



January 11, 2016

Ms. Therese W. McMillan, Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
East Building
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. McMillan,

On behalf of the Tampa Bay Beaches Chamber of Commerce membership, we urge you to approve the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's (PSTA's) request to enter Small Starts Project Development for the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project.

The proposed BRT line is expected to complement local service by supplying limited, expedited stops along Central Avenue from downtown St. Petersburg to the beaches. The aim of the Central Avenue BRT project is to serve several major employers and destinations, such as downtown St. Petersburg's medical center, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, museums and special events downtown and at the beaches.

There approximately 25,000 jobs within a half-mile of the bus stop corridor and 48,000 people residing within that area, according to the PSTA. In addition, 15 million visitors come to Pinellas County each year and 94,000 are employed in the tourism industry in Pinellas County; 25 percent of those visitors are international and a significant amount are millennials, both of whom expect alternative transportation to cars. Central Avenue is the busiest transit corridor in the entire Tampa Bay region and we urge you to support PSTA's request and look forward to the implementation of the BRT.

Regards,

Robin Sollie, IOM
CEO / President