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SunRail Southern Expansion Selected Among the Nation's Best *Now in the Running for the People's Choice Award—Online Voting*

Orlando, Fla — The SunRail Southern Expansion has been selected today as one of the “Top 12” projects competing in the America’s Transportation Awards and is now in the running for the prestigious People’s Choice Award. Online voting begins today through Sunday, Oct. 6 at: <https://transportationawards.secure-platform.com/a/gallery/rounds/14/details/2005>.

Sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), AAA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the competition evaluates projects in three categories: Quality of Life/Community Development; Best Use of Technology & Innovation; and Operations Excellence. The projects are also divided into three sizes: small (less than \$25 million); medium (\$25 million to \$200 million); and large (more than \$200 million).

SunRail’s Southern Expansion was selected for its positive impact on the quality of life in Central Florida as well as for its impacts related to community development around its stations.

Launched in May 2014, SunRail is the Orlando region’s first-ever commuter rail system. In July 2018, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) saw a game-changing opportunity for the young system, and launched its “Southern Expansion,” which added four new stations and 17 miles of new service area to an existing 32-mile route. The expansion brought new transit options to an area that is among the most congested in the region.

Since the Southern Expansion launched in southern Orange and Osceola counties, ridership has increased 82% and 95% of riders surveyed report they are satisfied with SunRail service. SunRail’s Transit-Oriented Development is estimated at \$3 billion, and property values have increased 63% or \$2.4 billion around the original stations. This increase in property values has generated nearly \$20 million of property tax revenue.

SunRail’s Southern Expansion was selected from four U.S. regional competitions and will battle it out in this year’s America’s Transportation Awards competition, with a \$10,000 cash award for a charity or transportation-related scholarship of the winner’s choosing at stake. The general public decides the People’s Choice Award winner through online voting. Online votes will be weighted to each state’s population, allowing for greater competition between states with larger and smaller populations.

The winners will be announced at the AASHTO Annual Meeting in St. Louis on October 8, 2019.