9. Study Recommendations

BCT as a system performs above its peers in both productivity and efficiency; however, there are areas where BCT can improve as shown throughout this study. This section summarizes these areas and recommends improvements.

9.1 Improve On-Time Performance

As discussed in Section 3, BCT systemwide On-Time performance (OTP) is approximately 60 percent – meaning that 40 percent of the time, buses are departing from timepoints either before the scheduled time or more than 5 minutes late. This level of OTP leads to a poor perception of reliability for BCT customers. Poor OTP may be caused by operator behavior, traffic or other on-street conditions, or inadequate scheduling for the running environment. The following are key areas to address and resolve OTP issues:

Increase Road Supervision: BCT has relatively few on-street supervisors, which may contribute to the low reliability. While the 2009 ridecheck as well as BCT APC data reported the level of OTP at around 60 percent, BCT on-street supervisors reported a much higher rate of OTP, suggesting that on-time departures improve significantly when supervisors are present. Experience with systems across the country as well as BCT has shown that having a supervisor on site can increase OTP by 20 percent or more.

Address Operator Behavior. Operator behavior should be addressed first when tackling schedule adherence issues, through a mix of improved supervision and improved training practices. This removes the "randomness factor" seen throughout the BCT system, with a mix of early and late departures. Once operators deliver consistent service, it is possible to see where issues with traffic congestion or scheduling cause OTP issues.

Implement an AVL System. BCT plans to implement an Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL) system within the year, which enables supervisors and dispatchers to view the exact locations of vehicles on the street. This makes it possible to address bus bunching and view other sources of consistent delay. This real-time application should be used as a management tool in addition to a reporting tool.

Implement Transit Priority Measures. Traffic conditions can have a substantial effect on system reliability, especially during peak periods. Transit priority measures such as signal priority, queue jumps, bus bulbs, bypass lanes, etc. may improve schedule adherence significantly, although some may be costly to implement. These improvements are especially important when implementing high-quality Rapid Bus service.

Adjust Schedules. Some schedules may be out of sync with conditions on the street, leading to consistent late or early arrivals. High amounts of early departures, as seen on some BCT routes, may point to excessive running time in schedules, or operators leaving early in order to compensate for delays further down the route. Scheduling issues are much more apparent once operators are beginning their trips consistently on time.

Recommendations to improve OTP include:

- Address operator behavior which contributes to poor schedule adherence.
  - Provide for additional supervision on-street, at major terminals and transfer locations, and at bus garages to ensure operators are following schedules.
  - Implement operator "in-service" meetings monthly to go over performance, safety, and training issues.
- Implement an AVL system to track bus progress and determine where issues arise.
- Determine where traffic conditions during certain times of day contribute to poor schedule adherence.
  - Possible priority measures such as transit signal priority, queue jumps, bus bulbs, etc. help maintain schedules.
- Determine where bus schedules are not adequate to the running environment (excessive late or early arrivals, etc.) and adjust accordingly.

9.2 Customer Service

Customer service on the part of BCT operators is of key importance, since the operator is the front line of contact between the BCT system and the customer. One of the common themes expressed in internal, external, and public stakeholder meetings was the issue of bus operators improving their level of customer service to provide a more pleasant travel environment. While these comments were not directed towards every operator, there was a general trend in wishing for improved operator courtesy.

Institute Recurring Customer Service Training. BCT should strongly consider instituting a recurring or refresher customer service training for operators and all front-line customer service staff on an annual basis. Such training should optimally serve as both refresher/update purposes as well as for corrective action for those staff who receive complaints past a predetermined number by BCT.

Adhere to SUNsational Service. Improved training will help to address customer service as well as OTP. In 1999, Broward County Government trademarked the term "SUNsational Service," a customer service initiative jointly undertaken by Broward County Government and the hospitality industry. The joint partnership focused on setting "10 Standards of Customer Service Excellence" for all employees, both in county government and the hospitality industry--namely the Greater Fort Lauderdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, hotels, restaurants and taxi cab drivers. In an effort to improve overall customer service, BCT should revisit this program and consider implementing a similar policy or enforcing the current SUNsational policy with the aim at improving operator behavior with regards to customer service. This is a nationally renowned program for customer service and such a type of program is imperative in a tourist-friendly locale such as Broward County.

Address Operator Needs. Operators are more likely to deliver improved service to passengers when they feel that their needs are being met within the agency. As discussed within Section 8, internal meetings with operators showed that they often feel that their comments or suggestions for improvement are not heard or addressed adequately. They also felt concerned for personal safety when enforcing certain policies, such as

fare collection. Training sessions are a good opportunity to allow operators to address their concerns, and create a plan to follow up with improvements.

Recommendations to improve customer service include:

- Monthly to bi-monthly training sessions involving customer service, fare policy, safety, and operations. Training specialists identify what customer service issues training can address.
- Institute annual recurring customer service training.
- Adhere to the SUNsational Customer Service Program
  - The Customer Service Policy should ensure that a defined, consistent customer service message exists for the entire agency.
  - Management provides full support (tools, resources, and budget) to implement and sustain the customer service program.
  - Management issues the directive to develop a comprehensive customer service plan.
- Create a forum (during training sessions, or other venues) where operators can bring up their concerns with supervisory staff, and collaboratively develop a plan for improvement.

9.3 Fare Policy Recommendations

Despite the recent October 2009 fare increase, it is strongly recommended that BCT enact additional changes to fares, as were described in the Early Action Plan. Details regarding the proposed fare policy recommendations and their multipliers are included in Appendix F.

The current fare structure offers multi-ride passes at a substantial discount over the system base fare, while current fare policy practices are susceptible to misuse by customers. Through the combination of these factors, BCT is missing out on over $700,000 per year in revenue.

31-Day College Pass. Implemented in 2008, the 31-Day College Pass was meant to provide currently-enrolled students with specific college-travel needs a discounted pass. However, pass usage figures have shown a distinct increase in College Pass sales combined with a commensurate decrease in 31-Day Adult Pass sales. This indicates a level of improper usage of the 31-Day College Pass, which is sold at $26.00, or half the price of a standard 31-Day Pass. It is recommended that the College 31-Day pass price be increased to $40.00 per month; this will still provide students a discount over the standard 31-Day Pass, while reducing the incentive for customers to fraudulently obtain and use 31-Day College passes.

Day Pass. The Day Pass ($3.00) currently offers a substantial discount over the standard fare based upon the number of times customers actually use bus services. Customers use the pass for an average of 3.8 rides with the Day Pass, for an average price per trip of $0.80. The recommended fare for the Day Pass is $4.00.

Courtesy Day Pass. It is recommended that BCT eliminate use of the Courtesy Day Pass due a relatively high rate of operators distributing them to customers. This practice reduces potential revenue for BCT and possibly contributes to poor passenger behavior by encouraging people to attempt boarding without paying the fare. Knowing that an operator is likely to give them a Free Courtesy Day pass if one claims they are unable to pay at the moment, this program is susceptible to fraud.

7-Day Pass. Changes to the prices for the 7-Day pass are also recommended. The October 2009 fare is $13.00, an increase of $1.00 over the previous fare. This pass is utilized 19.9 times per sale and is currently priced at 8.7 uses per sale, resulting in a 57 percent discount for customers. The recommended price for this pass is $14.25. While this price still offers a 52 percent discount over the one-way fare for customers, it is a marked reduction in discount.

10-Ride Bus Pass. Likewise, the 10-Ride Bus Pass is currently $13.00 and is priced at $1.30 per use, offering a 13 percent discount. It is recommended this pass be increased to $14.25 resulting in a fare of $1.43 per use (a discount of 5 percent.)

Two-Year Fare Model. In addition to developing recommendations on top of the recent October 2009 fare increase, a two-year fare increase was also developed. This increase is based upon the recommended fares. The two-year fares were developed based upon the peer review as well as an in depth review of discounts and actual pass usage.

Table 9.1 shows existing, recommended, and two-year recommended fares.

Table 9.1 – Fare Recommendations

Fare	October 2009 Fare	Recommended Fare	FY 2012 Fare
Cash-adult	$1.50	$1.50	$2.00
Cash-discount	$0.75	$0.75	$1.00
Daypass-adult	$3.50	**$4.00**	$5.00
Daypass-discount	$2.50	**$3.00**	$3.50
7-day pass	$13.00	**$14.25**	$16.25
10-Ride Bus Pass	$13.00	**$14.25**	$18.00
31-day pass - adult	$52.00	$52.00	$58.00
31-day pass - discount	$26.00	$26.00	$29.00
31-day pass - college	$26.00	**$40.00**	$45.00

9.4 Transportation Policy Recommendations

Transportation policy is entwined within the larger goals of regional mobility and sustainability, and relates to land use planning, urban design strategies, and regional development. It is important for BCT to engage in policy development with the Broward MPO, as well as related transportation agencies Miami-Dade Transit (MDT), Palm Tran, South Florida Regional Transportation authority (SFRTA), and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). Broward County is uniquely situated in the middle of the South Florida region, and can take a more active role in regional coordination and shaping the development of the overall transit network.

Coordination with Land Use Planning. BCT and the Broward MPO have made strides in coordination with the municipalities, enabling the development of Future Land Use designations with Mixed Use character: Transit Oriented Development (TOD), Transit Oriented Corridor (TOC), Regional Activity Center (RAC), Local Activity Center (LAC), and Mixed Use Residential (MUR), and Broward MPO LRTP's Mobility Hubs concept. The overall goal of these planning concepts is to direct growth into areas well-suited to a strong transit network, cohesively coordinating urban design and improved transit service. Having a coordinated land use planning strategy is imperative in implementing enhanced transit service such as Rapid Bus, BRT, or LRT.

As sustainable mobility options such as transit, biking, and walking become more prevalent travel modes, areas with relatively high population densities are the most likely area where sustainable travel may be utilized for all trips, every day. Key characteristics of densely developed area include medium to high residential densities, concentrated employment, major retail and entertainment destinations, and strong corridor-based development. BCT should actively work with the various county and city planning departments to develop the necessary Smart Growth initiatives that help increase transit use. Efforts should focus on transit-emphasized corridors to achieve a sustainable mobility future.

Coordination with Transit Agencies. While the system of County-based South Florida government makes it difficult to effectively coordinate transportation policy, South Florida is effectively one larger region connected by a transportation network. Roads and highways make it relatively easy to travel throughout the region via car, while transit customers must transfer to different transit systems and pay different fares when traveling between counties. BCT, MDT, Palm Tran, SFRTA, and FDOT should create a coordinated plan to address challenges to South Florida transit. The plan should address coordinating fares, creating easy transitions between services, and improving longer-distance commuter services.

The coordinated plan should also balance the importance of bus transit for a consistent network of services, with the investment in rail to provide high-capacity longer-distance transportation. While rail transit provides high-quality service, it is vastly more expensive than bus transit and only suited to very high-volume corridors. The proposed FEC corridor, which connects major downtown areas with more density and key destinations than Tri-Rail, has the potential to be a driving force in regional transportation. Locally, improvements to bus service (such as the Rapid Bus network proposed in this plan) will provide much-needed mobility enhancements to a wide variety of customers, for substantially less cost than implementing a single rail line. Investments in bus service can be seen as "building blocks" which may lead to additional enhancements in future, if the market demands.

BCT Takes the Lead. With the investments and improvements recommended within this COA, as well as its geographical location in the heart of the South Florida region, BCT will be in a position to have a strong voice in transportation policy decisions. The COA intends to move BCT from a system providing quality, productive local bus transportation, to a system providing enhanced services, attracting a larger market share, engaging in land use planning decisions, and taking an active role in sustainable regional mobility.

Recommendations to lead transportation policy include:

- Continue to work with all existing and potential stakeholders and the public to identify and secure new dedicated transit revenue sources in order to implement the COA-recommended PSP.
- Effective interaction with regional transportation agencies to develop a coordinated plan, easing transitions between providers and balancing bus and rail investment.
- Continued interaction with the Broward County Planning Council, Broward County Environmental Protection and Growth Management Department, Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), and the municipalities on transit-supportive land use and transportation planning.