



Peter O. Knight Airport
Plant City Airport
Tampa Executive Airport

March 15, 2018

Hillsborough County
Aviation Authority
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The Honorable Gus Bilirakis
House of Representatives
2112 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Bilirakis:

As CEO of Tampa International Airport, I encourage you to fully fund the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program. The Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in St. Petersburg, Florida is the Tampa Bay Region's **first-ever** CIG eligible project and we are hopeful that it will receive federal funding through the program in FY 2019.

The Central Avenue BRT will provide a fast, efficient and much-needed transit alternative between Pinellas County's award-winning beaches and downtown St. Petersburg along a corridor heavily used by both workers and millions of tourists where there is no room to expand roads. It will connect economically disadvantaged communities to booming job markets in St. Petersburg and along the gulf beaches

The Small Starts project has bipartisan support from state, regional and local leaders, with financial commitments from the Florida Department of Transportation, City of St. Petersburg and PSTA, and it has been recognized as an essential priority project by the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority (TBARTA)

It Received a MEDIUM-HIGH rating in the FY19 CIG Report released in February 2018, with the financial commitment from the City of St. Petersburg contributing to the HIGH financial rating I ask that you to support this important grant program and help our region reach a transportation milestone that has been decades in the making. With its efficient design and unprecedentedly broad support from the community, governmental agencies, and elected officials, **the Central Avenue Bus Rapid Transit project can become an FTA showcase for lean, successful, modern transit.**

Sincerely,

Joe Lopano
Chief Executive Officer
Tampa International Airport