



## Frequently Asked Questions

Updated May 2022

### 1. What is the SunRunner?

- The SunRunner is PSTA's new Bus Rapid Transit service—the first of its kind in Tampa Bay!
- The SunRunner connects customers to some of Pinellas County's most-visited destinations: St. Pete Beach and downtown St. Pete.
- The SunRunner supports:
  - Equity:
    - It provides more opportunity for essential workers to commute through the corridor and connect to jobs.
  - Sustainability:
    - By taking cars off the road, the SunRunner moves more people in less time, with fewer emissions than single-occupancy vehicles.
    - All SunRunner vehicles are hybrid electric, meaning decreased emissions and fuel consumption.
    - With features designed for cyclists onboard every vehicle and opportunities to connect to other PSTA routes, the SunRunner encourages biking and walking beyond the route itself.
  - Local businesses:
    - Delivers more potential customers from resorts, events, and other attractions along the SunRunner corridor.
    - With 15-minute frequency at peak times, the SunRunner becomes a reliable option for employees to commute efficiently.

### 2. When will SunRunner service start?

- Service is expected to begin in late 2022.

### 3. Why is the SunRunner needed?

- PSTA is preparing for the future: there are currently 50,000 jobs and 40,000 residents within a half-mile of the SunRunner route—and the numbers are growing.
- The SunRunner will help meet the travel needs of residents and the area's many visitors.
- The SunRunner travels one of PSTA's most heavily used corridors, in the state's most densely populated county.
- The 10-mile, 16-stop line is designed to meet the demands of work commuters and attract tourists and new riders into PSTA's comprehensive transit system.
- The SunRunner will improve mobility and accessibility to major activity centers across St. Pete, South Pasadena and St Pete Beach with future plans to create similar lines across the county.



#### 4. What makes the SunRunner special?

- The SunRunner is:
  - **Fast:** Limited stops enable travel from Beach to 'Burg (and vice-versa) in about 35 minutes—about 30% faster than current bus service.
  - **Frequent:** Service every 15-minutes during peak times means no long waits
  - **Clean:** Quiet, low-emission hybrid electric vehicles
  - **Reliable:** Running in its own lane enables the SunRunner to avoid traffic delays

#### 5. What is Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)?

- Bus rapid transit (BRT) – also known as “rail on wheels” – is a cost-effective service that provides many benefits of rail service with a much shorter construction schedule and at a fraction of the cost.
- BRT lines like the SunRunner have been built in cities around the world and have been proven to improve transit reliability, improve traffic flow, and support community growth.
- By improving the customer experience through faster trip times, more frequent service, and more onboard and in-station amenities, BRT systems better serve core customers and attract audiences that don't traditionally ride transit.
- BRT systems have been implemented in 26 U.S. cities to date.

#### 6. What features make the SunRunner a rapid transit option?

- SunRunner features several “best in class” BRT features including:
  - bus-and-turn lanes
  - transit signal priority
  - cashless fare payment
  - onboard bike racks
  - all door boarding
  - level boarding
  - real time bus information at stations
  - more efficient onboarding ramp for customers with disabilities
  - a simpler wheelchair restraint system
  - system branding unique to our community

#### 7. How often will the buses come?

- SunRunner buses will arrive every 15 minutes from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday-Saturday – no need to read a complicated schedule.
- Evening service runs every 30 minutes from 8 p.m. to midnight.



## SunRunner Features

### 8. What are SunRunner stations like?

- All 30 stations feature yellow, easy-to-identify totems with digital displays and real-time bus arrival information, allowing customers to better plan their trip and time.
- All stations are well-lit for nighttime use.
- All SunRunner stops have elevated platforms, allowing easier boarding for seniors, riders with disabilities and those traveling with a bicycle or stroller.
- 29 of the 30 SunRunner stations have upgraded shelters with shade, benches, and trash receptacles for added comfort
- 16 SunRunner station platforms in the City of St. Petersburg feature stained glass designs by local artist Catherine Woods, designed to complement the flora, fauna, and architecture of the station's surroundings. While each station is a work of art in its own right, they also function together to create a mural-like effect.

### 9. What will be different about the buses?

- The SunRunner's new hybrid buses are quieter, produce less emissions, and consume less fuel than traditional diesel buses, contributing to the area's sustainability and local air quality.
- Free Wi-Fi, digital displays, and charging stations at every seat meet the needs of modern travelers.
- The SunRunner's interior bike racks allow quicker boardings for cyclists.
- Each SunRunner bus features the iconic "Mr. Sun," designed by local artist Chad Mize.

### 10. How will the SunRunner improve traffic congestion?

- The SunRunner makes it possible to move more people along existing roads – an important factor for fast-growing Pinellas County.
- The SunRunner improves the traffic flow for all modes of travel:
  - Each SunRunner bus can take as many as 50 cars off the road.
  - Bus-and-turn lanes make our transportation network more efficient and help manage roadway congestion.
  - Hybrid electric vehicles with more efficient stops and scheduling help reduce fossil-fuel use and harmful emissions.



## Sharing the Road with the SunRunner

### 11. What are bus-and-turn lanes?

- Bus-and-turn lanes are designated lanes that help transit and emergency vehicles move more efficiently through traffic.
- Paved with rust-red asphalt, painted with “BUS and ← ONLY,” and marked with signage, the SunRunner’s bus lanes are easy to spot to avoid incorrect usage.

### 12. Why does SunRunner need bus-and-turn lanes?

- Bus-and-turn lanes help the SunRunner to provide its customers efficient and reliable service by avoiding traffic congestion.
- Bus-and-turn lanes allow SunRunner to move more people in less time.

### 13. How do bus-and-turn lanes help traffic flow?

- Having improved public transit removes cars from the road.
- Bus lanes allow PSTA to increase bus service without impacting traffic.
- Emergency vehicles can use the bus lanes to get to those in need more quickly and safely.
- Bus lanes are always available for evacuations during extreme weather events.

### 14. Am I allowed to use the bus-and-turn lane?

- Yes, you may drive in the bus lane for up to one block when:
  - Making a turn or merging into traffic after turning
  - Accessing driveways or local businesses
  - Accessing adjacent street parking space

### 15. How do I make a turn using the bus-and-turn lane?

- Carefully pull into the lane.
- Be sure to use your turn signal and look around for buses in the lane. If a bus is present, always pull in behind it.
- You can ride in the bus lane for no more than a block before or after your turn.

### 16. Can I park in the bus lane temporarily to make a delivery or a pick-up?

- No. Vehicles parked in the bus-and-turn lane risk being ticketed or towed immediately.

### 17. What is the penalty for driving or parking in the bus-and-turn lane?

- Vehicles driven in the bus lane are subject to tickets and fines.
- Vehicles parked in the bus lane are at risk of being ticketed or towed immediately.

### 18. What improvements are being made to parking along 1st Ave. N. and S.?

- Many street parking spots along the route were widened to make them safer and easier for drivers to use.



## SunRunner for Cyclists

### 19. Can I bring my bike onboard?

- Yes! While most buses have two bike racks on front, SunRunner buses have level boarding and three bike racks plus standing room for cyclists on board.
- Many SunRunner stations also have bike racks if you'd prefer to ride to the station and leave your bike there for when you return.
- If you'd like to bike to or from your SunRunner station but don't have your own bike, there are also multiple bikeshare locations close to a SunRunner station. Visit [gohopr.com/coast/](http://gohopr.com/coast/) for more information. Please do not bring bikes or scooters from rental services onboard.

### 20. How are bike lanes along the corridor being upgraded?

- Bike lanes between 66th St. and 34th St. were moved from 1st Ave. N and 1st Ave. S to Central Ave., where new, wider bike lanes have been added.
- Cyclists will be able to ride in the bus-and-turn lane on SR-693/Pasadena Ave between Central Ave and Huffman Way.
- Buffered bike lanes have been added on 1st Ave. N and 1st Ave. S between 34th St. and 3rd St.



## SunRunner Project & Operations

### 21. How long has the SunRunner been planned?

- Initial studies and planning for the SunRunner project began in 2009.
- After numerous studies and public interest meetings were held, the design process began in 2018.
- Route design was completed and unveiled on July 8, 2020.
- Construction groundbreaking took place August 17, 2020.

### 22. Why were 1st Ave. N. and S. chosen for the SunRunner route?

- Connection downtown St. Petersburg to the award-winning Pinellas County beaches was a top priority in the SunRunner design.
- PSTA is preparing for the future: there are currently 50,000 jobs and 40,000 residents within a half-mile of the SunRunner route – numbers that are only growing.
- The high-frequency service will help workers get to their jobs on time and customers get to businesses more reliably and with less traffic congestion.
- The SunRunner travels the region's highest ridership corridor in the state's most densely populated county.
- By helping people get to jobs, education, and medical care, the SunRunner is helping improve equity in southern Pinellas County.

### 23. How is the project being funded?

- On May 29<sup>th</sup> 2020, PSTA was awarded \$21.8 million in federal grant funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s [Capital Investment Grant program](#), which covered approximately half of the capital cost for building the SunRunner. This is the first Capital Investment Grant awarded to the Tampa Bay region.
- Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) provided 25% of the funding while PSTA, and City of St. Petersburg split the remaining construction costs.
- Future operating costs will be supported by PSTA and FDOT.

### 24. Will the SunRunner expand, or will there be future SunRunner routes?

- PSTA hopes to build several additional BRT routes like SunRunner in the future; however, none are currently funded.

### 25. How is the SunRunner different than the Central Avenue Trolley?

- The Central Avenue Trolley and the SunRunner work together to complement each other. The Central Avenue Trolley:
  - Runs in regular traffic along Central Ave. with more frequent stops, enabling customers to get to destinations in between the SunRunner stations.
  - Runs from the St. Pete Pier to Pinellas County Beach Park, connecting the SunRunner route to even more popular destinations.
  - Has standard bus stops easily accessible from businesses on Central Ave., compared to SunRunner's dedicated stations and elevated platforms.



## Riding the SunRunner

### 26. How do I ride the SunRunner?

- Visit the PSTA trip planner at [psta.net/real-time](https://psta.net/real-time) or download [Transit App](#)
- Enter your starting location and destination to plan your trip.
- Wait at your selected stop. The SunRunner and PSTA bus drivers will only stop for you if you're at a marked stop.
- The totem sign at each SunRunner station will display real-time information about when the next bus will arrive.

### 27. What are the hours of operation?

- The SunRunner will operate seven days a week, from 6 a.m. to midnight.
- SunRunner buses will arrive every 15 minutes from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday-Saturday
- Evening service runs every 30 minutes from 8 p.m. to midnight.
- Customers can track bus arrivals at [psta.net/real-time](https://psta.net/real-time) or on [Transit App](#)

### 28. Where can I go on the SunRunner?

- The SunRunner serves several key destinations, including:
  - Downtown St. Pete
  - USF/St. Pete
  - Tropicana Field
  - TradeWinds Island Resort
  - Grand Central Business District
  - Edge Business District
  - Central Ave.
  - Grand Central Station
  - Bayfront and Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital
  - South Pasadena
  - St. Pete Beach
- Numerous small, independent and locally owned shops, restaurants and businesses are also along the SunRunner route.

### 29. Is the SunRunner accessible?

- Yes, all stations have specially designed ramps and platforms that allow easy access for all, including customers in wheelchairs, with strollers, luggage or bicycles.
- The SunRunner buses will have all-door boarding which means passengers can enter through any door.
- Wheelchair passengers should board from the front using the door shown with an ADA decal on the bus, while passengers who wish to bring a bike should enter through the rear door marked with a bike decal.
- The SunRunner also has low-floor buses with fold-out ramps.
- For riders in wheelchairs and motorized scooters, the SunRunner features a simple, efficient wheelchair restraint system.



### 30. How much does it cost to ride?

- For the first six months after launch, riding the SunRunner will be FREE!
- After the launch period, fares will be the same as PSTA's regular service. [Click here for the most current fare information.](#)

### 31. How do I pay my fare?

- The only payment methods accepted on the SunRunner are the Flamingo Fares card and app. Just tap your card or phone on the reader.
- To learn more about Flamingo Fares, including how to download the app and where to purchase a card, please visit [flamingofares.com](http://flamingofares.com)
- Cash is not accepted. This allows for faster boarding so the SunRunner spends less time at stations and more time getting you where you want to go.

### 32. Can I bring my pet onboard?

- As with all PSTA buses, small, well-behaved pets traveling in carriers are always welcome on the SunRunner.