



## Florida Department of Transportation Research

Project UCARE: Uniform Cost Accounting and Reporting Elements  
for Transportation Demand Management Programs  
BD85 977-22

The federal transportation reauthorization called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21) creates a program that addresses many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, reducing project delivery delays, and reducing traffic congestion. Regarding the reduction of traffic congestion, the law charges USDOT to establish metrics by which to evaluate performance toward achieving transportation demand management (TDM) goals. However, the TDM industry lacks performance measures and standard data collection procedures to assess the effectiveness of service delivery. The industry also lacks a consistent method for calculating a wide range of societal benefits resulting from managing transportation demand. Consequently, without consistent methods to measure performance and to calculate benefits, it is not possible for the TDM community to demonstrate progress in reducing congestion so as to be considered for local, state or federal funding.

Recently, researchers at the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida sought to develop an accurate and sustainable online survey reporting system to record data about commuter needs and preferences in order to measure the results of TDM programs. This information can be used to identify ways to improve TDM programs and to aid in prioritizing program elements for funding.

One of their challenges was to design a system to address TDM programs at different scales (e.g., employer to regional) and small budgets. Another was to foster voluntary use of the survey, as the TDM programs are not supported by the mandates as are other modes, such as the National Transit Database for public transportation entities receiving federal funds.



*Passengers board a Regional Transit System (RTS) bus in Gainesville, Florida.*

Researchers conducted a literature review and surveyed TDM professionals to identify the key outputs and outcomes used today by commuter assistance programs (CAP). They also conducted a pilot test of the data collection instrument used in another research project to collect data from over 1,500 commuters from six Florida regional commuter assistance programs. The survey was administered as a mixed mode methodology to minimize data collection costs. Results of the CAP evaluation allowed researchers to use the data from the survey as inputs into the standardized societal benefit estimation procedures contained in FDOT's Trip Reduction Impacts of Mobility Management Strategies (TRIMMS) model. The final survey instrument, called UCARE.TRIMMS, is an easy-to-use voluntary reporting system that is available online to encourage participation.

The information obtained from the survey will allow commuter assistance programs to deliver ever-improving value to customers. Having a better understanding of customer needs and a better way to measure program performance allows commuter assistance programs to know how to improve commuter assistance programs while helping to reduce congestion, decrease emissions, improve mobility, and lower cost per customer served.