

First Coast Flyer East Corridor BRT
Jacksonville, Florida
Small Starts Project Development
(Rating Assigned November 2015)

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Bus Rapid Transit 18.5 Miles, 21 Stations
Total Capital Cost (\$YOE):	\$33.86 Million
Section 5309 Small Starts Share (\$YOE):	\$16.93 Million (50.0%)
Annual Operating Cost (opening year 2017):	\$3.34 Million
Existing Corridor Ridership (Warranted):	3,700 Daily Linked Trips
Overall Project Rating:	Medium-High
Project Justification Rating:	Medium
Local Financial Commitment Rating:	High

Project Description: The Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA), in coordination with the City of Jacksonville and the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), proposes to implement a bus rapid transit (BRT) line from the Rosa Parks Transit Station linking Regency Mall, Florida State College-Jacksonville (Deerwood Center), University of North Florida and ending at Jacksonville Beach. The project includes traffic signal priority at 32 intersections, real-time bus arrival information at stations, queue jumper lanes at six intersections, and procurement of 19 40-foot compressed natural gas buses. Service is planned to be provided every 10 minutes during weekday peak periods, every 15 minutes during weekday off-peak periods, and every 30 minutes on weekends.

Project Purpose: JTA indicates the project will reduce transit travel times, improve transit service reliability in the corridor, and enhance regional connectivity by providing better accessibility to educational and employment opportunities to downtown Jacksonville and throughout the Jacksonville metropolitan area.

Project Development History, Status and Next Steps: In November 2005, JTA completed an alternatives analysis and selected BRT as the locally preferred alternative for the East Corridor. The project was included in the region's fiscally constrained long range transportation plan in November 2014. The project entered Small Starts Project Development in May 2015. JTA expects to complete the environmental review process with receipt of a Finding of No Significant Impact in spring 2016, receive a Small Starts Grant Agreement in March 2017, and start revenue service in December 2017.

Locally Proposed Financial Plan

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Total Funds (\$million)</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Federal: Section 5309 Small Starts	\$16.93	50.0%
State: Florida DOT New Starts Program	\$8.46	25.0%
Local: JTA Discretionary Revenues	\$8.47	25.0%
Total:	\$33.86	100.0%

NOTE: The financial plan reflected in this table has been developed by the project sponsor and does not reflect a commitment by DOT or FTA. The sum of the figures may differ from the total as listed due to rounding.

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LAND USE RATING: Medium-Low

The land use rating reflects population and employment densities within ½-mile of proposed station areas, as well as the share of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the corridor compared to the share in the surrounding county.

- The average population density across all station areas is 2,400 persons per square mile, corresponding to a Low rating per FTA benchmarks. Total employment served is 40,000, corresponding to a Low to Medium-Low rating.
- There is no on-street parking along the East Corridor alignment. However, parking appears to be plentifully available in off-street lots serving the businesses and institutions in the corridor. In the downtown core, daily parking fees averaged \$8.56 in 2012, which rates Medium on FTA benchmarks.
- The proportion of legally binding affordability restricted housing in the project corridor compared to the proportion in the county through which the project travels is 9.03, which corresponds to a High rating.
- Most of the alignment is fronted by commercial development. This is typically in the form of strip malls or other single-story automobile-oriented development (office buildings, light industrial) with a substantial amount of surface parking. Residential neighborhoods are located nearby and there is some vacant land throughout the corridor. Sidewalks are provided along most of the immediate alignment; however, off the alignment, sidewalks are often not present.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RATING: Medium-Low

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium-Low

- *Transit-Supportive Corridor Policies:* The Future Land Use Element of the City of Jacksonville 2030 Comprehensive Plan has several policies that are supportive of transit. These include encouraging that new non-residential projects be developed in nodal or corridor development areas in appropriate infill locations or as TOD, and designating sites located within ½-mile of the JTA Rapid Transit System as suitable for TOD. In Jacksonville Beach (eastern terminus station), local plans support increased mixed-use development, as well as improved streetscape and pedestrian connections. The cities have not conducted planning specific to the corridor or station areas.
- *Supportive Zoning Regulations Near Transit Stations:* Zoning in most of the corridor is low or medium density residential or commercial that does not explicitly include transit-supportive elements. Parking requirements are also typical for suburban areas. The Jacksonville zoning code includes a TOD overlay district that can be applied to properties in designated station areas to allow increased residential density, improve pedestrian character, and reduce parking requirements; one East Corridor station area has been designated as suitable for its application, but it has not yet been applied to any specific properties.
- *Tools to Implement Land Use Policies:* JTA worked with the City of Jacksonville to adopt a Policy Framework for Transit-Oriented Development, which outlines steps to implementing TOD, as well as the Jacksonville Design Guidelines and Best Practices Handbook, which proposes TOD-supportive design standards that may be incorporated into the City's zoning and land development ordinances and policies. JTA regularly participates in the City's six Citizen Planning Advisory Committees on land use planning and transit in the county, and has worked with other interests such as the Downtown Investment Authority. JTA has joined with the City of Jacksonville and the Northeast Florida Regional Council to host workshops with developers on TOD opportunities. Regulatory and financial incentives for TOD are limited.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium-Low

- *Performance of Land Use Policies:* Downtown Jacksonville has seen about \$2 billion in investment since 2000, largely in rehabilitation of existing buildings but also in new civic and sports facilities and some office and residential projects. JTA has supported a transit-oriented development on agency-owned property at the Kings Avenue Skyway station in downtown Jacksonville. Development has been

occurring in the project corridor, but primarily in the form of alterations or repairs to existing structures and construction of new single-family homes.

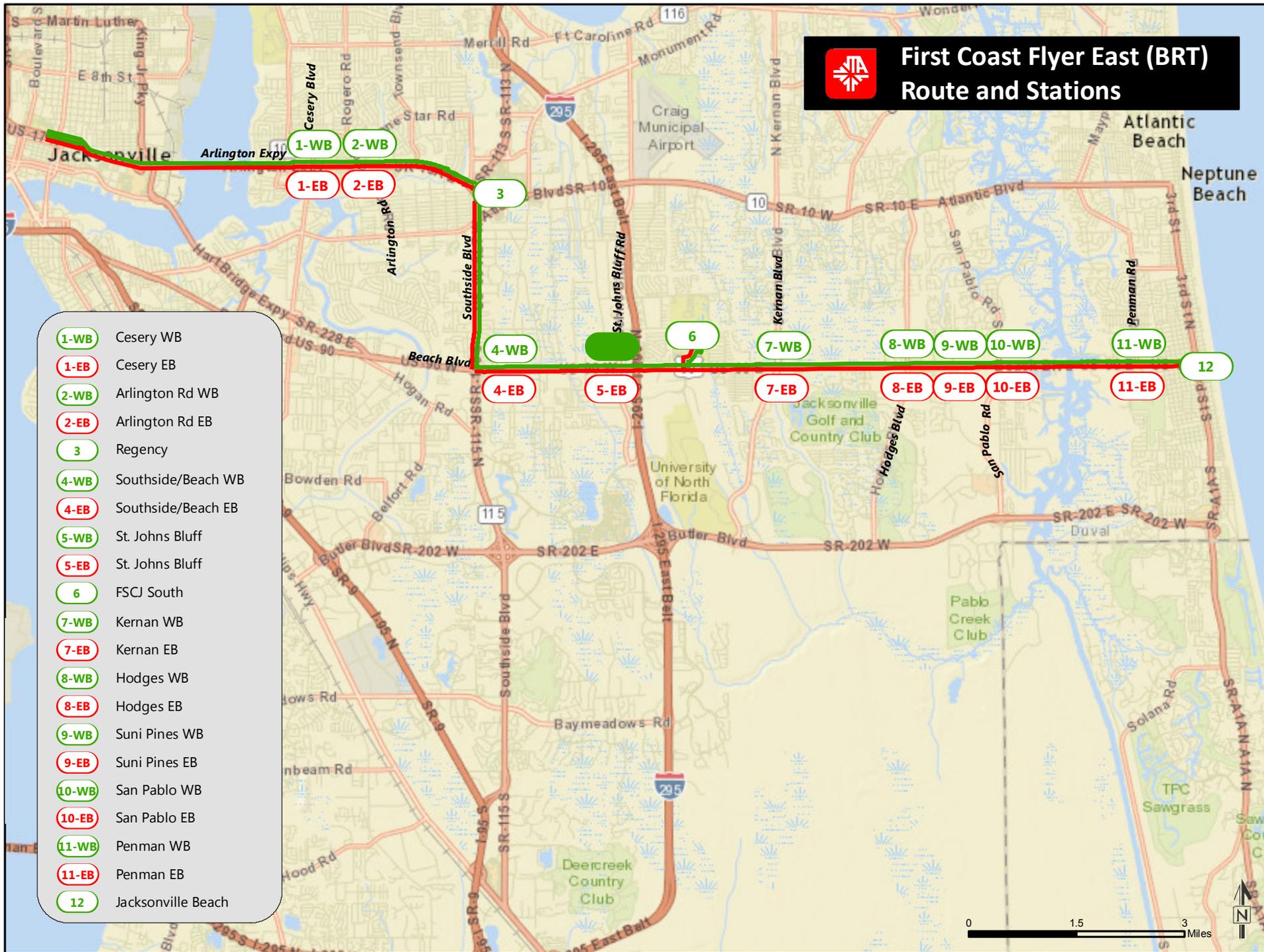
- *Potential Impact of Transit Investment on Regional Land Use:* There are vacant properties spread throughout the corridor as well as extensive amounts of low-density development that could potentially be redeveloped at higher densities if zoning and market forces permitted. An analysis of TOD potential in the various rapid transit corridors found about 1,300 acres in Corridor A (entirely part of the East Corridor) and 900 acres in Corridor B (of which about half is in the East Corridor) to have “high” redevelopment potential, over 10 percent of land area in each corridor. Current regional forecasts predict modest growth in the corridor, lower than the projected metro area growth rates.

Tools to Maintain or Increase Share of Affordable Housing: Medium

- The Jacksonville Housing Authority is committed to preserving the approximately 1,000 affordable housing units in the corridor that it manages. The Jacksonville Comprehensive Plan calls for approximately 19,000 additional dwelling units to be added to the housing stock by 2030 to meet the needs of low and very low income households. The City provides assistance to private sector and other public and nonprofit agencies with site location, preparation of plans, and infrastructure improvements for affordable housing. Jacksonville Beach does not have any active affordable housing programs.



First Coast Flyer East (BRT) Route and Stations



- 1-WB Cesery WB
- 1-EB Cesery EB
- 2-WB Arlington Rd WB
- 2-EB Arlington Rd EB
- 3 Regency
- 4-WB Southside/Beach WB
- 4-EB Southside/Beach EB
- 5-WB St. Johns Bluff
- 5-EB St. Johns Bluff
- 6 FSCJ South
- 7-WB Kernan WB
- 7-EB Kernan EB
- 8-WB Hodges WB
- 8-EB Hodges EB
- 9-WB Suni Pines WB
- 9-EB Suni Pines EB
- 10-WB San Pablo WB
- 10-EB San Pablo EB
- 11-WB Penman WB
- 11-EB Penman EB
- 12 Jacksonville Beach

