

**METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

1:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 9, 2014
Cape Coral Public Works Building Room 200
815 Nicolas Parkway, Cape Coral, FL 33915



AGENDA

Call to Order

Roll Call

Approval of Minutes

1. *Review and Approval of the Minutes of the March 12, 2014 Executive Committee

New Business

2. Public Comments on New Business Items
3. Preliminary Report on the Analysis of 2040 LRTP Revenue Projections
4. FDOT Analysis of Maintenance of Asphalt and Concrete Sidewalks/Pathways
5. Discussion and Input on Reporting the Economic Benefits and Impact of Transit
6. Presentation on the Status of the TIGER Grant

Other Business

7. Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda
8. Announcements
9. Information and Distribution Items

Adjournment

* Action Items + May Require Action

All meetings of the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) are open to the public. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person requiring special accommodations to participate in this meeting should contact Mr. Johnny Limbaugh at the Lee MPO 48 hours prior to the meeting by calling (239) 330-2242; if you are hearing or speech impaired call (800) 955-8770 Voice / (800) 955-8771 TDD. Or, e-mail jlimbaugh@leempo.com.

The MPO's planning process is conducted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes. Any person or beneficiary who believes he has been discriminated against because of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, or familial status may file a complaint with the Lee County MPO Title VI Coordinator Johnny Limbaugh at (293) 330-2242 or by writing him at P.O. Box 150045, Cape Coral, Florida 33915-0045.

**MINUTES OF THE LEE COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
BOARD'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Held on March 12, 2014

The following members were present for the meeting of the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization Board's Executive Committee on March 8, 2014 at Cape Coral Public Works Building, Conference Room 200, 815 Nicholas Parkway E., Cape Coral, Florida.

Councilman Rick Williams	City of Cape Coral
Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass	Lee County Commission
Mayor Alan Mandel	Town of Fort Myers Beach
Vice-Mayor Stephen McIntosh	City of Bonita Springs
Mayor Kevin Ruane	City of Sanibel

Those also in attendance included: Don Scott and Johnny Limbaugh of Lee County MPO. Darla Letourneau BikeWalk Lee

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 1:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Agenda Item #1 – *Approval of the Minutes of the February 12, 2014 Executive Committee

MOTION BY MAYOR MANDEL TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 12, 2014 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. SECONDED BY COUNCILMAN WILLIAMS. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

NEW BUSINESS

Agenda Item #2 – Public Comments on New Business Items

Comments will be addressed at each agenda item.

Agenda Item #3 – Update on the Review of 2040 State and Federal Revenue Sources

Don Scott provided an update to FDOT's revenue forecast and staffs efforts to get clarification on methodology and current funding levels. The committee discussed the need to have realistic estimates. The committee is concerned that the MPO had not received a response to the questions that were asked at the work program presentation in December. Don informed the Committee that staff was meeting with FDOT to discuss projects and revenue forecast and hope to have additional information. The Committee discussed the need to have the information from FDOT and directed staff to request a FDOT presence at the next meeting.

Agenda Item #4 – Review and Provide Direction on the MPO Legal Services Agreement

The Executive Committee and staff had a discussion on whether to go with a monthly retainer or to charge by the hour. Staff recommend that MPO go with the retainer version based on discussions with other MPO's that have outside legal services. The Committee agreed with the retainer and gave staff direction to move forward.

Agenda Item #5 – Analysis of the Maintenance Costs of Asphalt and Concrete Sidewalks/Pathways along State Roads

Don Scott provided an overview of the item. FDOT District One staff has been discussing with the MPO staff that they will no longer be maintaining future constructed asphalt sidewalks and pathways within FDOT right-of-way along State roads. This first came up in regards to various pathway projects where the MPO had submitted applications for SU box funding to get pathways/sidewalks built along various state road segments (two examples are: SR 80 from Orange River to Buckingham Road and Colonial Boulevard from Metro Parkway to Veronica Shoemaker).

Executive Committee directed staff to request maintenance and construction cost for asphalt and concrete pathways from FDOT and ask the FDOT attend the next meeting to discuss the issue future.

Agenda Item #6 – Approve a Revision to the MPO Employee Personnel Policies

Don Scott presented staff's request to update current policy for providing staff life insurance term to a maximum benefit allowed of \$50,000.

Motion by Mayor Ruane to approve the change. Second by Commissioner Pendergrass. Motion approved.

Agenda Item #7- Update and Discussion on the TIGER Grant

Don Scott and Johnny Limbaugh gave an update on current activities.

Other Business

Agenda Item #8 – Public Comments on Items Not on the Agenda

There were no comments made under this item.

Board Member items

Mayor Mandel updated the Executive committee on the Medicare and Transportation Disadvantage program changes and effects on the LCB and local users and providers.

Don Scott provided a brief update on the MPO's ongoing Land Use Survey.

Don Scott provide the Executive committee a letter for the RPC requesting payment for services provided prior to the separation of the two agencies. Mayor Ruane discussed the reasoning behind the separation and suggested that the MPO council respond to the request asking for backup for the invoice. The board directed MPO council to draft a response to the RPC

Vice Mayor McIntosh brought up the funding of the LinC route. The City will be reviewing their ability to continue providing funding to support the route.

Agenda Item #9 – Announcements

There were no announcements made under this item.

Agenda Item #10 – Information and Distribution Items

None

ADJOURNMENT

**UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF STATE AND FEDERAL
2040 LRTP TRANSPORTATION REVENUES**

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Provide an update on the analysis of the 2040 Local and State Revenues.

The MPO staff is currently working with Tindale-Oliver and Associates on the review of the existing transportation revenue projections with the first part of the analysis focusing on the level of funding that would be expected to be generated over the LRTP time period. The initial data on the projections should be available by the Executive Committee meeting for the Committee's discussion. In addition, the MPO staff will report on the results of the Work Program meeting with FDOT that dealt with questions regarding the revenue projections, and what they will be providing us from the District for comparison with the long range revenues.

ANALYSIS OF THE MAINTENANCE COSTS OF ASPHALT AND CONCRETE SIDEWALKS AND PATHWAYS

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Seek Executive Committee input on addressing the FDOT policy requiring local governments to maintain asphalt sidewalks and pathways within the state road right-of-way.

This item is a follow up to the discussion from the last meeting in regards to requiring the local jurisdictions to maintain upcoming planned asphalt sidewalks and pathways along state roads. Last month the Executive Committee requested additional information on this item to better understand the issues. The MPO staff has requested from FDOT the cost of maintaining asphalt versus concrete, the comparison of construction costs and any other constructability issues that relate to why one would be used over the other. FDOT is currently putting that information together and will provide this at the April 9th meeting. This issue first came up when the MPO submitted applications for SU box funding to get multi-use pathways built along various state road segments consistent with the MPO's Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan (two examples are: SR 80 from Orange River to Buckingham Road and Colonial Boulevard from Metro Parkway to Veronica Shoemaker).

DISCUSSION AND INPUT ON REPORTING THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS AND IMPACT OF TRANSIT

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Committee input on working on an updated report to provide the economic benefits and impact of transit in Lee County.

At the Joint MPO Board meeting there were a lot of questions raised about the LinC route which has led staff to look at updating and providing a short report on the overall economic benefits and impact of public transportation in Lee County. **Attached** is a report that was done back in 2005. Staff is seeking input from the Committee on developing an updated report along with a discussion on the types of data items that you would like to see. For example, some of those items could cover all or some of the following: economic benefits and opportunities, congestion reduction, gas consumption, environmental benefits, household costs, attracting businesses, health benefits, quality of life and safety. Staff would also like to have a conversation about how road costs are reported in comparison to the reporting of transit costs.

The Economic Benefits of Public Transportation Lee County, Florida

A Report by Deborah Halliday, MPA

December 2005



Your Ride Is Here.

About the Author

Deborah Halliday, Masters of Public Administration from Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs, provides economic and policy analyses on a range of issues including transportation, housing and land use for local governments and national organizations. Ms. Halliday is author of *The Public Costs of Inadequate Affordable Housing in Lee County, Florida* and *Home Sweet Home: Why America Needs a National Housing Trust Fund*. In addition, Ms. Halliday has experience in land use and growth policy, both as author of *Working the Land: A Guide for Montana's Farming and Ranching Families* and as a Board Member of the Missoula City-County Consolidated Planning Board. A partial list of recent clients include: Lee County, Florida Board of County Commissioners, the Center for Community Change, Brevard County, Florida Planning Department, the Rural Collaborative and the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. Ms. Halliday can be reached at debhalliday@msn.com or 617-938-9396.

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Table of Contents

Section 1: Executive Summary	Pages 1-3
Section 2: Study Overview	Pages 4-7
Section 3: Economic Impact of Public Transportation	Pages 8-10
Section 4: Workforce Development: Connecting People to Jobs	Pages 11-12
Section 5: Tourism and Transit: The Trolley System	Pages 13-14
Section 6: Additional Benefits of Public Transportation	Pages 15-16
Section 7: Methodology	Pages 17-19
Section 8: Endnotes	Pages 20-21
Addendum A: Hurricane Season and LeeTran	Pages 22-23
Addendum B: LeeTran Encourages Fitness	Page 24

1 Executive Summary

This study examines the economic benefits of public transit in Lee County, Florida. Traditionally, communities support public transportation because of the social benefits derived from transit service: buses, trains and trolleys provide a much-needed way to transport seniors, low-wage workers and residents, students and tourists to places of work, healthcare, schooling and recreation. Public transit's importance in these people's lives promises to continue, as skyrocketing fuel prices mean more people will seek alternate transportation choices.

Increasingly, however, communities are looking to better understand the benefits that public transportation provides for the whole community: *including those who never step on a bus or trolley*. Research is showing that public transit is an important generator of economic benefits. *The Economic Benefits of Public Transportation – Lee County, Florida* examines economic benefits in three areas: economic impact; workforce development; and tourism. The following findings result from this analysis:

1. LeeTran generates \$73 million in economic benefits each year

Economic benefits are analyzed in four areas: economic multiplier of dollars spent in the local community; road impact savings; commuter time savings; and worker transportation. The benefits of the trolley system are reviewed as a core function of the tourist economy in Lee County; however, the economic impacts are not quantified in this study.

- **Economic multiplier:** A \$6.3 million investment of County funding generates \$62 million in the local economy each year.
- **Road impact savings:** LeeTran keeps cars off the road that would otherwise result in \$5.2 million of road impact each year.
- **Commuter time savings:** LeeTran saves commuters \$1.3 million each year in time not spent in traffic congestion.
- **Worker transportation:** Almost 50 percent of LeeTran riders are traveling for work-related purposes. If LeeTran were to cease operations, \$4.16 million in workforce wages would be lost to the local economy every year.
- **The trolley system:** Over two million people visited Lee County in 2004, contributing \$1.1 billion to the local economy through hotels, motels, and other accommodations.¹ LeeTran provides tourists with important access to beaches, shopping and recreation.

2. LeeTran provides qualitative benefits to the community as well

In addition to the economic benefits listed previously, this study examined substantive benefits derived from public transportation that are compelling for reasons other than dollar-sense.

- **Public transit reduces fuel costs.** Florida gas prices rose 38 percent in the past year alone.² As the nation grapples with the implications of an ever-shrinking supply of crude oil, communities with public transit provide people with more choices. The spike in fuel costs is already driving up transit use: in August 2005, LeeTran passenger usage was up 22.85 percent from the same time period in 2004.³ LeeTran officials hypothesize this to be directly related to the spike in gasoline prices.
- **Public transit reduces crash incidences.** Lee County is experiencing a record number of traffic-related fatalities in 2005.⁴ There is a direct relationship between the number of cars on the road, and the frequency of accidents. Public transit keeps cars off the road, helping to minimize crash incidences. It is estimated that public transit is 170 times safer than is automobile travel.⁵
- **Public transit reduces air pollution.** Similarly, fewer cars means less air pollution – a major contributor to asthma-related illnesses in children and the elderly.⁶ Public transit reduces motor vehicle emissions, both because public transportation produces substantially less toxic emissions per passenger mile than do automobiles and because public transit keeps cars off the road that otherwise would be in use without the presence of public transit.⁷

3. As Lee County grows, traffic congestion is worsening – making public transit an important choice for travel.

The 1990s population boom that made Lee County one of the fastest growing counties in the nation continues. Lee County officials expect an additional 170,500 people will reside in the County by 2015 – a 31 percent increase over current population, estimated at 520,000 people.⁸ Automobile ownership outpaces population growth, and so it is expected that well over 200,000 new cars will be on the roadways in the next ten years.

Traffic congestion is already a major concern in the community:

- **Traffic outranks concern for crime, drugs, growth and taxes.** When asked what potential problems exist in the community, 50 percent of local residents ranked traffic congestion the #1 problem – well above concern for other community issues.⁹
- **Local residents are taking longer to get to work each day.** Workers spend 22 percent more time getting to work each day than ten years ago – from an average of 21 minutes to over 25 minutes each way, every day.¹⁰
- **Local businesses are concerned about traffic.** A recent survey of Bonita Springs-area businesses rated traffic congestion one of *the biggest*

impediments to doing business in Lee County.¹¹ For local businesses, traffic concerns outranked worries about the lack of affordable housing.

As the community grapples with escalating fuel costs and increased traffic, more and more residents are turning to the public transportation system. **In the past year alone, LeeTran passenger trips increased 22 percent.** This increasing demand from people who seek out alternate choices for transportation must be addressed to continue to meet the needs of a changing population.

4. Public transit provides choices and benefits for *all* residents.

Local residents benefit from public transit even if they never step on a LeeTran bus or trolley. This study calculates the economic benefits derived from public transit, establishing relationships between public transit and reduced roadway wear and tear, reduced commuter delays and fuel consumption, fewer motor vehicle crashes, and less air pollution each year. These elements of public transportation benefit *all* Lee County citizens, regardless of their use of public transportation.

There are other benefits of public transportation that the whole community is richer for having. The increased mobility of older residents, students, and workers benefits the community as opportunities arise for the community to be more engaged with one another. The ongoing increase in cost – in both time and money – to park in downtown Fort Myers is an impediment to families seeking services and activities downtown. Increased cost of housing means more and more people are looking farther from employment centers for places to live. All of these trends are made more doable in a community that has access to reliable, affordable public transportation.

As a result of this analysis, public officials, community leaders, neighborhood organizations, and concerned citizens can better assess LeeTran's contribution to the community and can plan more effectively for future needs – with a clearer understanding of the integral role transit plays in the economy. This study finds that public transportation not only provides substantial social benefits, but significant economic benefits as well.

2 Study Overview

Public transportation is a central function of a vibrant, growing economy. In its simplest form, public transit helps people get places, whether it is to their jobs or schools, to the doctor, or to shop and recreate. Lee County, Florida is growing steadily each year – the population boom that increased the community's residents by 31.6 percent in the 1990s shows few signs of abating. Officials project an additional 31 percent population increase to occur over the next ten years.¹² The mobility needs of a growing community are something Lee County can plan for, and public transportation – along with roadway expansion – meets a critical need in the community.

Traditionally, communities support public transportation because of the social benefits derived from transit service: low-wage workers and residents, seniors, students and tourists all seek out public transportation to help them get around the community. Increasingly, however, communities are looking to better understand the benefits that public transportation provides to the whole community, *including those who never step on a bus or trolley.*

Understanding the broader benefits of public transportation is critical to preparing for a vibrant, well-functioning community. At this time, the pressures of growth are showing up in the dissatisfaction residents and business owners express.

- **Traffic outranks citizens' concerns for crime, drugs, growth and taxes.**¹³ Commuters are spending longer periods of time driving to and from work, and the traffic will only worsen as the population boom in Lee County continues.
- **Local residents are taking longer to get to work each day.** Workers spend 22 percent more time getting to work each day than they did 10 years ago – from an average of 21 minutes to over 25 minutes each way, every day.¹⁴
- **Local businesses are concerned about traffic.** A recent survey of Bonita Springs-area businesses rated traffic congestion one of the biggest impediments to doing business in Lee County.¹⁵ Traffic concerns outranked worries about a lack of affordable housing.

Public transit alone cannot mitigate the impacts of too many cars, too much time spent in traffic, too much hassle to get around town. But – as this study will show – public transit *does* provide benefits to the community in many ways.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the economic benefits derived from public transportation in Lee County. Public benefits are analyzed in four areas: economic multiplier of dollars spent in the local community; road impact savings; commuter time

savings; and worker transportation. The benefits of the trolley system are also analyzed. To establish economic benefit, this study derives its methodologies from existing transportation research at institutions such as the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida, the Texas Transportation Institute at the Texas A&M University System, the Lee County Department of Transportation and the Center for Business and Economic Research at the University of Central Florida.

This report is intended to serve as a guide for business leaders, government officials, neighborhood groups, planners, and community members who seek to understand how public transportation can better meet the needs of a growing community in Lee County.

Scope of Research

This study analyzes the economic benefits derived from the public transportation services provided by LeeTran, which is a department of Lee County government. The economic impacts examined are those that benefit the entire community – not just those who regularly use public transportation. The main impacts analyzed are those that result from administering the bus service and from reducing the number of cars on the road. LeeTran provides many services to the community that are not analyzed, including, but not limited to, its paratransit services, which provide transportation choices for persons with disabilities. LeeTran recently took over provision of paratransit services from a contracted provider and is proving to provide better services at reduced cost. These services are critical to providing mobility options for important populations in the community. In addition, benefits that are crucial but difficult to express in economic terms – benefits such as reducing personal fuel consumption, lowered frequency of accidents and air pollution – are added because they benefit the community’s overall quality of life and are important benefits derived from public transportation.

Report Section Overview

Section 3: Economic Impact of Transit

Economic benefits are analyzed in four areas: economic multiplier of dollars spent in the local community; road impact savings; commuter time savings; and worker transportation. The benefits of the trolley system are also analyzed, although the economic benefits of the trolley system are not quantified in this study.

The economic multiplier of dollars spent in the local economy calculates the ways in which public spending for transit services stimulates the local economy *directly* through job generation and wages, and *indirectly* as the demand for goods and services created by the provision of public transportation creates a “ripple effect” throughout the economy. This analysis concludes that a \$6.3 million investment of County funds generates \$62 million in the local economy each year, as shown on Chart 3.1.

The second and third economic analyses examine impact derived from fewer cars on the road. Public transit keeps additional cars off the road in two ways. The first is a matter of efficiencies: buses and trolleys allow more people to travel with fewer road miles because more people are on a bus or trolley than can fit in a car. The second approach is

understood through a thought process: “If public transit services were to cease tomorrow, what would be the impact in the community?”¹⁶

It turns out that it would be substantial. A recent LeeTran ridership survey showed that 34 percent of LeeTran passengers would use a car if bus service were not available.¹⁷ That translates to an additional 3.6 million vehicle miles on the roadways each year. Keeping those extra cars off the road saves the community valuable time and money, in reduced wear and tear on the roads and in reduced commuter time spent in traffic congestion.

This study concludes that transit saves the community \$5.2 million of road impact each year, even after allowing for the impact that buses have on the roadways at this time. Road impact is the cost of wear and tear, maintenance and replacement of road systems over the long run. The Lee County Department of Transportation estimates that it costs \$160 per mile over a 20-year period for every weekday mile traveled.¹⁸ By keeping cars off the roadways, LeeTran is reducing the long-term deterioration of the local road system. This analysis is shown on Chart 3.2.

Commuter time savings utilizes research done by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) to estimate hours saved as a result of public transportation services. *TTI's Urban Mobility Report* is the longest-running study of traffic congestion in America. One of the communities it analyzes is Cape Coral, Florida. These data are commonly used to report congestion patterns in Lee County.¹⁹ TTI estimates public transit saves commuters 102,000 hours of travel time each year. Using local median wage data, this study estimates that the transit system saves \$1.3 million each year. Chart 3.3 illustrates this methodology.

Section 4: Workforce Development: *Connecting People to Jobs*

Local businesses are concerned about traffic and congestion. A recent survey revealed congestion as one of the biggest impediments to doing business in Lee County.²⁰ Employers routinely identify loss of worker productivity, and increased stress and absenteeism – which can lead to increased employee turnover – as outcomes of too much traffic and congested commutes.

For lower wage workers, public transit is critical to job access: low-wage workers spend up to 36 percent of their household budget on transportation services – almost twice the amount spent by average households – mostly to gain access to job sites.²¹ This study uses a methodology established by the University of Central Florida to determine the impact a cessation of public transit would have on the community's workforce. This study finds an estimated 1,156 workers rely on LeeTran every day to get to and from work, providing \$4.16 million in wages to the local economy that would not exist without bus service. This analysis is shown in Chart 4.1.

Section 5: Tourism and Transit: *The Trolley System*

Tourism is a major economic generator in Lee County. It is estimated that over two million people visited the area in 2004, contributing \$1.1 billion to the local economy through hotels, motels and other accommodations.²² Not included in this figure are the

dollars spent at restaurants, in souvenir shops, and by the many visitors who stay with family or friends or in their own seasonal residences each year.

In winter 2005, LeeTran did an innovative experiment in collaboration with the Town of Fort Myers Beach and the Florida Department of Transportation, in which they increased trolley service and created a designated trolley lane across the Matanzas Pass Bridge. The project proved highly successful, with ridership *doubling* in each of the three months of expanded service. A study of the expansion found that the trolleys kept 50,000 cars off the road and saved more than 20,000 gallons of gas.²³ The trolley service expansion is a good example of how providing reliable, frequent service can increase usage and meet a core need in the community.

Section 6: Additional Benefits of Public Transportation

The final section of the report examines benefits derived from public transportation that are not easily rendered in economic terms, but that are valuable to the community nonetheless.

The recent increase in fuel costs is already driving up public transit usage. In August 2005, LeeTran passenger usage was up 22.85 percent from the same time period in 2004.²⁴ LeeTran officials hypothesize the increase in ridership is directly related to the spike in gasoline costs that is hitting households with little excess resources especially hard.

Public transit also reduces motor vehicle emissions in two ways: public transportation produces substantially less toxic emissions per passenger mile than do automobiles, and public transit keeps cars off the road that otherwise would be in use without the presence of public transit.²⁵ Auto emissions have a variety of effects on human health. Ample research supports the relationship between air quality and health – particularly for children and the elderly.

The final benefit of public transportation that is analyzed is the reduction in the number of car crashes that occurs through transit use. Public transportation is 170 times safer than is automobile travel.²⁶ More importantly, there is a direct relationship between the number of cars on the road and the frequency of accidents. Lee County experienced a record number of car-related fatalities in 2004, and efforts to stem this trend are vital to the safety of the community.

In Conclusion

Through these analyses, using well-established methodologies and readily-accessible data, *The Economic Benefits of Public Transportation – Lee County* provides readers insight into the central role public transit plays in the community. Public transit is an important economic generator in the local economy, a key contributor to minimizing the traffic resulting from ongoing growth, and a vital component of workforce development and tourism. This study illustrates the many ways in which public transit is a critical component to meeting the growing needs of Lee County citizenry in a timely and efficient way.

3 Economic Impact of Public Transportation

This study analyzes the economic impact that public transportation has in Lee County, Florida. This section analyses three areas: (1) economic multiplier of dollars spent in the local community; (2) road impact savings; and (3) commuter time savings. Workforce development, trolley services, and additional benefits of public transportation are covered in Sections 4, 5, and 6, respectively. Section 7 provides information on the methodologies used in each section.

I: Economic Multiplier Effect in the Local Economy

A \$6.3 million annual investment of County funds generates \$62 million in the local economy every year.

Public transit is an important engine in the local economy. Spending for public transportation stimulates the economy *directly* through job generation and wages, and *indirectly* as the demand for good and services created by the provision of public transportation creates a “ripple effect”. LeeTran spent \$24 million in Fiscal Year 2005 in capital and operating expenses to provide bus and trolley service and accessible transportation services for local residents and tourists.²⁷

In Fiscal Year 2005, Lee County contributed \$6.3 million of the cost to operate LeeTran, or a little more than one-fourth of the total budget. (The remainder is raised through local municipalities, state and federal dollars, grants, advertising revenue and rider fares.)

A recent University of South Florida Center for Urban Transportation Research analysis of the “ripple effect” concluded that for every dollar spent on public transportation in Florida, a cost/benefit ratio range of 3:1 to 5.5:1 occurs.²⁸ The benefits are in job creation and direct and indirect infusions of transit operations spending in the local economy. This study uses the median figure – 4.25:1 – for the following analysis. Of the \$24 million LeeTran budget in Fiscal Year 2005, LeeTran spent \$14.6 million on operating costs and on local capital costs.

Chart 3.1: Economic impact of the multiplier effect

LeeTran operating & local capital costs, FY05	\$14.6 million
Number of times each dollar benefits the local economy through goods, services, other jobs being created to meet those market needs	4.25
Annual impact of multiplier effect:	\$62 million

II. Road Impact Savings

More cars on the road costs money. Transit keeps cars off the road.

The cost of building, maintaining, expanding and ultimately replacing local roadways is enormous. Lee County has more than \$331 million of road projects programmed for the next three years alone; local municipalities and the State have their own projects in the County totaling in the tens of millions of dollars.²⁹ To help pay for the cost of providing adequate roadways throughout the County, the Lee County Department of Transportation (DOT) estimates that it costs \$160 per mile over a 20-year period for every weekday mile traveled.³⁰ Referred to as the road impact fee, DOT assesses this fee to help fund road improvements over the long term.

Public transit saves the County money by keeping extra cars off the roadways. A recent LeeTran ridership survey found that 34 percent of LeeTran passengers would use a car to make their trip if bus service were not available.³¹ This translates to 3.6 million new vehicle miles on the road every year. Those additional cars add up. Even when one considers the wear and tear on the roads created by existing LeeTran bus service, keeping people out of a car and on the bus saves the public money. Additionally, buses create increased road capacity for other drivers: fewer cars are on the road because riders are on a bus, which creates space for other cars to use a road.

Chart 3.2: Economic impact – road impact savings	
New vehicle miles on the road if bus service was unavailable (annual)	3.6 million new miles
Current vehicle miles traveled by LeeTran buses	2.9 million miles
Total new miles on the road if bus service was unavailable (3.6 m – 2.9 m)	.65 million miles
Cost per mile, over 20 years (road impact fee)	\$160
Total savings of bus service, over 20 years	\$104.7 million
Annual impact of road impact savings:	\$ 5.23 million

III. Commuter Time Savings

Public transit saves commuters time – even if they never step on a bus or trolley.

The longest-running study of traffic congestion in America is the *Urban Mobility Report*, conducted annually by the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI). TTI is preeminent in the transportation field for its databases of trend analyses on transportation demand and impacts. Based on their research, TTE confirms that, on a daily basis, Americans are experiencing longer delays, spending more time in traffic, and that the spread of congestion is impacting more and more of the nation's roadways. In fact, each person

traveling in peak time periods wastes on average 62 hours a year: spending nearly eight full working days in traffic.³²

Too much time spent driving The average American spent 443 hours behind the wheel of a car last year: the equivalent of 55 eight-hour work days.³³ Lee County *wasted 2.3 million hours* in delayed traffic during peak rush hour travel last year.³⁴ Increasingly, studies are showing that the increased time spent in cars is leading to poorer health (people tend to eat and to eat poorly to help pass the time while on the road) and added stress.

Too much money spent waiting Last year, it cost Lee County drivers \$42 million in time delays and fuel wasted as a result of congestion on the roadways during peak travel times.³⁵

Commuter costs are rising as fuel prices skyrocket. Florida gas prices rose 38 percent in the past year, alone.³⁶ As the nation grapples with the implications of an ever-shrinking supply of crude oil, communities with public transit provide people with more choices. The spike in fuel costs is already driving up transit use. In August 2005 LeeTran passenger usage is up 22.85 percent from the same time period in 2004.³⁷ LeeTran officials hypothesize this to be directly related to the spike in gasoline prices.

Public transit puts more money in local residents' pockets and more time on their hands *even if they never step on a bus or trolley*. As mentioned previously, LeeTran keeps 3.6 million vehicle miles off local roadways each year. Fewer cars mean local residents save both time and money.

Drivers save time because fewer cars on the road mean shorter waiting times at stop lights and at major intersections. The *2004 Urban Mobility Report* estimates that public transportation saves Lee County-area drivers 102,000 hours of peak travel delay each year.³⁸ Using the local hourly median wage of \$12.73, it is possible to estimate the real savings derived from keeping additional cars off the road at peak travel times in Lee County.³⁹

Chart 3.3: Economic impact – commuter time savings	
# hours of delay saved as a result of public transportation, 2004 ⁴⁰	102,000
Local hourly median wage, 2004 ⁴¹	\$12.73
Annual impact of commuter savings:	\$1.3 million

4 Workforce Development: Connecting People to Jobs

Traffic is one of the biggest impediments to doing business in Lee County.⁴²

Local businesses are concerned about traffic congestion – rating it as one of the biggest impediments to doing business in Lee County.⁴³ Employers routinely identify loss of worker productivity, increased stress, and absenteeism as outcomes of too much traffic and congested commutes.⁴⁴ A recent survey of New Economy companies rated access to mass transit as an extremely important factor in their selection process for new corporate locations.⁴⁵

Workers already pay a lot for transportation costs. Families spend 19 percent of their household budget on transportation – second only to the cost of housing.⁴⁶ That means families spend more on transportation costs, such as owning and maintaining a car, and purchasing fuel and insurance, than they spend on food, clothing, or health care. Low-wage workers spend even more of their budget on transportation. Many lower-income families pay up to 36 percent of their household budget on transportation services – almost twice the amount spent by average households – mostly to gain access to job sites.⁴⁷

Lee County's sky-rocketing housing market is creating pressure on many workers and families to seek housing farther from the city, which creates more pressure on existing transportation systems – including public transportation and road infrastructure – as workers must travel farther to get from home to their job. Public transportation can be a key component of both transporting employees who must live far from where they work, and of mitigating the increase in number of cars on the road by keeping some people out of cars and on the bus.

The recent spike in gasoline prices is making the cost of private transportation more expensive than ever. Communities that have well-developed public transit systems can offer workers another option to the grid lock and cost spikes. Recent studies comparing the relationship between public transit and household transportation costs show that people spend more money on transportation when transit is not readily available.⁴⁸

Public transit plays a critical role in connecting workers with jobs.

Job access is a central function of public transportation: about one-half of LeeTran riders are going to or coming home from work. The majority of these workers are low-wage workers: 65 percent of workers riding LeeTran come from households earning less than \$20,000/year.⁴⁹ Many of these workers are employed in the fastest growing job sectors of the local economy. Home health care aides, medical assistants, retail salespeople and

office clerks – all ranking in the top ten growing employment sectors, all earning very modest wages – perform vital services in the community.⁵⁰ Many of these workers rely on public transit to get to their workplaces.

A lack of transportation options is increasingly acknowledged as a major barrier to work for economically disadvantaged people – while most people take jobs and decide how to get to work afterwards, low income people find their choice of job limited by transportation barriers.

Nationally, two-thirds of *new* jobs are located in suburban areas, while three-quarters of low-wage workers live in central cities or rural areas not well-served by transit.⁵¹ In Lee County, many lower-income people live in the City of Fort Myers and in outlying areas such as Lehigh Acres. Helping these workers get to job centers is critical. A 1999 national study found that 94 percent of welfare recipients attempting to move into the workforce rely on public transportation to get to their jobs.⁵²

Economic Impact of Public Transportation on Low Wage Workers

If public transportation services were to cease tomorrow, lower-wage workers would suffer a disproportionate impact. As mentioned previously, roughly 50 percent of LeeTran riders are going to or coming home from work. In a recent survey, LeeTran asked riders what they would do if LeeTran bus services were not available.⁵³ A full 20 percent of people who were traveling for work purposes said they would not make the trip. Using a methodology established by the University of Central Florida to determine the impact a cessation of public transportation services would have on the community’s workforce,⁵⁴ the following economic impact is reached:

Chart 4.1: Economic impact - worker transportation	
Estimated number of round-trip work-trips/day ⁵⁵	1,156
Annual wages earned by LeeTran work-trip riders	\$20.6 million
Percent LeeTran work-trip riders who would not be able to reach work if the bus were unavailable	20.21%
Annual lost wages if LeeTran bus service were not available	\$4.16 million
An estimated 1,156 workers rely on LeeTran every day to get to and from work, providing \$4.16 million each year to the local economy that would not exist without bus service.	

5 Tourism and Transit: The Trolley System

Expanded trolley service kept 50,000 cars off the beaches and saved 20,000 gallons of gas.

Magnificent beaches, wildlife refuges and superb climate: it's no wonder that more and more tourists are drawn to Lee County every year. In 2004, two million people visited Lee County, spending \$1.1 *billion* on the local economy on hotels, motels and other accommodations.⁵⁶ Not included in this figure are the dollars spent at restaurants, in souvenir shops, and by the many visitors who stay with family or friends or in their own seasonal residences each year.

As Lee County grows – both in year-round residents and as a tourist destination – local government is responding to increased demands on basic infrastructure in important ways. The Southwest Florida International Airport (SFIA) just completed a \$438 million expansion to meet the influx of visitors; the Federal Aviation Administration projects that the SFIA will be the eighth-fastest growing airport in the country by 2010.⁵⁷

Transit is a core component of any community's infrastructure. LeeTran's trolley services transport passengers from Summerlin Square "Park and Ride" to Fort Myers Beach and Bonita Springs, with connecting local service to Cape Coral, Fort Myers and the Southwest Florida International Airport. They offer services every fifteen-minutes with free "Park and Ride" services during the peak tourist season (mid-December to mid-April) and regular services during the rest of the year.

- **Trolley service is vital to the tourist economy.** Almost 50 percent of trolley riders are not residents of the County, and most out-of-town trolley riders are vacationers who come to the area at least once each year, if not more often.⁵⁸ A full 45 percent of vacationers who use the trolley do not have a car available to them while they visit.⁵⁹ In other words, they depend on the local trolley system to get around town while they shop, beach and vacation in the area.
- **The trolley connects shoppers to local stores.** A recent study of Fort Myers Beach's trolley study revealed that 75 percent of the 235,000 "Park and Ride" uses reported spending an average of \$35.60 which at the beach, for a total expenditure of \$6.3 million.⁶⁰ While much of this money may have been spent if tourists had to drive onto the Beach, the money saved in parking costs and the convenience of that the trolley system facilitated the maximizing of funding spent on the Beach.

- **Trolley service reduces parking and congestion on the beaches.** Tourists' and residents' efforts to get to and from Fort Myers Beach make the Matanzas Pass Bridge the busiest and most congested stretch of roadway in the area during peak tourism season. Cars can sit bumper-to-bumper for 45 minutes as they inch along the bridge. A recent survey done of trolley riders found that 93 percent of riders viewed the traffic on Fort Myers Beach as very or somewhat significant, and estimated the trolley saved between 10 and 30 minutes of travel time.⁶¹
- **Expanding trolley service meets growing needs.** Last winter, LeeTran, in partnership with Fort Myers Beach, Lee County and the Florida Department of Transportation, enhanced its trolley service to Fort Myers Beach by increasing the number of trolleys, the frequency of service, and by creating an express lane across the Matanzas Pass Bridge. Research into the impacts of the increased trolley ridership found that the expanded service kept about 50,000 cars off Fort Myers Beach and saved more than 20,000 gallons of gas.⁶² Furthermore, the free park-and-ride trolleys more than *doubled* the number of riders in the first three months of 2005. The trolley expansion illustrates the potential impact that comes from offering more frequent transit services in the community.

6 Additional Benefits of Public Transportation

The final section of the report examines benefits derived from public transportation that are not easily rendered in economic terms, but that are valuable to the community nonetheless.

Public transit reduces fuel costs

Florida gas prices rose 38 percent in the past year, alone.⁶³ As the nation grapples with the implications of an ever-shrinking supply of crude oil, communities with public transit provide people with more choices. The recent increase in fuel costs is already driving up public transit usage. In August 2005, LeeTran passenger usage was up 22.85 percent from the same time period in 2004.⁶⁴ LeeTran officials hypothesize this to be directly related to the spike in gasoline costs.

Increases in fuel costs hit modest income households – the elderly, low-wage workers, and students – the hardest. Lower-income households spend up to 36 percent of their budget on transportation – almost double the rate of average households.⁶⁵ For these people, having a choice in public transportation is critical. Recent studies comparing the relationship between public transit and household transportation costs show that people spend more money on transportation when transit is not readily available.⁶⁶

Public transit reduces air pollution

Motor vehicles are responsible for one-third to one-half of the smog in most metropolitan areas.⁶⁷ By keeping additional cars off the road, public transit helps to keep the air cleaner. Public transportation dramatically reduces motor vehicle emissions, both because public transportation produces substantially less toxic emissions per passenger mile than do automobiles and because public transit keeps cars off the road that otherwise would be in use without the presence of public transit.⁶⁸

While Lee County enjoys minimal “bad air” days due to its ideal location along the ocean, it is not isolated from the ails of compromised air quality. Roughly 7 percent of children under 17 years old in Lee County suffer from asthma, and it is the leading cause of school absences from a chronic illness.⁶⁹ Nationally, the elderly account for nearly 3,000 of the 5,000 deaths due to asthma each year.⁷⁰ Auto emissions have other negative effects on human health, which can be as mild as itchy eyes, and as severe as chronic lung disease or heart failure.⁷¹

Public transit reduces crash incidences

The final benefit of public transportation that is analyzed is the reduction in number of car crashes that occurs through transit use. Public transportation is 170 times safer than is automobile travel.⁷² More importantly, there is a direct relationship between the number

of cars on the road and the frequency of accidents. As a Cape Coral police officer said in a recent newspaper article, "There are more people, and that means more traffic. And more traffic means more accidents."⁷³ By keeping additional cars off the road, LeeTran helps to keep the roads safer.

As the area grows, local residents are seeing more accidents. Lee County has experienced a record number of traffic-related fatalities in 2005.⁷⁴ Cape Coral accidents were up 29 percent in the first four months of 2005.⁷⁵

Accidents primarily impact the individuals and families directly involved in an accident, but increasingly, economists are able to isolate the costs associated with motor vehicle accidents borne by the community as a whole. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that motor vehicle accidents cost \$230.6 billion in 2000, a 50 percent increase from 1994.⁷⁶ In Florida, motor vehicle accidents cost the state \$14.4 *billion* in 2000, equal to \$901 per person.⁷⁷ It is estimated that 75 percent of the costs associated with motor vehicle crashes are borne by people not involved with the accident – through increased insurance rates, state and local taxes to support public services related to crashes, and the fastest growing sector of costs in this field: travel delays.⁷⁸ Public transit saves local drivers money by reducing the number of cars on the road. Looking only at travel delay, it is easy to see how LeeTran – by keeping cars off the road – saves everybody time and money by reducing the likelihood of a motor vehicle crash.

7 Methodology

Section 3: Economic Impact of Public Transportation

I: Economic Multiplier Effect in the Local Economy

This section relies on recent research done by the University of South Florida Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR), *entitled Relationships Between Business and Public Transportation*, by Jay A. Goodwill, P.E., CCTM. In this report, Goodwill examines the fundamental economic relationship that can be measured from investments in public transportation. These involve “direct” investments that support jobs in the short term, and “indirect” investments or spending by suppliers whose goods and services are used in transit operations or that actively support jobs in transit. Both of these revenue streams provide business revenue and personal income, as income is spent throughout the economy, and supports other jobs and related spending. Goodwill then conducts an extensive literature review and concludes that ranges of 3:1 and 5.5:1 accurately sum up efforts to determine economic impacts of public transportation’s economic multiplier effect.

For the purposes of this study, researchers applied the middle range of the CUTR analysis, or 4.25:1. LeeTran expenditures were for Fiscal Year 2005. To accurately estimate the effect of local dollars in the community, LeeTran Fiscal Manager Susan Riley extricated capital expenditures made outside of the local economy. Riley estimates LeeTran spent \$14,660,503 in FY 2005 on operating and local capital expenditures. Using a cost/benefit ration of 4.25:1, a total impact of \$62,307,138 is derived.

II. Road Impact Savings

The road impact fee analysis is based on numbers developed in *the Road Impact Fee Update for Lee County, Florida* by Duncan Associates in June 2003. This report calculates that it costs the County \$160 per vehicle mile traveled for replacement and increased capacity costs over a 20-year period. This figure is arrived at by calculating vehicle miles traveled on an average weekday trip and multiplying that figure by the net cost of replacement roadways currently scheduled in the County.

To calculate the road impact savings of public transportation, researchers looked first at the annual passenger miles as reported by LeeTran in 2004 (10,780,280 miles). Researchers then estimated the percentage of these passenger miles that would become vehicle miles on the roadways should transit stop providing service. This number – 33.85 percent – is based on a passenger survey conducted in 2003 and reported in the *Lee County Transit Development Plan*. When asked “How would you make this trip if not by

bus?" 10.1 percent of respondents said they would drive, 7.5 percent said they would take a taxi, and 32.5 percent said they would ride with someone else. Based on conversation with transportation planners at Tindale Oliver & Associates and the University of South Florida Center for Urban Transportation Research, researchers estimate that 50 percent of respondents who said they would ride with someone else (16.25 percent) would generate new shared trips. Therefore, a total of 33.85 percent of passengers would use a car for their travel if a LeeTran bus were not available. This number is then multiplied by the annual passenger miles (10,780,280) to establish the number of new vehicle miles traveled on the road: 3,649,124. The current bus system already consumes vehicle miles, however, and so this number (2,994,146) is subtracted from the number of new miles traveled (3,649,124) to establish that 654,978 new vehicle miles would be on the road if transit ceased to operate. This number is then multiplied by the road impact fee (\$160/mile) to establish a savings of \$104,796,604. The road impact fee calculates costs based on a 20-year period, however, and so savings are annualized by dividing \$104,796,604 by 20, which results in an annual savings on \$5,239,830. It should be noted that the road impact fee is based on average weekday travel, and this methodology uses total miles traveled rather than weekday miles traveled. This is done because the base number used for all ensuing analyses is the 3,649,124 miles of savings, and researchers wished to avoid unnecessary confusion in the body of the report.

III. Air Pollution Savings

Air pollution savings are derived from air pollution estimates by Apogee Research in *The Costs of Transportation*, published by the Conservation Law Foundation. Apogee estimated air pollution costs for Boston, MA and Portland, ME during peak and off-peak travel at high, medium and low land use densities. This study uses medium density expressway travel during peak travel times, or 6.6 cents per passenger mile. Using the methodology cited previously to determine passenger miles saved as a result of public transit, 3.6 million passenger miles is multiplied by 6.6 cents per miles to establish an air pollution savings of \$237,600 annually.

IV. Commuter Time Savings

Commuter time savings are calculated by using the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) estimates of Hours of Delay Saved by Public Transportation for Cape Coral/Fort Myers. TTI estimates that public transportation saved 102,000 hours of delay each year. This number is then multiplied by the local hourly median wage (\$12.73 per hour) to establish annual savings of \$1.3 million. Because the data relies on Cape Coral/Fort Myers, the actual costs are underestimated since Lee County is larger than the urban area analyzed by TTI.

V: Economic Impact of Worker Transportation

The economic impact of worker transportation is based on a methodology developed in *The Economic Importance of LYNX to Central Florida – 2002* by W. Warren McHone of

the University of Central Florida College of Business Administration Center for Business and Economic Research.

Estimated number of round-trip work-trips per day

Estimated number of round-trip work-trips per day is based on 2004 data provided by LeeTran on average unlinked passenger trips per day for weekdays (8,243) and Saturdays (6,201). Sundays (2,142) are excluded to isolate prevailing work day activities. An average of 7,903 unlinked trips per day is derived by multiplying weekdays (8,243) by 5 (weekdays) and adding Saturdays (6,201) and dividing this by 6 (total days). The LeeTran ridership survey indicates that 43.9 percent of riders are traveling to or from work. Thus, 7,903 (average unlinked trips) multiplied by 43.9 percent is 3,469 unlinked trips. This methodology assumes that a LeeTran passenger averages 1.5 bus transfers per origin-destination trip, or three unlinked bus trips per round-trip. Therefore, 7,903 (average unlinked trips) divided by 3 (average number of unlinked bus trips) equals an estimated 1,156 round-trip work-trips per day.

Annual wages earned by LeeTran work-trip bus riders

Wage data for LeeTran riders is unavailable. Household income data shows that the typical LeeTran riders lives in a household with an income under \$25,000. To estimate annual wages, researchers analyzed mean wages for typical lower-wage jobs in the Fort Myers-Cape Coral MSA using the State of Florida Occupational & Employment Statistics for 2005 to establish an average mean hourly wage of \$8.77. Assuming a 40-hour work week, 1,156 (round-trip work-trips per day) multiplied by \$8.77 x 40 equals \$20,619,857.13 in total annual wages of LeeTran workforce riders.

Percent LeeTran work-trip riders who would not be able to reach work if the bus were unavailable. The LeeTran ridership survey showed that 20.21 percent of riders going to or coming home from work would not be able to make the trip if LeeTran services were not available.

Annual lost wages

\$20,619,857.13 (total annual wages) multiplied by 20.21 percent (riders going to or coming home from work would not be able to make the trip if LeeTran services were not available) equals \$4,167,293 in lost wages annually if bus service were not available.

8 Endnotes

- ¹ Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau *The Beaches of Fort Myers – Sanibel Visitor Profile: 2004 Year-End Summary*, p.1. Not included in this figure are the dollars spent at restaurants, in souvenirs, and by the many visitors who stay with family or friends or in their own seasonal residences each year.
- ² www.floridastategasprices.com. Accessed September 2005.
- ³ Data provided by LeeTran, September 6,2005.
- ⁴ Through October 2005, 121 traffic deaths have occurred in Lee County. Data provided by Steve Jansen, Lee County Department of Transportation.
- ⁵ National Safety Council data, as cited by American Public Transportation Association.
- ⁶ Delucchi, Mark A. and McCubbin, Donald R. *The Health Costs of Motor-Vehicle-Related Air Pollution*. Journal of Transport Economic and Policy, September 199, v.33 part 3, pp.253-86.
- ⁷ *The Benefits of Public Transportation – the Route to Better Personal Health*. American Public Transportation Association. www.apta.org. Accessed March 2005.
- ⁸ Bureau of Business Research, University of Florida, data as of April 2004. www.bebr.ufl.edu. Accessed 10/12/05.
- ⁹ 2002 National Citizen Survey for Lee County. National Research Center, as cited in 2004 Lee County Transit Development Plan. P.43.
- ¹⁰ U.S. Census data, Table TM-PO74, Summary File 3, 1990 and 2003.
- ¹¹ *Business Climate Survey, 2005*. Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce.
- ¹² Lee County Economic Development.
www.leecountybusiness.com/communityoverview/population/projection.html. Accessed 7/18/05.
- ¹³ 2002 National Citizen Survey for Lee County. P.43.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Census data, Table TM-PO74, Summary File 3, 1990 and 2003.
- ¹⁵ *Business Climate Survey, 2005*. Bonita Springs Area Chamber of Commerce.
- ¹⁶ This thought process was used to develop the analysis in *Conserving Energy and Preserving the Environment: The Role of Public Transportation* by Drs. Robert Shapiro, Kevin Hassett and Frank Arnold, a report published in July 2002, and commissioned by the American Public Transportation Association.
- ¹⁷ 2004 Lee County Transit Development Plan.
- ¹⁸ *Road Impact Fee Update for Lee County, Florida*. Duncan Associates. 2004.
- ¹⁹ See Goodwill, Jay. *Relationships Between Business and Public Transportation*. Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida. December 2004.
- ²⁰ *Business Climate Survey, 2005*.
- ²¹ Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ²² Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau *The Beaches of Fort Myers – Sanibel Visitor Profile: 2004 Year-End Summary*, p.1.
- ²³ *Technical Report Matanzas Pass Bridge Dedicated Trolley Lane Test Survey Report Draft*. Prepared for The Town of Fort Myers Beach by Integrated Marketing & Research Group, Inc. May 2005.p.3.
- ²⁴ Data provided by LeeTran, September 6,2005.
- ²⁵ *The Benefits of Public Transportation – the Route to Better Personal Health*. American Public Transportation Association. www.apta.org. Accessed March 2005.
- ²⁶ National Safety Council data, as cited by American Public Transportation Association.
- ²⁷ LeeTran, June 2005.
- ²⁸ Goodwill, Jay. *Relationships Between Business and Public Transportation*. Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida. December 2004.
- ²⁹ *Summary of Major Road Projects Programmed by Lee County*. July 14, 2004.
- ³⁰ *Road Impact Fee Update for Lee County, Florida*. Duncan Associates. 2004.
- ³¹ 2004 Lee County Transit Development Plan.
- ³² *The Benefits of Public Transportation*. American Public Transportation Association. www.apta.org.
- ³³ Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ³⁴ Goodwill, Jay. P.7.
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ www.floridastategasprices.com. Accessed September 2005.
- ³⁷ Data provided by LeeTran, September 6,2005.

- ³⁸ Schrank.
- ³⁹ *Florida Occupational Employment and Wage, 2005*. Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation. Median wage is cited for the Fort Myers/Cape Coral MSA.
- ⁴⁰ Schrank.
- ⁴¹ *Florida Occupational Employment and Wage, 2005*. Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation. Median wage is cited for the Fort Myers/Cape Coral MSA.
- ⁴² *Business Climate Survey, 2005*.
- ⁴³ Ibid.
- ⁴⁴ Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ⁴⁵ Jones Land LaSalle, *Property Futures*.
- ⁴⁶ *Driven to Spend, 2005*. Surface Transportation Policy Project. P.4.
- ⁴⁷ Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid. P.8.
- ⁴⁹ 2004 Lee County Transit Development Plan.
- ⁵⁰ Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, 2005.
- ⁵¹ Federal Transportation Administration, as cited in Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ⁵² Ibid.
- ⁵³ 2004 Lee County Transit Development Plan. Cross tab analysis of trip purpose and alternatives to bus transport provided by the Center for Urban Transportation Research, University of South Florida in July, 2005.
- ⁵⁴ McHone, W. Warren. *The Economic Importance of LYNX to Central Florida – 2002*. The Center for Business and Economic Research. University of Central Florida College of Business Administration, Department of Economics.
- ⁵⁵ See methodology section.
- ⁵⁶ Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau *The Beaches of Fort Myers – Sanibel Visitor Profile: 2004 Year-End Summary*, p.1.
- ⁵⁷ Lee County Economic Development. www.leecountybusiness.com Accessed 7/18/05.
- ⁵⁸ 2004 Lee County Transit Development Plan. P.109.
- ⁵⁹ Ibid. P.118.
- ⁶⁰ *Technical Report Matanzas Pass Bridge Dedicated Trolley Lane Test Survey Report Draft*. Prepared for The Town of Fort Myers Beach by Integrated Marketing & Research Group, Inc. May 2005.
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Boxleitner, Grant. *Beach trolley on a roll*. The News-Press, April 18, 2005.
- ⁶³ www.floridastategasprices.com. Accessed September 2005.
- ⁶⁴ Data provided by LeeTran, September 6,2005.
- ⁶⁵ Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid.
- ⁶⁷ Surface Transportation Policy Project. <http://www.transact.org>. Accessed 10/11/04.
- ⁶⁸ *The Benefits of Public Transportation – the Route to Better Personal Health*. American Public Transportation Association. www.apta.org. Accessed March 2005.
- ⁶⁹ *Asthma Facts and Figures*, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. www.aafa.org. Data is not available for the actual prevalence of asthma cases in Lee County. To arrive at an estimate, the data draws on AAFA estimates for several Florida cities, including Tampa, Fort Lauderdale, Hialeah, Hollywood and Jacksonville as well as state-based data.
- ⁷⁰ *Asthma Facts and Figures*, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. www.aafa.org.
- ⁷¹ Delucchi, Mark A. and McCubbin, Donald R. *The Health Costs of Motor-Vehicle-Related Air Pollution*. Journal of Transport Economic and Policy, September 199, v.33 part 3, pp.253-86.
- ⁷² National Safety Council data, as cited by American Public Transportation Association.
- ⁷³ Runnells, Charles. *More cars bring more crashes*. The News-Press. May 24, 2005.
- ⁷⁴ Through October 2005, 121 traffic deaths have occurred in Lee County. Data provided by Steve Jansen, Lee County Department of Transportation.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid.
- ⁷⁶ Blincoe, et al. P. 1.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid P. 44.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid. P. 2.

A

Hurricane season and LeeTran

Bus systems are a first line of defense for communities vulnerable to natural disasters. Buses are called to duty to transport elderly – including the oxygen-dependent and the frail – and disabled residents to shelters, to help families and business owners evacuate from a neighborhood that is threatened, and often to offer a community the most efficient – and safe – transportation means. When a storm is pending, LeeTran works closely with the Lee County Emergency Operations Center, identifying evacuation routes and schedules, setting up pick-up points to ensure residents are transferred to shelters. They are often the first able to ride the roadways after a storm has passed, returning people safely home.

The past two years have exposed Lee County residents to the devastation that a hurricane – or a series of hurricanes – can cause. By most measures, the 2004 hurricane season was the worst in Florida's history. Four hurricanes ripped through the state from mid-August to late September, with Hurricane Charley wreaking the most havoc in Lee County. Overall, the 2004 hurricane season is blamed for at least 80 deaths and caused more than \$20 billion in damages.¹

The 2005 hurricane season was memorable as well. Hurricane Wilma resulted in mandatory evacuations for the barrier islands and mobile home residents, and cut power to over 200,000 Lee County homes.² The cost of the storm is still being assessed, but early estimates are \$2.5 to \$3 million in damages just in county facilities, traffic signals and street signs.³

The American Public Transportation Association featured Steve Myers, transit director for Lee Tran, in 2004 for his leadership in protecting the LeeTran bus fleet as Hurricane Charley hit the shores with winds of 145 miles per hour, and for putting the fleet on the roadways as early as 8:00 a.m. the day after the storm passed through Fort Myers to move people into shelters and safety.⁴ LeeTran worked closely with Good Wheels, the paratransit service in the county, throughout the recovery period.

Having a well-established transit system in place during natural disasters is not only prudent for public safety; it is also a smart investment. Neighboring Charlotte County, which does not have a fixed bus route system, has had to rely on private transportation services to help evacuate residents. Contracting these services can be expensive, and can lengthen response time considerably.

Meteorologists are placing the recent upsurge in hurricanes into a ten-year cycle of increased hurricane activity in the area. LeeTran will continue to play an integral role in the community's ability to provide a rapid response to imminent threats: transporting people quickly to places of safety.

¹ Smith, Stanley K. and McCarty, Christopher. *The Demographic Impact of the 2004 Hurricane Season in Florida*. Bureau of Economic and Business Research, University of Florida. Florida Focus, vol. 1, no. 2, July 2005.

² *Fresh from lessons of Charley, Lee begins Wilma recovery*. BonitaNews.com. October 26, 2005.

³ *Slow recovery*. News-press.com. October 26, 2005.

⁴ *Florida Transit Systems Shift Gears as Hurricane Charley Strikes Coast*. American Public Transportation Association. www.apta.com August 23, 2004.

B LeeTran encourages fitness!

LeeTran recently placed first in a national competition that pitted similar-sized communities against one another to see which transit agency would have the most bicycle boardings in the country. LeeTran won with the highest percentage for a large urban area (200,000 to 999,999 people) and placed first for all transit agencies. A total of 4.24 percent of LeeTran riders boarded their bikes during the 2005 competition.

Encouraging people to exercise is a major initiative of the Centers for Disease Control, as research shows a sedentary lifestyle is leading to increased obesity and other health-related problems. In Florida, 60 percent of adults and 26 percent of Florida's high school students are overweight.⁵ To combat unhealthy weight gain, the Florida Partnership for Promoting Physical Activity and Healthful Nutrition has developed a series of initiatives. Key to their efforts is promoting ways to ease one's access to healthful habits – including increased physical activity.

LeeTran is providing a new front in the battle against obesity. Lee Tran has an innovative partnership with the local Department of Health to promote safety and to raise awareness about the healthy choices available to people who choose to combine transit and biking. By offering riders multiple opportunities to travel around the community, and convenient bicycle transport, LeeTran is helping people connect in easy – and healthful – ways.

⁵ http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/state_programs/florida.htm Accessed November 14, 2005.

PRESENTATION ON THE STATUS OF THE TIGER GRANT

DISCUSSION ITEM:

The Lee MPO was recently awarded a TIGER V grant of \$10.5 million by US DOT to implement the Lee County Complete Streets Initiative project. The project scope includes the construction of shared use paths, bike lanes, sidewalks, sidewalk connections, way-finding signs, bicycle parking, bus shelters and ADA compliant infrastructure. These improvements and enhancements are proposed along the Lee Tour De Parks Loop and the University Loop identified in the MPO Bicycle Pedestrian Master Plan, and along LeeTran's LINC and 60 bus routes.

The MPO staff has been holding weekly meetings with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to keep the project moving towards a successful implementation. The Construction Engineering Inspection Request for Proposal is currently advertised (responses are due on April 28th) and work continues on the development of the design build criteria package. The environmental work necessary to be completed before the agreement can be signed has also been resubmitted for a determination. Staff will present a power point at the meeting on the status of the project, any issues that have been raised to date and an overview of the reporting requirements that will be required through the construction of the project as well as after it is completed.