 2010.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Option 1: Accept the Regional Transit Study.

HISTORY AND ANALYSIS

The RTS was initiated to develop a long-term vision for transit within the capital region (Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon and Wakulla counties). As such, the study is the first of its kinds to holistically address regional transit needs. The study's specific goals are to:

- prepare an assessment of future transit needs for the four-county area;
- identify and assess realistic funding strategies;
- identify an organizational structure that will promote the development of a seamless, regional transit system; and,
- identify an implementation strategy and milestones.

Formally initiated at the March 16, 2009 CRTPA meeting, the RTS was developed by the consulting firm HDR with federal funding administered by the Florida Department of Transportation (Public Transit Office). An executive summary of the study identifying the key recommendations is included as **Attachment 1**.

Two committees guided development of the RTS: the Stakeholders Committee and the Steering Committee. The RTS Stakeholders Committee provided guidance and offered recommendations on the study. The committee was comprised of representatives from the region's public and private transportation related agencies including StarMetro, Big Bend Transit, Commuter Services of North Florida, Apalachee Regional Planning Council and Wakulla County Seniors Council. Additionally, representatives from the three universities/colleges were also invited to serve on the committee. The RTS Steering Committee, comprised of local government and agency representatives from the CRTPA region, served in a technical capacity to help oversee the project's work tasks. Minutes of the committee meetings are available on the RTS project's website that can be accessed from the CRTPA's website (www.crtpa.org).

STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

The RTS has developed a Service Development Strategy to identify the recommended transit service improvements, funding strategies and institutional framework options for the Capital Region over the next forty years. The recommendations were developed for the near, mid and long term time frame (Near Term: 2010-2014; Mid-Term: 2015-2024; Long Term: 2025-2050). The following identifies the recommended Transit Service Plan broadly identifying transit improvements for the region.

Recommended Transit Service Plan:

Near-Term (2010-2014)

The Near-Term Plan focuses on enhancing local transit service within the City of Tallahassee as well the addition of two new express routes to Gadsden and Wakulla counties. The StarMetro NOVA 2010 plan to "decentralize" the current bus service forms the local transit framework in the Near-Term, with added service in the rapidly developing southeast quadrant of the city. Two express routes are planned in the Near-Term between Quincy and Tallahassee, and Crawfordville and Tallahassee. Both of these routes will be served by new park and ride lots at the end of lines in the out-counties. Finally, three transfer centers are proposed to provide for better connections between the decentralized StarMetro routes, planned express routes, and future BRT routes proposed in the later phases.

Capital and O&M Cost Estimates for Recommended Near-Term Plan (\$2009)

Improvement	Capital Costs	Annual Operating Cost
NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (2010-2014)		
StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion	\$5,784,000	\$4,101,000
Express Bus Service	\$945,000	\$898,000
Satellite Transfer Centers	\$4,563,000	\$30,000
Regional Park-and-Ride Facilities	\$763,000	\$20,000
Subtotal of Near-Term Costs	\$12,055,000	\$5,049,000

Mid-Term (2015-2024)

The Mid-Term Plan builds upon the Near-Term by two adding additional areas of local service, five new regional express routes (including one linking Jefferson County (Monticello) and Leon County), and three bus rapid transit (BRT) routes. Fixed-guideway transit is introduced in this phase, as two streetcar routes are planned as circulators connecting key employment and education centers in downtown Tallahassee. Four transfer centers and two park and ride lots are planned to serve the new transit routes.

Capital and O&M Cost Estimates for Recommended Mid-Term Plan (\$2009)

Improvement	Capital Costs	Annual Operating Cost
MID-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (2015-2024)		
StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion	\$3,305,000	\$6,340,000
Rural Local Bus Service	\$868,000	\$2,709,000
Express Bus Service	\$3,464,000	\$4,692,000
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service	\$45,739,000	\$5,421,000
Streetcar Service	\$210,501,000	\$6,739,000
Satellite Transfer Centers	\$6,085,000	\$70,000
Regional Park-and-Ride Facilities	\$763,000	\$40,000
Subtotal of Mid-Term Costs	\$270,725,000	\$26,011,000

Long-Term (2025-2050)

The Long-Term Plan is the third and final phase of proposed transit improvements. Included in this phase are a few capital projects including three BRT corridors, and an express bus route. Local service improvements include a fixed route circulator in Crawfordville.

Capital and O&M Cost Estimates for Recommended Long-Term Plan (\$2009)

Improvement	Capital Costs	Annual Operating Cost
LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (2025-2050)		
StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion	\$0	\$6,340,000
Rural Local Bus Service	\$868,000	\$5,418,000
Express Bus Service	\$630,000	\$5,377,000
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Service	\$76,976,000	\$13,501,000
Streetcar Service	\$0	\$6,739,000
Satellite Transfer Centers	\$0	\$70,000
Regional Park-and-Ride Facilities	\$763,000	\$60,000
Subtotal of Long-Term Costs	\$79,237,000	\$37,505,000

To construct the proposed transit improvements, the RTS identifies generalized projected costs and revenues for the recommended transit improvements through development of a Business Plan. These improvements, as reflected in the Business Plan, are contingent on the identification of new funding.

Business Plan

Near-Term (2010-2014)

In the near-term, the plan assumes that only Local Option Gas Tax (LOGT) funds are used to support the proposed capital and operating expenses of the transit improvements. As shown in Table 3-1 below, approximately half (2.5 cents) of the available 5 cent LOGT tax is necessary to support the near-term local bus, express bus, and park-and-ride/transfer expenses.

Table 3-1: Near-Term Revenues and Expenses

LOGT Revenue (cents)	2.5	\$3,671,578
Surtax Revenue (%)	0%	\$0
Total Dedicated Revenue		\$3,671,578
Near-Term Operating Costs		(\$5,049,000)
Fare Revenue	25%	\$1,262,250
State Support	10%	\$504,900
Federal Support (PM)	10%	\$504,900
Local Subsidy Required		(\$2,776,950)
Remaining Dedicated Revenue		\$894,628
Near-Term Capital Costs		\$12,055,000
Local Share of Capital Costs	75%	\$9,041,250
Required Annual Debt Service		\$725,493
Surplus / (Deficit)		\$169,134

Mid-Term (2015-2024)

Major investments are projected for the mid-term timeframe, including \$210 million for a streetcar and \$45 million for BRT corridors. In the mid-term, the plan assumes that the remaining 2.5 cents from the LOGT is approved and dedicated to transit. Then, out of a possible 1.0% sales surtax, a surtax of slightly more than 0.6% is necessary to generate sufficient funding for all the capital and operating expenses of the proposed mid-term improvements. The balanced revenues and expenses are shown in Table 3-2.¹

Table 3-2: Mid-Term Revenues and Expenses

LOGT Revenue (cents)	2.5	\$3,671,578
Surtax Revenue (%)	0.63%	\$24,250,090
Total Dedicated Revenue		\$27,921,668
Mid-Term Operating Costs		(\$20,962,000)
Fare Revenue	25%	\$5,240,500
State Support	10%	\$2,096,200
Federal Support (PM)	10%	\$2,096,200
Local Subsidy Required		(\$11,529,100)
Remaining Dedicated Revenue		\$16,392,568
Mid-Term Capital Costs		\$270,725,000
Local Share of Capital Costs	75%	\$203,043,750
Required Annual Debt Service		\$16,292,756
Surplus / (Deficit)		\$99,812

¹ Note that the operating costs indicated here and in the long-term table are not the cumulative totals from the earlier tables, but instead are the *incremental* amounts added in each period.

Long-Term (2025-2050)

With the LOGT exhausted, the only available revenue for the long-term projects is the remaining 0.37% of the hypothetical region-wide dedicated sales tax. Roughly half of funding is needed to support expanded operating costs, but there is sufficient funding remaining to support the final major capital expansion of the BRT system with funds remaining in reserve.

Table 3-3: Long-Term Revenues and Expenses

LOGT Revenue (cents)	0	\$0
Surtax Revenue (%)	0.37%	<u>\$14,242,117</u>
Total Dedicated Revenue		\$14,242,117
Long-Term Operating Costs		(\$11,494,000)
Fare Revenue	25%	\$2,873,500
State Support	10%	\$1,149,400
Federal Support (PM)	10%	<u>\$1,149,400</u>
Local Subsidy Required		(\$6,321,700)
Remaining Dedicated Revenue		\$7,920,417
Long-Term Capital Costs		\$79,237,000
Local Share of Capital Costs	75%	\$59,427,750
Required Annual Debt Service		\$4,768,636
Surplus / (Deficit)		\$3,151,780

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Based upon the recommendations, strategies and options identified by the RTS, perhaps the most important immediate question is how to next proceed. To that end, the project consultants have identified a number of implementation strategies and key policy decisions to be addressed by elected officials.

Implementation Strategies:

- Near-Term (2010-2014) Implementation Strategies:

The immediate implementation actions for the Capital Region are relatively straightforward and are intended to support the near-term local and express bus transit improvements described above. From a governance perspective, the near-term strategy can be characterized as “less is more.” The current institutional arrangement for cross-jurisdictional services, whereby counties can contract directly (via intergovernmental agreements) with StarMetro or Big Bend Transit for service, appears to be working well. For a modest expansion of local and express bus service, this arrangement should continue to be sufficient. If greater coordination between jurisdictions is needed, an *ad hoc* committee (most likely under the umbrella of CRTPA) should be able to address most service planning issues. From a funding perspective, the necessary near-term actions are more challenging. Even the modest local and express bus expansions will not

be possible without new funding. The most readily available source of funding for these near-term improvements is the local option gas tax (LOGT). Although raising the gas tax is likely to encounter opposition, officials in each county in the region should begin to work with their citizens and business community to explore this possibility if this is an option they choose to pursue.

- Mid-Term (2015-2024) and Long Term (2025-2050) Implementation Strategies:

The long-term recommendation for the Capital Region is a Regional Transit Authority (RTA) with dedicated funding and the responsibility for fixed guideway services and cross-jurisdictional bus services. But the region cannot (and should not) attempt to make an immediate move from the current decentralized structure to a full-blown RTA. The process will likely unfold over a number of years, with the following key steps:

- *Undertake preparatory work with citizens, the business community, and the Legislature:* Laying the groundwork for an RTA and for designated funding can begin almost immediately. While many in the transportation community are familiar with the idea of an RTA, transit's relative lack of prominence in the Capital Region means that a significant education process will be required. (And even the passage of RTA enabling legislation at the State level will not guarantee success unless local stakeholders are engaged and willing to support the RTA with funding.)
- *Inaugurate a Capital Region RTA:* If the creation of an RTA is enabled by the Legislature and the voters in the region approve, a Capital Region RTA can be inaugurated. Initially, the RTA will likely have few powers, and it may act simply as a planning body for transit in the region.
- *Designate the RTA as a regional CTC:* As noted in the preliminary recommendations in Technical Memorandum #4 – Institutional Structure and Funding Options, services for the transportation disadvantaged (TD) are a natural candidate for regionalization. Following the creation of the new RTA, it could be designated as the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for the entire region, and its first major responsibility could be the provision of truly regional TD services. Assuming that it performs this task successfully over the first few years, this will provide a base of goodwill and expertise for the expansion of the RTA's responsibilities.
- *Dedicate funding to the RTA:* The success or failure of an RTA for the region will depend largely on funding. The RTA may be able to successfully deliver TD services by relying only on annual allocations from local jurisdictions and state agencies. However, the delivery of bus services and fixed guideway services will require dedicated funding. As noted in Technical Memorandum #4, the most likely candidate for long-term dedicated funding in the Capital Region is a sales tax. However, there will be many difficult steps necessary to achieve a dedicated regional sales tax for transit. Statutory changes will likely be required, and then the approval of voters in each county will be needed. As with the creation of the RTA, this will necessitate a major public education and outreach process.
- *Shift cross-jurisdictional bus services to the RTA:* The responsibility for planning, funding, and operating existing and future cross-jurisdictional bus services would then be shifted from the local jurisdictions to the RTA. Local bus services would remain under the control of the local jurisdictions.

- *Deliver regional BRT and streetcar services through the RTA:* The delivery of premium transit such as BRT and streetcar service will mark the culmination of the RTA.

Furthermore, the following contains the policy decisions associated with the implementation strategies and transit recommendations identified by the RTS:

- **Will the region pursue near-term (2010 – 2014) bus improvements?** The proposed local bus, express bus, and park-and-ride/transfer improvements will improve transit options for commuters and begin to raise the profile of transit in the region. But these improvements cannot be undertaken using existing funding sources. The three policy options are: fund the improvements with a local option gas tax (LOGT); fund the improvements with a different funding source (such as general funds); or defer the improvements.
- **Is an *ad hoc* coordinating committee needed?** As express bus services and cross-jurisdictional services are implemented in the region, greater coordination among the local governments may be needed. A decision should be made about creating a committee (under the umbrella of the CRTPA or another regional body) where regional bus service planning issues can be formally raised and addressed.
- **Should the region begin to pursue enabling legislation for a Regional Transit Authority (RTA)?** If the answer is yes, this pursuit will need to include legislative efforts and formal exploration of options for organization, governing board composition, functional responsibilities, and legal requirements. It also will have to include extensive citizen and business community outreach in the form of town hall meetings, opinion polling, public relations and media efforts.
- **Should the designation of a regional CTC (TD service provider) be pursued?** If the regional stakeholders believe that the potential gains to riders will outweigh the potential costs, then this designation should be explored at the State level with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD).
- **Can the region begin a feasibility study and/or alternatives analysis (AA) for any of the proposed premium transit investments?** The lead-time on major transit capital projects can stretch many years from project conception to the first shovel actually going in the ground. If the Capital Region is serious about pursuing a streetcar or a major BRT corridor in the mid-term timeframe, these studies need to begin in earnest now.
- **How will the region pay for premium transit?** If the Capital Region is to successfully pursue a streetcar or major BRT corridor, dedicated funding will absolutely be needed. A dedicated sales tax is by no means a perfect funding source, but it has many positive qualities. Yet it would be very difficult to implement a true region wide dedicated sales tax given the current statutory and political environment. The region's stakeholders need to achieve consensus on whether to begin the difficult work of changing that environment.

As noted above, there are many steps and options to be followed with regards to addressing regional transit within the Capital Region. Whether local officials decide to choose to proceed forward at this point with the studies recommendations or decide to wait at this time, the plan provides a blueprint

from which to proceed. Furthermore, because the plan was developed at a high level, any further decisions will require more detailed analysis and study.

OPTIONS

- Option 1: Accept the Regional Transit Study.
 (RECOMMENDED)
- Option 2: Provide other direction.

ATTACHMENT

- Attachment 1: Executive Summary

February 2010

REGIONAL TRANSIT STUDY



Executive Summary

Prepared for:
Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency
408 N. Adams Street, 4th Floor
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Prepared by:
HDR Engineering, Inc.
1180 Peachtree Street, Suite 2210
Atlanta, Georgia 30309-3531



**CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AGENCY
REGIONAL TRANSIT STUDY**

Executive Summary

Prepared for:
Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency
408 N. Adams Street, 4th Floor
Tallahassee, FL 32301

Prepared by:
HDR Engineering, Inc.
1180 Peachtree Street, Suite 2210
Atlanta, Georgia 30309-3531

February 2010

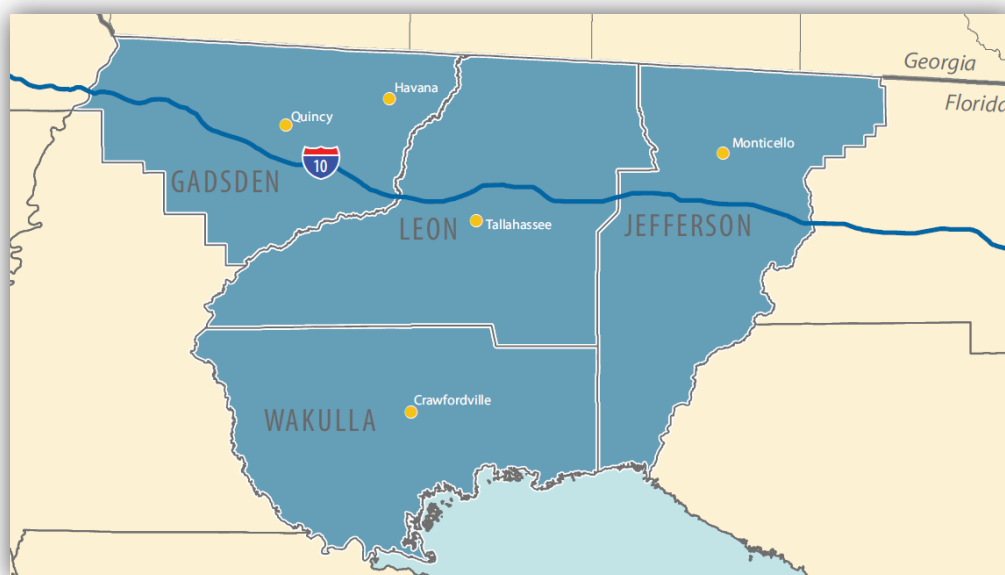
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1.0 Introduction

In March, 2009, the Capital Region Transportation Planning Agency (CRTPA), in partnership with StarMetro, began a year-long process to study the viability of a regional transit system in the Tallahassee Region. The goals of the Regional Transit Study (RTS) were to prepare an assessment of current and future transit needs in the four-county region, identify and assess realistic funding strategies, identify an organizational structure that will promote the development of a seamless regional transit system, establish an implementation strategy for advancement of the proposed transit improvements and organizational changes, and define development review guidelines and design policies that are conducive to a transit-oriented community.

Figure 1: RTS Study Area



The RTS study area covers the four-county CRTPA planning region, including Leon, Gadsden, Jefferson, and Wakulla counties. The City of Tallahassee is both the geographic and population center of the region, with over 170,000 residents in 2008. The four-county region is home to more than 350,000 residents and approximately 175,000 workers. The Capital Region's economy is primarily driven by the public sector, as Tallahassee is the state capital of Florida and home to two major universities, Florida State University (FSU) and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU).

The Capital Region is served by three public transportation providers: StarMetro, Big Bend Transit, and Wakulla County Transportation. StarMetro is the region's primary fixed-route provider, serving the City of Tallahassee and limited parts of unincorporated Leon County. Big Bend Transit provides consolidated transportation services to Gadsden, Jefferson, and rural Leon counties, while Wakulla County Transportation serves Wakulla County. In 2008, these three operators provided over 4.6 million transit trips in the CRTPA region.

Regional Transit Study

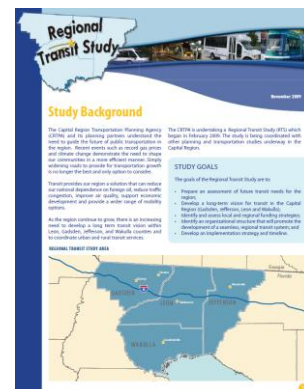
This Regional Transit Study seeks to identify and evaluate alternatives, both service-related and institutional, for improving transit service delivery in the capital region. These alternatives provided the basis upon which a framework for achieving a regional transit system was developed and recommendations made for implementing changes in the coming years.

2.0 Public Involvement

A comprehensive public information campaign was central to the success of this study. A multifaceted approach was taken to engage the public in a variety of settings in order to gather a broad cross-section of input. Coordination with other studies being conducted, including the Regional Mobility Plan, was encouraged to achieve maximum public input.

A variety of tools, techniques, and activities were used to solicit public input, including:

- **Stakeholder Group:** A stakeholder group was created to provide policy guidance for all aspects of the project. Group members were representatives from various community and transportation organizations within the study area.
- **Technical Steering Committee:** A technical steering committee was formed to provide technical guidance throughout the project. The committee was comprised of representatives from StarMetro, Big Bend Transit, FDOT, Commuter Service of North Florida, the city of Tallahassee, and the four study area counties.
- **Community Meetings:** Two rounds of community meetings were held to gather input from interested members of the public. The first round of meetings, held in April 2009, involved four public meetings in each of the study area counties to introduce the study and gather public input on transit needs. The second set of meetings, held in November 2009, also involved four public meetings at which the result of the transit needs analysis and draft transit improvement recommendations were presented to obtain feedback from the public.
- **Board Presentations/Briefings:** The consultant team provided regular updates to the CRTPA board regarding the status and findings of this study.
- **Study Brochure and Newsletters:** A study brochure and two newsletters were developed during the course of this project. These provided updates of the study's goals, recommendations, and status.
- **Survey:** A transit needs survey was administered via email, hard copy, and in-person. This 12-question survey was completed by over 340 respondents, and provided critical input to understand current travel behavior and attitudes regarding the need for regional transit for the service and policy recommendations developed during this study.
- **Website:** A project website was created and linked to the region-wide Capital Legacy Project web page. This site was a valuable public engagement tool which provided project information, updates, documents, and contact information.



3.0 Baseline Conditions

Along with input gathered through the public involvement campaign, a baseline conditions analysis provided the foundation upon which recommendations for transit service improvements and alternative institutional arrangements were made. There were two primary aspects of the baseline conditions exercise: an existing conditions analysis and transit potential analysis.

Existing Conditions

CRTPA prepared base demographic data derived from 2000 U.S. Census Data, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and InfoUSA and updated for a base year of 2007. The base demographic data was used to assess existing transit service in the Capital Region and to compare it to future projections to determine the transit market potential inter-county (between counties) and intra-county (within each county). A thorough inventory of key data variables was compiled, including the following:

- Population
- Employment
- Transit Dependent Populations – Zero-Car Households, Elderly, Low Income, Disabled, Student

Additionally, profiles were developed for StarMetro, Big Bend Transit, and Wakulla County Transportation, as the transit providers in the region. Service statistics, productivity metrics, route structure, and service area were all documented within these profiles. Finally, a peer analysis was conducted for StartMetro's operations. This system-level analysis was conducted in order to identify StarMetro's strengths and weaknesses with respect to service productivity, cost effectiveness and efficiency, maintenance productivity, and service coverage.

Transit Potential Analysis

A transit potential analysis was performed to determine the level of demand for public transportation services in the region. The region's travel demand model was used to estimate population, employment, and travel demand for the years 2015, 2025, and 2050 by traffic analysis zone (TAZ). This data was used to determine travel patterns within the Capital Region, as displayed in Figures 2 and 3, below. Based on current and projected travel flows, transit markets were determined and improvements were proposed accordingly.

Figure 2: 2007 Trip Flows

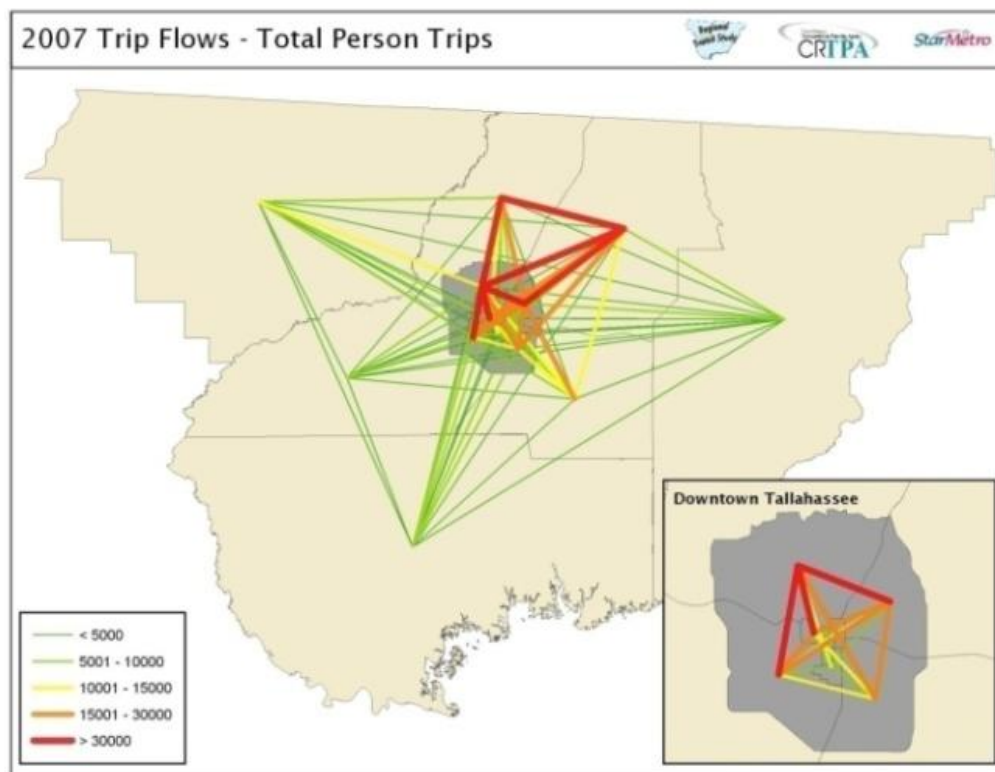
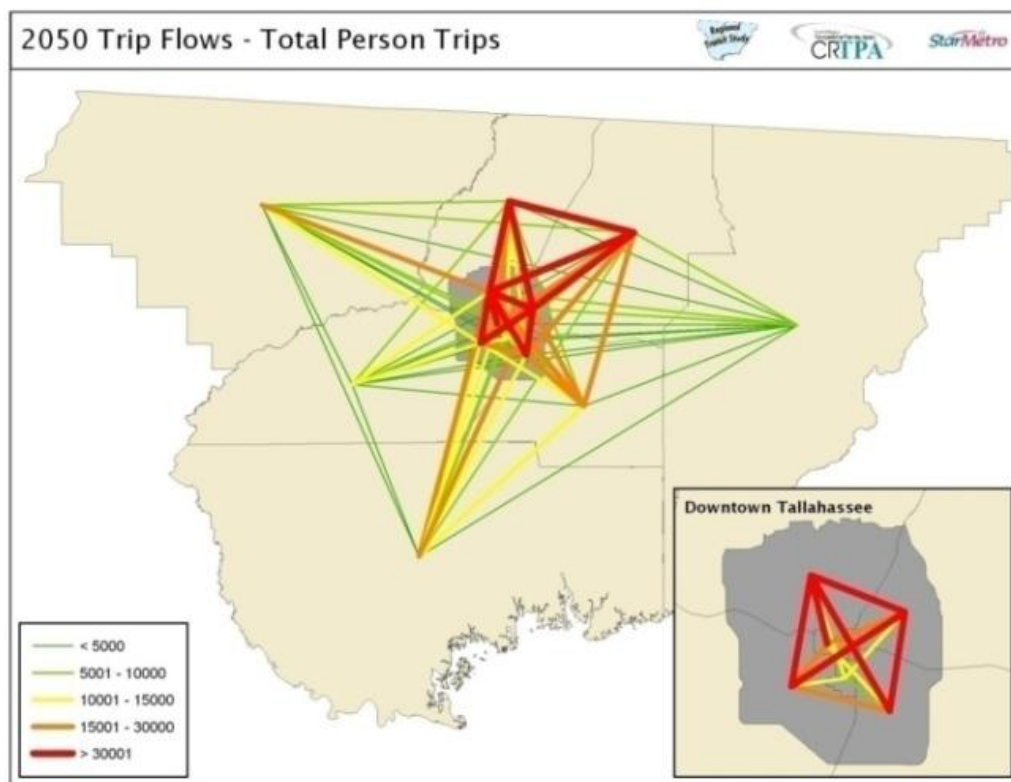


Figure 3: 2050 Trip Flows



4.0 Transit Services Improvements

Based on input received from the public and other project stakeholders as well as data derived from the baseline conditions report and transit potential analysis, a series of transit service improvements was developed and analyzed for ridership potential, capital cost, and operational cost. These improvements were categorized into three timeframes: near-term (2010 – 2014), mid-term (2015 – 2024), and long-term (2025 – 2050). Two types of improvements were proposed: service improvements and capital projects. Service improvements include enhancements and additions to local fixed-route services such as those currently provided by StarMetro as well as rural fixed-route circulator routes. Capital projects are transit improvements which will require significant capital investment to implement. These include fixed-route and fixed-guideway projects such as express bus, bus rapid transit (BRT), streetcar, light rail transit (LRT), and commuter rail transit (CRT). Capital facilities such as transfer centers and park and ride lots are also included in this category.

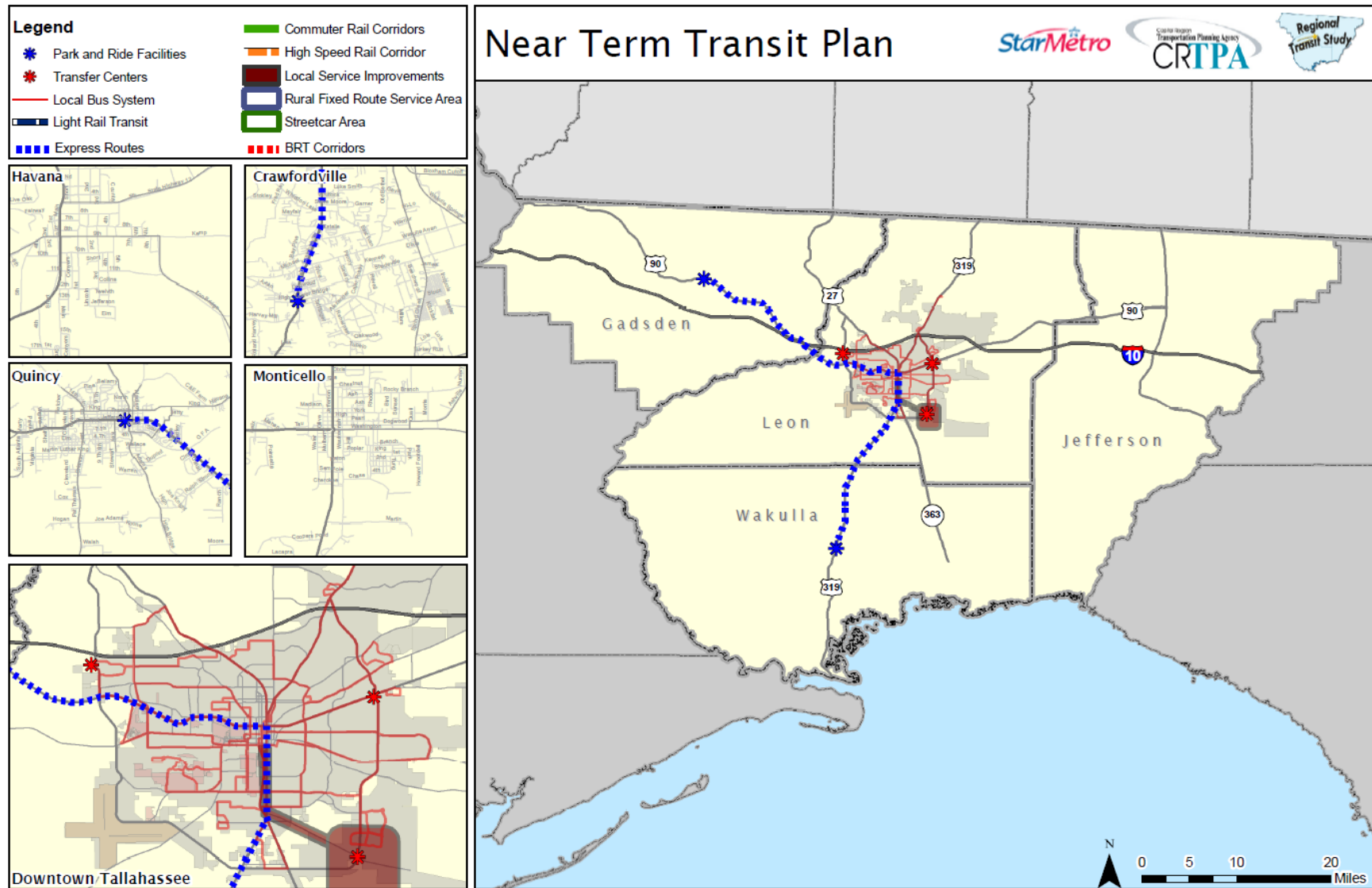
Near Term (2010-2014)

The proposed transit service improvements in the near-term, as displayed in Figure 4, are as follows:

- Capital Circle Office Complex/Southwood StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion
- Tram Road StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion
- Crawfordville Express Bus Service
- Quincy Express (service anticipated to begin early 2010)

Regional Transit Study

Figure 4: Near-Term Transit Plan (2010-2014)



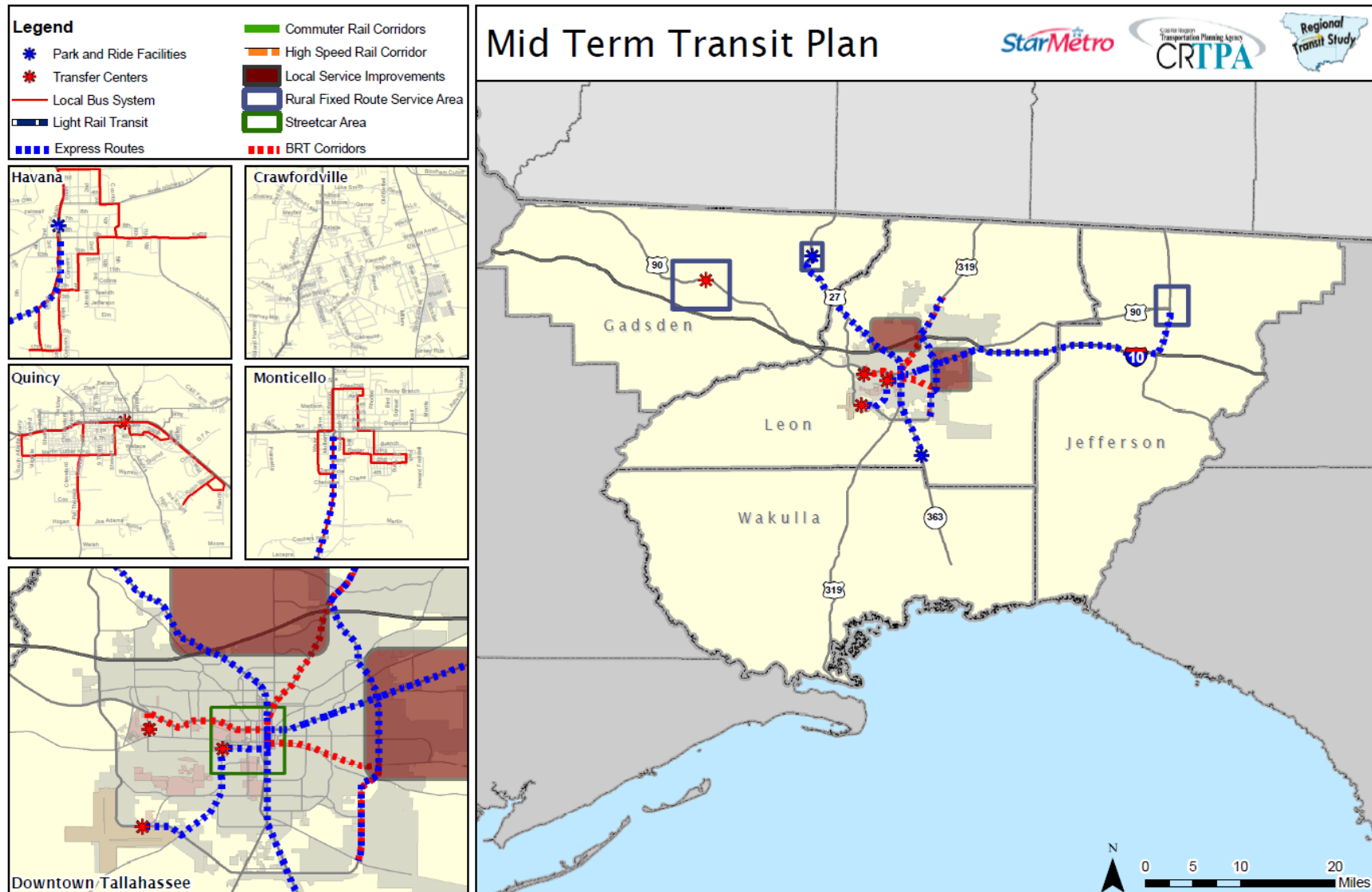
Mid Term (2015-2024)

The proposed transit service improvements in the mid-term, as displayed in Figure 5, are as follows:

- North Leon County StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion
- East Leon County StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion
- Quincy Fixed Route Expansion
- Havana Fixed Route
- Monticello Fixed Route
- Woodville Highway Express Bus Service
- Capital Circle East Express Bus Service
- Havana Express Bus Service
- Monticello Express Bus Service
- Airport Express Bus Service
- West Tennessee Street Bus Rapid Transit
- Thomasville Road Bus Rapid Transit
- Apalachee Parkway Bus Rapid Transit
- Gaines Street Streetcar Line
- Campus Streetcar Line

Regional Transit Study

Figure 5: Mid-Term Transit Plan (2015-2024)



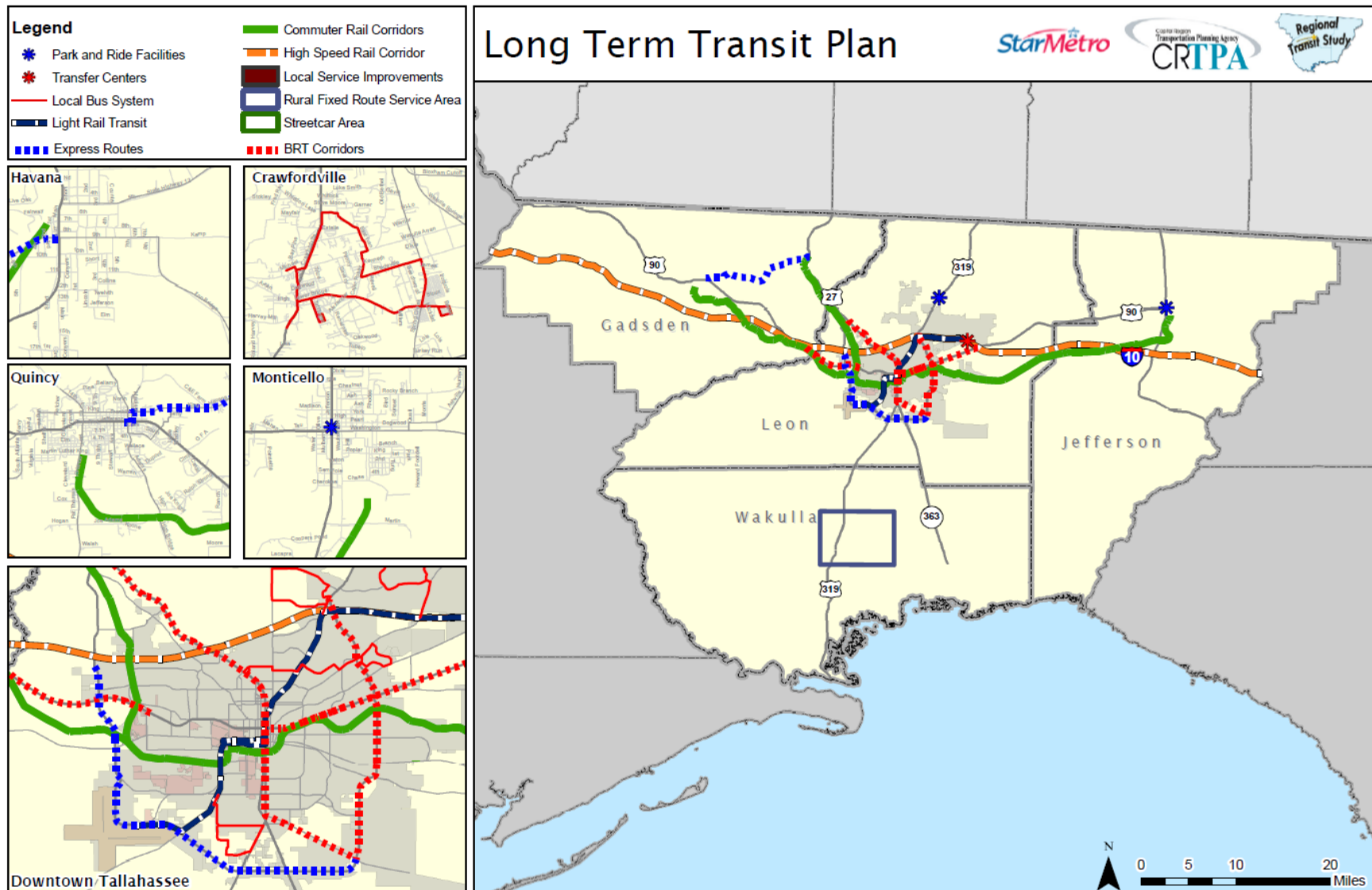
Long Term (2024-2050)

The proposed transit service improvements in the long-term, as displayed in Figure 6, are as follows:

- LRT Feeder Bus Service
- Crawfordville Fixed Route
- Quincy Fixed Route Expansion
- Havana Fixed Route Expansion
- Havana/Quincy Express Bus Service
- Capital Service Southwest Express Bus Service
- West Tennessee Street Bus Rapid Transit Extension
- Capital Circle East Bus Rapid Transit
- Monroe Street Bus Rapid Transit
- East Tennessee Street (Mahan Drive) Phase 1 & 2 Bus Rapid Transit
- Airport to Downtown Light Rail Transit
- Downtown to I-10 High Speed Rail Light Rail Transit
- Quincy to Downtown Commuter Rail Transit
- Havana to Downtown Commuter Rail Transit
- Monticello to Downtown Commuter Rail Transit

Regional Transit Study

Figure 6: Long-Term Transit Plan (2024-2050)



Regional Transit Study

Estimated capital and operational costs associated with all of the projects are listed in Table 1. After a thorough screening process, the following projects were eliminated from inclusion in the final recommended transit service plan:

- LRT Feeder Service
- Capital Circle Southwest Express Bus
- West Tennessee Street BRT Extension
- Light Rail Transit Service
- Commuter Rail Service

The service above were considered and evaluated, however, because of the projected ridership levels and costs, they were not deemed feasible for implementation within the time horizons of this report. Costs of these improvements are included in Table 1 to show order of magnitude of costs.

Regional Transit Study

Table 1: Proposed Improvements - Capital and Operations Costs (2009\$)

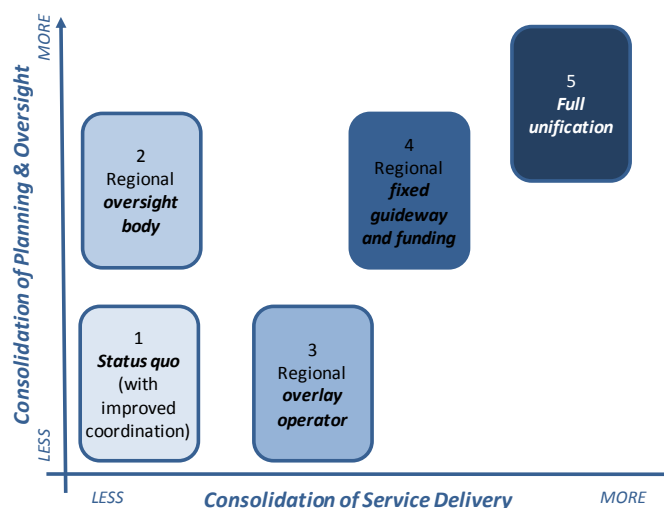
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Regional Park-and-Ride Facilities	\$763,000	\$40,000
Subtotal of Mid-Term Costs	\$270,725,000	\$26,011,000
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LONG-TERM IMPROVEMENTS (2025-2050)		
StarMetro Local Bus Service Expansion	\$0	\$6,340,000
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Regional Park-and-Ride Facilities	\$763,000	\$60,000
Subtotal of Long-Term Costs	\$79,237,000	\$37,505,000
Improvement	Capital Costs	Annual Operating Cost
IMPROVEMENTS NOT INCLUDED IN RECOMMENDED PLAN		
LRT Feeder Service	\$1,440,000	\$1,120,000
Capital Circle Southwest Express Bus	\$630,000	\$694,000
West Tennessee Street BRT Extension	\$14,503,000	\$1,378,000
Light Rail Transit Service	\$994,469,000	\$23,266,000
Commuter Rail Service	\$1,460,000,000	\$29,369,000
Subtotal of Non-Recommended Improvement Costs	\$2,471,042,000	\$55,827,000

5.0 Institutional Structure and Funding

Institutional Alternatives

A set of possible institutional structures for transit operations in the Capital Region were defined based on the existing and proposed transit services. Five broad categories of institutional frameworks were identified as options for the Capital Region: status quo (with improved coordination), regional oversight body, regional overlay operator, regional fixed guideway and funding, and full unification. Within each category are a number of possible variations. As displayed in Figure 7, the organizational scenarios represent a continuum of service delivery and planning, and oversight. At the low-end of service consolidation and planning is the current institutional arrangement (status quo). As the region moves towards increasing unification, services become more consolidated and may take on the form of a regional oversight board or overlay operator. This may include consolidating transportation disadvantaged (TD) / demand response services. A regional fixed guideway system with regionally-based funding would be an interim step prior to full unification, which would eliminate any existing operators and replace them with a single regional transit entity.

Figure 7: Regional Organization Scenarios



Status Quo (with Improve Coordination)

The simplest and least consolidated institutional option would be to continue with the existing arrangement of transit providers (StarMetro, Big Bend Transit, and Wakulla County Transportation). CRTPA would also remain responsible for long-range transportation planning as the MPO. In this arrangement, as new cross-jurisdictional bus services are introduced, counties could decide whether to contract with StarMetro for service or to provide service on their own (either directly or through a third-party contractor).

Regional Transit Oversight Body

This oversight body could be a new authority, or the responsibilities could be housed within an existing regional entity such as the CRTPA or the Apalachee Regional Planning Council. In this arrangement, the oversight body could be responsible for functions such as medium-term regional transit planning, unified marketing and customer information, and unification of fare policies and fare media. The oversight body could also play a role in the distribution of funding by becoming the “designated recipient” for federal funding and by having responsibility for allocating any new dedicated regional transit funds.

Regional Overlay Operator

A regional “overlay” operator would automatically be responsible for any fixed-route transit service that crossed city or county borders. This operator would be independent of the existing transit providers (in both governance and funding), but it could choose to contract with an existing provider (such as StarMetro) for the actual day-to-day delivery of the service. The overlay operator would also be responsible for future cross-county fixed guideway investments. However, as with the status quo option, any potential BRT or rail projects located entirely within the City of Tallahassee would be controlled by StarMetro.

Regional Fixed Guideway and Funding

In this structure, a new regional transit body would have responsibility for *any* new fixed guideway service in the region (BRT, streetcar, LRT, etc.), even if located entirely within one jurisdiction, as well as any cross-jurisdictional bus services. In addition, it would control functions such as regional service planning, customer information, and fare media and policy, and it would control federal and regional funding distribution. Jurisdictions would still control their own local bus services, and the option would still exist (for example) for the new regional entity to contract with StarMetro for the actual delivery of bus service.

Full Unification

In a fully consolidated option, the existing local transit providers would go away entirely, and a new regional authority would be responsible for all aspects of transit oversight, funding, and delivery, across all modes. The new authority could even take on the long-range transportation planning aspects of CRTPA and become the MPO.

Funding Alternatives

While many funding options were considered and detailed as part of this analysis, two funding sources were identified as being most feasible in the Capital Region for transit: the local option gas tax (LOGT) and dedicated sales tax. By statute, Florida counties are authorized to levy a LOGT of up to 12 cents per gallon on fuel subject to voter approval in the form of three separate levies:

- The first is a tax of 1 cent on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold within a county. Known as the **Ninth-Cent Fuel Tax**, this tax may be authorized by an ordinance adopted by an extraordinary vote of the governing body or voter approval in a countywide referendum. Generally, the proceeds may be used to fund transportation expenditures.

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- The second is a tax of **1 to 6 cents** on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold within a county. This tax may be authorized by an ordinance adopted by a majority vote of the governing body or voter approval in a countywide referendum. Generally, the proceeds may be used to fund transportation expenditures.
- The third tax is a **1 to 5 cents** levy upon every net gallon of motor fuel sold within a county. Diesel fuel is not subject to this tax. This additional tax shall be levied by an ordinance adopted by a majority plus one vote of the membership of the governing body or voter approval in a countywide referendum. Proceeds received from this tax may be used for transportation expenditures needed to meet the requirements of the capital improvements element of an adopted local government comprehensive plan.

Currently, none of the four Capital Region counties (Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, and Wakulla) have levied any portion of the third tax (the 1 to 5 cent LOGT) described above. If each county were to levy the full 5 cents of the 1 to 5 cent LOGT, given current (2009) fuel sales the full revenue that would be available from a region-wide LOGT is slightly more than \$7 million. As noted earlier, this could fund some significant improvements in local and express bus service, but it is not sufficient to fund the premium transit projects in the med-term and long-term.

A dedicated sales tax is a second option for generating capital and operating funds for transit in the Capital Region. Currently, only Leon and Wakulla counties are statutorily able to assess a sales tax for transit via the existing Charter County Transportation System Surtax. If, however, a 0.5% regional dedicated sales tax was passed, approximately \$19 million could be generated annually. These funds could be used on a “pay-as-you-go” basis for operations or small capital projects, or they could be bonded to support a larger capital project.

Other funding mechanisms used throughout the state for transit capital and operating expenses, such as vehicle rental fees and property taxes, were not seen as viable options due to the relatively small size and political climate of the Tallahassee metropolitan area. While the LOGT and dedicated sales tax are viable funding alternatives, their implementation will likely be met with substantial political and legislative obstacles.

Recommendations

Based on the analyses performed by the consultant team and input from the project steering committee, interviewees, and stakeholders, six recommendations were made regarding regional institutional organization and potential funding:

- **Maintain the existing institutional structure in the near-term.** Current inter-local agreements between StarMetro, the counties, and contracted providers appear to be sufficient in the near-term (next two to three years). It is recommended that the organizational status quo be maintained while inter-jurisdictional express service is developed.
- **Current funding is not sufficient for even modest expansion, so the LOGT should be pursued.** In order to implement any near-term and mid-term service and capital improvements, an additional funding stream should be pursued via a LOGT.

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- **Do not create competing local transit providers.** In order to facilitate future consolidation, it is recommended that no additional local transit providers (i.e. county-level) be established. Alternatively, contractual arrangements should be made with existing providers to implement new or expanded service outside of existing service areas.
- **Demand response service should be a strong candidate for initial regionalization.** In an effort to build support for an RTA, the counties' existing demand response services should be considered for regionalization in the near to mid-term. This would create a seamless TD network while laying the political and organizational groundwork for regionalization of fixed route services.
- **Maintain some local control even in the long-term.** Migration to an RTA should be approached in an incremental fashion. By maintaining local control of transit services and operations while increasing regional efforts, consensus can be built in the public and legislative arenas. For example, a regional entity could be charged with planning and cross-jurisdictional service in the near term while maintaining autonomy of local service. Over time and as the political climate permits, an increasing level of responsibility will shift from the local to regional level.
- **Long-term funding will be challenging, but a dedicated sales tax is one option.** In order to fund the recommended fixed-guideway projects, a long-term regional funding stream must be secured. A dedicated sales tax provides the most promising revenue source.

6.0 Service Development Strategy and Business Plan

Implementation Plan

Near-Term (2010-2014)

Implementation of the near-term plan involves limited action on the part of local jurisdictions and agencies and should not require the creation of any additional agencies. Rather, it is suggested that the current institutional arrangement for cross-jurisdictional service, whereby counties contract directly via intergovernmental agreements with StarMetro or Big Bend Transit for local and express services, be maintained. Regional planning functions may require the creation of an *ad hoc* committee, and would likely be best suited under the umbrella of CRTPA. In order to fund the proposed transit improvements in the near-term, a new funding source will be required. A local option gas tax is the most feasible regional funding option in the near-term and local officials in each county should begin to pursue legislation enabling such measure.

Mid-Term (2015-2024) and Long-Term (2025-2050)

The shift from the current institutional arrangement in the Capital Region to a unified RTA should be approached in an incremental fashion. The process will involve a series of key steps over a number of years:

- **Undertake preparatory work with citizens, the business community, and the Legislature:** A comprehensive public information campaign will be required to educate the citizens of the Capital Region regarding the costs/benefits of an RTA. This will lay the groundwork for public buy-in and the eventual voter approval of an RTA.

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- **Inaugurate a Capital Region RTA:** The creation of an RTA will require enabling legislation and voter approval. A newly-created RTA will have limited powers in the near-term, with its primary functions being planning for the region.
- **Designate the RTA as a regional CTC:** Designation of the RTA as the regional Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) is an appropriate first step in regionalizing transit operations. If successful, this will provide a base of goodwill and expertise required for further regionalization of fixed route services.
- **Dedicate funding to the RTA:** A new regional funding source will be required in order to implement new regional fixed route services. A dedicated regional sales tax, though possibly difficult to implement, is the most promising candidate to fund a regional transit system.
- **Shift cross-jurisdictional bus services to the RTA:** Once a steady funding stream is established, all cross-jurisdictional functions including planning, funding, and operating, will be shifted to the RTA. Local service would remain under the control of local jurisdictions.
- **Deliver regional BRT and streetcar services through the RTA:** The delivery of premium transit such as BRT and streetcar service will mark the culmination of the RTA.

Business Plan

A high-level projection of costs and revenues was developed based on a set of assumptions regarding farebox recovery, state operating support, federal operating support, local share of capital costs, bond interest rate for local share of capital costs, and bond term. These are as follows:

Operating Funding Assumptions

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Farebox recovery rate for new services: | 25% |
| • State operating support (% of expenses): | 10% |
| • Federal operating support (% of expenses) ¹ : | 10% |

Capital Funding & Financing Assumptions

- | | |
|---|----------|
| • Combined state and federal share of capital costs (%) | |
| ○ Streetcar: | 25% |
| ○ Bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors: | 40% |
| ○ Other projects (bus, transfer centers, park-and-rides): | 70% |
| • Bond interest rate for local share of capital costs: | 5% |
| • Bond term for local capital costs: | 20 years |

The capital funding assumptions reflect the consultant team's assessment of the likelihood of receiving significant state and/or federal grant funding for each particular transit investment category. Given the overall constraints on funding, we assume that a larger state/federal funding share can be achieved on smaller projects. That is, it will be easier for FDOT to support

¹ Federal operating support is not provided directly, but instead takes the form of 5307 Urbanized Area program funds used for 'preventive maintenance' expenses.

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smaller projects, and the region should be able to bring together a range of different federal sources for smaller bus projects (such as 5307 and 5309 formula funds, as well as discretionary 5309 bus funds and other federal earmarks). Thus, the assumed state/federal share for the smaller proposed transit investments is 70%, which means the local share of the capital costs will be 30%.

Conversely, for a very sizable project like the streetcar, unless the region is very successful in the FTA New Starts program, most of the funding will likely come from local sources, so the assumed state/federal share for the streetcar is only 25%. BRT projects occupy somewhat of a “middle ground” for potential grant funding. A federal funding share of 40% is typical for a successful Small Starts or Very Small Starts BRT project. We assume that the Capital Region will be able to compete for and win Small Starts or Very Small Starts funding for some of its BRT corridors, but not all. However, FDOT should also be able to provide state-level funding. Between those two sources, we assume that the combined state and federal funding share for the entire group of BRT projects will average 40%, leaving 60% of the BRT capital costs to be funded locally.

From the available dedicated revenues, the region first must cover any committed debt service expenses from the previous period. After that, the region must fund operating expenses that are not supported by fare revenues or state/federal grant funds. Any funds remaining after that are then available to pay new debt service on the local share of the capital costs for that period. The original dedicated funding amount can then be modified so that all local operating and capital costs are covered and small positive balance remains. Table 2 displays projected costs and revenues, presented in 2009 dollars. It is assumed that gas tax revenues will be utilized to fund near and mid-term improvements, while sales taxes will be used to fund mid and long-term improvements. Auxiliary revenues include local, state, and federal contributions.

Table 2: Projected Costs and Revenues

	Near Term			Mid Term			Long Term		
LOGT Revenue (cents)	2.5	\$	3,671,578	5.0	\$	7,343,155	0.0	\$	-
Surtax Revenue (%)	0%	\$	-	0.60%	\$	23,095,324	1.05%	\$	40,416,817
<i>Less: Revenue Already Committed to Debt Service</i>		\$	-		\$	(290,197)		\$	(15,206,572)
Available Annual Dedicated Revenue		\$	3,671,578		\$	30,148,282		\$	25,210,245
Total Annual Operating Costs		\$	5,049,000		\$	26,011,000		\$	37,505,000
<i>Less: Fare Revenue</i>	25%	\$	(1,262,250)	25%	\$	(6,502,750)	25%	\$	(9,376,250)
<i>Less: State Support</i>	10%	\$	(504,900)	10%	\$	(2,601,100)	10%	\$	(3,750,500)
<i>Less: Federal Support</i>	10%	\$	(504,900)	10%	\$	(2,601,100)	10%	\$	(3,750,500)
Local Annual Subsidy Required		\$	2,776,950		\$	14,306,050		\$	20,627,750
Remaining Dedicated Revenue		\$	894,628		\$	15,842,232		\$	4,582,495
Total Capital Costs		\$	12,055,000		\$	270,725,000		\$	79,237,000
<i>Less: State/Federal Capital Grants</i>	70%	\$	(8,438,500)	30%	\$	(81,217,500)	40%	\$	(31,694,800)
Local Share of Capital Costs		\$	3,616,500		\$	189,507,500		\$	47,542,200
Required Annual Debt Service (20 years @ 5%)		\$	290,197		\$	15,206,572		\$	3,814,909
Annual Surplus / (Deficit)		\$	604,430		\$	635,660		\$	767,586

Policy Decisions

The final question for the Capital Region is a practical one. Given the recommendations and strategies and options presented in this Regional Transit Study, how should the region proceed? CRTPA, StarMetro, and the region's local elected officials face a number of key policy decisions in the coming months and years.

- **What existing and/or new funding sources are available?** The proposed transit improvements will require dedicated funding to operate and maintain the new services. Additional funding will be required to pay for the planning, engineering, construction of the premium transit services. Existing and new funding sources will need to be identified to fund these improvements.
- **Will the region pursue near-term bus improvements?** The proposed local bus, express bus, and park-and-ride/transfer improvements will improve transit options for commuters and begin to raise the profile of transit in the region. But these improvements cannot be undertaken using existing funding sources. The three policy options are: fund the improvements with a local option gas tax (LOGT); fund the improvements with a different funding source (such as general funds); or defer the improvements.
- **Is an *ad hoc* coordinating committee needed?** As express bus services and cross-jurisdictional services are implemented in the region, greater coordination among the local governments may be needed. A decision should be made about creating a committee (under the umbrella of the CRTPA or another regional body) where regional bus service planning issues can be formally raised and addressed.
- **Should the region begin to pursue enabling legislation for a Regional Transit Authority (RTA)?** If the answer is yes, this pursuit will need to include legislative efforts and formal exploration of options for organization, governing board composition, functional responsibilities, and legal requirements. It also will have to include extensive citizen and business community outreach in the form of town hall meetings, opinion polling, public relations and media efforts.
- **Should the designation of a regional CTC (TD service provider) be pursued?** If the regional stakeholders believe that the potential gains to riders will outweigh the potential costs, then this designation should be explored at the State level with the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD). This would need to be examined in greater detail to determine if regionalizing the TD service would create additional costs or potential savings due to the potential consolidation of functions of the individual CTC's.
- **Can the region begin a feasibility study and/or alternatives analysis (AA) for any of the proposed premium transit investments?** The lead time on major transit capital projects can stretch many years from project conception to the first shovel actually going in the ground. If the Capital Region is serious about pursuing a streetcar or a major BRT corridor in the mid-term timeframe, these studies need to begin in earnest now.
- **How will the region pay for the proposed transit improvements?** All new transit services will require dedicated funding from identified sources. LOGT funds are recommended to support the proposed capital and operating expenses of the transit improvements in the near-term. If the Capital Region is to successfully pursue a streetcar or major BRT corridor, dedicated funding will absolutely be needed. A dedicated sales tax is by no means a perfect

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funding source, but it has many positive qualities. Yet it would be very difficult to implement a true regionwide dedicated sales tax given the current statutory and political environment. The region's stakeholders need to achieve consensus on whether to begin the difficult work of changing that environment.

7.0 Development Review Guidelines and Design Standards

Supportive land use policies are instrumental in fostering transit ridership. The consultant team assessed current land use policies, including comprehensive plans, land development codes, and review guidelines, in the Capital Region and developed recommendations for amending these policies to create transit-supportive design standards at the local level. The following key design issues were evaluated:

1. Density/Intensity
2. Location and size
3. Uses (type, mix, diversity)
4. Dimensional standards (e.g., height, setbacks, lot width, maximum coverage)
5. Design and development standards (e.g., parking, landscaping, open space, mobility, building design)
6. Administration/development review

While a diagnostic exercise found that some transit-oriented policies currently exist within the Capital Region, these codes can be enhanced to set policy mandates and incentives for creating sustainable, transit-friendly communities. Policy guidelines for the above-mentioned design standards, as well as bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities, were provided.

8.0 About This Report

There are five technical memoranda that detail the analyses and subsequent findings that comprised this study. Technical Memorandum 1 – Public Information Plan describes the public involvement component that accompanied and influenced the technical analyses. Technical Memorandum 2 – Baseline Conditions details the key data variables that drove the analysis and ultimate recommendations reported in this study. Technical Memorandum 3 – Transit Service Improvements includes the transit potential analysis and travel demand forecasting documentation along with the proposed transit service recommendations and cost projections. Technical Memorandum 4 – Institutional Structure and Funding Options proposes a series of recommendations for organizational arrangements and funding options that would support the implementation of the transit service recommendations. Technical Memorandum 5 – Service Development Strategy and Business Plan details the recommended steps required for implementation as well as the projected revenues and expenditures for the Near, Mid, and Long-Term plans. Finally, Technical Memorandum 6 – Development Review Guidelines and Design Standards evaluates current land use policy in the Capital Region as it relates to transit, and proposes design standards that can be adopted in order to create places that are conducive to transit ridership.