



Green, Convenient Transit that Fuels the Economy and Improves Quality of Life – That’s What Federal Transportation Funds do For Pinellas County, Florida.

The summer weather along Florida’s gulf coast can be quite challenging for transit users. Riders in Pinellas County (Clearwater/St. Petersburg) have to deal with high heat and thunderstorms on a daily basis, while only a fraction of their bus stops are outfitted with shelters. That being the case, it’s not hard to see why the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority’s new Real Time Bus Information system is arguably one of the most important improvements in agency history. The federally funded Real Time system allows riders to call, text, logon or use smartphones to see when their next bus will arrive, letting them spend more time indoors, instead of dealing with the elements. It also lets area tourists know how many more minutes they can spend in the gift shops before catching the next trolley. So the federal funds that paid for the Real Time system provide ongoing benefits for residents, tourists and businesses alike.

Additionally, in a market where beach tourism is the number one industry, protecting the environment is essential for the local economy. That’s why PSTA leaders are thankful that they were able to use federal funding to invest in environmentally friendly diesel-electric hybrid buses. PSTA now operates 48 hybrid “SmartBuses” (out of a fleet of 203) that reduce emissions and fuel use as compared to standard diesel models. In fact, nearly all PSTA buses were purchased with federal dollars and if it weren’t for those funds, Pinellas County’s residents and six million annual tourists, would have very few transportation options other than the automobile. In a built-out county with essentially no room for new roads, transportation options are essential for combatting traffic congestion. Without those federal dollars, the county’s quality of life and economic lifeblood would measurably worse off than they are today.