**GO ENHANCE RTS STUDY EXCECUTIVE SUMMARY - May, 2014.**

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION.

### 1.1 Purpose and Need.

#### 1.1.1 Purpose of Study.

The study evaluated premium transit modes as a cost-effective, sustainable mechanism for improving east-west connectivity, increasing mobility and transportation choice, reducing congestion and parking demand, spurring economic development, and supporting the community's desire for a multimodal model network. In 2010, the Gainesville Regional Transit System (RTS) completed an initial *Rapid Transit System Feasibility Study* which recommended a premium transit investment in a 16-mile east-west corridor extending from Oaks Mall to the Gainesville Regional Airport, serving the University of Florida (UF) and downtown Gainesville.

The follow up *Go Enhance RTS Study* has both expanded upon and refined that study to examine a variety of transit improvements and their ability to improve travel markets that converge within the corridor. The study area was also expanded to include the Santa Fe College (SFC), Newberry Village, Spring Hill, and SantaFe Village areas.

#### 1.1.2 Project Need.

An assessment of current conditions in the study area and the potential ramifications of future development highlight several key transportation-related problems from which alternatives and evaluation criteria were developed.

Newberry Road, University Avenue, Archer Road, NW 13th Street, NW 23rd Avenue, SW 20$^{th}$ Avenue and SW 34th Street are all currently at or are projected to exceed accepted levels of traffic congestion (Level of Service E and F). The most significant commercial, healthcare, cultural, educational, government, high density residential and employment destinations are situated along these corridors. The roadway capacity projects planned for these roadways will not substantially reduce the projected levels of travel delay. The combination of rising levels of traffic congestion along with limited roadway expansion options due to pedestrian concerns, community policy, relocation costs, and physical constraints puts a greater strain on the regional roadway network than it can be expected to handle. As a regional destination of statewide significance, transportation is a critical issue for Gainesville's economic viability, its hospitals and schools. Congestion on principal arterial roadways between I-75 and UF/Shands will have an adverse impact on air quality, livability, commute times and community cohesiveness. Adverse impacts in Gainesville will likely

ripple through the region and could reduce the area's economic and community competitiveness as an educational and research center.

Beyond that, City, County and UF policies and priorities favor multimodal strategies that reduce travel demand via personal automobiles, emphasizing a more balanced approach to accessibility, mobility and livability. The area has some of the highest transit, bicycle, and pedestrian mode shares in the state yet lacks a transportation corridor dedicated to fast, convenient and effective multimodal transportation that connects key travel markets like SFC, the F and the Shands Healthcare Complex with East Gainesville residents. The provision of such a service would also support desired urban form patterns and attract choice riders to the network.

**1.2 Goals and Objectives.**

To assess the extent to which routing alternatives and modes were satisfying the purpose and need, five goals and 23 objectives were identified, as shown in Table 1-1. These goals and objectives were developed based on input from the study advisory committees and current City and County comprehensive plans. A set of performance measures were developed for each objective.

**1.3 Public Involvement.**

At the initiation of the GO Enhance RTS Study, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was drafted to outline the approach and methods the project team would use to educate and engage citizens and other stakeholders and gather their input on all aspects of the project, including the recommended Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). Outreach objectives were designed around communicating often with government agencies at multiple levels, soliciting input from neighborhood and business associations and other large organizations like the University of Florida, allowing the public at large to comment on the project, and doing all this in a manner that made the information easily accessible and compliant with federal Title VI requirements (bilingual public flyers [Spanish and Chinese], translatable website, translation services at public meetings, etc.).

Various events were advertised through the website and media, in addition to distribution of flyers at RTS transit stations and on RTS buses, student unions at the UF and SFC, and at various community meetings. Public opinion questionnaires were also provided at critical junctions in the project at public and community meetings, information booths, and on the study website at www.go-enhancerts.com to solicit public comments regarding the initial Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) alternatives, refined BRT alternatives and LPA.

**Table1-1: Study Goals and Objectives.**

| GOALS. | OBJECTIVES. |
|---|---|
| **Goal #1: Improve Mobility and Transit Accessibility in the Study Area.** | 1. Improve travel circulation by connecting major activity centers in the study area.<br>2. Provide an effective connection to existing and future regional transit services.<br>3. Improve transit travel times between existing and future major trip destinations.<br>1. Accommodate variable travel. |
| **Goal #2: Assure Equitable Transportation Options for the Community.** | 1. Provide additional services for the transit-dependent population.<br>2. Provide equitable transportation services and benefits.<br>3. Provide equitable sharing of costs for transportation improvements among those who benefit from them. |
| **Goal #3: Enhance the Quality of the Environment.** | 1. Improve transportation mobility while achieving a balance of environmental preservation and compact development in transit supportive areas.<br>2. Provide a transit alternative to single occupant automobile use that serves the University of Florida, Santa Fe College campuses, downtown and other major activity centers such that mode shares are shifted.<br>3. Minimize encroachment on environmentally sensitive lands and parklands.<br>4. Improve air quality by reducing automobile emissions and pollutants. |
| **Goal #4: Enhance Community Cohesion.** | 1. Support development of a pedestrian environment around stations to increase transit use and promote more walking.<br>2. Serve existing and support future high-density land uses (e.g., mixed-use, residential, commercial, office and institutional use).<br>3. Provide transit investments supportive of City and County redevelopment/development and land use plans. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Goal #5: Develop Transportation Options that are Cost Effective, Promote Private Investment and Financially Viable.** | 1. Identify a strategy for local agencies to fund the estimated local share of capital costs.<br>2. Identify a strategy for local agencies and the private sector to fund estimated operating and maintenance costs.<br>3. Develop transit improvements in the most cost-effective manner.<br>4. Maximize the economic benefits gained from transit capital investments.<br>5. Implement transit improvements in a timely manner. |

Two committees were also formed to help with project fact finding. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) served as the first involvement tier and included key personnel that are involved in daily local transportation management and work tasks. The study's technical committee included representatives from RTS, City of Gainesville and Alachua County Public Works, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and the Parson Brinckerhoff (PB) Team. From study initiation through the drafting of the LPA, the technical committee met five (5) times.

The second participation tier is the Project Advisory Working Group (PAWG). The PAWG provides supplemental input to such project aspects as the ridership modeling methodology. The PAWG included representatives from the UF, SFC, Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization (MTPO), and business/builders/workforce associations. From study initiation through the drafting of the LPA, the PAWG met four (4) times.

Additionally, throughout the planning process, the project management team had 13 individual meetings with City and County Commissioners, two (2) City Commission meetings, two (2) MTPO Board meetings, one (1) MTPO Citizen Advisory Committee meeting and one (1) MTPO Technical Advisory Committee meeting, three (3) public meetings/open house workshops, and one (1) to two (2) meetings each with groups like the Black on Black Crime Task Force, Chamber of Commerce and FloridaWorks.

## 2.0 ANALYSIS.

### 2.1 Overview.

The evaluation framework used in the study consisted of a three-tiered screening process (see Figure 2-1). Tier 1 Pre-Screening phase identified a long list of routing alternatives to be evaluated in the remainder of the study, including verification of the most appropriate premium transit mode. In Tier 2, alternatives were tested using a set of evaluation measures derived from the goals and purpose and need. This screening used geospatial and transportation data in a quantitative analysis to determine each routing alternative's effectiveness in addressing community goals and project need. The end result of the Tier 2 screening was a short list of the most promising Refined Alternatives packaged over the entire study area for evaluation in the Tier 3 screening.

**Figure 2-1: Three-Tiered Screening Process.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Tier 1.** | **Pre-Screening.**<br>• Has it previously bene eliminated?<br>• Is it clearly ill-suited to address the need?<br>• Does it have an obvious fatal Flaw? |
| **Tier 2.** | **Initial-Screening.**<br>• Develop evaluation measures that reflect goals.<br>• Identify available data for screening criteria.<br>• Test routing alternatives using evaluation criteria.<br>• Select "best performing" routing alternatives and combine. |
| **Tier 3.** | **Refined Alternatives Analysis.**<br>• Develop additional more rigorous evaluation measures.<br>• Identify costs, ridership and benefits of alternatives.<br>• Test refined alternatives using additional evaluation criteria.<br>• Recommend preferred alternative to community. |

The Tier 3 screening was a more detailed analysis made possible due to the development of conceptual operations, running-way designs, and station details. At the end of Tier 3, a recommendation was made to the community for a single LPA for the study corridor, defined in terms of mode, type of service, general routing, timing, and logical termini.

**2.2 Tier 1 Screening.**

### 2.2.1 Alignments.

***Subareas.***

The study area was divided into six subareas between SFC on the west and Gainesville Regional Airport on the east. The sub-areas included:

1) Spring Hill/SFC.
2) Oaks Mall.
3) Student Village Area.
4) UF Campus.
5) Downtown Gainesville.
6) East Gainesville.

In each subarea, segments of existing or planned streets where routing options for premium transit service could be developed were identified, based on input from previous studies and current study stakeholders. Operations for these routing alternatives focused on bi-directional transit service. From these street segment options, complete routing options across each of the subareas were identified and evaluated in the Tier 1 screening exercise.

***Results.***

Of the 32 initial routing alternatives, nine were recommended for elimination based upon the Tier 1 screening questions. These alternatives were recommended for elimination because they had been eliminated in previous studies and conditions still precluded their inclusion, were clearly ill-suited to address the transportation need, or had an obvious fatal flaw based on market conditions, traffic operations, or funding feasibility.

### 2.2.2 Modes.

BRT and streetcar were the two premium transit modes considered in the study. BRT was the recommended premium mode identified in the prior RTS 2010 Rapid Transit Feasibility Study.

BRT represents implementation of limited-stop bus service on urban streets with numbers of “rail-like” attributes, including longer span of service and more frequent headways, exclusive bus lanes or transitways (if feasible), extensive intersection priority, stylized vehicles, enhanced stations, off-board fare collection, and real-time passenger information. Streetcar as evaluated would be a rail vehicle operating within a trackway with the same service features and passenger attributes as BRT.

Five criteria were used in comparing BRT to streetcar:

- Cross-section/Right-of-way constraints.
- Routing flexibility.
- Travel time benefits.
- Development potential.
- Capital and operating costs.

Based on the factors described above, BRT was identified as the preferred premium transit mode because streetcar service would be slower due to its single lane, mixed traffic restriction and streetcar capital and operating costs far exceed those of BRT given the length of the corridor.

Enhanced bus service (referred to as the Transportation System Management [TSM] alternative) was also evaluated as a baseline improvement alternative to BRT. Enhanced bus service includes a range of operational modifications designed to enhance efficiency and customer convenience, like new bus routes, express bus improvements during peak periods, longer operating hours or more operating days, amenity additions at bus stops, and new bus and traffic management software systems.

### 2.3 Tier 2 Screening.

#### 2.3.1 Methodology.

The Tier 2 screening evaluated 23 subarea routing alternatives advanced from the Tier 1 screening (Figure 2-2). They were evaluated based upon 22 measures and calculated in terms of length, distance, dollars, quantities or counts.

For each screening measure, the routing alternatives were rated on a scale of Good, Better, and Best, with the “Best” rating representing the most improvement over current conditions and “Good” representing the least improvement. The poorest performers were recommended for elimination from further consideration. The best performing corridor segments were then packaged together into full corridor alternatives across all six subareas. Because of the subjective nature of the rating scale, the evaluation criteria were not weighted or scored numerically apart from a count of the “good,” “better,” and “best” scores for each routing alternative.

#### 2.3.2 Refined Corridor Alternatives.

At the conclusion of the Tier 2 screening, at least two of the highest ranked routing alternatives were preserved across each subarea. This small set of alternatives

subsequently was assembled into two “full-length” alternatives across the study area (Figure 2-3).

Corridor A would extend from Santa Fe Village to the Gainesville Regional Airport, serving SFC, Oaks Mall/North Florida Regional Medical Center, UF, Downtown Gainesville, East Gainesville and the Gainesville Regional Airport. The alternatives would operate along SW 20thAvenue, Hull Road and Mowry Road through the central part of the study area. Based on stakeholder input two routing options were identified: 1) using the new SW 38th Terrace and Hull Road extension to access the UF park-n-ride, and 2) serving Innovation Square via SW 6th Street and SW 4th Avenue.

Corridor B would extend from SFC to the airport. It would follow a more southerly alignment using an extended SW 62nd Blvd serving Butler Plaza, then Archer Road to head east, serving the same areas as Corridor A. Similarly, two routing options were identified: 1) operating south of Archer road using SW 35th Place, and 2) using Windmeadows Drive north of Archer Road west of SW 34th Street.

For both Corridor A and B, optional service to Celebration Pointe was also evaluated, assuming a new overpass of I-75 west of Butler Plaza.

**Figure 2-2: Map Image of Tier 2 Subarea Routing Alternatives.**

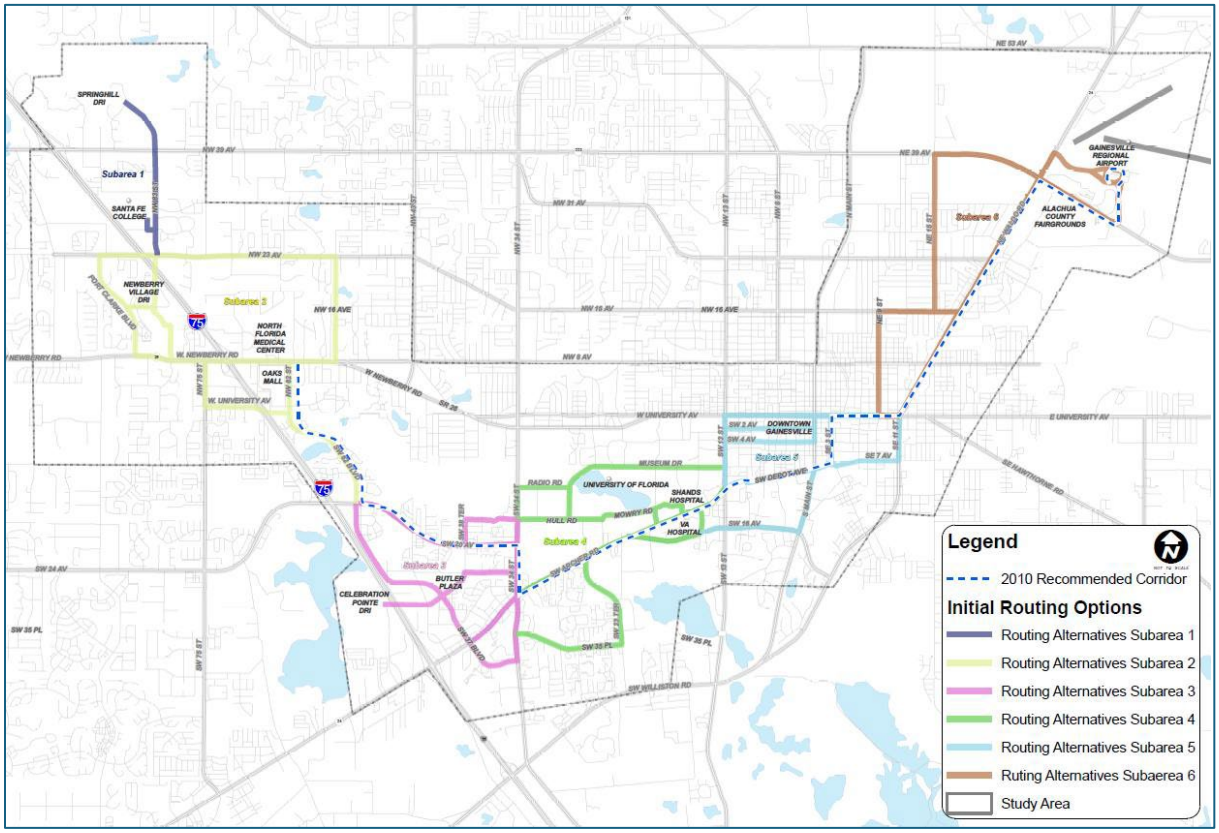
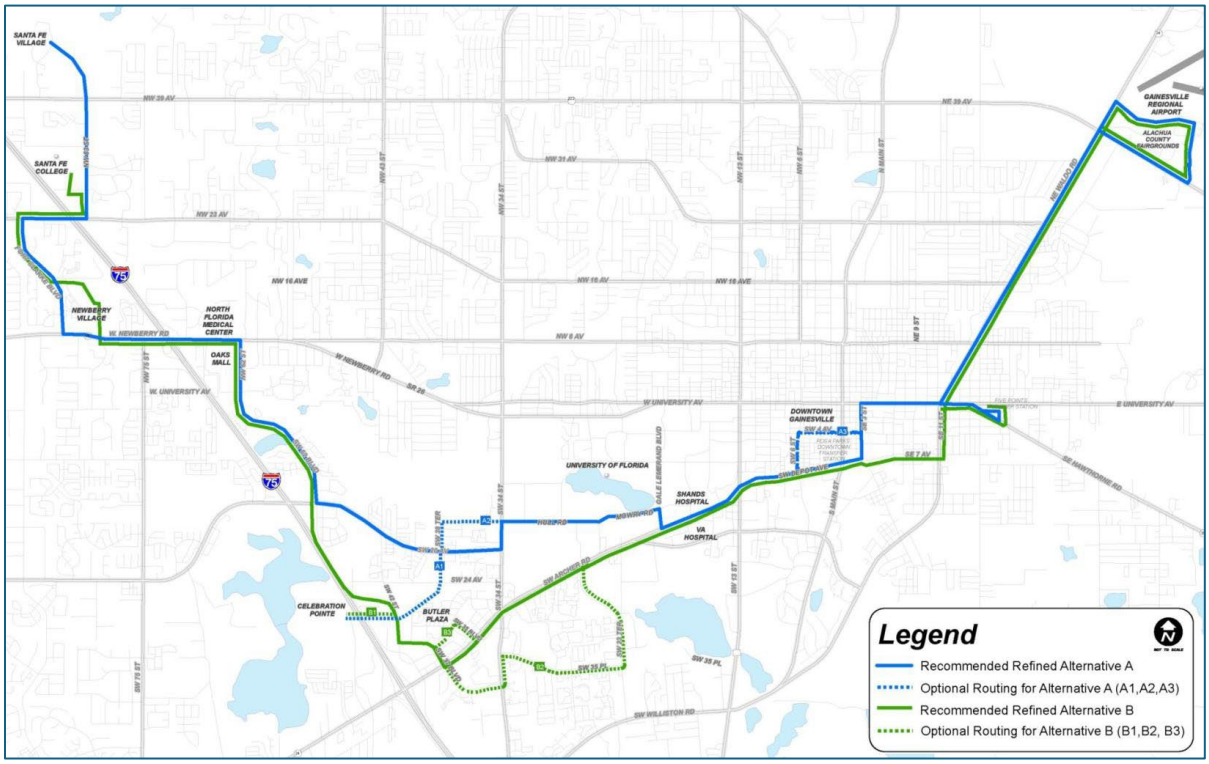


**Figure 2-3: Map Image of Refined Corridor Alternatives.**




## 2.4 Tier 3 Evaluation.

### 2.4.1 Operating Plan.

An operating plan was developed for the TSM and refined Build BRT alternatives for evaluation purposes. For both, new limited stop service in Corridors A and B was assumed (Figure 2-3). Service hours and frequency of service assumptions were as follows:

- Weekdays – 18-hour service (5:30 AM to 11:30 PM).
    - AM and PM periods – 10-minute frequency.
    - Off-peak periods – 15-minute frequency.
- Saturdays – 15-hour service (7 AM to 11 PM).
    - 20-minute service all day.
- Sundays – 12-hour service (8 AM to 8 PM).
    - 30-minute service all day.

### 2.4.2 Transit Priority Analysis.

Transit priority opportunities for the TSM and refined Build alternatives were assessed for both existing and year 2035 conditions. This included the feasibility and location of exclusive bus lanes along roadway segments and transit signal priority (TSP) and queue jump treatments at major intersections (24 in total were analyzed). The analysis identified travel time savings along each corridor which could be achieved by such priority treatments. Exclusive bus lane options evaluated included integration of a median transitway into the proposed SW 62nd Blvd. extension, and curbside Business Access and Transit, or BAT lanes (shared with local driveway and intersection right turn movements) along Newbery Road in front of Oaks Mall and the North Florida Medical Center, and along the south side of Archer Road east of SW 34th Street, including use of the Old Archer Road frontage road. TSP focused on extending the green signal to give priority to bus traffic, while queue jumps involved getting buses around traffic at intersections in a right turn or separate auxiliary lane.

For Corridor A, approximately a 10-minute savings during both the weekday AM and PM peak period by year 2035 could be achieved with identified priority treatments. With Corridor B, the savings would range from 16 minutes in the AM peak to 22.5 minutes in the weekday PM peak. This was due to the greater amount of median transitway and BAT lanes in this alternative.

### 2.4.3 Running Way Plans and Station Types.

Concept plans were developed for the BRT mode for the refined Build alternatives. Layout plans were developed to illustrate basic running-way components to allow for the development of conceptual-level capital cost estimates and an initial screening of environmental impacts. Potential BRT stations along each route alternative were also identified, including planned park-n-ride and transit center locations. The ability of BRT vehicles to circumvent turns at intersections and through existing and planned roundabout locations was also assessed. For Corridor A, four intersections would require geometric modifications, and for corridor B, 13 intersections would require such modifications.

Three station types were created with differing platform lengths and number of bus bays and amenities. These included (ranging from smallest to largest footprint):

- Enhanced stop.
- Designated station (with reduced or full-length shelter canopy).
- Extended station.

All stations would have both BRT and local buses using the platform area. At an enhanced stop, a shorter platform would be provided accommodating up to one 60-foot articulated bus at a time, while the extended stations could accommodate both an articulated bus and a 40-foot standard bus. Extended stations would be oriented to designated park-n-ride and transit center locations, with the greatest degree passenger amenities. At all stations, off-board fare collection would be provided, with real-time passenger information and bike racks limited to the designated and extended stations.

A total of 38 to 42 directional stations for Corridor A and 36 to 37 directional stations for corridor B were identified (pending the alternative). Classification of each station by type was based primarily on the existing weekday ridership at the stop location (and adjacent stops). Four park-n-ride locations (in Newberry Village, Butler Plaza, UF (existing) and at Celebration Pointe) were identified. A new transfer station in east Gainesville in the Five Points area (on Hawthorne Road at SE 11th Avenue) was also identified.

### 2.4.4 Ridership Projections.

Ridership projections for the TSM and refined Build alternatives were developed for the year 2035 weekday period using the MTPO regional model. The model included the travel time savings associated with identified transit priority treatments for the respective alternatives, with the Build alternatives including savings from off-board fare collection (and hence faster boarding times) in addition to travel time savings. The modeling assumed the same limited stop locations and operating characteristics for both the TSM and refined Build alternatives.

#### *TSM.*

The TSM alternative would have an estimated year 2035 weekday ridership range of 2,363 for base Corridor A and 2,030 for base Corridor B. An extension to Celebration Pointe would add about another 365 riders per day. From a systemwide ridership standpoint, the TSM alternative ridership would only be about 1 to 2% higher than the No-Build alternative.

#### *BRT.*

The refined Build alternatives for BRT would have an estimated year 2035 weekday ridership range of 4,967 for base Corridor A and 4,121 for base Corridor B, almost twice the ridership as for the TSM alternative along each route. The Build alternative would yield a system wide ridership increase of 6%.

### 2.4.5 Cost Estimates.

#### *Operating Costs.*

For the TSM and refined Build alternatives annual operating costs were estimated based on corridor length, projected operating speeds, service headway, span of service, and operating days per year. Operating speeds reflected travel time savings from applicable transit priority treatments under assumed existing conditions. The operating cost calculations applied the 2013 hourly rate of $62.98 by RTS for bus service.

Operating costs for the TSM alternatives ranged from 4-point-1 million dollars to 4-point-5 million dollars (Corridor A) to 4-point-9 (Corridor B) million per year (in existing dollars); routing options resulted in minor variations from these figures. Reflecting the lower number of operating hours, Corridor A would require 18 to 20 vehicles for the new service (pending the alternative), while Corridor B would require 21 vehicles (for all alternatives).

For the refined Build alternatives, annual operating costs ranged from 3-point-3 million to 3-point-6 million for Corridor A and 3-point-6 million to 3-point-8 million for Corridor B. Corridor A would require 16 to 18 vehicles, while Corridor B would require 18 to 19 vehicles (pending the alternative). The lower operating costs and number of vehicles with the Build alternatives compared to the TSM alternatives reflected the lower travel time with greater savings from priority treatments and off-board fare collection.

The operating costs were also broken out by three corridor segments: 1) Oaks Mall to Five Points 2) Oaks Mall to SFC or Santa Fe Village and 3) Five Points to the airport. Slightly more than 50% of the cost was associated with the Oaks Mall to Five Points segment.

***Capital Costs.***

Capital costs (in existing dollars) were estimated for the TSM and Build alternatives based on the degree of infrastructure improvements. For the TSM alternatives, capital costs included new 40-foot standard buses, construction of a new Five Points transfer station, and some intersection priority treatments. For the refined Build alternatives, added costs included BAT lane modifications, articulated buses, and enhanced stations. The provision of a median transitway within an extended SW 62nd Blvd. was assumed to be covered by private developer contribution.

The TSM alternatives ranged from 14.7 million dollars for Corridor A to 15.2 million dollars for Corridor B and the refined Build alternatives ranged from 56.7 million dollars for Corridor A and 66 million dollars for Corridor B.

As for operating costs, capital costs were divided into the three corridor segments, with 61% of the TSM costs being in the Oaks Mall to Five Points segment, and 66-70% of the Build costs in that segment.

### 2.4.6 Environmental Screening.

An environmental screening evaluation was conducted to identify at a very high-level potential effects of the corridor alternatives on existing community, cultural, and natural resources. The focus was on identifying fatal flaws using FDOT's Environmental Screening Tool (EST). Eight criteria were evaluated: 1) Neighborhoods and Demographic Characteristics 2) Visual and Aesthetic Conditions 3) Noise and Vibration 4) Historic and Archeological Resources 5) Ecosystems and Habitats 6) Water Quality 7) Parks and Public Lands and 8) Contamination. As expected, since most of the project will be occurring within existing right-of-way, the potential socio-cultural and environmental effects in general for both Corridors A and B are expected to be minimal.

### 2.4.7 Market and Development Potential.

The market and development potential around the station locations associated with the two corridors and their sub-routing options were assessed from both an "attractiveness" and "capacity" standpoint. Attractiveness relates to the location and demographic characteristics that would cause developers to choose one station area over another. Capacity of the station area relates to primarily physical factors such as availability of land and the relative ease of assembling land for development projects.

The attractiveness assessment evaluated six factors: 1) walkability 2) employment density 3) change in educational attainment 4) income level 5) future land use and 6) job access. The capacity analysis addresses five variables: 1) vacant land 2) current development density 3) number of parcels 4) parcel size and 5) presence in a Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) area. Performance was measured on a three-point scale, with low or minimal potential receiving zero points, moderate potential one point, and major potential two points.

None of the stations scored high for either attractiveness or capacity. From an attractiveness standpoint, only one (SE 3rd Street/SE 2nd Avenue) scored as medium potential, the others as low potential. From a capacity standpoint, 31 stations scored as medium potential, and eight as low potential (the highest station was NW 89th Blvd. – Santa Fe Village). When comparing the two overall corridors, Corridor A scored noticeably higher than Corridor B.

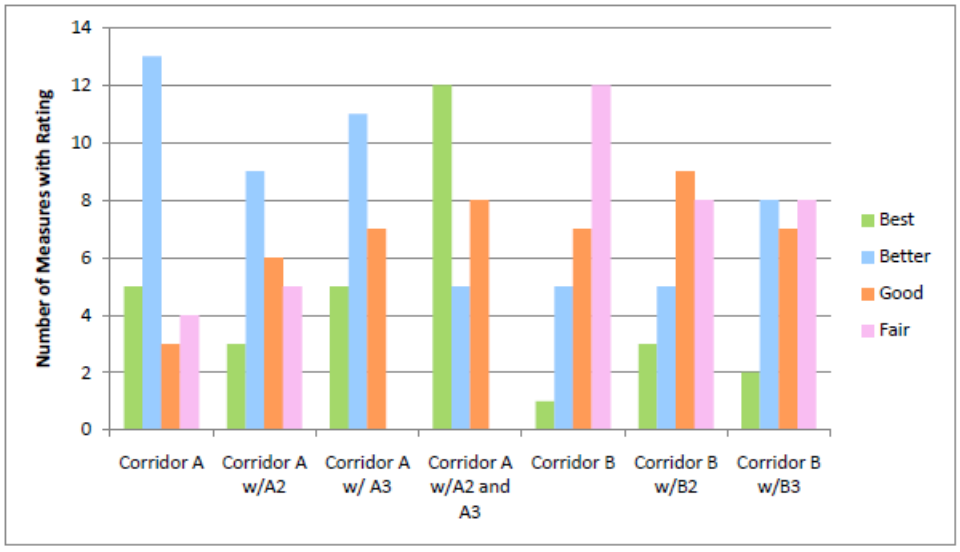
### 2.4.8 Overall Corridor Evaluation.

An overall evaluation of the TSM and refined Build alternatives was undertaken by applying two sets of screening criteria: 1) performance measures related to the goals and objectives established for the study and 2) Federal Transit Administration criteria related to its major capital investment funding program, Section 5309.

***Performance Evaluation Measures.***

Twenty-one (21) performance measures were applied in evaluating Corridors A and B and their routing options, including measures like number of persons without access to a vehicle served and ratio of proposed operating cost to current RTS operating budget. For each alternative, each measure was given a "fair", "good", "better" or "best" rating, based on how it performed relative to the mean. With all measures considered, as shown in Figure 2-4, Corridor A with both the SW 38th Terrace and SW 6th Street (Innovation Square) routing options had the greatest number of "best" and "better" ratings. The Corridor A Build alternative performed slightly higher than the TSM alternative in that corridor.

**Figure 2-4: Tier 3 Performance Evaluation Measures.**



***FTA Evaluation Criteria.***

Given that the primary potential source of capital funding for a premium transit improvement in Gainesville is the FTA Section 5309 program, the Build alternatives were evaluated against the Small Starts Project Justification criteria identified in the new MAP-21 federal transportation reauthorization (Small Starts projects cannot exceed $250 million, and not exceed $75 million federal share). For comparison purposes, the TSM alternatives were also rated against the same measures, though, they would not be eligible for funding through this program. Six Project Justification Criteria were evaluated: 1) Mobility Improvements 2) Cost-effectiveness 3) Environmental Benefits 4) Economic Development 5) Land Use and 6) Congestion Relief. FTA identifies a five-scale rating – "High", "Medium-High", "Medium", "Medium-Low" and "Low" – for these criteria. An evaluation of these six criteria revealed an overall "Medium" rating for both the TSM and Build alternatives in Corridors A and B. It should be noted that recent experience has shown that to be competitive, a project justification for Small Starts should be at least "Medium-High".

The Project Justification rating only comprises half of a complete FTA project rating for Small Starts – the other half being Financial Commitment. Three criteria comprise the Financial Commitment: 1) Current Financial Capital and Operating Condition 2) Commitment of Capital and Operating Funds and 3) Reasonableness of Financial Plan. The same five-scale rating as for Project Justification is to be applied. In the case of Gainesville, as there is no current financial commitment for a premium transit investment in the identified corridor, this evaluation was not conducted.

**2.4.9 Potential Funding Sources.**

An assessment of potential federal, state and local (public and private) funding and financing vehicles which could be used to implement a premium transit investment in Gainesville was conducted. Federal sources include both formula grants and discretionary grants (including Section 5309 Small Starts and new TIGER infrastructure grants). State capital funding sources focus on Florida's State Transportation Trust Fund, which includes the New Starts Transit Program, Public Transit Block Program, Transit Corridor Program, and Service Development Program. Potential local funding sources include special assessments on property within or close to a corridor, joint development, naming rights and private contributions.

In addition to prospective funding programs, there are project financing vehicles including loan programs and bonds to fund transit capital improvements. Federal financing programs available include the TIFIA Credit Assistance Program, Grant Anticipation Notes, and Tax-Exempt Bonds. At the local level, tax-increment financing is a potential financing tool.

To fund the operating costs associated with a new premium transit investment in Gainesville, existing sources that fund current RTS operations could be applied, such as FTA's Urbanized Area Formula Program and State Public Transit Block Grant funds but this would have to correspond with a reduction in these services to cover the new costs. Local funding sources include passenger fares, advertising and pass program revenues, city gas tax proceeds and general fund contributions. If a new transportation surtax were approved for the Gainesville area that could serve as another source of revenue.

**3.0 Locally Preferred Alternative.**

Based on the detailed evaluation of alternatives, a draft recommended "Locally Preferred Alternative" was identified. In particular, implementation of the TSM alternative in Corridor A is recommended, with service along SW 38th Terrace. The service levels would be similar to those of BRT, but with transit infrastructure improvements just focused on transit signal priority improvements at intersections and construction of the Five Points Transfer Station. There are three primary reasons for this recommendation: 1) the Build alternative would come at a much higher cost but not have a major impact on system ridership 2) the local performance measure assessment revealed Corridor A to be rated higher and 3) with only a "Medium" rating against the FTA Project Justification criteria, a Build alternative is not seen to be strongly competitive for federal funding.

Relative to the No-Build alternative, the TSM alternative would achieve higher systemwide ridership increases, and would establish the area's first continuous high frequency transit corridor linking key community focal points like East Gainesville, Downtown Gainesville, UF/Shands/VA Hospital, and Oaks Mall/North Florida Regional Medical Center. The operating costs for the new service could be partially offset by reductions in existing, overlapping RTS service in the corridor. Importantly, the TSM reflects expressed preference for minimal transit infrastructure level of investment at public outreach events.

Figure 3 illustrates the components of the recommended alternative. A two-phase implementation plan has been identified: 1) Phase 1 – Oaks Mall to Five Points and 2) Phase 2 – Oaks Mall to Santa Fe Village. Phase 3 – Five Points to the Airport will be reevaluated at a later date as the County Fairgrounds redevelops and/or other employment growth around the airport occurs to serve as a trigger.

Phase 1 service from Oaks Mall to Five Points (Figure 3-1) would open in 2018, with Phase 2 operational by 2020.For both phases, capital costs would total around 14-point-5 million and operating costs around 33-point-5 million through 2025.

**Figure 3-1: Map Image of Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative - TSM.**