

June 23, 2014

Samuel Snead
Program Manager, Office of Transit Programs
Federal Transit Administration
East Building, 4th Floor
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Snead,

The City of Gainesville strongly supports the Regional Transit System's (RTS's) Ladders of Opportunity Initiative (LoOI) grant application.

The location of the proposed Five Points multimodal transit center is at the heart of the City's most impoverished and transit-dependent area. The surrounding Census Blocks exceed the service area's average for population without a vehicle, 65 years or older, below poverty, and lacking a high school diploma (or equivalency).

Transit service frequencies in the area currently exceed 30 minutes and typically are closer to an hour. With over a third of the RTS bus fleet past its useful life, reliability is also an issue. The creation of this facility and corresponding introduction of 20-minute frequencies or better to the City's major transit center would offer the first meaningful opportunity for individuals to reliably use transit to access the area's major employment centers like the University of Florida (UF) and Malcom Randall Veteran's Affairs Medical Center.

Importantly, this effort supports over two decades of investment and policies aimed at improving this part of the community with private/public partnerships consistently identifying transit at the nucleus of any sustained, widespread redevelopment action. In the past decade, UF, Santa Fe College, the City of Gainesville (partially using federal dollars), and others like Wal-Mart have injected a large amount of resources towards revitalization. However, this alone cannot overcome the spatial incongruity between the location of most jobs and services and where those most dependent on them live.

With the largest transit mode share and the highest service productivity in the state, RTS is fully capable of rapidly and successfully implementing this project. Development would symbiotically integrate and connect with the under-construction city-wide bike boulevard to simultaneously offer access via two affordable, alternative modes of transportation. With these attributes, the project perfectly emulates the objectives for this discretionary grant.

Sincerely,

Edward Braddy
Mayor, City of Gainesville