Marty Transit Development Plan

Final Report

Executive Summary

PREPARED FOR:

Martin County Public Transit (Marty)

PREPARED BY:

Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACS	American Community Survey
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ART	Area Regional Transit St Lucie County
AVL	Bus Automated Vehicle Location
BOCC	Board of County Commissioners
CAD/AVL	Computer-Aided Dispatch / Automatic Vehicle Location
CB	Commuter Bus
COA	Comprehensive Operational Analysis
COA	County Council on Aging
CRA	Community Redevelopment Agency
CSRC	CareerSource Research Coast
CTC	Community Transportation Coordinator
CTD	Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged
DOR	Department of Revenue
DR	Demand Response
FDOT	Florida Department of Transportation
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FMLM	First Mile Last Mile
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FTIS	Florida Transit Information System
FY	Fiscal Years
LCB-TD	Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged
LRTP	Long Range Transportation Plan
MB	Motorbus
MDC	Mobile Data Computer
MOD	Mobility on Demand
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
NHTSA	National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

NTD	National Transit Database
OTM	Census On The Map
PPP	Public Participation Plan
PRC	Project Review Committee
PROWAG	Public Rights of Way Access Guidelines
PTBG	Public Transit Block Grant
RTAP	Rural Transit Administration Program
SFCS	South Florida Commuter Services
SSA	Safe Systems Approach
SWG	Stakeholder Working Group
TAM	Transit Asset Management
TBEST	Transit Boardings and Estimation Tool
TDP	Transportation Development Plan
TDSP	Transportation Disadvantaged Service Plan
TES	Transit Efficiency Study
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TNC	Transportation Network Companies
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
VA	Veteran's Administration
VMT	Vehicles Miles Traveled

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

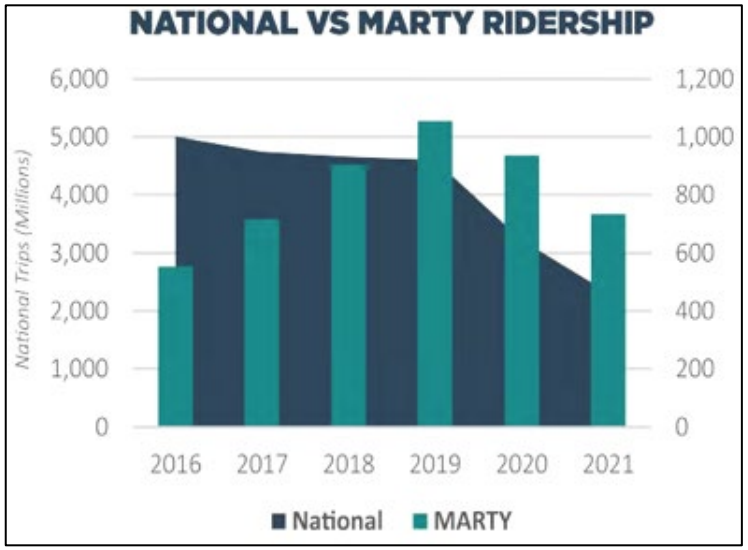
Introduction

The Martin County Transit Development Plan (TDP) Major Update for Fiscal Years 2025 to 2034 was funded and prepared by the Martin Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) in close coordination with Martin County Public Transit (Marty) management and staff. The TDP provides a strategic blueprint for public transportation in Martin County for the next ten years and conforms to the requirements of Rule Chapter 14-73, Florida Administrative Code (FAC) which allows jurisdictions to be eligible for the Florida Public Transportation Block Grants.

As a precursor to this TDP, the Martin MPO implemented a Transit Efficiency Study (TES) of the Marty system for the purposes of examining how the transit system can become more efficient and to identify direction from the MPO Policy Board for this TDP. The outcome of the study identifies potential strategies to improve ridership, efficiently expand services through additional stops and community transit to areas not currently served and for the future pursuit of supplemental funding opportunities to grow the transit system. Direction from the MPO Policy Board was to focus on ridership strategies that will improve the efficiency of the system.

Technical Analysis

An analysis of Baseline Conditions was performed to detail the community profile and land use characteristics and to assess how efficiently Marty provides service based on 2017-2021 National Transit Database (NTD) information. General metrics such as passenger trips, vehicle miles, revenue hours, and operating costs show improving trends over those past five years. The results of the review indicated that Marty experienced an overall 8% increase in ridership (inclusive of Covid impacts), while transit agencies nationwide, including Florida, experienced an overall decline of over 55%.



A peer systems analysis was also performed comparing Marty to five other transit agencies to gauge performance in FY 2022. In comparison, Marty is a very small linear system focused on the U.S. 1 corridor with a service area of only 65 square miles while other systems, with similar populations, were serving 217 square miles (Indian River Florida GoLine) and 758 square miles (Bay County Florida). Marty also had the lowest budget of all the systems at

$3,023,246 and the lowest ridership by far at 92,669 trips/year versus the five peers that ranged from 349,281 trips/year to 1,239,241 trips/year. The analysis also shows Marty as the least efficient system at $32.60 cost per trip while Indian River Florida GoLine was the most efficient at $4.35 per trip. While presenting the comparative metrics to the MPO Advisory Committees and MPO Policy Board the low ridership and high cost per rider metrics became a central concern of stakeholders and elected officials.

An analysis of Ten-Year Transit Demand was performed for the existing system in FY 2025 and FY 2034. Overall ridership is estimated to increase by only 13% in 2034 with the highest increases in ridership occurring on Routes 1, 2, and 20X. This analysis shows that the Marty system is very limited as, in its current operation, can only produce an average of 1.3% more ride per year in the next ten years without any improvement.

Route	2025 Boardings	2034 Boardings	Additional Boardings	Percent Change
Route 1	56,975	65,275	8,300	14.6%
Route 2	14,143	15,942	1,799	12.7%
Route 3	18,555	20,475	1,920	10.3%
Route 4	5,393	5,685	292	5.4%
Route 20X	11,367	12,884	1,517	13.3%
Total	106,433	120,261	13,828	13.0%

Public Involvement

The approach to the public involvement process aimed to actively engage a diverse range of community members across the County. This involved developing an online survey, facilitating six open houses, conducting interviews with elected officials, pop-up events, speaking events and holding monthly meetings with key stakeholders.

The general sentiment within the community suggests a need for transformation of the current system. Presently, the system faces limitations in terms of its coverage, schedules, and frequency. Furthermore, there is a recognized need to enhance the marketing of

the system, as most individuals approached were unfamiliar with its routes and schedule. There is also a perception in the community around the observed lack of passengers on buses and that the size of buses which does not resonate well with some sectors of the community.

The Public Involvement process began with developing a distinctive brand for the process and an online survey was made accessible to the public for five months. The survey effort was successful in obtaining input from 732 respondents. Key insights revealed that the community recognizes the need for the services provided by the system, especially for those unable to drive or lacking access to a private vehicle. The majority of respondents prioritized improvements related to span of service such as Saturday and Sunday service and more frequent service on existing routes. Among persons that had not used Marty in the past, the primary reasons for not utilizing the service included the perception that traveling by car is faster and concerns about inconvenience, with many expressed a lack of knowledge about the service routes and destinations.

Six open houses were organized, one per Commission District, with two events in District 3, where, because of its geography, where two events held, one in Indiantown and one in the Banner Lake Community. All six events included active outreach by holding the events outdoors at community centers, after school care centers, libraries, or other communal spaces, aimed to engage a broad segment of the community. Each event, lasted between two to four hours and provided attendees with the opportunity to learn about the transit system, voice their opinions, have a tour of a Marty Bus, express their needs, and participate in the survey. In addition to these scheduled events, the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and the County participated in various programmed events, on-board surveys and promoting the online survey and distributing information about the TDP involvement.

Discussions with event attendees were consistent with the survey results as they expressed support for the transit system, emphasizing its vital role in the community. Among the most requested improvements are for more information on how the system operates and where it goes, weekend service, additional bus stops, and increased frequency. Respondents also suggest boosting marketing efforts

to reach parts of the community that may be unaware of the service and its routes. The consensus is that a well-connected and coordinated system accessible to everyone will contribute to increased ridership.

Alternative Strategies

Potential transit improvement strategies were developed based on the Goal and objectives, baseline conditions, outreach, the transit gap analysis, plans reviewed, and the situational appraisal. The transit improvements, also referred to as alternatives, have been grouped into four strategies that range from no/low-cost improvements through reallocation of existing resources to more aspirational recommendations that will require additional funding.

Strategy 1 – Reallocate Resources

These strategies represent no/low-cost improvements that can be made in the short term and would require a reallocation of resources with minimal and/or no additional resources.

- **Improve transfer timings**. Optimizing the schedules for transfers.
- **Split Route 3.** Split Route 3 into two circulators to increase coverage to shopping, community and medical destinations.
- **Extend Route 2.** Extending the route to the Walmart in Stuart would add a desired shopping destination for Indiantown residents and create transfer opportunities to Routes 1 and Split Route 3.
- **Implement flex service on Route 4.** Route 4 is currently underperforming and the assessment for this TDP indicates that the existing stops need better placement and/or safe crossings, more bus stops and a service extension to the Banner Lake Community.
- **Extend Route 20X.** Extending the southern terminus of Route 20X from the Veteran's Administration (VA) Medical Center to the Mangonia Park TriRail Station to increase regional connectivity.

Strategy 2 – Increase Span of Service

Adding weekend service on Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4 and later service on Route 4 was a need identified during public outreach and in the last two TDPs (for Routes 1,2 and 3). As a step towards expanding the span of service for the fixed-route bus service, a more cost-effective solution would be exploring a pilot program through Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), microtransit, or taxi partnerships to test the ridership potential.

- **Offer later service on Route 4.** Offering later service to close a gap to connections with other Marty routes.

- **Pilot "Saturday Shift" program.** For Routes 1, 2, 3, and/or 4, pilot a TNC program that offers services within a ¾-mile distance of existing route alignments.
- **Pilot "Sunday Shift" program**. For Routes 1, 2, 3, and/or 4, offer TNC services within a ¾-mile distance of existing route alignments.
- **Later service.** As the demand for the increased service span increases, implementing could be a cost-effective solution.

Strategy 3 – Add Bus Stops

The need to add bus stops emerged through the precursor TES effort and from feedback from the public and elected officials and through technical analysis performed for this TD. Typical bus stop spacing for urban transit systems nationwide is a ¼-mile spacing. The current bus stop spacing for Marty Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4, are 0.96, 2.59, 1.10, and 1.75 miles, respectively. **Forty new priority locations are recommended.**

Strategy 4 – Create an Aspirational Network with a Hub(s)

Establishing a network that includes an intermodal hub, new fixed routes, and First Mile/Last Mile (FMLM) connections using TNCs would greatly increase local and regional connectivity.

- **Intermodal Hub in Stuart.** The hub should be in proximity to the Brightline Station and be the recognized county transportation center.
- **Jensen Beach Trolley**. New service to connect the Stuart intermodal hub to the beaches and Treasure Coast Mall and Jensen Beach.
- **Kanner Hwy Fixed-Route.** A new fixed-route service could be added to connect the transfer station at the Robert Morgade Library to the proposed Intermodal Hub in Stuart.
- **Realign Route 1**. Route 1 could deviate to connect directly to the Intermodal Hub.
- **Route 2 Express with Indiantown TNC.** A restructure of service delivery to provide for a new local TNC service in Indiantown.
- **Stuart TNC Zone**. A TNC service in Stuart could increase ridership to existing routes and improve access to affordable housing units, medical services, and other origins and destinations.
- **Palm City TNC Zone.** The Palm City TNC Zone would increase access for areas with a high proportion of transit-dependent populations and destinations.

- **Port Salerno TNC Zone.** This new service area in Port Salerno would connect to Route 1 and 4 from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm on weekdays only.
- **Jensen Beach/Rio/Ocean Breeze TNC Zone.** This new service area would connect to Route 1 and the proposed Jensen Beach Trolley from 6:00 am to 8:00 on weekdays only.

Evaluation of Alternatives

A methodology was developed to evaluate and rank each of the potential transit improvements within the four scenarios. The evaluations are based on the Goal and Objectives of the Marty System. Alternatives that had a low level of support for an objective were assigned a number 1, and alternatives with a very high level of support for an objective were assigned a number 4.

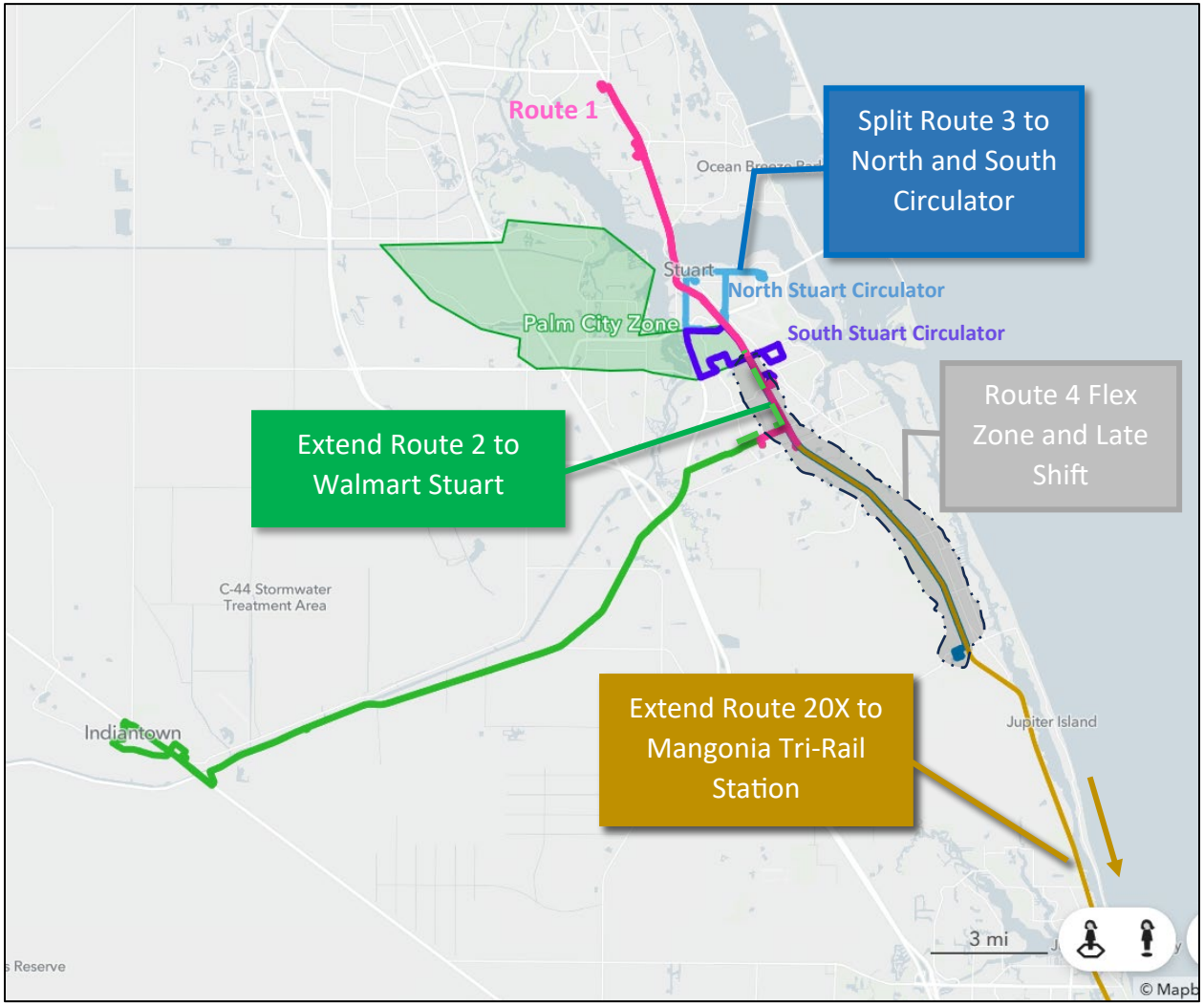
Evaluation of Alternatives

Objective	Description	Measure	Weight
Efficiency	Improves cost efficiencies.	Cost per New Rider	**30%**
Underserved Communities	Percent of service area that overlaps with Historically Disadvantaged Communities and transit-dependent populations.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**15%**
Effectiveness	Increases coverage in the community. Need found in Transit Gap Analysis. Reaches areas with high population and employment.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**15%**
Regional Connectivity	Improves access to regional transit services like Tri-Rail, future Brightline service, and to transit service in neighboring counties.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**10%**
Public Outreach	Major themes in observed in surveys, and stakeholder meetings.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**10%**
Safety	Improves safety through first-mile and last-mile access as well as safety hazards relating to heat.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**10%**
Resilience	Reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Facilitates emergency evacuations. Withstands hazards to wind, flooding, and wildfires.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**5%**
Technologically Advanced	Increases the use of state-of-the-art technologies that improve the convenience, reliability, and quality of service of the transit system.	Low/Med/High/Very High	**5%**

Ten Year Implementation Plan

The results of the evaluation resulted in the recommended Ten-Year Implementation Plan lists as illustrated in the figure below.

Recommended Implementation Plan Map



Add Bus Stops (40)

Split Route 3 to
- North Stuart Circulator (35-min headways)
- South Stuart circulator (40-min headways)

Route 4 Flex (80-min headways) **and Late Shift TNC**

Extend Route 20X to Mangonia Park Tri-Rail Station (80-min headways

Palm City TNC Zone from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm. Weekdays only.

Saturday TNC Pilot Program Routes 1, 2, 3, 4 from 6:00 am to 8:00 pm

Implementation of the Ten-Year Plan was estimated to generate 154,170 additional annual boardings with the greatest gains in ridership expected from adding 40 new bus stops to generate over 77,000 new trips per year followed by extending Routes 2 and 20X. By 2034, annual ridership is expected to grow to at least 294,136 trips a 276% increase over FY 2024. In contrast the Ten-Year Transit Demand Analysis for the existing system showed only a 13% increase.

The Ten-Year Financial Plan assumes a gradual rollout of the recommended services. A detailed breakdown of capital and operating costs and revenues may be found in **Appendix H**. Key issues raised by that Ten Year Financial Plan are as follows:

- It must be stressed that 78% of the Capital Plan is related to vehicle replacement and capital cost of vehicles which is necessary with or without improvements because the buses are reaching their expected life cycle in the next ten years.
- While revenues are anticipated to exceed costs for FY 2025-2027, the Plan projects that there will be shortfalls from FY 2028-FY 2034, resulting in a cumulative shortfall of $5.3 million over the Ten-Year period.
- The greatest shortfalls in funding occur in those years where local government funding dips below 30% of total costs, indicating that there may be a need to identify additional local funding sources.
- In order for the County to maximize grant revenues, County match contributions would need to increase.

Ten Year Financial Plan Total Costs and Revenues

Total Operating and Capital Program Costs and Revenues	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	10-Year Total
Total Revenue	$4,069,899	$4,335,622	$4,459,821	$4,551,626	$4,621,236	$4,843,734	$5,223,911	$5,405,027	$5,570,550	$5,767,397	$ 48,848,824
Total Cost	$3,301,829	$3,935,454	$4,278,112	$5,470,282	$6,593,831	$6,409,062	$7,257,492	$6,002,811	$5,580,385	$5,350,568	$ 54,179,826
Net Total (Contingency/Need)	$768,070	$400,168	$181,709	($918,656)	($1,972,594)	($1,565,328)	($2,033,581)	($597,784)	($9,834)	$416,829	$ (5,331,002)
% Local Governmental Share of Total Cost	46%	39%	35%	28%	23%	23%	23%	28%	32%	36%	29.7%

A table identifying potential funding sources for Unfunded Needs is summarized below.

Unfunded Transit Needs

Strategy	Operating Cost (2024$)	Capital Cost (2024$)	Potential Funding Source
Intermodal Hub	TBD	TBD	Leverage Brightline on Intermodal hub, Section 5307, Section 5309, Bus Facilities, FDOT Toll Credits, and/or Local Funds
Additional At-Stop LCD Real-Time Bus Arrival Displays	TBD	$10,000-$15,000 each	Section 5307, Section 5309, Bus Facilities, FDOT Toll Credits, FDOT Intermodal Program, FDOT Park and Ride Lot Program (where applicable) and/or Local Funds
Sunday Shift Routes 1, 2, 3, and 4	$128,934		FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs, RideUnited Grants
Stuart TNC Zone	$1,088,100		FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs, RideUnited Grants
Route 2 Express / Indiantown TNC Zone	$116,052	TBD	FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs, RideUnited Grants
Jensen/Rio/Ocean Breeze TNC Zone	$217,620	TBD	FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs, RideUnited Grants
Port Salerno TNC Zone	$93,690	TBD	FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs, RideUnited Grants
Kanner Hwy Fixed-Route.	$685,690*	$1,060,000*	Section 5307, Section 5309, FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs
Jensen Beach Trolley.	$217,630*	$1,590,000*	Section 5307, Section 5309FDOT Transit Corridor or Service Development Programs

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