



## Florida Department of Transportation Research

### An Assessment of Public Transportation Markets Using NHTS Data

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In 2007, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) assessed public transit markets in a national study published as *A Profile of Public Transportation Passenger Demographics and Travel Characteristics Reported in On-Board Surveys*. The APTA study was based on data collected from 2000 to 2005 through on-board surveys of over 400,000 people on over 150 transit systems. This valuable study gave an in-depth view of the behavior and characteristics of transit users.

Every few years FHWA conducts a major survey called the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS). The NHTS 2009 was based on surveys from more than 150,000 households and examined travel behavior across all travel modes, correlated with a wide variety of traveler characteristics. Thus, the NHTS 2009 placed transit markets in the broader context of all travel activities and adds to APTA much valuable information about transit use for planning boards and civic officials. To develop this information, FDOT contracted with researchers from the University of South Florida to assess the NHTS 2009 data in terms of public transit.

The researchers used the NHTS 2009 data to study both Florida and U.S. transit markets. For the purposes of the study, a transit market was defined as a segment of transit users defined by a specific characteristic measured in the NHTS 2009. Eight markets were defined by trip purpose, driver status, immigration status, existence of medical conditions that make travel difficult, household income, vehicle availability, race and ethnicity, and monthly frequency of transit use. Each of these markets was further analyzed according to the five properties: market size, modal share, attitudes about a range of transportation issues, socio-demographics, and trip characteristics.

The report's tabulations contain a great deal of information, but a few observations from the report will serve as examples of its potential. Florida's reliance on public transit is about one-



*The National Household Travel Survey places transit use in a wider context of travel behavior and offers a detailed view of transit use.*

half of that of the U.S. Transit's mode share in Florida is 1.00 percent vs. 1.92 percent in the U.S. as a whole. The amount of service provided certainly plays a role in the mode share; in 2009, per capita vehicle revenue miles for all fixed-route services in Florida were about 70 percent of the national rate. Floridians are about 87 percent as likely as the average U.S. resident to walk for daily travel.

The study makes possible a detailed examination of transit users in Florida. It is also possible to compare Florida data to national data. This study should be valuable to policy makers and agencies concerned with current use and future trends in public transit use.