

PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Meeting Date: November 26, 2019

Department: Palm Tran

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Title: Palm Tran Connection Efficiencies Project (CEP)

Summary: Palm Tran has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the Palm Tran Connection (PTC) Paratransit Service. Palm Tran Connection is growing at an unsustainable rate when compared to its peers, accounting for one-third of Palm Tran's current annual operations budget. Palm Tran management has endeavored in the CEP over the last year to evaluate some of the key components of Palm Tran Connection's service affecting cost and operational performance; capacity, eligibility and on-time performance. The evaluation analyzed key metrics in these areas and utilized service data to make recommendations to modify the eligibility process, the utilization of non-dedicated transportation providers such as taxis or Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) during high-peak demand and alternative service options for non-ADA trips. The proposal will provide options to better serve Palm Beach County's disabled, senior and transportation disadvantaged communities.

At this workshop, staff is seeking input and direction on the implementation of the CEP.

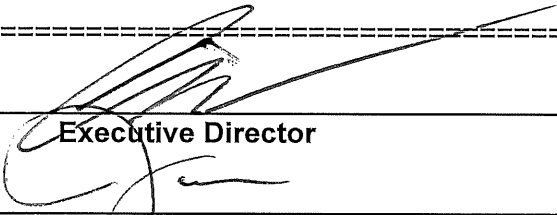
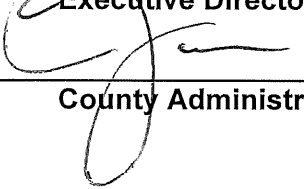
Background and Policy Issues:

Palm Tran Connection is a shared ride, door-to-door service operated by Palm Tran for eligible passengers with disabilities, senior citizens and the transportation disadvantaged. There have not been any significant changes in PTC's overall service approach in two decades. However, at the November 19, 2013 Board of County Commissioners (BCC) meeting, the Board directed staff to provide a detailed overview of PTC under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), including requirements of the Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program and to present potential cost-savings for consideration. At the January 28, 2014 BCC workshop, staff presented the information as directed, but the Board took no action at that time. In 2013, PTC had a total of 190 vehicles and provided approximately 823,000 passenger trips. In contrast, in 2019 PTC utilizes 290 vehicles and is providing close to one million passenger trips, demonstrating the need for this comprehensive evaluation and service redesign.

Attachments:

- 1. Presentation

=====

Recommended by:		11/18/19
	Executive Director	Date
Approved by:		11/22/19
	County Administration	Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs					
External Revenues					
Program Income(County)					
In-Kind Match(County)					
NET FISCAL IMPACT					
#ADDITIONAL FTE					
POSITIONS (CUMULATIVE)					

Is Item Included in Current Budget? Yes No
Does this item include the use of federal funds? Yes No

Budget Account No:
Fund Agency Organization Object

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

C. Departmental Fiscal Review:

Carol Richmond 11/08/19
Carol Richmond, Interim Director of Administrative Services

III. REVIEW COMMENTS:

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

[Signature] 11/21/19
OFMB 11/21

[Signature] 11/21/19
Contract Dev. & Control

B. Legal Sufficiency

[Signature] 11/24/19
Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review

Department Director

(THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.)



Connection Efficiencies Project ("CEP")

1



Agenda

2

- Introduction
- Overview of Palm Tran Connection, TD and ADA
- The Connection Efficiencies Project (CEP) Process
- Current Palm Tran Connection (PTC) Performance
- Peer Comparisons
- Identification of Issues
- Recommendations for Efficiencies

CEP Recommendations

3

1. Enhanced Eligibility Assessment
2. Overflow Service Option
3. Develop Non-ADA Service Delivery Options

Qualifications of Reviewer

4

- David Rishel, Delta Services Group, Inc.
 - 30+ years paratransit, ADA compliance
 - Designed NJ Transit statewide paratransit
 - Significant paratransit work
 - Los Angeles
 - Columbus
 - Philadelphia
 - Chicago
 - Louisville
 - Washington, D.C.
 - Palm Beach County
 - US Department of Justice

The CEP Review Process

5

- Main Questions:
 - How is Palm Tran Connection operating today?
 - What can be improved?
- Review Palm Tran Connection
 - On-site observations
 - Review of documents and processes
 - Peer Comparison
 - ADA Regulations
 - Industry best practices

Palm Tran Connection Program Overview

6

- Three paratransit programs:
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit
 - ✦ Federally mandated service rules
 - ✦ No limits on capacity
 - ✦ “Civil Right” to access transportation
 - Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program
 - ✦ State Program with limited State funding
 - ✦ Disability and income qualifications
 - Division of Senior Services (DOSS)
 - ✦ Nutrition
 - ✦ Federal Program through Area Agency on Aging (AAA)
 - ✦ Limited Funding from Federal Government

How is Palm Tran Connection Operating Today?

7

CURRENT SERVICE STATISTICS

Palm Tran Connection Cost & Ridership

8

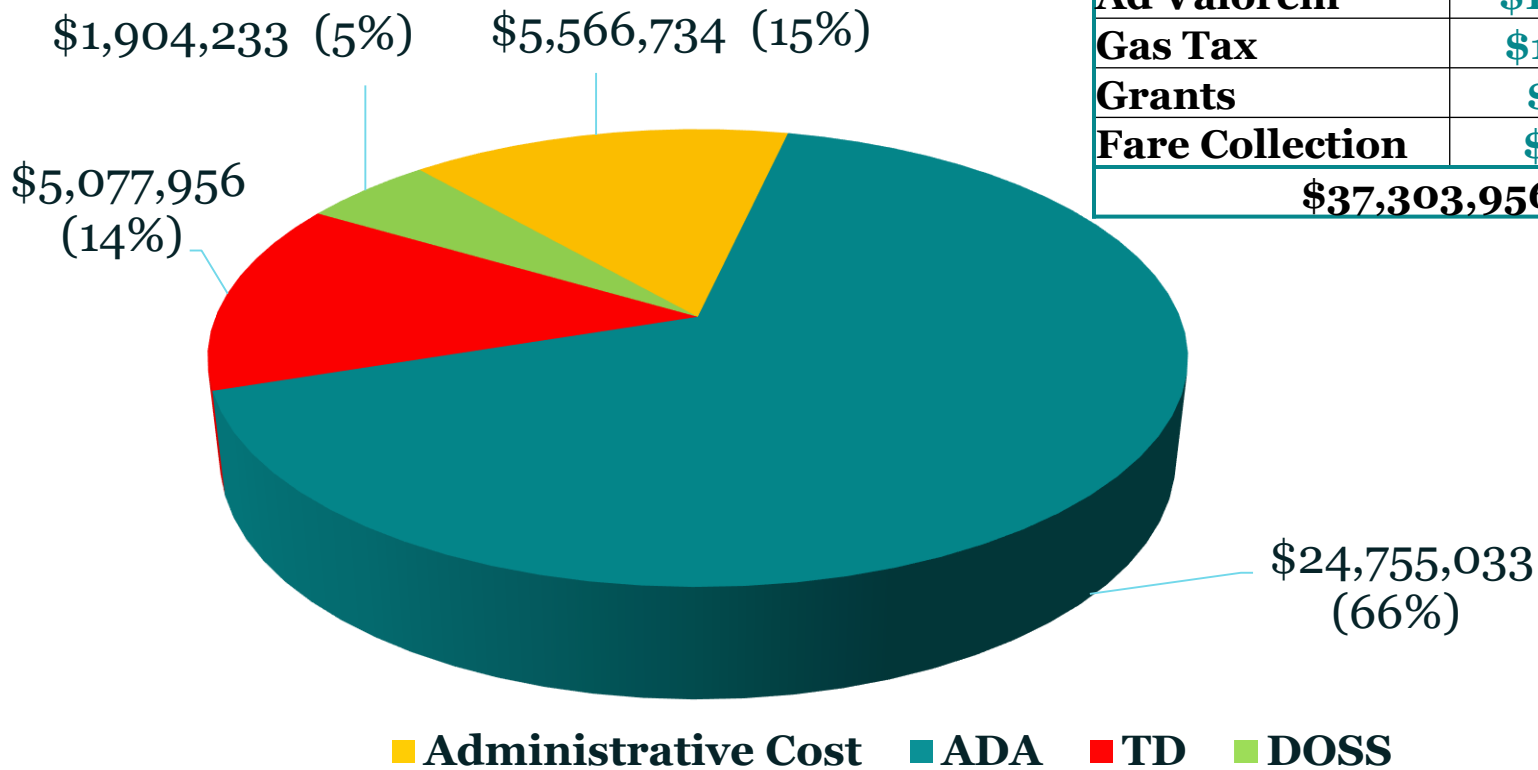
- In FY19 Palm Tran overmatched the grants it received by almost \$5 million
 - \$2.99 million overmatch on Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) program which is an overmatch of 78%
 - \$1.98 million overmatch on Division of Senior Services (DOSS) Program which is 5 times the grant award

FY19 Ridership	
Program	Passengers Transported
ADA	777,584
TD	149,601
DOSS	59,371
Total	986,556

Connection Programs Cost

9

Palm Tran Connection Program Cost for FY 2020

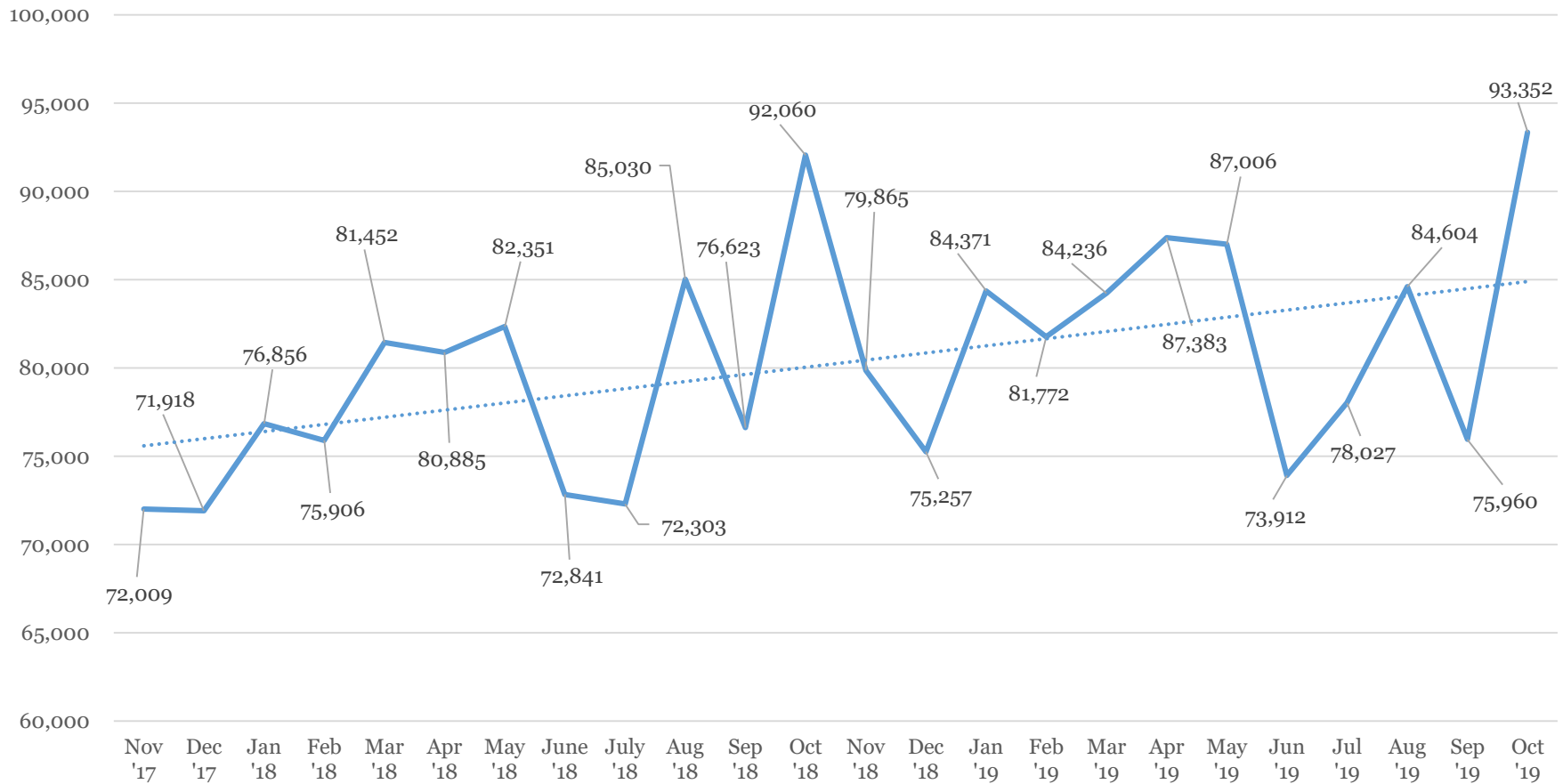


Funding Sources	
Ad Valorem	\$18,002,889
Gas Tax	\$13,500,302
Grants	\$3,099,959
Fare Collection	\$2,700,806
\$37,303,956	

Service Is Growing

10

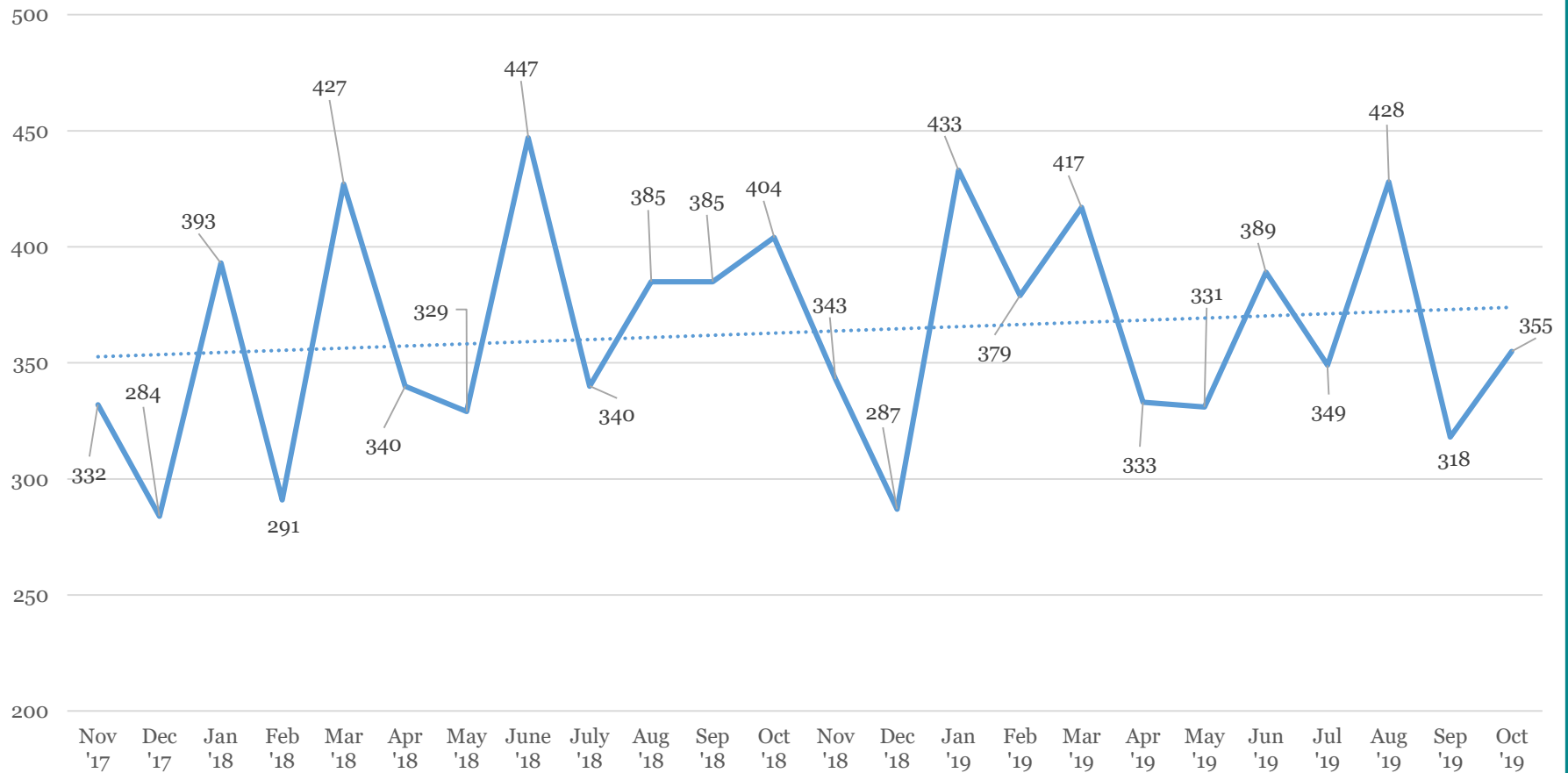
Passengers Transported by Month



There is a Growing Flow of New Customers

11

New Clients Registered by Month

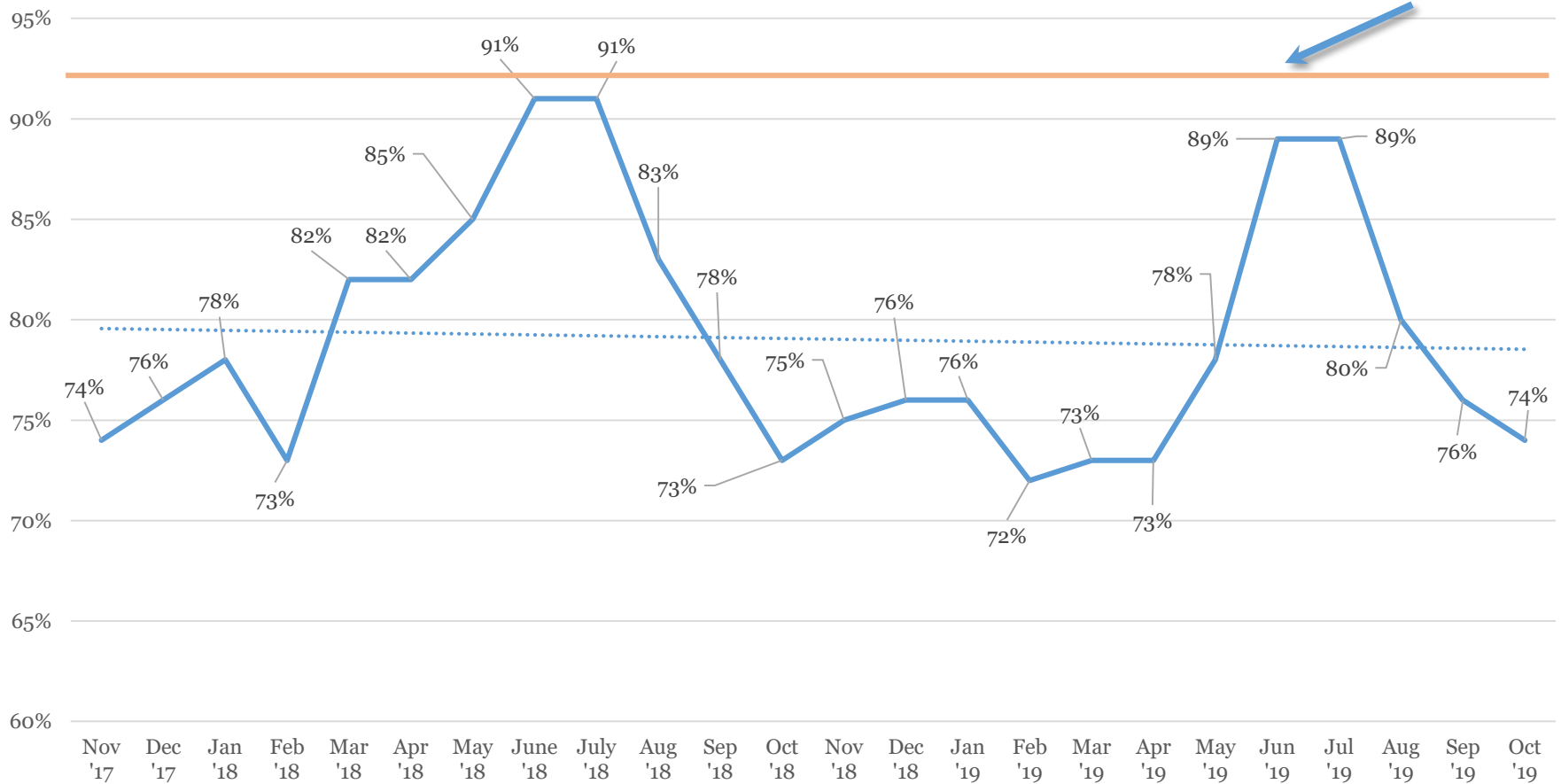


On Time Performance is Struggling

12

On Time Performance by Month

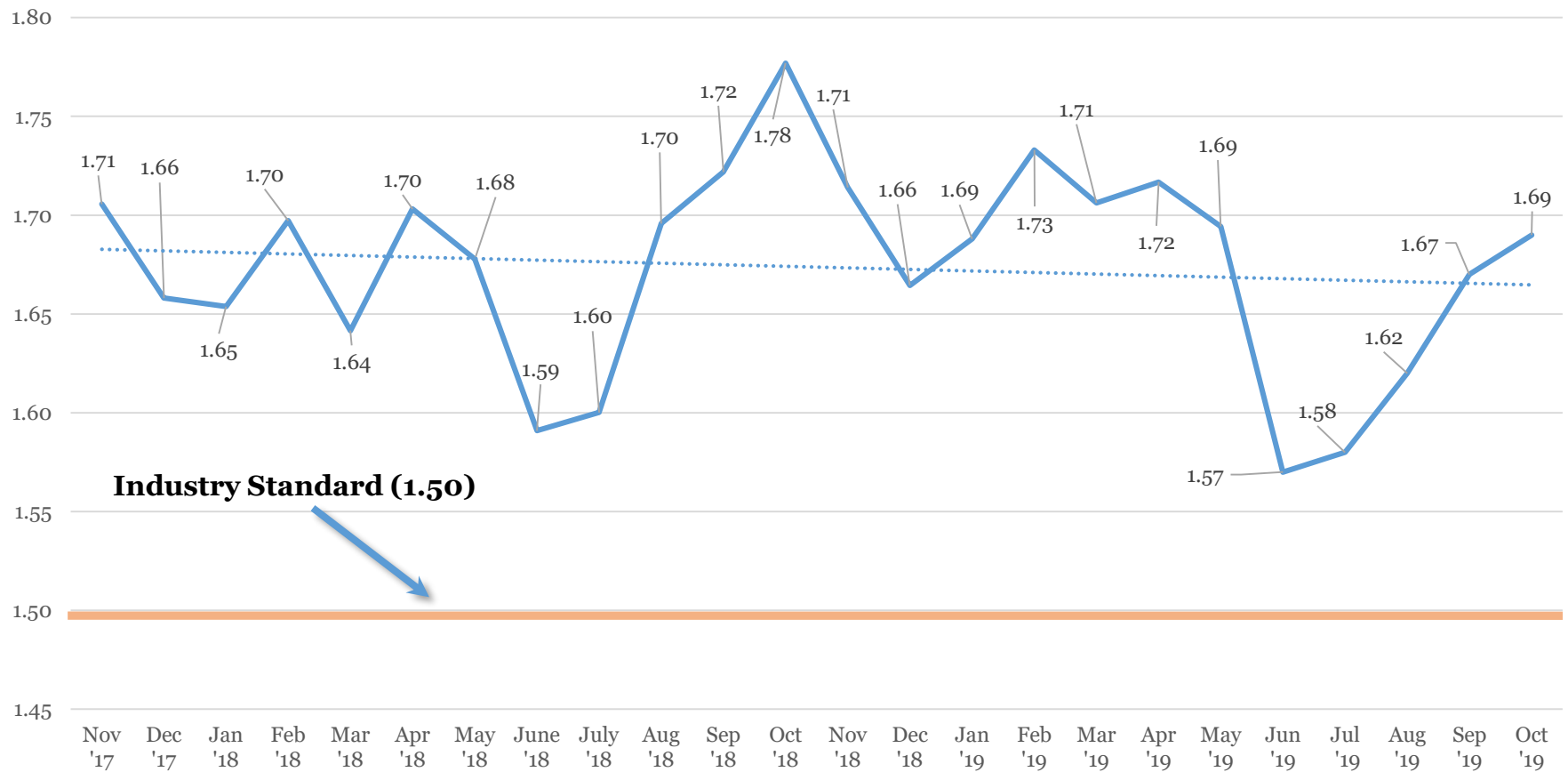
Industry Standard (92%)



Service Efficiency Remains Good...For Now

13

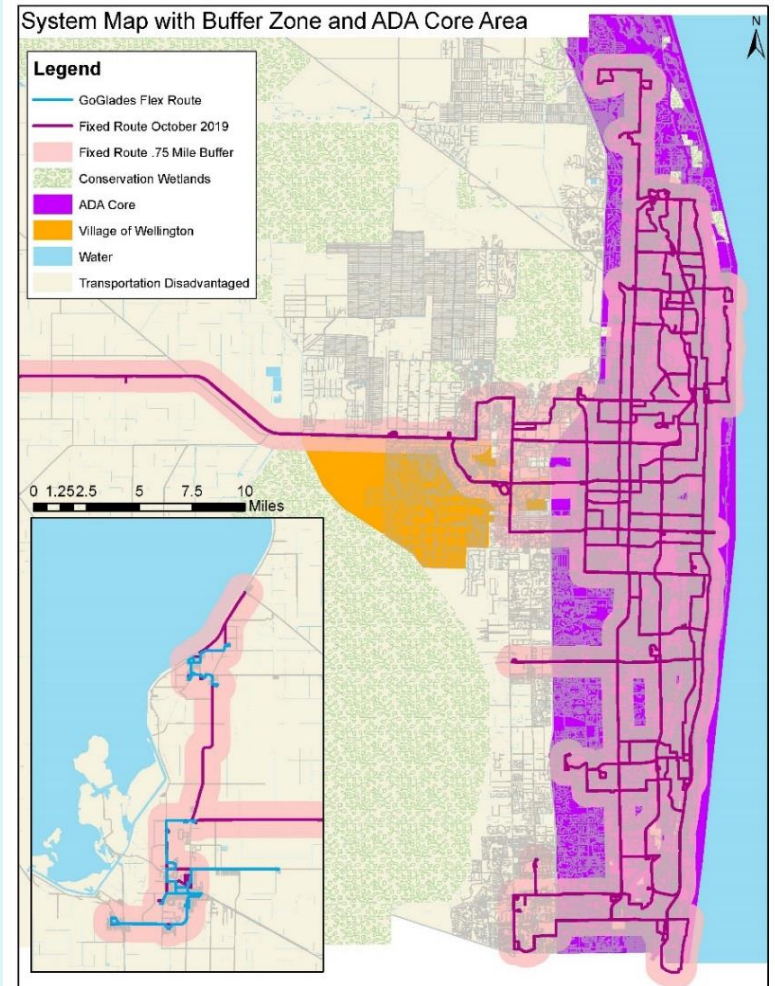
Passengers Per Service Hour by Month



Palm Beach County's Transit is Unique

14

- Very dense bus network along the coast
- Very limited bus service inland
- Paratransit serves everywhere in the County



Peer Comparison

15

**HOW DOES PALM TRAN CONNECTION
COMPARE TO ITS PEERS?**

Peer Systems Selected for Comparison

16

In-State Peers

- Broward County Transit
- Central Florida RTA (Lynx)
- Jacksonville Transportation Authority
- Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority

Out of State Peers

- Alameda-Contra Costa Transportation District (Bay Area, CA)
- Central Ohio Transit Authority (Columbus, OH)
- City of Phoenix Public Transit Department (Valley Metro)
- Nassau Inter County Express (Long Island, NY)
- Pace Suburban Bus Division (Suburban Chicago)

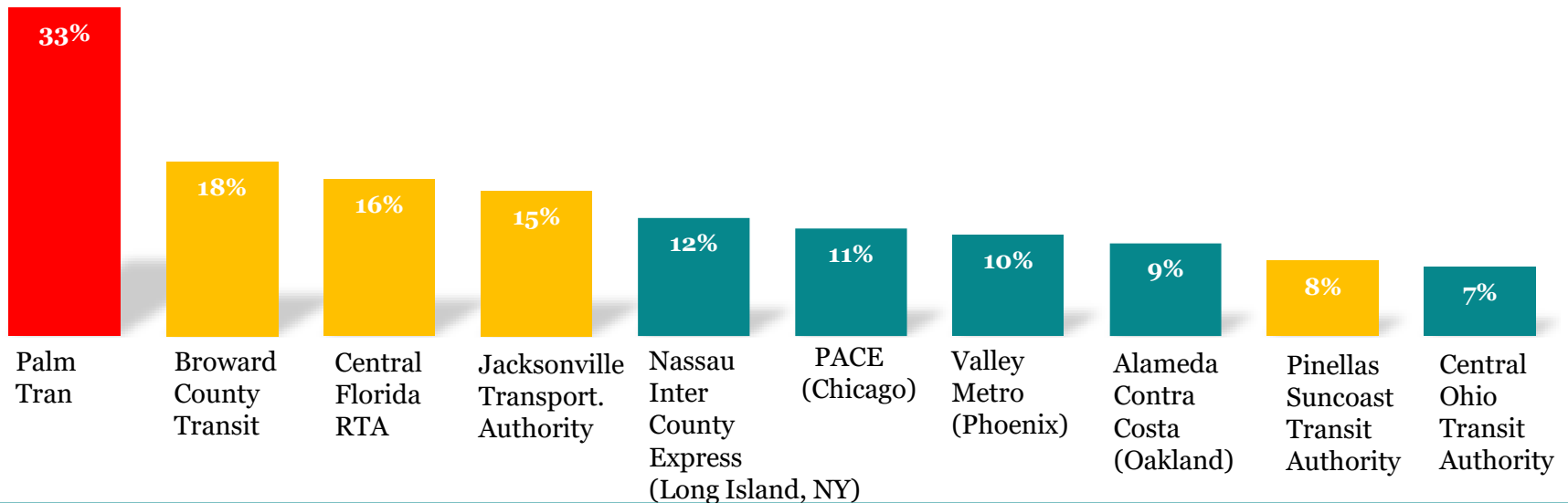
* Comparison data sourced from 2017 National Transit Database (NTD)

Palm Tran's Paratransit Share of Budget

17

- 33% of Palm Tran's operating budget is used for paratransit operations
 - Highest of its peers (Florida systems in yellow)
- National Average 15-20%

Paratransit as a % of Total Operating Cost

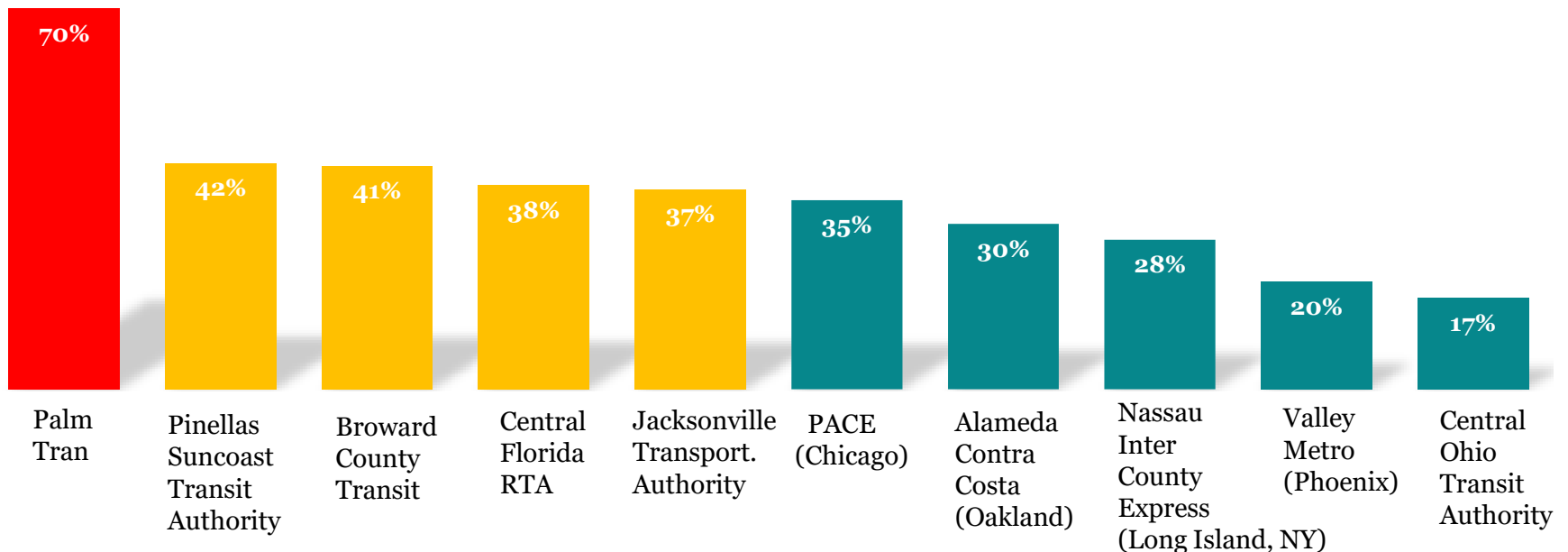


Palm Tran's Paratransit Share of Fleet

18

- 70% of the Palm Tran fleet is paratransit vehicles
- Nationally 1/4 to 1/3 of fleets are paratransit

Paratransit as a % of Total Bus Fleet



Other Areas of Comparison

19

Measure	PTC	National Average
Cost Per Trip	~\$35.00 Per Trip	\$23.00 to \$53.00/trip
Efficiency	~1.6 Trips Per Hour	ADA Average ~1.0 TPH
Fares	Charge 1.75X Fixed Route	Charge 2X Fixed Route
On Time Performance	High 70% range	Goal ~92%



Florida-Specific Comparison

20

- ADA – Federal Requirement is $\frac{3}{4}$ mi. from Fixed Route
- TD – Most agencies limit after State funding expended
- DOSS – Paratransit providers do not typically operate this type of program

Agency	ADA	TD	DOSS
Palm Tran	Beyond $\frac{3}{4}$ Mile	Not Limited	Not Limited
Broward County Transit	$\frac{3}{4}$ mi	As Funded	N/A
Central Florida RTA (Lynx)	$\frac{3}{4}$ mi	As Funded	N/A
Jacksonville Transportation Authority	$\frac{3}{4}$ mi	As Funded	N/A
Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority	$\frac{3}{4}$ mi	As Funded	N/A

Summary of Major Points

21

- Steady growth in demand for paratransit service
- Average of 360 new ADA eligible customers per month
- Better than average efficiency (Productivity)
- Decreasing on time performance
- Unusually large proportion of paratransit compared to fixed route bus
- PTC compares well to peers for efficiency

The growth on Palm Tran Connection is effecting performance and this will continue.

Connection Efficiencies

22

CONNECTION EFFICIENCIES PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

Challenge #1: Currently not Assessing “Need” for Paratransit

23

- ADA Paratransit is intended for passengers unable to ride accessible fixed route buses
 - Currently “registering” customers for paratransit vs. assessing need for paratransit
 - Palm Tran offers a large, fully accessible fixed route system
 - Currently, virtually no denials of eligibility
 - **There has never been an ADA eligibility appeal**
- If customers can ride the fixed route bus, that should be the first choice.

Recommendation #1: Develop Enhanced Eligibility Assessment

24

- Interview and Functional Assessment
 - Medical verification as needed
- Focus on customer needs/abilities
- Educate customers about Fixed Route and other transportation options
- Conditional and trip-by-trip decisions
 - Paratransit and bus to meet customer needs
 - Changes to Reservations booking policy
- Estimated Cost:
 - Approximately \$1 - \$1.5 Million annually

Recommendation #1: Example: Central Ohio Transit Authority Assessment Center

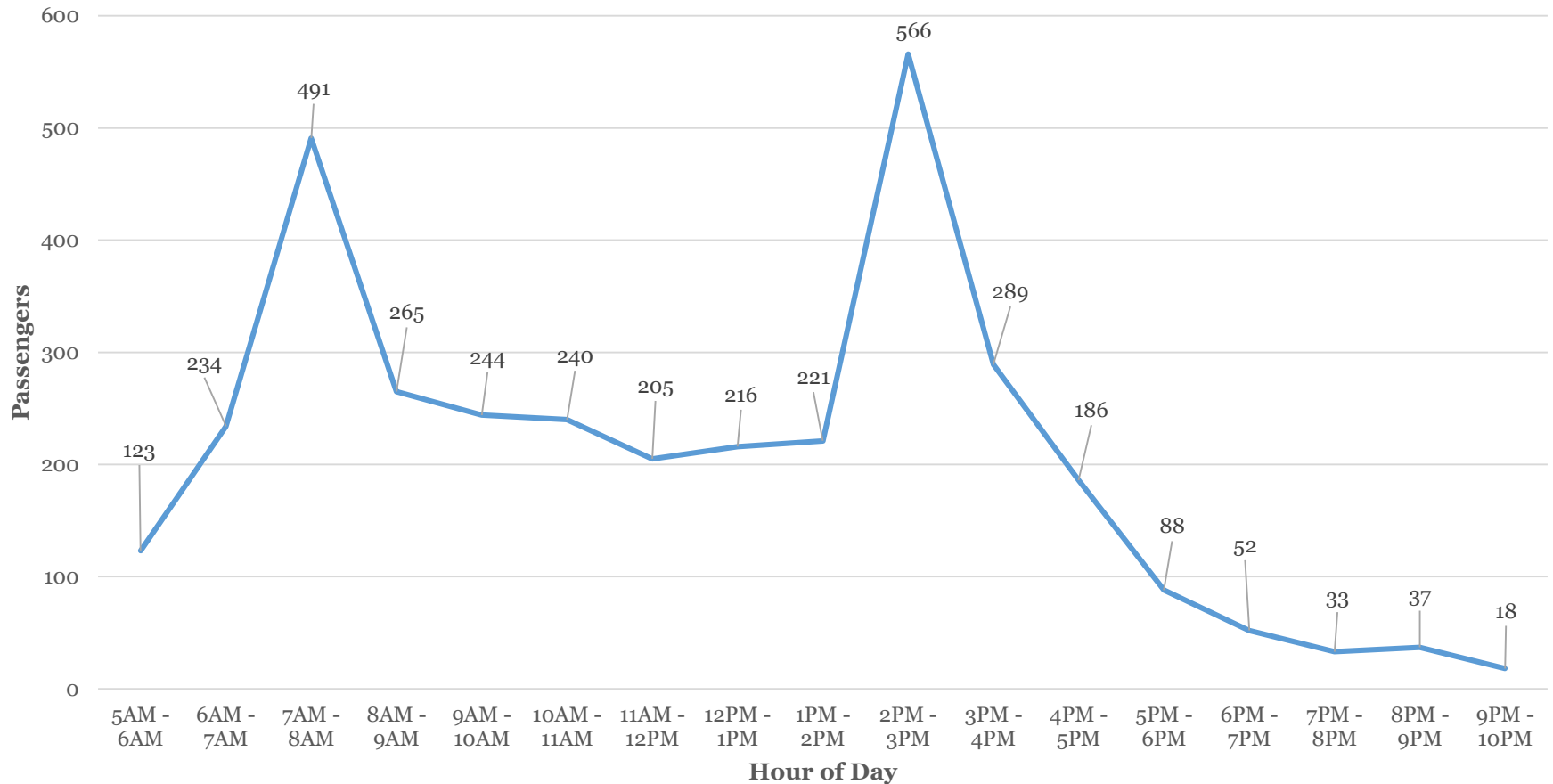
25



Challenge #2: High Peak Demand Challenges PTC

26

Average Passenger Count by Hour of Day (2019)



Recommendation #2: PTC Needs an “Overflow” Service Option

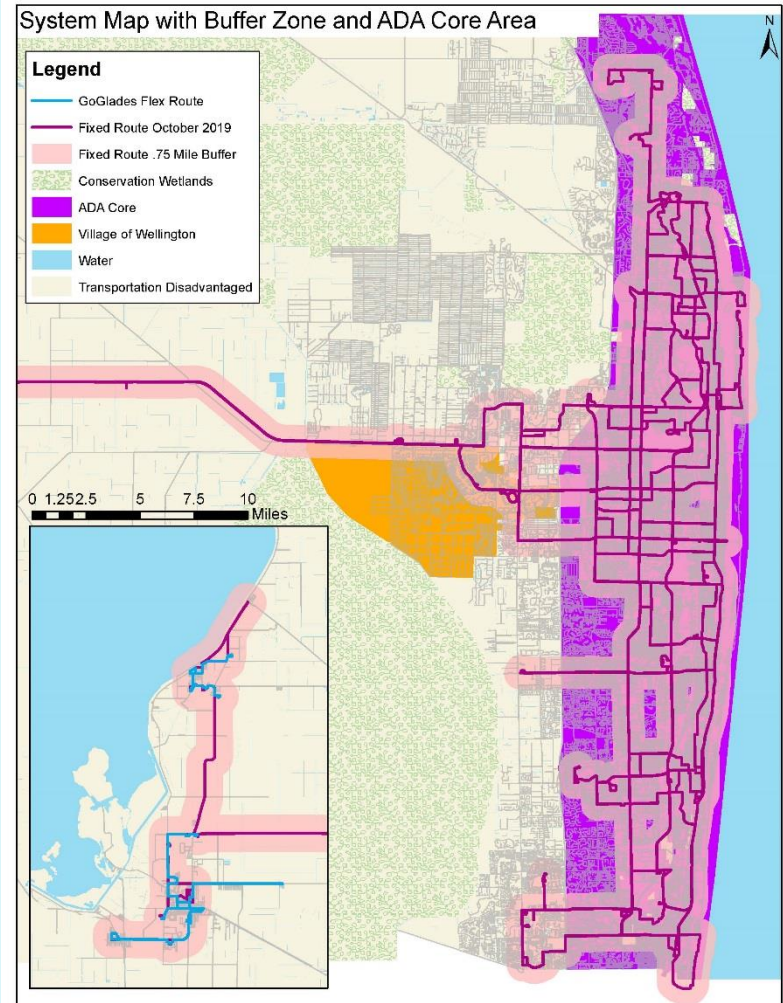
27

- All paratransit has high peaks in demand; denials are not permitted
 - An overflow provider can handle excess peak demand
- Paratransit often has unusual single trips to outlying areas in the evening or off-peak
 - Overflow providers can take inefficient, outlying trips
- A contract with a Taxi, Transportation Network Company (TNC), or similar provider can help with peak and outlier trip demand
 - Provides a cushion to increase capacity
 - Paid only when used
- Based on current needs estimated \$500,000 annually

Challenge #3: ADA Service Area Exceeds Requirements

28

- Requirement: $\frac{3}{4}$ Mile of local bus routes
 - Exceeding service area requirements
- PTC: Everything East of FL Turnpike
 - Exceeding time of day requirements
- All trips are scheduled and managed like ADA trips
 - Current policies are making service tougher to implement



Recommendation #3: Develop Non-ADA Alternatives

29

- Palm Tran has options for non-ADA trips
 - Scheduling flexibility
 - Prioritization
 - Fares for extra services
- Begin analysis of non-ADA trips to identify alternative scheduling and service delivery options
 - Mobility on Demand
 - Mini-Routes
 - Premium Services
- Cost: Planning and Analysis <\$100k
 - Possible new service options

Proposed Implementation Schedule

30

- Immediate Actions (December 2019 – February 2020):
 - Refine current eligibility assessment process, enhance screening
 - Begin drafting new eligibility process
 - Begin analysis of Non-ADA trips
- Short Term (March 2020):
 - New assessment process draft, plan implementation
 - Scope of work for new overflow provider complete
 - ✦ Begin Procurement
 - Report on options for Non-ADA trip delivery

Next Steps

31

- Impact of Changes
- Communication, Communication, Communication!
- Seeking Board Guidance, Input and Direction
 - Enhanced Eligibility Assessment
 - Overflow Service Option
 - Develop Non-ADA Service Delivery Options
- Discussion / Questions