



2023 Palm Beach CTC Evaluation Executive Summary

In Palm Beach County, the Palm Beach Transportation Planning Agency (TPA) serves as the Designated Official Planning Agency (DOPA), which facilitates an annual evaluation of Palm Tran Connection, the Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC). The CTC evaluation process is dictated by the Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged (CTD) and includes the following:

- General Questions
- Chapter 427, F.S.
- Insurance
- Rule 41-2.011, F.C.
- Commission Standards and Local Standards
- American with Disabilities Act Compliance
- On-Site Observation of the system
- Surveys
- Level of Cost
- Level of Competition
- Level of Coordination

Below are the key findings and recommendations from the FY 2021 - 2022 CTC Evaluation that was conducted during the months of February, March, April, and May 2023:

Section	Key Findings	Recommendation	CTC Response
General Questions	As identified in previous years, the high demand for paratransit and trip costs continues to increase. ADA far exceeds the required ¾ of a mile for service area and service hours which impact on-time performance and productivity.	The CTC should continue to develop and implement trainings and workshops to encourage and teach eligible riders how to easily access and transfer to the fixed-route service and Tri-Rail from paratransit.	The CTC continues to encourage and educate customers to utilize the fixed route service when the user is agreeable and has reasonable access to the service. Informational videos, virtual and in person trainings are available upon request.
	The large undeveloped area that divides the eastern urban communities from the western rural	The CTC should collaborate with LCB Members, use the board as a bridge to connect with riders for	Collaborating with members of the LCB is a great idea We look forward to starting the process with the DOPA.

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	<p>communities creates challenges for operating an efficient and convenient transportation system across the entire county.</p>	<p>ongoing education, and the best method to commute on paratransit, fixed route, and TNCs.</p> <p>Analyze the suburban area in Palm Beach County to facilitate a possible transit feeder service to a fixed route. Replicate the Go Glades on demand model on the east side of the County.</p>	<p>As of July 2023, Palm Tran Connection has entered into a contract with UZURV (a TNC service) to assist with the influx of booked trips. In the near future, we will also implement a "Riders Choice" program with Lyft. This will alleviate some of the pressure of the increased ridership.</p> <p>Palm Tran's Planning Department has a plan to implement "Go Glades" like service throughout the county to complement the Fixed Route and bring added options to the residents and visitors of Palm Beach County.</p>
	<p>Employment makes up the largest share in the trip category. Most customers complain about the late pick-up and drop-off. Employment trips impact the customer, the CTC, and the economy. The method to report on-time performance does not complement appointments and window on-time performance. The waiting period is so lengthy it creates frustration.</p>	<p>Continue evaluating resources availability to deliver on-time performance. When feasible implement alternate, less traditional paratransit services such as TNC to alleviate the increased ridership and ensure the OTP is at an acceptable rate.</p>	<p>The transit industry was hit hard by the employee shortage crisis. The lack of drivers and increased demand for service has negatively affected our on-time performance. By implementing the UZURV service and rider's choice program, we anticipate improving on-time performance and a better customer experience. However, there are budget constraints that we must keep in mind when the demand for service on paratransit exceeds the budget. TNC service is not the most efficient way to provide paratransit service, but it could alleviate some of the ridership burden. The CTC might return to the LCB to discuss Trip Priorities or Trip Limits as the county overmatches the TD grant exponentially.</p> <p>Palm Tran management and the use of the PT-Stat team and forum will continue to focus on implementing an appropriate balance between on-time performance and productivity.</p>

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<p>Chapter 427, F.S.</p>	<p>School buses are not currently being utilized in the coordinated system due to similar peak hours. Charter and private school students oftentimes rely on paratransit services to get to and from school. The size of Palm Beach County and the average one-way trip length being over 15 miles, school buses would not be conducive to the wear and tear of paratransit trips. School buses are currently not a viable cost-effective alternative.</p>	<p>If possible, work with the School District of Palm Beach County to utilize school buses.</p> <p>Develop an agreement with charter and private schools to subsidize costs for paratransit services provided to their students.</p>	<p>School buses are not a feasible option in Palm Beach County. There have been discussions with the School Board on school bus usage. Still, with the similar peak times, cost-effectiveness, the size of Palm Beach County, and the average one-way trip length being close to 10 miles, school buses would not be conducive to providing paratransit trips. Therefore, school buses are not currently a viable, cost-effective alternative. Additionally, charter and private school students often rely on paratransit services to get to and from school. Despite our efforts, and those of the Assistant County Administrator, there has not been any cooperation from the private and charter schools to solve this situation.</p>
	<p>The CTC has a goal of increasing estimated bus pass trips by 10% for paratransit riders. In FY 2020, of all new clients, 17% were issued ADA ID cards, a decrease from 20% in FY 2019, likely due in part to COVID-19 (no new ADA ID cards were issued between April-June 2020).</p>	<p>Continue to evaluate trends and assess the impact of COVID-19 on bus pass trips for TD clients.</p>	<p>Due to COVID-19, ridership was reduced by 30%. We are still recovering from the effects of the pandemic. However, we have seen increased ridership this past Fiscal Year. Recent trends are encouraging.</p>
	<p>The CTC has begun conducting eligibility interviews to better match riders with the service that best fits their need and to help manage the continued demand for paratransit services in Palm Beach County.</p>	<p>Monitor and report impact of phone eligibility interviews.</p> <p>When conducting eligibility interviews, ensure that safe pedestrian/bicycle routes to access fixed route service is a consideration in whether riders can use fixed route transit.</p>	<p>The Palm Tran Connection eligibility department carries various reports that address the different stages of the eligibility process. Offering various alternatives to paratransit is part of the needs assessment. The new process has been successful in ensuring those that truly need paratransit get certified.</p>

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	<p>There is not currently a formal arrangement with the local WAGES coalition, CareerSource PBC. However, in the past year the CTC implemented an agreement with CareerSource to reinstate a bus stop outside their facility. Palm Tran does not currently prioritize trips. The cost per trip is experiencing an ongoing increase over the years.</p>	<p>Continue to coordinate with CareerSource PBC to determine how to best provide clients with innovative transportation services.</p> <p>CTC should consider formalized a trip prioritization matrix to mitigate potential future conflict.</p>	<p>The CTC provides trips on Connection and Fixed Route to those seeking employment. We are in constant communication with CareerSource and have partnered with them to help with the hiring of bus operators.</p> <p>Trip prioritization will eliminate trips for riders that are currently being transported without an alternative. This could be an option in the near future due to budget constraints.</p>
<p>Local Standards</p>	<p>The CTC is currently <u>meeting</u> the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passenger no shows of <5%. • Call hold time is less than two (2) minutes per call. <p>The CTC is currently <u>not meeting</u> the following goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing public transit ridership goal of 25%. • On time performance goal of 90%. • Roadcalls of ≤1 per 10,000 miles. • Complaint ratio goal of ≤3 per 10,000 trips performed. • At-fault accident goal of ≤1 per 100,000 miles traveled. 	<p>The CTC’s Office of Performance Management (OPM) should continue to evaluate current measurable goals and develop a strategic plan to achieve them (i.e., increasing the average on time performance standards, decreasing the amount of complaints, and get able-bodied users of Connection to transition to the fixed-route, if their abilities allow.)</p>	<p>The CTC continues to evaluate goals and develop ways to address metric concerns. Such as on time performance; the CTC is providing services with UZURV and developing a working plan with Lyft to elevate the stress on the program and increase on-time performance (the utilization of TNC’s shall provide further service delivery support).</p> <p>For those that can use the fixed route and do not qualify for paratransit they are referred to the fixed route. With the RPM 2.0 Palm Tran fixed route is endeavoring to straighten out routes and reduce headways. This will lead to a more appealing and accommodating option to move paratransit users to fixed route.</p>

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Passenger Surveys	<p>Survey responses indicate concerns with on-time performance; late pick up or return pick up was an issue. Riders are requesting late-hour service.</p>	<p>CTC should consider evaluating rider’s origin and destination trips; implement route optimization. Send text notifications to customers when there is a road closure, work zone, crash, or peak hour traffic delay.</p>	<p>The CTC is constantly optimizing the scheduling parameters to improve customer experience. Our software vendor Trapeze has performed several “health checks” and the PT-Stat OTP team analyzes the data and suggests innovative scheduling ideas to the Palm Tran Connection team.</p> <p>Riders can use the Palm Tran Connection app or on the web (called Passweb) to easily access their ETA and see where their bus is located. The app is available for Android and Apple. The website is Passweb.palmtran.org.</p>
	<p>Customers expressed frustration with cash payment system. Asking for improving the payment process.</p>	<p>CTC should consider implementing digital payment/ digital cash to increase efficiency. Incorporate payment hardware like Software like Square, Clover Stripe, and ShopKeep.</p>	<p>Palm Tran fixed route has implemented a cashless fare payment system. Where customers are able to pay with the Paradise Pass, by tapping their phone, card or paradise pass.</p> <p>Palm Tran Connection will be implementing EZ Wallet payment where the customer will be able to load money to their account, fare deduction will be completed by having an account positive balance and a deduction will be made on the time of boarding. This is scheduled for 2023.</p>
	<p>Customers expressed concerns with trip lengths; it can take 2-3 hours to travel 10 miles; some vehicles are overbooked, which increases delays. There are inconsistent instructions between drivers, customers, and guard gate officers.</p>	<p>CTC should consider upgrade their system and software or incorporate Google Map or Waze application.</p> <p>CTC should consider working with customers more closely to standardize gate access for drivers. Consider adding language on the application and interview process to mitigate potential guard gate access barriers.</p>	<p>A new on board system called Driver Mate is scheduled to be tested this year that utilizes Google maps and interactive traffic logic. If the test is successful we will invest the capital in upgrading all paratransit vehicles to this system.</p> <p>The current eligibility application contains a section where a customer can add gate information, furthermore during the phone interview process the customer home address is reviewed to ensure accuracy.</p>