



## 1.0 Introduction

St. Johns County provides public transit services to citizens of St. Johns County in the state of Florida. As part of its commitment to providing transit services to its citizens, St. Johns County conducts a Transit Development Plan (TDP). The TDP outlines strategic initiatives and services for a ten-year period: years 2017-2026. This plan is mandated by state law and provides a basis for St. Johns County to receive state funding for its transit projects. The process is repeated once every five years, as a major update to the plan. Annual or minor updates are also conducted.

The most recent major update (2012-2021) was adopted by the SJCBOCC on August 16, 2011. Every year since August 2011, a 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 annual update document has been completed. The TDP helps ensure that the St. Johns County Sunshine Bus Company public transportation services are consistent with the travel needs and mobility goals of the county. By establishing a strategic focus and mission for the transit services, the TDP serves as a guide for the future development of a transit system that will meet the needs of the community.

In order to assess the context of the local operating environment, this document reviews public transportation vision, mission, goals, objectives and strategies for St. Johns County as well as existing conditions and relevant plans and studies. The TDP's alignment with local, regional and statewide transportation priorities and planning efforts is critical to its success. Just as important, the TDP incorporates opportunities for public and agency feedback and assisted with evaluating the provision of public transit services to the community. As part of the TDP, a specific program of public involvement was developed in order to engage the community in this planning effort. The TDP Public Involvement Plan (PIP), which appears as Appendix A, relies on coordination and solicitation of input from existing transit riders, public agency stakeholders and the general public.

Development of this TDP is described in ten sections: Public Involvement; Existing Service Area Conditions; Existing Transit Services; Transit Performance Evaluation; *Policies, Plans and Additional Context*; *Transit Demand and Mobility Needs Summary*; *Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives*; *TDP Alternatives and Strategies*; and *Financial Plan*. This document was developed in accordance with the state laws and rules governing Transit Development Plans (Florida Administrative Code, F.A.C. 14-73.001). The relationship between these ten parts and the F.A.C. 14-73.001 is summarized in Table 1.1. Table 1.1 serves as a checklist for the TDP's development requirements and identifies the location within this TDP where each requirement has been addressed.



**Table 1.1 Transit Development Plan Checklist (F.A.C. Public Transit 14-73.001) St. Johns County (2017-2026) Major Update**

<b>(3) Transit Development Plans</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>COMMENTS/REFERENCE</b>
Use a Ten-Year planning horizon covering year for which funding is sought and nine subsequent years	X		Throughout TDP
<b>(A) Public Involvement</b>			
Public Involvement Plan approved by FDOT or consistent with North Florida TPO's adopted public involvement plan prior to initiation of TDP development process	X		Section 2, Appendix A
TDP to include a description of the process used and activities	X		Throughout TDP
Solicit comments from First Coast Workforce Development (WorkSource)	X		Section 2 Appendices A, B and C
Advise FDOT, WorkSource, North Florida TPO of all TDP related public meetings	X		Section 2, Appendices A - C
FDOT, WorkSource, North Florida TPO provided comment opportunity/review during development of Mission, Goals, Objectives, Alternatives, and Ten-Year Implementation Program	X		Section 2, Appendices A - C
Public Involvement Plan process included opportunities for review and comments by public (citizens, passengers and other interested agencies not mentioned)	X		Section 2 Appendices A - G
<b>(B) Situation Appraisal</b>			
The TDP serves as a strategic planning document	X		Throughout TDP
Include an appraisal of factors within and outside Sunshine Bus that effect the provision of transit service	X		Sections 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7
Assess the effects of land use, state and local transportation plans, other governmental actions and policies, socioeconomic trends, organizational issues and technology	X		Sections 3, 6 and 7
Estimation of the community's demand for transit service over a ten-year period using	X		Section 7
FDOT Planning tools (TBEST), or:	X		Section 7
FDOT Approved transit demand estimation techniques	N/A		Section 7
Assessment of the extent to which land use and urban design supports the efficient provision of transit service	X		Sections 3, 6 and 7



<b>(3) Transit Development Plans</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>COMMENTS/REFERENCE</b>
Consider comprehensive plan, land use/development forecasts, major changes in land use policies, or changes in land use for major activity centers that may affect ridership	X		Section 3 and 6
Evaluation of performance of service provided to the community	X		Section 5
<b>(C) Mission and Goals</b>			
Includes Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives with consideration for the situation appraisal	X		Section 8
<b>(D) Alternative Courses of Action</b>			
Develop and evaluate alternative strategies and actions for achieving goals and objectives	X		Sections 8 and 9
Include alternative benefits and costs	X		Sections 9 and 10
Consider financial alternatives, including any new or dedicated revenue sources	X		Sections 6 (Additional Context) and 10
<b>(E) Ten-Year Implementation Plan</b>			
Identify policies and strategies for achieving goals and objectives over a ten-year period	X		Sections 8 and 9
Maps indicating areas to be served, type and level of service to be provided	X		Section 9
Includes a monitoring program to track performance measures as a part of the ten-year implementation program	X		Sections 9 and 10
Include a Ten-Year Financial Plan (operating and capital) noting sources and expenditure of funds	X		Section 10
Include a Capital Acquisition Plan	X		Sections 9 and 10
Include anticipated revenues by source	X		Section 10
Include detailed list of projects or service needed to meet the goals and objectives	X		Sections 9 and 10
Include an implementation program noting projects and services	X		Sections 9 and 10
<b>(F) Relationship to Other Plans</b>			
Be consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP)	X		Sections 6 and 8 (Goal 3)
Be consistent with local government comprehensive plans	X		Sections 6 and 8 (Goal 3)
Be consistent with North Florida TPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)	X		Sections 6 and 8 (Goal 3)
Be consistent with NEFRC Regional Transportation Plan goals and objectives	X		Sections 6 and 8 (Goal 3)
Describe relationship between Ten-Year Implementation Program and any other local plans	X		Sections 6



<b>(3) Transit Development Plans</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>COMMENTS/REFERENCE</b>
<b>(4) Annual Updates</b>	<b>N/A</b>		
<b>(5) Plan Submission and Approval</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>COMMENTS/REFERENCE</b>
TDP submitted to the Department by September 1	X		Draft submitted September 1, 2016. Adopted TDP submitted October, 2016.
<b>(6) Grant Administration</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>COMMENTS/REFERENCE</b>
TDP adequately provides FDOT with sufficient information to enable the Department to make funding decisions pertinent to the provider	X		Throughout TDP
TDP contains information about funding needs that could qualify for FDOT funding through Chapter 341, Florida Statutes	X		Sections 9 and 10

Source: Based upon requirement from Florida Administrative Code 14-73.001



## 2.0 Public Involvement

### 2.1 Public Involvement Plan

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed to help ensure that the transit development plan provides opportunities for stakeholders and the general public to participate in developing the TDP. The TDP utilizes a multi-faceted approach for engaging the public and key stakeholders through various activities. St. Johns County's TDP public involvement includes inter-agency and regional coordination; elected official and stakeholder input; surveys to collect feedback from Sunshine Bus customers, bus drivers/staff and the general public; and public comment opportunities. Table 2.1 summarizes TDP public involvement activities. Public involvement efforts include coordination with agencies potentially serving LEP and other disadvantaged populations, such as low income and minority communities; coordination with the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind; and a LEP analysis.



**Table 2.1 Summary of TDP Public Involvement Activities**

Activity	Stakeholder Type	Date	Number of Participants
PIP Approval	(not applicable)	January 2016	---
Elected Official Interviews	Elected Official	March 2016	5 Elected Officials
Stakeholder Questionnaires	Agency or Entity such as government or social service agency, schools	February – March 2016 <sup>1</sup>	14 Completed Questionnaires
Stakeholder Group Meetings	Staff representative(s) of St. Johns County and incorporated cities, SJCCOA, and other local, regional and state agencies such as the county’s visitor and convention bureau, FDOT, Northeast Florida Regional Council, Northeast Florida Regional Transportation Commission, North Florida TPO and CareerSource NEFL (First Coast Workforce Development, Inc.).	January and April 2016	January - 16 Attendees April - 15 Attendees
Transit Passenger Survey (On-Board Transit Survey)	Bus Riders	April 2016	84 Completed Surveys
Bus Driver/Staff Questionnaire	Sunshine Bus / SJCCOA Staff	March - April 2016	22 Completed Questionnaires
Public Opinion Survey (Online Survey)	General Public, generally not bus riders	June – July 2016	402 Surveys
Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board Presentations (board meetings include opportunity for public comment)	Transportation Disadvantaged, general public	March 2016	March - 11 Attendees
SJCBOCC Presentation and Approval (board meetings include opportunity for public comment)	County representatives, general public	October 2016	County representatives, general public

Source: ETM, 2016

Notice of FDOT staff approval of the PIP was received on January 28, 2016. Appendix A contains a copy of the PIP and Appendices B – G contain additional public involvement materials. The SJCBOCC approved the TDP at their board meeting held on Tuesday, October 4, 2016.

<sup>1</sup> One questionnaire was distributed and received back in August, 2016



## 2.2 Elected Official and Stakeholder Input

### 2.2.1 Elected Official Interviews

Individual interviews were held with two representatives from the SJCBOCC and one elected official from each of St. Johns County’s incorporated communities. Questions from the Stakeholder Questionnaire (Appendix B) were used to help generate discussion during the interviews and to help ensure that each official addressed the major themes of needs, priorities and/or goals. Three interviews were in-person and two were completed by phone.

Table 2.2 lists the elected officials interviewed. These interviews took place between March 2, 2016 and March 16, 2016.

**Table 2.2 Elected Officials Interviewed**

No.	Name	Community	Interview Date
1	Mayor Tom Ward	Town of Hastings	March 2, 2016
2	Commissioner Jeb Smith, BOCC Chair	St. Johns County	March 3, 2016
3	Commissioner Rachael Bennett	St. Johns County	March 3, 2016
4	Commissioner Margaret England	City of St. Augustine Beach	March 4, 2016
5	Commissioner Nancy Sikes-Kline	City of St. Augustine	March 16, 2016

Source: ETM, 2016

Input regarding public transportation identified through interviews with elected officials is summarized below, according to key themes.

#### *Major Destinations:*

##### *Within St. Johns County*

- Jobs and services, such as:
  - Medical facilities (such as Flagler Hospital and doctor’s offices)
  - Government services such as libraries, post offices and the county’s Health and Human Services (HHS) Building. People use libraries for computer use/job seeking. Hastings and Anastasia Libraries were specifically mentioned.
  - Grocery store, retail areas (such as the outlet malls, Walmart and Target), and pharmacy locations.
- Destinations in the St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach areas, such as:
  - SR-312 and US-1, this area is a hub of services and amenities
  - Downtown St. Augustine
  - Anastasia Boulevard
  - St. Augustine Beach: the Pier, Publix shopping area on A1A, Sea Grove area, destinations along Anastasia Boulevard, Anastasia State Park
- From west, including Hastings:
  - Diverse locations within the St. Augustine area.



- Medical destinations and jobs are important for those that need transportation services.
- Vilano Main Street area
- Council on Aging senior center on Marine Street

*Outside of St. Johns County*

- In addition to the St. Augustine area, people in Hastings also travel to Palatka (Putnam County) to shop. Some are currently using another public transportation system that carries people by bus between Hastings and Palatka. The train station in Palatka currently serves people well if they want to travel to/from Orlando, or to areas to the north.

*Service Needs within St. Johns County:*

- Service frequency on existing bus routes vs. new/expanded service
  - One elected official stated that current bus riders experience challenges with frequency of service when getting to jobs in St. Augustine.
  - Another stated that increased frequency on existing bus routes is needed first, over new service expansion and that the system needs to prove that transit is a viable alternative to an automobile.
  - One elected official stated that new routes are more important than more frequent service on the existing routes, and believed that Sunshine Bus does not go where people need to go.
  - It is important to improve the existing service, including additional hours in the evening.
  - Another was not aware of any concerns in regards to frequency and/or new or expanded service.
- Alleviate the St. Augustine area parking and congestion challenges.
  - It is difficult for people to move around the city core where the current parking garages are located, due to traffic congestion.
  - Consider remote parking as a solution; remote parking has been successfully used for special events in the past.
- Connecting people to jobs and other major destinations located in St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach is a need.
  - A suggestion for a small circulator for residents, connecting the Boulevard, King Street and West Augustine.
  - Specifically, it was mentioned that some of St. Augustine Beach's public works employees commute from areas such as Hastings and West Augustine. Many cannot afford the parking nor living in St. Augustine Beach.
  - Another representative noted that some people live on the west side of the county and work in St. Augustine, as the west side of the county contains low cost housing. There is a need for lower cost housing located closer to the jobs.





- Three elected officials stated that transit should serve tourism and special event needs. However, one of those three stated that the goals of the Sunshine Bus may not be aligned with serving tourism.
  - Connect the beach to downtown St. Augustine
  - Transit with stops along Anastasia Boulevard and A1A Beach was suggested by one elected official.
- One elected official mentioned that there may be a transportation need for county school district students who cannot ride the school bus (i.e., those that do not live within the school bus service area).
- Marketing is needed so people know about public transit services.
- Future Needs:
  - The county's western border near the St. Johns River will be an attraction at some point.
  - East-west connectivity will be needed.
  - Increasing major employment nodes will increase the need for transit.

*Service Needs outside of St. Johns County:*

- It was mentioned that transportation to Jacksonville and to the airport is a need.
- One representative felt that there is not much need to go to Putnam and Duval Counties.
- Regarding regional transportation, another representative mentioned that the county may not be interested if it is only an extension of JTA. Another concern mentioned is that the counties have different transportation needs.
- Another elected official did not see a need for regional transit to and from other counties until approximately 10 to 20 years from now.

*Public Transportation Trends:*

- Inadequate parking and failing road capacity.
  - There is and will continue to be increased traffic congestion and parking needs within St. Augustine.
  - The impacts from tourism will be similar to an “explosion” placing more demands on parking and transportation.
- Tourism is increasing in the St. Augustine area and connections to tourist attractions are needed.
- Transit dependent market/Traditional transit market:
  - Since the service initially began, an increase in people waiting at Sunshine Bus bus stops has been observed (on the west side of the county). An example was provided of a man who rides his bicycle more than 3 miles to a Sunshine Bus bus stop in Flagler Estates.
  - Generally, whether or not people have jobs (i.e., financial resources) will impact whether or not they will need public transportation.



- Increasing bicycle use in the St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach area, with more people riding bicycles in the street.
- There are safety issues for bicyclists on A1A Beach in St. Augustine Beach between Pope Road and the Publix.
  - No bike lanes on A1A Beach.
  - Sand blowing on the roadway affects safety for bicyclists.
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is a national trend.
- Millennials see transportation differently than others. Millennials generally have a greater preference for transit than the population as a whole.
- Intercity passenger rail – Hopefully, All Aboard Florida will look at Orlando to Jacksonville next.
- Commuter rail - There are a lot of commuters traveling from the north to the south.
- Fuel cost has a proportional relationship to transit use.

*Local funding Sources:*

- One elected official was supportive of additional public transit funding from the county, noting that the county's general fund contribution has not increased.
- It was mentioned that the county needs a sustainable, dedicated funding source.
- There is a need for analysis of the funding guidelines to find additional ways to fund transit.
- It was mentioned that the cities of St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach do not contribute dollars to the Sunshine Bus.
- St. Augustine Beach tourism generates bed tax/tourist development tax revenue and other revenues for the county.
- One representative stated that advertising and potential fare increases should be used.
- Another representative discussed private investment as a potential funding source. Some employers may be interested but it may not be practical. There are needs, however the provision of public transportation is not always affordable (i.e., to a business or to the county) and the cost of service needs to be justified.

*Highest Priorities for Public Transportation and Goals for Future Public Transportation Service:*

- Connect major destination points.
  - Provide public transit service to government services, such as libraries and post offices.
  - Medical destinations
  - Connect people to their work locations.
  - Transit for tourism, connecting the City of St. Augustine and St. Augustine Beach.
  - Provide connections to tourist destinations and special events (in St. Augustine and St. Augustine beach)
- Reliability, accessibility and frequency are important.



- Resolve inadequate parking and congestion issues.
  - Connect Downtown St. Augustine and the St. Augustine Beach Pier to parking areas located outside of the congestion.
- Market the service in order to increase ridership.
- Service efficiency and effectiveness are important.
  - An example was mentioned of using smaller buses/vehicles instead of larger vehicles. St. Lucia Mini Bus was mentioned as a specific example.
  - Encourage innovative ideas/nontraditional solutions
- Reserve Transit Corridors – As time goes on, we are losing our ability to reserve transit corridors. We need to be more forward thinking in terms of corridors and transit facilities, and think about multimodal transportation options.
- Promote land use regulations that are more supportive of transit.

*Additional Comments:*

- Draft information from the City of St. Augustine Parking Survey is available.
- St. Augustine Beach Vision Plan - the plan recognizes the impact of tourism.
- One representative was very happy with the council on aging transportation, stating that the service provides transportation three times a week to and from the senior center.

### **2.2.2 Stakeholder Questionnaires**

A stakeholder questionnaire was emailed to each member of the TDP Stakeholder Group and representatives of other key organizations throughout the community. The purpose was to collect input concerning public transportation needs, priorities and goals. Generally, the organizations contacted were believed to have constituents, clients and/or employees who either use public transportation or might be interested in using public transportation within, to and/or from St. Johns County. The participation of social service and community organizations helped consider the needs of low-income, minority and LEP populations.

Table 2.3 provides a list of the stakeholders who completed a stakeholder questionnaire; listed in the order of questionnaires received. All but one of these questionnaires were collected between February 18, 2016 and March 22, 2016. The final was collected on August 22, 2016. A series of 12 questions was developed to assess stakeholder views related to public transportation needs and goals. A copy of the stakeholder questionnaire is included in Appendix B.



**Table 2.3 List of Stakeholder Questionnaires Received**

No.	Name	Affiliation
1	Gary Mackey, Transit Grant Specialist	St. Johns County, Transportation Development
2	Lindsay Haga	Northeast Florida Regional Council, designated planning agency for St. Johns County Transportation Disadvantaged Local Coordinating Board
3	Pam Stevens, Land Use Coordinator	Town of Hastings
4	Arleen Dennison, Director of College Advancement	First Coast Technical College, Main Campus on Collins Avenue and Public Safety Campus on Gaines Road
5	Gary Peterson	Home Again St. Johns, Inc.
6	Joe Stephenson, Executive Director	Northeast Florida Regional Transportation Commission
7	Liz Peak, Regional Services Coordinator	Jacksonville Transportation Authority
8	Lori Wagner, Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialist	Florida School for the Deaf and Blind
9	Elisha Zuaro, Reading Specialist	Florida School for the Deaf and Blind
10	Mary Kelley Kryzwick, Regional Director	Catholic Charities – St. Augustine Regional Office
11	Marc Albert, Business Consultant	CareerSource Northeast Florida
12	Daniel Stewart, VP of Student Services	Flagler College
13	Tracy Dillon, Social Services Manager	St. Johns County Health and Human Services
14	Melanie Patz, VP of Community Investment & Impact	Baptist Health

Source: ETM, 2016

A summary of responses for returned stakeholder questionnaires, in order of the questions, is presented below. Common themes and perceptions are identified, where possible.

1. *Are you currently aware of St. Johns County’s public transit system (Sunshine Bus) and its services?*

All stakeholders are aware of Sunshine Bus.

2. *Do you use Sunshine Bus? If so, why? If not, what would encourage you to use Sunshine Bus?*

Approximately, five stakeholders routinely recommend the use of Sunshine Bus for their clients, assist their clients with using Sunshine Bus and/or acknowledge that their clients use Sunshine Bus. These stakeholders are: Catholic Charities, Home Again, Florida School for the Deaf and Blind (FSDB), St. Johns County Health and Human Services (HHS) and First Coast Technical College (FCTC). Example types of assistance include providing access and bus tokens/passes to clients in



need, and teaching the general use of public transportation to blind and visually impaired high school students.

Other stakeholders do not use Sunshine Bus as a form of transportation for various reasons. A few stated they have their own personal transportation/vehicles. A couple noted that the routes do not extend into Northwestern St. Johns County or do not extend into the City of Jacksonville for commuting. Other comments offered for not riding Sunshine Bus included: buses too infrequent, no bus stops located near home and not convenient. One visually impaired stakeholder commented that he did not want to flag down the bus.

3. *What are the major destinations within your St. Johns County community? Please use specific names of places and/or street locations, if you can. (Major destinations may include office parks, hospitals or other medical centers, retail centers, government centers, colleges/universities or tourist destinations, for example.)*

Based on the stakeholder responses, the majority of major destinations are located within the St. Augustine area. Common major destinations listed include government offices, medical services, shopping areas, US 1 in the St. Augustine area, downtown St. Augustine/St. George Old Town area, schools and St. Augustine Beach. Major destinations listed by stakeholders include the following:

- Government: County government center, HHS Building, main public library on US 1, Social Security Office
- Retail: Walmart, Cobblestone shopping area, Seabridge Square and surrounding shopping areas, US 1 commercial/retail area between Moultrie Creek and SR 207, St. Augustine Outlet Malls, Home Depot, Target, Winn Dixie North Plaza, restaurants
- Medical services: Flagler Hospital, Flagler Family Medicine
- US 1: US 1 and SR 16, Wildwood Drive and US 1, US 1 and SR 206
- Colleges: FCTC has two St. Johns County campuses (both off of SR 16; one at Collins Avenue and the other off Gaines Road); Flagler College; St. Johns River State College
- St. George Old Town area/St. Augustine Historic District and Bayfront/Downtown St. Augustine/King St, from US 1 to the east
- St. Augustine Beach, the Pier
- Social services – HHS Building, Catholic Charities (the office across from county jail on Lewis Speedway and St. Francis House)
- Transportation Hub – Greyhound Bus Stop
- CR 210 and Interstate 95 area
- NW Sector - Intersection of SR 13/Racetrack, Bartram Trail Library, CR 210 Winn Dixie
- Mickler's Beach Park, Crescent Beach



4. *What are the major destinations outside of your community (or outside of the county) where people are traveling to/from your area?*

The most commonly mentioned major destination outside of the stakeholders' communities is the Jacksonville/Duval County area, with emphasis on Duval County's employment centers, hospitals/medical services and malls. Various other destinations were also mentioned; some are specific areas or communities within St. Johns County while others are counties/cities outside St. Johns County. Specific destinations listed by stakeholders include the following:

- Jacksonville/Duval County: Avenues Mall, St. Johns Town Center, downtown Jacksonville, the John Turner Butler (JTB)/Southside area, Wolfson's Children's Hospital, Nemours's Children's Clinic, Mayo Clinic on San Jose, Shands Jacksonville, hospital on University Boulevard, and the beaches.
- Within St. Johns County: amphitheater, recreational parks such as Treaty and Davis, Outlet Malls on SR 16, Armstrong, Hastings, Flagler Estates, Shores, Ponte Vedra Area (including Ponte Vedra large employers) Race Track Road, and World Golf Village.
- Other areas outside of St. Johns County: Putnam County (Palatka and Crescent City), Flagler County, Clay County (Green Cove Springs and Orange Park) and Gainesville, including the Veterans Hospital.

5. *Is there a need for more transit service in core areas of the county that are currently served by Sunshine Bus? (More service refers to additional routes, more buses, longer hours, more days of the week, etc.) Which is more important for Sunshine Bus: new/extended bus routes OR more frequent buses on existing routes? Please explain your answers.*

About half of the stakeholders favor more frequent public transportation service over new/extended services, while most other stakeholders prefer both options (better frequency and new/extended services). One comment is that better frequency will increase ridership, particularly from riders not dependent on transit. Another comment is that home-to-work trips require additional routes, more frequency and longer hours to create a reliable and desirable alternative. Additional service improvement needs are listed below.

- Sunday service
- FCTC (First Coast Technical College)<sup>2</sup>:
  - If the Purple Line could take a slight detour off of SR 16 to travel north on Collins to the main gate of FCTC, students would be more likely to use the bus.
  - Afternoon time schedules are particularly inconvenient for students. Current hours are not conducive to commuting between Hastings and St. Augustine/Palatka areas. Need more convenient service and additional regional destinations to serve FCTC students.

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<sup>2</sup> Additional details regarding student demographics and barriers to transportation were provided by FCTC.



- More frequent, earlier and later service on the Teal Line
- More service to Avenues Mall to connect to JTA.
- Bus stop needed closer to Catholic Charities offices.
- Longer hours in the evening and on the weekend to use transit for leisure and recreational pursuits.

6. *Is there a need for transit service in other areas of St. Johns County, not currently served by Sunshine Bus? If “yes”, what areas and why?*

At least half of the respondents stated a need for transit service in either the northwest or northeast areas of the county. Northwest and northeast communities mentioned include the SR 13 corridor, Fruit Cove, Julington Creek, Bartram Park, and CR 210 on the northwest; as well as Nocatee, Ponte Vedra and Palencia to the north and east. World Golf Village was also mentioned as an increasingly dense area.

In regards to northern St. Johns County, people commented on a need for transit connections to service industry and other jobs located in the CR 210 and Ponte Vedra areas. Another believed that people living along SR 13 in the northwest sector mostly prefer to travel to Mandarin. Another respondent indicated a transit need within the northwest community for non commuters, as an alternative to vehicle driving. For example, there is a transit need for residents to run errands within neighborhood commercial centers, for parents and children to ride to and from school together, or to travel to other activity centers or recreation sites. There was a specific comment that people need public transportation between Duval and St. Johns Counties east of the Intracoastal Waterway.

A few stakeholders commented that there are transit needs in the southern and more rural areas of the county, including the SR 206 and Interstate 95, Elkton, Hastings and Flagler Estates areas. One stakeholder noted that the highest areas of food stamp participation within the county are located in the St. Augustine and southeast St. Johns County zip codes (32084, 32086 and 32080). There was a suggestion to confirm Sunshine Bus’s future service area and to consider formal inter-local coordination/cooperation agreements to assure connectivity with neighboring transit services.

[Sunshine Bus currently serves portions of some areas mentioned above, such as Palencia, Hastings, Flagler Estates and Elkton, as it traverses US 1 and SR 207, and stops in Hastings and Flagler Estates.]

7. *Is there a specific facility or site within St. Johns County, not currently served by Sunshine Bus that would benefit from public transportation? If “yes”, what facility or site, and why?*





Not many facilities or sites were offered by the stakeholders; however, specific facilities/sites identified by four stakeholders are FCTC's campuses on SR-16<sup>3</sup>, the Flying J Truckstop at SR 206 and Interstate 95 (listed as a potential future location for Home Again), Catholic Charities office on Lewis Speedway (across from the county jail), and Lighthouse Park and Calhoun Center in St. Augustine. Northwest and northeast portions of the county were noted; with the representative from CareerSource commenting that the Ponte Vedra area has the most need due to employers having a difficult time finding employees. Another stakeholder listed the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club and Sawgrass Country Club for employment purposes; and specifically stated that public transportation is needed between east Duval County and Ponte Vedra employers. Two other stakeholders suggested express bus service from key St. Johns County locations countywide, to key destinations and connections to Duval County (and possibly in Putnam, Clay and Flagler Counties).

8. *Is more regional transportation needed to connect St. Johns County with surrounding counties (such as Duval, Flagler, Putnam, Clay or other surrounding counties)? If "yes", which counties and why.*

Duval County was cited most frequently regarding regional transportation needs, followed by Flagler and Putnam counties and then Clay County. Duval County was noted for its medical specialists and employers. One respondent acknowledged that regional transportation will require regional cooperation and coordination. At least one stakeholder did not believe that regional transportation was needed. Other specific comments are listed below:

- HHS clients need transit to Putnam, Flagler and Duval for jobs, shopping and medical services. Due to in network provider insurance requirements, many must see doctors outside the county, especially for specialty doctors.
- Besides St. Johns County, ranking the other counties in which the majority of FCTC with transportation difficulties reside would be: 1. Putnam, 2. Clay, 3. Duval, 4. Flagler. Additionally, FCTC students are in frequent transition and some are homeless. Having access to transportation in these other counties may help them stabilize their living situations and contribute to success at school.
- Need more connector routes with Duval (east of the Intracoastal Waterway), Putnam and Flagler Counties to bring job seekers in those areas of higher unemployment to St. Johns County employers.

9. *Changing conditions within the community can affect the existing transit market, as well as offer new opportunities to serve potential customers. Are there any specific trends that you think will affect public transportation needs over the next 10 years? (For example, socioeconomic, transportation, land use, urban design patterns, policy, funding, technological and/or other changes.)*

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<sup>3</sup> Examples of scheduling difficulties were provided by FCTC





Population Growth, Development and Congestion - The most common trend mentioned was population growth and development within the county, particularly in the northern sections of the county, as well as increasing traffic congestion within growth areas and St. Augustine. One stakeholder commented that Nocatee, Silver Leaf and Twin Creeks will be significant growth areas. A few stakeholders noted that population growth, new roadway connections or increased traffic are opportunities for additional public transportation services. Specific suggestions include using the FEC rail line along with buses to serve commuters and tourists, adding a bus route along Wildwood Drive to serve growth in that area, and planning a bus route along the future SR 313.

Demographic and Personal Preferences – There is growth in aging populations and an increase in senior living and assisted living facilities within St. Johns County. One specific example of transit needs related to older adults is the many elderly residents who do not have transportation or prefer not to drive to areas with heavy traffic in the Hastings area. Other trends potentially influencing transit are personal preferences not to drive, regardless of age, and increased concern about environmental issues.

Technology, Flexibility and Information – One stakeholder discussed the importance of using technology and more creative, flexible transit services to increase information sharing, coordination and cooperation, and to ultimately improve personal mobility. This person encouraged personal mobility to occur by any means that can be facilitated rather than on the operation of fixed routes. Another stakeholder mentioned technology's ability to make it easier for visually impaired transit customers to schedule rides with the use of an app, stating that visually impaired customers would likely be willing to pay more for this service.

Funding –Difficulties securing funding for traditional transportation infrastructure such as roadway expansion will influence the use of transit.

10. *Public transportation seldom comes close to being paid for through user fares? What types of local funding sources should be used to continue or increase transit service in the future? (For example, private partnerships, advertising revenues, fare increases, ad valorem tax, sales tax, gas tax.)*

The gas tax and advertising were cited most often as local funding sources for public transportation, followed by fare increases, sales tax, and private partnerships. Ad valorem, county funding, and impact fees were also mentioned. A few people stated that local funding is vital. Other responses noted that funding sources should be sustainable (i.e., lasting, viable) and diversified (i.e., varied). There was a suggestion for private partnerships with Ponte Vedra employers such as the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club and Sawgrass Country Club, to support the current and future transportation needs of their employees.

11. *What should be the highest priority for public transportation services in St. Johns County?*

The most common responses for the highest priority for public transportation services in St. Johns County focus on enhancing the transit system to make transit more convenient, either by making improvements to existing bus lines, adding new bus lines and/or expanding into other areas of



the county. Example enhancements to existing bus lines include better frequency of buses, extended times of day, adding bus stops and incorporating concepts of Universal Design at bus stops and on buses. Universal Design is a type of design suggested by FSDB mobility specialist and students. The design benefits many potential users, including those with visual impairments or other special needs. Example design considerations include onboard annunciators and variable message signs to announce upcoming stops or an audible sound when bus doors open.

Additional responses suggest ways to increase and maximize ridership, expand the transit market beyond the transit dependent and garner support for increased taxes. These suggestions include implementing bidirectional express/commuter services, planning for future population and employment growth, and adopting the transit system as an acceptable mitigation to transportation impacts relating to growth.

Other priorities include providing connections to key destinations, finding funding sources to increase services and diversifying funding. In terms of markets or trip purposes, jobs, medical care and shopping centers were mentioned as a priority. One stakeholder suggested the following priority ranking: 1) medical services (local and regional), 2) critical life sustaining goods and services, 3) home to work/work to home trips (local and regional) and 4) everything else (local and regional). A final stakeholder added access to jobs, food, health services and entertainment for people without private transportation.

12. *As you consider your answers to the prior questions, what would you suggest are appropriate goals for future public transportation service in St. Johns County (over the next 10 years)?*

*Goals may address themes, such as: access to jobs, access to services, ability to connect to other types of transportation (multimodal connections), cross-county connections, convenience, quality of service, ability to travel (mobility), ability to make transportation choices, frequency of service, hours of service, days of service, bus stops, bus stop signs, bus shelters, bike racks, safety, security, effectiveness and efficiency, image, information, customer service, funding, intergovernmental coordination, regional coordination, environment, energy, health, economy, education, training, marketing/communication).*

Stakeholders suggested several topic areas that can be developed into potential goals, as summarized below. The most common topic areas focused on enhancing transit service (i.e., more frequent service, better hours/days, more bus stops, more bus lines/routes, etc.) and providing access to key destination, such as jobs and services.

- Convenience, mobility, multimodal connections, cross-county connections
- More frequent service
- Better operating hours and days of service
- Bus stops within activity centers
- Increase bus stops, including bus stops in neighborhoods
- More bus stop signs



- Access to services
- More bus lines/routes
- Mass transit access to downtown Jacksonville
- Personal mobility (first locally, then regionally)
- Support access to jobs using a coordinated, easy to use cross-county transportation system that would decrease cars on our roadways and decrease the effects of carbon-based fuels on our environment.
- Inform the public and promote the system throughout the region to increase awareness of the options and increase ridership.
- Support a thriving economy in St. Augustine by improving access to jobs.
- Encourage smart residential growth by ensuring convenient transportation services (such as Park-and-Rides and express commuter routes)
- Safety and security at bus stops
- Funding
- Technology/Information/Apps
- Collect and use data to drive decisions related to efficiency and effectiveness

### 13. Additional Comments

- Better outreach to residents about the service is needed. Suggestion for mail-outs to residents.
- Consider transfer tickets that will not require a fare for the next bus.
- Schedules/maps outlining the routes are not accessible to people who are blind or visually impaired. People who are totally blind are not able to read the color coded maps.

### 2.2.3 Stakeholder Group Meetings

St. Johns County staff coordinated with inter-governmental and regional agencies during development of the TDP. A stakeholder group of local, regional and state participants helped guide the study, with two Stakeholder Group meetings held at the St. Johns County Permit Building in the county's main government center. Staff representative(s) of St. Johns County, City of St. Augustine, City of St. Augustine Beach, Town of Hastings, SJCCOA, and other local, regional and state agencies such as the county's visitor and convention bureau, FDOT, Northeast Florida Regional Council, Northeast Florida Regional Transportation Commission, North Florida TPO and CareerSource NEFL (First Coast Workforce Development, Inc.) were invited to attend the meetings. Appendix C contains meeting agendas and notes.



## 2.3 On-Board Transit Survey

### 2.3.1 Description of Survey

On Tuesday, April 5, 2016, a survey was administered to customers riding the Sunshine Bus Company deviated fixed-route system. The purpose of the survey was to collect information about rider demographics and travel activity, and obtain input from customers regarding suggestions to improve the service and their level of satisfaction with various aspects of the Sunshine Bus Company Service. Riders of selected buses on all bus routes were asked to complete a survey form while onboard the buses. The majority of bus riders were able to fill out the surveys themselves, while a few riders accepted the option of having the surveys administered to them. Most riders chose to take the survey; however, some riders declined to provide their input. A total of 84 surveys were completed.

**Table 2.4 Number of Surveys Collected**

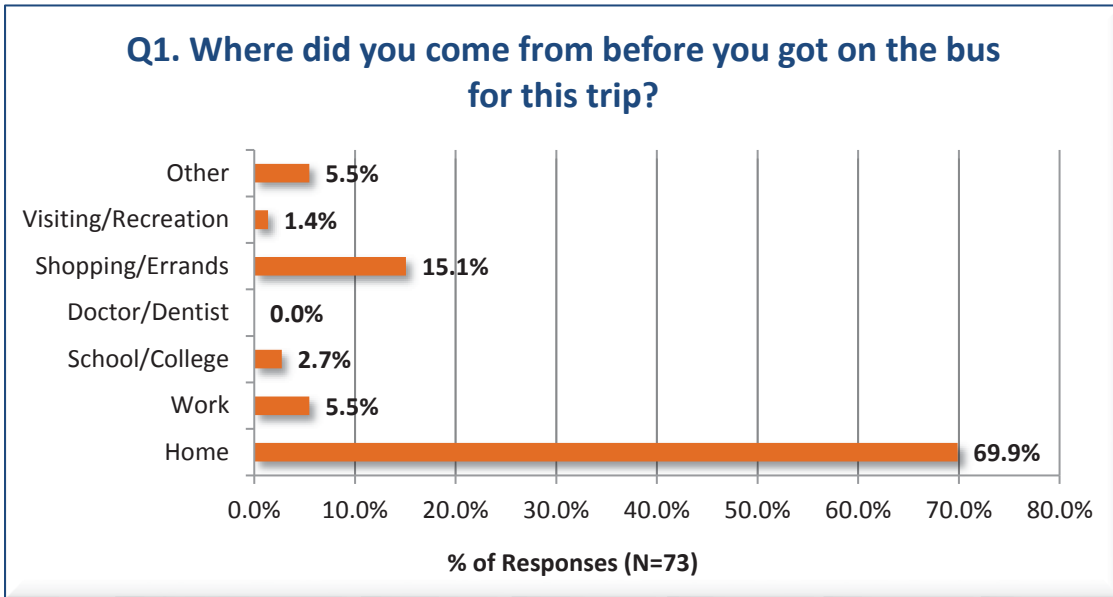
<b>Bus Route</b>	<b>Number of Surveys</b>
Connector	17
Orange	21
Blue	6
Purple	9
Teal	13
Green	8
Red	10
<b>Total Surveys</b>	<b>84</b>

The survey instrument is included in Appendix D. Survey results are described on the remaining pages of this section.

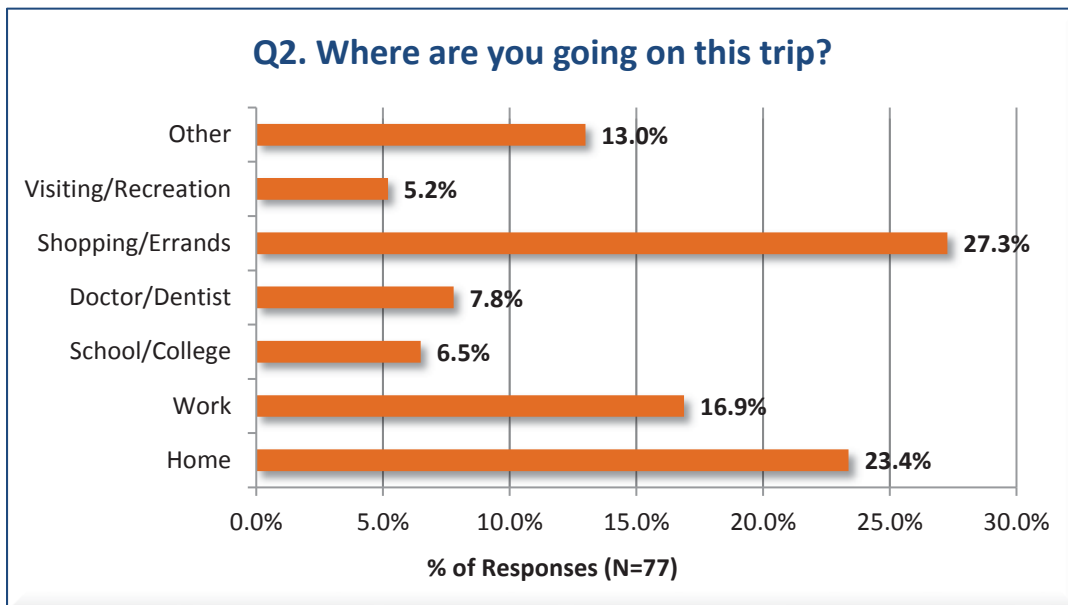
### 2.3.2 Survey Results

The majority of survey respondents began their bus trip at home (Figure 2.1). Regarding the destinations of survey respondents (Figure 2.2), a significant percentage went shopping or on errands (27%); followed by home (23%), and work (17%) destinations.

**Figure 2.1 Where Riders Came From (Origin)**

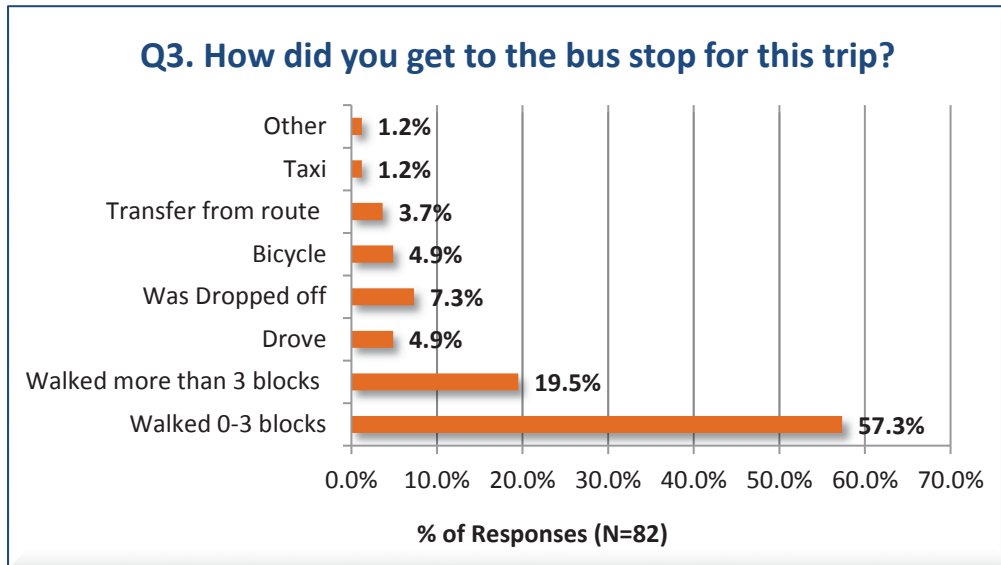


**Figure 2.2 Where Riders Were Going (Destination)**

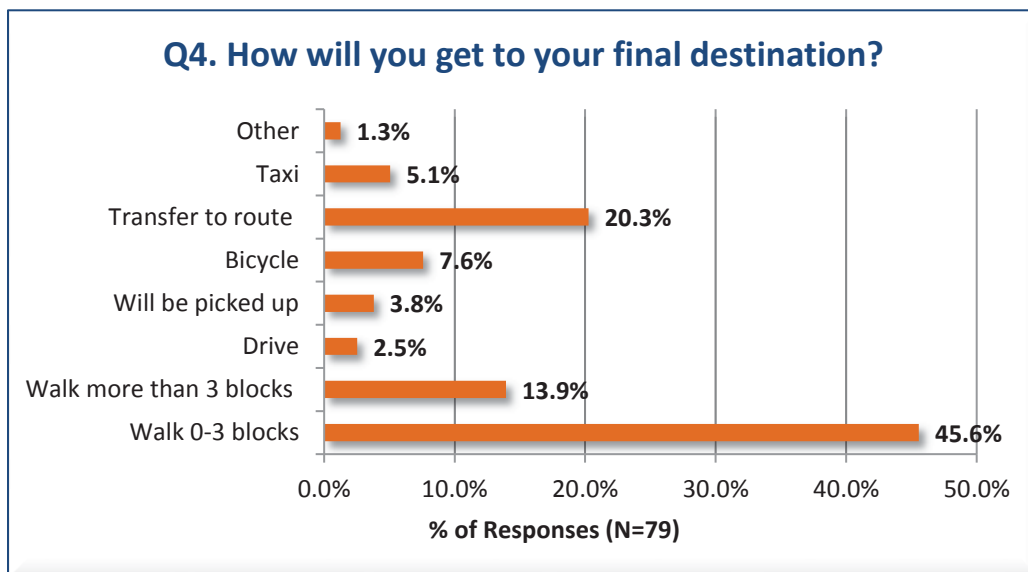


The majority of survey respondents either walked to the bus stop or walked to their trip destination. About 77% walked to the bus stop (Figure 2.3), while 59.5% walked to their final destination (Figure 2.4). Of these, most survey respondents walked no more than three blocks. After walking, the second highest mode of transportation for getting to the bus stop was being dropped off by someone else (7.3%), while the second highest mode for getting to their final destination was another bus (i.e., transferred to another bus route, 20.3%).

**Figure 2.3 Means of Transportation to the Bus**



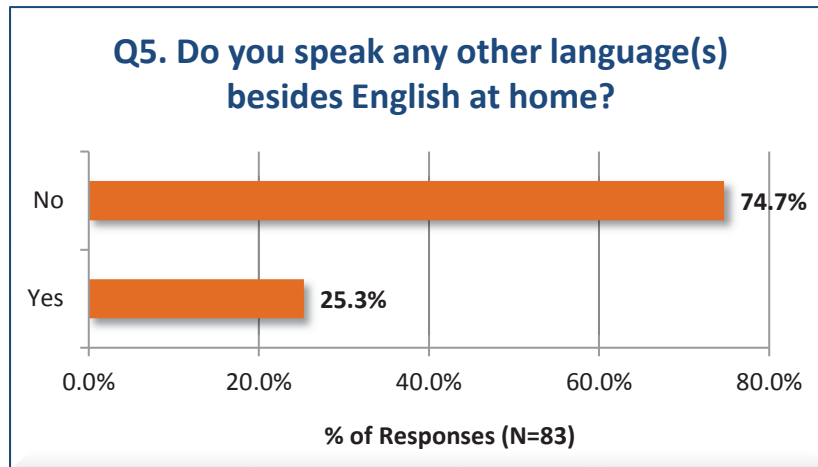
**Figure 2.4 Means of Transportation from the Bus**



Survey question number five (Q5), “Do you speak any other language(s) besides English at home?” is important to helping Sunshine Bus Company staff determine the frequency with which riders with

Limited English Proficiency come in contact with transit. Figure 2.5 shows that almost 75% of riders surveyed did not speak any language besides English at home (62 out of 83 responses). The other 25% of survey respondents that speak other languages were provided an opportunity to write those languages on the survey form. Table 2.5 shows a count of the languages written on the surveys, with Spanish and sign language written most frequently.

**Figure 2.5 Language(s) Spoken at Home**



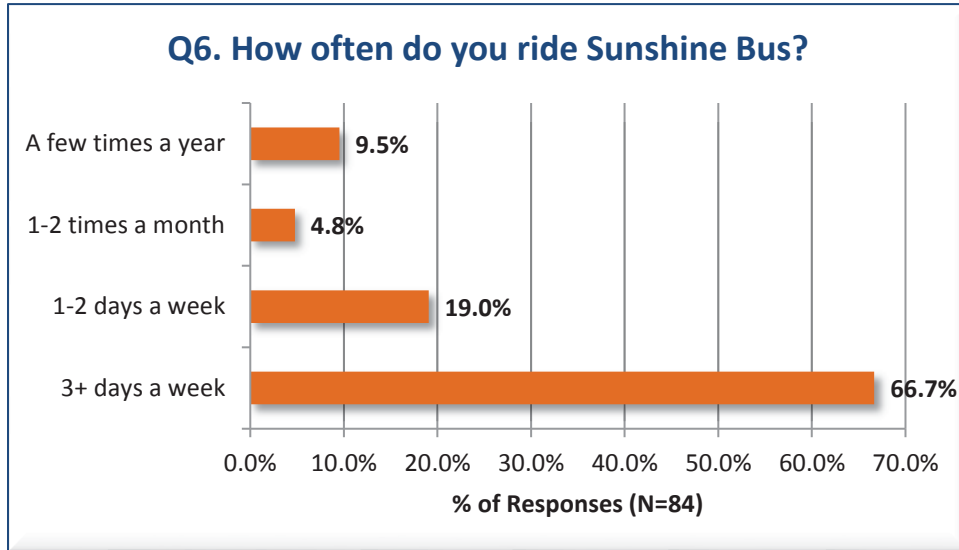
**Table 2.5 If “yes”, please specify which language(s)**

	Count of Languages Indicated	%
Spanish	4	24%
Sign Language	3	18%
Arabic	2	12%
Italian	2	12%
Portuguese	2	12%
Polish	1	6%
Russian	1	6%
French	1	6%
Hungarian	1	6%
	17	100%

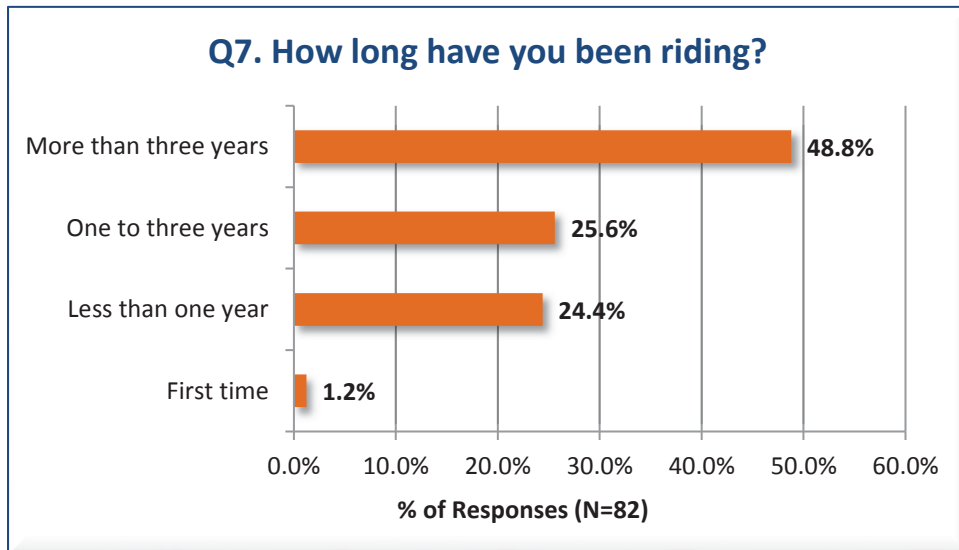
Figures 2.6 and 2.7 indicate that most Sunshine Bus Company customers are frequent riders. The vast majority of survey respondents indicated they rode the bus weekly (86%); with 67% riding 3+ days a week and 19% riding 1-2 days a week. Seventy-four percent (74.4%) have been customers of Sunshine

Bus Company for at least one year; and almost half (48.8%) have been customers for more than three years.

**Figure 2.6 Frequency of Sunshine Bus Use**



**Figure 2.7 Length of Time Survey Respondents Have Been Sunshine Bus Customers**

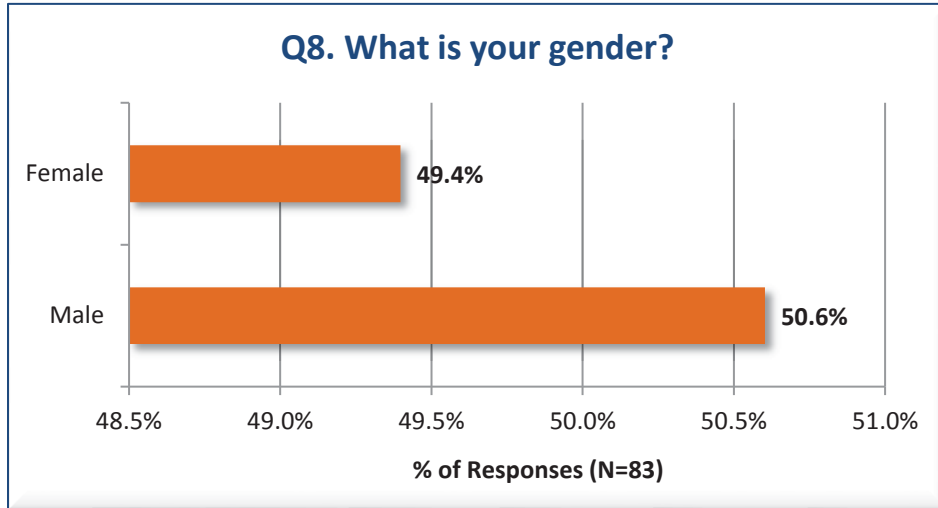


Figures 2.8 – 2.9 show demographic information for individuals that participated in the survey. Generally, the same number of survey respondents were male as were female, both representing 50% of survey participants. Additionally, half of the survey respondents were between the ages of 35 and 59;

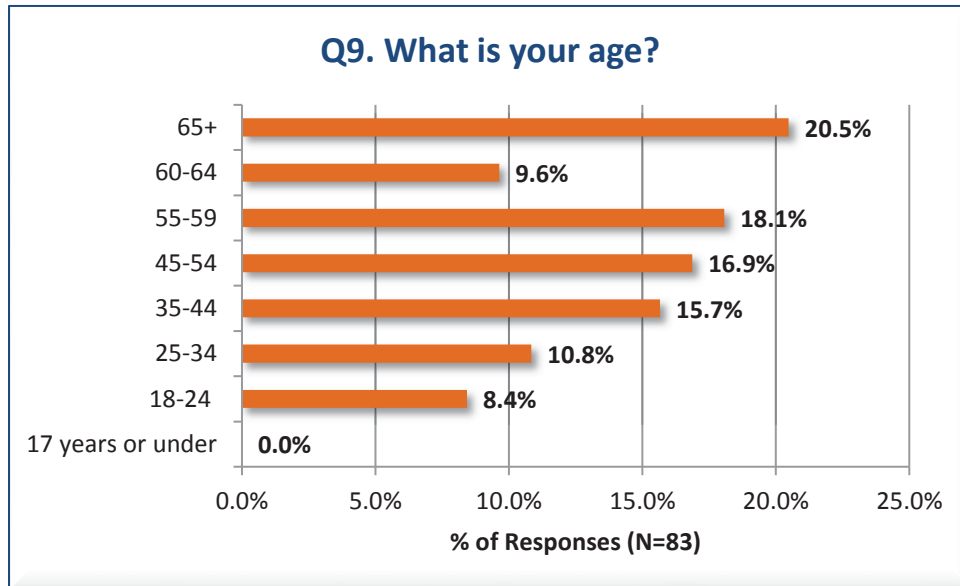


over half indicated they were white; and over 70% had a total household income less than \$20,000. For each age group shown in Figure 2.10, most survey respondents indicated they were 65 years old and above (20.5%); and of the income groups shown in Figure 2.11, most had a total household income of less than \$10,000 (42.1%).

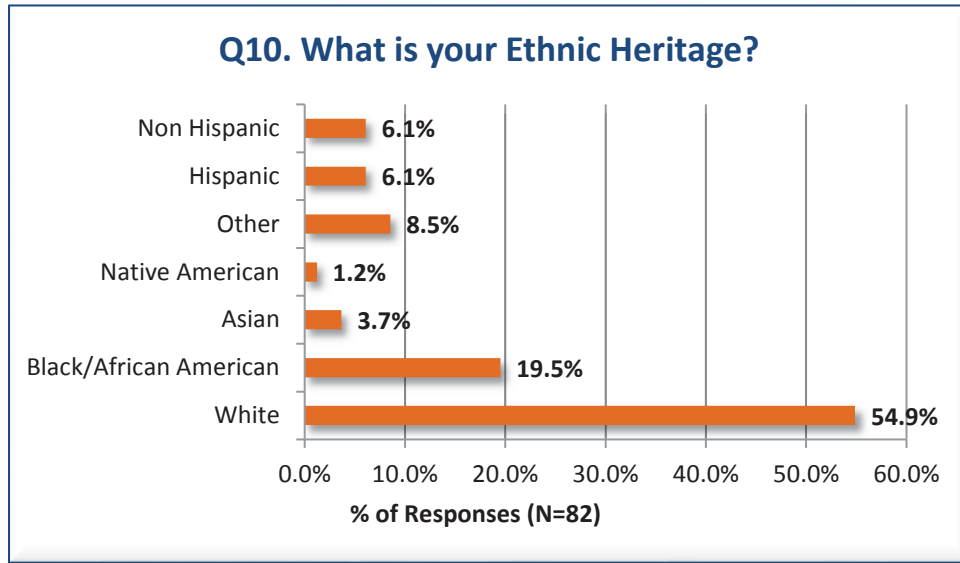
**Figure 2.8 Gender**



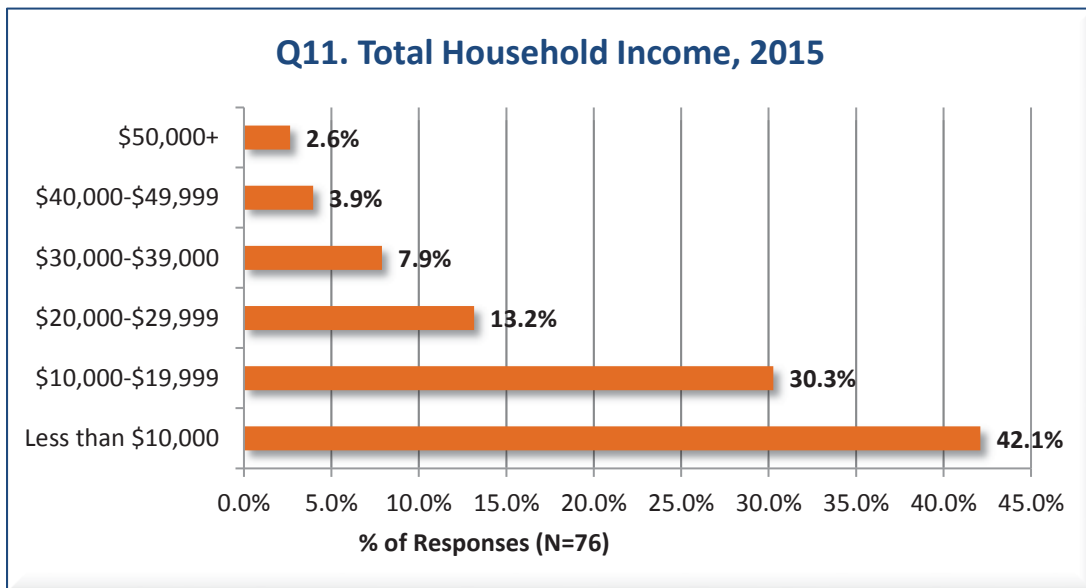
**Figure 2.9 Age**



**Figure 2.10 Race and Ethnic Heritage of Survey Respondents**

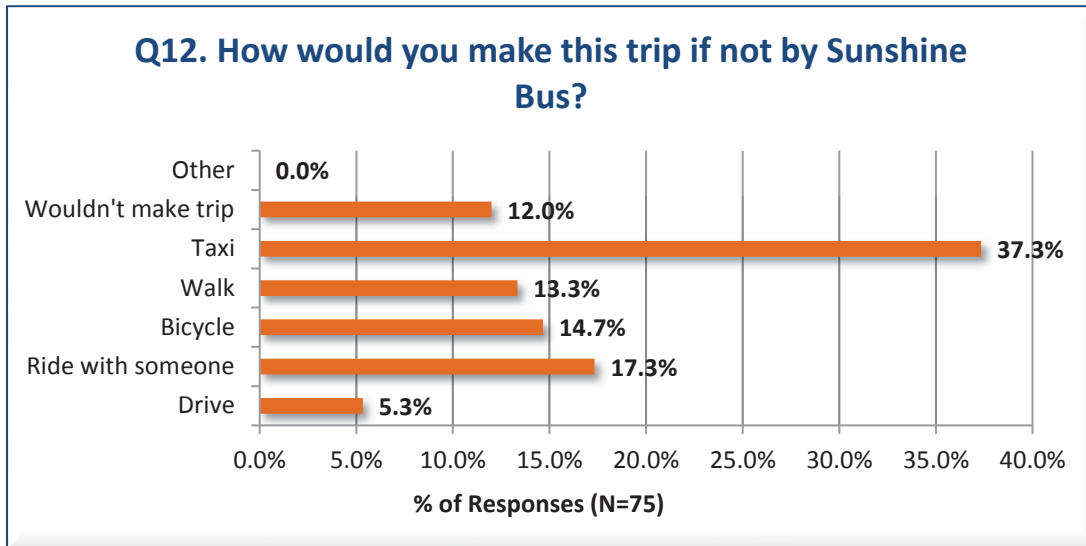


**Figure 2.11 Income**



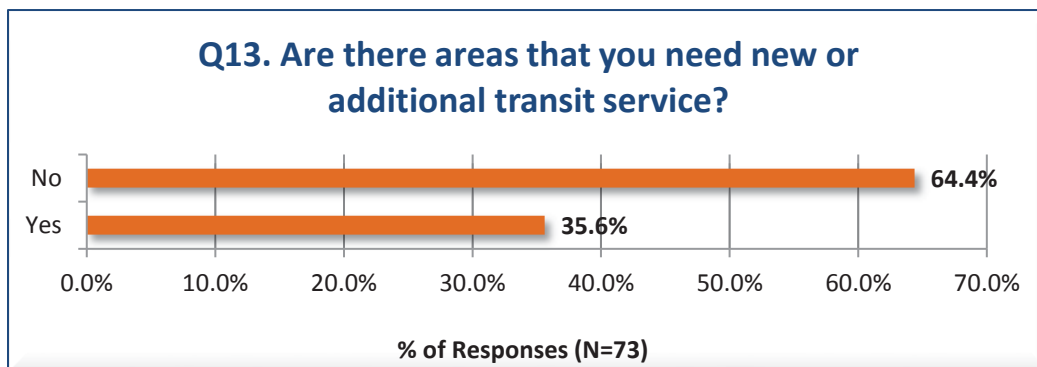
In Figure 2.12, although the majority of survey respondents would use another means of transportation if Sunshine Bus were not available, only 5% would drive themselves. Most would travel by taxi (40%), a combined 28% would either bicycle or walk; and 17% would ride with someone else. Twelve percent (12%) of survey respondents would not make their trip at all if Sunshine Bus were not available, potentially indicating that these are the most transit dependent as they may have no other transportation options available to them.

**Figure 2.12 Transportation Options**



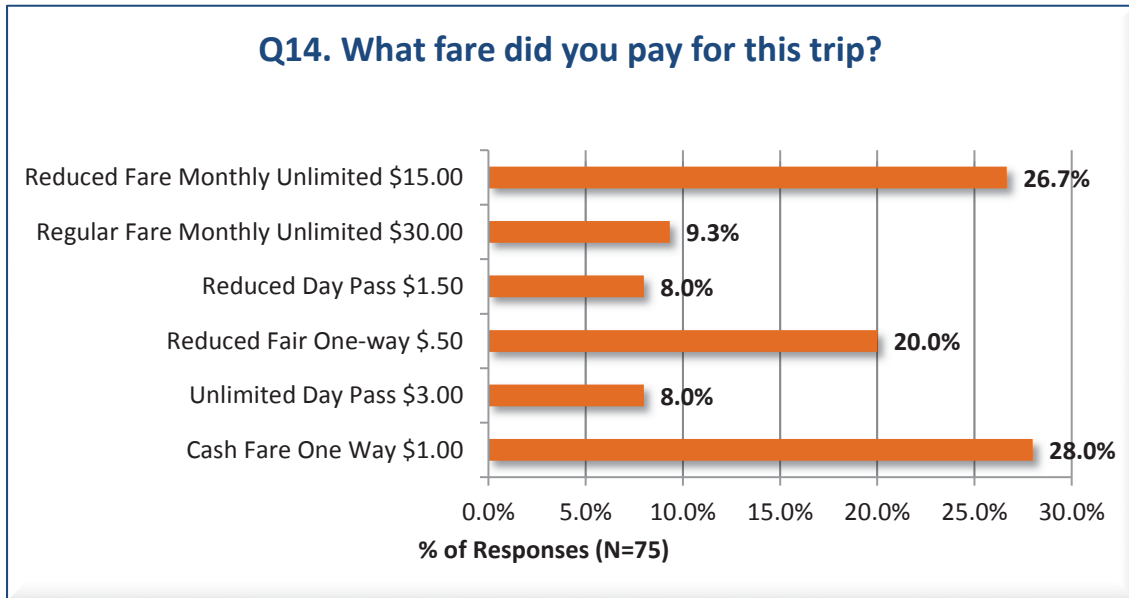
Although most survey respondents (64.4%) stated there are not areas that need new or additional transit service, several respondents did provide specific comments indicating the additional transit service that they would like (Figure 2.13). Some comments focused on the desire for either more frequent buses (particularly on US 1 and the SR 16/SR 207 area), later hours, or more weekend service. Other comments listed various areas within St. Johns County, as well as cities outside of the county. Appendix D2 contains a list of new or additional services as written by survey respondents.

**Figure 2.13 New or Additional Transit Service Needs**



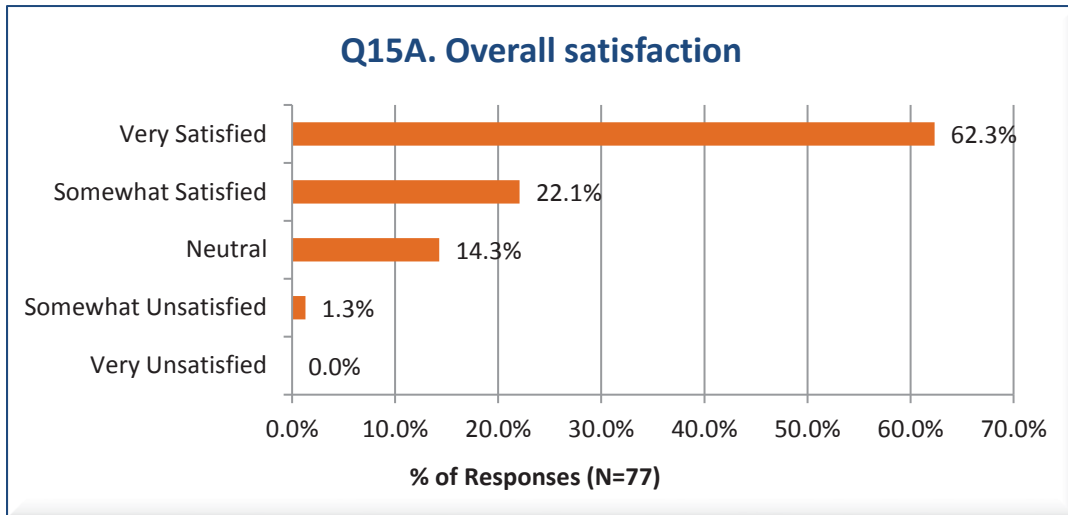
Question 14 on the survey asked about the type of fare that customers paid to board the bus. Over half of the survey respondents replied that they paid either a cash fare one way \$1.00 (28.0%) or a reduced fare monthly unlimited \$15.00 (26.7%).

**Figure 2.14 Bus Fare**



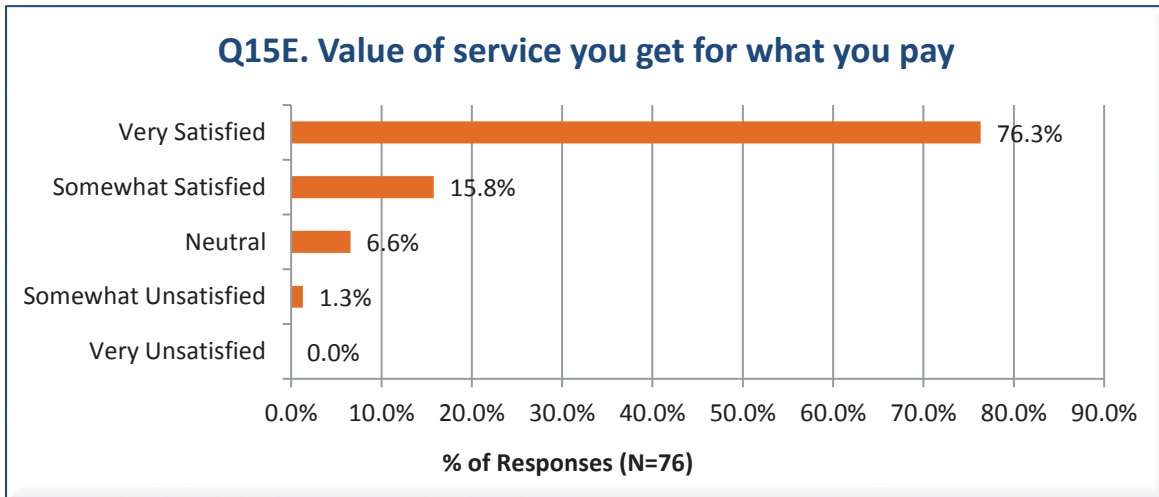
Question #15 asked, on a scale of 1 to 5, how satisfied Sunshine Bus riders were with various aspects of the Sunshine Bus Company transportation service, with 1 being *very unsatisfied*, 3 being *neutral* and 5 being *very satisfied*. Eight-four percent (84%) of survey respondents indicated they were satisfied. Specifically, Figure 2.15 shows that 62% of survey respondents were *very satisfied*, while 22% were *somewhat satisfied*.

**Figure 2.15 Overall Satisfaction with Sunshine Bus**



Over 90% of respondents indicated they were satisfied (either *very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied*) with the value of service received for what they paid (Figure 2.16).

**Figure 2.16 Satisfaction with the Value of Sunshine Bus Service**





An average score was calculated for each service characteristic. As stated on the previous page, a 5 (*very satisfied*) is the highest number of points possible and a 1 (*very unsatisfied*) is the lowest. Table 2.6 contains the listing of average scores. The averaging of the scores show that in general, survey participants were at best *very satisfied* with aspects of Sunshine Bus service (score of 5) and at worst *satisfied* with other aspects of the service (score of 4).

**Table 2.6 Satisfaction Ratings for Bus Survey Characteristics by Average Score**

CHARACTERISTICS OF BUS SERVICE	AVERAGE SCORE
Bus driver safe driving	4.73
Value of service you get for what you pay	4.67
Cleanliness/Safety of buses and bus stops	4.62
Overall satisfaction with Sunshine bus	4.45
Bus driver courtesy	4.38
Ease of transfers between buses	4.22
Ease of using route and schedule info	4.18
Sunshine Bus Company's telephone customer service	4.17
Ability to get where you want to go	4.14
Bus is on time	4.05
Convenience of routes	4.01
How often buses run	3.59

Table 2.7 (on the following page) shows the frequency of responses related to how satisfied Sunshine Bus Company riders were with various aspects of the Sunshine Bus Company. Over 80% of riders responded they were satisfied (either *very satisfied* or *somewhat satisfied*) with: cleanliness/safety of buses and bus stops (94%); bus driver safe driving (94%); value of service for what you pay (92%); overall satisfaction with Sunshine Bus Company (84%); and ease of transfers between buses (84%). Respondents were most dissatisfied with how often buses run, with 22% either *somewhat* or *very unsatisfied*.



**Table 2.7 Satisfaction with Sunshine Bus Service**

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH EACH OF THE FOLLOWING?	VERY SATISFIED 5	%	SOMEWHAT SATISFIED 4	%	NEUTRAL 3	%	SOMEWHAT UNSATISFIED 2	%	VERY UNSATISFIED 1	%	TOTAL
A. Overall satisfaction with Sunshine Bus	48	62%	17	22%	11	14%	1	1%	0	0%	77
B. How often buses run	25	32%	20	26%	16	21%	10	13%	7	9%	78
C. Ability to get where you want to go	36	46%	24	31%	12	15%	5	6%	1	1%	78
D. Ease of transfers between buses	35	48%	26	36%	7	10%	3	4%	2	3%	73
E. Value of service you get for what you pay	58	76%	12	16%	5	7%	1	1%	0	0%	76
F. Bus driver courtesy	39	51%	22	29%	9	12%	5	6%	2	3%	77
G. Bus driver safe driver	55	71%	18	23%	4	5%	0	0%	1	1%	78
H. Bus is on time	38	55%	15	22%	8	12%	6	9%	2	3%	69
I. Ease of using route and schedule info	39	51%	22	29%	9	12%	5	6%	2	3%	77
J. Convenience of routes	30	39%	25	32%	15	19%	7	9%	0	0%	77
K. Cleanliness/Safety of buses and bus stops	55	71%	18	23%	4	5%	0	0%	1	1%	78
L. Sunshine Bus Company's telephone customer service	38	55%	15	22%	8	12%	6	9%	2	3%	69



Bus riders were provided space on the survey form to suggest ways to improve Sunshine Bus service. Comments received are summarized and grouped into categories in Table 2.8. Over 50% of written comments in question 16 suggest either more frequent buses, design enhancements, Sunday/daily service or more hours of service throughout the day. Ten percent (10%) suggest that improvements are needed in bus driver courtesy and another 10% suggest more or improved bus routes. A few comments raise potential policy issues related to customer service and on time performance, for example.

**Table 2.8 Summary of Rider Comments by Topic (Question 16)**

Comment	# of Comments	%
Increase the number of trips or buses/Improve frequency of buses (Specific locations mentioned: to/from Outlet Mall, SR 16, SR 207, Teal Line, more buses on each line)	9	15%
Design Enhancements related to bus, bus stop or location information/universal design (For example: Call out stops, tone (sound) to tell people inside the bus that a stop is coming up, Color flags or other way to identify bus in distance, bus route color on back of bus, use color to indicate bus lines, can't read blinking lights, wish stops were easier to locate, paint back of bus stop signs yellow, not familiar with US 1 bus stops)	9	15%
Add Sunday service/Need daily service	8	13%
Increase the service hours/span of service	8	13%
Compliment (For example: Great service for tourists, Teal Line is great for Hastings/Flagler Estates, excellent service, convenient, I love the bus)	7	11%
Improve driver courtesy (For example: drivers sometimes unprofessional, buses sometimes pass stops if people are standing there without checking, soothing music or no radio)	6	10%
Offer more or improved routes (For example: Split the Purple Line into 2 routes (Seabridge to St. Augustine outlet malls and St. Augustine outlet malls to Avenues Mall), routes on Volusia Street, a bus line to Jacksonville Beach, from SR 207 to US 1, crossing the bridge, Restore Purple Line to the old schedule.)	6	10%
Miscellaneous comments (For example: An offer from a media designer to help improve customer experience)	5	8%
Provide more bus stop amenities (For example: bus stop bench at Sea Bridge Square, benches at US 1 stops, bus stop rest area, trash cans at all designated stops)	4	6%
Improve schedule adherence - improve on-time performance, including buses arriving too early. A late bus is better than one that goes by too early	2	3%
Add more bus stops	2	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>100.0%</b>





## 2.4 Bus Driver and Staff Questionnaire

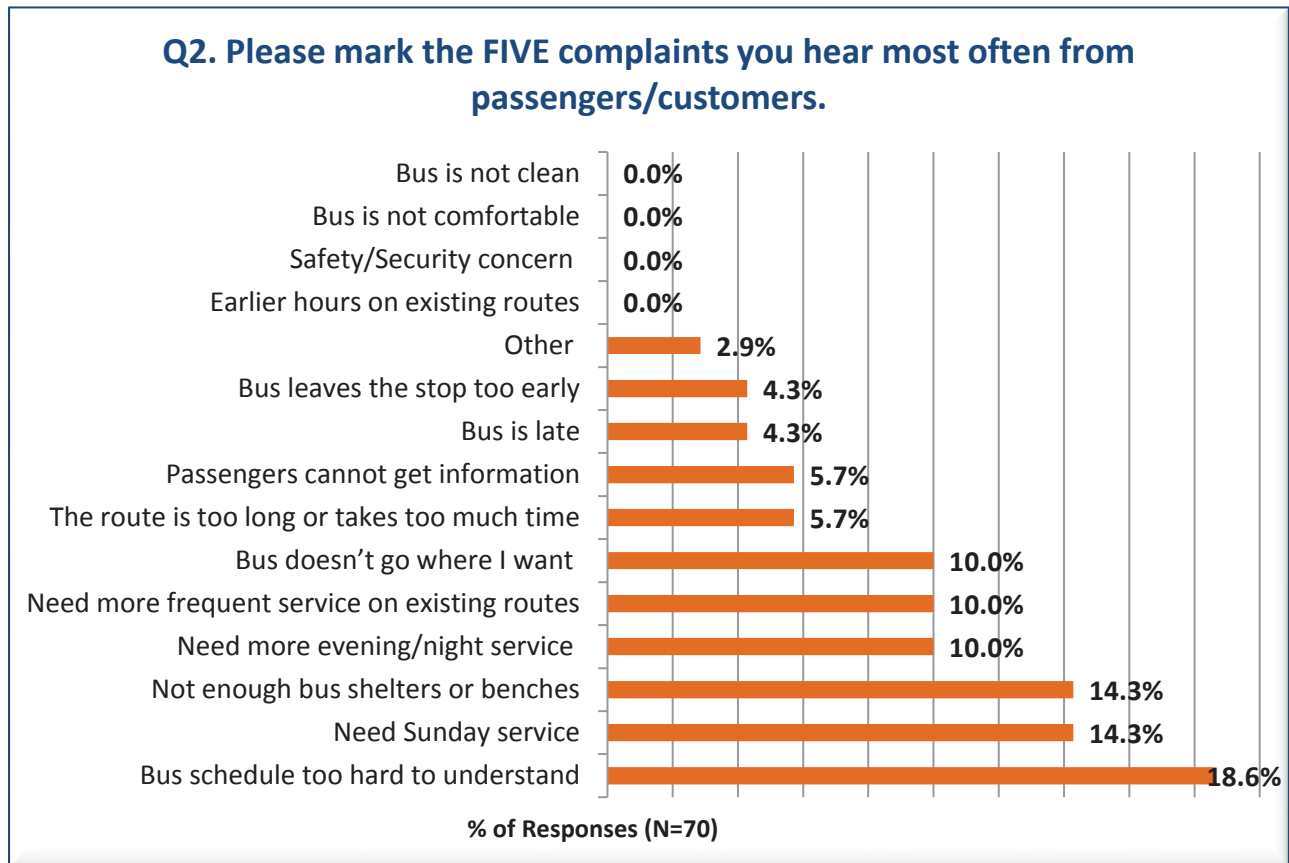
### 2.4.1 Description

Sunshine Bus Company bus operators and other St. Johns County COA staff were provided an opportunity to complete a questionnaire over a period of nearly three weeks. From March 29, 2016 to April 15, 2016, bus operators and COA staff completed hard copies of a self-administering questionnaire at COA's bus facility. The general purpose of this questionnaire (Appendix E1) was to collect input from bus operators and staff related to bus operations, such as common complaints from customers, strengths and weaknesses of the bus system, and suggestions to improve bus service. A total of 22 questionnaires were collected from 20 bus operators (19 Sunshine Bus and one Paratransit), one customer service/dispatch representative and one billing/schedule coordinator. Summary information for a few questions is contained on the following pages. Remaining summary and questionnaire responses are contained in Appendix E2.

### 2.4.2 Summary of Questionnaire Results

Bus operators were asked to mark the five complaints heard most often from Sunshine Bus passengers/customers (Figure 2.17). Out of 14 options, the most common complaint selected was that bus schedules were too hard to understand (at 18.6%); followed by need Sunday service (14.3%) and not enough bus shelters or benches (14.3%); and need more evening/night service (10.0%), need more frequent services on existing routes (10.0%), and bus doesn't go where I want (10.0%) all tied for third place. When asked whether or not the complaints they heard most often were valid, 12 out of 19 bus operators (63.2%) replied "yes"; the other seven replied no. Regarding the paratransit service, three out of seven bus operators/staff commented that customers would like shorter wait/turnaround times. Additional comments were that customers would like to make additional (non-medical) stops, the bus doesn't come when they thought it would come (mostly too early) and some don't qualify for the service and wish they did.

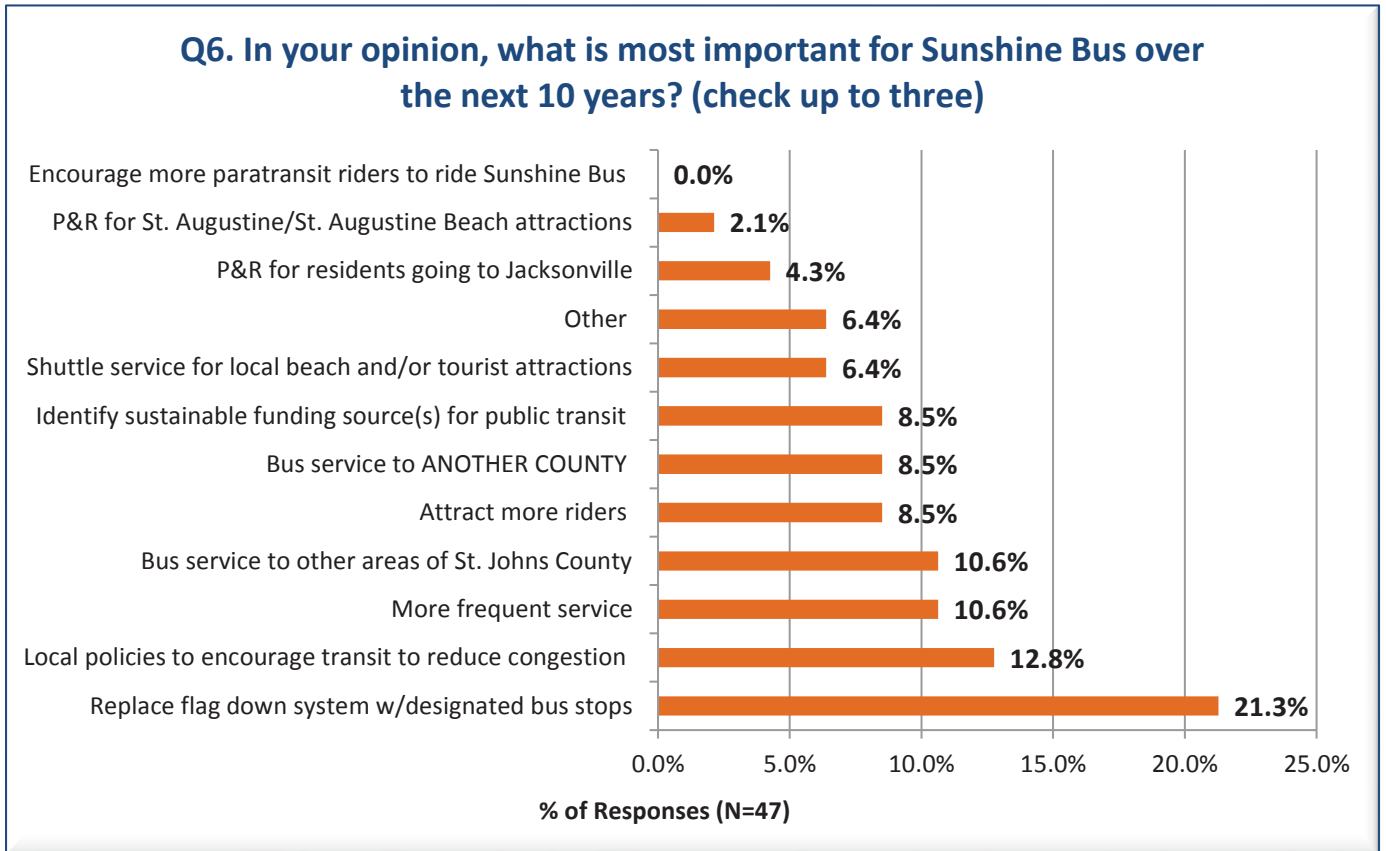
**Figure 2.17 Frequent Complaints**



Bus operators were asked their opinions on options that were most important for Sunshine Bus to focus on over the next ten years (Figure 2.18). Out of 11 potential choices, the most common suggestion indicated was to replace the flag-down system with designated bus stops (at 21.3%); followed by local policies to encourage transit to reduce congestion (12.8%); and more frequent service (10.6%) and bus service to other areas of St. Johns County (10.6%) both tied for third place. Although Park-and-Ride (whether for St. Augustine area attractions or for residents going to Jacksonville) received minimal responses, when asked whether or not the county government center is a good location for a Park-and-Ride lot, 12 out of 17 bus operators (70.6%) replied “yes”. Of those that replied “yes”, reasons offered were varied including: lots of parking available, lots of routes come here and safe/clean. Others that replied “yes” either suggested that the specific location at the county government complex be close to the exit/near US 1 (2) or that a Park-and-Ride at the county government complex only be used for routes traveling to the north (2). Of the five who replied no, reasons offered included: too far away from town/majority of population, too much traffic and spaces fill up by employees and people doing business.



Figure 2.18 Potential Ten Year Priorities





## 2.5 Public Opinion Survey (Online Survey)

### 2.5.1 Overview of Survey

A public opinion survey was implemented to obtain input from the general public (particularly St. Johns County residents, employees and businesses) and to guide development of the plan. The survey was available online for 35 days, from June 3, 2016 to July 7, 2016. A total of 402 surveys were collected. Information collected from survey respondents related to transit needs, factors that might influence decisions to use public transit, knowledge and attitudes about public transportation, and some demographics of the respondents.

The survey was made available on the St. Johns County, City of St. Augustine Beach and North Florida TPO's websites. On St. Johns County's website, the survey link ([www.sjctransitstudy.com](http://www.sjctransitstudy.com)) was posted as the first item on the home page as well as on the transportation development page. The survey link was emailed to the St. Johns County Administrator, BOCC members, TDP Stakeholder Group (including FDOT, Northeast Florida CareerSource, and the North Florida TPO), as well as other stakeholders. All were encouraged to share the link with their contacts.

In addition to websites and email notification, the St. Johns County and other stakeholders posted information about the survey to media and/or social networking sites. Examples of the media outlets utilized are listed below.

- Government Television (GTV), the television channel of St. Johns County, Florida – bulletin board
- Facebook – St. Johns County and North Florida TPO
- Twitter – St. Johns County and Northeast Florida Mobility Coalition Transportal (a virtual regional transportation resource)
- Media – email notification by St. Johns County

### 2.5.2 Online Survey Results

Summary results are provided below. Charts, including detailed cross tabulations by home zip code, can be found in Appendix F.

#### *Respondent Characteristics*

The majority of survey respondents live in St. Johns County (88%), work outside of their home (82%), and drive themselves to work (93%). Only 2% of survey respondents use public transportation to get to work and another 2% carpool. Of the age ranges, 22% selected 45-54 years old, followed by 35-44 years old at 19% and 65-74 at 15%. Over half the survey respondents had two or more working vehicles in their household; only 2% had none. Forty-two percent (42%) had a total annual household income of \$70,000 or more.

#### *Public Transportation Needs and Willingness to Use Public Transportation*

Considering that online survey respondents were not transit dependent, a significant percentage stated they either would consider using public transportation or needed public transportation. Seventy-four



(74%) of survey respondents would consider using public transportation in St. Johns County if it was available to them. Thirty-seven (37%) said “yes” and another 37% said “maybe.” The remaining 26% said “no.”

#### *Where do you most need public transportation?*

When asked to choose between different areas of the County, about 60% of survey respondents stated they most need public transportation in the St. Augustine/St. Augustine Beach area.

When asked to choose preferred connections to the St. Augustine area: 19% would like public transit to connect St. Augustine with the southwest (Hastings and Flagler Estates area); 18% would like to connect St. Augustine with the northwest (Julington Creek, Fruit Cove, Durbin Creek and/or northwest CR-210 areas); and another 18% with the northeast (Nocatee, Ponte Vedra Beach and/or Palm Valley areas). Eight (8%) would like to connect St. Augustine with the World Golf Village area.

#### *Do respondents need public transportation to other counties and which counties*

Fifty-three (53%) of survey respondents need public transportation between St. Johns County and other counties. Twenty-eight (28%) said “yes” and another 25% said “maybe.” The remaining 47% said “no.” When asked which counties, most chose Duval County, followed by Flagler County and Putnam County.

#### *Knowledge about public transportation*

Most survey respondents have heard of Sunshine Bus (77%) but only 14% had used Sunshine Bus in the past. Regarding paratransit, just over half of survey respondents had never heard of it (53%), and only 3% had used it.

#### *Factors that might influence decisions to use public transportation*

When asked to select up to three conditions that would most encourage them to use public transportation, “frequent service (vehicle run often)” was selected most often; followed by “routes that serve the areas I need to go” and “low/affordable fares.”

When asked to select the option that best described why they would use public transportation in St. Johns County:

- 37% of survey respondents chose “to avoid driving in heavy traffic and/or parking conditions;”
- 21% chose “I like having a variety of transportation options” and
- 18% chose “I support transit for others and am willing to try it for myself.”

Finally, most survey respondents would use public transportation to get to “beaches or historic St. Augustine area attractions;” followed by “work” and then “shopping/errands.”

#### *Attitudes about public transportation*

Most survey respondents agree (either agree or somewhat agree) with the following statements.

- An effective public transportation system is important for the economy (92%).
- Public transportation should be improved to reduce congestion (91%).



- An effective public transportation system is important for the environment (86%).
- There is a need for additional or improved public transportation within St. Johns County (88%).
- I would support increased taxpayer funding of public transportation serving St. Johns County (67%). Twenty-two (22%) said they either disagree or somewhat disagree, while 10% were not sure.

## 2.6 Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Analysis

The federal government directs the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to look at the services it provides, and make sure that individuals who have a limited ability to read, write, speak, or understand English (i.e., who are limited English proficient, or LEP), have access to those services. On August 16, 2000, the President signed Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.” Then the USDOT and FTA published LEP guidance in 2005 and 2007<sup>4</sup>, respectively. As a result, public transportation providers that receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding, such as Sunshine Bus, must take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP persons have meaningful access to public transportation.

A four-factor framework is outlined in Section V of the 2005 DOT LEP Guidance<sup>5</sup> to help transit agencies ensure that limited-English members of their population have meaningful access to benefits, services and information. These four factors are: 1) Determine the number or proportion of LEP individuals eligible to be serviced or likely to be served by transit; 2) Determine the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with transit; 3) Determine the relative importance of transit provided by St. Johns County to peoples’ lives; and 4) Assess the available resources to the transit system.

To address Factor 1, U.S. Census, American Community Survey data for St. Johns County, Florida was used to determine the number and proportion of LEP individuals in the community.

**Table 2.9 Population 5 Years and Older Who Speak a Language Other than English at Home**

Language	Number of Speakers	% of Total County Population <sup>6</sup>	% of Number of Speakers that Speak English “Very Well”	% of Number of Speakers that Speak English <b>Less than “Very Well”</b>	% of Total County Population Speaking English <b>Less than “Very Well”</b>
Spanish	7,590	3.9%	68.9%	31.1%	1.2%
Other Indo-European	4,805	2.5%	76.1%	23.9%	0.6%
Asian and Pacific Islander	1,715	0.9%	65.0%	35.0%	0.3%
Other	867	0.4%	71.6%	28.4%	0.1%
Total	14,977	7.8%	70.9%	29.1%	2.3%

Source: American Community Survey, Table DP02: Selected Social, 2014 5-Year Estimates. In this table, total county population refers to total St. Johns County population that is 5 years and older.

<sup>4</sup> Circular 4702.1A, “Title VI and Title VI-Dependent Guidelines for FTA Recipients,

<sup>5</sup> Federal Register/Vol.70, No.239/December 14, 2005

<sup>6</sup> % of Total County Population 5 Years and Older



Table 2.9 shows that about 2.3% of St. Johns County’s population (five years and older) speaks English less than “very well.” Of those, the predominant second language is Spanish. Four percent (4%) of the total county population (five years and older) speak Spanish at home, and 31% of that population speaks English less than “very well.” Still, this represents a relatively small portion (1.2%) of the total St. Johns County population.

To determine the frequency with which LEP individuals come in contact with transit, the on-board survey asked, “Do you speak any other language(s) besides English at home?” The majority of survey respondents (74.7%) stated that they do not speak any languages besides English at home.

The below questions on the on-board survey (Appendix D1) provide information concerning the relative importance of Sunshine Bus to people’s lives:

- “How would you make this trip if not by Sunshine Bus?” (Question 12) and,
- “How often do you ride Sunshine Bus?” (Question 6)

The majority of riders surveyed (67%) said they ride the bus three or more days a week. Twelve percent (12%) would not make the trip if not by Sunshine Bus.

The Sunshine Bus Company’s website currently features a translation widget that allows individuals to translate website information into different languages. Since the last annual TDP update, no additional resources have been received to implement additional LEP measures. St. Johns County will continue to look for additional low-cost methods (as well as additional financial resources) to provide language translation assistance to customers that need it.

## **2.7 Summary of Public Involvement**

A variety of input and comments were received during public involvement. Some topics and sentiments were commonly observed across the various public involvement methods.