



February 12, 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 Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I am writing to encourage you to approve the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA) request to enter Small Starts Project Development for the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Project. The proposed project is along one of the county's busiest transit corridors and would be a tremendous boost to our economy, industry and quality of life.

The Pinellas MPO first identified the Central Avenue corridor for premium transit in its Major Investment Study, completed in 2000. Numerous plans developed over years, including the Pinellas Mobility Initiative, the Countywide BRT Plan, the Central Avenue Corridor Alternatives Analysis, the Pinellas Alternatives Analysis, and the 2013 Community Bus Plan have reconfirmed the need for premium transit in the corridor and identified BRT as the preferred type of premium transit service. BRT service along the Central Avenue corridor is identified as cost feasible in the adopted Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and is on the priority transportation project list for the Tampa Bay urbanized area.

For many years now, our county has struggled to meet the demands for improved transit service. Being able to bring this BRT project to fruition would be an integral step toward improving our region's transit service, as well as providing attractive and viable transportation options for residents, employees, and visitors. The Pinellas MPO strongly supports this project and has amended it into both the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and the LRTP Cost Feasible Plan to facilitate its implementation.

We are proud to be partners with PSTA on this project and look forward to the implementation of this long planned project.

Sincerely,

Jim Kennedy, Chairman
Pinellas County
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Cc: Dr Yvette Taylor, Federal Transit Administration, Region IV
PSTA Board of Directors