Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
For the Gainesville and Alachua County Area

VIII. Information Item B

Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
For the Gainesville and Alachua County Area

March 28, 2025

MEETING MEMORANDUM

To: Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization Board

From: Brad Thoburn

Subject: **CUTR Presentation on RTS Demand Response Services**

BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 1380 that required, in part, for the Center for Urban Transportation Research deliver a report to the Florida Department of Transportation on model policies and procedures or best practices for paratransit providers to complete trips within an acceptable time. On January 10, 2025, the Center for Urban Transportation Research provided a presentation to a legislative transportation subcommittee on the report recommendations.

Upon request by the City of Gainesville, the Center for Urban Transportation Research conducted a study about demand response services provided by Regional Transit System (RTS). The study examined the relationship between ADA and Transportation Disadvantaged program services provided in Gainesville. It also detailed industry best practices, provided a peer analysis, and explored opportunities for enhancing RTS mobility management. On March 6, 2025, the Center for Urban Transportation Research provided a presentation to the Gainesville City Commission on the study's findings and recommendations. The presentation is also being provided to the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization.

The PowerPoint presentation is attached.

Attachment

RTS Demand Response Service Management and Delivery Analysis

Executive Summary Presentation

Gainesville MTPO
Meeting Presentation
April 4, 2025

Presentation Overview

- Introduction
- Study Purpose
- Issues
- Approach / Findings
- Recommendation / Strategies

Study Purpose / Objectives

- ✓ Opportunities to improve and efficiently manage demand response service
- ✓ Explore industry best practices
- ✓ Contracting and in-house responsibility strategies
- ✓ Explore RTS mobility management opportunities and customer-oriented service trends
- ✓ Address FTA / ADA Compliance requirements

Issues

- ✓ ADA complementary service demand and cost control
- ✓ ADA and TD Program coordination relationships
- ✓ Co-mingle demand response transit services benefits and efficiencies
- ✓ Unique Gainesville travel markets and service partnerships
- ✓ RTS strategic opportunities for regional mobility management and stakeholder partnerships
- ✓ MoD technologies and customer service ideals for future of accessible transportation county-wide

Demand Response Transit Context

- ✓ ADA Complementary Service
- ✓ TD Program / Coordinated Service
- ✓ Alternative Demand Response Models

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability just as other civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion.

What is ADA Complementary Paratransit?

- “Safety net” for persons with disabilities who cannot use fixed route
- Each public entity providing fixed route service must provide paratransit service (within ¾ mile of fixed routes)
- Must be comparable to fixed route service
- “ADA Complementary Transit Service”
- Provided service type: Demand Response Transit (DRT)

DRT Service Types

There are six basic types of Demand Response Transit (DRT) that are provided by small and midsized transit agencies. These include the following:

1) ADA complementary paratransit
2) Coordinated paratransit
3) Alternative services for ADA paratransit customers
4) Dial-a-ride
5) Microtransit
6) Flex transit

What is Transportation Disadvantaged Program?

- Defined in Chapter 427, Florida Statutes and Rule 41-2 F.A.C.
- “Transportation Disadvantaged” as older adults, individuals with disabilities, persons with low-income, or at-risk children who are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.
- TD Program was created by the Florida Legislature in 1979, with the goal to establish a Coordinated Transportation System.
- Program provides transportation capital and operating funding for “Non-Sponsored” eligible TD customers.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Transportation Disadvantaged (TD) Customer Qualification Parameters

- **ADA: Certified Disability, Paratransit service for those unable to access Public Transportation System from a geographical area within fixed route service.**

Federal Transit Administration, Americans with Disabilities Act

- **TD: Eligibility based upon Disability, Age, and Low-Income, Non-Sponsored by Trip type. County-wide service area.**

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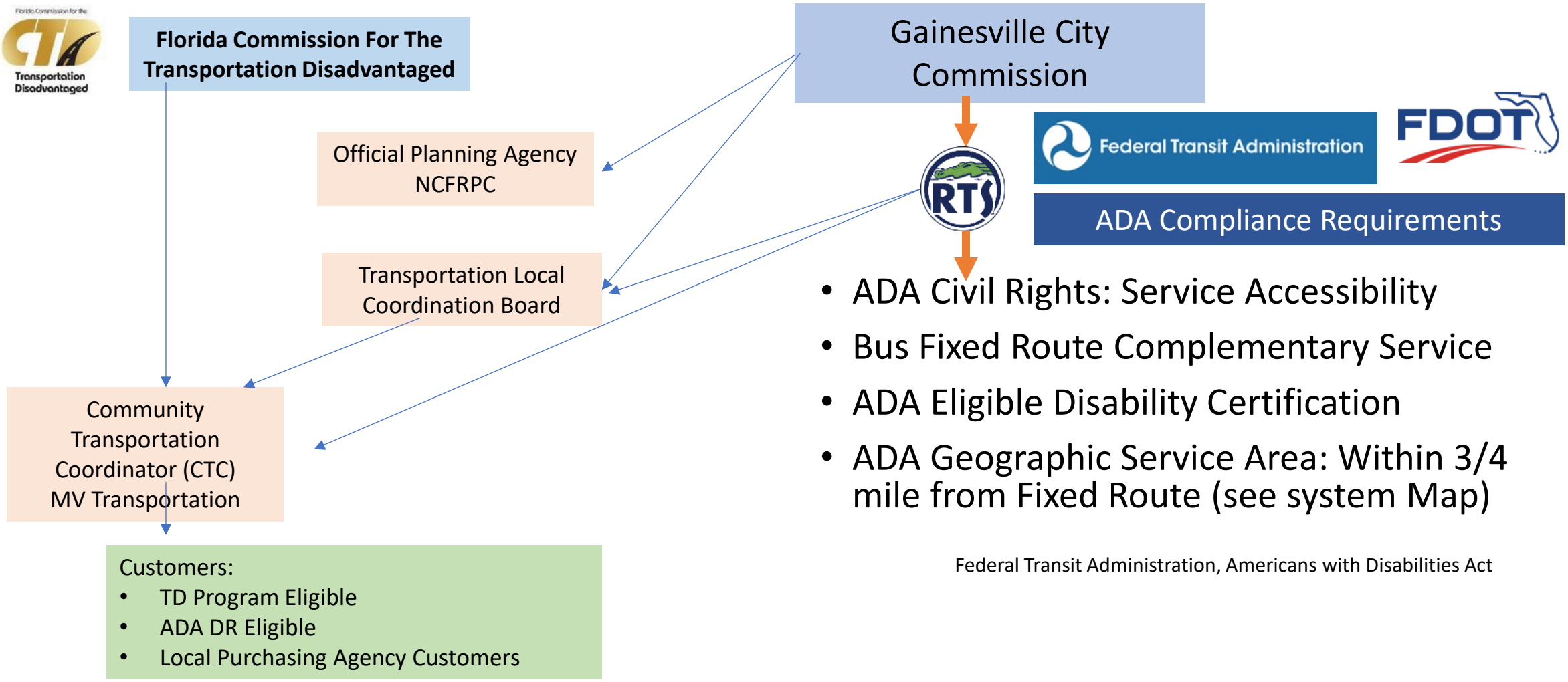
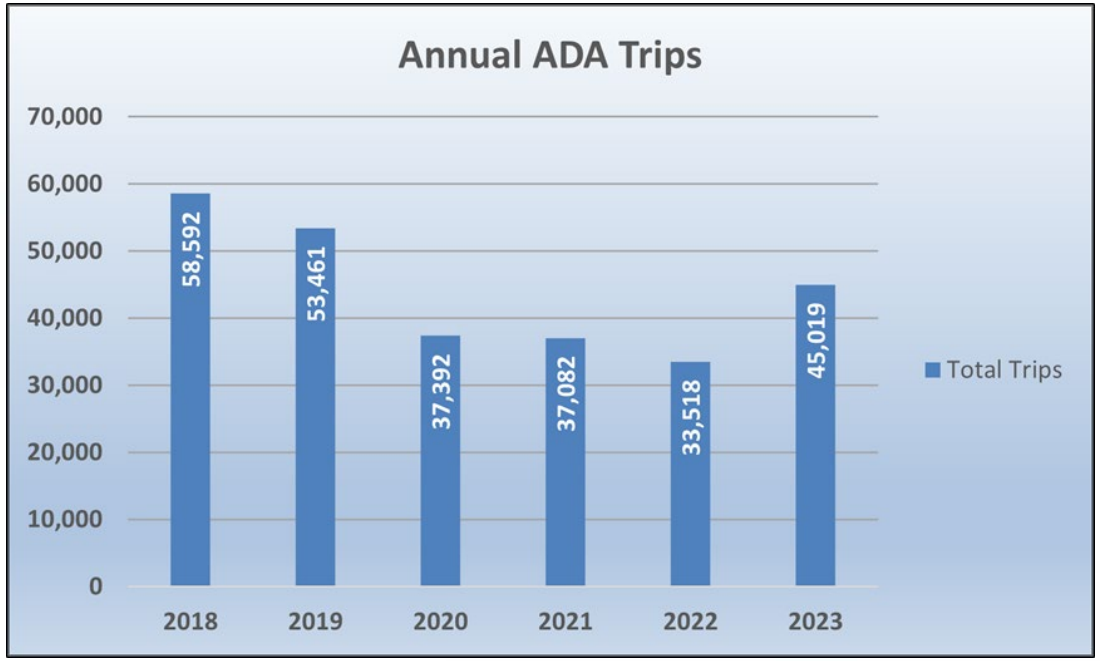
ADA / TD Organizational Coordination / Responsibilities



ADA DRT Ridership and Service Cost Trends



FY	Expenditures (MV Transportation)	Increase/Decrease from Previous Year
2019	$1,640,479.81	($14,401.30)
2020	$1,412,756.02	($227,723.79)
2021	$1,221,516.80	($191,239.22)
2022	$1,196,117.03	($25,399.77)
2023	$2,599,100.54	$1,402,983.51

2024 ADA Trips = 47,797

2024 Expenditures = $3,100,735
Increase = $501,635

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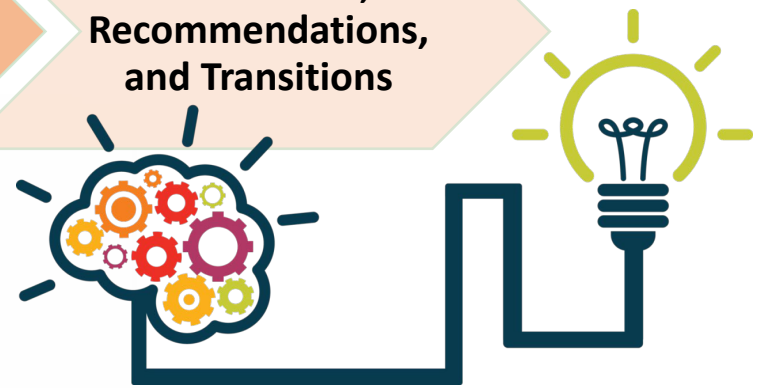
Analysis Approach

1	Trend and Existing	Service Character Performance Customers	Organization Functional Map Local Influencers
2	Industry Analysis and Research	Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP)	Transit Agency Interviews Best Practices & Trends
3	Findings, Alternatives and Recommendations	Findings, Issues and Opportunities	Alternatives, Recommendations, and Transitions



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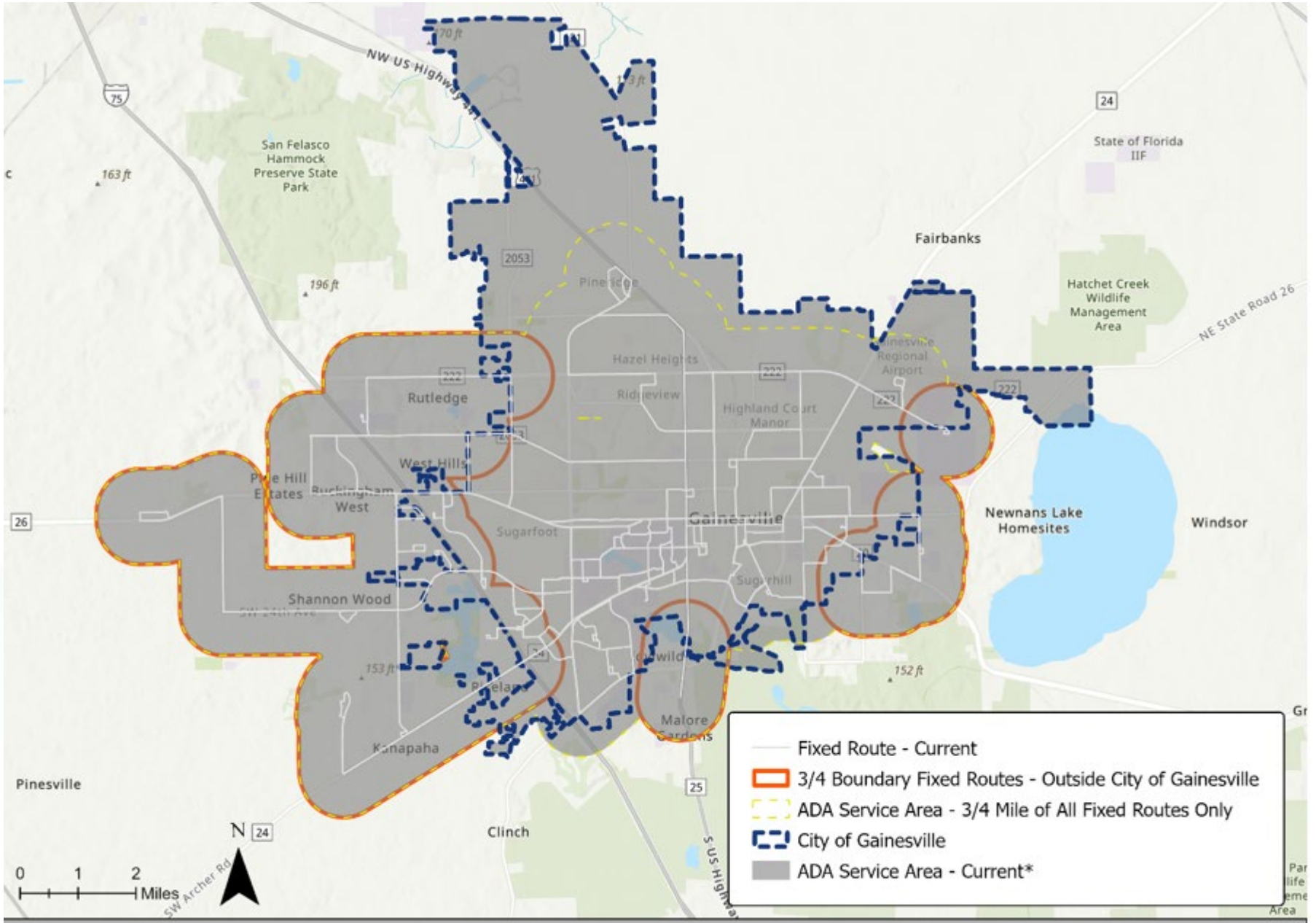

RTS Service Area Assessment Overview

RTS Demand Response Service Management and Delivery Analysis
Technical Report #1 - 2024

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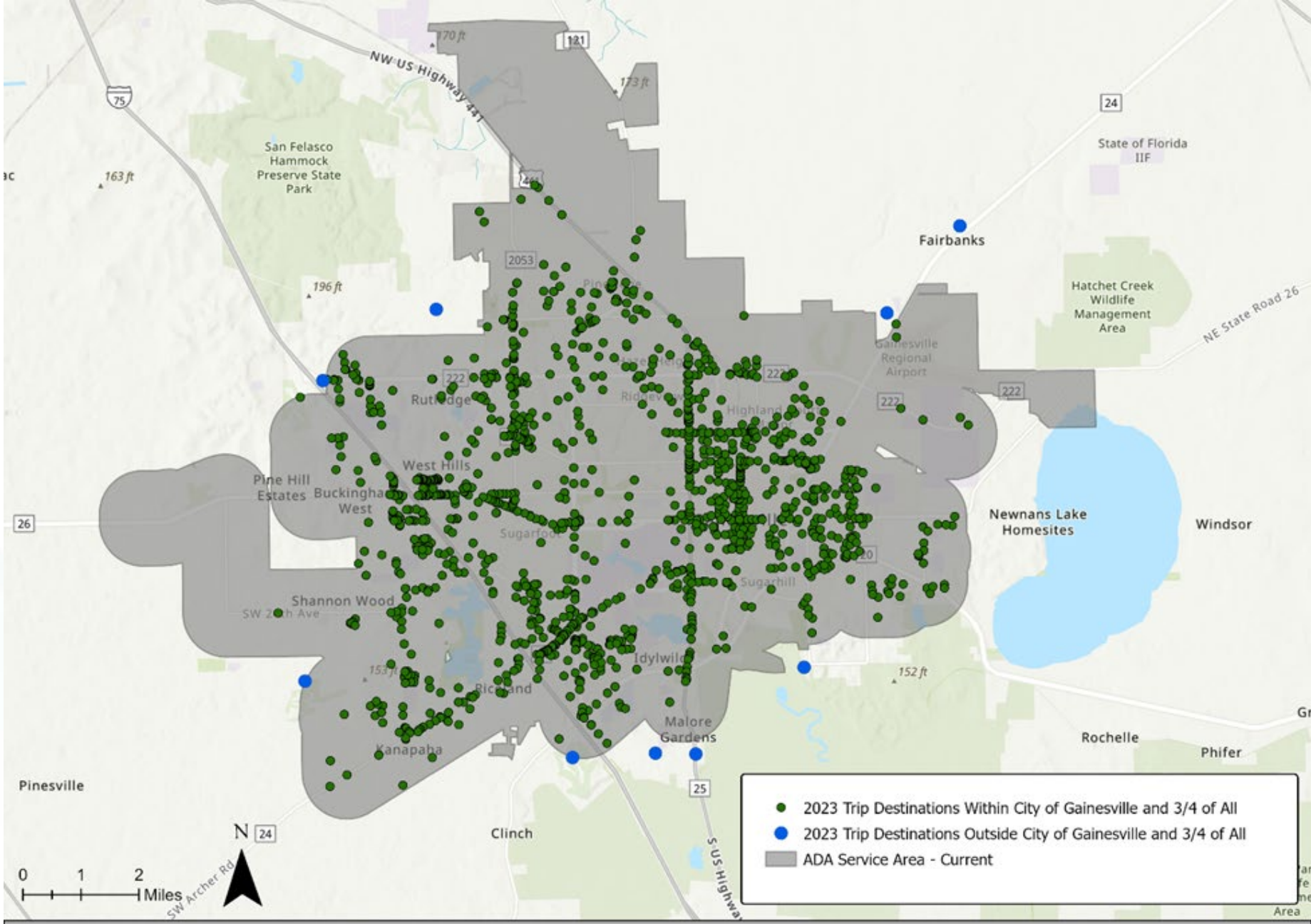

2023 ADA Paratransit Trip Destinations

RTS Demand Response Service Management and Delivery Analysis
Technical Report #1 - 2024

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RTS ADA DR Existing Management Model

- ✓ Turn-Key Contracting Services
- ✓ RTS Personnel Oversight Management
- ✓ RTS Ultimate Customer Service Responsibilities
- ✓ RTS Ultimate Grants and ADA Compliance Responsibilities

According to the latest National Transit Database (NTD) data, a significant portion of demand response services are contracted out rather than being operated directly by transit agencies. In 2022, roughly 73% of U.S. transit agencies that offer demand response (DR) services reported using purchased transportation (i.e., contracting out) for at least part of their DR operations.

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Existing ADA Demand Response Service Functional Areas and Responsibilities

- Management
- Customer Care
- Compliance
- Eligibility Certification

- Call Intake
- Reservations / Scheduling
- Dispatching
- Operations
- Maintenance
- Vehicles / Facilities

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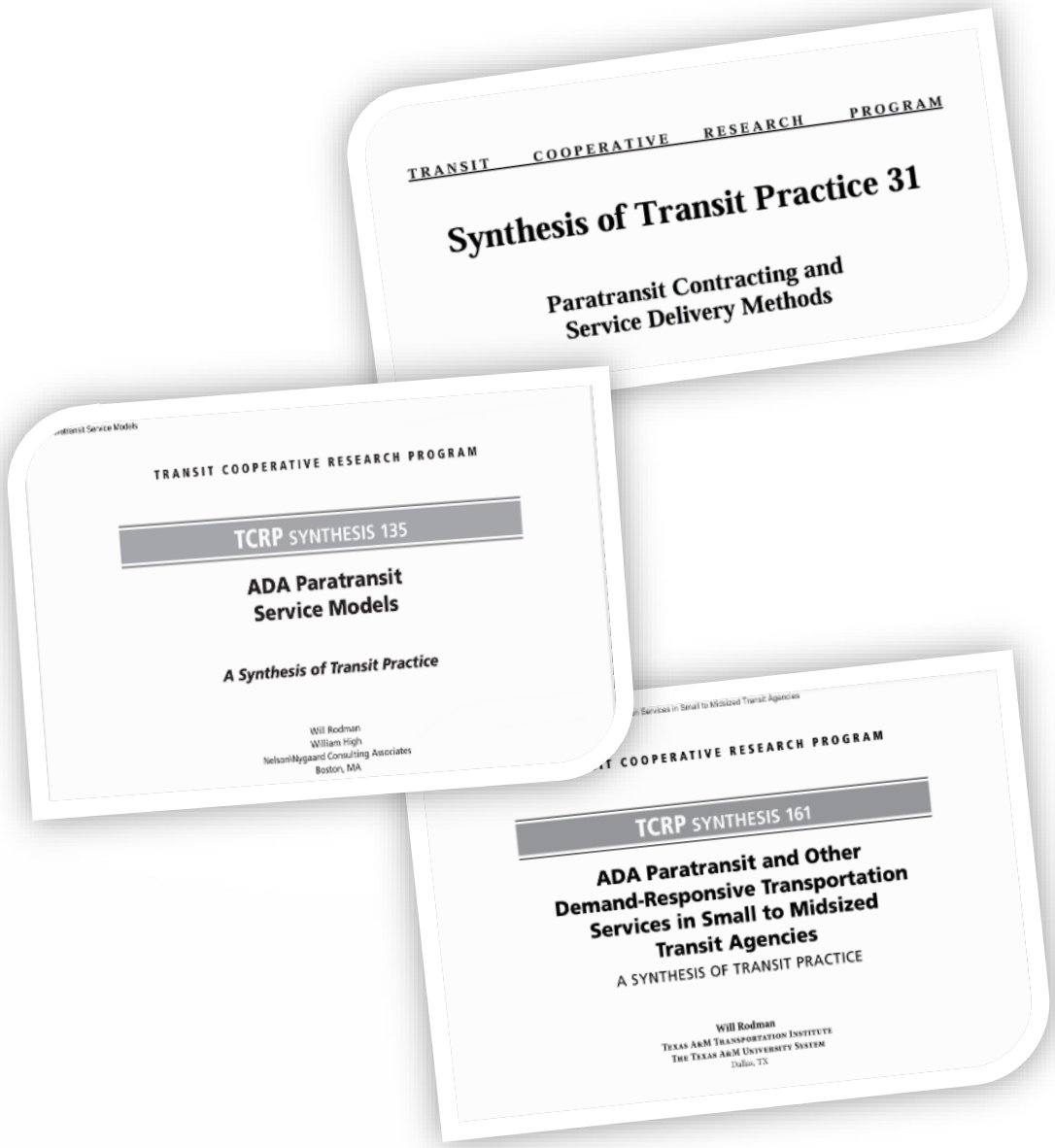
2 Review of Industry Best Practices / Existing and Future Peer Management Models

- Research reviews
- Florida Agency interviews
- Management models / workforce
- Staffing / contract procurement
- Human services coordination
- ADA / FTA / CTD compliance, grants, and funding
- Customer markets / customer service
- New MoD services / technologies



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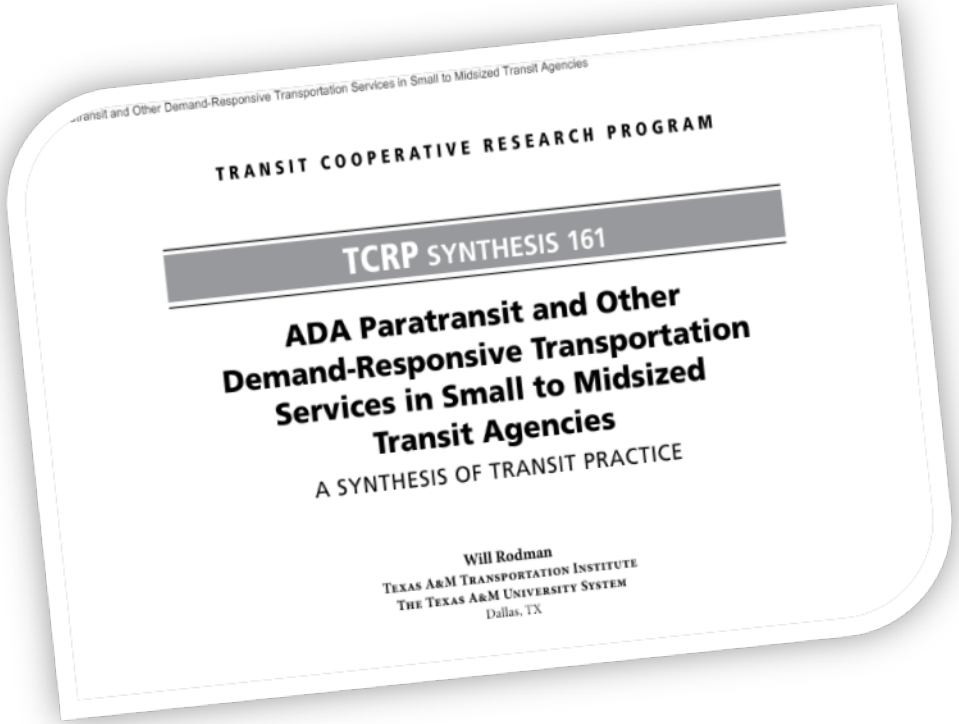
TCRP Synthesis 161 RTS Relevant Key Findings

1. Variety of DRT Services is a key component of Mobility Management, with the customer benefits outweighing uniform service models
2. Directly operated more control / turn-key more cost effective
3. Comingling ADA Paratransit trips and other compatible trips on the same service increases productivity and cost efficiency
4. Agencies are finding unique and better ways to adopt "hybrid" service models (such as brokerage services or TNCs) and community-based operations.
5. Transit agency provided vehicles and facilities can reduce contracting costs
6. Sharing DRT functional areas can address efficiency, customer care and control of services.



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ADA
National Transit Data Base (FTA 2023)

No.	Year	NTD ID	Legacy ID	Company Name	Location	State	Mode	Service	Average Trip Length (in miles)	Passenger Trips	Revenue Hours	Revenue Miles	Total Operating Expense	Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	Cost per Passenger trip	Cost per rev. hour	Cost per rev. mile
1	2023	40026	4026	Manatee County Board of County Commissioners	Sarasota	FL	DR	DO	7.43	71,336	44,636	521,717	$5,874,921	28	$82.36	$131.62	$11.26
2	2023	40027	4027	Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority	Saint Petersburg	FL	DR	PT	5.64	106,722	80,760	1,043,537	$9,631,541	42	$90.25	$119.26	$9.23
3	2023	40027	4027	Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority	Saint Petersburg	FL	DR	TN	6.37	44,920	11,655	286,249	$1,599,495	18	$35.61	$137.24	$5.59
4	2023	40027	4027	Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority	Saint Petersburg	FL	DR	TX	7.53	58,701	14,769	426,793	$1,483,308	19	$25.27	$100.43	$3.48
5	2023	40030	4030	City of Gainesville, FL	Gainesville	FL	DR	PT	9.15	44,293	31,564	501,621	$2,700,672	35	$60.97	$85.56	$5.38
6	2023	40032	4032	County of Volusia	Daytona Beach	FL	DR	DO	13.18	150,753	77,204	1,329,137	$8,714,512	52	$57.81	$112.88	$6.56
7	2023	40032	4032	County of Volusia	Daytona Beach	FL	DR	PT	6.31	54,655	27,404	390,197	$1,637,165	16	$29.95	$59.74	$4.20
8	2023	40032	4032	County of Volusia	Daytona Beach	FL	DR	TX	7.76	38,075	19,787	314,974	$2,197,213	11	$57.71	$111.04	$6.98
9	2023	40036	4036	City of Tallahassee	Tallahassee	FL	DR	DO	5.09	39,221	11,145	184,566	$1,559,369	13	$39.76	$139.92	$8.45
10	2023	40036	4036	City of Tallahassee	Tallahassee	FL	DR	PT	6.24	38,073	13,132	222,811	$1,542,654	21	$40.52	$117.47	$6.92
11	2023	40036	4036	City of Tallahassee	Tallahassee	FL	DR	TX	3.78	44,678	11,655	156,317	$1,291,146	37	$28.90	$110.78	$8.26
12	2023	40037	4037	Board of County Commissioners, Palm Beach County	West Palm Beach	FL	DR	PT	11.19	1,025,094	638,408	10,011,802	$53,255,182	282	$51.95	$83.42	$5.32
13	2023	40038	4038	Escambia County Board of County Commissioners, FL	Pensacola	FL	DR	PT	9.78	112,971	65,144	1,025,392	$4,788,600	40	$42.39	$73.51	$4.67
14	2023	40046	4046	Sarasota County	Sarasota	FL	DR	PT	7.21	452,443	169,502	2,775,968	$12,365,006	76	$27.33	$72.95	$4.45
15	2023	40063	4063	Brevard Board of County Commissioners	Titusville	FL	DR	DO	14.68	82,185	44,249	607,031	$4,514,203	32	$54.93	$102.02	$7.44

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TD Program Coordinated Reationship

CTC Type by Urban Counties over 200,000 population

Summary CTC Type for 200,000+ Counties	
CTC Type Categories	
County Organization	16
Transit Authority	7
City	1
Private Non-Profit	2
Private For Profit	1
Total	27

Florida Urban Counties Over 200,000 Population / CTC Type
2020 U.S. Census
Community Transportation Coordinators Type

	County	Population	Square Miles	County Seat	CTC Type
1	Alachua County	271,588	875	Gainesville	Private For Profit Sole Source
2	Brevard County	606,671	1016	Titusville	County
3	Broward County	1,932,212	1207	Fort Lauderdale	County
4	Clay County	219,575	604	Green Cove Springs	Transit Authority (JTA)
5	Collier County	387,450	2002	Naples	County
6	DeSoto County	37,082	637	Arcadia	County
7	Duval County	982,080	762	Jacksonville	Transit Authority (JTA)
8	Escambia County	323,714	656	Pensacola	County
9	Hillsborough County	1,478,759	1019	Tampa	County but not Transit Authority
10	Lake County	366,742	938	Tavares	County
11	Lee County	750,493	785	Fort Myers	County
12	Leon County	299,484	667	Tallahassee	City
13	Manatee County	398,503	743	Bradenton	County
14	Marion County	368,135	1584	Ocala	Private Non Profit Seniors Services Agency
15	Miami-Dade County	2,832,794	1893	Miami	County
16	Okaloosa County	203,951	930	Crestview	County
17	Orange County	1,415,260	903	Orlando	Transit Authority
18	Osceola County	387,055	1328	Kissimmee	Transit Authority
19	Palm Beach County	1,466,494	1972	West Palm Beach	County
20	Pasco County	542,638	747	Dade City	County
21	Pinellas County	984,054	274	Clearwater	Transit Authority
22	Polk County	715,090	1798	Bartow	Transit District
23	St. Johns County	261,900	601	St. Augustine	Private Non Profit Seniors Services Agency
24	St. Lucie County	322,265	572	Fort Pierce	County
25	Sarasota County	438,816	556	Sarasota	County
26	Seminole County	476,727	309	Sanford	Transit Authority
27	Volusia County	551,588	1102	DeLand	County

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Select Transit Agencies Models Interviews

- ❑ Discussion of RTS ADA DR
- ❑ Commonalities
- ❑ Management Models
- ❑ Context of Overall DR Services
- ❑ FTA / Florida Grant Compliance
- ❑ Issues and Opportunities

1) Brevard County - Space Coast Area Transit (SCAT), FL
2) Manatee County, FL
3) Palm Tran – Palm Beach County
4) Pinellas County- PSTA, Fl
5) Volusia County – VOTRAN, FL

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ADA DR Service Models

- ✓ Brevard County Space Coast
- ✓ Manatee County MCAT
- ✓ Pinellas County PSTA
- ✓ Palm Beach County Palm Tran
- ✓ Volusia County Votran

- *In-House (Brevard, Manatee,)*
- *Contract (Pinellas, PalmTran)*
- *Mix Blend of DR Services(Votran, Volusia County)*

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Mobility Management, Customer Orientation, Coordination and Transformation

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Existing ADA Demand Response Service Functional Areas and Responsibilities

- Management
- Customer Care
- Compliance
- Eligibility Certification

- Call Intake
- Reservations / Scheduling
- Dispatching
- Operations
- Maintenance
- Vehicles / Facilities

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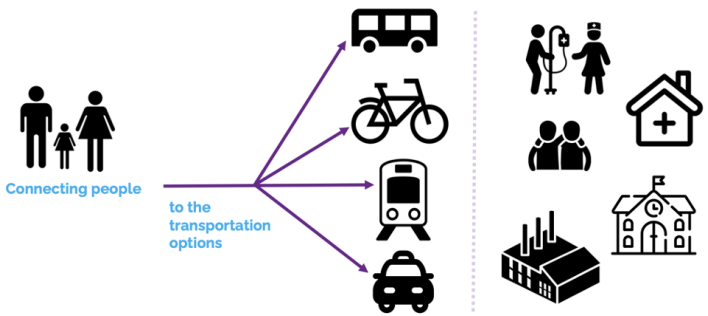
Future Concept ALL Demand Response Service and Mobility Management Functional Areas

- Management
- Control Reservations, Schedule, Dispatch, Customer
- Customer Care
- Compliance
- Eligibility Certification

RTS Mobility Management
Mobility Broker



NCMM National Center for Mobility Management

DRT Operations – Brokerage

Bus Service

MoD Services
Technology + Partnerships

Business Services
TNC / Taxi

Coordinated Human Services

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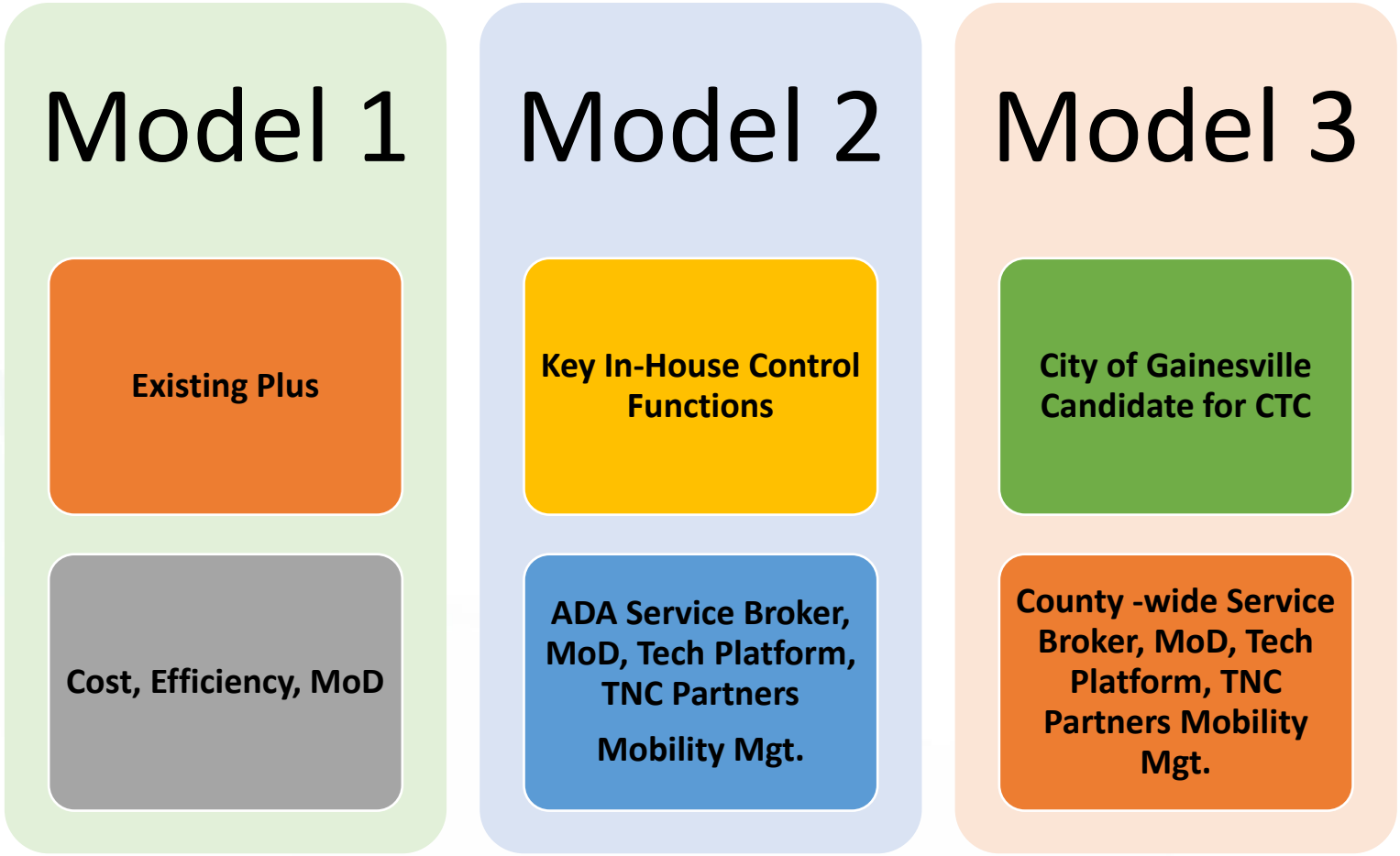
DRT Alternative Models: Compatible Evolution

Figure 1-13: Service Model Alternatives



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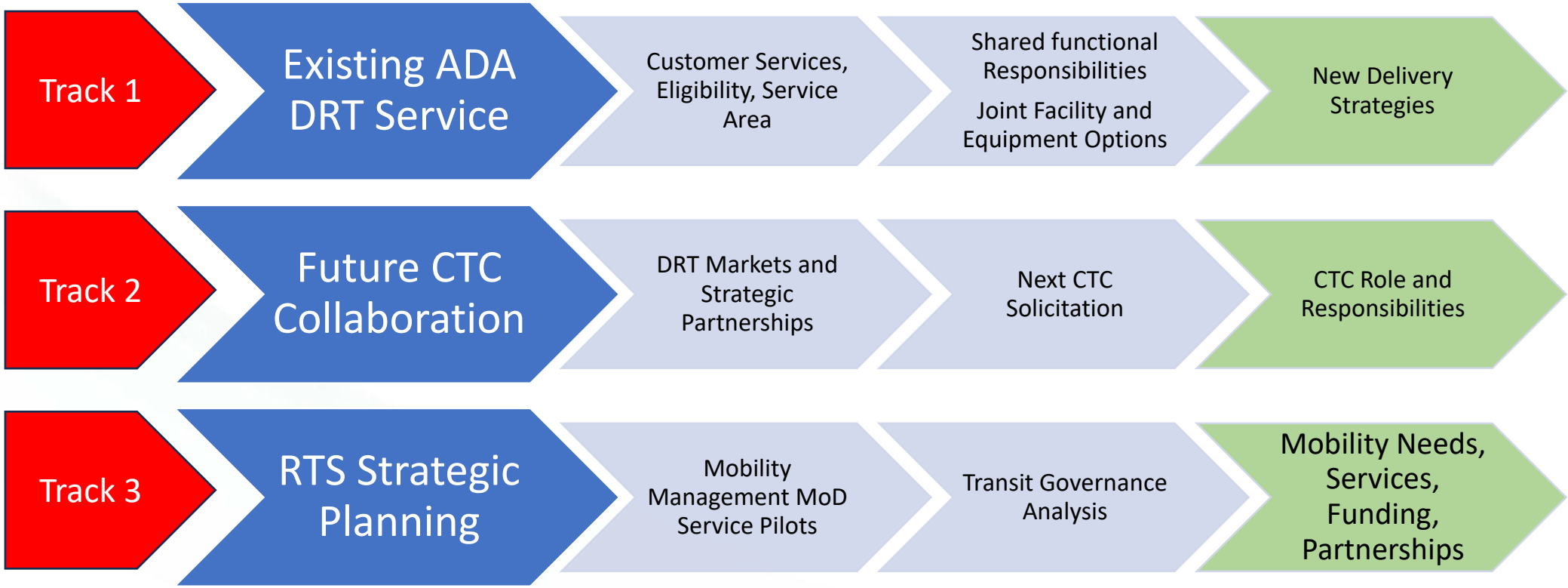
DRT Evolution Tracks



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Recommendation #1: CTC

Prior to any major modifications to the management and operational structure of RTS's ADA complementary service, a Mobility Coordination Task Force should be formed within the framework of the TD program.

- **Strategy 1a –** Determine the future role of the CTC
- **Strategy 1b –** Ensure that stakeholder representation on the Task Force includes county, city, LCB, DPA, and other funding and customer advocate stakeholders.
- **Strategy 1c –** Consider overall community mobility needs and role of RTS as CTC.

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Recommendation #2: RTS Organizational Strategies

Prioritize the modification of the management and operational structure of RTS's ADA complementary service contracted with the CTC, both short term and long term.

- **Strategy 2a –** Establish an ADA Complementary Service Transition Plan
- **Strategy 2b –** Consider accommodating existing contracted ADA services with RTS facilities, equipment, and maintenance services.
- **Strategy 2c –** Consider benefits of RTS as CTC and a DRT service design co-mingling all DRT services county-wide, establishing a brokerage business plan for RTS, and assimilate the four call and control functions (reservations, scheduling, dispatching, and handling service-day calls from riders) into the RTS organizational structure to include a Manager of DRT Services or a generalized Manager of Mobility Services.

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Recommendation #3: Explore development of additional MoD services.

- Microtransit
- TNC / TX Partnerships
- On Demand Digital Platforms for Customer Choices Mobile App
- Multi-modal integration

Mobility on Demand (MoD) is a broad transportation concept where people can access mobility options as needed, using a variety of modes or services, often facilitated by technology. It is part of a larger mobility ecosystem that integrates multiple forms of transportation, such as public transit, ridesharing, bike sharing, car sharing, and more, with the ability to book, plan, and pay for trips through mobile apps or other digital platforms.

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Recommendation #4: Transit Governance Assessment

Consider the overall public transportation system relative to community vision and values and define a family of mobility services targeted to specific customer markets.

Strategy 4a – Conduct a Public Transportation Governance Partnership Study. The purpose of this study would be to assess and improve the governance structure of public transportation systems to enhance efficiency, accountability, and service delivery (Conceptual Scope is Outlined in Analysis Report)

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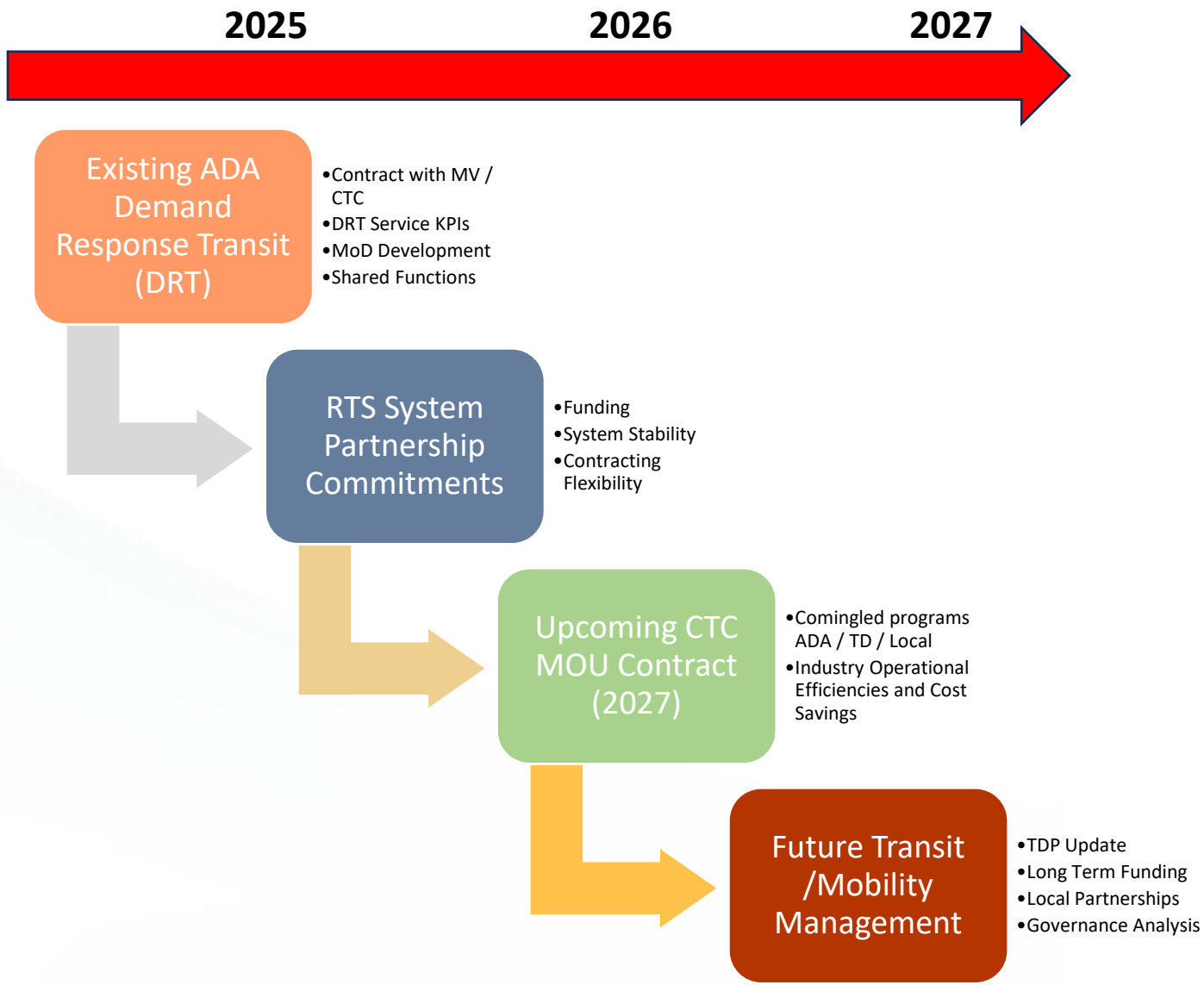
DRT Evolution Timeframe



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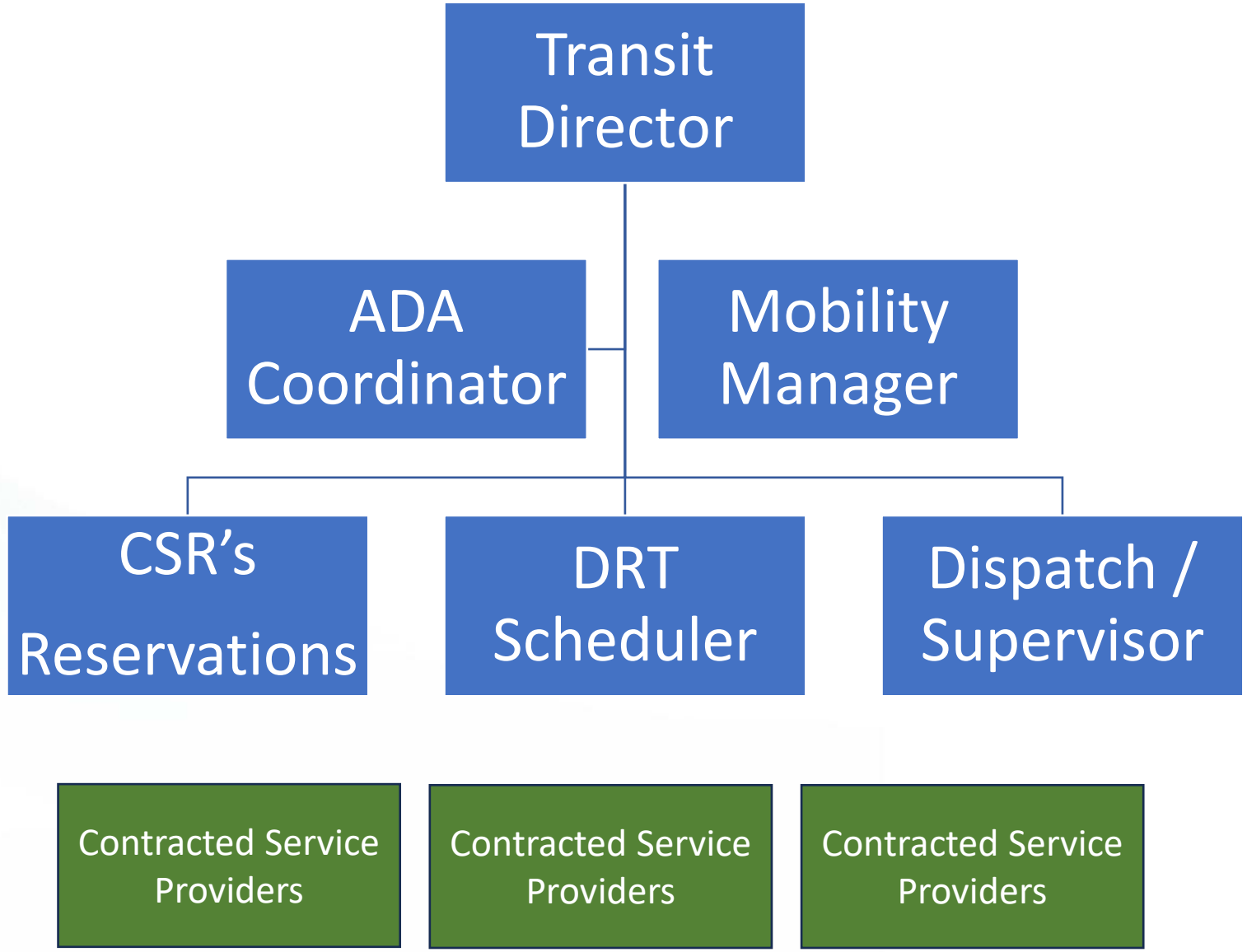
RTS Mobility Management Org Chart Addition Concept

Bus Service

Existing Organization



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Thank You!

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