

June 9, 2020

Dear Tampa Bay Area Transit Operators:

We sincerely appreciate your participation on the Technical Advisory Group/Transit Management Committee (TAG/TMC) for TBARTA's *Envision 2030* Regional Transit Development Plan (RTDP) and the additional feedback and discussion in recent weeks regarding the draft plan published in early March.

TBARTA's vision is a world-class regional transit system that connects and moves the Tampa Bay region. To achieve this, we are charged with planning, developing, funding, implementing, and operating a regional system that will connect Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, and Pinellas counties. Consistent with enabling legislation, TBARTA must prepare an RTDP and submit it to the Florida Legislature by July 1, 2020.

The first of its kind in the Tampa Bay area, *Envision 2030* was developed based on extensive direction from the TBARTA Board (via a workshop, one-on-one meetings, and presentations), guidance from the TBARTA TAG/TMC and the TBARTA Citizens Advisory Committee, and extensive engagement with citizens, stakeholders, and local partners throughout the region.

Since the draft *Envision 2030* plan was published in early March, we have heard concerns from many local partners in the Tampa Bay region. This letter responds to these concerns from a high-level perspective and communicates how we are addressing them in the final *Envision 2030* plan that will be presented to the TBARTA Board for adoption:

- TBARTA's top two priorities are (1) increasing total transit funding that comes to the Tampa Bay region in support of improved and expanded regional and local transit services and (2) building region-wide consensus regarding how TBARTA can best support incremental progress toward the regional transit vision.
- Scenarios and concepts for advancing the regional transit vision are documented in *Envision 2030* based on best practices applied throughout the US, including Atlanta, Minneapolis, Phoenix, San Diego, Seattle, and South Florida, among others. Historically, these regions have demonstrated greater success than the Tampa Bay area in securing Federal funding for major transit projects.
- *Envision 2030* illustrates an unconstrained regional transit vision network, summarizes three investment scenarios for the next 10 years (one cost-feasible and two unfunded), and outlines potential actions for the TBARTA Board to consider in collaboration with local partners. **None of these actions will move forward without significant further discussion and consensus with the local transit operators in the Tampa Bay region.**
- In response to comments and concerns from our local partners, *Envision 2030* is being revised to more clearly reflect the desire of the TBARTA Board to collaborate with local partners on the best approach for TBARTA to fulfill its mission in a manner that makes this a "win-win" opportunity for regional and local transit priorities. The final *Envision 2030* plan to be presented to the TBARTA Board for adoption includes the following notable changes that directly address the concerns of our local partners:

- Removal of the assumption that TBARTA will take on operations of any existing regional services unless mutually agreed-upon with the local operator. The 10-year plan will include costs for improving the highest-priority existing regional routes, funds for which TBARTA would then provide to the local operating agency if available in the future.
- Removal of the assumption to redirect any State grant funds to support TBARTA's operation of existing regional routes or reallocate any percentage of the population portion of regional Block Grant funds to TBARTA. Any such changes will require significant further discussion and consensus with the local transit operators
- Inclusion of only existing revenue sources in the 10-year financial plan. All costs for regional transit improvements identified in both the Low-Impact and High-Impact scenarios are shown as unfunded.
- At its June 22, 2020, meeting, the TBARTA Board will be asked to adopt the *Envision 2030* RTDP. TBARTA staff are requesting the following:
  - Adoption of the unfunded Regional Transit Vision
  - Adoption of the Status Quo Scenario (funded with existing revenue sources)
  - Support for continued evaluation of potential actions for the TBARTA Board to consider in collaboration with local partners

The benefits of a regional transit approach are undeniable—providing more mobility options, increasing regional access to jobs, attracting more business and talent, stimulating economic development, and enhancing life experiences of citizens and visitors. I am committed to working diligently with each of you to communicate this message in the coming months and years.

Thanks again for your participation in the *Envision 2030* planning process. We look forward to working with each of you to make the regional transit vision become a reality.

Sincerely,



David Green  
Executive Director

cc: Carolyn House Stewart, Hillsborough Area Regional Transit  
Bill Steele, Manatee County Area Transit  
Kurt Scheible, Pasco County Public Transportation  
Brad Miller, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority  
Jannina Stampfli, THEBus