



May 2, 2022

Amy Volz
Low-No Program Manager
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Ms. Volz:

On behalf of the City of Fort Pierce, this letter is written in support of the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners' application for a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant.

Area Regional Transit (ART) is the county's rapidly growing public transportation system, providing services to a population of 320,000 over 572 square miles, which includes the cities of Port St. Lucie, Fort Pierce, and affords regional connectivity to Martin and Indian River counties. ART operates eight bus routes, one micro-transit zone and door-to-door services for the transportation disadvantaged.

ART provides 3,000 daily trips and has experienced a ridership increase over 200% since 2017. ART has been recognized for innovative service practices in the National Academies of Science, Medicine and Engineering, the National Association of Counties, and the Florida Public Transportation Association.

ART has a growing fleet size with over sixty vehicles, ranging from forty-foot city buses to small, neighborhood friendly caravans. Currently, all major repairs and fueling is subcontracted out to third-party vendors. Due to the increasing size and complexity, subcontracting is no longer efficient. The fleet is not prioritized at local mechanic shops, the costs for spare vehicles, towing and key personnel to transport the buses is not cost effective or efficient.

St. Lucie County, through its Long-Range Transportation Plan and Transit Development Plans, has identified that transit operations should consolidate the currently outsourced fueling, maintenance and administrative activities at a centralized location. This will improve system operating efficiencies, cost, and reliability. A Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility will position the county for future success with providing access to opportunities for residents and optimizing the operations.

A Transit Operations and Maintenance Center will allow public transportation programs in St. Lucie County to evolve from basic rural-suburban transit services to a comprehensive, modern public transportation system. St. Lucie County currently owns the land to be used for the facility, the project has received a categorical exclusion from NEPA, and has just under half of the total cost of the project ready to go. Construction of the facility can begin very quickly and offer nearly immediate benefits to ART and transit riders for years to come.

We strongly support St. Lucie County's application for the construction of a Transit Operations and Maintenance Facility to better serve the citizens of our region.

Sincerely,

Linda Hudson,
Mayor