

3.0 Passenger Rail Services and Initiatives in Florida

■ 3.1 Overview

Although Florida's total population shrunk by about 60,000 residents in 2009 – a first in over three decades according to state demographers – and overall population growth rates have declined three points to approximately 2 percent annually due in large part to the nationwide recession and declining housing market, the State is expected to continue to attract retirees and residents looking for warmer weather and low costs of living. State demographers at the University of Florida predict that once the recession ends, Florida can expect to grow as much as 200,000 people per year – fewer than the 300,000 a year the State averaged during the past three decades, but enough to lead most other states in net growth. By 2035, more than 25 million people will call Florida home, representing a 56 percent increase between 2000 and 2035.⁴⁵ In absolute terms, Florida will add over 9 million people to its population between this time period.

Furthermore, although much of Florida's growth will be concentrated in urbanized areas, growth will occur across Florida's regions and urbanized area boundaries will expand across county lines. Florida's density per square mile was 344 according to the 2009 Census and was ranked the eighth densest state in the nation.

Population growth, and the associated transportation demand, will place additional pressure on all aspects of the State's transportation system. A growing population not only adds automobiles to roadways, but the increase in economic activity to support this population also will generate additional demands for freight movement. Florida's large tourism industry will further contribute to this demand, with the number of annual visitors to the State increasing to over 121 million by 2035, from 80 million in 2009. The expected growth in population and visitors over the long-term reinforces the value of investing in rail as part of a multimodal transportation strategy to more efficiently accommodate the mobility needs of future populations.

Many urban and interregional SIS highway corridors are currently or are expected to be heavily congested during peak periods by 2035, even after planned capacity improvements are made. Likewise, many of the State's airports are projected to be

⁴⁵U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida (October 2009 forecast to 2030), and Florida Transportation Plan (forecast extension beyond 2030).

operating at more than 80 percent of capacity, the point at which additional capacity should be under construction. The solution in the past, in Florida and throughout the United States, has been to add new roadways and more lanes on existing roads. This becomes much more difficult as construction costs continue to climb and increasing population densities increase property values and decrease available land. It should be noted that while construction costs and land prices have declined with the recession, they are expected to rise again as the economy recovers.

Given these considerations, expanding passenger rail and urban transit systems will be necessary in order to serve as viable options for the movement of people within and between areas. Northeastern states, with similar population densities and congestion problems as Florida, have recognized the importance of strong intercity and commuter rail services as a tool to aid in congestion relief and provide mobility. In fact, strategically implementing passenger rail services can aid the State in mitigating congestion, stabilizing highway construction and maintenance costs, and promoting development of compact livable communities.

In 2006, FDOT prepared the *Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Vision Plan*. According to the plan, by 2040, the intercity travel market would grow from just over 100 million trips in 2006 to nearly 200 million trips by 2020 and 320 million trips by 2040.⁴⁶ According to the *Vision Plan*, the largest numbers of estimated intercity trips are between central Florida and Tampa Bay (Orlando-Tampa); southeast Florida and central Florida (Miami-Orlando); and southeast Florida and the Tampa Bay region (Miami-Tampa). Additional significant travel is also anticipated between Jacksonville (northeast Florida) and Orlando (central Florida). Intercity travel in central and south Florida is especially important given the presence of the recreation and tourism industry there. This increase will add pressure to existing transportation facilities and would necessitate advanced management and operations as well as development of new infrastructure to manage the demand.

This section describes Florida's existing passenger rail network, including intercity, commuter, and local transit services. It also discusses future passenger rail service needs and presents planned service expansions and improvements, new lines and facilities, and future high-speed rail service. Finally, it covers recent legislative changes that have a direct impact on passenger rail transportation. This section contributes to the State Rail Plan requirements set forth by Public Law 110-432:

- Inventory of the existing overall rail transportation system, services, and facilities within the State and an analysis of the role of rail within the surface transportation system.
- Review of all rail lines within the State, including proposed high-speed rail corridors and significant rail line segments not currently in service.

⁴⁶Source: *Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Vision Plan*, Draft Executive Report, Florida Department of Transportation, August 2006.

- Statement of the State’s passenger rail service objectives, including minimum service levels for rail transportation routes in the State.
- Review of major passenger and freight intermodal rail connections and facilities within the State, including seaports, and prioritized options to maximize service integration and efficiency between rail and other modes.
- Performance evaluation of passenger rail services operating in the State, including possible improvements in those services and a description of strategies to achieve those improvements.
- Compilation of studies and reports on high-speed rail corridor development within the State not included in a previous plan under this subchapter, and a plan for funding any recommended development of such corridors in the State.

■ 3.2 Current Passenger Rail Systems

This section discusses the various passenger rail systems currently operating in Florida. These include Amtrak, Tri-Rail, and local systems such as metro-rail, metromover, TECO, and the JTA Skyway. The section includes a description of network coverage, ridership, and economic impacts of the systems.

Amtrak⁴⁷

The National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) has provided intercity and long-distance service to Florida for almost 40 years. Originally created in 1970 as a for-profit government corporation with trackage rights over all freight railroads, Amtrak was converted to a private entity in 1997 in an effort to make the railroad more self-sufficient. Since 1997, Amtrak has continued to receive public funds through annual appropriations to continue operating, although the funding has been far below requested levels.

Amtrak operates a nationwide rail network, serving over 500 destinations in 46 states and three Canadian provinces on over 21,000 miles of routes, with more than 19,000 employees. It is the nation’s only high-speed intercity passenger rail provider, operating nearly 60 percent of its trains at speeds in excess of 90 mph. In FY 2009 (October 2008 to September 2009), Amtrak transported over 27.1 million passengers, the second largest annual total in Amtrak history.

Amtrak owns approximately 730 miles, representing 3 percent of its national network. Most of the Amtrak-owned route mileage is located between Washington, D.C. and

⁴⁷<http://www.amtrak.com>.

Boston (Northeast Corridor) and between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Amtrak does not own any mileage in Florida, but operates a maintenance facility in Hialeah. Amtrak's Southern Division, which is responsible for Amtrak's operations in the Southeastern United States, is headquartered in Jacksonville. Amtrak also has train and engine crew bases in Miami, Sanford, and Jacksonville, an on-board service crew base in Hialeah, and contractor-operated commissaries in Hialeah and Sanford.

Florida Route Descriptions

In Florida, Amtrak operates three distinct services, the *Auto Train*, *Silver Meteor*, and *Silver Star*⁴⁸, and *Sunset Limited*, covering 21 stations throughout the State. At the end of FY 2009, Amtrak employed 750 Florida residents and total wages of Amtrak employees living in Florida totaled \$48.8 million. Amtrak operates in Florida over lines owned by CSXT Transportation (CSXT) as well as those owned by FDOT, known as the South Florida Rail Corridor. Amtrak's current Florida routes include:

- The *Auto Train* offers nonstop service between Lorton, Virginia (south of Washington, D.C.) and Sanford, Florida. The *Auto Train* operates daily, with afternoon departures in each direction. The entire trip takes approximately 17.5 hours overnight. It is the only combination auto/passenger train in the United States. Passengers ride in Superliner coaches and sleepers, while their vehicles are transported in auto carrier cars at the rear of the train. The *Auto Train* operates over CSXT's "A" Line from the Florida-Georgia border to its terminus in Sanford. This popular service would likely extend further north (e.g., New York/New Jersey) were it not for clearance restrictions of the multilevel auto carriers in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. During FY 2009, the *Auto Train* carried 232,995 passengers and 111,373 vehicles. Amtrak acquired new auto carrier cars in 2005 to replace the previously operated cars, which were up to 50 years old. The new auto carriers can carry 250 sedans or 120 minivans and sport utility vehicles (SUVs), an increase from the previous cars that could carry 187 sedans or 29 minivans and SUVs. The *Auto Train* has reached full capacity and the station in Sanford was damaged following the 2004 hurricanes. Amtrak's capital plan includes additional capital investments to overhaul Superliner cars and P-42 diesel locomotives used on the *Auto Train*, and \$2.5 million to repair hurricane damage, replace hydraulic ramps, and expand the passenger waiting area at the Sanford terminal.
- The *Silver Star* and the *Silver Meteor* offer service daily between New York City and Miami. Both services operate over mostly the same route within Florida, but follow different trajectories north of Savannah, Georgia, through the Carolinas. Together, the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* provide Amtrak's **Cross Florida Service**. From the Florida-Georgia border, both routes operate over CSXT's "A" Line south to Auburndale. At Auburndale, the *Silver Meteor* continues southeast to West Palm Beach via CSXT and the South Florida Rail Corridor into Miami, and the *Silver Star*

⁴⁸ The *Sunset Limited* Amtrak route from Sanford, FL to New Orleans was discontinued in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina damaged the tracks.

travels southwest to Tampa and then back to Auburndale where it retraces the *Silver Meteor's* aforementioned route to Miami. North of Florida, the *Silver Star* follows a route along the Appalachian Piedmont between Savannah, Georgia, and Raleigh, North Carolina, via Columbia, South Carolina. The *Silver Meteor* follows a route along the Atlantic Coastal Plain, serving Charleston, South Carolina and Fayetteville and Raleigh, North Carolina. From Raleigh, both routes operate over the same line to New York City. Both routes are subject to frequent delays due to freight congestion in areas of the Carolinas and Virginia. Most of the route within Florida does not suffer from delays. The two service routes had been at risk of potential elimination due to large losses in 2004 and 2005; however, in 2009 the lines have experienced increases in on-time performance and gains in riders despite a nationwide decline in Amtrak ridership. *Silver Star* ridership increased 5.8 percent – to 31,343 – in April 2009, compared to April 2008; while Amtrak ridership nationwide declined 2 percent during the same period. Approximately one in three *Silver Star* passengers board or disembark at Tampa's Union Station.⁴⁹

- Within Florida, the *Silver Star* serves the following stations: Jacksonville, DeLand, Winter Park, Orlando, Kissimmee, Lakeland, Tampa, Winter Haven, Sebring, West Palm Beach, Deerfield Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, and Miami. It also serves platforms without stations in Palatka, Okeechobee, and Delray Beach. The *Silver Star* travel time from Jacksonville to Miami is slightly longer than 11 hours. The total travel time between New York City and Miami is slightly longer than 31 hours.
- The *Silver Meteor* serves the same stations as the *Silver Star*, with the exception of Tampa and Lakeland. Because the *Silver Meteor* switches at Auburndale and does not stop in Tampa, it offers slightly faster service between Central and South Florida. The *Silver Meteor* carries passengers between Jacksonville and Miami in 9 hours. The total travel time between New York City and Miami is just under 28 hours.
- The *Sunset Limited* currently provides tri-weekly service between Los Angeles, California and New Orleans, Louisiana. The service formerly extended east of New Orleans over CSXT across the Florida Panhandle and over the CSXT "A" Line from Jacksonville to Orlando, but this portion of the *Sunset Limited* service has been suspended since August 27, 2005 due to extensive infrastructure damage in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama caused by Hurricane Katrina. Although the damaged track has been repaired and CSXT has no objections to resuming passenger service, station reconstruction is expected to take much longer and a final decision has not been made concerning when Amtrak will reinstate service east of New Orleans. Prior to Hurricane Katrina, the *Sunset Limited* was one of Amtrak's least efficient routes, serving only 81,348 passengers in 2005 (compared to 92,246 in 2004). The route generated \$35.2 million in annual losses in 2005 (compared to \$29.3 million in 2004) while contributing revenues of only \$10.8 million, yielding a loss of \$433 for each

⁴⁹Ted Jackovics, *Silver Star Ridership Increases*, Tampa Tribune, June 23 2009.

passenger.⁵⁰ One of the studies Amtrak was required to develop under PRIIA was a plan for restoring passenger rail service between New Orleans and Sanford, including a projected timeline, projected costs, and any needed legislative changes required to do so. This feasibility study was submitted to Congress in July of 2009 and presented 3 preferred alternatives (from 12 submitted for analysis) for service restoration along with their capital and operational costs. These were:

1. Restoration of tri-weekly Sunset Limited service between Los Angeles, California and Orlando, Florida.
 2. Extension of the daily City of New Orleans service, which currently operates between Chicago, Illinois and New Orleans, Louisiana, east from New Orleans to Orlando, Florida.
 3. Implement daily stand-alone overnight service between New Orleans, Louisiana and Orlando, Florida.
 - Under each of the three proposed options service would be restored between New Orleans and Orlando, and the study assumed that all of the 19 stations between New Orleans and Orlando, including the 13 Suspended Service Stations, would be served by the restored service.
 - All three alternatives would result in an annual direct operating loss associated with restoring service. Option 1 would result in a \$4.8 million annual loss (56 percent farebox recovery), Option 2 would cost \$11.7 million per year (44 percent recovery), while Option 3 would cost \$18.4 million per year (23 percent recovery). Annual ridership is estimated at 53,300 for Option 1, 96,100 for Option 2, and 79,900 for Option 3.
 - The next step in the process is to have Federal and state policy-makers determine if passenger rail service should be restored between New Orleans and Orlando; and, if so, identify the preferred option for service restoration, and provide the additional funding for capital and ongoing operating costs that will be required to implement that option.
- With its **Thruway Motorcoach Services**, Amtrak serves many Florida counties that do not have direct passenger rail access. The Thruway service provides rail-bus connections for communities previously served by the Palmetto Service between Lakeland and Jacksonville. On October 31, 2004, Amtrak discontinued its Palmetto service to Florida. The Palmetto, which originates in New York City, previously terminated in Miami via Jacksonville, Orlando, and Tampa over CSXT's "S" Line. The Palmetto called on four stations between Lakeland and Jacksonville, including Ocala, Waldo, Wildwood, and Dade City. The Palmetto service now operates between New York City and Savannah, Georgia. Other Thruway bus services include: Orlando/Tampa to St. Petersburg and Fort Myers (via Lakeland, Bradenton, Sarasota, and Port

⁵⁰Ronald D. Utt, *Springtime for Amtrak and America*, The Heritage Foundation, May 2006.

Charlotte); DeLand to Daytona Beach; Orlando to Orlando hotels and attractions; and Miami to Key West (via Miami International Airport, Homestead, Key Largo, Islamorada, Marathon, and Key West).

Table 3.1 summarizes Florida's current Amtrak passenger rail service.

Table 3.1 Summary of Florida Amtrak Passenger Rail Service

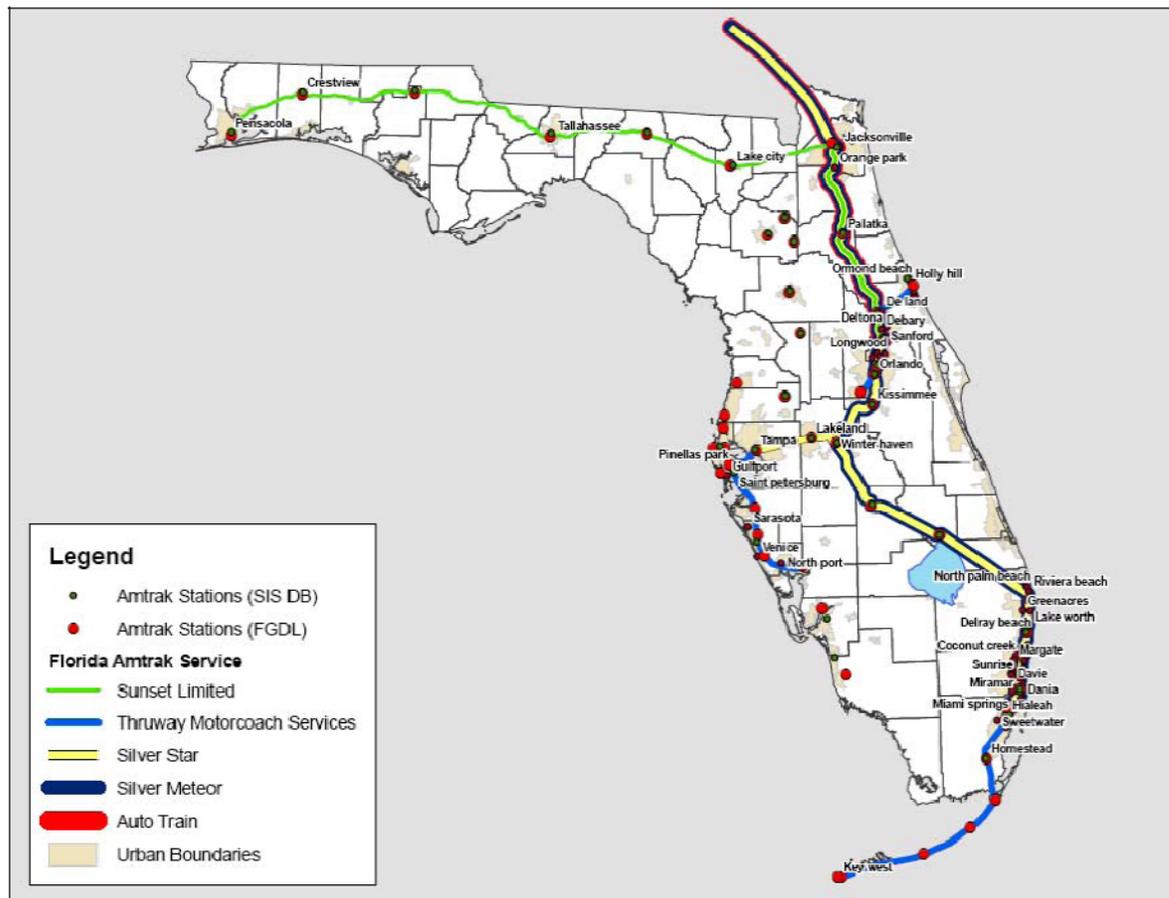
Route	Frequency	Origin/Destination	Type of Service
<i>Auto Train</i>	Daily, each direction	Washington, D.C. (Lorton, Virginia) to Sanford, Florida	Conventional and personal auto transport
<i>Silver Meteor</i>	Daily, each direction	New York City to Miami	Conventional
<i>Silver Star</i>	Daily, each direction	New York City to Miami (via Tampa)	Conventional
<i>Sunset Limited</i>	Three times per week	Los Angeles to Orlando (via Jacksonville) ^a	Conventional

Source: Amtrak.

^a Service is currently suspended east of New Orleans. Evaluations for service restoration are currently underway (see page 3-5).

Amtrak currently provides passenger rail service to 18 stations in Florida. Rail service to 6 additional stations in Chipley, Crestview, Lake City, Madison, Pensacola, and Tallahassee along the *Sunset Limited* route was suspended on August 27, 2005. Figure 3.1 provides an overview of the four Amtrak routes in Florida, including all passenger rail stations. Figure 3.1 also shows those locations that are served by Amtrak's Thruway Motorcoach Services.

Figure 3.1 Amtrak Routes and Stations in Florida



Source: Amtrak, Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDA), and Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Database (refers to Amtrak stations that are designated to SIS).

Note: The Sunset Limited route has not been in service since August 2005 due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. It is unclear at this point when service will be resumed.

Ridership

With 988,303 passengers in 2009, Florida is one of four states outside the Northeast Corridor with relatively high Amtrak ridership. Florida passengers represent approximately 3.6 percent of Amtrak ridership nationwide. Table 3.2 shows Florida in relation to the other high-ridership states for 2009. Although Amtrak carries nearly 1 million annual passengers in Florida, much of this travel is interstate trips. For example, the busiest station within Florida is the Sanford *Auto Train* station, with 232,955 total passengers in 2009. This service is exclusively for interstate passengers. After the Sanford *Auto Train* station, Orlando has the second highest ridership, with 145,775 passengers in 2009. Tampa, Miami, Jacksonville, and West Palm Beach all had more than 50,000 passengers in 2009 and eight other stations had ridership of at least 20,000.

Table 3.2 Top Amtrak Ridership States
Millions of Passengers

Rank	State	2009 Ridership	Rank	State	2009 Ridership
1	California	11.070	7	Maryland	1.789
2	New York	9.615	8	New Jersey	1.570
3	Pennsylvania	5.528	9	Connecticut	1.560
4	Illinois	4.398	10	Washington	1.232
5	District of Columbia	4.278	11	Virginia	1.025
6	Massachusetts	2.646	12	Florida	0.988

Source: Amtrak.

Note: Northeastern Corridor states are shaded.

As Table 3.3 indicates, from 2008 to 2009, overall ridership in Florida increased by 2.6 percent, from just over 963,000 to over 988,000. Fourteen out of the 18 stations in the State experienced increases in ridership between 2008 and 2009, with 11 of these serving more than 1,000 more passengers than the previous year. The average absolute increase in ridership at Florida stations was 1,401 passengers. The Tampa station experienced the greatest relative and absolute growth in ridership, adding 10,738 passengers (a 10.7 percent increase) over 2008. In addition to Tampa, 7 stations (Winter Haven, Delray Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Okeechobee, Deerfield Beach, and Jacksonville) experienced passenger growth over 5 percent.

Table 3.3 Florida Amtrak Boardings and Alightings by Station
Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

Station	2009	2008	Percent Change	Net Change
Sanford (<i>Auto Train Station</i>)	232,955	234,839	-0.80%	-1,884
Orlando	145,775	147,491	-1.16%	-1,716
Tampa	110,857	100,119	10.73%	10,738
Miami	81,582	80,348	1.54%	1,234
Jacksonville	65,051	61,758	5.33%	3,293
West Palm Beach	54,119	52,249	3.58%	1,870
Fort Lauderdale	49,609	45,979	7.89%	3,630
Kissimmee	41,054	38,495	6.65%	2,559
Hollywood	34,532	33,372	3.48%	1,160
Winter Park	30,948	29,514	4.86%	1,434

Table 3.3 Florida Amtrak Ridership by Station (continued)
Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009

Station	2009	2008	Percent Change	Net Change
Deerfield Beach	27,506	26,044	5.61%	1,462
Deland	25,965	24,854	4.47%	1,111
Winter Haven	22,881	21,079	8.55%	1,802
Lakeland	22,212	24,179	-8.14%	-1,967
Sebring	16,982	17,945	-5.37%	-963
Palatka	12,522	12,082	3.64%	440
Delray Beach	10,232	9,448	8.30%	784
Okeechobee	3,521	3,297	6.79%	224
Total Florida Ridership	988,303	963,092	2.62%	25,211

Source: Amtrak.

Since 1980, Amtrak's Florida ridership has grown by about 58 percent, from 626,115. The railroad's peak Florida ridership occurred in 1992, with 1.2 million passengers.

Economic Impact

In 2009, Amtrak employed 750 Florida residents, generating over \$48 million in wages. During 2009, Amtrak procured \$22.9 million in goods and services in Florida, with much of the money spent in Jacksonville (\$5.5 million), Lake Mary (\$4.6 million), St Petersburg (\$3.1 million), Tampa (\$2.0 million), Fort Lauderdale (\$2.0 million) and Boca Raton (\$1.4 million). Expenditures in Jacksonville are primarily due to the concentration of railroad equipment maintenance firms in the Jacksonville area. Amtrak's Hialeah maintenance facility performs light overhauls for Viewliner, Amfleet, and Heritage cars for Silver Service trains. Amtrak also operates a maintenance facility in Sanford (near Lake Mary), which services the Superliner cars of the *Auto Train*.

Travel Times Compared to Automobiles and Airplanes

Of the more than 988,000 annual passengers on Amtrak in Florida, most of this travel was interstate trips. Florida intercity passenger rail travel is very low in comparison to intercity highway and airline travel. One of the principal reasons is the slower travel times. Table 3.4 provides a comparison of some transit times for autos, planes, and rail. All air travel times include one extra hour to allow for check-in and security, though no extra time was added for travel to and from the airport or train station. Averaged across these five markets, air travel is 1 hour and 30 minutes faster than autos, and autos are 2 hours and 23 minutes faster than rail.

Table 3.4 Comparison of Modal Travel Time for Select Florida Cities

	Highway Mileage^a	Automobile^a	Airplane^b	Amtrak
Jacksonville-Tampa	197	3 hours, 28 minutes	4 hours, 10 minutes ^b	5 hours, 13 minutes
Jacksonville-Miami	344	5 hours, 15 minutes	2 hours, 20 minutes	9 hours, 7 minutes
Orlando-Miami	237	3 hours, 41 minutes	1 hour, 55 minutes	5 hours, 45 minutes
Tampa-Miami	281	4 hours, 20 minutes	1 hour, 59 minutes	5 hours, 45 minutes
Average		4 hours, 25 minutes	2 hours, 55 minutes	6 hours, 48 minutes

Source: Cambridge Systematics.

Notes:

- ^a Highway mileage and automobile times obtained from Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com>). No allowance is made for congestion.
- ^b Airplane times were obtained from Expedia.com, sorted by shortest time. One hour was added to all air travel times to allow for airport check-in and security. There were no direct flights between Jacksonville and Pensacola or Jacksonville and Tampa. The shortest trip time for each trip was 3 hours and 10 minutes, which includes a connection in Atlanta. Times allow for the time zone change.

Another issue reducing the competitiveness of current intercity passenger rail service in Florida is the low-frequency and off-peak travel times. In the markets listed, there are usually one or two rail departures per day. Jacksonville to Miami, for example, has two rail trips on an average weekday. One departs at 7:15 a.m. and the other at 9:48 a.m. Air, in contrast, offers four nonstop trips from Jacksonville to Miami departing at 6:30 a.m., 11:15 a.m., 4:40 p.m., and 6:05 p.m. on the same weekday.

To provide another contrast, New York City to Washington, D.C., and Jacksonville to Tampa are both approximately 225 miles apart. Business travelers in the New York-D.C. corridor can select from any of the hourly departures of the Acela Express Metroliner trains (two hours and 50 minutes travel time) or the regional trains that run between the Metroliner service (approximately 3.5 hours travel time). The flexibility of schedule and the time savings to the business traveler make passenger rail a competitive, viable option to air travel for New York-D.C. travel. The 5 hours and 13 minutes travel time in the Jacksonville-Tampa corridor make it difficult for a traveler to justify the lost opportunity costs from time that could have been used conducting business.

Commuter Services

Florida's only commuter rail, Tri-Rail is operated by the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) and covers a 72-mile-long corridor (142.2 directional route miles) between West Palm Beach and Miami. Tri-Rail has 18 stations along the

south Florida coast including 5 stations in Miami-Dade County, 7 in Broward County, and 6 in Palm Beach County. In 2008, Tri-Rail was ranked 11th among 22 commuter rail systems nationwide, with more than 4.3 million annual unlinked trips in southeast Florida. The total number of Tri-Rail passengers increased by 13.2 percent from 2007 numbers. This is the result of the growth in population in southeast Florida and growing traffic congestion, as well as an increased interest in alternative transportation options despite fuel prices decreases throughout 2008.

History

Tri-Rail began operations on January 9, 1989 as a demonstration commuter rail project to alleviate highway congestion during the widening of I-95. Table 3.5 describes the timeline of Tri-Rail from 1985 to the first half of 2009.

Table 3.5 Tri-Rail Timeline of Major Events

1984-1985	Final Planning Studies completed, allowing early organizers to take additional steps in preparing the region for commuter rail service.
1986	Tri-County Rail Organization (TCRO) formed through an interlocal agreement made between Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. The agreement authorizes TCRO to eventually manage regional commuter rail operations.
1989	Tri-County Commuter Rail Authority (Tri-Rail) created through Florida Statutes, replacing TCRO.
2003	Tri-Rail transformed into South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA) through legislation signed by Governor Jeb Bush. SFRTA is empowered by the State to enhance the movement of people and goods to improve economic viability and quality of life in South Florida.
2006	The number of daily weekday trains is increased from 30 to 40.
2007	SFRTA completes its double-tracking project, including the New River bridge span in Fort Lauderdale. The number of weekday trains is increased from 40 to 50.
2008	Tri-Rail carries a record-breaking 4,303,509 passengers, representing a 26.3 percent increase over the 2007 total of 3,408,486 passengers.
July 2009	SFRTA is awarded approximately \$2.5 million in stimulus funds, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Categorized under Urbanized Area Formula Funds, this grant will allow for the SFRTA/Tri-Rail to purchase one new locomotive fully covered by Federal funds.
December 2009	The December 2009 Special Legislative Session on Rail – provided Tri-Rail with additional operating funding of \$13.3 million if the agency continues to operate as is or an additional \$15 million if the agency takes over maintenance and dispatching of the South Florida Rail Corridor from CSXT.

Source: Cambridge Systematics.

Current Operations

Tri-Rail currently operates 25 daily round-trips on weekdays and 8 on weekends and major holidays. With the completion of the double-tracking project, service frequency has been increased to mostly hourly service with half hourly service during the peak hours, running from 4 am to midnight during the weekdays. All trips cover the entire 72-mile Tri-Rail route between the Mangonia Park (West Palm Beach area) and Miami Airport Stations. The map in Figure 3.2 shows the locations of commuter rail stations along the Tri-Rail line.

Figure 3.2 Tri-Rail Commuter Rail System Map



Source: Tri-Rail (South Florida Transportation Authority).

The corridor that Tri-Rail operates over is owned by FDOT, which acquired it from CSX Transportation in 1988 with CSXT retaining an exclusive perpetual freight easement. CSXT currently provides dispatching for the corridor and maintenance of its track and

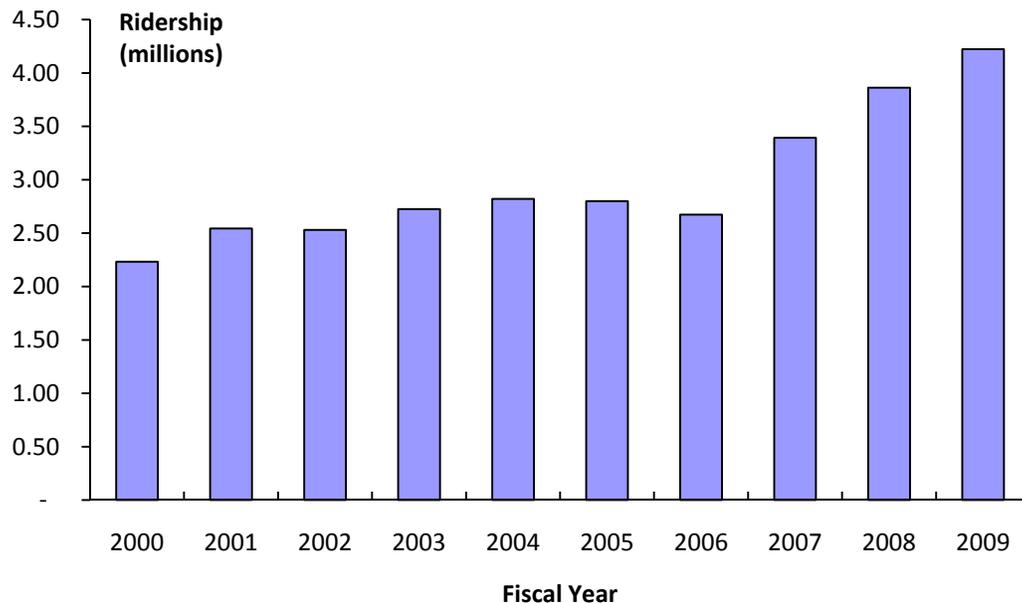
signals under the Operating and Maintenance Agreement Phase A (OMAPA) with FDOT. SFRTA, Amtrak, and CSXT share the use of the corridor.

SFRTA is not a party to OMAPA; CSXT and FDOT are the signatories. SFRTA is FDOT's commuter rail service operator within SFRC. CSXT and FDOT have negotiated another agreement, which is titled South Florida Operating Management Agreement (SFOMA) that could, in the future replace OMAPA. SFOMA would turn over dispatch and maintenance of the corridor to FDOT. It would also give FDOT control over the operating rules used on the corridor. It is FDOT's intention to transfer those responsibilities to SFRTA. The terms of the transfer are still under discussion between SFRTA and FDOT.

Ridership

Since 2006, when it showed the largest percentage of passenger growth of any system in the country, Tri-Rail has consistently been one of the nation's leaders for ridership growth in the commuter rail sector. Tri-Rail carried 4.22 million passengers in FY 2009, representing a 9.3 percent increase over the 2008 total. Ridership on Tri-Rail has grown steadily since its formation, with some slight upward and downward fluctuation from year to year. Ridership has increased significantly the past three years. The chart in Figure 3.3 illustrates recent Tri-Rail ridership trends.

Figure 3.3 Annual Tri-Rail Ridership
Unlinked Trips (in Millions)



Source: South Florida Regional Transportation Authority.

SFRTA’s commuter operations are comparable to many other commuter rail operations around the country. For example, Dallas, San Jose, and Southern Connecticut each have one commuter line. Seattle and Northern Virginia both have service on two commuter lines. Table 3.6 compares general line characteristics for each of these commuter train operations. Dallas’s system is by far the smallest, while Seattle’s system is the newest.

Table 3.6 Rail Line Characteristics for Selected Commuter Operations

Agency	Fixed Guideway Directional Route Miles	Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service	Beginning Date of Service	Service Runs	Time to Run Length of Service
South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA)	142.2	34	1989	West Palm Beach to Miami	110 minutes
Trinity Railway Express (TRE)	29.0	21	1996	Dallas to Fort Worth	65 minutes
Virginia Railway Express (VRE)	161.5	75	1992	Manassas to D.C., Fredericksburg to D.C.	75 minutes 95 minutes
Altamont Commuter Express (ACE)	172.0	18	1998	Stockton to San Jose	130 minutes
Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT)	101.2	22	1990	New London to New Haven	50 minutes
Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (ST)	146.9	35	2000 2003	Tacoma to Seattle, Everett to Seattle	60 minutes 60 minutes

Sources: 2007 National Transit Database, Agency web sites.

Table 3.7 shows complete data on performance measures for the sample of commuter train operations. Based on 2007 operating statistics, SFRTA operating expenses are second largest at \$43 million, and its fare revenues cover about 17 percent of total operating costs. Virginia Railway Express (VRE), which is a larger system, is the only agency with a larger operating cost, but the agency’s farebox revenues cover a larger amount of operating costs – about 43 percent. None of the other agencies serve more than a small fraction of the revenue miles that SFRTA and VRE serve. Both agencies annually run excess of 1.7 million passenger-miles, while the next largest agency – Altamont Commuter Express (ACE) – offers only 780,000.

Table 3.7 Rail Performance Measures for Selected Commuter Operations

Agency	Operating Expenses	Annual Passenger-Miles	Annual Vehicle Revenue Miles	Annual Unlinked Trips	Operating Expense Per Passenger-Mile	Operating Expense Per Annual Vehicle Revenue-Mile
South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA)	\$43,306,781	107,980,836	2,558,956	3,408,486	\$0.40	\$16.92
Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)	\$20,919,797	16,530,552	552,623	1,476,088	\$1.27	\$37.86
Virginia Railway Express (VRE)	\$46,192,429	103,229,455	1,771,079	3,386,974	\$0.45	\$26.08
Altamont Commuter Express (ACE)	\$10,879,259	33,612,734	780,192	706,858	\$0.32	\$13.94
Connecticut Department of Transportation (CDOT)	\$10,917,972	9,086,541	588,755	466,406	\$1.20	\$18.54
Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (ST)	\$24,631,997	52,987,255	737,582	2,156,652	\$0.46	\$33.40

Source: 2007 National Transit Database.

SFRTA also has the second highest cost-effectiveness and service efficiency in comparison to its counterparts. With operating expenses per passenger-mile of \$0.40, SFRTA was slightly less efficient than ACE, but performed significantly better than Dallas and Connecticut. SFRTA's operating expenses per vehicle revenue-mile were \$16.92, again slightly higher than ACE, but significantly lower than Dallas, VRE, and Seattle. Dallas had the highest operating expenses per passenger-mile and vehicle revenue-mile, at \$1.27 and \$37.86, respectively.

Other Rail-Based Systems

In addition to Tri-Rail, which is a commuter railroad, there are several rail-based passenger transportation systems operating in the State of Florida. These include Miami's Metrorail and Metromover, the TECO Line Streetcar System in Tampa, and Jacksonville's Skyway system. A brief description of each of these systems, along with their corresponding route maps, is provided below.

- **Metrorail**, operated by the Miami-Dade Transit Agency, is an electrically powered, elevated, rapid-transit heavy rail system extending from Kendall through South Miami, Coral Gables, and downtown Miami; to the Civic Center/Jackson Memorial Hospital area; and to Brownsville, Liberty City, Hialeah, and Medley in northwest Miami-Dade, with connections to Broward and Palm Beach counties at the Tri-Rail/Metrorail transfer station. Metrorail has 22 stations connecting a major portion of Miami-Dade County's businesses, cultural, and shopping centers (See Figure 3.4). Travel from one end of the 22.6-mile system to the other takes 47 minutes, with top speeds of 58 mph and average speeds of 31 mph. The Metrorail system, which first opened in May 1984, currently has 136 cars, with a capacity of 164 passengers per car. Metrorail averaged approximately 60,200 weekday boardings and 59,900 weekend boardings in January 2009. Total ridership in FY 2008 was over 18.5 million, a 5.9 percent increase from FY 2007 ridership figures.⁵¹
- **Metromover**, located in Miami, is the largest automated guideway in the United States. It is operated by the Miami-Dade Transit Agency, has more than 8.5 directional route miles, and serves 20 stations. This electrically powered, fully automated peplemover system, which first opened in April 1986, currently operates free of charge and has 29 cars, with a capacity of 96 passengers per car. Metromover has a downtown inner loop and Omni/Brickell outer loop. These loops connect with Metrorail at Government Center and Brickell stations (see Figure 3.5). Weekday Metromover boardings for January 2009 averaged 25,500 and weekend boardings averaged 28,400. Total ridership in FY 2008 was over 8.8 million, a 2.5 percent increase from FY 2007.⁸

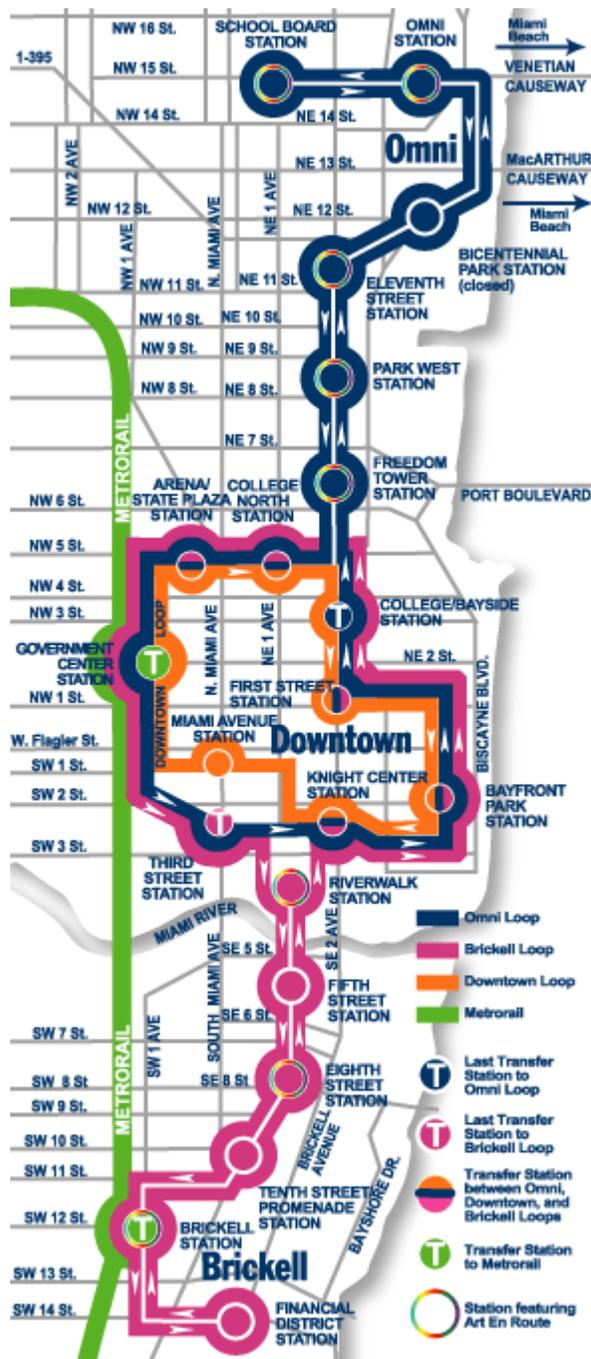
⁵¹Miami-Dade County Metrorail web site. Available: <http://www.co.miami-dade.fl.us/transit/metrorail.asp>.

Figure 3.4 Metrorail System Map



Source Miami-Dade County Metrorail web site. Available: <http://www.co.miamidade.fl.us/transit/metrorailstations.asp>.

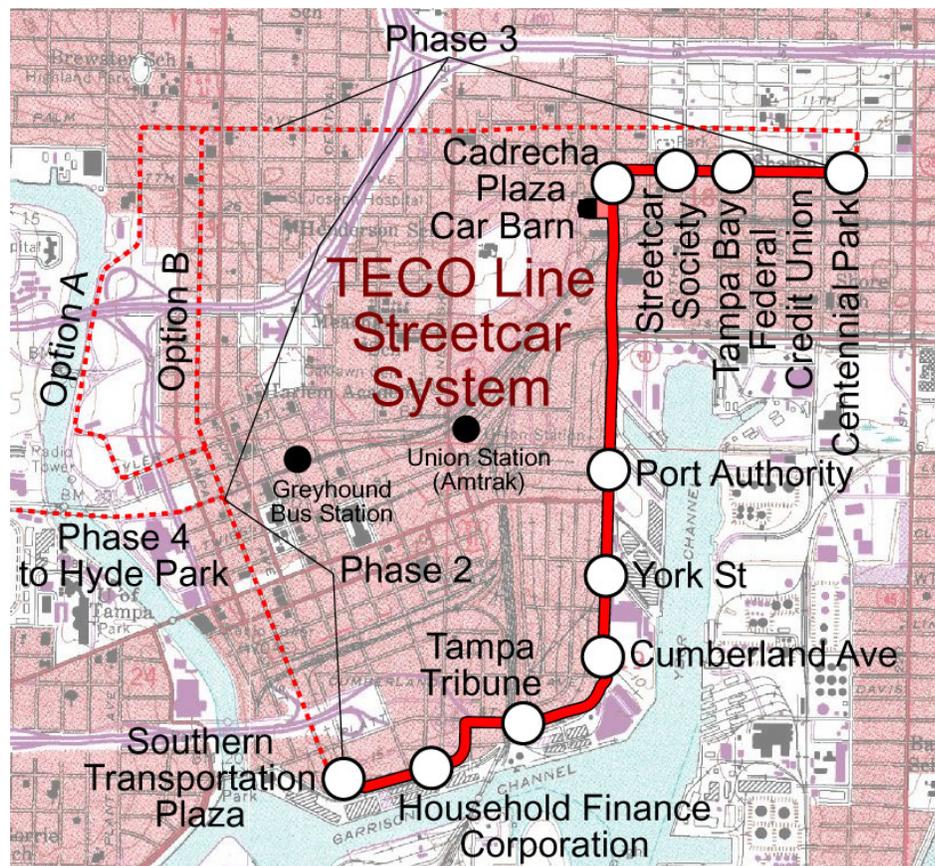
Figure 3.5 Metromover System Map



Source Miami-Dade County Metrorail web site. Available: <http://www.co.miamidade.fl.us/transit/moverstations.asp>.

- **TECO Line Streetcar System** (light rail), operated by the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (Tampa/Ybor City), offers 10 station stops along 4.6 directional route miles. The city used to have an electric streetcar system until 1946 following World War II. Streetcars returned to Tampa in 2002 with the opening of the heritage line; this phase of the TECO Line Streetcar System is a 2.4-mile section that connects the downtown, Channelside and Ybor City, improving transportation capacity, supporting Tampa's thriving cruise industry and transporting workers to and from their jobs (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 TECO Line Streetcar System Map



Source: Wikipedia.org.

- The next phase of the system will be a 0.3-mile extension that will run north on Franklin Street to Whiting Street and the Fort Brooke parking garage. It will connect the more than 35,000 people who work in the downtown area to almost every major downtown parking structure with an anticipated operating date of December 2010.
- **JTA Skyway.** The JTA Skyway is a people mover monorail system in Jacksonville. It is operated by the Jacksonville Transportation Authority. The course of its 2.5-mile track includes the Acosta Bridge, spanning the St. Johns River, which divides

downtown Jacksonville. Each train is automated by Automatic Train Control (ATC), can have two to six cars, and travels at up to 35 mph (56 km/h). The system serves eight stations in the region, as illustrated in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7 JTA Skyway System Map



Source: Wikipedia.org.

■ 3.3 Proposed Passenger Rail Systems

This section discusses various passenger rail systems that have been proposed in the State of Florida. These include Florida High-Speed Rail (primarily the Tampa-Orlando-Miami corridor), Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service, the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center, and various commuter rail services throughout the State. The section provides a background for each of these in addition to their current status and future outlook.

High-Speed Rail

*Background*⁵²

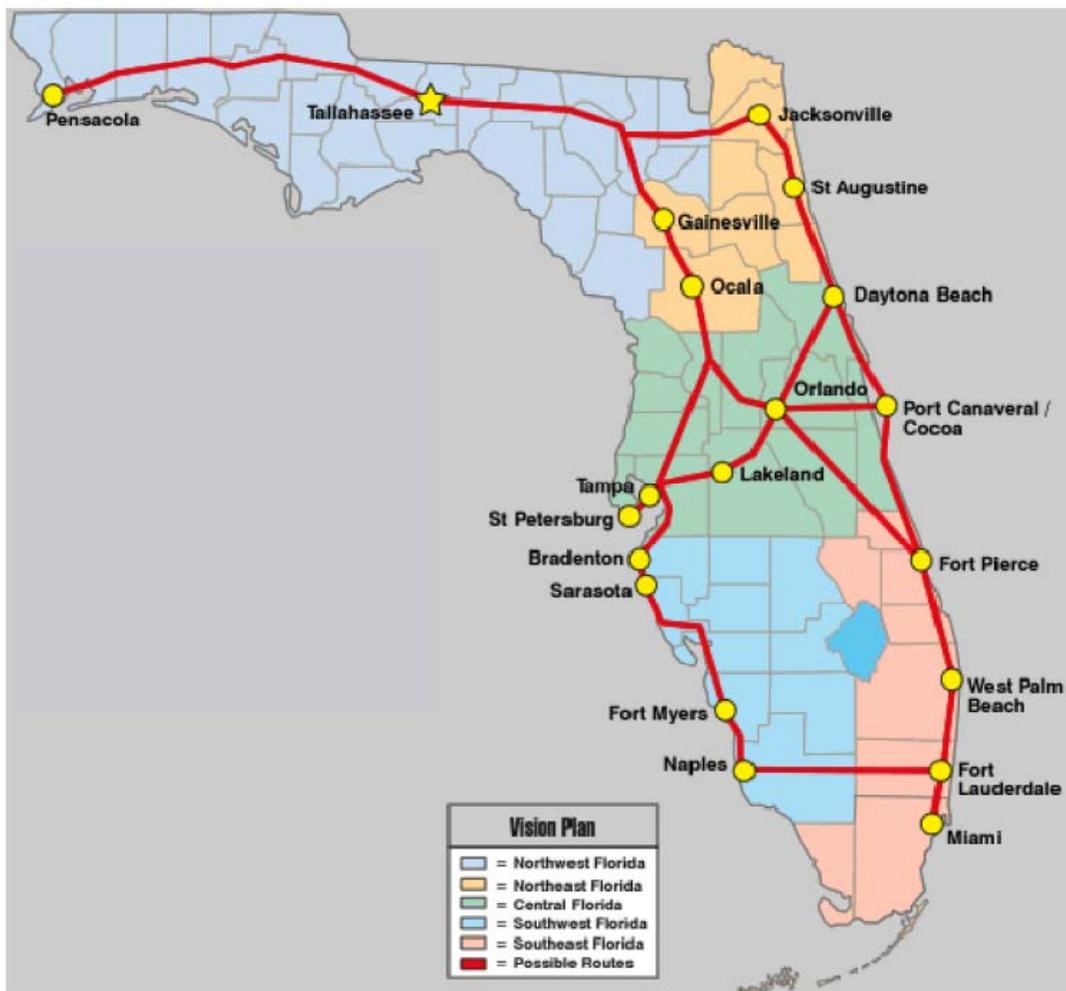
High-speed rail (HSR) operates in the 120 to 200 mph range, or faster, and requires a minimum of Class VII or greater track. The primary advantage of high-speed rail is that it expands the 75- to 300-mile competitive range of intercity service, especially providing stronger alternatives to air travel at longer distances. The primary disadvantage of high-speed rail is the cost associated with new alignments, track upgrades, rolling stock, and highway-rail grade crossing separations. The Orlando-Tampa corridor, for example, already is heavily congested with freight trains and will require a new alignment for high-speed passenger rail. Safety reasons also prompt a higher degree of separation between high-speed passenger and freight trains as well as grade separations at crossings, either through dedicated track or temporarily.

Florida has been evaluating high-speed rail since at least the mid-1970s, when the Florida Transit Corridor Study analyzed 150 mph trains operating between Daytona Beach and St. Petersburg. In the 1980s, Governor Bob Graham created the Florida High-Speed Rail Committee, which issued a report recommending public/private partnerships be formed to implement a high-speed rail network to meet Florida's mobility needs in the 21st century. In 1984, the Florida Legislature enacted the Florida High-Speed Rail Transportation Committee Act and, by 1986, a study was completed recommending a high-speed rail system connecting Miami, Orlando, and Tampa (see Figure 3.8). Proposals were received and reviewed, but eventually they were rejected by the State as too expensive. In 1992, the Florida Legislature passed the New High-Speed Rail Act, bringing FDOT into the efforts.

In 1995, FDOT announced a funding commitment of \$70 million per year for 30 years for high-speed rail. This led to a partnership with the Florida Overland Express (FOX), a consortium that proposed constructing 320 miles of new electrified, grade-separated, dedicated high-speed rail track linking Miami, Orlando, and Tampa at a total cost of \$6.1 billion. Top speeds would reach 200 mph, providing travel times of 1.5 hours between Orlando and Miami. The FOX consortium proposed debt financing with bonds fully repaid from system revenues and the \$70 million annual contribution from the State. In 1999 this effort was terminated along with FDOT's annual \$70 million funding commitment. The effort was replaced in 2000 by the more cost-effective *Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service Vision Plan* prepared by Amtrak.

⁵²Background information obtained from: <http://www.floridahighspeedrail.org/>. In particular, the document *History of High-Speed Rail in Florida: Chronology of Events*, was used.

Figure 3.8 Florida High-Speed Rail Long-Term Vision Plan



Florida High-Speed Rail from 2000 to Present

In November 2000, Florida voters approved an amendment to the State Constitution mandating the development of high-speed passenger transportation service linking Florida’s five largest urban areas. This service would have speeds in excess of 120 mph and would operate on dedicated rails or guideways. This prompted the Florida Legislature to enact the Florida High-Speed Rail Authority Act, which created the nine-member Florida High-Speed Rail Authority.

The High-Speed Rail Authority created a vision for a high-speed rail network linking the major population centers in Florida and issued a request for proposals in October 2002 to design, build, operate, maintain, and finance an initial high-speed rail service between Tampa and Orlando. The cost estimate was \$2.4 billion. The route would begin near the Tampa Central Business District and travel parallel along I-4 into Orlando and on to the Orlando International Airport. A Phase I, Part 2 extension into St. Petersburg also was planned.

Growing concern over the costs of implementing a high-speed rail network led to efforts to repeal the amendment. In November 2004, Florida voters chose to overturn the original amendment, resulting in removal of the constitutional mandate. Although the amendment has been repealed, the Florida High-Speed Rail Authority decided it was in the best interest of the State of Florida to complete the Final EIS and to pursue a Record of Decision from the FRA for the initial Tampa-Orlando segment, completing and preserving the progress to date. Since 2004, the Authority has continued the preliminary design, engineering, and procurement process for the Florida high-speed rail corridor with funds previously earmarked by the U.S. Congress.

On April 16, 2009, the Obama Administration announced a new vision for developing high-speed intercity passenger rail in America. This vision, outlined in the administration's *High-Speed Rail Strategic Plan*, calls for collaboration between Federal Government, States, railroads, and other stakeholders to develop a national system of high-speed rail corridors. Eleven designated corridors, including the Tampa-Orlando-Miami high-speed rail corridor, are addressed in the plan (see Figures 3.9 and 3.10), which details the application requirements and procedures for obtaining a portion of \$8.0 billion in high-speed rail funding appropriated through the ARRA.

Furthermore, two more corridors, Jacksonville to Orlando and Mobile to Jacksonville, were designated as key passenger rail routes which could be next in receiving designation and funding for high-speed rail service. A Jacksonville to Orlando line would be next in priority after the Tampa-Orlando and Orlando-Miami lines have been completed.

Figure 3.9 Designated National High-Speed Rail Network



Source: *High-Speed Rail Strategic Plan.*

Figure 3.10 Tampa-Orlando-Miami High-Speed Rail Corridor



Source: FDOT - <http://www.floridahighspeedrail.org/>.

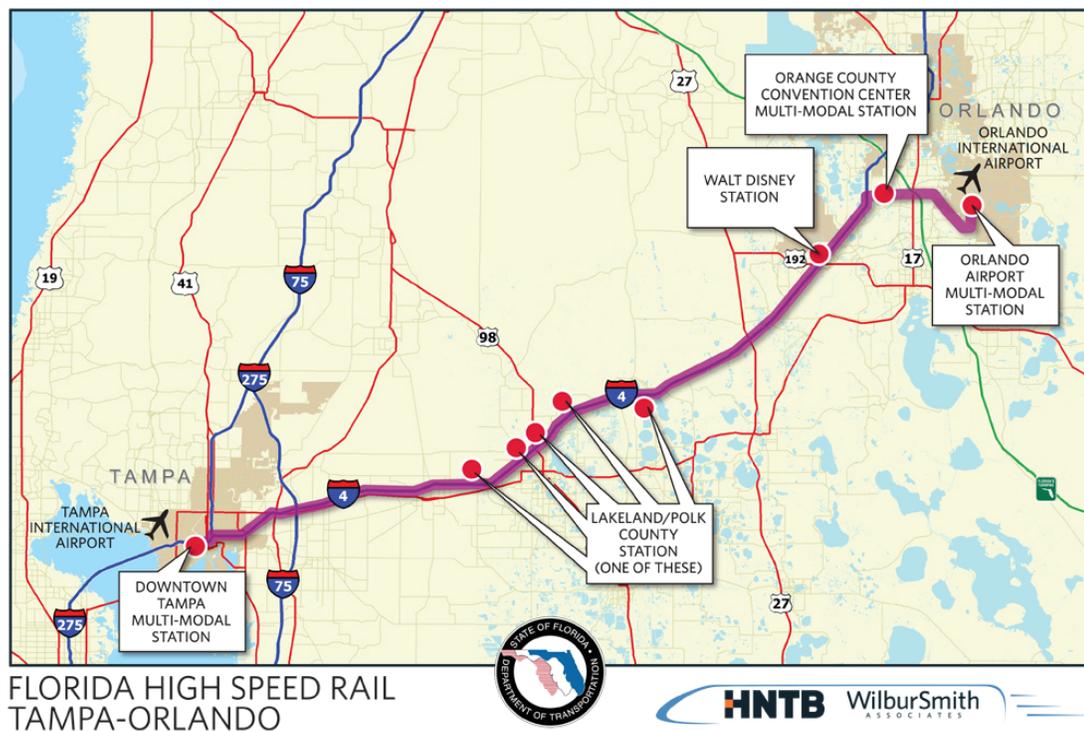
Tampa-Orlando Corridor

In January of 2010, Florida DOT received a \$1.25 billion award for the first phase of the aforementioned project. This investment will initiate the development of the Tampa to Orlando segment, with speeds reaching 168 mph and 16 round-trips per day on new track dedicated solely to high-speed rail. Trip time between the two cities on the new line will be less than one hour, compared to around 90 minutes by car. This project will create jobs and generate economic activity as 84 miles of track are constructed, stations are built or enhanced, and equipment is purchased. Completion of this phase is anticipated in 2015.⁵³

⁵³<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/fact-sheet-high-speed-intercity-passenger-rail-program-tampa-orlando-miami>.

Florida is planning five stations along this corridor (see Figure 3.11), and will have strong connections with existing road, bus, and transit systems. For example, plans at the Orlando International Airport (OIA) call for high-speed rail to stop at a new southern terminal, which it would share with a proposed extension of SunRail and a future light rail system. The International Drive (I-Drive) stop is located at the southern end of the I-Ride trolley route and is served by Lynx. The Tampa station is at the north end of the HART bus transit mall. Proposed light rail service in Tampa would run directly to the high-speed rail station. All stations will feature parking and rental car facilities and will have a full set of rail passenger services available. Each station also will have air-conditioned waiting areas and convenience services for ticketed passengers.⁵⁴

Figure 3.11 Planned Stations along Tampa-Orlando Corridor



Source: FDOT - <http://www.floridahighspeedrail.org/>.

Moving forward, FDOT is responsible for building the project with oversight by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). The Federal government is the principal funding source for the project, and FRA is responsible for administering the \$1.25 billion award of ARRA funds and any other future Federal funding. It is expected that the FRA and FDOT

⁵⁴<http://www.floridahighspeedrail.org/>.

will develop a funding agreement for the balance of the project's capital costs as the project progresses.

The project received a Record of Decision from the FRA on May 7, 2010, which allows FDOT to proceed with right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction. U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood announced in Orlando on May 27, 2010 that Florida received \$66.7 million out of \$80 million in ARRA funds being made available nationwide. This money will fund FDOT's work program for 2010 that includes taking the project to 30 percent design, updating ridership projections and preparing for issuance of bid documents in early 2011.

Project construction (for this corridor) will likely occur in two phases. The first phase is a proposed Early Works Safety Project, which will involve elimination of I-4 median obstacles and construction of at-grade permanent safety barriers. This work is expected to begin in early 2011.

FDOT also is planning to bid out the main part of the project early next year. Private consortiums will be asked to submit bids to complete the design of the system, then build, operate, and maintain it. FDOT's goal is to secure construction bids and have the private sector cover operating costs. FDOT expects to select the private vendor in 2011. Construction is projected to start in 2012 and system operation is scheduled for 2015. These schedules are subject to approval by the FRA.

Orlando-Miami Corridor

The second phase of the project, the 230-mile Orlando to Miami line, is scheduled for completion in 2017 and is expected to operate at speeds up to 186 mph, reducing travel time between these two cities to approximately two hours, or roughly half as long as it takes to drive the same route. Ultimately, 20 round-trips per day between Orlando and Miami are planned. Although no Federal funds are currently available for this segment, significant planning activities are ongoing to prepare for this second phase of Florida's high-speed rail vision should funding be put in place for further high-speed rail development. These activities include cost evaluation and environmental impacts of various alignments along corridor. This planning work is expected to take approximately 30 months.

Anticipated Costs

The total anticipated capital cost for infrastructure, right-of-way, and rolling stock for the Orlando-Tampa corridor is \$3.5 billion. Infrastructure and rolling stock for the Orlando-Miami corridor is estimated at \$8 billion. Right-of-way costs for this corridor have not yet been determined.

Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service

Background

In response to continued economic and population growth in Florida and increasing pressure on the State's transportation network to provide mobility and transportation choices for residents and visitors, FDOT developed the 2006 Intercity Passenger Rail Vision Plan. The plan identifies potential higher-speed intercity rail corridors to assist in meeting Florida's growing mobility needs and calls for an incremental and phased approach to the implementation of a Statewide intercity passenger rail system. It was developed based on the financial and economic objectives of the U.S. DOT and FRA. The plan aims to:

- Develop an affordable Statewide intercity passenger rail system that will connect all major urban regions in the State that are not commonly served by air or rail;
- Use a combination of Florida East Coast (FEC) and CSXT rights-of-way with inland and coastal options as well as segments of highway corridors already owned by FDOT and other public and partner entities; and
- Develop a system that is eligible for Federal funding by meeting FRA's public-private partnership (P3), financial, and benefit/cost requirements.

Potential Corridors for Florida Intercity Passenger Service

Based on future intercity travel market projections and the objectives listed above, the Florida Vision Plan evaluated two independent routes that connect Miami, Orlando, Tampa, and Jacksonville (see Figure 3.10). The first traveled along the coast (the Coastal Route) from Miami to Jacksonville with a westbound branch, connecting just North of Cocoa Beach, that linked Tampa and Orlando. The second option was the inland route which traveled from Miami to West Palm beach along the coast and then moved inland to Winter Haven (through Sebring); this track would connect to a Tampa-to-Jacksonville corridor moving through Orlando and Sanford. The plan was for either of these alternatives to be implemented over four phases, culminating in 2020 or 2025.

Recently, however, there have been new developments in the region that have altered the plan moving forward. These include the High-Speed Rail initiative discussed earlier, as well as Amtrak as well as efforts to restore Amtrak service on the Florida East Coast Railway from Jacksonville to Miami. FDOT is currently seeking Federal funding to develop this latter service under the FRA's High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program. The proposed service would provide twice daily round-trip service with interim stops in St. Augustine, Daytona Beach, Titusville, Cocoa, Melbourne, Vero Beach, Fort Pierce, and Stuart. The proposed service will follow the FEC rail line from Jacksonville to West Palm Beach, then crossover to the South Florida Rail Corridor (Tri-Rail) and follow that line down to Miami.

Amtrak Gulf Coast Service⁵⁵

On July, 2009 Amtrak published the Gulf Coast Service Plan, which highlighted three options for service restoration along the Gulf Coast, between New Orleans (LA) and Sanford (FL).

Background

In 1993, Amtrak's Sunset Limited, which operated between Los Angeles and New Orleans, was extended east from New Orleans to Jacksonville, and initially to Miami, Florida. This created a new transcontinental Amtrak route and brought passenger rail service to the Gulf Coast Region between New Orleans and Jacksonville. In August 2005, Sunset Limited service east of New Orleans was suspended due to Hurricane Katrina, which caused massive damage to rail infrastructure on the portion of the train's route between New Orleans, Louisiana and Mobile, Alabama. The service remains suspended today because of the cost and challenges associated with restoring service to this route.

Amtrak's suspension halted intercity passenger rail service at thirteen stations, six of which were located in Florida. These are: Pensacola, Florida

- Crestview, Florida (Ft. Walton Beach);
- Chipley, Florida (Panama City);
- Tallahassee, Florida;
- Madison, Florida; and
- Lake City, Florida.

Preferred Options for Service Restoration

Amtrak initially evaluated 12 alternatives, described in more detail in Section IV of the report, for restoring service between New Orleans, and Florida. Of the 12 alternatives, three were selected as preferred options for evaluation in the study based upon projected ridership, revenue, operating costs, and operating loss.

The preferred options are:

1. Restore tri-weekly Sunset Limited service between Los Angeles and Orlando.
2. Extend the daily City of New Orleans service, which currently operates between Chicago and New Orleans, and east from New Orleans to Orlando.
3. Implement daily stand-alone overnight service between New Orleans and Orlando.

⁵⁵ Amtrak Gulf Coast Service Plan – <http://www.amtrak.com/>

Table 3.8 below highlights some of the key metrics from the three options evaluated as part of the Service Plan Report. As illustrated, Option 1 results in annual operating losses of \$4.8 million with 53 thousand passengers and a farebox recovery ratio of 56%. While the annual ridership increases with the other two options, the increased operating costs would lead to annual losses of \$11.7 and \$18.4 million, for options 2 and 3 accordingly, with recovery ratios of 44% and 23%.

Table 3.8 Amtrak Gulf Coast Service Options - Key Metrics

Projected Performance	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Capital/Mobilization Costs	\$32.70	\$57.6-\$96.6	\$57.6-\$96.6
Direct Operating Contribution/Loss	(\$4.80)	(\$11.70)	(\$18.40)
Farebox Recovery	56%	44%	23%
Annual Ridership	53,300	96,100	79,900

Note: Dollar figures are in millions

For Florida the main difference between the three options will be the frequency of the service and the markets that will be served outside of the State. The Florida-portion of the route would be the same under the three scenarios.

The next step for Amtrak is to identify the preferred option for service restoration and provide the additional funding for capital and ongoing operating costs that will be required to implement that option. Once these actions are taken, Amtrak will move quickly to initiate the steps required for service restoration, if such an option is chosen. It should be noted that the States are likely going to be absorbing the annual operating losses.

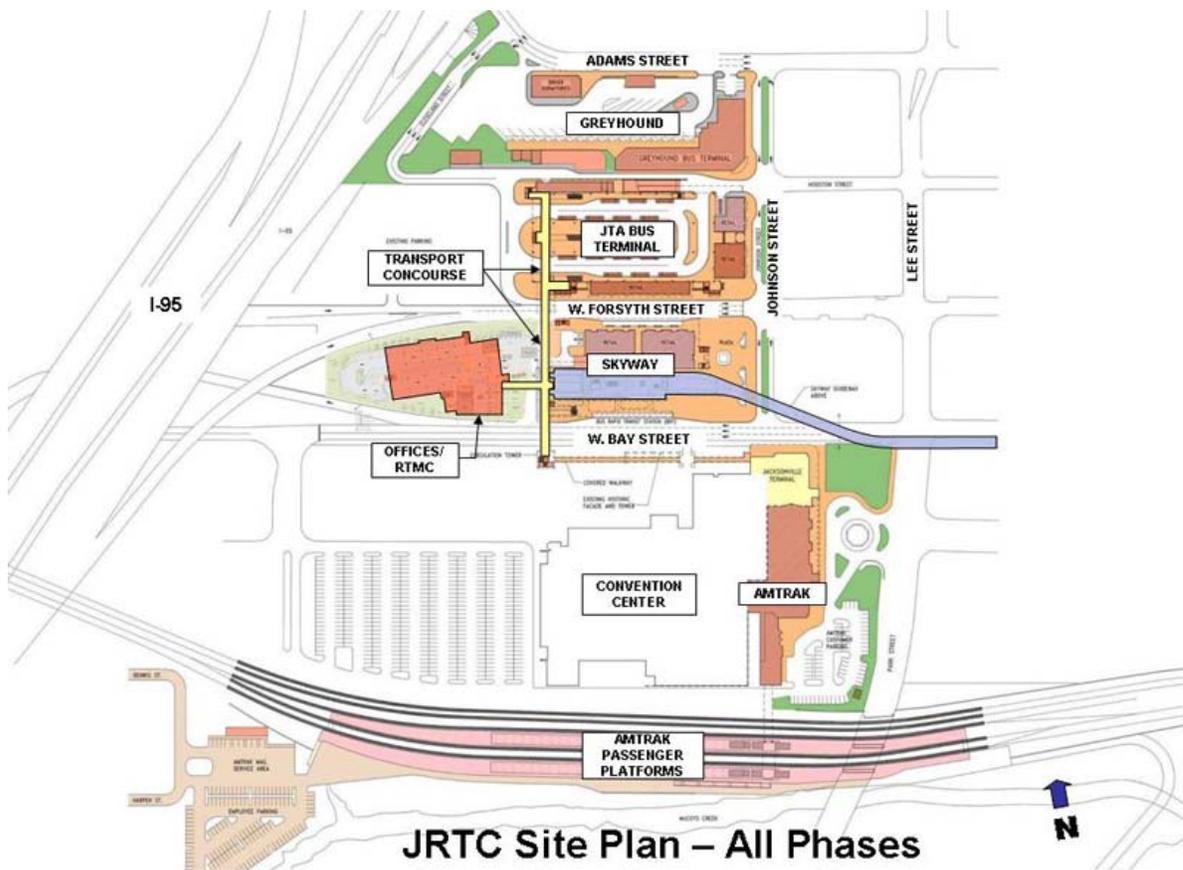
Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center

A separate proposal, which supports the *Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service Vision Plan* is the \$172.5 million refurbishing of the Jacksonville (Prime Osborn) Terminal into a multimodal regional transportation center. Once completed, the modernized Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center (JRTC) will serve the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) buses, the Skyway, Greyhound, Amtrak, and potential future commuter rail services. The JTC will also contain 2,200 parking spaces, over 30,000 square feet of retail space, and offices for the JTA. A regional Transportation Management Center, housed in the JRTC will manage all traffic operations throughout the region from a central site.

Most relevant to this Rail Plan is the proposal to relocate the current Amtrak station at Clifford Lane to the proposed JRTC (see Figure 3.12). This will require construction of track to connect the JRTC with the CSXT mainline (Amtrak's current route). Current designs will allow Amtrak trains to access and exit from the CSXT line with minimal delay and with minimal impact on freight service. Also part of the proposal is a connection to the Florida East Coast mainline, to facilitate possible passenger service over that route.

The project is planned to be implemented in phases. Schematic designs have been completed and Environmental Assessment draft documents have been approved by FHWA and FTA for all modes in the entire complex. FDOT is at 90 percent full design for the Phase 1 Module, and the JTA has started detail design for the Intercity Bus Terminal, with appraisals underway for the couple of private parcels needed. Construction was set to begin in 2009, but due to funding issues it had to be placed on hold. JTA is continuing to apply for Federal assistance for construction funding, and may obtain support from FDOT. Once funding starts flowing in, JTA will begin construction of the first phase.

Figure 3.12 Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center Site Plan





Source: Jacksonville Transportation Authority.

Miami Intermodal Center (MIC)⁵⁶

In the late 1980s, with Miami-Dade's county's population growing and moving westward, local officials foresaw the need to create transportation connectivity. At the same time, the area's vital aviation industry forecast the need to decongest roadways in and around Miami International Airport, the county's foremost economic generator. Local officials asked FDOT to marshal forces to link the community's disparate transportation services and to find a way to relieve MIA of the burdensome traffic that was clogging its access roadways and terminal ramps.

Planning, Design, and Construction

In 1995, FDOT's Major Investment Study (MIS)/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the MIC was approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and in 1998 a Record of Decision by USDOT was granted giving location and design concept approval.

FDOT continues to lead the design and construction of the MIC Program in partnership with the U.S. DOT, Miami-Dade County, the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority and the SFRTA. A consultant management group assists FDOT in the planning, design and implementation of the program. Highway and access roads have been completed. Construction on a Rental Car Center began in August 2007. The structure was topped off in September 2008 and is currently 95 percent completed.

⁵⁶Miami Intermodal Center Program, <http://www.micdot.com/index.html>.

Project Overview

The MIC Program includes the Rental Car Center, Miami Central Station, MIA Mover, access roads, and major highway improvements, all to be completed by 2012 (see Figure 3.13). FDOT is pursuing private and/or public sector Joint Development projects to enhance the MIC's economic viability. Miami-Dade Transit is developing the MIC-Earlington Heights Metrorail Extension (referred to as Airport Link) bringing Metrorail service to MIA via the Miami Central Station by 2012.

The MIC will become the county's main transportation hub and will link MIA with South Florida's business and tourist destinations. The Miami Central Station will enable safe and efficient transfers between rail systems, buses, taxis, automobiles, and bicycles. Traffic at the airport's terminals will be reduced by 30 percent when all rental car companies previously found at MIA and several operating off-airport shift operations to the Rental Car Center.

Figure 3.13 Miami Intermodal Center Overview



Finance

The U.S. DOT has designated the MIC Program as a Major Project under the Transportation Infrastructure Financing Innovation Act (TIFIA) of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21). This has enabled the MIC Program to receive two loans, one for \$269 million and another for \$270 million. FDOT has repaid its initial \$15 million drawdown of the \$269 million loan and may now use that source to fund a portion of the Rental Car Center.

Funding for the MIC Program has been advanced through the TIFIA loans and an internal State Transportation Trust Fund (STTF) loan. Other major funding sources include various state and local sources and private sector fees and charges. The MIA Mover is being funded primarily by Miami-Dade County as its contribution to the program as specified in various agreements with the state and Federal government. FDOT has contributed \$100 million toward the MIA Mover's guideway, foundations, and stations located at the MIC and MIA. Joint Development will be privately funded by developers who lease MIC properties that have been set aside for that purpose.

Florida Commuter Rail Services

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

SFRTA has several expansion plans for Tri-Rail outlined in their Strategic Regional Transit Plan and Transit Development Plan. These include:

- South Florida East Coast Corridor Study;
- Jupiter Corridor;
- Expanded Passenger Service in Miami-Dade County;
- New Tri-Rail Station Analysis; and
- East-West Corridor Studies.

South Florida East Coast Corridor Study

The South Florida East Coast Corridor (SFECC) study was developed in response to the need to support existing and future passenger travel needs in Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, and Broward counties. The study, led by FDOT District 4 in partnership with local and regional agencies, is investigating various alignments and transit technologies along the SFECC. Transit technologies under consideration include buses, commuter rail, light rail, and heavy rail. Right-of-way on streets and areas parallel to the SFECC will be evaluated for the alternative transit routes.

The proposed project would provide additional north-south mobility options for area residents, visitors, and employees in addition to expanding transportation options to support existing and potential growth. The study area covers an 85-mile stretch from the

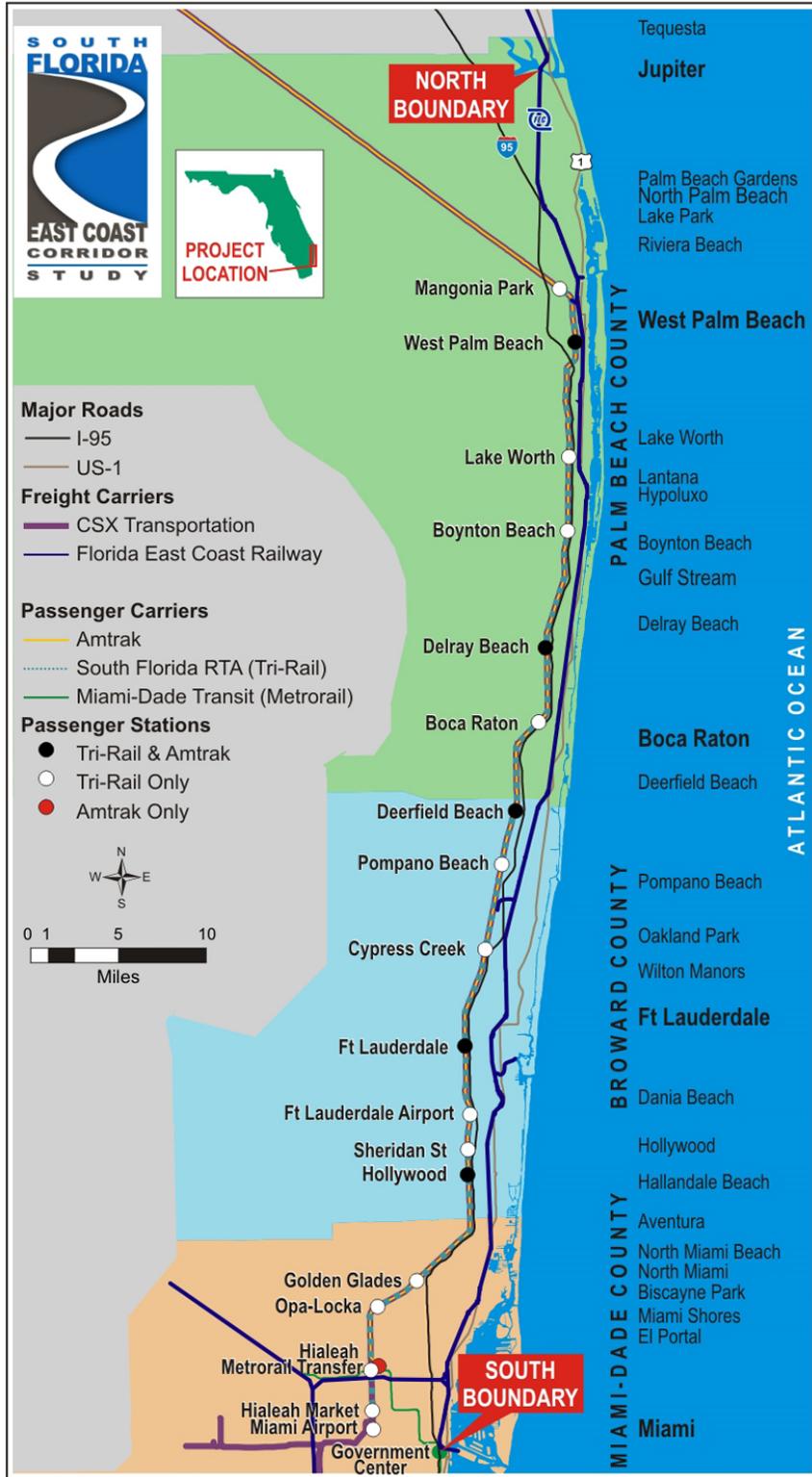
Town of Jupiter in Palm Beach County to the Central Business District (CBD) of the City of Miami (Figure 3.14).

Jupiter Corridor

The Jupiter Corridor is a proposed 15.7-mile extension of Tri-Rail from West Palm Beach to Jupiter, Florida, along FEC right-of-way. The feasibility of commuter rail service on the Jupiter Corridor and a possible extension further north into Martin County will be evaluated as part of the South Florida East Coast Corridor Study.

SFRTA views this as an early phase of the South Florida East Coast Corridor with a total estimated cost of \$250 million. For the design build phase of this northern extension the associated capital improvements, including track and signal improvements, grade crossing safety improvement, station construction, acquisition of new rolling stock and the construction of a new maintenance layover are programmed in the SFRTA five-year capital plan. According to SFRTA, final capital cost estimates and funding sources will be developed through future corridor-specific studies. Funding could be drawn from a combination of FDOT rail and transit grants, including the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS), Transportation Regional Improvement Program (TRIP), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts and other FTA programs, Palm Beach STP, and private-sector sources.

Figure 3.14 South Florida East Coast Corridor Study Area



Source: South Florida East Coast Corridor Study web site. <http://www.sfecstudy.com>.

The corridor could include a connection to the Miami Intermodal Center (MIC) located adjacent to the City of Hialeah. The project has the potential to serve and expand overall transit ridership in the southeast Florida region with connections to existing and proposed transit. This includes connecting with Metrorail, Metromover, and Metrobus services in the tri-county area.

The Phase 1 Alternatives Analysis began in September 2005 and focused on regional issues along the entire 85 miles of the corridor. In 2006, public involvement workshops were held in Broward County, Miami-Dade County, and Palm Beach County to present the alternatives developed regarding the corridor study. Results of the SFEC workshops were then presented to the MPO board for input and guidance. The Final Conceptual Alternatives Analysis is currently under review by the Federal Transit Administration.

In Phase 2, the study area was subdivided into three service segments and one corridor-length section for further analysis based on the forecasted travel patterns and market analysis. The sections are:

- **South Corridor Section** – Between a site near Miami-Dade Government Center and the Pompano Beach Tri-Rail Station via the FEC alignment;
- **Middle Corridor Section** – Between the Pompano Beach Station and the West Palm Beach Tri-Rail Station via the FEC alignment;
- **North Corridor Section** – Between the West Palm Beach Station and Jupiter via the FEC and I-95 alignments; and
- **South East Florida Corridor Section** – Extending the entire length of the corridor and incorporating the South, Middle, and North Sections.

Phase 2 will create a Master Plan for the entire corridor resulting in an overall Locally Preferred Alternative that defines modes and services on the entire FEC alignment. The Phase 2 study was expected to be completed in spring 2010.

Expanded Passenger Service in Miami-Dade County

SFRTA has identified a number of existing rail corridors in Miami-Dade County that could be utilized for passenger rail service. Tri-Rail extensions using FRA compliant commuter rail technology are envisioned in Downtown Miami (via the FEC railway) and to the West (using SFRC/CSX tracks, parallel to SR 386/Dolphin Expressway). Although commuter rail extensions to the South (using the CSX Kendall corridor and the FEC Ludlam corridor) have been proposed in the past, recent studies by the Miami-Dade MPO have recommended that these two southern corridors would be best served by light rail/streetcar or bus rapid transit due to their primarily residential character.

New Tri-Rail Station Analysis

Several new station locations have been proposed for additional evaluation and consideration for implementation along the existing Tri-Rail commuter rail line. The new

stations being evaluated include a station area that would serve the Palm Beach International Airport, a station that would serve the travel market between the existing Hollywood and Golden Glades Tri-Rail stations, and one in Boca Raton just south of Glades Road (to serve the Boca Town Center Mall area). These stations would potentially serve underutilized travel markets as well as improve the accessibility of the Tri-Rail system. Additionally, discussions have taken place among SFRTA, FDOT, and the Broward MPO to initiate analysis of a new Tri-Rail station at Oakland Park Boulevard.

Shuttle bus service would also be implemented at each of these stations in addition to existing local transit bus service. The proposed shuttle bus services for the Palm Beach International Airport station would operate at a 20-minute headway during the peak periods for the a.m. and p.m. and would include a service span that is similar to those Shuttle operations currently serving Miami International Airport and Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International airport on both weekdays and weekends to provide adequate service coverage and service to meet the specific travel markets and activity center served. Proposed shuttle service for the station between Hollywood and Golden Glades is proposed to also operate on 20-minute headways during the a.m./p.m. peak periods.

East-West Corridor Studies

SFRTA is currently conducting studies of several potential corridors for expanded Tri-Rail service:

- **Palm Beach County** – An analysis performed for SFRTA’s 2008 TDP Major Update illustrated a potential east-west travel market within Palm Beach County and recommended that SFRTA conduct a corridor study between Delray Beach Tri-Rail Station and Western Palm Beach County centered on Atlantic Boulevard. It was also recommended that SFRTA advance an East-West transit recommendation within Central Palm Beach County from the results of the Central Palm Beach Transportation Corridor Study.

Recently, however, east-west corridor priorities in Palm Beach County have changed. While the recommended Okeechobee Boulevard corridor in the Central Palm Beach Transportation Corridor Study remains a high priority for the SFRTA, PalmTran, and the Palm Beach MPO, the Atlantic Boulevard corridor was not pursued. Instead, SFRTA, FDOT, and the Palm Beach MPO have prioritized the Glades Road corridor for premium east-west transit. A new Tri-Rail station immediately south of Glades Road is being considered to complement this effort.

- **Broward County** – The 2008 analysis performed for the TDP Major Update also illustrated a potential east-west travel market along two corridors in Broward County. The analysis recommended that SFRTA lead corridor analysis and evaluation efforts for:
 - The corridor between the South Florida Rail Corridor and Western Broward County centered on McNabb Road/Cypress Creek Road between Atlantic Boulevard and Oakland Park Boulevard; and

- The corridor between the South Florida Rail Corridor and Southwestern Broward County centered on Hollywood/Pines Boulevard between Sheridan Street and Pembroke Road.

However, the east-west corridor priorities in Broward County have also changed since the SFRTA 2008 TDP Major Update. The new Broward MPO 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) emphasizes Sample Road, Oakland Park Blvd, Broward Blvd, and Hollywood/Pines Blvd as premium east-west transit corridors. Since Oakland Park Blvd has emerged as a high priority corridor for Broward County Transit (BCT), Broward MPO, and FDOT, it is now being considered as the site of a future Tri-Rail station. This new station would result in all of the premium east-west corridors in Broward being directly connected to Tri-Rail stations.

Orlando

SunRail (Central Florida Commuter Rail)

Rapid population growth in the Orlando Metropolitan Area (Orange, Osceola, and Seminole Counties) has also caused an increase in congestion throughout the region. In response, FDOT, in coordination with local funding partners in Orange, Osceola, Seminole, Volusia counties, and the City of Orlando, the Federal Transit Administration, metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) in the region, and other interested stakeholders, are advancing the commuter rail line SunRail (formerly referred to as the Central Florida Commuter Rail Transit project, with service expected to begin operation in 2013).

Background

In August 2006, Governor Jeb Bush announced an agreement in principle between FDOT and CSXT that included the purchase of the 61 miles of tracks from the freight company and granted the State complete operations, maintenance, and dispatch controls of the South and Central Florida Rail Corridors. CSXT would retain easement for exclusive freight operations along the Central Florida Corridor from midnight to 5:00 a.m. The State will have 12 hours of exclusive daytime commuter passenger rail operations from 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. During the remaining seven hours, both passenger and freight cars will use the tracks. CSXT will divert most of its through trains from the “A” Line that runs through Orlando to the “S” Line running from Jacksonville to Wildwood through Ocala.

In November 2007, the State agreed to pay \$432 million to CSXT to purchase the “A” Line from DeLand to Poinciana. In January 2009, the SunRail name and logo were publicly unveiled in Orlando. In February 2009, FDOT awarded professional services contracts to

Archer Western Contractors Ltd. and RailWorks Track Systems, Inc. to perform track and signal work and platform construction within the CSXT right-of-way.⁵⁷

After some legislative difficulty addressing liability insurance provisions, Governor Crist called a special session in December 2009 that not only addressed these issues, but established a comprehensive framework for Florida's current and future passenger rail system. On December 8, the Florida Legislature approved the HB 1-B Bill which authorized FDOT to complete development of the SunRail corridor pending FTA full-funding grant agreement.

Funding, Operations and Administration

In the summer of 2007 FDOT secured unanimous ratification of agreements for the governance, funding, operations and maintenance of SunRail from local funding. These agreements laid the framework for the operations and maintenance of SunRail, and secured the 25 percent local match funding commitment required to leverage up to 50 percent of the project's \$615 million capital costs from the Federal Transit Administration. In addition, the HB 1-B Bill provided a dedicated funding source for SFRTA-TriRail of at least \$13.3 million from the State Transportation Trust, to be funded by gas taxes, for operations and maintenance.⁵⁸ Among other provisions, the agreements call for FDOT to fully fund for the first seven years of the operations and maintenance deficit for SunRail, before local governments assume that responsibility in year 8 of operations.

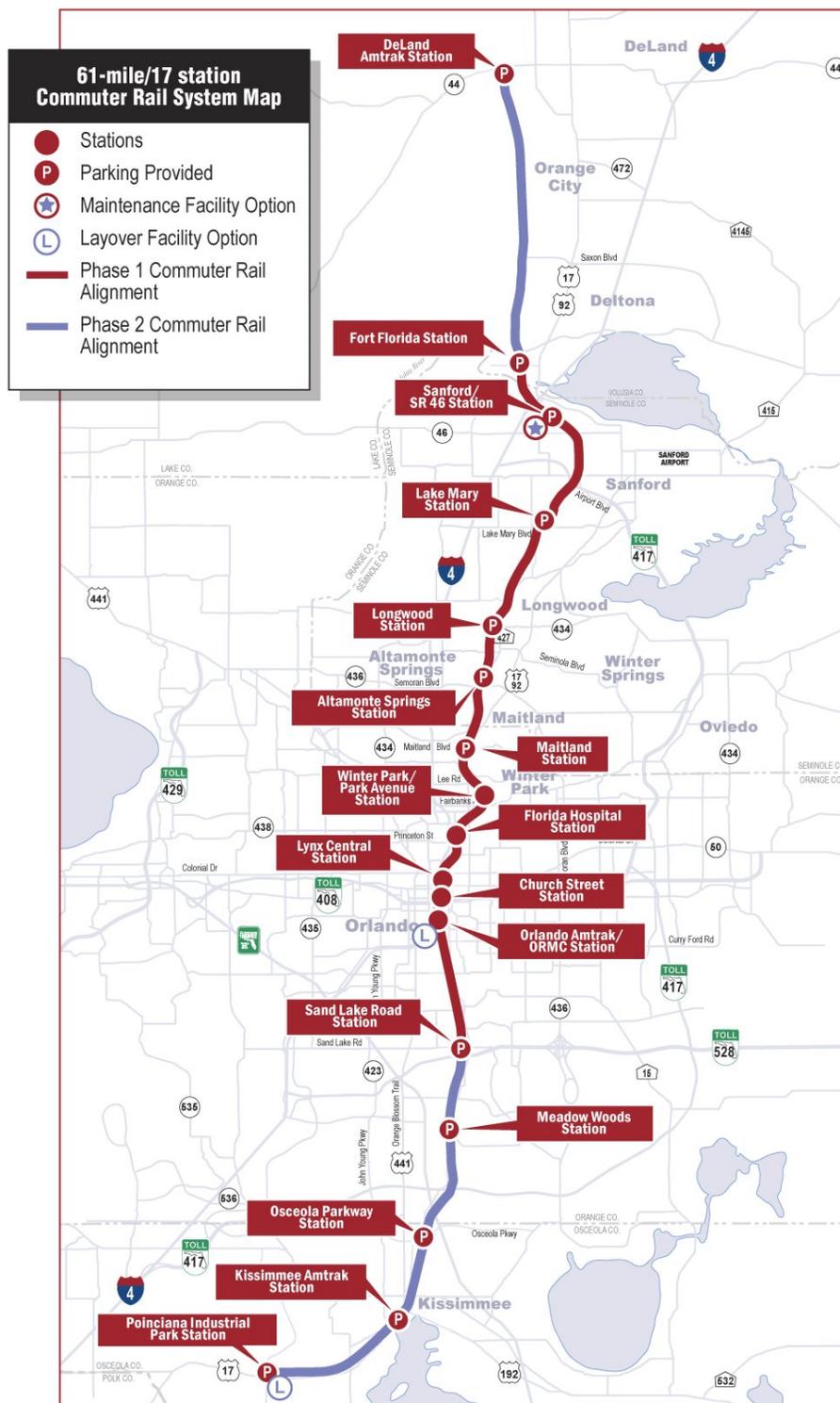
The agreements also established the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission, composed of an elected official from each of the five funding partners, that serves in an advisory capacity to FDOT prior to taking over the system. The Commission currently acts in an advisory capacity to FDOT during the construction and early operations of SunRail. Various amendments to the interlocal agreements were subsequently ratified by local funding partners and the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission in the summer of 2010.

The 61-mile system will serve 17 stations, linking DeBary in Volusia County to Poinciana, south of Kissimmee in Osceola County, and will operate over existing rail freight tracks currently owned by CSXT (see Figure 3.15). The 31-mile first phase of SunRail will serve 12 stations, from DeBary to Orlando. Phase II will serve 5 additional stations, north to DeLand and south to Poinciana. Trains will operate at speeds up to 79 mph, and service is proposed to be offered at 30-minute peak-hour headways, with off-peak service times at approximately two-hour headways. New signals and double-tracking along much of the corridor ultimately will allow SunRail to provide 15-minute peak-hour service as passenger demand increases over time.

⁵⁷FDOT Awards First SunRail Construction Contract. SunRail web site. Available: <http://www.sunrail.com/documents.asp>.

⁵⁸If SFRTA becomes responsible for maintaining and dispatching the South Florida Rail Corridor, \$15 million will be transferred annually from the State Transportation Trust Fund for operations, maintenance, and dispatch. Otherwise, \$13.3 million will be transferred annually.

Figure 3.15 SunRail (Central Florida Commuter Rail)



Source: Sunrail web site. Available: <http://www.sunrail.com/>.

Tampa

Over the past 30 years the population of the Tampa Bay area has more than doubled, employment has more than tripled, half of developable land has been built out, and the average commute time has more than doubled. By 2035 the area is expected to add another 1.8 million new residents and employment and congestion is expected to double again. To address these concerns, the Tampa Bay Area Regional Transportation Authority (TBARTA) was established by the Florida State Legislature in July 2007 and charged with implementing a Regional Transportation Master Plan for Citrus, Hernando, Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, and Sarasota Counties.

TBARTA's Long-Range Transportation Master Plan was adopted on May 22, 2009. The Mid-Term Regional Network for 2035 includes 116 miles of Short-Distance Rail (most likely light rail) investments. The Long-Term Regional Network for 2050 and beyond features 135 miles of Short-Distance Rail (most likely light rail) and 115 miles of Long-Distance Rail (heavy commuter rail) projects. Figure 3.16 illustrates the proposed Long-Term Regional Network. Projects will be prioritized and specific details will be developed through additional corridor-specific studies.

Figure 3.16 Proposed Tampa Bay Long-Term Regional Network



Source: TBARTA Regional Transportation Master Plan. <http://www.tbarta.com/plan>.

Miami

Metrorail

On June 16, 2007, Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) renamed the three planned Metrorail expansion projects the Orange Line. The Orange Line will extend the Metrorail system by 22 miles (see Figure 3.17) and be constructed in three phases:

- **Phase 1 - Miami Intermodal Center (MIC)/Earlington Heights Corridor** - The MIC/Earlington Heights Corridor is a 2.4-mile extension of the Metrorail system from the existing Earlington Heights Station. The corridor will extend along State Road 112, to the MIC near Miami International Airport. The project includes one station at the MIC, with connections to TriRail, the Metrobus system, tour buses, taxi cab service, Greyhound, a future Amtrak station, an automated People Mover to MIA, and the airport rental car facility. Project design was completed on January 31, 2008. Right-of-way is being secured, and utilities relocation is underway. The Orange Line Phase 1 is expected to open for service in late 2011. The total cost of the MIC - Earlington Heights Corridor is estimated at \$526 million, Funding sources for the Project are the half-cent sales tax from the People's Transportation Plan and \$100 million from the State of Florida.
- **Phase 2 - North Corridor** - The North Corridor is an elevated 9.2-mile, double-track, heavy-rail extension of the Miami-Dade Metrorail system. The extension will run from the existing guideway just north of the Martin Luther King Jr. station at NW 62nd Street to a new station at NW 215th Street just south of Florida's Turnpike near the Broward County line. The extension will serve several communities and key regional landmarks along the NW 27th Avenue corridor, Miami-Dade College, Dolphin Stadium, and Calder Race Course. Seven new stations will serve the extension at: NW 82nd Street, NW 119th Street at Miami-Dade College, Ali-Baba Avenue in Opa-Locka, NW 163rd Street and Bunche Park, NW 183rd Street and Miami Gardens, NW 199th Street at Dolphin Stadium, and NW 215th Street at Calder Race Course. Provisions will also be made to accommodate a future station at NW 103rd Street. The termination at NW 215th Street accommodates a future interface into Broward County. The total cost of the North Corridor is estimated at approximately \$1.5 billion in year of expenditure dollars. Phase 2 has been placed on hold indefinitely pending new funding sources.
- **Phase 3 - East-West Corridor** - The East-West Corridor will extend approximately 10.1 miles from the MIC to Florida International University. The project will include up to 10 Metrorail stations. Costs are anticipated to reach \$2.5 billion in year of expenditure dollars. The East-West Corridor has been placed on hold indefinitely pending new funding sources.

Figure 3.17 Metrorail's Orange Line

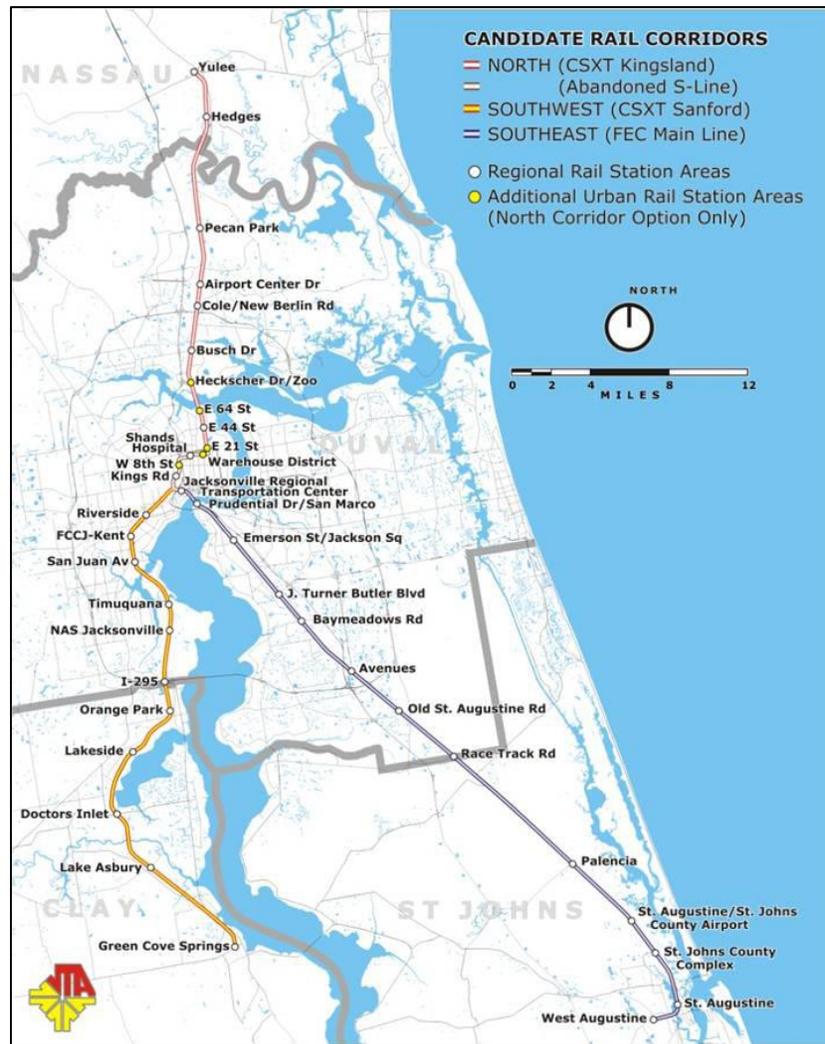


Source: Miami-Dade Transit.

Jacksonville

To accommodate continued and rapid growth in Baker, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties, the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) completed an extensive feasibility study in September 2009 and determined the three preferred corridors- Southeast, Southwest, and North. These corridors are feasible and will be carried into the next phase of development. The study which determined commuter rail demand, preferred alignments, and possibilities for public-private partnerships to develop the system was conducted in partnership with the First Coast Metropolitan Planning Organization, Northeast Florida Regional Council, and FDOT. The next step is to conduct an Alternatives Analysis. Figure 3.18 illustrates the three corridors chosen in the study.

Figure 3.18 Jacksonville Potential Commuter Rail Corridors



Source: Jacksonville Transportation Authority.

■ 3.4 Legislative Changes Affecting Passenger Railroads

This section covers four recent legislative changes that have had, and will continue to have, a significant impact on passenger rail transportation in the United States and, in particular, in the State of Florida. These include the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008, and the Florida State Legislation from December, 2009 Special Session.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA)

On February 13, 2009, Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) at the urging of President Obama, who signed it into law four days later. The three main goals of the Recovery Act are to:

- Create new jobs and save existing ones;
- Spur economic activity and invest in long-term growth; and
- Foster unprecedented levels of accountability and transparency in government spending.

ARRA included unprecedented level of investment in passenger rail for the United States. The bill appropriated \$1.3 billion to Amtrak for capital investment, and requires that Amtrak allocate \$850 million to rebuild and modernize infrastructure and equipment. Not more than 60 percent of the \$850 million may be spent within the Northeast Corridor (NEC). In addition, ARRA appropriated \$450 million for security and life safety projects. An allocation of 0.05 percent of this funding may be retained by the FRA for oversight, and \$5 million is directly allocated to the Amtrak Inspector General. In addition to the capital funds for Amtrak, the law also makes available \$8 billion for state grant programs for high-speed and other rail service.

The High-Speed Rail and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program is a long-term strategy to build an efficient, high-speed passenger rail network of 100 to 600 miles of intercity corridors, as one element of a modernized transportation system. In the near term, this strategy lays the foundation for that network by investing in intercity rail infrastructure, equipment and intermodal connections, beginning with an \$8 billion down payment provided under ARRA, and continuing with a high-speed rail grant program of \$1 billion per year (as called for in the President's Fiscal Year 2010 budget proposal).

The next two subsections describe requests for passenger rail funding from ARRA for projects in Florida. This includes requests made by FDOT and Amtrak.

FDOT's Requests for ARRA Funds

In response to this program FDOT submitted pre-application proposals in July 2009 to fund three corridors under the new Federal HSIPR program. These applications call for Federal funding support to implement the following services:

- Tampa-Orlando-Miami High-Speed Rail Program. FDOT's goal is to implement service along the:
 - Tampa-Orlando segment by 2015 (approved for funding in January, 2010); and
 - Orlando-Miami segment by 2017.
- Florida East Coast Amtrak Service from Jacksonville to Miami using the FEC and South Florida Rail Corridors (SFRC). FDOT's goal was to begin passenger service along this line by 2012.

- Central Florida Passenger Rail Corridor, including:
 - Sunrail commuter rail from Volusia to Osceola counties (approved during special session of Florida Legislation during the fall of 2009);
 - Future connections to Jacksonville; and
 - Integration with high-speed rail.

In January of 2010, Florida DOT received a \$1.25 billion award for the Tampa-Orlando segment of the High-Speed Rail Program. This was the sole award for FDOT from ARRA funds.

Amtrak's Requests for ARRA Funds

In addition to the aforementioned project applications, submitted by FDOT, Amtrak also prepared a list of projects that totaled almost \$20 billion, that would receive funding from ARRA. In order to distill this list, Amtrak began a process to analyze and reduce the project list to a manageable group of projects that were shovel-ready and could be successfully implemented. Amtrak developed several criteria for scoring and ranking projects, including likelihood of success, tangible value, economic stimulus benefits, and relation to Amtrak corporate goals. The selection criteria were developed by Amtrak executives to ensure that projects would be consistent with the intent of the ARRA and the goals of Amtrak.

A key goal for Amtrak is to reduce its state-of-good-repair backlog (currently estimated to be over \$5 billion), and make investments that are needed to return Amtrak assets to a state of good repair. Amtrak's 2008 Annual Report states that in addition to advancing infrastructure capital programs, Amtrak will use ARRA funds to return to service 100 cars that were sidelined and move forward with equipment procurement. Amtrak's active fleet was near capacity in FY 2008, and equipment procurement is a necessary component to any future plans.

Amtrak has identified 19 projects in Florida, with an estimated cost of \$49.2 million, to be funded through ARRA. Table 3.9 provides details on each of these projects.

Table 3.9 Amtrak ARRA Projects in Florida

Project Name	Estimate	PRJ Number
Non-NEC Wireless Access points for Field Operations in Jacksonville and Sanford.	\$210,000	PRJ29110026
Construction of Hialeah Maintenance Facility	\$25,000,000	PRJ29110037
Static Station Signage Program: platform kiosks in three Florida stations; general signage/rebranding at Orlando Station	\$58,000	PRJ29110081

Mobility First: Okeechobee, Florida includes agreements, host railroad negotiations, conceptual and final design, and financial and program management	\$14,000	PRJ29110113
Mobility First: New wheelchair lift in Sanford, Florida (Auto Train)	\$11,000	PRJ29110113
Mobility First: Tampa, Florida includes agreements, host railroad negotiations, conceptual and final design, and financial and program management	\$2,000	PRJ29110113
Mobility First: Winter Haven, Florida includes agreements, host railroad negotiations, conceptual and final design, and financial and program management	\$2,000	PRJ29110113
MOFE Hialeah – Roof Replacement	\$500,000	PRJ29116007
MOFE Sanford – Upgrade Exterior Lighting	\$500,000	PRJ29116007
MOFE Sanford – Coach Shop-480 Electrical Upgrade	\$500,000	PRJ29116007
Sanford Expand and Upgrade Welfare Facility to include T&E, Mechanical and Engineering Employees	\$1,000,000	PRJ29116007
Hialeah Tracksides utility upgrades, substation renewal and electrical upgrades plus facility infrastructure upgrade	\$8,008,304	PRJ29116007
Miami Commissary – facility repairs, and install auxiliary generator	\$125,000	PRJ29116007
Okeechobee, Florida Station to receive a new ADA-compliant Shelter Station Building and 550-foot, 8-inch ATR concrete platform.	\$1,350,000	PRJ29116015
Jacksonville, Florida Station to receive a new ADA-compliant tactile edge on existing concrete platforms	\$100,000	PRJ29116015
Sanford (Auto Train), Florida Station to receive a new ADA-compliant tactile edge on existing concrete platforms	\$150,000	PRJ29116015
Winter Haven, Florida Station to receive a new ADA-compliant tactile edge on existing concrete platforms	\$100,000	PRJ29116015
Tampa Platform ADA and Canopy Restoration	\$1,600,000	PRJ29116015
Construction of Sanford, Florida Station	\$10,000,000	PRJ29116021
Total	\$49,230,304	

Source: Amtrak.

Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA)

In October 2008, Congress passed the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), which reauthorized Amtrak and established a new vision for passenger rail in the United States. PRIIA tasked Amtrak, the U.S. DOT, the FRA, state DOTs, and other stakeholders to improve service, operations, and facilities to strengthen the U.S. passenger rail network. PRIIA authorizes the appropriation of funds to the U.S. DOT for FY 2009 through FY 2013 to award grants to Amtrak or to states to cover operating costs, capital investments, improvements necessary to reduce congestion or facilitate ridership, and

repayment of long-term debt and capital leases. PRIIA also authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to negotiate to restructure Amtrak's debt.

To receive funding:

- Amtrak must implement a modern financial accounting and reporting system; and
- Amtrak's Board of Directors must submit a five-year financial plan addressing projected revenues and expenditures, projected ridership, estimated long-term and short-term debt, labor productivity statistics, anticipated security needs, and an annual budget to the Secretary of Transportation.

Amtrak is also required to conduct a number of studies to improve ADA accessibility and explore the feasibility of expanding or reinstating service along certain corridors including restoring service along the *Sunset Limited* route between New Orleans, Louisiana and Sanford/Orlando, Florida.

Furthermore, FRA and Amtrak must develop metrics and minimum standards for measuring the performance and service quality of intercity passenger train service, and Amtrak must develop and implement performance improvement plans for its long-distance passenger routes.

The law puts more control of corridor development in the hands of states and encourages enhanced private sector involvement. Amtrak is encouraged to increase operation of special passenger trains funded by, or in partnership with, private sector operators to minimize the need for Federal subsidies. For states, PRIIA established new guidelines for creating rail plans and requires Amtrak and the states to develop a nationwide standard methodology for establishing and allocating the operating and capital costs of providing intercity rail passenger service on designated high-speed rail corridors or other priority corridors. If a state selects an entity other than Amtrak to provide passenger rail services, the state may enter into an agreement with Amtrak to use Amtrak's facilities and equipment. The Alternative Passenger Rail Service Pilot Program, which FRA is instructed to develop under PRIIA, will also allow rail carriers that own infrastructure over which Amtrak operates to petition to be considered as a passenger rail service provider over the route in lieu of Amtrak for up to five years.

Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA)

On October 16, 2008, President Bush signed the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (the "Safety Act"). The Safety Act is the most comprehensive new railroad safety law in the past 30 years. It contains dozens of new mandates for freight railroads, commuter railroads, and Amtrak. The changes are centered around five concepts as described below:

1. **Worker and Public Safety** (mandates installation of positive train control, hours of service reform, rail passenger disaster family assistance, locomotive cab safety, training, medical attention, and emergency escape breathing apparatus);
2. **Track Safety** (concrete crossties and track inspection time);
3. **Grade Crossing Safety** (toll-free number to report grade crossing problems, sight distance regulations, accident and incident reporting, national crossing inventory, state action plan, and emergency grade crossing improvements);
4. **Enforcement** (penalties for violations, enforcement transparency, railroad radio monitoring, and inspector staffing); and
5. **Other Safety Highlights** (bridge safety, solid waste processing rail facilities, and tunnel information).

These changes will allow for safer operation of passenger railroads in the United States, which may lead to more extensive use of this mode throughout the country.

Florida State Legislation from December, 2009 Special Session⁵⁹

On December, 2009 Governor Crist signed House Bill 1B, which was passed during the special session held in the fall of that year. The bill establishes a comprehensive framework for Florida's current and future passenger rail system, which today includes SunRail, Tri-Rail and plans for high-speed rail. The primary components of House Bill 1B include the following:

- **SunRail** - FDOT is working with the Federal government and Central Florida officials to develop and operate SunRail, a commuter rail transit project that will run along a 61-mile stretch of existing rail freight tracks in Orange, Seminole, Volusia and Osceola counties. The legislation authorizes FDOT to complete the purchase of the Central Florida Rail Corridor once the Federal Transit Administration has established a full-funding grant agreement.
- **Tri-Rail** - The legislation also provides additional funding for Tri-Rail, which currently operates 50 trains daily from Palm Beach County to Miami-Dade County. The operator of the passenger line, SFRTA, announced in April 2009 that it was in danger of significant service reductions without additional resources.
- **Florida Statewide Rail Commission and Florida Rail Enterprise** - The legislation creates the Florida Statewide Rail Commission to advise the FDOT and the Legislature on the development and operation of Florida's passenger rail systems. In addition, it

⁵⁹The Florida Office of Economic Recovery - <http://flarecovery.com/news/articles/governor-crist-signs-bill-expanding-passenger-rail-creating-jobs>.

creates the Florida Rail Enterprise within FDOT to oversee all state-owned passenger rail systems. The legislation addresses liability risks associated with state-owned passenger rail corridors and requires FDOT to work with communities affected by increased freight rail traffic resulting from routing modifications.

■ 3.5 Passenger Rail Policy Direction and Priorities for Florida

This section presents a snapshot of passenger rail activity in Florida in the past, present, and moving forward. Passenger rail continues to evolve in the State, such as High-Speed Rail, intercity passenger, and commuter rail services throughout Florida. As communities continue to struggle with congestion, FDOT has intensified its investment in these services in order to diversify the type of passenger transportation alternatives available. The State has undertaken these investments using partnerships between FDOT, local governments, and U.S. DOT (including FRA and FTA). Some examples include the Tampa-Orlando high-speed rail corridor, Orlando's SunRail commuter system, and the State's proposed partnership with Amtrak for service on Florida's east coast.

Moving forward, the State of Florida continues to develop and refine its passenger rail program. As described above, there is commuter rail, intercity rail, and high-speed rail in place or under development in the State, all of which tie into the Strategic Intermodal System (SIS). Ongoing evolution of Florida's passenger rail system is illustrated by the following current initiatives:

1. Completion of Orlando-Tampa High-Speed Rail. Through partnership with the Federal Government, this will be the first high-speed corridor in the State, representing a significant step forward for HSR in the State. This phase of the program is expected to be completed by 2015.
2. Development of the SunRail commuter system. This will be the first commuter rail system in Orlando, which is one of the fastest growing regions in the State.
3. Completion of environmental and design work on the Orlando-Miami HSR with eventual construction (pending funding). This will complete the initial Tampa-Orlando-Miami corridor in the State, which will connect its two largest population centers.
4. Implementation of passenger service on the Florida's east coast. The State continues to work with the FEC and Amtrak to reestablish intercity passenger service along the Atlantic Coast. The State recently submitted an application to FRA for funding of this project under the High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail program.
5. Other commuter systems. There are significant investments planned for commuter systems within Florida's major metropolitan areas such as Jacksonville, Tampa, and South Florida. These will be predicated upon interlocal agreements and available funding.

It should be noted that advancement of these initiatives will be dependent on participation from the private sector. The State is not likely to have enough funding sources available to implement these projects by itself (this is particularly the case for high-speed rail projects), and will be using public-private partnerships to deliver.