SunRunner Bus Rapid Transit

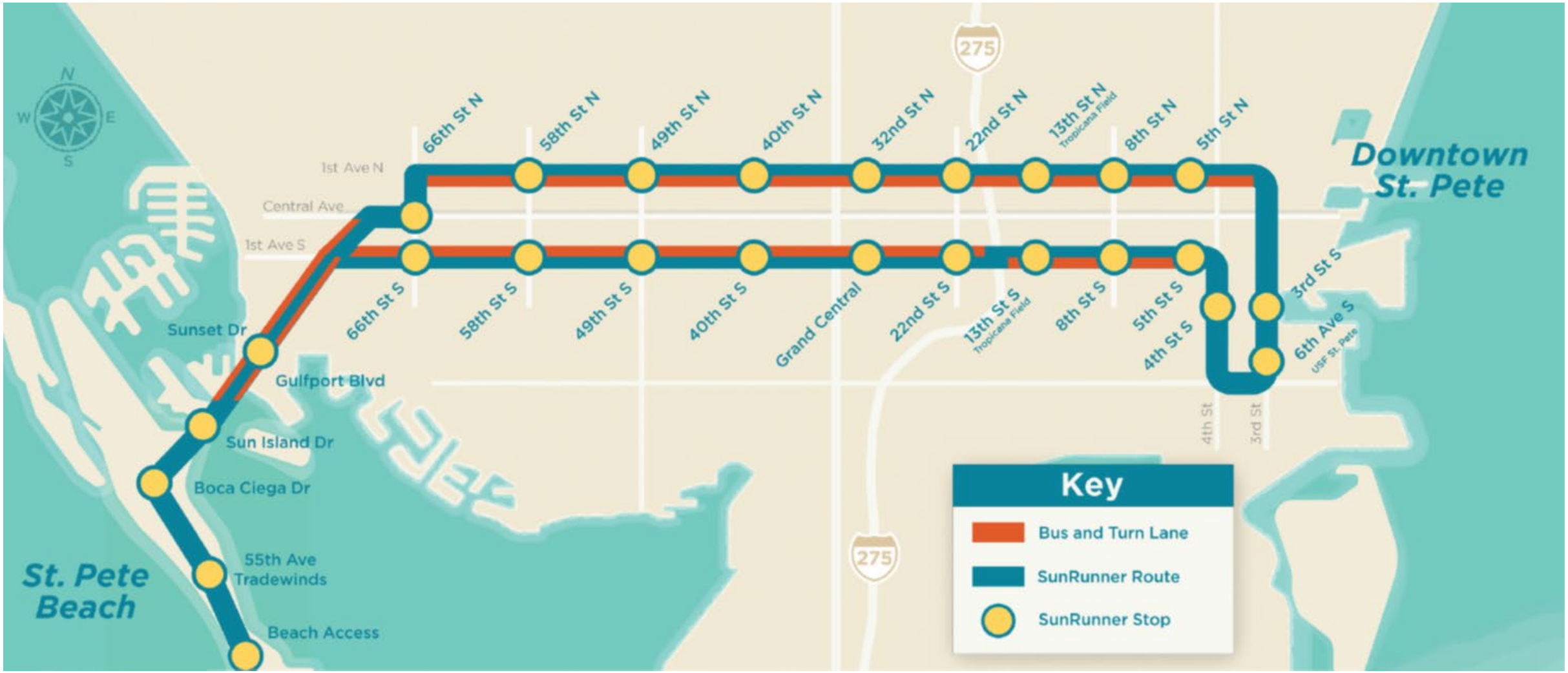
Florida Public Transportation Association

September 24, 2024

About PSTA & Pinellas County

- Population of 961,739
- 24 municipalities - 22 served by PSTA
- Top industries – health, tourism, manufacturing, & financial services
- 46 bus routes including 4 contracted trolley routes
- 10.4 million rides in FY23

SunRunner Stations



SunRunner Project Features

- **Fast:** Beach to ’Burg in 35 mins
- **Frequent:** Service every 15 mins (from 6 am to 8 pm)
- **Clean:** Low-emission hybrid electric
- **Timely:** 6 a.m.-12 a.m. daily
- **Workforce & Residents**
  (50,000 jobs/40,000 people within ½ mile)
- **Affordable:** Only $2.25 per ride

SunRunner Project Features

- Bus-and-turn lanes along 6.5 miles of the 10-mile route
- 30 uniquely branded station platforms with real time bus arrival
- Artwork on stations and on hybrid-electric buses
- Transit signal priority along the route
- On-board bike racks
- All door boarding

Left-Side Running BAT Lanes

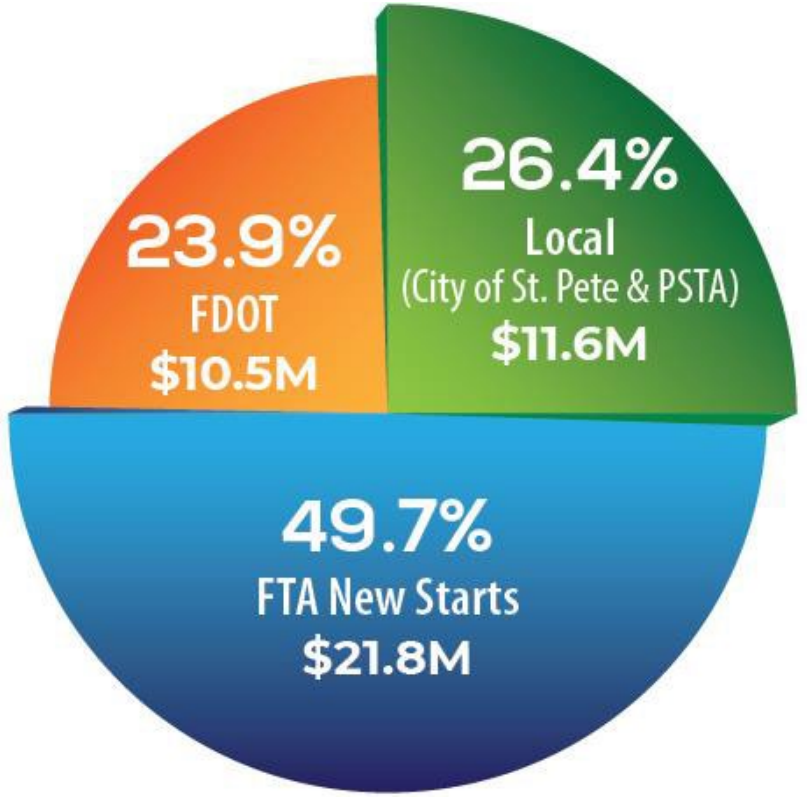
Station Platform Adjacent to BAT Lane

Planning Phase – Corridor Alternatives

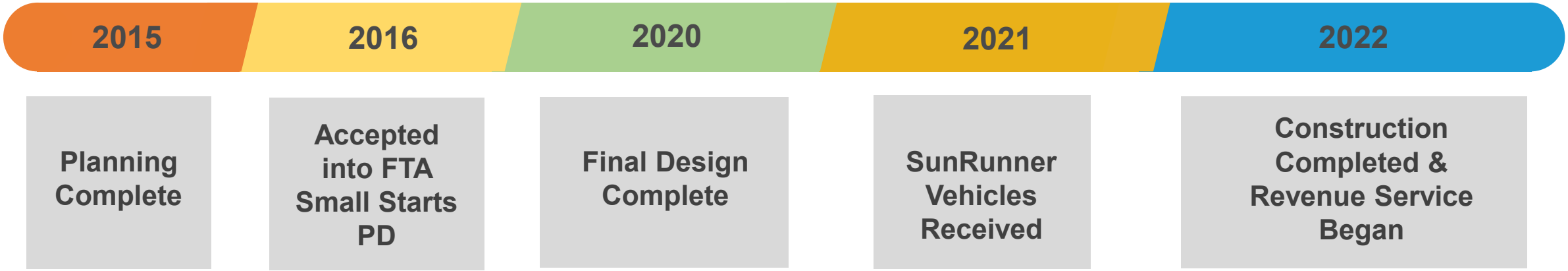
- Identified as a future premium transit route in 2003
- Included in the MPO's Long Range Transportation Plan in 2015
- Three route options considered during planning

1st Project in FTA New Starts Process

- **Total project cost (YOE) - $43.9 Million**
- **Funding Sources:**
  - FTA
  - FDOT
  - City of St. Petersburg
  - PSTA



Project Timeline – Project Development



Planning Completed – June 2015
Accepted into FTA Small Starts PD – May 2016
Final Design Completed – January 2020
Federal Grant Executed – July 2020

SunRunner Vehicles Received – May 2021
Construction Completed – October 2022
Revenue Service – October 21, 2022

FTA Project Funding

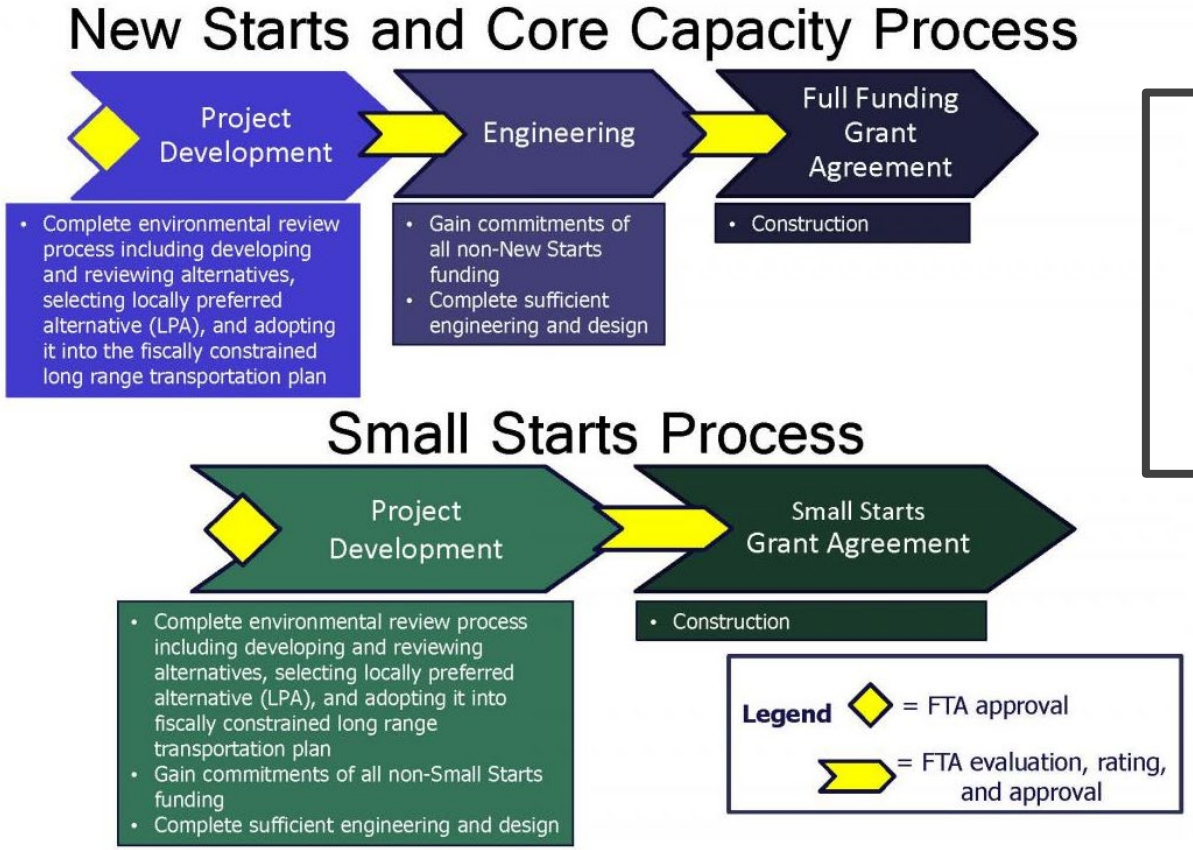
- Announced through a Presidential Tweet on May 28, 2020
- Last piece of funding needed to start construction

Key Challenges

- 1st BRT and CIG project in Tampa Bay (and for PSTA)
- Multiple stakeholders (FDOT, Pinellas County, Cities of St Petersburg, S Pasadena and St Pete Beach)
- Securing funding commitments from project partners

FTA CIG Process

- Applied for Small Starts project development process
- Demonstration of technical and management capacity



Lesson Learned - Contact other peer agencies for best practices and approaches early in the process

Key Challenges

- **Several steps involved in FTA Rating process**
  - Completed NEPA and preliminary engineering early
  - Securing funding commitments (and demonstrating committed funds)
- **FTA assigned a PMOC contractor early in design phase**
- **Required completing risk review by PMOC**
- **“Wish-list” items in project scope removed:**
  - Electric buses and charging equipment
  - Ticket vending machines at stations
  - Other “pilot” demonstrations

Lesson Learned – Continuous coordination with FTA Region IV and headquarters staff

Key Challenges – Design Phase

- **Multiple stakeholders (FDOT, Pinellas County, Cities of St Petersburg, S Pasadena and St Pete Beach)**
  - City of St Pete Beach concerns – funding, project terminus and bus size
  - Concerns about loss of travel lanes and parking
  - Lack of consistent design standards and permitting requirements across jurisdictions

Lesson Learned – Continuous stakeholder and community outreach throughout project development phase

Project Cost and Schedule

- Project cost generally stayed consistent during design and construction phases
- Project completed $5.3 Million under budget
- Adequate contingency included as part of project budget
- Project schedule included 18-month construction period including need for change order, Board approvals, NEPA amendment etc.

Lesson Learned – Include adequate contingency in your budget and schedule

Project Cost and Schedule

- **Delays in executing a grant agreement**
  - Design completed – Jan 2020
  - Funding Announcement – May 2020
    - ✓ *PSTA moved forward with a small phase of construction while waiting for FTA funding decision*
  - FTA Single Year Grant Agreement – July 2020
- **COVID-19 impacts during construction (contract awarded in July 2020)**
  - Labor shortages
  - Supply chain issues – technology components (screens, switches, modems etc.) and station guide strips
- **Global supply chain and inflationary impacts**

Key Lessons Learned

- Planning – Develop 3rd party agreements with project stakeholders (funding/design/construction/maintenance)
- Design - Consider visiting other peer systems with key stakeholders
- Design - Design/operational standards for BRT for the agency
- Procurement - Consider multiple procurement packages – Civil/station and technology for construction
- Start-Up/Training - Training platform
- Say no to wish list items!

City of St Petersburg Partnership

- Funding for project construction - $4 Million
- Additional funding for station art - $750,000
- $950,000 in pedestrian improvements for sidewalks, ADA connections and safe connections between stations
- Conversion of one inside lane for BAT lanes
- Assistance with design reviews and construction oversight
- Expedited permitting assistance (no permits needed for right-of way improvements)
- Coordinated effort on community outreach

FDOT Partnership

- Funding for project construction - $10.5 Million
- Additional technical support during design and construction – real estate acquisition
- Conversion of one outside lane for BAT lanes
- Assistance with design reviews and construction oversight
- Coordinated effort on community and stakeholder outreach

Project Groundbreaking

- Held on August 17, 2020 in front of TB Rays Stadium

Launched on 10/21/22

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SunRunner
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66th Street