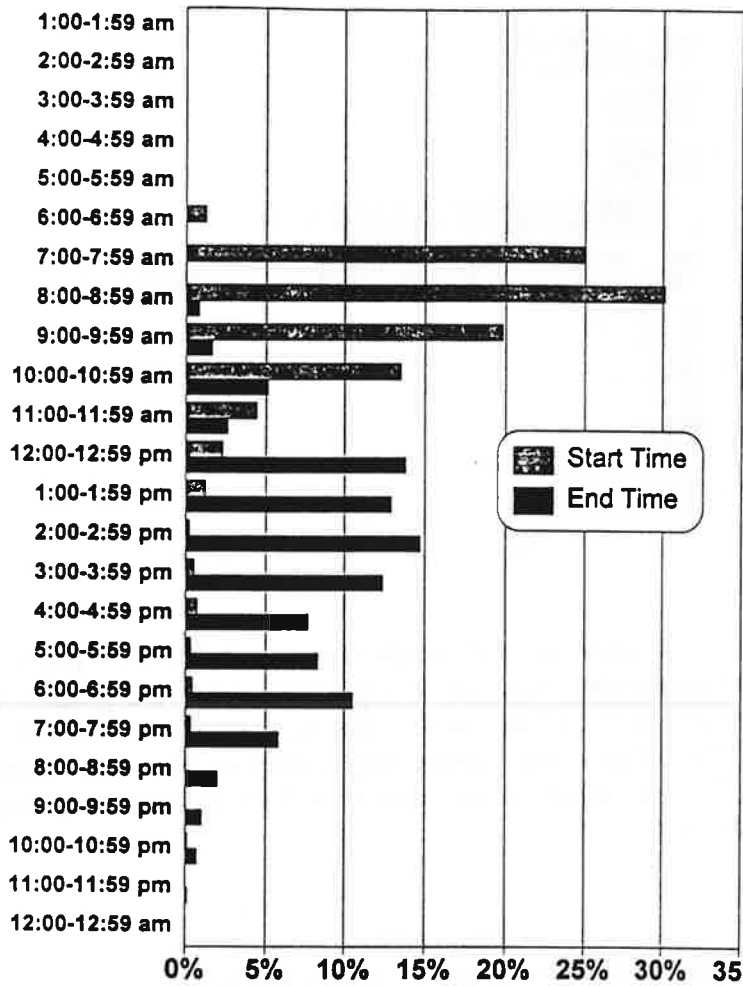
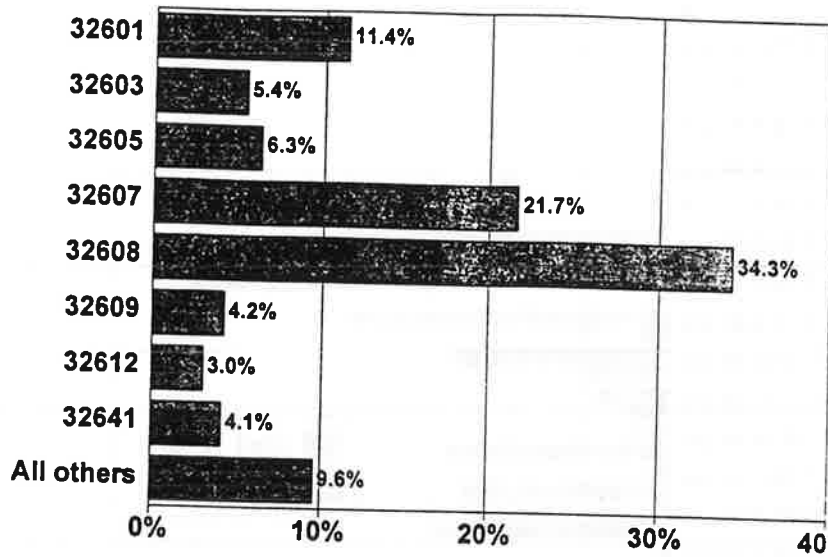


Figure 21
Q26b: Class Start and End Times



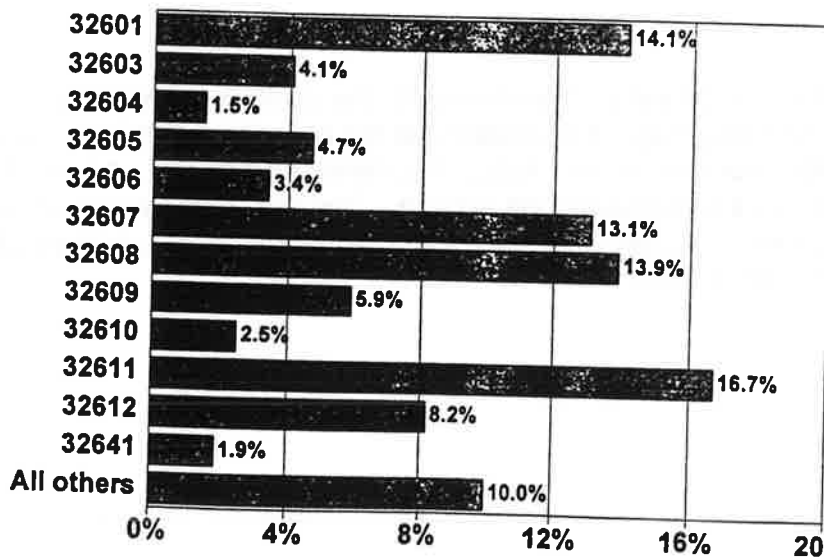
Residence Zip Code - Question 24 asked riders to provide the zip code for their place of residence. From Figure 22 on the following page, it is evident that the majority of RTS riders live in the zip code areas of 32607 (West Gainesville) and 32608 (Southwest Gainesville). A total of 56 percent of riders indicated these two zip codes on their surveys. The next most frequently indicated zip code was 32601 (Downtown and East Gainesville), with approximately 11 percent of the riders listing this particular zip code for their residence.

Figure 22
Q24: What is the zip code of your residence?



Work Zip Code - Question 25 asked riders to provide the zip code for their place of work. Figure 23, below, presents the frequency distribution for this question. From the graphic, it is evident that a large percentage (31 percent) of RTS riders work in the zip code areas of 32601 (Downtown and East Gainesville) and 32611 (UF campus). Interestingly, the two next most frequently indicated work zip codes were 32607 and 32608, which were also the two most frequently indicated zip codes for the riders' residences.

Figure 23
Q25: What is the zip code of your work?



Customer Satisfaction

Multiple questions were included on the survey questionnaire to ascertain customer satisfaction with specific aspects of RTS transit service. For example, Questions 16 and 17 asked riders to list the one thing they liked most and the one thing they liked least, respectively, about riding the bus.

Additionally, Question 27 asked riders to rate their perception of 21 different service characteristics as well as the overall quality of RTS service using a five-point scale (1-“very dissatisfied” to 5-“very satisfied”). Further, Question 28 asked riders to list the three service characteristics (from those presented in Question 27) that would most benefit them personally if RTS were to improve them. The discussion of the results of these questions follow.

Aspects Liked Best - From the analysis of Question 16, it was determined that a total of 298 discrete responses were provided for this question. CUTR grouped the most frequent responses by assigning them unique identifier codes based on categorical similarities. Table 10 outlines the six groups of responses most frequently given by riders. As an example, the category “bus operators” includes such descriptors as courteous, friendly, helpful, kind, fun, and pleasant.

Table 10

Q16: Please tell us the one thing that you like most about riding the bus.

Aspects Liked Best	# of Riders	% of Valid Responses
Convenience	1,966	27.4%
Not having to park	754	10.5%
Bus operators	719	10.0%
Better than walking	501	7.0%
Punctual/on time/schedule	294	4.1%
Not having to drive	250	3.5%

Aspects Liked Least - From the results of Question 17, it was determined that a total of 293 discrete responses were provided for this question. Similar to the process used for Question 16, CUTR grouped the most frequent responses by assigning them unique identifier codes based on categorical similarities. Table 11 outlines the six groups of responses most frequently given by riders. As an example, the category “overcrowding” was mentioned in the morning, in the afternoon, when it rains, on specific routes, and at peak times.

Table 11

Q17: Please tell us the one thing that you like least about riding the bus.

Aspects Liked Least	# of Riders	% of Valid Responses
Overcrowding	1,461	18.9%
On-time performance	1,227	15.9%
Wait times	1,186	15.3%
Frequency of service	511	6.6%
Bus service ends too early	419	5.4%
Travel times/takes too long	417	5.4%

Satisfaction Ratings - As mentioned previously, Question 27 gave riders an opportunity to rate their individual levels of satisfaction with each of a number of RTS service characteristics using a scoring scale of 1 to 5 (1-“very dissatisfied” to 5-“very satisfied”). Using this rating system’s numerical scoring values, an average score was calculated for each service characteristic. The resulting mean scores give a better indication of overall customer satisfaction with each of the service characteristics. Since a score of 5 indicates a “very satisfied” level of contentment, the closer to 5 that a characteristic’s mean score is, the higher the degree of customer satisfaction with that characteristic.

Table 12 presents all of the average customer satisfaction ratings for the service characteristics included in Question 27. It is evident from the data that most of the mean scores fall between the 3 (neutral) and 4 (satisfied) satisfaction ratings, signifying a “somewhat satisfied” level of contentment with many of RTS’s service characteristics. Among the highest-rated service characteristics are those related to safety and bus operator behavior. Those characteristics that RTS riders are most unsatisfied with include the weekday span of service (evening), frequency of service, weekend span of service (evening), and on-time performance.

Table 12
Average Customer Satisfaction Ratings

Service Characteristic	Mean Score (maximum=5)
a. Overall satisfaction with RTS	3.52
b. Frequency of service	2.75
c. Ability of RTS to get riders where they want to go	3.75
d. Number of times riders need to transfer between buses to get where they want to go	3.79
e. Ease of transferring between buses	3.35
f. On-time performance	2.77
g. Travel time	3.20
h. Value of bus fare	3.74
i. Ease of obtaining bus route and schedule information	3.81
j. User friendliness of bus route and schedule information	3.77
k. Time of day the earliest buses run on weekdays	3.80
l. Time of day the latest buses run on weekdays	2.62
m. Time of day the earliest buses run on weekend days	3.24
n. Time of day the latest buses run on weekend days	2.95
o. Cleanliness of buses and bus stops	3.87
p. Safety at the bus stop	3.93
q. Safety while riding the bus	3.99
r. Safety after getting off the bus	4.06
s. Temperature inside the buses	3.54
t. Availability of seats on the buses	3.09
u. Bus driver’s ability to drive the bus	3.94
v. Bus driver’s courtesy	4.19

In addition to analyzing average satisfaction ratings, CUTR produced several cross-tabulations for Question 27, Part A (overall satisfaction with RTS), and compared the resulting customer satisfaction levels by age and total household income for 1996. In Table 13 below, approximately 55 percent of RTS riders in all age groups indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with RTS service. Correspondingly, Table 14 shows that all income categories, with the exception of the \$10,000-\$14,999 income category, indicated satisfied or very satisfied levels of contentment for more than 50 percent of riders.

Table 13
Overall Satisfaction with RTS by Rider Age

Age Groups	Satisfaction Ratings (5-very satisfied, 1-very dissatisfied)					Total
	5	4	3	2	1	
Under 18	14.6%	24.7%	52.4%	5.2%	3.1%	100.0%
18 to 24	11.8%	42.8%	34.2%	8.9%	2.4%	100.0%
25 to 34	16.1%	42.1%	27.7%	7.5%	6.7%	100.0%
35 to 44	30.5%	31.1%	19.9%	8.7%	9.7%	100.0%
45 to 54	23.7%	20.9%	32.8%	7.9%	14.6%	100.0%
Over 54	34.6%	16.8%	15.8%	20.3%	12.4%	100.0%
All Ages	14.5%	40.1%	32.5%	8.8%	4.1%	100.0%

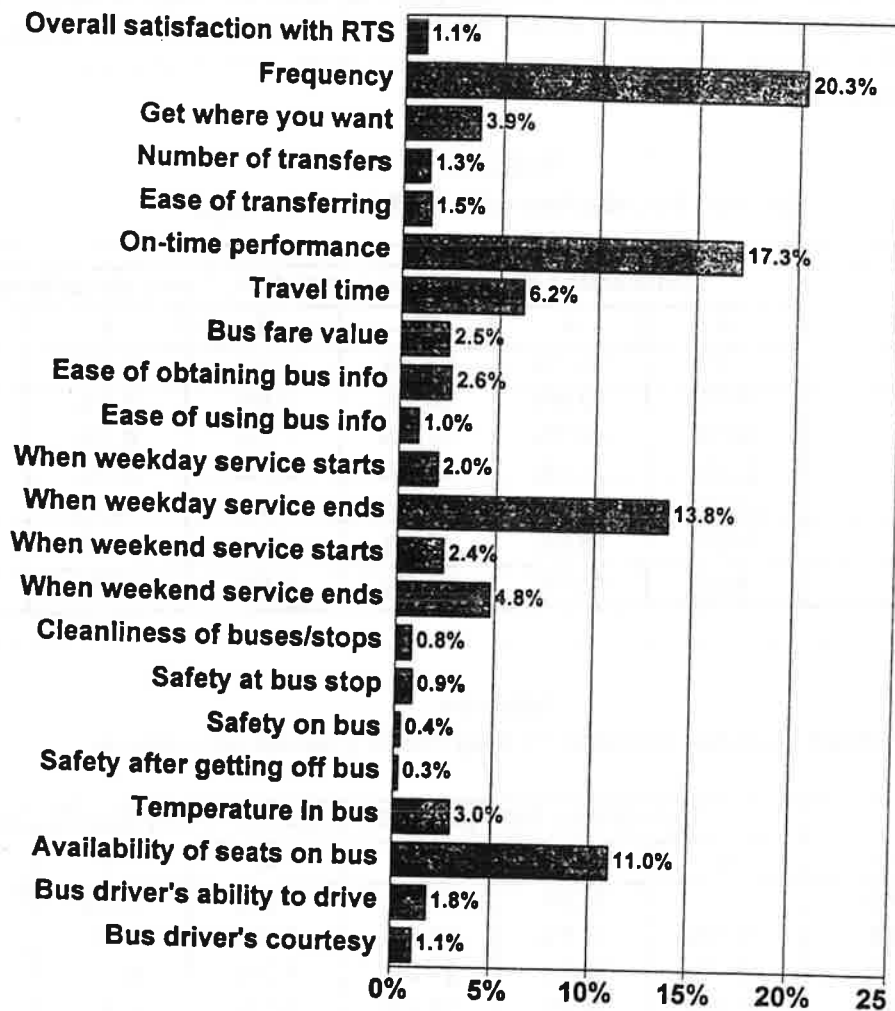
Table 14
Overall Satisfaction with RTS by Rider Household Income

Income Ranges	Satisfaction Ratings (5-very satisfied, 1-very dissatisfied)					Total
	5	4	3	2	1	
Less than \$5,000	14.0%	35.9%	37.6%	7.6%	4.9%	100.0%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	11.5%	44.1%	33.9%	5.4%	5.1%	100.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	15.4%	32.7%	37.0%	9.0%	5.9%	100.0%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	14.6%	38.9%	38.0%	4.1%	4.3%	100.0%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	31.7%	38.3%	21.7%	4.1%	4.1%	100.0%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	19.9%	52.7%	8.3%	17.9%	1.4%	100.0%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	11.0%	59.4%	21.7%	0.0%	7.9%	100.0%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	6.4%	55.8%	23.1%	4.6%	10.1%	100.0%
\$50,000 or more	14.9%	42.1%	28.7%	14.1%	0.3%	100.0%
All Incomes	14.7%	41.3%	31.6%	8.0%	4.5%	100.0%

Finally, as discussed previously, Question 28 asked riders to list the three service characteristics (from those presented in Question 27) that would most benefit them personally if RTS were to improve them. The results of this question verify those characteristics that riders were least satisfied with in Question 27. Therefore, the top three highest-prioritized improvements are frequency of service, on-time performance, and weekday span of service. All three of these service characteristics were noted in Question 17 as aspects liked least by riders about riding the bus. The frequency distribution of response for Question 28 is presented below in Figure 24.

Figure 24

Q28: List the three service characteristics that would most help YOU if RTS were to improve them



CUTR also utilized Question 28 in a cross-tabulation with rider age to determine whether most needed improvements were consistent among the 18-to-24-year-old age group and all other age groups combined. Table 15, shown on the following page, indicates that the top seven highest priorities for service improvements among 18 to 24 year olds are the exact same top seven priorities for all other age groups, although the order of ranking differs. The greatest discrepancy was that 18 to 24 year olds placed a greater priority on the availability of seats on the buses than did the other age groups. Also, the other age groups gave a higher priority to weekday span of service than did the 18 to 24 year olds.

Table 15
Service Characteristics Most Needing Improvement by Rider Age

Service Characteristics Most Needing Improvements	18-24 Age Group	Rank	All Other Age Groups	Rank
Frequency of service	22.0%	1	15.3%	2
On-time performance	19.3%	2	11.3%	3
Availability of seats on the buses	13.0%	3	5.1%	7
Time of day the latest buses run on weekdays	13.0%	4	16.2%	1
Travel time	6.5%	5	5.3%	6
Time of day the latest buses run on weekend days	3.4%	6	8.9%	4
Ability of RTS to get riders where they want to go	3.2%	7	5.9%	5

Following are Figures 25 through 46, which present the frequency distributions for all of the service characteristics included in Question 27 of the survey questionnaire.

Figure 25
Q27a: Your overall satisfaction with RTS

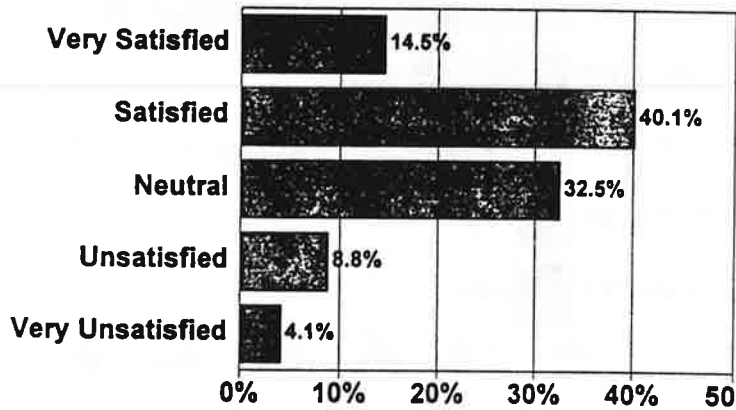


Figure 26
Q27b: Frequency of service (how often buses run)

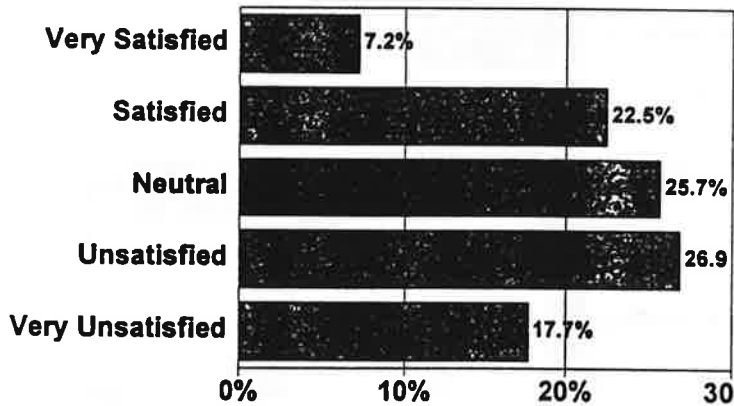


Figure 27
Q27c Your ability to get where you want to go using the bus

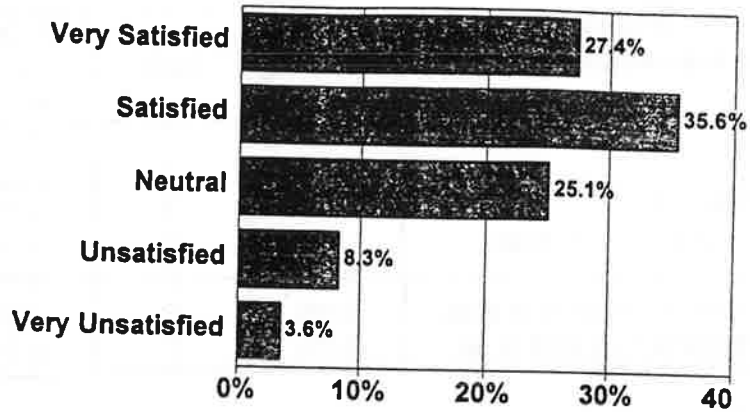


Figure 28
Q27d: The number of times you have to transfer buses to get where you want to go

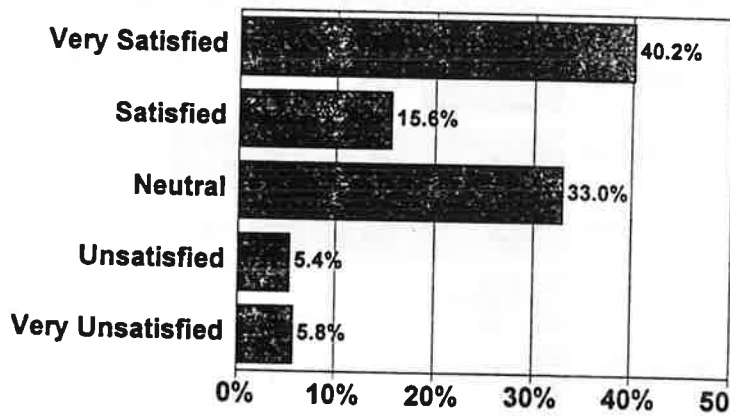


Figure 29
Q27e: How easy it is to transfer between buses

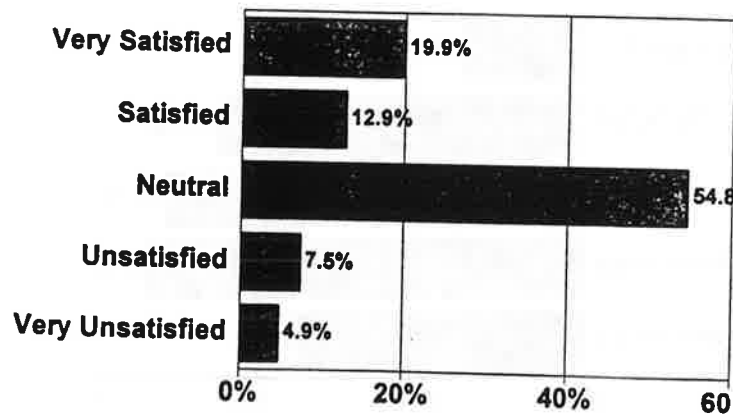


Figure 30
Q27f: How regularly buses arrive on time

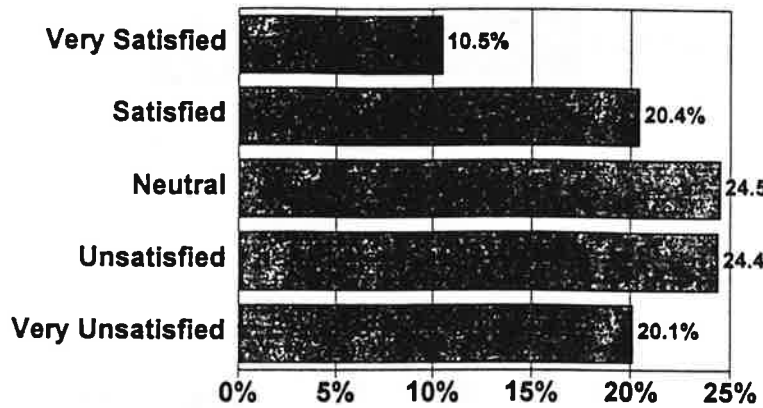


Figure 31
Q27g: The time it takes to make a trip by bus

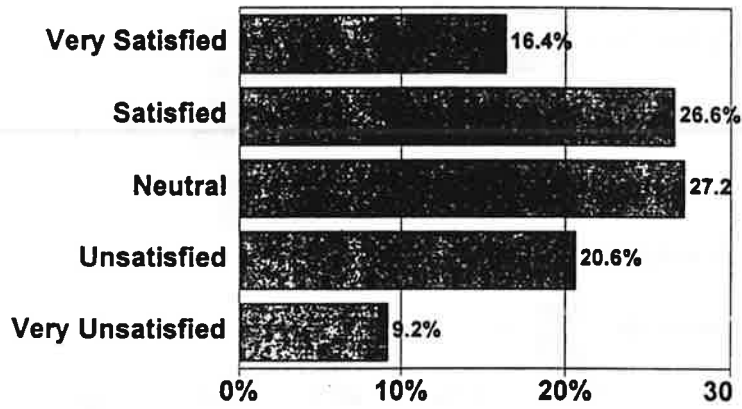


Figure 32
Q27h: Value of bus fare (service you get for what you pay)

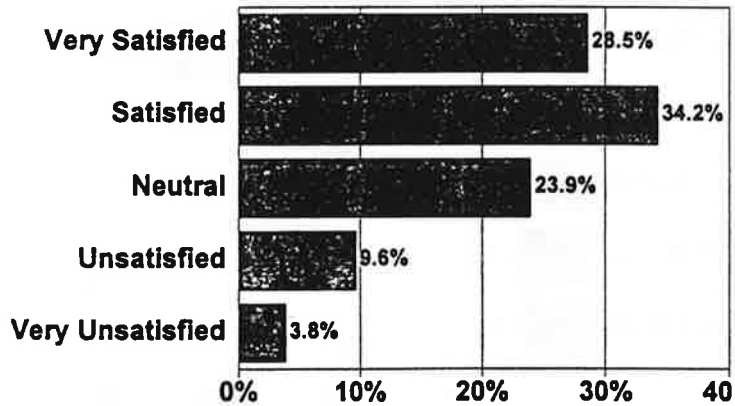


Figure 33

Q27i: How easy it is to obtain bus route and schedule information

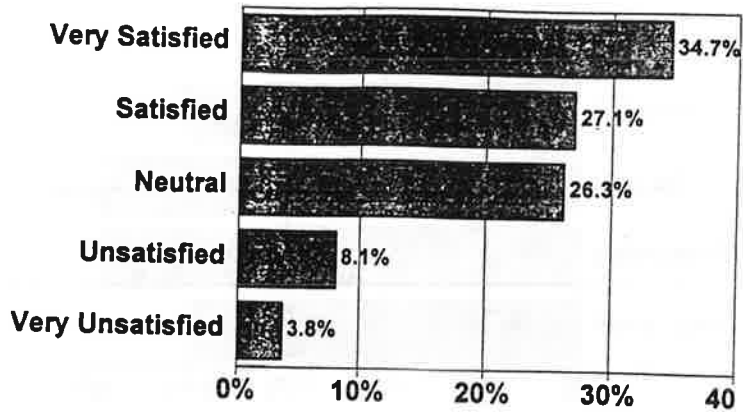


Figure 34

Q27j: How easy it is to use bus route and schedule information

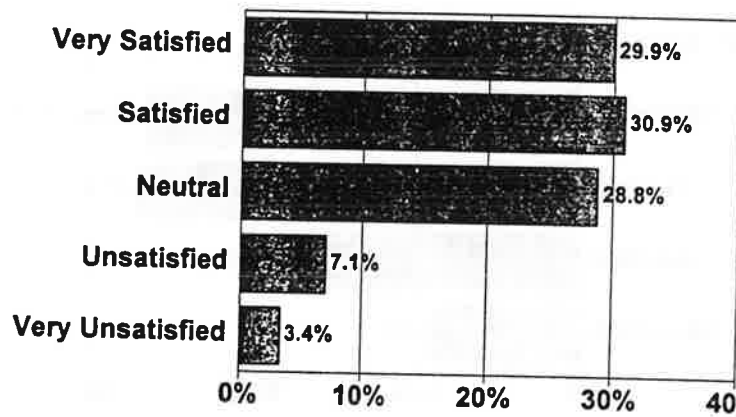


Figure 35

Q27k: The time of day the earliest buses run on weekdays

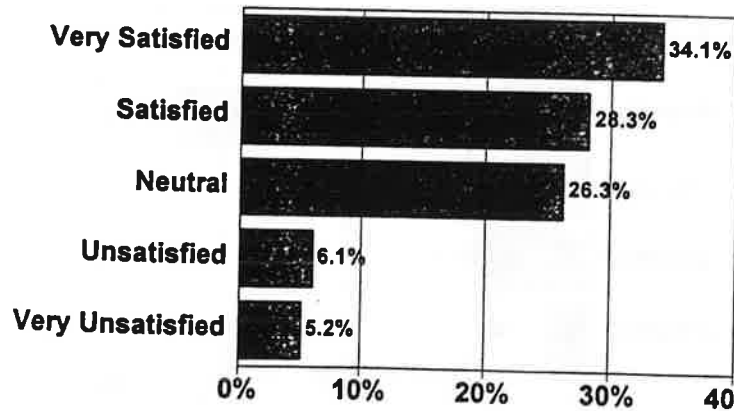


Figure 36

Q27l: The time of day the latest buses run on weekdays

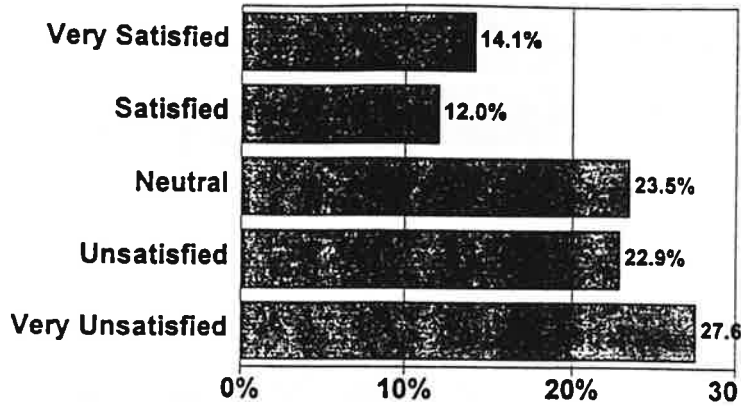


Figure 37

Q27m: The time of day the earliest buses run on weekend days

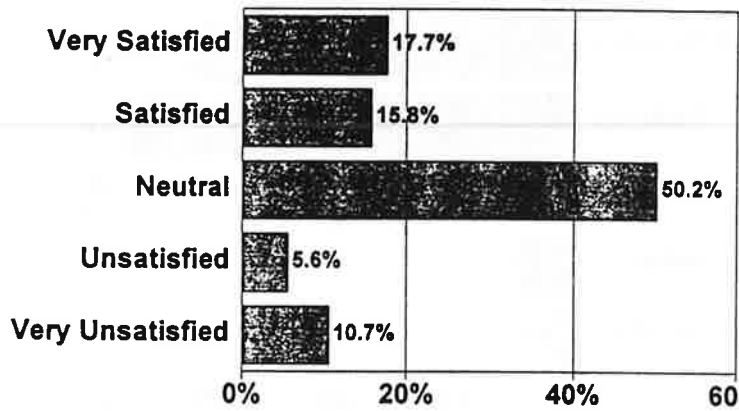


Figure 38

Q27n: The time of day the latest buses run on weekend days

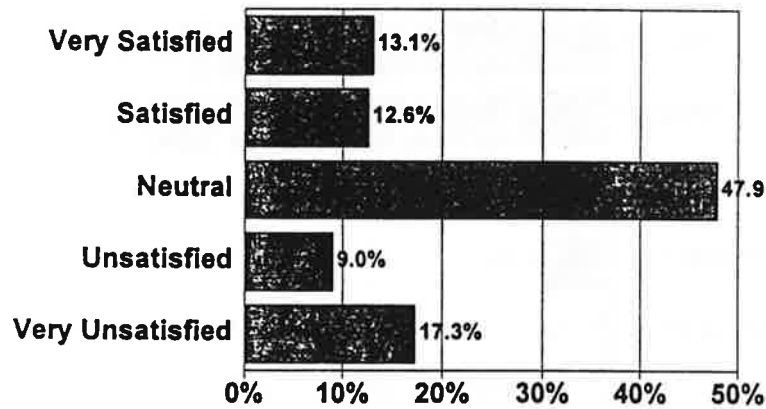


Figure 39
Q27o: How clean the buses and bus stops are

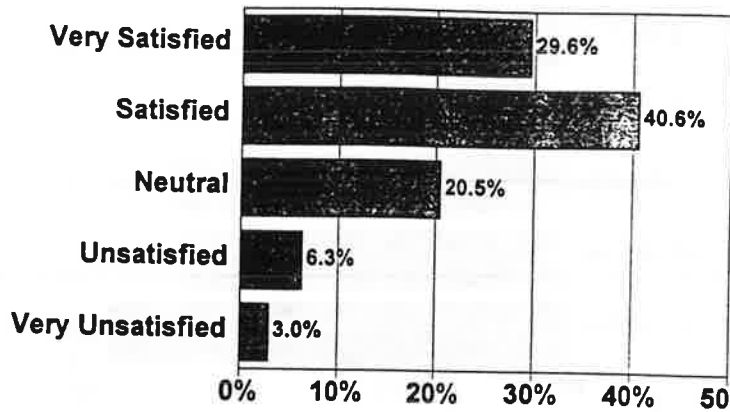


Figure 40
Q27p: Safety at the bus stop

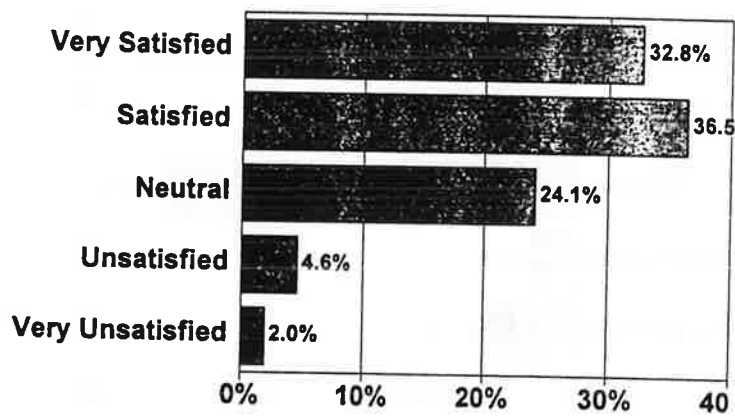


Figure 41
Q27q: Safety while riding the bus

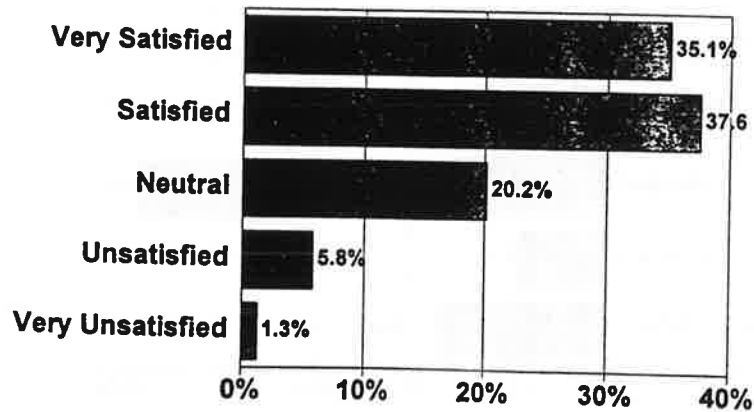


Figure 42
Q27r: Safety after getting off the bus

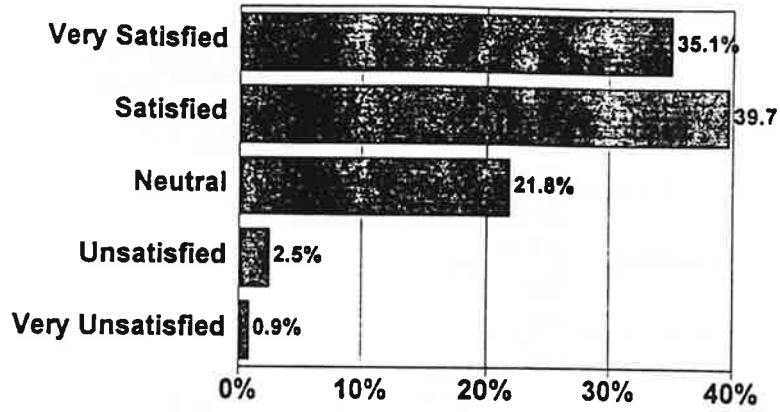


Figure 43
Q27s: Temperature inside the buses

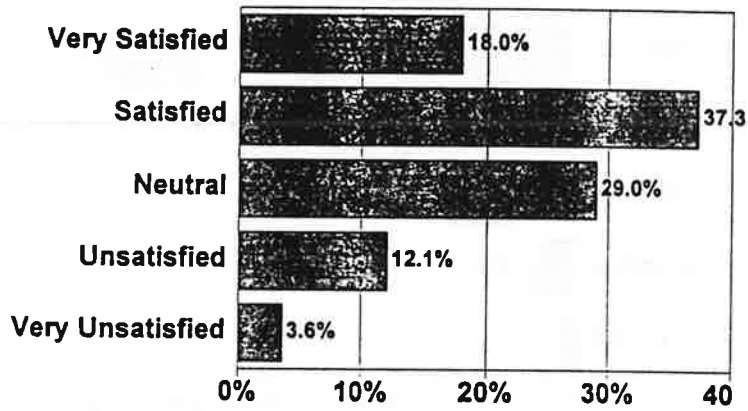


Figure 44
Q27t: Availability of seats on the buses

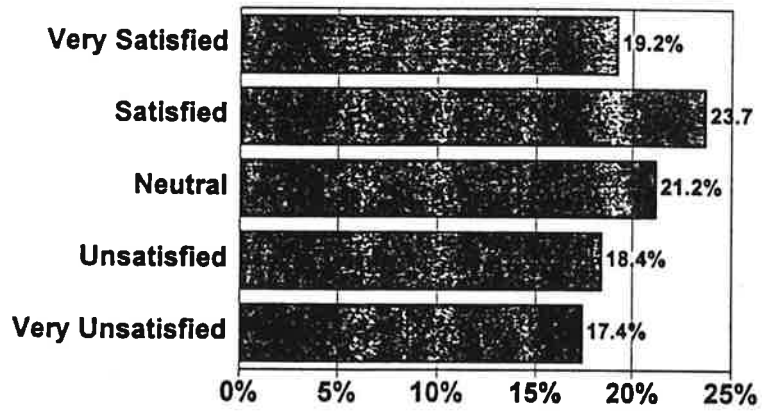


Figure 45
Q27u: The bus driver's ability to drive the bus

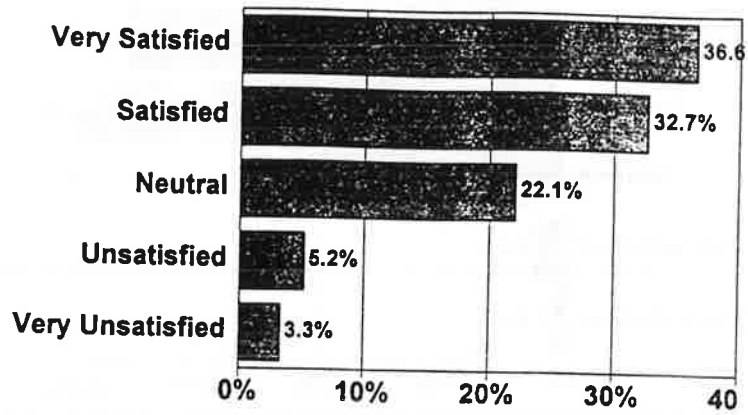
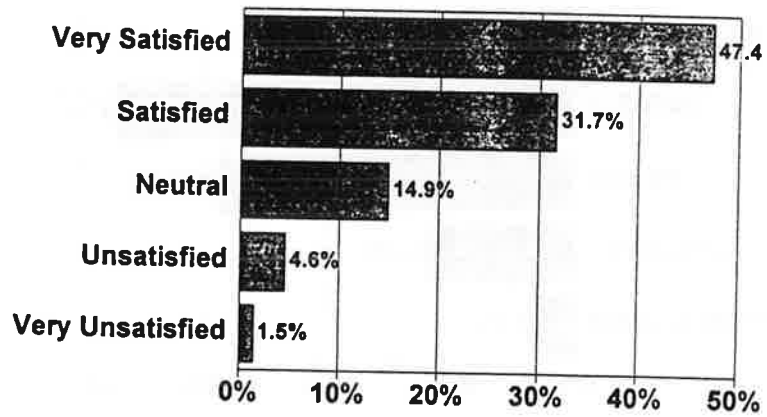


Figure 46
Q27v: The bus driver's courtesy



Summary

Based on the results of the 1997 RTS on-board survey, CUTR has drawn a number of conclusions about RTS services and customers as follows:

1. The University of Florida main campus is the primary generator of transit trips in Gainesville.

- 48 percent of riders listed the UF campus as their origin and 66 percent listed it as their destination (Question 2).
- 58 percent of riders indicated that they were going to the UF campus for their trip (Question 8).

2. The primary market for RTS services is the UF student market.

- 70 percent of riders are between the ages of 18 and 24 years old (Question 18).
- 79 percent of riders paid a student fare when boarding the bus (Question 11).

3. Seniors, persons with disabilities, and working adults are under-represented in RTS ridership.

- Less than 2 percent of all riders are over the age of 65 years old (Question 18).
- Less than 3 percent of riders reported paying half-fare (\$0.50) when boarding the bus (Question 11).
- Only 11 percent of riders reported that they were going to work on their trip (Question 8).

4. The RTS route network is well-designed for direct origin-destination travel.

- Only 18 percent of all riders require more than one route to complete their trip (Question 6).

- There is a high mean satisfaction score (3.79) for the number of times riders have to transfer to get where they want to go (Question 27d).

5. A majority of RTS customers ride the bus because transit is the most logical mode of transportation for them.

- Convenience (27 percent) was listed as aspect most liked by riders (Question 16).
- 85 percent of riders have a valid driver's license (Question 9).
- 81 percent of riders have access to one or more vehicles (Question 22).
- 69 percent of riders utilize transit for reasons other than ability to drive (Question 13).
- 66 percent of riders would drive, walk, or bicycle if not making their trip by transit (Question 14).

6. The highest priorities for service improvements are the same among RTS riders:

- Frequency of service - 20 percent (Question 28).
- On-time performance - 17 percent (Question 28).
- Weekday span of service - 14 percent (Question 28).

7. Overall, more than half of all customers are satisfied or very satisfied with RTS.

- The mean rating for overall satisfaction is 3.52 (Question 27a).
- Greater than 50 percent of all riders gave a rating of satisfied or very satisfied for their overall satisfaction with RTS service (Tables 13 and 14).

INTERVIEWS WITH KEY COMMUNITY LEADERS

An important element in the preparation of a TDP is to gain input from key community leaders and local officials. Community leaders not only provide guidance in determining the direction of public transportation but also can be advocates to the general public. The community's beliefs concerning the transit system and public transportation in general provide insight in determining whether the existing system's goals and performance match residents' expectations of their public transportation system. Also, the way in which public transit is viewed by local officials can significantly influence the priority that is given to transit and other related transportation issues.

CUTR and RTS management compiled a list of key community leaders to interview consisting of the City and County Commission, University of Florida administrators and student representatives, business leaders, Santa Fe Community college, the media, the MTPO, citizen activists, and City of Gainesville administrators. In all, twenty-two interviews were conducted over a five day period. Throughout the interview process, CUTR found that awareness of transit is high in Gainesville due to the recent partnership formed by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), the University of Florida, the City of Gainesville and the Alachua County Commission to provide additional funding for service improvements on routes with passenger overloads.

An outline of questions used for these interviews is contained in Appendix E. Interviews consisted of three parts, as follows:

- **The current status of transit in Gainesville.** In this section, a variety of topics were covered including press coverage, the potential of transit's role in economic development, road improvements, land use, communications, and support.
- **The current status of RTS.** In this section, community leaders were asked to assess RTS's strengths and weaknesses, its image, and areas of focus over the next several years.
- **Future Direction for RTS.** In this section, community leaders were asked to envision the future of RTS and to provide guidance and direction to RTS in fulfilling its community role.

Overwhelmingly, leaders stated that RTS did a very poor job of communicating its role in the past but that the past year had seen significant change with the new management structure at RTS.

- "The new director is doing an excellent job of changing attitudes. He is a salesman."
- "The new director has a dynamic personality and a lot of energy. He is exactly what the doctor ordered. He has rallied the troops and raised morale."
- "The new director has garnered a lot of articles and local coverage."
- "It is beginning to, especially with current personnel. They need to look for improving methods and dialogue with the community. The long term vision has to be there to justify current decision-making."

There were those leaders who cautioned that transit still has a long way to go in communicating its role. "In Gainesville, as in Boulder, a big part of the success is in the message. Boulder did a PR campaign and called routes, 'Hop, Skip, and Jump.' They added the aspect of fun." Another said that transit needs more positive campaigns and visibility. After all, no one knows about bikes on buses until they actually see a bike mounted to the front of the bus. All leaders asked said they supported RTS utilizing funds for marketing and communications.

The interview then turned to a discussion of future support in light of the current status of transit as an issue in Gainesville. Everyone knows that elected bodies must set about each year to determine community priorities in terms of urban services. In order to determine community leaders' feelings on supporting transit funding, community leaders were asked where transit should fit within the overall mix of urban services. Subsequently, in the next question, leaders were asked to express their conditions for supporting transit more in the future.

Transit in the Overall Mix of Community Priorities

A majority of leaders agreed that transit is an essential service. A number of leaders talked about being more creative in locating additional funding for transit from such resources as Alachua County, gas taxes, impact fees, and road improvement funds. Actually, many of the County commissioners themselves stated that the County needed to be more active in funding transit. Others talked about the need to strengthen partnerships with the State of Florida, the Board of Regents, and the University of Florida. One leader stated that, "Transit is way up there. I would give it an 8 or 9 out of 10. However, I don't see transit in a vacuum. I lump it together with all transportation issues." Another said, "Transit should remain a high priority until

it is doing its job."

There were those who were more tentative regarding where transit fits within community priorities. One leader said, "It depends on the results of what transit accomplishes. If it is working, we should support it more. If it is not, then we shouldn't." Another leader said that transit should be the "primary secondary" service after police, fire and emergency services.

Community Leaders' Conditions for Supporting Improvements and Expansions

Community leaders were asked to complete this statement: "I would support transit more if..." There were also a wide range of answers to this question. Many stated emphatically that they already support transit wholeheartedly. For those who gave conditions, a summary is provided below:

I would support transit more if...

- the system continues to increase ridership;
- the system is configured to serve areas where it is efficiently operated;
- it is more market-driven;
- the system continues to expand;
- the system continues to serve residents of East Gainesville;
- there were better schedules and improved customer relations;
- the system serves major employers;
- the system meets the needs of commuters in outlying areas;
- the system is configured to serve high density areas straight from apartment complexes to campus.

Current Status of RTS

In this section, community leaders were asked specifically about RTS, its strengths and weaknesses, its image, and its needed areas of focus over the next few years. When asked about strengths and weaknesses, many leaders said they were not familiar enough with the operation to really be able to make a good judgment. However, most were able to cite the change in management over the past year as a major strength.

RTS Strengths and Weaknesses

The most often cited strength was the new transit director and the manner in which he is managing the system. In addition, student interest in transit was cited as a major strength. Also, community leaders expressed admiration for the recent changes in service that have allocated smaller buses to routes with lower ridership and expanded service in areas where they are more utilized. A great deal of admiration was expressed at the strength of RTS in making these changes and having the will to stick to them.

As to its weaknesses, a wider variety of responses was given. Some leaders felt that RTS needed to strengthen its relationship with its employees in order to create a better transit system. Others expressed mixed feelings about the mini-bus service and how changes will affect current riders. The fact that the bus system is not 100% accessible was also listed as a major weakness for people with disabilities.

Some leaders also talked about service quality issues. Weaknesses included lack of reliability and frequency in service contributing to a poor image. Still others felt that RTS is not funded at the level it should be. Finally, the lack of public relations and communications was cited as a major weakness for RTS.

Current Image of RTS

When asked about the current image of RTS, most leaders stated that there are historical influences, such as lack of support and attitude of transit as a social service, that contributed to a low image of RTS in the past. One leader stated it simply, "Late, surly, not enough frequency." Another said, "In the past we wished it could be better but we didn't know how." Most leaders did not want to focus on the past image and agreed that the image is moving in a positive direction. However, they did feel that this more positive image is an opportunity that must be seized upon and will stall if service quality and public relations issues are not addressed.

Specific Areas of Focus for RTS

It was explained to interviewees that when completing a five year TDP, a transit system must develop areas of focus among all the options available. Therefore, interviewees were asked an open ended question, "What specific areas do you think RTS needs to focus on in the next few

years to improve its services?"

Both administration and student officials of the University of Florida offered input and guidance for this question. Leaders feel that RTS needs to work on becoming a more responsive, reliable and dependable service with greater frequency and on-time performance. One leader stated that the campus-oriented routes should be renamed to have a specific identity for the UF campus and its students. Direct routing between high density rental communities and the UF campus was also mentioned as a major focus.

Those areas of focus were voiced by other leaders as well. Most leaders said that the transit system should "focus on the basics" and continue to be oriented in areas where it will be the most productive, efficient and utilized. "We need a system that is intuitive...one that has a logical network." Others stated that the system should work on becoming more customer friendly with an emphasis on printed schedules and other materials benefiting customers. One leader spoke of, "customers who fall into the convenience of solid transit." Accessibility for persons with disabilities was mentioned as a needed focus. Finally, leaders stated that marketing and public relations should be a major focus to improve image and broaden the appeal of transit in Gainesville.

Future Direction

In this section, community leaders were asked to envision an RTS of the future by responding to the question, "What if RTS was a jewel of the Gainesville community? What would it be like?" In addition, leaders were asked to give their initial impressions to a change in organizational structure for RTS that would create an agency more reflective of the partners to the system.

RTS as a Jewel of the Community

There were a number of adjectives used by community leaders to describe RTS as a community jewel, as follows:

- User-friendly
- Convenient
- Efficient
- Friendly

- Safe
- Clean
- Straightforward
- Welcome
- Reliable

In addition, several community leaders offered comments that are worth quoting directly as RTS seeks guidance and looks to impress the importance of transit to the Gainesville public in the coming years:

- "It would be a jewel if it was a feather in our cap. It would be a system we could tout about, part of getting people to come to Gainesville, a place where you do not need a car. Also, it would be part of the marketing efforts of the University of Florida."
- "It would be a jewel if I could use the system without even knowing anything about riding transit or the transit system. In other cities, I've seen transit where it is color-coded with easy access."
- "It would be a jewel if it was a frequent, on-time, user-friendly service that had easy availability of information, if it was easy to get on and off with passes (seamless), and people could use it to travel to all the other jewels of the community we talk about."
- "It would be a jewel if it was configured to serve effective routing and that it would not neglect or eliminate service to other parts of the community. It would be a jewel if it were more privatized, meaning that it employed modern marketing, customer service and market-driven approaches."
- "It would be a jewel if it ran more in a grid pattern, if it ran at night, if it solved traffic problems for football games and conventions, and if it fostered more bicycle use."
- "It would be a jewel if it was organized in a straightforward, simple fashion so people could figure out how to get from Point A to Point B. Transit buses would be centers of community interaction where people would have face-to-face contact that would further bring out a sense of community. And finally, the community would be in recognition...they would be proud and say, "We got a damn good bus system and we're glad it's here."

Organizational Structure

Leaders were asked to respond to the following question about the organizational structure of RTS: "How would you react to a change in organizational structure for RTS where, instead of being a department of city government, it would have a quasi-agency status with a governing board made up of the partners to the system (City, County, UF, FDOT, etc.)?"

A number of leaders responded to this question by saying that Gainesville currently has an authority for both the airport and the library system, and that this structure works well for both agencies. Leaders noted that the library has a regional identity that garners regional pride. Also, the library has a taxing authority that will end in the year 2005, which gives it time to build an endowment fund to support the library when the authority expires. For those who supported the concept, there was acknowledgement that the system is no longer a "city" system but rather a system that is regional in scope.

Although there was initial support expressed for such an idea, there was also caution. "I think it's a question that needs to be asked. The only thing is I wouldn't want to see any unintended consequences." Another leader asked, "Who would choose the board? How would the operator be chosen? Would it be a dependent or independent taxing district? I'd have to see format and responsibilities."

For those who opposed the idea, it was noted that by keeping a service under general government, elected representatives are able to balance priorities and emphasize urban services in the budgeting process. Some leaders felt that independent authorities either have a fragmenting effect on the community or have governing structures that fall by the wayside in the decision-making process.

RTS OPERATOR SURVEY

In addition to the on-board survey completed by the riders, a survey was also prepared for the RTS bus operators. Since bus operators are in direct contact with passengers, they are an invaluable source of information concerning RTS's daily operations. A copy of the operator survey is contained in Appendix C. Tables 1 through 4 contain the results from the 1997 operator surveys.

Approximately 40 surveys were distributed to bus operators when they reported for their shift. A total of 14 responses were received.

The first question asked bus operators to mark the most frequently received complaints from passengers from a list of 16 potential complaints. The most frequent complaints identified by bus operators were "bus is late," "no bus shelters/benches," "infrequent service," and "bus does not go where I want." The frequency of responses is below in Table 1.

When asked if the complaints were valid, bus operators noted that for the most part the complaints are valid. However, a couple of operators stated that the complaints come from a small percentage of people and sometimes the complaints are not handled correctly.

Table 1
Most Frequent Passenger Complaints about Identified by Bus Operators

Complaint Type	Number of Responses from Bus Operators
Bus is late	10
No Bus Shelters/Benches	10
Infrequent Service	8
Bus does not go where I want	8
Need Evening Service	7
Route or Destination not clear	7
Bus is not clean	7
Need Sunday service	6
Bus did not show/passed me up	5
Bus schedules too difficult to understand	5
Fare is too high	4
Bus leaves stop too early	3
Bus is not comfortable	2
Eating or drinking on bus	2
Smoking on bus	2
Bus is not comfortable	2
Passengers cannot get route information	1

The next question asked the operators to pick from a list of possible improvements to the transit system and to mark the ones they thought would be helpful. The most often cited improvements were to give better route and schedule information and to put up more shelters at bus stops. Table 2 below gives the frequency of responses from the operators.

Table 2
Transit System Improvements Requested by Bus Operators

Improvements	Number of Responses from Bus Operators
Provide better route/schedule information	12
Put up shelters at bus stops	11
Maintain buses more frequently	9
More buses on routes	9
Give more time in schedules	7
Lower the fares	6
Operate Sunday service	5
Operate new, smaller vehicles	5

Operators were then asked to identify possible safety problems with any of the routes in the system and to describe them. A total of four responses were received to this question, as follows:

- If possible, bus stops could be relocated so that a street light is over them;
- The narrow stairwells on the minibuses;
- Need stop sign to prevent sudden stops; and
- All routes that are 8-10 hours long need enough time for operator to take restroom break.

When consulted about their route schedules, drivers noted Route 8 six times as an especially difficult schedule to maintain. Other routes mentioned were Route 3 (five times), Route 10 (four times), Route 12 (two times), Route 5 (two times), Route 4 and 7 (one time each).

The bus operators were given the opportunity to voice their opinions on any modifications that should be considered on the routes, as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3
Routes to Modify Identified by Bus Operators**

Route	Suggested Modification	# of times mentioned
8	More time and buses	3
3	More time and buses	3
10	More time	1
12	More time	1
General	Add a few minutes to end of each route	1
General	Bus should not have to go all around. One should be going and one should be coming	1
General	Heavy vehicle traffic and passenger load should be reflected in running times. As of now Saturday and weekday running times are the same as are a.m. and p.m. rush hours and mid-day.	1

Bus operators were then asked to give their opinions about night and Sunday service. More operators thought there should be night service than Sunday service, which was consistent with passengers in the on-board survey.

**Table 4
Response to Questions 7 and 8**

Question	Yes	No
7. Is night service necessary?	10	3
8. Is Sunday service necessary?	7	6

Finally, bus operators were asked to share any comments they may have regarding RTS, its services, and its customers. Responses are summarized below:

- All buses need to run on the hour and half hour and make connections with other routes so people can get to and from work.
- I would monitor on-time performance and also seriously consider service to outlying areas.
- The smaller buses on Route #7 and no bell for passenger destination.
- Some stops are hard to see.
- Try a route to the airport and lamplighter again.
- RTS needs more buses on the #7, #3, #8, #10, and #11 so people could make better connections and would not have to wait so long to catch the bus they need.

CHAPTER TWO

Goals and Initiatives

Goal #1: Fulfill the newly-adopted RTS Vision for Transit in Gainesville

Initiatives

A. *Make Transit Fun.*

Next August, the University of Florida will implement a per-credit hour fee that will replace UF student passenger fares and enable all students to have unlimited access to transit services. This will provide RTS with a unique opportunity to begin promoting fun in transit, which can be conveyed in several ways. Sometimes, the transit system can poke fun at itself with tongue-in-cheek advertising and promotional campaigns using print, radio and television media to deliver the message of fun. Also, the transit system can sponsor events and activities that make transit service itself fun. Examples include rotating musicians on buses for the first two weeks of class, giving gifts to each boarding passenger, setting up a transit information center on campus, and free gift promotions during apartment check-in.

B. *Establish market-driven approaches to increase ridership.*

Rather than designing a rigid product and then attempting to force it on customers, a market-driven approach means that the transit system will design, tailor or modify its transportation services based on the needs or demands of a particular market segment. For instance, University of Florida employees as a market segment may require different products that are more logical for their transportation needs: express bus services from park and rides, limited stop local bus service, shuttles, van pools, and carpool ride matching. Downtown workers, the youth market (public school children) and senior markets may have entirely different transportation needs. Taking a market-driven approach to transit service enables the transit provider to treat transit as a business with a focus on gaining more customers and increasing ridership.

C. *Develop a product approach to give distinction to transit services.*

Currently RTS is the name of the transit system and its individual products are called routes. In a product approach, the entire transit system and individual routes and services could be given different names to give them distinction. These approaches can greatly enhance marketing efforts, the visual aspect of the transit system, service packaging, and customer identification with various services. This

approach can also play a major role in packaging different enticement programs for different market segments to utilize transit.

D. Focus on the University of Florida campus as the major regional generator of transit trips.

The route network as it currently exists attempts to serve either the University of Florida campus or origins and destinations throughout the urban area. There is great ridership disparity between those routes that directly serve UF and those that do not, which provides an indication that low ridership routes are not serving customer travel patterns. Clearly, all existing data indicates that the University of Florida and surrounding businesses are the primary regional generator of transit trips. Therefore, the transit system should focus on UF because of the implications for expanded ridership as well as balancing the overall transportation system in the region.

Goal #2: Communicate the Role of Transit in the Gainesville Community

Initiatives

A. Implement a Communications Program

Transit's image is a major factor discussed in community leader interviews as a needed focus for RTS. A communications program is different from a marketing program because it does not attempt to actually stimulate usage of the transit product. Rather, it provides the transit system with several methods by which to convey messages to the public as a whole about the role of transit, its importance to the community, impact on transportation systems and other community values, future vision, and improvements. However, if done well, a communications program can actually become a part of the marketing efforts of the transit system by enhancing transit's attractiveness to those members of the community who had previously never given it a thought.

A communications program is designed to improve image and build public support for continued expansion of the transit system. In building this support, RTS needs to implement programs that show progress and then report that progress in a proactive way. The program will define messages and audiences and then address such aspects as media (television, radio, and newspaper), press releases, corporate communications, community outreach (discussed below), involvement with and sponsorship of community events, and promotion of "community jewels" (agencies and entities that are universally valued by the Gainesville public).

B. Establish a Community Relations and Outreach Program

A community relations and outreach program has the objective of developing two or three general presentations (based on the communications program above) and taking them out into the community. Speaking engagements with homebuilders, the Chamber of Commerce, environmental coalitions, disabled advocates, seniors, university student groups, and school children should be conducted as often as possible. The impact of these efforts is to enhance transit's presence in the community as well as to build relationships on a continuous basis. This component is also critical for the transit system to maintain constant feedback from the public as a means of identifying improvements and communicating them effectively.

C. Establish Transit Alliance Program with community groups.

This initiative is already underway by RTS on an informal basis as opportunities present themselves. Actually, a good Transit Alliance Program is designed to be flexible in recognizing and capitalizing on opportunities. There are many opportunities for expansion of this program with the University of Florida, the Alachua County School Board, environmental groups, sustainable development groups, bicyclists, City of Gainesville and Alachua County Parks, and others interested in the issue of transportation and community. The program will garner grass roots support for transit and create advocates and spokespersons for the expansion of the transit system. It also requires the transit system to be responsive to its allies in meeting and promoting their interests in the community.

D. Intensify marketing efforts to University of Florida students.

The data from virtually all the analyses in the Base Data Compilation section reveal that the UF student market is the primary market for transit services in Gainesville. Although students are turning to public transportation as a logical mode of travel to campus, there are tremendous opportunities to intensify marketing efforts to this population with enormous ridership gain potential.

E. Intensify marketing efforts to working adults, seniors, and persons with disabilities.

This initiative should be a secondary focus but still within the five-year timeframe. Ultimately, the objectives of transit and justifications for continuation of many existing services must be met by stimulating usage by these markets. However, efforts should also be staged with the purchase of accessible buses for seniors and persons with disabilities.

Goal #3: Increase Service Availability

Initiatives

- A. *Focus service enhancements on greater system frequency, reliability (on-time performance), and weekday evening service.*

These three service improvements are the highest priorities among customers of and partners to the transit system. Therefore, RTS must respond and prioritize improvements with all new operating funds, starting with running time adjustments to increase reliability, frequency improvements, and finally, as funding is available, additional weekday evening service.

- B. *Establish seasonal schedules corresponding to University of Florida sessions.*

Seasonal schedules, tested last summer, were effective in saving resources and operating funds by reducing frequency of service on both system and campus routes during the summer months when ridership dropped due to reduced enrollment. The TDP therefore reflects this as a full initiative because it enables RTS to allocate resources in fall, winter and spring when ridership is heavier and more service is needed.

- C. *Establish direct routings between high-density residential areas and the University of Florida campus.*

Although the existing network is well-designed for direct origin-destination travel, the process of establishing more direct and faster travel between high density residential and the UF campus must be an ongoing effort.

- D. *Focus on partnerships to fund transit service improvements.*

Although RTS is currently operated by the City of Gainesville, the transit system is structurally regional and consists of existing (City of Gainesville, Alachua County, University of Florida, and the Florida Department of Transportation) and potential partners (apartment complexes, homebuilders, the school board, etc.) As the agency continues to grow and expand, focus should center on strengthening existing relationships and then cultivating potential new partners. In addition, partnerships can play a large role in funding transit through a painted bus advertising program. By allowing full-wrap advertising on buses, the transit system can promote the interests of partners who promote the interests of transit.

- E. *Establish a service review process consisting of RTS staff and bus operators.*

The process has the objective of monitoring product and system performance and to be a conduit to communicate feedback from passengers, bus operators, and the public. Decisions related to service changes, route modifications, and schedule changes would be made under this process.

- F. *Continue to replace existing bus fleet with buses that meet all Federal Americans with Disabilities Act standards.*

RTS is currently requesting a discretionary appropriation from the Congress to purchase 25 new buses, all of which will meet ADA standards. However, since many of the new buses will be required for service expansions, retiring old buses may take a little longer. Once new buses are acquired, RTS should work with people with disabilities to establish priorities for accessible routes.

- G. *Establish contract with local Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC) for Complementary Paratransit Service under the Americans with Disabilities Act.*

In the long run, the elimination of mini-bus service in favor of a contract with the CTC to provide ADA mandated complementary paratransit will reduce operating costs and increase the availability of service for persons with disabilities who meet the eligibility requirements.

Goal #4: Enhance the Presence of Transit through Fixed Facilities and Customer Amenities

Initiatives

- A. *Construct a new administration facility/transfer center in Downtown Gainesville.*

This initiative is already scheduled for construction.

- B. *Establish a regional transfer center on or near the University of Florida campus.*

To foster travel from all parts of the urban area to the University of Florida and, to make travel to campus more attractive to a wider range of markets, it is critical for RTS to establish a second primary regional transfer center that provides connections in the University area. In the long run, such a center will assist RTS in orienting a majority of services to the campus while still providing mobility to customers who are traveling to other destinations for work and other purposes.

- C. *Incorporate transit design and amenities into new residential and commercial developments.*

Both Alachua County and the City of Gainesville believe that land use, zoning, and development regulations need to deal with the issue of design for transit circulation and amenities into new development. It is critical to the TDP to be in compliance with adopted local plans but also to shape the future of those plans by developing language that will re-orient both comprehensive plans and development regulations to achieve this initiative.

- D. *Incorporate transit design and amenities into road improvements.*

As was done with the recent S.W. 20th Avenue charette, RTS must capitalize on leadership support and continue this initiative at the MTPO level to enhance the presence and functioning of transit on congested corridors.

- E. *Establish a Passenger Amenities Program with design elements that promote fun, accommodate new development, and incorporate public participation in the design process.*

Passenger amenities include passenger shelters, information kiosks at bus stops, street furniture, trash cans, etc. The program has the objective of being flexible enough to incorporate different design features based on compatibility with surrounding land uses, customer demand, artistic and creative elements, and community values. Also, the program should address the replacement of existing passenger shelters to become more aesthetically pleasing and incorporate bus stop kiosks with schedule information.

- F. *Incorporate transit design and amenities into new parking lots on the UF campus.*

When applicable, all new parking lot construction should include design for transit circulation and amenities in accordance with this TDP and the University of Florida Campus Master Plan.

Goal #5: Utilize Technology and Innovative Approaches in the Provision of Transit Services

Initiatives

A. *Implement alternative fuel buses.*

Alternative fuel buses reduce air pollution from diesel fuel and are considered an innovation in the transit industry. Because of range restrictions, alternative fuels should be implemented on routes with shorter distances.

B. *Utilize smaller buses on lower ridership routes.*

This objective is intended to provide transit service supply based on demand and to improve public perception.

C. *Experiment with route and point deviation as a service alternative.*

Route and point deviation services can impact both ADA requirements (by diverting a route to pick up a disabled person) and on efficiencies by providing transit service when and where demanded.

D. *Investigate Automatic Passenger Counters (APCs) to aid in monitoring route ridership by time of day.*

APCs are applicable not only for Section 15 purposes, they can also be used in tracking boardings by stop for bus shelter placements, monitoring actual running times, and bus overload situations by time of day.

E. *Investigate an automated bus scheduling software package.*

Scheduling software can provide efficiencies in system scheduling by interlining routes, reducing overtime, creating more efficient run cutting, and reducing deadhead hours and miles. These efficiencies save money and assist in effective allocation of resources.

F. *Establish a commuter assistance program to provide ride-matching and van pool programs for commuters in Alachua and surrounding counties.*

This initiative can serve community mobility needs without adding operating costs to the transit system. It is also a productive means to develop new markets that do not have an inclination to use bus transit service. Any program of this type should take a product approach that will include incentives, guaranteed ride home programs, and other features as developed in other programs throughout the country.

G. *Revitalize bus maintenance.*

This initiative is intended to bring the maintenance function back into the transit system and restructure roles and responsibilities for the purpose of accommodating fleet expansions and alternative fuel buses.

Goal #6: *Change the Organizational Culture of the Regional Transit System*

Initiatives

- A. *Explore the opportunity of establishing an authority status for RTS to reflect the regional nature and partners to the transit system as well as dedicated funding.*

A transit authority in the Gainesville area will enhance the management of the transit system, foster regional identity and create an environment whereupon the partners to the transit system can directly influence its direction.

- B. *Develop a customer-orientation approach to transit by becoming more customer-friendly in printed transit information materials, customer relations, customer complaints, employee courtesy, and service reliability.*

It is well known in the private sector that superior customer service is a critical investment factor in gaining new and keeping existing customers. Customer-orientation should be a primary focus of RTS to ensure that service improvements result in customer satisfaction with and confidence in the transit system. Training bus operators in superior customer service skills, changing their uniforms to convey a friendlier atmosphere, and providing a more pleasing interior environment on buses are examples of customer-orientation. Employee training programs should be addressed under this initiative.

- C. *Conduct a management-bargaining employee retreat once annually to promote buy-in to the vision and mission for public transit.*

Employee connection to the vision and mission of the transit system is a critical component to the improvement of transit service in the region. An employee retreat conducted once annually is the starting point to establishing this connection.

CHAPTER THREE: Evaluation of Existing Transit Service

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Three contains two main sections. The first section, a performance evaluation, consists of a detailed overview of the operating and financial characteristics of RTS. This first section is further divided into a trend analysis and a peer review analysis. The trend analysis represents RTS's performance over a six-year time period (FY 1991 through FY 1996), while the peer review compares the performance of RTS's fixed-route service with that of other selected Florida and non-Florida transit systems. The second section addresses how the results of the performance evaluation apply to the goals and objectives developed for RTS in Chapter Two.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF EXISTING RTS SERVICE

The following sections outline the performance evaluation methodology and describe the results of the trend and peer analyses. All data used in these sections originate from individual National Transit Database (formerly known as Section 15) reports. These analyses are useful in determining the strengths of RTS as well as areas that may require additional attention.

The Purpose of Performance Review

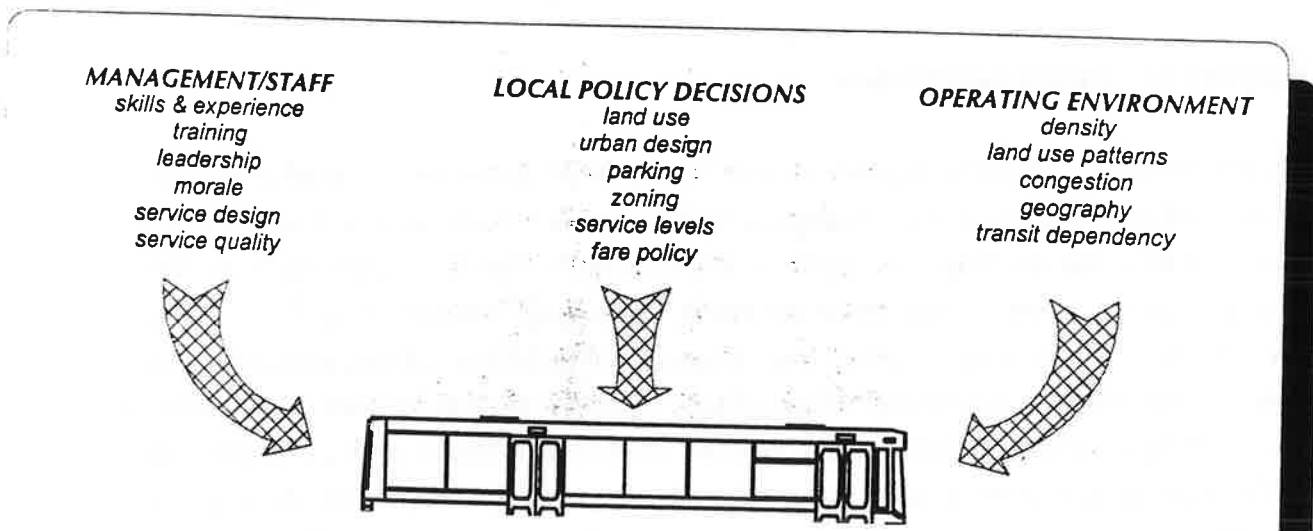
Since a performance evaluation is only one method of analyzing the performance of a given public transportation system and is limited to only those aspects included in the analysis, the reader should exercise considerable caution in interpreting the results. These analyses are particularly strong in reviewing cost effectiveness and efficiency; however, they do not relay the extent to which other objectives of the public transportation system are being achieved. For example, the performance evaluation will not directly measure several relevant considerations such as passenger satisfaction with regard to levels of service, taxpayer and public attitudes toward the agency, employee morale, success in attaining minority hiring or contracting goals, quality of planning, contributions to community economic development, air quality improvements, or other goals that may be important to the public transportation system and the community. In addition, several aspects of quality of service are not measured in a performance evaluation. These include vehicle cleanliness and comfort, operator courtesy, on-

time performance, quality of marketing and passenger information support, and level of satisfaction with hours of operations, frequency of service, and geographic coverage of the service. Many of the above-mentioned issues, however, are addressed in this TDP through the on-board passenger survey, the bus operator survey, interviews with local officials, and other forms of public involvement.

In addition to understanding the limits of this analysis, the reader should take care in interpreting the meaning of the various performance measures. The evaluation does not necessarily provide information concerning which aspects of performance are within control of the agency and which are not. Figure III-1 denotes the major factors that ultimately affect a given agency's performance.

Performance reviews are a useful and important tool in monitoring and improving transit system performance. However, it must be recognized that the results of trend and peer analyses are only a starting point for gaining a complete understanding of the performance of transit systems. The issues identified as a result of this evaluation provide the basis for a series of questions that can lead to an enhanced understanding of the "hows" and "whys" of system performance.

Figure III-1
Factors Affecting Transit Performance



Performance Review Database

To receive federal funds, transit properties are required to report a variety of data in a standardized format, resulting in what is known as a National Transit Database, or NTD (formerly known as Section 15), report. These documents provide standardized measures of reporting that enable a more accurate comparison of information among properties. Since 1979, when this reporting requirement was instituted, additional refinements in data collection and reporting have increased the accuracy and comparability of the data. The data are for the fiscal year used by each transit system. For Florida properties, the fiscal year runs from October 1st through September 30th. For other properties, the fiscal year may be different.

Data Reliability - All NTD data submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) are subject to considerable review and validation through manual and automated methods. Each report is thoroughly examined to identify errors, questions, and inconsistencies. FTA specifies problems and requires each reporting agency to respond to these problems before the final report is accepted.

For this study, data were taken from published summary reports of NTD data and from individual NTD reports provided by the transit agencies. With the exception of the inflation rate, all information was provided by the transit systems. CUTR did not collect any original data or conduct any audits or on-site analyses of the data or data collection procedures.

Data Definitions - To fully understand the data presented in NTD reports, it is important to understand the definitions of the terms used. In many instances, these definitions differ from initial perceptions and may be subject to interpretation. Appendix E contains a detailed list of definitions for selected terms used by FTA. The data collection procedures further specify exactly what is meant by a given term. For example, a "passenger trip" refers to an individual boarding a transit vehicle. A person riding a bus from the corner to the office takes one passenger trip to work and a second passenger trip to return home. Likewise, a person transferring from one bus to another is considered to make two passenger trips to get to his or her destination. Despite these definitions and continued refinements in data collection procedures, there remain some discrepancies among systems as to how terms are defined and how information is collected. Accordingly, caution should be used in interpreting findings, especially for those variables that are more likely to be subject to variations in definition. One example includes how employees are categorized among administrative, operating, and maintenance tasks within different agencies. Another example is how revenue service

interruptions and incidents are defined by different agencies. Other discrepancies can result from differences in the organizational structure of the agency and the allocation of responsibilities among the various governmental entities within the service area. For example, street sweeping and garbage pick-up at park-and-ride or other transit facilities may be provided at no cost by a given jurisdiction or may be a contract or in-house cost of the transit system. Legal services, computer services, engineering and design support, administrative support, and other costs are often shared costs that may or may not be accurately allocated between the transit system and a parent government body.

The national inflation rate, as defined by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all items (including commodities and services) from year to year, was used to inflate cost indicators from 1991 through 1996 so that they could be presented in real terms (1996 dollars). Over the past several years, service and labor costs tended to increase at a faster rate than did commodity prices. Therefore, transit operating expenses, which are predominantly comprised of service and labor costs, can be expected to increase somewhat faster than inflation even if the amount of service provided does not increase.

Performance Indicators and Measures - The evaluation measures used throughout the performance review are divided into three categories: performance indicators, effectiveness measures, and efficiency measures. Performance indicators report absolute data in the selected categories that are required by NTD reporting. These tend to be key indicators of overall transit system performance. Effectiveness measures typically refine the data further and indicate the extent to which various service-related goals are being attained. For example, the number of passenger trips per capita is an indicator of the effectiveness of the agency in meeting transportation needs. Efficiency measures involve reviewing the level of resources (labor and other costs) required to achieve a given level of output, or service. It is possible to have very efficient service that is not effective or to have highly effective service that is not efficient.

The substantial amount of data available through NTD reporting provides an opportunity to develop a large number of measures. Sets of performance indicators, effectiveness measures, and efficiency measures that are believed to provide a good representation of overall transit system performance have been selected for this analysis. Table III-1 lists the selected indicators and measures provided in this report for fixed-route transit services and also provides subcategories, where appropriate.

**Table III-1
Selected Performance Review Indicators and Measures
Fixed-Route Transit Services**

Performance Indicators	Effectiveness Measures	Efficiency Measures
Service Area Population	Service Supply Vehicle Miles Per Capita	Cost Efficiency Operating Expense Per Capita Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip Operating Expense Per Passenger Mile Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile
Passenger Trips Passenger Miles	Service Consumption Passenger Trips Per Capita Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour	Operating Ratios Farebox Recovery
Vehicle Miles Revenue Miles Vehicle Hours Revenue Hours	Quality of Service Average Age of Fleet (years) Revenue Miles Between Incidents Revenue Miles Between Revenue Service Interruptions	Vehicle Utilization Revenue Miles Per Vehicle Mile Vehicle Miles Per Peak Vehicle
Route Miles		Labor Productivity Revenue Hours Per Employee Passenger Trips Per Employee
Total Operating Expense Total Operating Expense (1984 \$) Total Maintenance Expense Total Maintenance Expense (1984 \$)		Energy Utilization Vehicle Miles Per Gallon
Operating Revenues		Fare Average Fare
Total Employees		
Vehicles Available for Maximum Service Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service		
Total Gallons of Fuel Consumed		

Overview of RTS

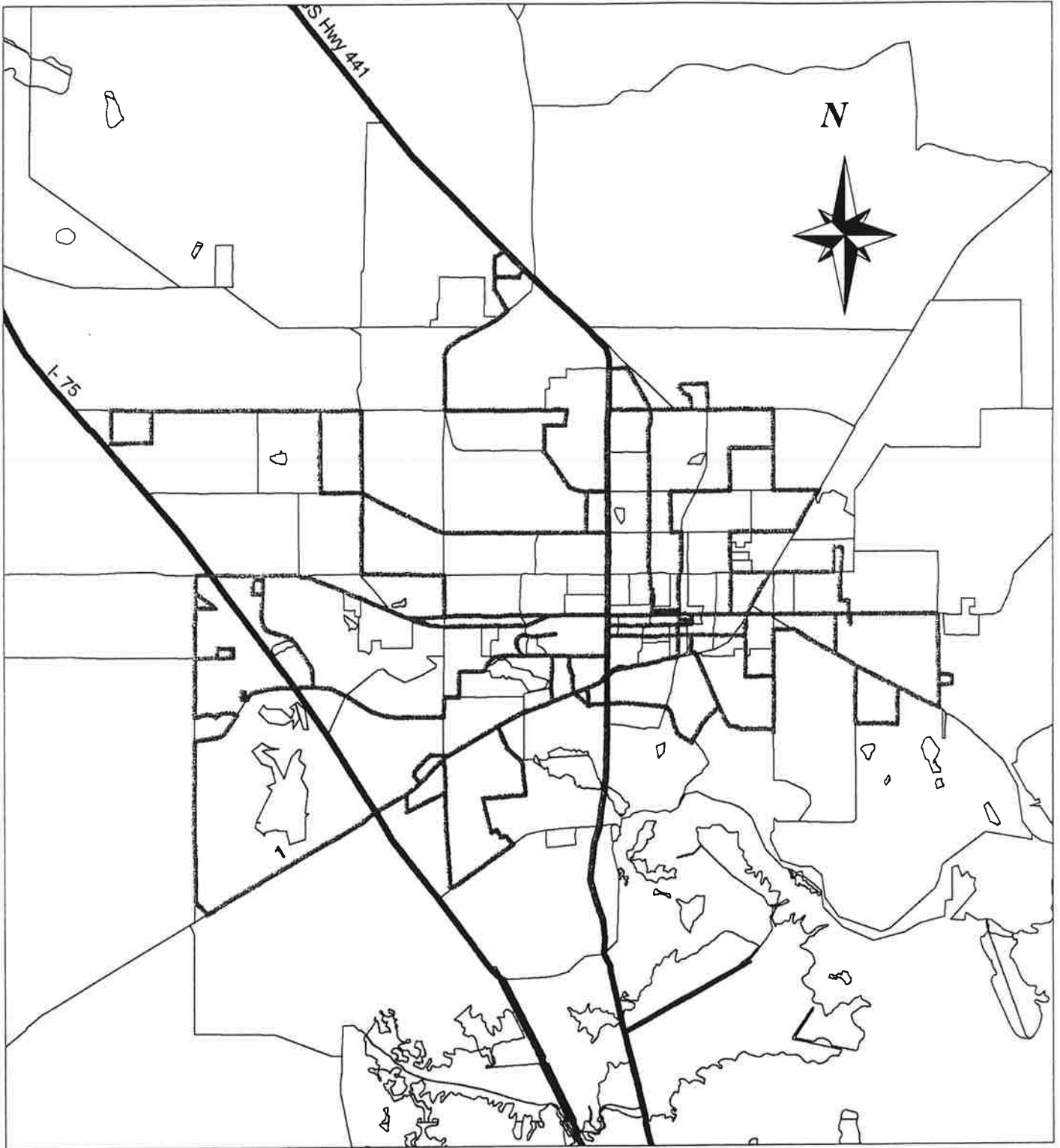
RTS operates as a department of the City of Gainesville Commission, a five-member public policy body responsible for the oversight of all city government operations. RTS provides public transportation services to the Gainesville urban area through the direct operation of its fixed-route motorbus service and the provision of ADA-mandated complementary demand-responsive service. The system serves Gainesville and portions of the unincorporated urban area. Figure III-2 shows a map of the system network prior to December 1997. Since this performance review is covered through FY 1996, the new system map and a description of the service changes will be provided in Chapter Five (Identification and Evaluation of Alternatives).

This performance evaluation focuses on fixed-route service; therefore, demand-response service is not included in the trend or peer review analyses. To present a general overview of the transit system, selected performance indicators, effectiveness measures, and efficiency measures are reported in Table III-2. The source of the data is RTS's FY 1995 and FY 1996 NTD reports.

**Table III-2
Summary of Selected Operating Statistics,
Gainesville RTS**

Performance Indicators	FY 1995	FY 1996	% Change
Service Area Population	184,000	184,000	0.00%
Passenger Trips	2,047,467	2,110,229	3.06%
Revenue Miles	1,399,500	1,333,890	-4.69%
Revenue Hours	69,365	104,688	50.92%
Total Operating Expense	\$4,089,013	\$3,663,424	-10.41%
Total Maintenance Expense	\$471,473	\$753,031	59.72%
Total Employees (FTEs)	73.8	72.8	-1.36%
Vehicles Available in Maximum Service	47	47	0.00%
Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	31	33	6.45%
Effectiveness Measures			
Vehicle Miles Per Capita	7.69	7.33	-4.70%
Passenger Trips Per Capita	11.13	11.47	3.06%
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	1.46	1.58	8.13%
Average Age of Fleet (years)	6.23	5.98	-4.01%
Efficiency Measures			
Operating Expense Per Capita	\$22.22	\$19.91	-10.41%
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	\$2.00	\$1.74	-13.07%
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile	\$2.92	\$2.75	-6.00%
Farebox Recovery Ratio	35.32%	43.36%	22.74%
Revenue Hours Per Employee	940	1,438	53.00%
Passenger Trips Per Employee	27,743	28,986	4.48%
Average Fare	\$0.71	\$0.75	6.70%

Figure III-2
RTS Route System
Alachua County



Fixed-Route Trend Analysis

A fixed-route trend analysis for the years 1991 through 1996 was conducted to follow the performance of RTS's directly-operated motorbus service over a six-year time period. Data used in this analysis are from RTS's NTD reports as well as CUTR's *1996 Performance Evaluation of Florida's Transit Systems* reports (Part I, Trend Analysis [1984-1996]; Part II, Peer Review Analysis [1996]). It is important to remember that fiscal year 1996 information represents preliminary data that have not been validated by FTA. Performance indicators and measures are grouped into categories and presented in tabular form (Tables III-3 through III-12), along with brief discussions of the data. The percent change over the six-year trend period for each indicator and measure is also shown in the tables. The trends are also illustrated graphically in Figures III-3 through III-35. Detailed trend data tables can be found in Appendix F.

Performance Indicators

Ridership and Route Mileage

As indicated in Table III-3, ridership on RTS's directly-operated fixed-route service declined approximately 18 percent over the period from 1991 to 1996. After a steady increase in the number of passenger trips, ridership began to decline after 1994. This decline is due in part to a fare increase that was implemented in August 1994 (the end of fiscal year 1994), and in part to significant decreases in service during fiscal years 1995 and 1996.

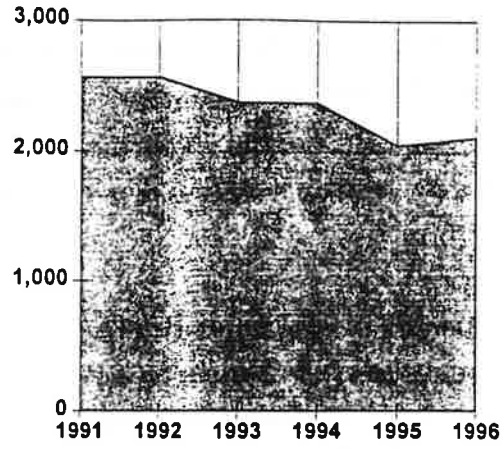
The number of passenger miles decreased significantly over the trend period, falling more than 18 percent. The largest decline was between 1994 and 1995 when passenger miles decreased 18 percent. The slight change in ridership combined with the significant change in passenger miles resulted in a 17 percent decline in the average trip length between 1991 and 1996. In fiscal year 1995, RTS reported that it had obtained a sampling waiver to utilize average trip length to calculate the number of passenger trips and passenger miles. Over the trend period, the average trip length (passenger miles per passenger trip) fell from 6.57 miles in 1991 to 5.47 miles in 1996. The trends for passenger trips and passenger miles are depicted in Figures III-3 and III-4.

The trend for the number of route miles is also shown in Table III-3 and Figure III-5. The number of route miles remained quite stable over the trend period. With 266.6 route miles in 1991, RTS had 266.9 route miles between 1992 and 1996.

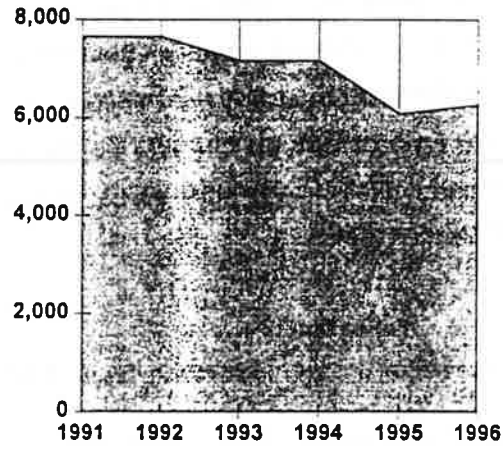
Table III-3
Gainesville RTS - Ridership and Route Miles, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis

Fiscal Year	Passenger Trips	Passenger Miles	Route Miles
1991	2,569,580	7,660,043	266.6
1992	2,569,580	7,660,043	266.9
1993	2,370,197	7,169,222	266.9
1994	2,370,197	7,169,222	266.9
1995	2,047,467	6,080,977	266.9
1996	2,110,209	6,267,321	266.9
% Change 1991-1996	-17.88%	-18.18%	0.11%

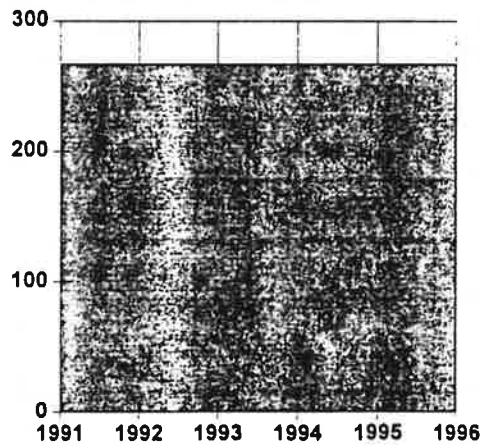
**Figure III-3
Passenger Trips (000)**



**Figure III-4
Passenger Miles (000)**



**Figure III-5
Route Miles**



Level of Service

The level of service provided, as measured by vehicle miles and revenue miles, increased over the trend period. Table III-4 shows that vehicle miles grew nearly 14 percent while revenue miles increased slightly more than 15 percent. These changes are also shown graphically in Figures III-6 and III-7. As the figures show, both vehicle and revenue miles peaked during fiscal year 1994.

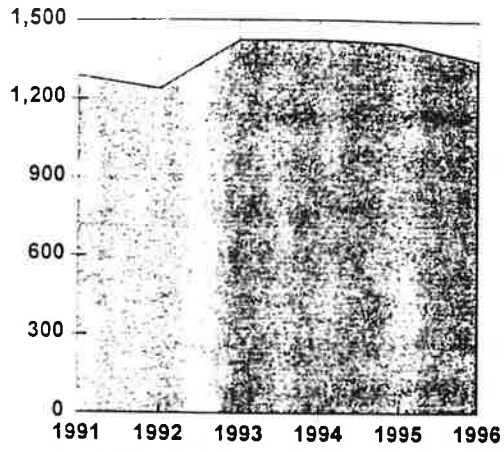
Table III-4 also indicates that the numbers of vehicle hours and revenue hours remained more stable between 1991 and 1996, increasing less than one percent and decreasing approximately one percent, respectively. As with vehicle and revenue miles, vehicle and revenue hours peaked during fiscal year 1994, as exhibited in Figures III-8 and III-9.

After fiscal year 1994, Table III-4 shows that vehicle miles and revenue miles decreased throughout the remainder of the trend period. Vehicle hours and revenue hours also declined until fiscal year 1996 when there was a sharp increase. When validating NTD data, CUTR notes discrepancies each year and then provides an opportunity for transit systems to respond to questions related to those discrepancies. RTS is currently investigating the change in vehicle hours between fiscal year 1995 and 1996.

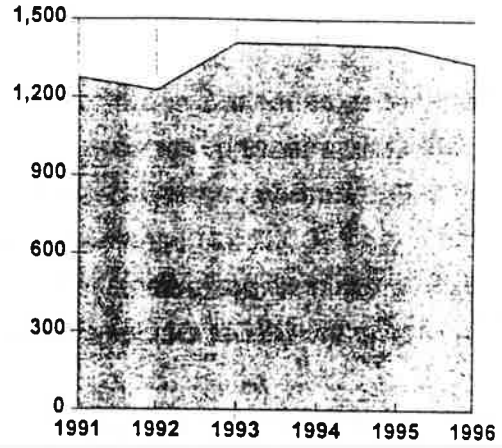
**Table III-4
Gainesville RTS - Level of Service, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Vehicle Miles	Revenue Miles	Vehicle Hours	Revenue Hours
1991	1,289,624	1,275,372	91,172	85,191
1992	1,239,100	1,223,488	87,400	82,671
1993	1,424,899	1,409,584	74,315	69,871
1994	1,424,899	1,409,584	74,315	69,871
1995	1,414,601	1,399,500	73,770	69,365
1996	1,348,182	1,333,890	108,486	104,688
% Change 1991-1996	4.54%	4.59%	18.99%	22.89%

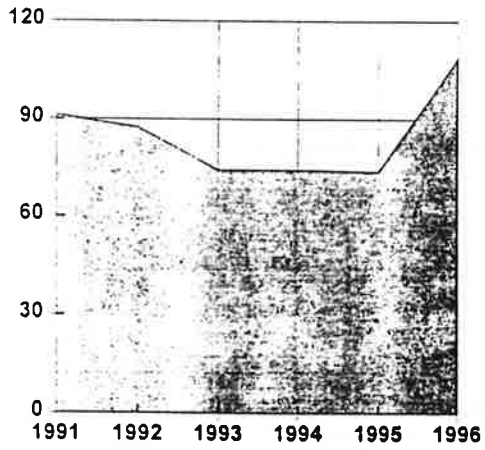
**Figure III-6
Vehicle Miles (000)**



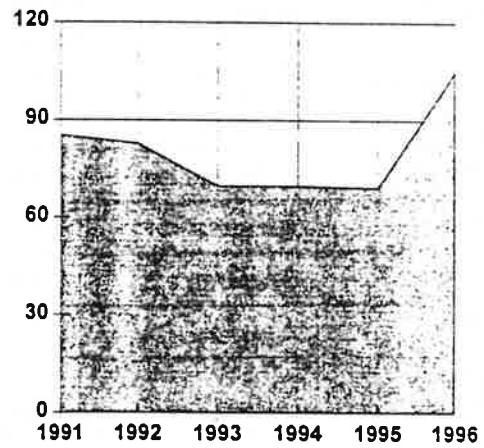
**Figure III-7
Revenue Miles (000)**



**Figure III-8
Vehicle Hours (000)**



**Figure III-9
Revenue Hours (000)**



Operating Expenses

Total operating expense rose more than 21 percent in nominal terms between 1991 and 1996 as evidenced by Table III-5. However, when these figures are adjusted for inflation, the increase is only about seven percent (in 1996 dollars). Total operating expenses declined between 1991 and 1992 and then increased gradually until falling again between 1995 and 1996. The change in operating expense is exhibited in Figure III-10 in both nominal and real values.

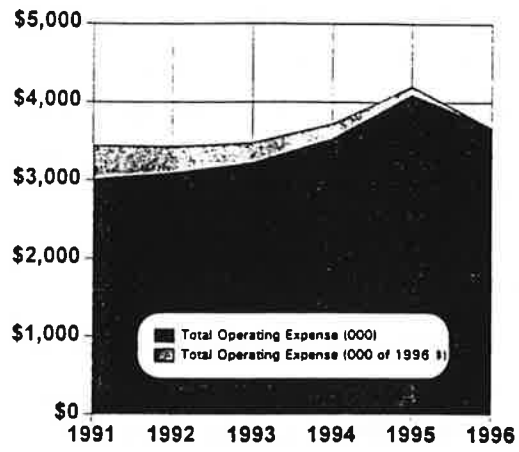
Total maintenance expense is a subset of total operating expense. The table below and Figure III-11 show that maintenance expense, in nominal terms, behaved similarly to total operating expense during the trend period; first decreasing, then gradually increasing, and finally declining between 1995 and 1996. Total maintenance expense increased nearly 60 percent between 1995 and 1996, which is attributable to RTS divesting its departmental maintenance function and turning it over to the City of Gainesville Fleet Management Department.

Overall, maintenance expense grew approximately 53 percent during the trend period; however, when inflation is considered, maintenance expense in real terms increased 34 percent during this time.

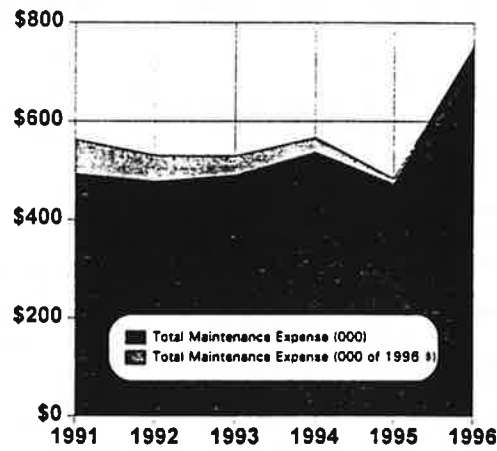
**Table III-5
Gainesville RTS - Operating Expenses, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Total Operating Expense	Total Operating Expense (1996 \$)	Total Maintenance Expense	Total Maintenance Expense (1996 \$)
1991	\$3,011,808	\$3,439,485	\$492,286	\$562,191
1992	\$3,081,965	\$3,427,145	\$477,259	\$530,712
1993	\$3,212,733	\$3,476,177	\$490,106	\$530,295
1994	\$3,521,432	\$3,718,632	\$536,729	\$566,786
1995	\$4,089,013	\$4,203,505	\$471,473	\$484,674
1996	\$3,663,424	\$3,663,424	\$753,031	\$753,031
% Change 1991-1996	21.64%	6.51%	52.97%	33.95%

**Figure III-10
Total Operating Expense**



**Figure III-11
Total Maintenance Expense**



Operating Revenues

Since 1992, passenger fare revenue from RTS fixed-route service steadily increased, as evidenced in Table III-6. Although previous sections have indicated that service miles and passenger trips declined over the period, RTS did institute two fare increases in fiscal year 1993 (base fare from \$.50 to \$.75) and fiscal year 1995 (base fare from \$.75 to \$1.00). These fare increases would account for the growth in passenger revenues. Figure III-12 also illustrates the trend for fare revenue.

Operating revenue includes, in RTS's case, passenger fares as well as special transit fares, auxiliary transportation funds, and non-transportation revenues (such as investment income). The table below and Figure III-13 show that this indicator increased significantly through fiscal year 1994 and then declined in fiscal years 1995 and 1996. RTS reported that this occurred due to the City of Gainesville reducing transit's overall share of the local option gas tax.

Lastly, the trend for total local revenue is exhibited in Table III-6 and Figure III-14. Total local revenue consists of all revenues originating at the local level, including operating revenue (excluding state and federal assistance). Total local revenue increased nearly 12 percent from 1991 to 1996; however, it fell slightly between 1995 and 1996, decreasing about two percent.

Table III-6
Gainesville RTS - Operating Revenues, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis

Fiscal Year	Passenger Fare Revenue	Operating Revenue	Total Local Revenue
1991	\$1,225,822	\$1,292,794	\$3,011,808
1992	\$1,339,904	\$1,386,179	\$3,102,512
1993	\$1,339,856	\$1,405,949	\$2,886,914
1994	\$1,365,493	\$1,935,203	\$3,728,546
1995	\$1,444,349	\$1,482,169	\$3,427,042
1996	\$1,588,310	\$1,620,814	\$3,371,152
% Change 1991-1996	29.57%	25.37%	11.93%

Figure III-12
Passenger Fare Revenue (000)

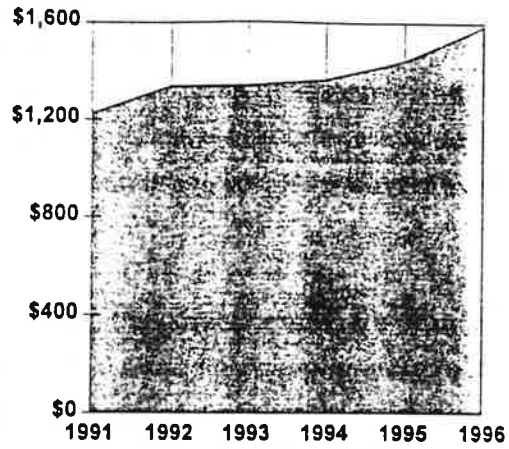


Figure III-13
Operating Revenue (000)

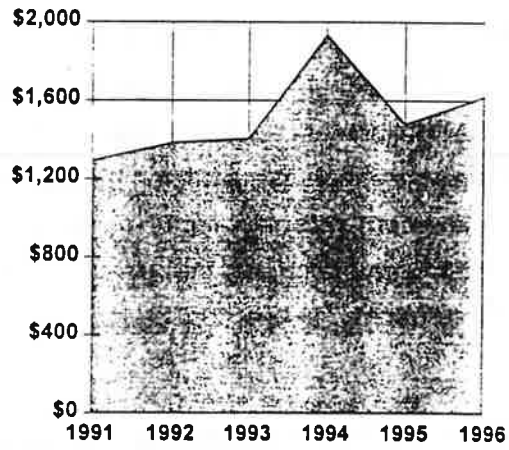
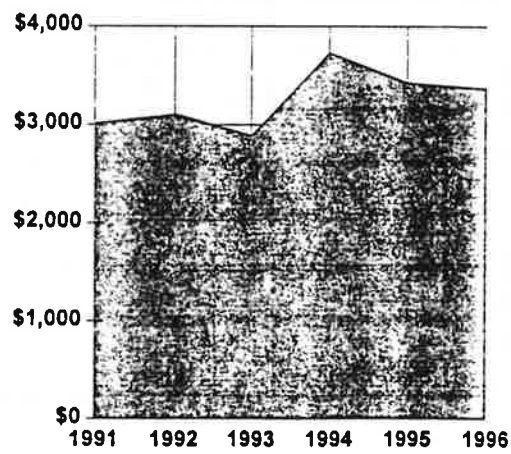


Figure III-14
Total Local Revenue (000)



Employees, Vehicles, and Fuel Consumption

The total number of employees at RTS is represented by full-time equivalents (FTEs). Table III-7 indicates that the total employee FTEs increased approximately 3 percent to 72.8 in 1996. Figure III-15 illustrates the trend graphically, and also shows the variations among the three employee categories: administrative employees, maintenance employees, and transportation operating employees.

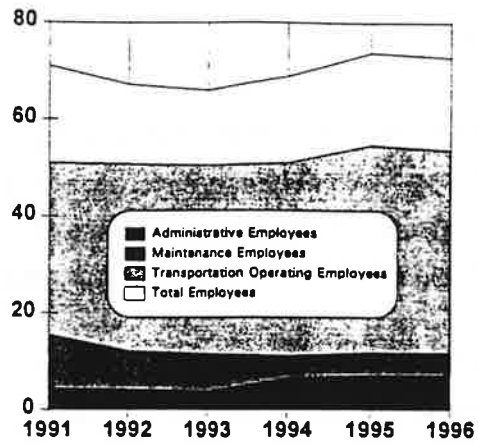
The numbers of vehicles available for and operated in maximum service are also outlined in Table III-7. The changes were not significant over the period from 1991 to 1996. Since 1991, the number of vehicles available for maximum service has increased to 47. Figure III-16 shows this trend, and also indicates that the number of vehicles operated in maximum service peaked in 1996 at 33.

Finally, the total gallons of fuel utilized for each year in the trend period is presented in the table below. The table and Figure III-17 indicate that fuel consumption fluctuated over the trend period, peaking in 1996 with 353,624 gallons of fuel. In fiscal year 1995, RTS reported an overcharge for fuel that explains the sharp increase between fiscal years 1994 and 1995. RTS reported that there would be an adjustment in fiscal year 1996; however, RTS has subsequently reported that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) instructed them not to make the adjustment in the 1996 submission of their NTD (Section 15) report.

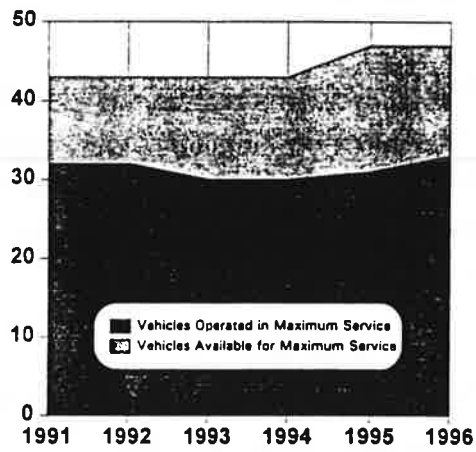
**Table III-7
Gainesville RTS - Employees, Vehicles, and Fuel Consumption, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Total Employees (FTEs)	Vehicles Available for Max. Service	Vehicles Operated in Max. Service	Total Gallons of Fuel Consumed
1991	71.0	43	32	289,241
1992	67.2	43	32	309,469
1993	66.0	43	30	291,440
1994	68.8	43	30	273,478
1995	73.8	47	31	341,246
1996	72.8	47	33	353,624
% Change 1991-1996	2.54%	9.30%	3.13%	22.26%

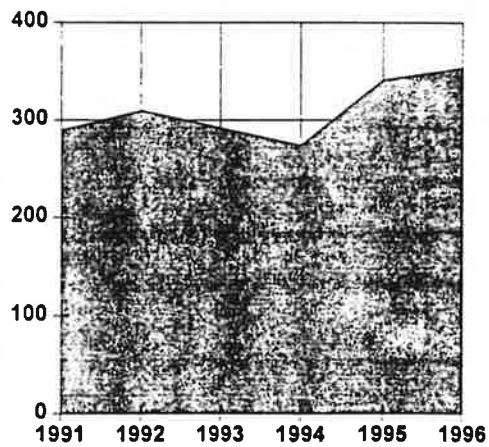
**Figure III-15
Total Employees**



**Figure III-16
Vehicles in Maximum Service**



**Figure III-17
Total Gallons of Fuel (000)**



Effectiveness Measures

Service Supply and Service Consumption

The number of vehicle miles per capita is one method of evaluating the level of service supply. Over the trend period from 1991 to 1996, this measure increased approximately four percent, as shown in Table III-8. Figure III-18 depicts the trend and also indicates that the measure peaked in fiscal years 1993 and 1994 with 7.74 vehicle miles per capita in each year.

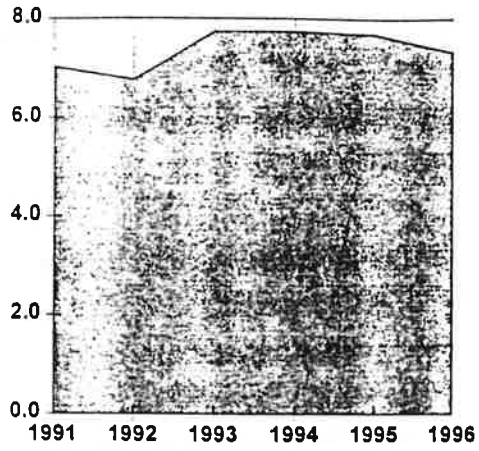
Measures of the level of service consumption are also summarized in Table III-8 and in Figures III-19 through III-21. One such measure is the number of passenger trips per capita. Between 1991 and 1996, this measure declined nearly 18 percent. The table and Figure III-19 illustrate how this measure peaked in 1992 (at 14.05 trips per capita) and reached the minimum for the trend period in 1995 (at 11.13 trips per capita).

Additional measures of service consumption are the numbers of passenger trips per revenue mile and per revenue hour, which are generally influenced by the supply and demand of transit service. Since 1991, passenger trips per revenue mile fell approximately 21 percent while trips per revenue hour fell by one-third, as indicated in Table III-8. Overall, these measures demonstrate a decline in the level of service consumption for RTS.

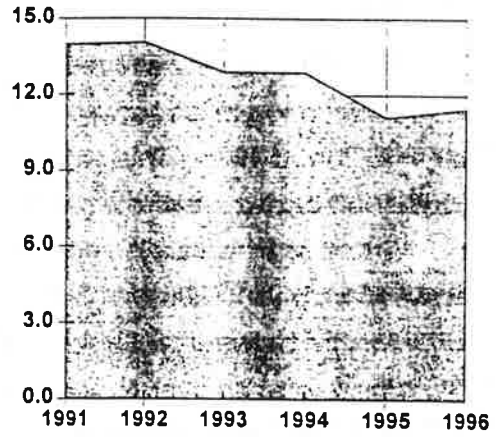
**Table III-8
Gainesville RTS - Service Supply and Service Consumption, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Vehicle Miles Per Capita	Passenger Trips Per Capita	Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile	Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour
1991	7.02	13.98	2.01	30.16
1992	6.77	14.05	2.10	31.08
1993	7.74	12.88	1.68	33.92
1994	7.74	12.88	1.68	33.92
1995	7.69	11.13	1.46	29.52
1996	7.33	11.47	1.58	20.16
% Change 1991-1996	4.41%	-17.98%	-21.48%	-33.17%

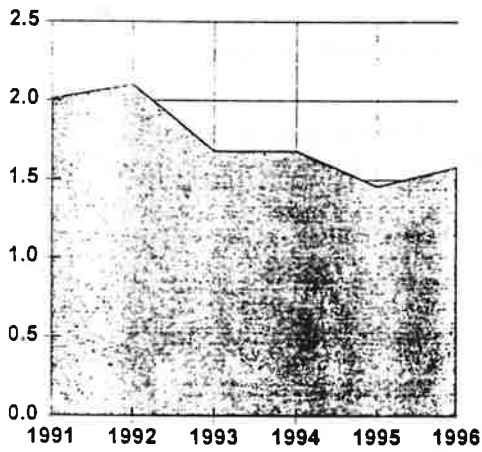
**Figure III-18
Vehicle Miles Per Capita**



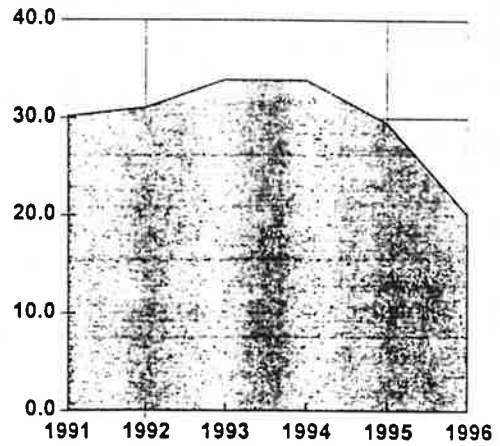
**Figure III-19
Passenger Trips Per Capita**



**Figure III-20
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Mile**



**Figure III-21
Passenger Trips Per Revenue Hour**



Quality of Service

Table III-9 shows the trend for the average age of RTS's vehicle fleet. During the trend period, the average age increased from 3.19 years in 1991 to 5.98 years in 1996. However, the average age declined since 1994 due to the purchase of new vehicles which replaced 12 buses. The average age of the fleet is also represented graphically in Figure III-22.

The numbers of revenue miles between incidents and between revenue service interruptions help determine the levels of safety and reliability, respectively, of RTS's service. The table below indicates that revenue miles between incidents (accidents) grew approximately one percent between 1991 and 1996. This measure decreased 10 percent between 1995 and 1996, indicating an increased number of incidents during this time. The number of revenue miles between interruptions (roadcalls) increased significantly over the trend period. This measure increased sharply in 1996 with 3,889 revenue miles between interruptions. The increase in this measure between 1995 and 1996 demonstrates a decline in the number of interruptions and, therefore, an overall increase in the level of reliability that is likely due to the newer fleet. The trends for these two measures are shown in Figures III-23 and III-24.

**Table III-9
Gainesville RTS - Quality of Service, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Average Age of Fleet (years)	Revenue Miles Between Incidents	Revenue Miles Between Interruptions
1991	3.19	22,774	1,707
1992	4.19	40,783	1,448
1993	5.10	50,342	1,857
1994	6.10	46,986	2,373
1995	6.23	25,445	2,451
1996	5.98	22,998	3,889
% Change 1991-1996	87.46%	0.98%	127.78%

Figure III-22
Average Age of Fleet (years)

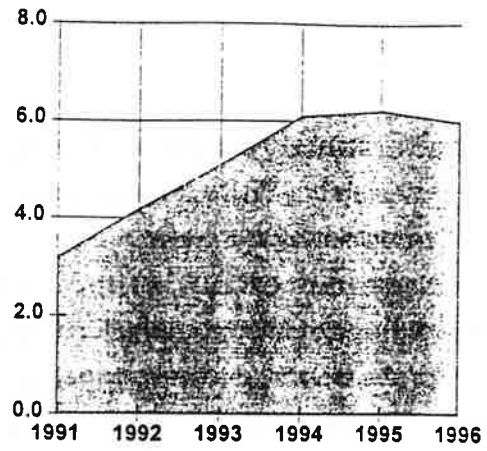


Figure III-23
Revenue Miles Between Incidents

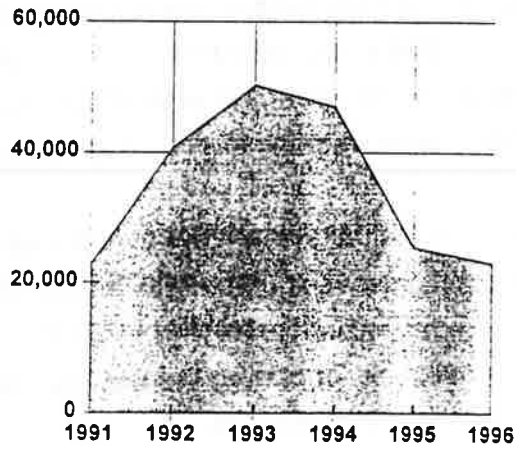
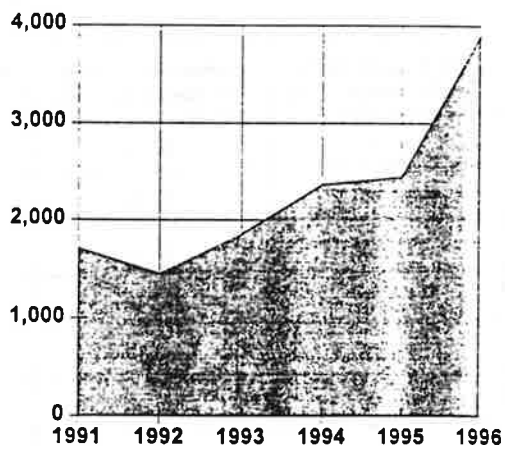


Figure III-24
Revenue Miles Between Interruptions



Efficiency Measures

Cost Efficiency

Four operating expense ratios, outlined in Table III-10, are each shown in nominal values and help to measure the RTS's overall cost efficiency. The table indicates that operating expense per capita increased approximately 21 percent over the trend period. After peaking in 1995 at \$22.22 per capita, this expense ratio decreased to \$19.91 in 1996. In the section on operating expenses on page 14, it is noted that, when adjusted for inflation in 1996 dollars, operating expenses rose only about 7 percent for the period. However, these efficiency measures must be reported in nominal dollars by year. The trend for this measure is also depicted in Figure III-25.

Operating expense per passenger trip and per passenger mile each increased approximately 48 percent between 1991 and 1996, as noted in the table below. Not unlike operating expense per capita, these two measures peaked in fiscal year 1995 at \$2.00 per trip and \$0.67 per passenger mile. Figures III-26 and III-27 illustrate these trends graphically.

Operating expense per revenue mile is the final ratio analyzed for this evaluation. As summarized in Table III-10, this measure increased 16 percent between 1991 and 1996. Between 1995 and 1996, the measure decreased six percent from \$2.92 in 1995 to \$2.75 in 1996. As with the other measures, the values for operating expense per revenue mile of service are also presented in graphical form in Figure III-28.

Table III-10
Gainesville RTS - Cost Efficiency, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis

Fiscal Year	Operating Expense Per Capita	Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip	Operating Expense Per Passenger Mile	Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile
1991	\$16.39	\$1.17	\$0.39	\$2.36
1992	\$16.85	\$1.20	\$0.40	\$2.52
1993	\$17.46	\$1.36	\$0.45	\$2.28
1994	\$19.14	\$1.49	\$0.49	\$2.50
1995	\$22.22	\$2.00	\$0.67	\$2.92
1996	\$19.91	\$1.74	\$0.58	\$2.75
% Change 1991-1996	21.49%	48.11%	48.67%	16.30%

Figure III-25
Operating Expense Per Capita

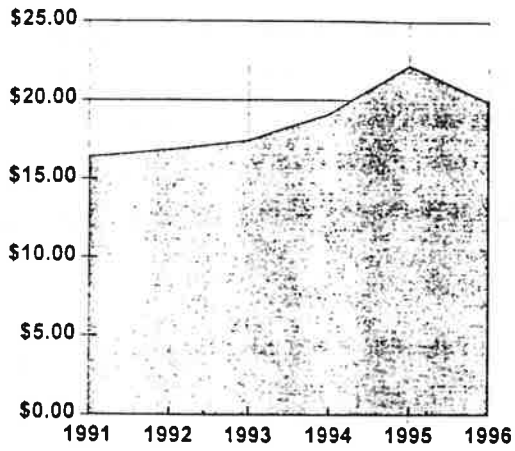


Figure III-26
Operating Expense Per Passenger Trip

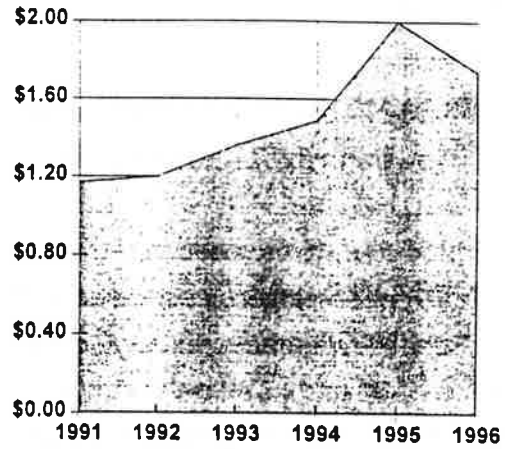


Figure III-27
Operating Expense Per Passenger Mile

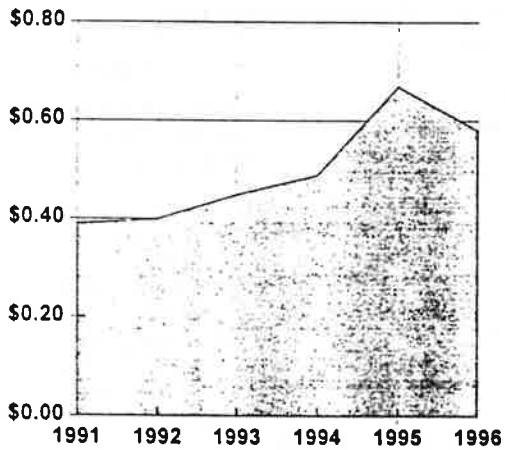
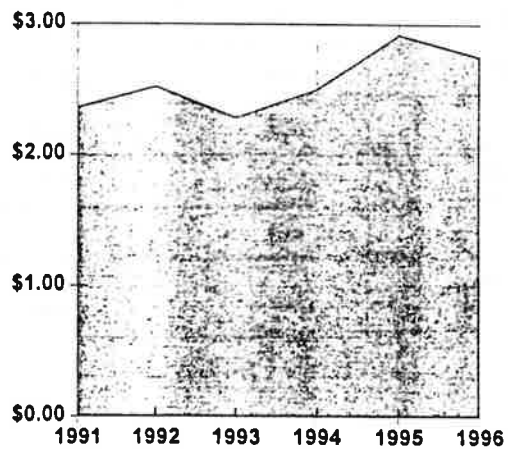


Figure III-28
Operating Expense Per Revenue Mile



Farebox Recovery, Average Fare, and Labor Productivity

The farebox recovery ratio, which represents the amount of operating expenses covered by fare revenue, increased nearly seven percent over the trend period, as noted in Table III-11. The table and Figure III-29 show that this measure remained relatively stable between 1991 and 1996, reaching a peak at 21 percent in 1996. The growth in the farebox recovery over the last two fiscal years is directly related to the fare increase that occurred at the end of fiscal year 1994 (August 1994).

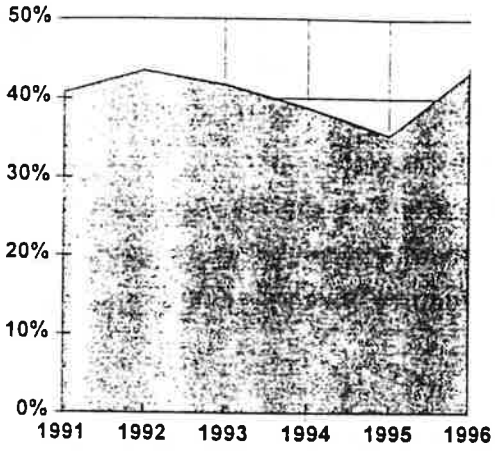
The average fare per passenger trip increased significantly during the trend period, according to Table III-11. The trend for RTS's average fare is exhibited in Figure III-30.

RTS's labor productivity, as measured by the numbers of revenue hours per employee and passenger trips per employee, decreased over the six-year trend period. The table below indicates that these two measures each declined approximately 14 percent between 1991 and 1996. Figures III-31 and III-32 reveal that the two labor productivity measures peaked early in the trend period and then steadily declined after fiscal year 1993.

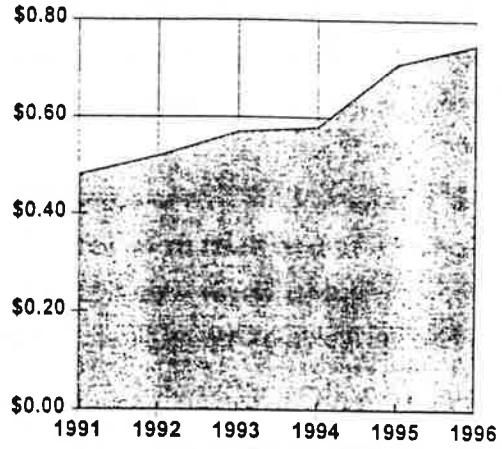
**Table III-11
Gainesville RTS - Farebox Recovery, Average Fare, and Labor Productivity,
Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Farebox Recovery	Average Fare	Revenue Hours Per Employee	Passenger Trips Per Employee
1991	40.70%	\$0.48	1,200	36,191
1992	43.48%	\$0.52	1,230	38,238
1993	41.70%	\$0.57	1,059	35,912
1994	38.78%	\$0.58	1,016	34,451
1995	35.32%	\$0.71	940	27,743
1996	43.36%	\$0.75	1,438	28,986
% Change 1991-1996	6.52%	57.78%	19.85%	-19.91%

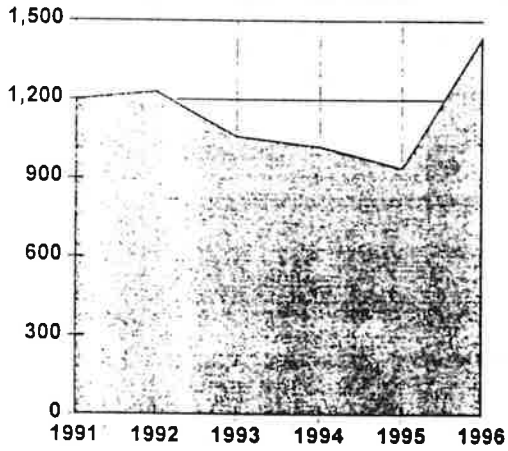
**Figure 3-29
Farebox Recovery**



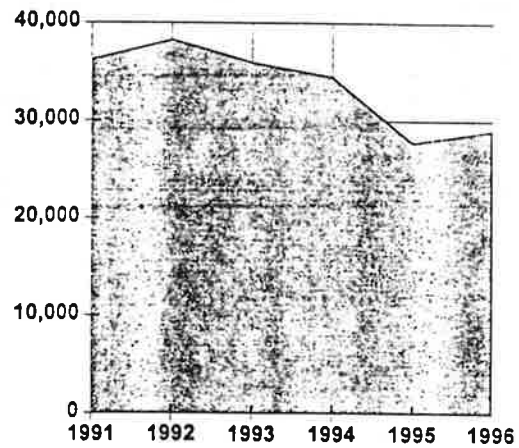
**Figure III-30
Average Fare**



**Figure III-31
Revenue Hours Per Employee**



**Figure III-32
Passenger Trips Per Employee**



Vehicle Utilization and Energy Utilization

Two measures of vehicle utilization are the number of revenue miles per vehicle mile and the number of vehicle miles per peak vehicle. Table III-12 shows that the number of revenue miles per vehicle mile remained nearly constant throughout the trend period. Throughout the trend period, this measure has been equal to 0.99 revenue miles per vehicle mile. The number of vehicle miles per peak vehicle also stayed comparatively stable during the six-year period. However, the table indicates that the value of this measure has decreased since 1994, peaking in 1993 and 1994 at 47,497 vehicle miles per peak vehicle. Figures III-33 and III-34 present these two measures in a graphic format.

Finally, the fuel efficiency of RTS's fixed-route fleet can be measured by the number of vehicle miles per gallon. As can be seen from Table III-12, this measure decreased more than 14 percent between 1991 and 1996. The declining trend in fuel efficiency is likely due to the introduction of newer vehicles to the fleet. This trend is also represented in Figure III-35.

**Table III-12
Gainesville RTS - Vehicle Utilization and Energy Utilization, Fixed-Route Trend Analysis**

Fiscal Year	Revenue Miles Per Vehicle Mile	Vehicle Miles Per Peak Vehicle	Vehicle Miles Per Gallon
1991	0.99	40,301	4.46
1992	0.99	38,722	4.00
1993	0.99	47,497	4.89
1994	0.99	47,497	5.21
1995	0.99	45,632	4.15
1996	0.99	40,854	3.81
% Change 1991-1996	.05%	1.37%	-14.49%

Figure III-33
Revenue Miles Per Vehicle Mile

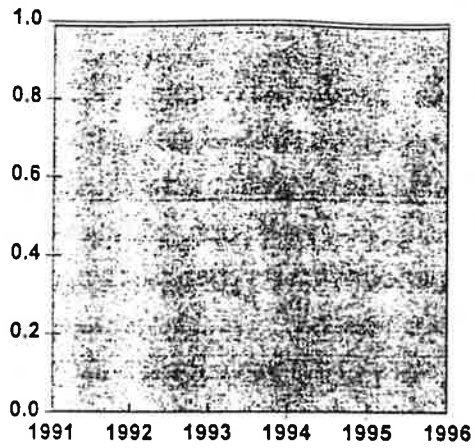


Figure III-34
Vehicle Miles Per Peak Vehicle

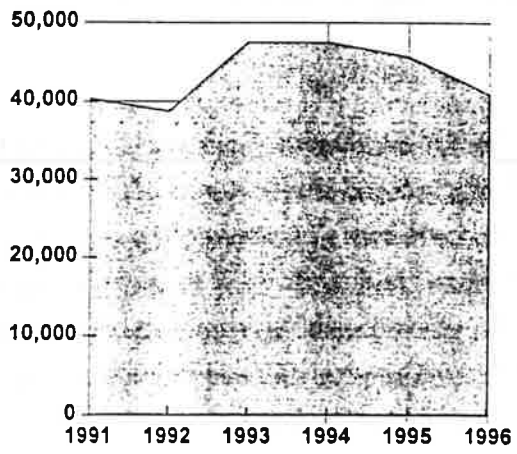
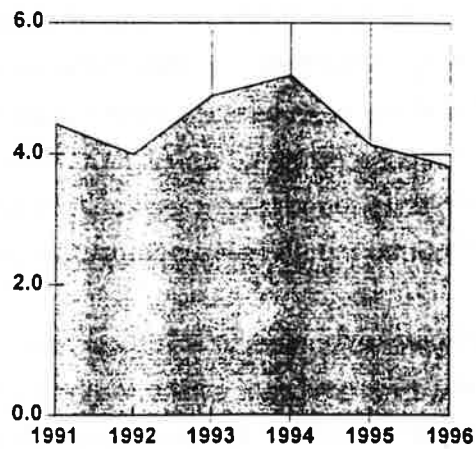


Figure III-35
Vehicle Miles Per Gallon



Fixed-Route Peer Review Analysis

A fixed-route peer review analysis was conducted to compare the performance of RTS with similar systems in Florida and throughout the southeastern United States. The methodology for choosing peer systems was based on both operating characteristics (number of vehicles operated in maximum service, amount of service supplied, average speed, ridership, and operating expenses) and other exogenous factors (geographic location, service area population, and service area population density). The two primary decision variables for selecting potential peers, however, were geographic location and the number of vehicles operated in maximum service.

The specified geographic region for this study included the southeastern part of the United States since transit systems that operate in a similar geographic area are typically subjected to many of the same exogenous factors. These factors include climate, labor costs, historical transit ridership trends, and density.

CUTR conducts an annual Performance Evaluation Study for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) which includes a trend analysis and a peer review analysis. CUTR's peer analysis groups Florida's fixed-route transit systems (those receiving State Block Grant funds) into four groups based on motorbus fleet size: 1 to 9 vehicles, 10 to 49 vehicles, 50 to 200 vehicles, and greater than 200 vehicles. Peers from outside Florida are carefully selected and also placed into these categories. The analysis allows Florida properties to be compared with each other as well as among their out-of-state peers.

Only transit systems that operate between 10 and 49 vehicles in maximum service were considered for this peer analysis. The out-of-state peers have been examined closely and accepted by CUTR, as well as FDOT, to be appropriate peers for Florida systems. Data from the systems chosen for the peer group were reviewed for reasonableness and extraordinary conditions. In some cases, it was necessary to contact the transit systems to clarify inconsistencies in the data and to collect missing data. All data are from the systems' individual NTD reports for fiscal year 1996, which is the most recent validated fixed-route information available. Peer systems contained within the 10-to-49 peer group are listed in Table III-13.

The final peer group contained 16 systems, including RTS. Seven of RTS's peers were Florida systems, while the remaining eight were from other states. Although peers were selected based on system size, it can be noted that four of the systems do serve major universities in

their communities: Tallahassee Transit (TALTRAN) serving Florida State University, Transit Authority Lexington serving the University of Kentucky, Citibus of Lubbock serving Texas Tech University, and Durham Area Transit serving Duke University. Tables III-14 through III-22 present RTS's value and the peer group minimum, maximum, and mean for each indicator and measure. In addition, RTS's deviation from the mean is also reported as a percent of the mean value. Complete data tables including each peer system are found in Appendix F. Graphics throughout this section (Figures III-36 through III-70) illustrate the selected performance indicators and measures from this analysis. These figures indicate the rank of the systems as well as the peer group mean (denoted by the vertical line) for each measure.

Table III-13
Peer Systems Operating Between 10 and 49 Vehicles in Maximum Service

Florida Peers	Non-Florida Peers
Tallahassee Transit	Winston-Salem Transit Authority (NC)
County of Volusia dba VOTRAN	Columbia - South Carolina Electric & Gas Co.
Regional Transit System (Gainesville)	City Transit Management Co. Inc., dba Citibus (Lubbock, TX)
Escambia County Area Transit	Transit Authority Lexington (KY)
Sarasota County Area Transit	Greater Roanoke Transit Company (VA)
Lee County Transit	Durham Area Transit Authority (NC)
Lakeland Area Mass Transit District	New Orleans - Westside Transit Lines (LA)
Space Coast Area Transit (Brevard County)	Columbus Transit System (GA)

Performance Indicators

Population, Ridership, and Route Mileage

RTS, serving the city of Gainesville, reported a service area population of 184,000 in FY 1996. The service area populations for Florida and non-Florida systems were obtained directly from the systems' 1996 NTD reports. As shown in Table III-14 and Figure III-36, RTS's service area population is below the average of the peer systems. It should be noted, however, that several other Florida systems use county population as a proxy for the service area population, even if the transit system does not serve the entire county. This is supported by Figure III-36, which shows most of the Florida systems at the top of the graphic (Gainesville, Tallahassee, and Lakeland, with smaller populations, only serve their respective cities). Most systems outside Florida utilize the actual service area population, which is formally defined as a three-quarter-mile buffer around the route network.

For this TDP, RTS's actual service area population was calculated utilizing Geographic Information System (GIS) technology. The population within a three-quarter-mile buffer of RTS's route network was determined to be 118,582, according to 1990 U.S. Census data.

Table III-14 below also indicates that RTS's ridership is 4 percent above the average of 2,029,125 trips. However, RTS's number of passenger miles is approximately 18 percent below the peer average. Since student trips are shorter in length (especially campus routes) and the overall service area is smaller, this figure why RTS has a relatively shorter average passenger trip length (passenger miles per passenger trips) when compared to its peers. Figures III-37 and III-38 graphically illustrate the peer group's values for these two indicators. Finally, the table below shows that RTS's number of route miles is about eight percent greater than the peer average. Route miles are also depicted in Figure III-39.

**Table III-14
FY 1996 Population, Ridership and Route Miles, Fixed-Route Peer Analysis**

Performance Indicator	RTS	Peer Minimum	Peer Maximum	Peer Mean	RTS: % From Mean
Service Area Population	184,000	96,000	437,740	215,853	-14.76%
Passenger Trips	2,110,209	584,585	3,682,543	2,029,125	4.00%
Passenger Miles	6,267,321	1,517,186	14,873,783	7,582,602	-17.35%
Route Miles	266.9	127.8	444.0	245.7	8.63%

Figure III-36
Service Area Population (000)

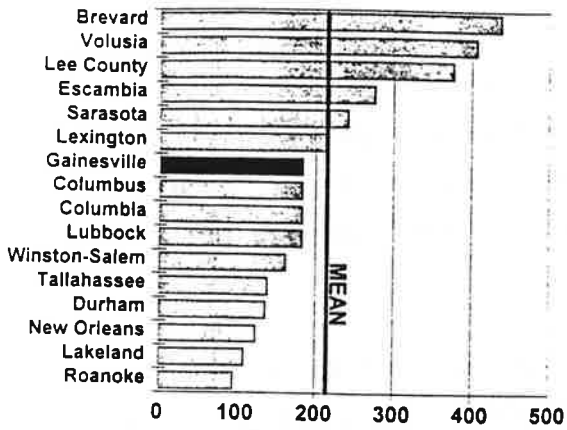


Figure III-37
Passenger Trips (000)

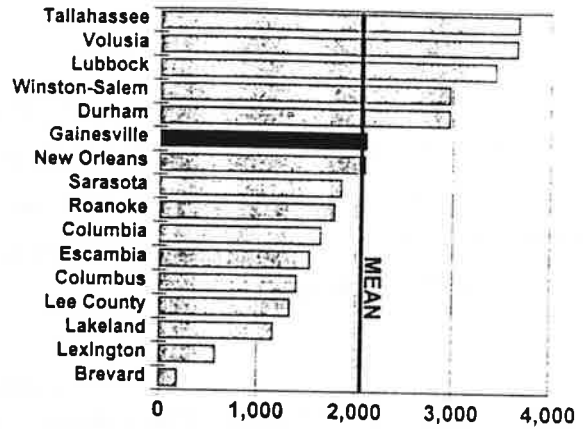


Figure III-38
Passenger Miles (000)

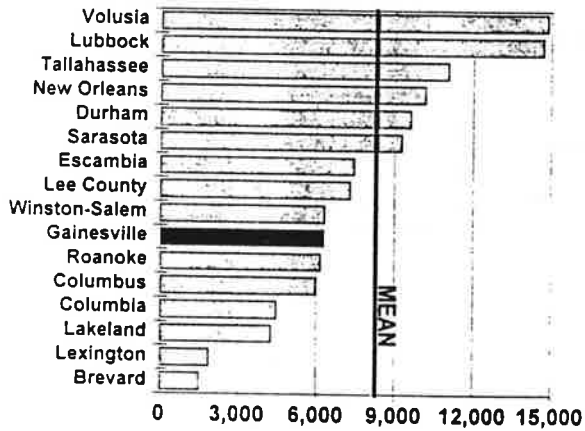
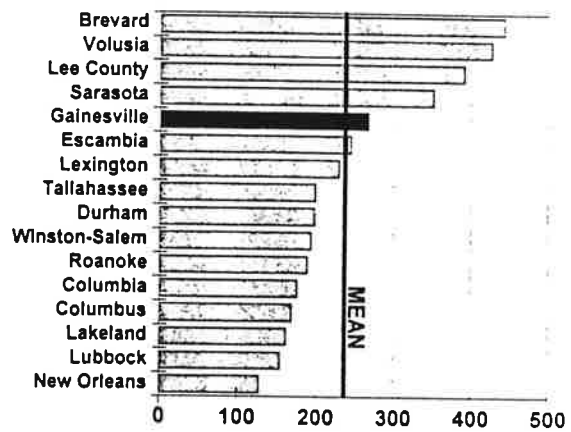


Figure III-39
Route Miles



Level of Service

As evident from Table III-15 and Figures III-40 and III-41, RTS clearly provides a slightly above-average level of vehicle miles and revenue miles. The table indicates that RTS's values for these two indicators are approximately one percent and five percent greater, respectively, than the average of the peer systems. VOTRAN in Volusia County provides the most vehicle and revenue miles of the group, while Space Coast Area Transit in Brevard County provides the least.

Additionally, RTS's number of vehicle hours and revenue hours are approximately 13 percent and 15 percent, respectively, above the peer group mean for these indicators. Figures III-42 and III-43 portray the peers' values for vehicle hours and revenue hours. Once again, VOTRAN is shown to have the most vehicle and revenue hours for the peer group while Space Coast's figures are at the minimum.

**Table III-15
FY 1996 Level of Service, Fixed-Route Peer Analysis**

Performance Indicator	RTS	Peer Minimum	Peer Maximum	Peer Mean	RTS: % From Mean
Vehicle Miles	1,348,182	579,316	2,505,606	1,337,362	0.81%
Revenue Miles	1,333,890	523,039	2,299,407	1,263,758	5.55%
Vehicle Hours	108,486	26,629	153,416	96,015	12.97%
Revenue Hours	104,688	24,042	140,805	91,171	14.83%