GIS for the Transit Rider (101)

Planning your next trip aboard a Palm Tran bus just got easier. Geographic Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS) technology are quickly becoming the preferred means for individual service planning. Already available to Palm Tran's Communication and Dispatch Center, Palm Tran Supervisors monitor buses and operators on a real-time display screen depicting the street network, actual bus locations, and other pertinent information. Similar information is now available to Palm Tran Riders on their desktops, laptops, or data plan equipped smart phones. Google Transit and InfoPoint (from Avail Technologies) are two new on-line service products now available to commuters. Since both products are new, improvements are envisioned as we become more familiar with these products.

A typical first time Rider, unsure about how to get from here to there, need only have access to Google Maps http://maps.google.com (for desktops and laptops) or http://m.google.com/maps (for data plan equipped smart phones) to retrieve schedule and bus stop information. Palm Tran joins a growing cadre of transit systems using Google Transit, in Florida and across the County.   Anyone can plan a trip using Google Transit, for example from Miami International Airport, to the Palm Beach County Courthouse using multiple modes of travel (walking, bus, train, bike, and automobile). This service calculates the route, transit time, cost and compares alternate trip methods.

What about real time information about where my bus is and when it will be here? InfoPoint provides all this and more (http://www.pbcgov.org/infopoint). It is designed for those who know their schedule and bus stop but often want to know more. Is it on time? When is my bus arriving? When is the next bus departing? Anyone connected to the web can see real-time information; for example what the bus number is and what the estimated departure is on the Route 40 trip from the Mall at Wellington Green to the West Palm Beach Intermodal Transit Center, or Downtown West Palm Beach.

The Riders who have access to the web are now empowered with both schedule and real-time information. More than just static unchanging schedule information, the Rider with real-time access will be able to reduce waiting time, feel safer, enjoy quicker inquires, responses, improved efficiencies and reliability. In two words—OVERALL SATISFACTION. Palm Tran is using GIS technologies to better serve your ever changing needs. Stay tuned for further trip planning and customer improvements at Palm Tran.