

Constitutional Collision Course: Governor Rick Scott and the Refusal of
High Speed Rail Stimulus Funds

by

Francis Henry Kurtz

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Liberal Arts: Florida Studies
Department of Humanities
College of Arts & Sciences
University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Major Professor: David McMullen, Ph.D.
Christopher Meindl, Ph.D.
Seth McKee, Ph.D.

Date of Approval:
11 July 2013

Keywords: Florida, Planned Transportation, American Recovery and
Reinvestment Act of 2009, Mass Transit, History of Rail in Florida

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family. Without the support of my parents, Mike and Laurie, I would not have been able to accomplish half of what I have been able to in my life as I have today. Thank you. I would like to thank my sister and brother, Casey and Jacob, for letting me stay on a couch while I was researching or being there to take my mind off of being stressed by talking basketball.

I would like to thank the support of the professors I've had at USFSP, USF, Seminole Community College, UCF, and Oviedo High School. Without the inspiration they instilled in me for the pursuit of knowledge, I probably would not have accomplished as much as I have academically, nor had the drive.

I would also like to thank the staff of *The Crow's Nest*, the staff and clientele of the Tavern at Bayboro, and those who I shared an office space with in the Snell House, all of whom continued to push me in my studies here at USFSP. I would like to thank Kayleigh Lutman who dealt with late nights and early mornings of my writing. I would also like to thank Chris Guinn and Angela Hood for taking their time to edit my work.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the assistance that I have received at numerous places during my research over the past two years: the staff at the Nelson Poynter Memorial Library at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, the University of South Florida Library, the University of Central Florida Library, the University of Florida's libraries, the R.M. Strozier Library at Florida State University, the Thomas G. Carpenter Library at the University of North Florida, the Florida Atlantic University Library, and the University of Miami Libraries, the Seminole County Public Library System, the Sanford Museum, the Museum of Seminole County History, the Orange County Public Library System, the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System. The staff at the Florida Supreme Court Library and at the Secretary of State's Office in the R.A. Grey Building both deserve a thank you as well. Additionally, the staff of AMTRAK's *Silver Star* and the reporters of the *St. Petersburg Times*, the *Tampa Tribune*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, the *Florida Times-Union*, the *Tallahassee Democrat*, the *Miami Herald*, and *USA Today*.

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Abstract

The State of Florida has consistently, over the past forty years, studied the feasibility of constructing a high speed rail system. Every proposed high speed rail system in Florida has been halted at some point during the planning or construction phases.

This study looks at those previously proposed projects in addition to the history of railroading in Florida. The economic and political conditions that were in place in the late 2000s that allowed President Barack Obama to win the Presidency and implement his economic vision will be reviewed. This study will also examine Florida Governor Rick Scott's decision to decline funds to construct a high speed rail line in Florida from Orlando to Tampa, and a later segment from Orlando to Miami. Also included is an overview of local mass transit systems in the Tampa Bay Area, Central Florida, and South Florida.

The research reveals that Scott's actions were politically motivated, and congruent with similar actions that he took in his first year as Florida's Governor, and in politics. With his second year in

office, Scott has toned down his agenda and now better navigates his position as a politician in Florida.

Introduction

The development of high speed rail in Florida has been a politically controversial topic in Florida for decades. The most recent example of this controversy being the election of Florida's forty-fifth Governor Rick Scott in 2010.

Scott, a former health-care executive at Columbia/HCA, entered the 2010 gubernatorial race in April of that year. From his entry into the contest through the Republican primary in August, Scott contributed more than \$50 million of his own money to his campaign. Scott ran against the then Attorney General of Florida, Bill McCollum, an office that is seen as a classic stepping stone to the Governor's mansion, in one of the costliest and ugliest Republican primaries for governor in state history. Repeatedly throughout the campaign Scott referred to McCollum as a "Tallahassee insider" who was beholden to special interests. McCollum had the backing of the "establishment wing" of the Republican Party including an endorsement from former Governor Jeb Bush.¹

¹ Aaron Deslatte and Jennifer Gollan, "Rick Scott beats Bill McCollum to end nasty GOP governor's primary fight," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 25, 2010:

Scott won in an upset by a margin of about 40,000 votes and carried 53 of Florida's 67 counties. It was the third time that McCollum had run for a statewide office and lost. Alex Sink, the then one-term Chief Financial Officer and a Democrat, was seen as the "favorite" going into the general election phase of the 2010 cycle.²

The 2010 general election was termed "too close to call" on election night. However, the following morning Sink, after the precinct returns she was counting on in Tampa and South Florida failed to produce a victory, called Rick Scott to concede. At the time of publication, the *Orlando Sentinel* calculated that Scott had, out of 5.3 million votes, a lead of 68,277 votes over Sink.³

The 2010 Governor's race was the closest in Florida since 1876; when Democrat George F. Drew defeated Republican Marcellus L. Stearns by a margin of 195 votes; there were 48,163 ballots cast that year. By percentage, Drew received 50.2% of votes cast to Stearns' 49.8%.⁴ Scott garnered 48.9% of the vote to Sink's 47.7%.

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-08-25/news/os-gop-gubernatorial-primary-results-20100824_1_rick-scott-high-unfavorable-ratings-primary-fight.

² Ibid.

³ Aaron Deslatte, Jason Garcia, and Peter Franceschina, "Rick Scott, state's next governor, calls for Floridians to unite," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 3, 2010: http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-11-03/news/os-florida-governor-election-results-20101103_1_rick-scott-democrat-alex-sink-lieutenant-governor.

⁴ Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1949-1950 2nd Biennial Edition* (Tallahassee, Florida: The Peninsular Publishing Company, 1949), 226.

After campaigning against McCollum and the pawn of special interests, Scott spent \$3 million on his inauguration ceremony, an amount largely paid for by the same lobbyists he had attacked earlier, seating them in the first three rows. The theme of Scott's inaugural speech centered on getting Floridians back into the workforce, closing with his trademark campaign phrase "let's get to work." At the time of his inauguration Florida had an 11.9% unemployment rate. Notably his 700,000 jobs in seven years pledge was absent during his inauguration speech.⁵

On 26 May 2011, Scott signed his first budget at a media event held in The Villages, a large Central Florida retirement community and a Republican Tea Party stronghold. The budget, after Scott's \$615 million of line item vetoes, totaled \$69.1 billion and included a provision for state employees to begin contributing 3 percent of their salary towards their retirement.⁶

The Tea Party movement was started on 19 February 2009, when CNBC bond reporter, Rick Santelli, while reporting from the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, expressed outrage at the Obama

⁵ Michael C. Bender and Mary Ellen Klas, "Rick Scott takes office, asserts himself as state's chief job creator," *St. Petersburg Times*, January 4, 2011: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/gubernatorial/rick-scott-takes-office-asserts-himself-as-states-chief-job-creator/1143416>.

⁶ Marc Caputo and Aaron Sharockman, "Gov. Rick Scott signs, vetoes \$615 million in spending," *St. Petersburg Times*, May 26, 2011, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/gubernatorial/gov-rick-scott-signs-budget-vetoes-615-million-in-spending/1171958>.

Administration for its decision to subsidize bad mortgages. Santelli said he was thinking of having a "Chicago tea party" and would be dumping mortgage backed securities into Lake Michigan as a form of protest.⁷ Almost overnight conservative groups across the country organized around Santelli's comments. The Florida Tea Party expresses its platform of a "limited federal government, individual freedoms, personal responsibility, free markets, returning political power to the states and the people."⁸

During 2008, it became apparent that mortgage-backed securities were poised to create a large problem for the financial sector. In March of that year, Bear Stearns received assistance from the Federal Government in order to continue operations; in September, the government mortgage subsidizers, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac needed to be stabilized. Followed by Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers and American Insurance Group, who all were failing, putting the world's financial system in a tailspin. Barack Obama was elected President of the United States in November of that year and quickly went to work on crafting a stimulus package that would help stabilize the economy. Early in his campaign and tenure as Governor,

⁷ "Rick Santelli's Shout Heard 'Round The World," *CNBC*, February 22, 2009, <http://www.cnbc.com/id/29283701>.

⁸ "What the TEA Party of Florida Stands For," *TEA Party of Florida*, <http://floridateaparty.blogspot.com/p/welcome-to-tea-party-of-florida.html>.

Scott put himself on a collision course with one of President Barack Obama's signature projects for the stimulus package: high speed rail.

My interest in trains goes back to when I was young. My family and I moved to Florida in November 1993 after living in the San Francisco Bay area. While living in California in the East Bay, north of Oakland, my father's job was in downtown San Francisco and he would take the Bay Area Rapid Transit, or BART, to and from work. When my mother was pregnant with my sister, she took me to ride the BART and Cable Cars in San Francisco for hours just to get out of the house. Growing up, my favorite books were train-centered such as *Busy Trains* and the *Thomas the Tank Engine* series, which my parents read to me countless times. When I was able to read, I read them cover to cover again and again and again.

Upon moving to Florida in the early 1990s, I scanned the *Orlando Sentinel* daily for updates on the Florida Overland eXpress project. The proposed route would connect Tampa with Orlando and Miami. I looked forward to the year 2004 when I would be in senior high school and the Florida Overland eXpress would begin operation. In 1999, Jeb Bush cancelled the program.

While in junior high school in 2000, I followed the High Speed Rail Constitutional Amendment closely and talked about it with friends,

even though none of us were old enough to vote. In the hysteria following the 2000 Presidential Election, I was thrilled that the amendment passed and it would be only a matter of time before trains zipped across Florida. That dream ended four short years later when the citizens of Florida voted to repeal the High Speed Rail amendment.

In 2010 President Barrack Obama announced that there would be increased investment in high speed rail across the country. The Tampa to Orlando portion would be the first dedicated high speed rail line on either American continent and it was slated to begin operation during the President's second term, if he won reelection in 2012. A year later, Rick Scott-the newly elected Governor of Florida decided to reject federal funding that would have paid for the project construction.

During my time in Florida I have looked forward to the possibility of using high speed rail as a way to travel around the state. As a frequent user of AMTRAK I am satisfied with that limited service. However, if high speed rail were implemented, there would be more than the two daily AMTRAK trains that currently serve Florida, therefore offering more travel times and destinations than currently available.

It is my goal in this study to examine why Florida seems to be so good at planning high speed rail, which has been on the drawing board since 1976, but has failed to implement any such plans. Chapter One focuses on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, commonly referred to as the Stimulus package, by looking at the election of 2008, the economic conditions leading up to the election, the stimulus package itself and the vision for high speed rail in the United States. Chapter Two examines the history of passenger rail in Florida from the 1800s to present day including the Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line, the Florida East Coast Railroad, the Seaboard Coast Line, and AMTRAK. Also included in this chapter is the history of planning for high speed rail in Florida since 1976. Chapter Three analyzes Florida's application and awarding of funds from the Federal Department of Transportation for construction of a dedicated high speed rail line, other high speed rail projects across the country, and Florida's rejection of federal funding. Chapter Four reviews mass transit projects in the metro areas of Tampa Bay, Central Florida (the Orlando Metro Area), and Southeast Florida that would have been served by high speed rail, as well as the current project by the Florida East Coast Railroad to connect Orlando and Miami with passenger rail.

Chapter One: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

Electoral Background

When the polls closed on the West Coast, on 4 November 2008 all of the major American television networks called the Presidential election in favor of the junior senator from Illinois, Barack Hussein Obama. The senior senator from Arizona, John Sidney McCain III, conceded the presidency to Obama shortly after the Pacific coast states began reporting their election returns.⁹ Barack Obama won 365 electoral votes to John McCain's 173, and became the 44th President of the United States. Obama also received 66,862,039 votes, or 53% of the popular vote, to McCain's 58,319,442 votes, or 47%.¹⁰

In Florida, Obama received 4,282,074 votes, 51% of votes cast, whereas McCain garnered 4,045,624 votes; therefore, Mr. Obama won Florida's 27 electoral votes.¹¹ Obama was the first Democrat to carry

⁹ Beth Fouhy, "McCain concedes presidency, congratulates Obama," *Tucson Citizen*, November 5, 2008: <http://tucsoncitizen.com/morgue/2008/11/05/101691-mccain-concedes-presidency-congratulates-obama/>.

¹⁰ "Election Results 2008," *New York Times*, December 9, 2008: <http://elections.nytimes.com/2008/results/president/map.html>.

¹¹ Florida Department of State Division of Elections, "November 4, 2008 General Election Results, Official Results,"

Florida in a general election since Bill Clinton's reelection campaign in 1996.¹²

Economic Background

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, one of President Obama's first term highlights, would not have happened without the economic turmoil that occurred in late 2008. The Dow Jones Industrial Average closed with a record high of 14,164 points on 9 October 2007.¹³ On 1 May 2008 the Dow closed at 13,010 points. On 1 August it closed at 11,326.32. On 3 September, the market appeared to be on the upswing when it closed almost 200 points higher than at the beginning of August, at 11,532.88 points.¹⁴

By August of that year, the jobless rate rose to 6.1%, a .04% increase over July's figure, the highest single month increase since 1981. On 14 September, the investment bank, Merrill Lynch, collapsed and agreed to be purchased by Bank of America. The following day another investment firm, Lehman Brothers, filed for bankruptcy, the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history. The country's

[http://doe.dos.state.fl.us/elections/resultsarchive/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/4/2008&DATAMODE=.](http://doe.dos.state.fl.us/elections/resultsarchive/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/4/2008&DATAMODE=)

¹² Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1999-2000 27th Biennial Edition* (Tallahassee, Florida: The Peninsular Publishing Company, 1999), 632.

¹³ "Dow Jones Average Tops Record High," *ABC News*, March 3, 2013: <http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/business/2013/03/dow-jones-average-tops-record-high/>.

¹⁴ "Dow Jones Industrial Average Index Ten Year Chart," *CNBC*, <http://apps.cnbc.com/view.asp?uid=stocks/charts&symbol=.DJIA&tearoff=1>.

credit markets froze, and following the Lehman bankruptcy, the stock market began a free fall and the rate of return on treasury bonds fell below zero. In essence, investors were paying the United States government to safely hold their money. On 15 September, the following day, the Federal Reserve bailed out the insurance behemoth, American Insurance Group (AIG), which had over-leveraged its insurance of mortgage backed securities.¹⁵

That same day while campaigning in Florida, Senator John McCain declared “the fundamentals of our economy are strong.” Senator Barack Obama, while campaigning in Colorado asked, “Senator, what economy are you talking about?”¹⁶ Hours after McCain’s initial statement he tried to back off, claiming that he meant that the American workers who were the backbone of the economy were strong, resilient, and productive. The next day McCain called the current economic situation a crisis during interviews by ABC, CBS, NBC, MSNBC, CNBC, CNN, and Fox News.¹⁷

¹⁵ Michael Grunwald, *The New New Deal: The Hidden Story of Change in the Obama Era*, (New York City, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 70-71.

¹⁶ John Bentley, “McCain Says “Fundamentals” Of U.S. Economy Are Strong,” *CBS News*, September 15, 2008: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-502443_162-4450366-502443.html.

¹⁷ Michael Cooper, “McCain on U.S. economy: from ‘strong’ to ‘total crisis’ in 36 hours,” *New York Times*, September 17, 2008: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/17/world/americas/17iht-mccain.4.16251777.html>.

On 29 September, a fortnight after Lehman filed bankruptcy, the U.S. House of Representatives failed to pass, after three hours of debate, the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, or House Resolution 3997.¹⁸ The final vote was 228 against, with 133 Republicans joining 95 Democrats, while 140 Democrats and 65 Republicans voted in favor of the act.¹⁹ By the time the New York Stock Exchange closed that day, approximately \$1.2 trillion of value had disappeared. The Dow Jones Industrial Average hemorrhaged 777.68 points, the single worst day of trading in U.S. history.²⁰

On 1 October, the U.S. Senate revised the failed House resolution when Chris Dodd, the senior senator from Connecticut, added an amendment to House Resolution 1424, which had been on the Senate's calendar since March of that year.²¹ At 9:22 P.M. the Senate passed the resolution, which would "provide authority for the Federal Government to purchase and insure certain types of troubled assets for the purposes of providing stability to and preventing disruption in the economy and financial system and protecting

¹⁸ Library of Congress, "Bill Summary & Stats 110th Congress (2007-2009) H.R. 3997 All Congressional Actions with Amendments," <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HR03997:@@S>.

¹⁹ United States House of Representatives, "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 674," <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2008/roll674.xml>.

²⁰ Amy Bingham, "Stock Market History: the 10 Worst Days," *ABC News*, August 9, 2011: <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/stock-market-history-10-worst-days/story?id=14259116#all>.

²¹ Library of Congress, "Bill Summary & Stats 110th Congress (2007-2009) H.R. 1424 All Congressional Actions with Amendments," <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d110:HR01424:@@S>.

taxpayers.” It passed with bipartisan support, including yes votes from Senators Obama and McCain. Florida’s Senator Bill Nelson, Democrat, voted against the measure while Republican Senator Mel Martinez voted in favor.²² Two days later, the House of Representatives passed the Senate’s amendments to House Resolution 1424 by a vote of 263 to 171 in a rare show of bi-partisanship.²³ President George W. Bush signed the bill authorizing the Treasury Department to use \$700 billion to purchase toxic, mortgage-backed securities in an attempt to stimulate credit markets and economic activity.²⁴

The legislation did not have the intended effects; the month of October 2008 was one of the worst months in the history of the New York Stock Exchange. Three of the ten largest point drops in a single day occurred that month. On 9 October 2007, the Standard & Poor’s 500 index closed at an all time high of 1,565.15 points; a year later the S&P 500 shed 42% of its value closing at 909.92 points.²⁵ The Dow Jones Industrial Average experienced similar declines, falling 678.91 points on 9 October 2008, in what was the fifth largest single-

²² United States Senate, “U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 110th Congress-2nd Session,” http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=110&session=2&vote=00213.

²³ United States House of Representatives, “Final Vote Results for Roll Call 681,” <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2008/roll681.xml>.

²⁴ M. Alex Johnson, “Bush signs financial bailout bill,” *NBC News*, October 3, 2008: <http://www.nbcnews.com/id/26987291/#.UUyyRtejOSo>.

²⁵ Alexandra Twin, “Dow tumbles 7%,” *CNN Money*, October 9, 2008: http://money.cnn.com/2008/10/09/markets/markets_newyork/.

day loss in the history of the Average, closing below 8,600 points for the first time since October of 2003. 15 October saw a 733.08 point loss at the close or nearly 8% of the day's opening value, the second largest single day loss in history. On 22 October the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 514.45 points, or 5.7%, for the ninth largest single day loss.²⁶

On the campaign trail and in the halls of Congress, then Senator Obama lobbied for a new form of stimulus that would be different than the Wall Street bailouts that Congress just passed. Michael Grunwald, author of *The New New Deal: The Hidden Story of Change in the Obama Era*, writes "When he [Obama] replaced Bush, Washington would finally help Main Street... And yes, he [Obama] meant when, not if." If there was doubt that the election was not a "change election," those views quickly changed once global economy slipped into a worldwide recession.²⁷

The Stimulus Package

During Obama's first two days as President-elect, the Dow Jones Industrial Average suffered its worst losses since the Crash of 1987, hemorrhaging an additional 1,000 points. During his first press conference as President-Elect, Obama declared "We're facing the

²⁶ Bingham, "Stock Market History: the 10 Worst Days."

²⁷ Grunwald, 73.

greatest economic challenge of our lifetime, and we're going to have to act swiftly to resolve it... [a stimulus package will be] the first thing I get done."²⁸

Illinois Representative Rahm Emanuel, who would become President Obama's first Chief of Staff, wanted the President to sign a stimulus bill into law on Inauguration Day, 20 January 2009. Even though Obama did not have the power of the federal bureaucracy at his disposal during the transitional months of November, December, and January, work had to begin as soon as possible. Aides who had worked on the campaign for months began crafting legislation calling for hundreds of billions of dollars in federal spending; in short, they began building President Obama's legacy even before he spent his first day in the White House.²⁹

During the transitional period following the election, Obama explained that he wanted the Recovery Act to both save the country's economy from collapse as well as to serve as an investment in future growth. Programs that would immediately help ease the effects of the downward spiraling economy received increased funding: food stamps, unemployment insurance, health care subsidies, and a one-time payment of \$250 to seniors, veterans, and disabled citizens. Long

²⁸ Ibid., 91.

²⁹ Ibid., 92-93.

term investment programs included the creation of a “smart” electric grid to move energy efficiently around the country, upgraded existing AMTRAK trains, improvements to public housing, school modernization, digitizing of medical records, reduction of the country’s dependence on foreign oil by investing in wind turbines and solar panels, and expansion of broadband internet access.³⁰

While observing the current condition of railroads in the United States, Grunwald quipped, “America’s freight rail was the envy of the world, but our intercity passenger rail wasn’t even the envy of the Third World.” In Europe and Asia trains carried passengers around at speeds greater than 220 miles per hour, while rail passengers in the United States continued plodding along at speeds achieved in the 1800s. Obama’s economic team thought high speed rail projects would take too long to construct and would have few benefits to passengers. However, Rahm Emanuel and Vice President-Elect Joe Biden fought to include high speed rail in the planned stimulus package. Even though construction of high speed rail projects would not be easily or quickly completed, it would, if implemented, help advance the vision Obama had for his stimulus package by easing congestion on roadways and at airports, reducing fossil fuel consumption, and reinvigorating the long dormant domestic train

³⁰ Ibid., 161-170.

construction industry. At that time China was building the world's largest high speed rail network, and Spain, which is approximately the geographic size of the Texas, invested \$200 billion in its high speed rail network.³¹

Six days after President Obama's inauguration, Wisconsin Representative David R. Obey introduced House Resolution 1, or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.³² It passed the House at 6:11 P.M. two days later by a vote of 244 Democrats to 188 nay votes made by 177 Republicans and 11 Democrats. There was one Republican no vote.³³ The bill that passed the House totaled \$819 billion and included multiple benefits for Floridians: almost \$900 million for increased food stamp benefits, \$246 million for a one time Supplemental Social Security Income payment, nearly \$4.2 billion in Medicaid assistance, \$1.9 billion for infrastructure projects, and roughly \$2.3 billion in local school grants.³⁴ The House plan originally called for \$300 million for high speed rail projects.³⁵

³¹ Ibid., 174.

³² Library of Congress, "Bill Summary & Stats 111th Congress (2009-2010) H.R. 1 Major Congressional Actions," <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/bdquery/z?d111:HR00001:@@R>.

³³ United States House of Representatives, "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 46," <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2009roll046.xml>.

³⁴ News Services, "What's in the stimulus package for you?," *Orlando Sentinel*, January, 29, 2009, final edition, sec. A.

³⁵ Grunwald, 219.

While negotiating in the Senate, Chief of Staff Emanuel and Vice President Biden lobbied Senate leaders to increase the amount of money for high speed rail. At one point during negotiations, the Senate version had somewhere between \$40 and \$50 billion earmarked for high speed rail projects.³⁶ Senate leaders needed to get three Republican senators to vote for the bill in order for it to pass. However, funding of other programs would need to be reduced. Funding for high speed rail projects was sliced to a little over \$2 billion, larger than the House version of the package but a long way from the \$40 to \$50 billion that some had suggested a few days before.³⁷ The Senate version of the plan was passed on Tuesday, 10 February 2009, by a vote of 61 to 37, with one nonvoting member. Three Republicans from the Northeast joined two Independents in voting for the bill. Florida Senator Bill Nelson cast his vote in favor while Senator Mel Martinez, who walked out of negotiations, voted no.³⁸

Members of the Republican Party argued that any economic relief package must include tax cuts if they were to support any proposed plan. The Senate version included nearly \$350 billion worth

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 225.

³⁸ United States Senate, "U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 111th Congress 1st Session," http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00061.

of tax cuts, more than the \$275 billion in the House version. The bill then headed to a conference committee with hopes of a compromise by the weekend. In terms of what Florida would receive, there were vast differences between the two plans. The State of Florida would receive a bailout, or funds to shore up budget deficits, of \$3.5 billion under the House plan. In the Senate plan that number was \$1.75 billion. There was \$1.85 billion for transit and highway projects in Florida in the House plan compared to \$1.7 billion in the Senate plan. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) would receive \$600 million under the House plan compared to \$1.3 billion in the Senate version. Republican Governor Charlie Crist endorsed the stimulus plan claiming that Florida faced a budget deficit of close to \$4 billion and the more federal money received, the less the State would have to cut state services. When journalists asked Florida Republican Party Chairman, Jim Greer, about the split opinion of Governor Crist and Republican congressman (all of whom rejected the stimulus package) he replied, "Florida is facing challenging times from an economic standpoint. Governor Crist is looking to help energize the Florida economy" and the Republicans in Congress have a "different role" as they oversee the economic policy for the entire country.³⁹

³⁹ Mark K. Matthews, "2 plans: Which is best for Florida?," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 11, 2009, final edition, sec. A.

During the conference committee negotiations, White House Chief of Staff Emanuel wanted to highlight a “marquee project” for the stimulus package; something similar to the New Deal’s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which employed millions of people and resulted in numerous parks and stadiums, an upgrade of local infrastructure, and the construction of other public works during the Great Depression. Broadband internet, education reform, and a new smart grid for distributing electricity, would transform the economy in the 21st century. Unfortunately these projects would remain virtually invisible to taxpayers. High speed rail promised to put people to work, would be visible to taxpayers, and might just transform the way Americans traveled throughout the country. In short, High Speed Rail projects could become a modern day CCC. The White House called for \$10 billion in high speed rail projects, far more than the \$300 million under the House plan and the \$2 billion in the Senate proposal. Additionally, supporters believed that high speed rail appropriations would convince moderate Republicans in the House to vote for the stimulus package. Congressional negotiators finally agreed to spend \$8 billion on high speed rail.⁴⁰

On Friday, 13 April 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 by a

⁴⁰ Grunwald, 227-231.

vote of 246 yeas to 183 nays with one member voting present - three members abstained. All of the 246 yes votes came from Democrats; the 183 no votes were made up of 176 Republicans and seven Democrats.⁴¹ Fewer than three hours later, the United States Senate passed the Recovery Act; 60 yes votes to 38 no votes, with one Senator abstaining. Three Northeastern Republicans, Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe, both from Maine, and Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, voted for the Recovery Act along with the Senate's 55 Democrats and two Independents. Florida's Senator Bill Nelson again voted in favor of the bill and Senator Mel Martinez again voted against the stimulus package.⁴²

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 was signed into law by President Obama on 17 April 2009 and totaled \$787 billion in spending and tax cuts. Tax cuts made up nearly 40% of the final bill. The Recovery Act was the largest economic package passed since Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. According to President Obama, it was to be "a plan that will ignite spending by businesses and consumers, make the investments necessary for lasting economic growth and prosperity, and save or create more than 3.5 million jobs

⁴¹ United States House of Representatives, "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 70," <http://clerk.house.gov/evs/2009roll070.xml>.

⁴² United States Senate, "U.S. Senate Roll Call Votes 111th Congress 1st Session," http://www.senate.gov/legislative/LIS/roll_call_lists/roll_call_vote_cfm.cfm?congress=111&session=1&vote=00064.

over the next two years.”⁴³ The stimulus package advanced nearly 50 of President Obama’s 510 promises made while on the campaign trail such as funding a better electrical grid, more appropriations for border security, purchasing hybrid cars for the federal fleet of vehicles, supporting various infrastructure programs, and helping to offset the cost of weatherizing homes. In less than a month, President Obama proposed and received close to \$1 trillion in spending, including the funding of a large number of his priorities.⁴⁴

Vision for High Speed Rail

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 set aside \$9.3 billion for passenger rail projects throughout the country, with \$8 billion for high speed rail corridor projects. Yet the legislation failed to define high speed rail, which allowed states with all manner of railroad projects already in the planning stages to apply for high speed grants. When the Recovery Act passed, there were no pre-approved projects and states had 60 days to submit bids for projects to the Department of Transportation. AMTRAK received \$1.3 billion, separate from the \$8 billion for high speed rail, with \$450 million earmarked for safety and

⁴³ Wes Allison, “Obama got his stimulus package, but there are lessons to be learned,” *St. Petersburg Times*, February 13, 2009: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/national/obama-got-his-stimulus-package-but-there-are-lessons-to-be-learned/975981>.

⁴⁴ Bill Adair, “In \$789 billion stimulus package, Obama advances his agenda,” *St. Petersburg Times*, February 17, 2009: <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/national/in-789-billion-stimulus-package-obama-advances-his-agenda/976888>.

security improvements and only 60% of the remaining \$850 million could be spent on improvements to the Northeast Corridor. The additional funds were envisioned to go to rehabilitation of passenger cars and locomotives and for improvements that would expand capacity on existing railway lines. Congress authorized \$9.3 billion for passenger rail, but \$27.5 billion for highway projects, \$8.4 billion for transit initiatives, and \$1.3 billion for aviation.⁴⁵

On top of the Recovery Act's \$8 billion for high speed rail, President Obama sought an additional \$1 billion per year over the next five years to be inserted in the 2010 budget. Obama claimed that high speed lines would stimulate the economy by providing jobs as well as offering a green alternative to flying or driving.⁴⁶

On 16 April 2009, President Obama announced his vision for high speed rail, comparing it to the interstate highway system initiated during the 1950s. The \$787 billion dollar American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 that was signed into law on 17 February 2009, included \$64 billion earmarked for transportation projects for bridges, rail, roads, and transit. Obama made sure to clarify that this

⁴⁵ Bob Johnston, "Passenger rail scores last-minute win in stimulus bill," *TRAINS*, February 16, 2009:
<http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/02/Passenger%20rail%20scores%20last-minute%20win%20in%20stimulus%20bill.aspx>.

⁴⁶ "Rail funding in stimulus was president's 'signature issue,'" *TRAINS*, February 17, 2009:
<http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/02/Rail%20funding%20in%20stimulus%20was%20presidents%20signature%20issue.aspx>.

was only the first step in a long-term plan that would connect dozens of metropolitan areas throughout the country with high speed rail. It would require future commitment to fully implement a national high speed rail network.⁴⁷

President Obama expounded:

“Imagine boarding a train in the center of a city. No racing to an airport and across the terminal, no delays, no sitting on the tarmac, no lost luggage, no taking off your shoes. Imagine whisking through towns at speeds over 100 miles per hour, walking only a few steps to public transportation, and ending up just blocks from your destination. Imagine what a great project that would be to rebuild America.”

Obama’s plan would require implementation in two phases. The first phase would be to upgrade existing routes with

“projects that can create jobs and benefits in the near-term. We’re not talking about starting from scratch. We’re talking about using existing infrastructure to increase speeds on some routes from 70 miles per hour to over 100 miles per hour.”

⁴⁷ Jim Abrams, “Obama on high-speed-rail: Time for U.S. to catch up,” *Orlando Sentinel*, April 17, 2009, final edition, sec. A.

The second phase of Obama's high speed rail plan would establish high speed rail lines that are comparable to those found in Europe and Japan.⁴⁸

The President noted that the United States trails the rest of the world when it comes to high speed rail.⁴⁹ In March of 1955, the French National Railways, SNCF, set a world record of 205 miles per hour. In February of 1981, the SNCF increased the world rail speed record to 237.5 miles per hour. In 1983, France's dedicated high speed rail line, Ligne à Grande Vitesse, reduced travel time between Paris and Lyon to two hours, averaging 132 miles per hour.⁵⁰

Japan initiated the global high speed rail revolution in 1964 with the introduction of the *Shinkansen* trainsets, and dedicated rights of way that achieved 130 miles per hour. A trainset contains a power locomotive at the beginning of a train, the passenger coaches, and the trailing locomotive. Trainsets were able to run at speeds of 170 miles per hour in 1982, 186 miles per hour in 1997, and 223 miles per hour in 2003.⁵¹ During 1982, Canada's VIA Rail debuted their LRC, or Light, Rapid, Comfortable, trainsets with a maximum speed of 125 miles per

⁴⁸ Andy Cummings, "Obama lays out vision for high speed rail," *TRAINS*, April 16, 2009:
<http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/04/Obama%20lays%20out%20vision%20for%20high%20speed%20rail.aspx>.

⁴⁹ Abrams, "Obama on high-speed-rail: Time for U.S. to catch up."

⁵⁰ George H. Drury, "TRAINS rides the TGV," *TRAINS*, April 1989, 53.

⁵¹ David Ross, *The Encyclopedia of Trains & Locomotives From 1804 to the Present Day* (Sand Diego, California: Thunder Bay Press, 2007), 323-324.

hour. However, due to track condition and signals, the LRC trains were only able to operate at speeds of 105 miles per hour.⁵² In 1989, the Swedish Railways introduced their Class X2000 Tilting Trains that were also capable of speeds of 125 miles per hour while tilting around curves in the tracks, thereby shaving 10 to 20 minutes off of each trip compared to the previous timetables of the late 1980s.⁵³ German Railways introduced their Class 401 ICE, InterCity Express, high-speed electric train that was able to reach speeds of 175 miles per hour while in operation.⁵⁴ In 1993 the Class 373 "Eurostar" trains began service between London, Paris, and Brussels with speeds of 186 miles per hour. In 2003, it took a mere two hours and fifteen minutes to travel between London and Paris.⁵⁵ In 1995, the French National Railways debuted their Third Generation Train à Grande Vitesse, or TGV, bi-leveled trainsets capable of moving at 218 miles per hour.⁵⁶ The Thalys trainsets that connect major cities in France, Belgium, Germany, and the Netherlands went into service in 1996 and are capable of speeds of 186 miles per hour. The 184 miles between Paris and Brussels can be traversed in 1 hour and 25 minutes, prompting Air France to terminate air service between the two cities and books seats

⁵² Ibid., 370.

⁵³ Ibid., 385.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 388.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 393-394.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 399-400.

on the Thalys instead.⁵⁷ In 2000, Germany debuted their Class 403 ICE trainsets that can reach speeds of 229.5 miles per hour.⁵⁸ In 2004, South Korea initiated high speed rail service when its KTX high-speed electric trains went into service achieving speeds of 217 miles per hour. When the line was completed, travel time between Pusan and Seoul was cut from 4 hours 20 minutes to 1 hour and 56 minutes. In the first fortnight of service the KTX carried over one million passengers.⁵⁹ Currently people in Spain can travel the 386 miles between Barcelona and Madrid at speeds averaging close to 150 miles per hour.⁶⁰

President Obama proposed that a high speed rail network made up of 100 to 600 corridors could play a critical role in the country's transportation strategy. Investment in this form of transportation has been lacking for many decades. Congress defined four different types of corridors: (1) High Speed Rail Express corridors consisting of major population centers, 200 to 600 miles apart, that could support frequent service with a few intermediate stops featuring top speeds of at least 150 miles per hour on grade separated, dedicated rights of way. These corridors would relieve air and highway congestion; (2) High Speed Rail Regional corridors consisting of major and moderate

⁵⁷ Ibid., 404-405.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 419.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 429.

⁶⁰ Abrams, "Obama on high-speed-rail: Time for U.S. to catch up."

population centers, 100 to 500 miles apart, with intermediate stops on grade separated right of way along shared tracks and dedicated rights of way with top speeds of 110 to 150 miles per hour. These corridors would relieve highway and some air congestion; (3) Emerging High Speed Rail corridors with population centers 100 to 500 miles apart on primarily improved, shared track that does not have to be grade separated with speeds of 90 to 110 miles per hour. These corridors are intended to develop a passenger rail market with hopes of upgrading to Regional or Express service by relieving other modes of transportation; and (4) Conventional Rail corridors that do not have great potential for high speed service but can relieve congestion on other modes of transportation by traveling at speeds of 79 to 90 miles per hour.⁶¹ "Grade separation" in this context refers to tracks that do not cross roadways, either by traveling over or under the road.⁶² Shared rail lines are the agreement that AMTRAK has with freight railroads, who own the rights of way that the passenger trains use. Separate rights of way refer to dedicated high speed rail lines for high speed passenger trains only.⁶³

⁶¹ United States Department of Transportation, *Vision for High-Speed Rail in America* (Washington, District of Columbia: April 2009), 2.

⁶² *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, s.v. "Grade Separation," <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/grade%20separation>.

⁶³ United States Department of Transportation, *Vision for High-Speed Rail in America*, 5.

These corridor definitions mirror how high speed rail evolved in Europe and the Northeast Corridor of the United States. Instead of utilizing the transportation networks that had been in operation for more than a century, European countries built modern transportation networks following the destruction caused by the Second World War. The United States, having been spared from the domestic destruction of war continued to rely on what was rapidly becoming an insufficient transportation network. Germany upgraded its infrastructure to allow faster speeds for their trains before constructing “by-pass lines” that were straighter than the normally curved and high traffic mainlines, thereby reducing travel time between stations.⁶⁴ France, as demonstrated above, introduced high speed service up to 125 miles per hour in the 1950s and 1960s over existing rights of way. Once implemented, the routes of Paris to Lyon and Paris to Toulouse proved there was value between the cities. The French either partially or wholly replaced the routes with the TGV trainsets. In the United States, the *Metroliner* trainsets that operated in the Northeast Corridor during the 1960s and 1970s competed with airlines in terms of door-to-door travel times and led to Northeast Corridor improvement

⁶⁴ Ross, 388.

projects, reducing travel times and increasing both average and top speeds.⁶⁵

Under Obama's stimulus plan, any region could submit a long range plan, however, priority was given to the ten major corridors that were identified by the Federal Railroad Administration in 1991. Those corridors included the Pacific Northwest, California, Texas, the Middle West, the Gulf Coast, Southeast, Florida, Pennsylvania, New York, and the Northeast.⁶⁶ U.S. Transportation Secretary, Andrew H. Card, designated the Florida high speed rail corridor, linking Orlando and Tampa with Miami, in 1992.⁶⁷ The Federal Railroad Administration placed a 10 July 2009, deadline for pre-applications so the Department of Transportation would be able to see what possible projects were competing for the \$8 billion in high speed rail funding. There were four categories for these applications based on the their level of readiness: (1) "shovel ready" projects or those that were only lacking funding and were otherwise ready to begin construction; (2) projects that required additional study prior to construction; (3) projects that were not yet ready for immediate study but should be considered for future development; and (4) projects where States were willing to

⁶⁵ United States Department of Transportation, *Vision for High-Speed Rail in America*, 7.

⁶⁶ Abrams, "Obama on high-speed-rail: Time for U.S. to catch up."

⁶⁷ Federal Railroad Administration, "Chronology of High-Speed Rail Corridors," <http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/passenger/618.shtml>.

make a match of federal funds. Complete applications for categories 1, 3, and 4 were due to the Federal Railroad Administration on 24 August; while applications for category 2 were due on 2 October. The projects that won grant money would be announced soon after the October deadline.⁶⁸

The Obama Administration knew that the \$8 billion from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act would not be enough to fully fund the construction and operation of an American high speed rail network. Vice President Joseph Biden argued that the high speed rail funding from the Recovery Act served only as “down payment” for a high speed rail system that would require continued financial commitment. The Administration thought the selling of bonds would be a realistic source of additional funds. Biden added that building a high speed rail system would be a part of a “rebalancing” of the country’s transportation approach. He reminded the press that “the interstate highway system started in the same way” as it was not all constructed or funded at one time, and that the only way ambitious projects were completed was because of a continued commitment to seeing the project completed.⁶⁹ SNCF President Jean-Pierre

⁶⁸ “FRA lays out procedure for high speed applications,” *TRAINS*, June 17, 2009, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/06/FRA%20lays%20out%20procedure%20for%20high%20speed%20applications.aspx>.

⁶⁹ “Obama Administration looks at high speed rail bonding program,” *TRAINS*, June 5, 2009,

Loubinoux, claimed that high speed rail networks are efficient when they link cities 600 to 900 miles apart; California, Texas, Florida and the Northeast Coast of the United States offer those possibilities.

Loubinoux also pledged that SNCF would be open to operating its high speed rail network in the United States if given the opportunity.⁷⁰

<http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/06/Obama%20Administration%20looks%20at%20high%20speed%20rail%20bonding%20program.aspx>.
⁷⁰ "French interested in running U.S. high-speed railway network," *TRAINS*, March, 20, 2009,
<http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/03/French%20interested%20in%20running%20US%20high-speed%20railway%20network.aspx>.

Chapter Two: History of Passenger Rail and High Speed Rail

Planning in Florida

Railways Prior to 1900

At the start of the 19th century approximately 80 percent of the United States' population lived along the Atlantic seaboard, nearly 20 percent resided in the Ohio River Valley, and a slim, though growing, number of inhabitants chose to reside in the valley of the Mississippi River. Westward expansion originally started along trails through wooded areas that inched toward the Pacific Ocean. In 1818, the National Road was paved, an improvement over the wooded dirt trails, to the banks of the Ohio River. In 1825, steamboats allowed for goods to move upstream and the Erie Canal opened, which linked the Hudson River through upstate New York with the Great Lakes at Buffalo, New York, along the shores of Lake Erie. When the Canal was completed there was a need for transportation; agricultural products needed to

be moved from the West to the East, cotton was demanded in the North from the South, and the manufactured goods of the Northeast needed to be shipped to the South and West. The Erie Canal, the first link between South, West, and East, was the answer to the country's transportation dilemma in 1825.⁷¹

During the same year there were proposals for various other canal projects as well as a new form of transportation, the railway. The draw of the railway was the possibility of attaining speeds of 15 miles per hour, or four times greater than the fastest canal boat which thus rendering the canal in North America obsolete. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad began construction in 1828 and commenced operation in 1830 which connected the Chesapeake Bay with the valuable river steamboat traffic. Over the next thirty years, numerous railroads would be constructed across the United States (centered primarily in the North); countless more railways would be planned and never completed. By the time of the War Between the States, the North had a three-to-one railroad track mileage advantage over the South.⁷²

During the second year of the War Between the States, the United States Congress passed legislation that authorized the

⁷¹ Christopher Chant, *The History of North American Steam* (Edison, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, 2007), 8-15.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 15-40.

Transcontinental Railroad. The vote in 1862 was markedly different than previous attempts due to the fact that the southern states had seceded and no longer had representation, allowing for the bill's passage. In years prior, the South was able to kill transcontinental railroad proposals by arguing that the New Orleans, Louisiana to Southern California route was preferable, and more profitable, to either, and would not vote for either, the Nebraska to Central California or Chicago, Illinois to the Pacific Northwest routes. Without Southern interference, the Union Congress established that the railroad would run from the Missouri River, somewhere along Iowa's border, to the Pacific Ocean. On 10 May 1869, the "Golden Spike" that signified a link between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, was driven into the track at Promontory Point, Utah, and the Transcontinental Railroad was completed.⁷³

The first mention of railroads in Florida's history occurred in 1828 when the Florida Territorial Legislative Council chartered the Chipola Canal Company and authorized the company to construct a canal or railway between the eastern section of St. Andrew's Bay and

⁷³ Ibid., 50-75.

the Chipola River. Neither the canal nor the railway was ever constructed.⁷⁴

During the 1829-1830 session of the United States Congress, Florida's territorial delegate, Joseph White, asked for a survey and estimation of cost to be conducted for a railway to be constructed between St. Marks, Florida and Augusta, Georgia. This proposal was eventually denied.⁷⁵

The first railway that operated in Florida was between St. Joseph and Lake Wimico, on the Apalachicola River, in 1836. In 1837, the Tallahassee Railroad was chartered for operations between Tallahassee and St. Marks located on the Gulf of Mexico. Both railroads were driven by horses and mules instead of locomotives.⁷⁶

The Lake Wimico and St. Joseph Canal and Railroad Company opened service in March of 1836 as a means to connect St. Joseph with the busy Apalachicola River. Initially mules and horses conveyed all traffic on the line. However, in the summer of 1836, two steam locomotives went into operation covering the eight miles in 25 minutes. In order to spur development, fares were not charged during the first six months of operation. After that, very low fares were

⁷⁴ Gregg M. Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History* (Gainesville, Florida: University Press of Florida, 2008), 2.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

implemented; only 25 cents was charged to passengers. Coupled with the Panic of 1837 and a yellow fever epidemic in 1841, the railroad eventually ceased to exist.⁷⁷

A passenger trip along the 22 mile Tallahassee Railroad cost \$1.50 and took 2 ½ hours traveling at a speed of 9 miles per hour. The Tallahassee Railroad was sold to the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad in 1855. Through a number of mergers and consolidations within the railway industry, the historic line was acquired by the Seaboard Air Line in 1899. In 1931, due to the emergence of new commercial centers throughout the state, the importance of St. Marks declined and the Seaboard Air Line petitioned the Interstate Commerce Commission to abandon the rail spur. Parts of the line were used until the late 1960s, however. In 1984, the Florida Department of Transportation purchased the right of way. By 1988, the former railroad had been transformed into Florida's first rail trail where bicyclers, joggers, skaters, horseback riders and walkers could utilize the thoroughfare which was previously utilized by the iron horse. There have been other rail trail projects throughout Florida, such as in Pinellas and Seminole Counties, and there are numerous more planned. A rail trail occurs when a government, state or local,

⁷⁷ Louise M. Porter, *The Lives of Port St. Joseph* (Port St. Joe, Florida: St. Joseph Historical Society, 1975), 32.

purchases an abandoned right of way from a railway and then constructs a paved trail for use as a recreation area.⁷⁸

In 1834, the Florida, Alabama, and Georgia Rail Road was authorized by the Territory of Florida to build a line from Pensacola to the Alabama border and a charter from Alabama to build through the state to the Georgia border. By 1838, construction had ceased due to lack of funding. However, there was public interest in the building of railroads in the future state.⁷⁹

On 3 March 1845, only one railroad, the Tallahassee Railroad, was in operation. Florida's Congressman, Edward C. Cabell, envisioned a railway that ran from Jacksonville to Pensacola which he estimated the building cost to be close to \$4 million. In order to finance the railroad, Cabell proposed that the federal government give Florida the right of way so it could be sold to develop the railway. In 1845, Florida received 500,000 acres from the federal government, upon becoming the 27th state admitted to the Union, and an additional 20 million acres of wetlands to develop as part of the Swamp Land Acts. The Internal Improvement Fund, which was to be overseen by the governor, attorney general, state treasurer, comptroller, and the registrar of state lands, would manage the newly acquired land and

⁷⁸ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 33-37.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 43-49.

sell it accordingly. The federal government also stated that any company that wanted to construct a route from the St. Johns River to the Escambia River, from Amelia Island to Tampa Bay or Cedar Key, or from Pensacola to the Alabama border was entitled to free grants of land.⁸⁰

The Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Central Railroad was chartered to fulfill the first leg of Congressman Cabell's vision by constructing a 60 mile railway from Jacksonville to Alligator (renamed Lake City in 1859). It was completed in 1858. The railway opened for service on 13 March 1860, with an excursion train from Jacksonville to Lake City. On 21 March, the railway transported all the citizens of Lake City to Jacksonville for a barbecue and ceremony. It was believed that the line had a lucrative future, especially since the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad would connect Lake City to Tallahassee in the near future. No one could foresee the devastation that lay ahead during the War Between the States.⁸¹

The Pensacola and Georgia Railroad was chartered in January of 1853. In 1855, the Florida Legislature determined the route would run from Lake City to Pensacola by way of Tallahassee. The Pensacola and Georgia Railroad would acquire the Tallahassee Railroad. During the

⁸⁰ Ibid., 50-57.

⁸¹ Ibid., 57-61.

War Between the States, the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad would extend west from the state capital to Quincy. The next 180 miles, west from Quincy to Pensacola, would have to be constructed by others. In December of 1860, the railway opened to the public. Passengers were able to travel from Tallahassee to Lake City in a time of 7 ½ hours.⁸²

In January of 1853, Florida chartered the Alabama and Florida Railroad which was to run between Pensacola and Pollard, Alabama. The initial segment to Pollard was completed in 1861. On 5 May 1861 the connection to Pollard to Montgomery, Alabama was completed. Passenger trains began a 10 hour schedule between Pensacola and Montgomery on 6 May.⁸³

A railroad that would connect the Atlantic Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico had been a vision for the leaders of Florida since the times the state had been a territory. Such a railroad would cut 800 miles of shipping between New York City, New York and New Orleans, Louisiana. Four failed construction ventures preceded the efforts of David Levy, Florida's Congressional Delegate, who attempted to persuade the Secretary of War to survey Florida for a line that would run from the St. Mary's River to Cedar Key. Levy proposed that

⁸² Gregg Turner, *The Making of America Series: A Short History of Florida Railroads* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2003), 25.

⁸³ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 65-67.

Florida would be in charge of running the railway that linked the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean. Upon Florida's admittance to the Union, Levy was elected as Florida's first Senator and changed his name to David Levy Yulee. In 1851, Yulee lost his Senate seat to Stephen Mallory of Key West. Following the loss, Yulee began to examine the need for such a railway and determined that he, not the State of Florida, should be the one in charge of running the route. Yulee discovered that the United States Department of Treasury estimated the amount of trade between New York City and New Orleans at \$325 million and that his railroad would cut 800 miles of the costs for shippers.⁸⁴

After failing in 1849 to get the Atlantic and Gulf Railroad chartered by the Florida Legislature, Yulee tried again. On 8 January 1852, the Legislature approved the charter of the Florida Railroad Company. Fernandina, the deepest port south of Chesapeake Bay, was chosen to be the railway's eastern terminus on the Atlantic Ocean. Cedar Key, another deepwater harbor, was chosen to be the western terminus. The railway ran southwesterly from Fernandina through Baldwin, where it intersected with Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Central Railroad, through Starke and Waldo. Waldo was chosen to be a junction where a branch line would eventually travel south through

⁸⁴ Ibid., 68-73.

Ocala and onward to Tampa. When it was learned that Cedar Key, and not Tampa, was selected as the western terminus of the railway, the citizens of Tampa burned Yulee in effigy. The mainline would travel west from Waldo to Cedar Key via Gainesville and Archer.⁸⁵

Yulee signed a contract with Joseph Finegan & Company to complete construction in 1855. Finegan would become one of Yulee's chief real estate purchasers in addition to his roles as a planter, lumberman, and a cotton broker. During the War Between the States, Finegan rose to the rank of Brigadier General in the Army of the Confederate States of America and was head of the Confederate forces that won the Battle of Olustee. However, due to financial problems, the partnership between Finegan and Yulee unraveled, and left Yulee, who was also having difficulty raising cash, without a contractor. Yulee sought "Yankee" investment in his railroad to finish the project, and an extension to Tampa Bay. The extension was to be completed by the subsidiary company, the Florida Peninsular Railroad. On 1 March 1861, the Florida Railroad opened for business between Cedar Key and Fernandina.⁸⁶

The War Between the States saw the completion of a railway link between Georgia and Florida, though it occurred at the end of the War

⁸⁵ Ibid., 73-74.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 74-80.

and had no real effect in saving the Confederacy. During the War, the Florida Railroad allowed for Yulee to escape to Gainesville from his residence in Fernandina. Northern investors were returned control of the railway after the war. The Pensacola and Georgia Railroad became important to Florida during the War because the Live Oak Branch allowed munitions, troops, cattle, salt and other supplies to travel northward to the rest of the Confederacy. The project was completed after Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, stepped in and impressed the little used Florida Railroad's rails (something Yulee tried to delay) to be used to finish the Florida-Georgia link.⁸⁷ The Florida Railroad was reorganized into the Atlantic, Gulf, and West India Transit Company in 1872. The newly created railway was still the parent of the Peninsular Railroad, which began operation in 1880 and ran from Waldo to Ocala, and the Tropical Railroad which ran from Ocala to Wildwood and began service on New Year's Day of 1883.⁸⁸

Florida's railroads fell into a state of disrepair during the War Between the States due to impressments lack of available parts for repairs and the general infrastructure destruction incurred during times of war. Only about 38% of Florida's railroad routes were useable at the conclusion of the war. The Florida and Alabama

⁸⁷ Robert C. Black III, *The Railroads of the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 212.

⁸⁸ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 115.

Railroad lost its locomotives, cars, and rails due to impressments during the War. During Reconstruction, the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad sold the Live Oak Branch to the Florida, Atlantic and Gulf Railroad. The Pensacola and Georgia Railroad, along with the Florida, Atlantic, and Gulf Railroad, were merged into the Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile Railroad in 1869 with the goal of linking the three cities, chiefly Jacksonville with Pensacola. The lofty vision failed and the Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile Railroad only extended 20 miles west of Quincy to Chattahoochee.⁸⁹

Following Reconstruction, Florida's railways enjoyed a period of expansion. Governor William Bloxham was elected in 1881. He was a planter from Leon County and served in the Confederate Army during the War Between the States. He declared that "his pleasure and duty" was to foster railroads and other internal improvements, to encourage immigration to the state, and to educate the youth. He called these items his "three great links in the general chain of progress which the State could confidently rely for future growth and prosperity."⁹⁰

Hamilton Disston first visited Florida in 1877. When in Florida, he met fellow Republican Henry Sanford, who was developing what would become the City of Sanford on the southern shore of Lake

⁸⁹ Ibid., 94-103.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 104.

Monroe. In 1881, the state's Internal Improvement Fund was unable to pay the interest on defaulted bonds and had its assets frozen. Even the receiver of the fund was unable to restore solvency; bankruptcy of the Internal Improvement Fund was a definite possibility as the debt was \$959,934. Disston struck a deal with Governor Bloxham to purchase 4 million acres, at a price of 25 cents per acre. The land Disston purchased was perceived to be swampland. As the Internal Improvement Board had defaulted on its bonds, solvency needed to be restored before the Board could approve any land grants for railways. After the debt was serviced from the deal, the Internal Improvement Fund was again able to start giving land grants; close to 8.25 million acres of land were granted during Governor Bloxham's first administration.⁹¹

In 1876, Colonel William D. Chipley became president of the Pensacola Railroad, formerly the Florida and Alabama Railroad. Chipley thought the Pensacola Railroad would soon be bought by a larger railway, and subsequently began takeover discussions with the Louisville and Nashville Railroad. The acquisition was completed in February of 1880 for a price of \$157,545 and Chipley became the Louisville and Nashville's area superintendent. In March of that year, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad created a subsidiary company, the

⁹¹ J.E. Dovell, "The Railroads and the Public Lands of Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (January 1956): 236-258.

Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad, to extend from Pensacola to Chattahoochee where it would link with the Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile Railroad. Work was completed on the extension in April of 1883, and in 1885 the parent, Louisville and Nashville Railroad, fully merged with the spun off Pensacola and Atlantic Railroad.⁹²

Sir Edward Reed, a twice-knighted British politician, purchased both the Florida Central Railroad and the Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile Railroad in the early 1870s. He then formally merged the two companies into one single Florida Central and Western Railroad. In April of 1881, Sir Reed was named the president of the Florida Transit Railroad, which was newly reorganized from the Atlantic, Gulf, and West India Transit Company. Two years after being named to the helm, Sir Edward Reed merged the subsidiary Florida Peninsular and Tropical Railroads into the Florida Transit Railroad and renamed the new railway the Florida Transit and Peninsular Railroad. In 1884, Sir Reed then merged his Florida Central and Western Railroad with Florida Transit and Peninsular Railroad to create the Florida Railway and Navigation Company. Two other firms joined the 1884 merger, the Fernandina and Jacksonville Railroad and the Leesburg and Indian River Railroad which ran from Wildwood to Leesburg. In the coming years, Sir Reed expanded from Wildwood south to Plant City and east

⁹² Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 108-112.

to Tavares. Following financial difficulties after not paying interest in 1885, the Florida Railway and Navigation Company slipped into receivership to Colonel H. Reiman Duval who reorganized the company in 1888 as the Florida Central & Peninsular Railroad.⁹³

In 1879, Henry Plant acquired the Atlantic & Gulf Railroad which ran from Savannah, Georgia to Live Oak, Florida and renamed the new company Savannah, Florida and Western Railway. A year later, Plant bought the Savannah & Charleston Railroad. In 1881, Plant connected Waycross, Georgia to Jacksonville, Florida allowing for trains to operate over several railroads from New York City to Jacksonville. Plant then connected his railroad to Gainesville and Palatka and expanded South to Charlotte Harbor. A Plant subsidiary connected to Bartow and Lakeland. Plant then purchased the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railway while completing the link between Sanford and Tampa by way of Maitland, Orlando, Kissimmee and Lakeland. In 1884, when Tampa was connected to the South Florida Railroad, there were only 700 people living in the area. Following the arrival of the railway, new industries popped up. Port Tampa was established, as was the Tampa Bay Hotel, which is now the University of Tampa. In 1895, the Plant System bought the Orange Belt Railroad that ran from Sanford to St. Petersburg via Lake Sylvan, Winter Garden, Dunedin,

⁹³ Ibid., 112-119.

and Clearwater. By 1902, the Plant System of railroads would span over 2,200 miles between Florida, to Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina.⁹⁴

In 1883, the Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West began construction from Jacksonville to Sanford and the link was completed in February of 1886. This line was branch line of the South Florida Railroad which was a subsidiary of Plant System Railroads. In October of 1890, the Osceola and Lake Jessup Railway extended the ten miles from Winter Park to Oviedo and shortly the extra mile to Lake Charm. In 1894, this railway was absorbed by the Florida Central and Peninsular Railroad.⁹⁵

Another major player in Florida's railway expansion was Henry Morrison Flagler. Flagler first visited Florida in the winter of 1877, with his first wife who was suffering from tuberculosis. He honeymooned in Florida with his second wife in 1883 and visited again in 1885. Flagler joined the Board of Directors of the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax River Railway in 1885. In St. Augustine, Flagler built the Ponce de Leon Hotel, now Flagler College, which opened in 1888. In May of that year, Flagler acquired the St. Johns and Halifax River Railroad which operated between East Palatka and Daytona Beach. By 1892

⁹⁴ Ibid., 119-129.

⁹⁵ Richard Adicks and Donna Neely, *Oviedo: Biography of a Town*, 2nd ed. (Oviedo, Florida: Richard Adicks and Donna Neely, 1992), 30-32.

Flagler had reorganized the recently-acquired Florida Coast and Gulf Railroad into the Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Indian River Railway to expand southward down Florida's east coast. West Palm Beach was connected to the railway in 1894 and by 1896 Flagler was operating both the luxurious Royal Poinciana and Breakers hotels. At first, Flagler was skeptical of extending his rail line to Miami. At the time Dade County only had 257 people residing within it. However, his reservations were put aside after the freezes of 1884-1895 when Miami resident, Julia Tuttle, sent Flagler a box of orange, lemon, and lime blossoms signifying the freeze did not touch the southern city. In exchange for land, Flagler agreed to extend his railway 70 miles south to Miami where he would construct a new hotel on his way to building a city. Around this time Flagler renamed his company the Florida East Coast Railway. In 1905, the railway began construction of the Key West Extension. On 22 January 1912, close to seven years after construction commenced, the Key West Extension saw its first passenger trains roll over its bridges.⁹⁶

Railroads popped up between communities almost overnight during the late 1800s. Certain routes, by themselves, proved to be unprofitable. However, if another railway acquired a struggling route, a larger system emerged and connected a greater number of cities.

⁹⁶ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 129-139.

Examples of this are the Plant System of Railroads and the Florida Central & Peninsular Railroad. This is the reason for a large amount of railroad consolidation in the late 1800s.

Atlantic Coast Line

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad was created by over 100 railroads that extended south from Richmond, Virginia in April of 1900. It consisted of over 2,000 miles of track. On 1 July 1902, the Atlantic Coast Line purchased the 2,235 miles of the Plant System Railroads for \$46,563,898, doubling the size of the Atlantic Coast Line. On 27 September of the same year, it purchased a controlling interest in the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, increasing the mileage of the Atlantic Coast Line family to over 9,000 miles. The Atlantic Coast Line connected Florida with Richmond, Virginia via Savannah, Georgia, Charleston, South Carolina, and Rocky Mount, North Carolina. In the autumn of 1910, it expanded south from Haines City to Sebring.⁹⁷

Florida's land boom of the 1920s had an effect on the railways that served the Sunshine State. The Atlantic Coast Line, which had 1,793 miles of track in Florida, upgraded its locomotive shops in Sanford and constructed a number of new stations along its route including Frostproof, Avon Park, and Lake Wales. Sarasota was

⁹⁷ Turner, *The Making of America Series: A Short History of Florida Railroads*, 93-99.

connected to the Atlantic Coast line in 1924; Punta Gorda, Fort Myers, and Naples followed in 1925; and, Everglades received service beginning in 1929. In 1925, the Atlantic Coast Line recorded top profits with \$93.9 million, and another record year followed in 1926 with \$97 million.⁹⁸ During the 1920s, five year round trains ran between New York City and Jacksonville with an additional four during the winter tourist season.⁹⁹

During the 1930s, the Atlantic Coast Line's premier train, the *Florida Special*, achieved a new speed record between New York City and Jacksonville with a time of 29 hours and 40 minutes.¹⁰⁰ The Atlantic Coast Line operated a number of passenger trains into Florida. The *ACL Express*, *Havana Special*, *Palmetto Limited*, *Florida Special*, *Everglades*, *Miamian*, *Florida West Coast Special*, and the *Florida East Coast Special* operated on the New York to Florida route. The *Seminole*, *Southland*, *St. Louis-Jacksonville Express*, *Floridian*, *Dixie Express*, *Dixie Flyer*, *Southland*, and *Flamingo* operated from the Middle West to Florida.¹⁰¹

During the Second World War, the Atlantic Coast Line experienced an uptick in traffic. Revenues increased year over year;

⁹⁸ Gregg Turner, *Images of Rail: Florida Railroads in the 1920s* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), 33-34.

⁹⁹ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 196.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 207-208.

¹⁰¹ Turner, *The Making of America Series: A Short History of Florida Railroads*, 117-123.

\$67.4 million in 1941, \$115.1 million in 1942, and \$155.9 million in 1943. During this same period, few of Florida's Atlantic Coast Line tracks were abandoned. Air conditioning was added in the 1950s. Tracks continued to be well maintained allowing coaches to travel at high speeds. In 1957, the railroad moved its corporate headquarters to Jacksonville, Florida from North Carolina. In 1959, the Interstate Commerce Commission initially approved the Atlantic Coast Line's proposal to merge with its rival, the Seaboard Air Line, though the merger would not be consummated until 1 July 1967.¹⁰²

In the post-war era, the Atlantic Coast Line consistently recorded on-time performances in the upper ninety percent for its New York City to Florida services. During the winter of 1955 the Atlantic Coast Line initiated 100 mile per hour service on its streamliner fleet, allowing a ten hour trip between Jacksonville, Florida and Richmond, Virginia and a 24 hour schedule between Miami, Florida and New York City, New York. In 1957, due to the costs of maintaining 100 mile per hour service, streamliner service was reduced to 90 miles per hour and following capital improvements, the 24 hour schedule between Miami and New York City was maintained.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 212-218.

¹⁰³ William D. Middleton, "How to run Streamliners," *Classic Trains Special Edition Number 12: TRAINS of the 1950's*, 2013, 112-121.

Seaboard Air Line

The Seaboard Air Line Railway began as an alliance of more than twenty railways and 2,600 miles of track. After the War Between the States, Seaboard connected Atlanta, Georgia with Norfolk, Virginia. In February of 1899, the Seaboard Air Line purchased the Florida Central and Peninsular Railway. On 14 April 1900, two celebratory trains left Richmond, Virginia for Tampa, Florida. The Seaboard Air Line purchased three firms in the early 1900s: the Plant City, Arcadia, and Gulf Railroad; the Tallahassee, Perry, and Southeastern Railroad; and the Atlantic, Suwannee River, and Gulf Railway. The Seaboard Air Line purchased a controlling interest in the Tampa and Gulf Coast Railroad in 1910, which connected Tampa with St. Petersburg via Port Richey, Tarpon Springs, and Clearwater. In 1911, the railway extended to Inverness and in 1912 it acquired the Tampa Northern Railroad that operated between Tampa and Brooksville.¹⁰⁴ The Seaboard Air Line Railway connected Jacksonville, Florida with Richmond, Virginia via Savannah, Georgia, Columbia, South Carolina, and Raleigh, North Carolina.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 145-153.

¹⁰⁵ Theodore Shradly and Arthur M. Waldrop, *Orange Blossom Special: The Story of Florida's Distinguished Winter Train Expanded Second Edition* (Valrico, Florida: Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line Railroads Historical Society, 2000), vii.

At the outset of the 1920s, the Seaboard Air Line Railway had 1,306 miles of track in Florida; in 1926 it recorded its best year with \$67 million in revenues. In 1925, the Seaboard Air Line Railway extended to Miami via Okeechobee, on the northern shore of Lake Okeechobee, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach and no longer relied upon the Florida East Coast Railroad to transport its through cars down the East coast. The extension to Miami was met with opposition by both the Florida East Coast Railroad that stood to lose Seaboard's through cars and thus valuable revenue, and the Atlantic Coast Line, that perceived Seaboard's Miami extension as competition for transporting traffic from the Northeast to Florida. In 1930, due to overexpansion during the decade of the "Roaring Twenties," and the loss of traffic brought on by the onset of the Great Depression, the Seaboard posted a \$4.5 million loss and slipped into receivership, where it would remain until the 1940s.¹⁰⁶

In 1939, the Seaboard Air Line introduced the *Silver Meteor*, a lightweight, air conditioned streamlined train that operated between New York City to St. Petersburg by way of Tampa, and to Miami; the route split sections in Wildwood.¹⁰⁷ In 1947, the Seaboard Air Line Railroad introduced the *Silver Star*, which would also run between New York City to St. Petersburg, via Tampa, and to Miami. Part of the

¹⁰⁶ Turner, *Images of Rail: Florida Railroads in the 1920s*, 53-54.

¹⁰⁷ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 208-209.

“Silver Fleet’s” advantages were long straightaways of track that facilitated locomotives capable of speeds of 75 miles per hour, though engineers routinely exceeded that speed. The *Silver Star* was able to run between New York City and Miami in 25 hours and 45 minutes.¹⁰⁸

The *Orange Blossom Special* was the Seaboard Air Line’s flagship train. It operated between New York City and both Florida coasts from 1925 to 1952 during the winter tourist season. The train was an express that made few stops once leaving Washington, District of Columbia.¹⁰⁹ The train, when on display with its new diesel locomotives in Jacksonville, inspired a popular Bluegrass tune of the same name.¹¹⁰

There were a number of other trains that served Florida for the Seaboard Coast Line. The *New York-Florida Limited*, the *Palmland*, and the *Sun Queen* all served the New York City to Florida route. The *Gulf Wind*, *New Orleans-Florida Limited*, and the *Seaboard Mail and Express* all covered the route from Jacksonville to Chattahoochee over Seaboard tracks and continued on to New Orleans with Louisville and Nashville powered locomotives on that company’s tracks.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Larry Goolsby, *Seaboard Air Line Passenger Service: The Streamlined Era* (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Printing Company, 2011), 20-43.

¹⁰⁹ Shrady and Waldrop, 4-115.

¹¹⁰ Goolsby, *Seaboard Air Line Passenger Service: The Streamlined Era*, 45.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 53-54.

The *Florida Sunbeam* and *Suwannee River Special* served from Chicago to Miami; however, the rival Atlantic Coast Line and its partners had cornered the vast majority of this market.¹¹²

In January of 1963, the Florida East Coast Railway's unions went on strike. The Atlantic Coast Line was forced to run its trains to Auburndale, instead of interchanging with the Florida East Coast in Jacksonville, where the Seaboard would haul the passenger cars the rest of the way to Miami; suddenly the Atlantic Coast Line found the Seaboard's Miami Extension of the 1920s not such a bad move after all.¹¹³

Florida East Coast Railroad

Henry Flagler lived for a little over a year after the Key West Extension was completed. He died on 30 May 1913.¹¹⁴ Twenty three years later the Extension was destroyed during the Labor Day Hurricane of 1935 which recorded winds greater than 200 miles per hour. The Overseas Highway, completed in 1938, was constructed

¹¹² Ibid., 54-55.

¹¹³ Ibid., 94-96.

¹¹⁴ Turner, *The Making of America Series: A Short History of Florida Railroads*, 79.

using portions of the original Florida East Coast extension to Key West.¹¹⁵

The impact of Flagler's railway is reflected in the increased population of the City of Miami over the next 50 years. The population of the little village of Miami, less than 300 people when Flagler's railway was extended there, exploded to 192,122 by 1945, less than 50 years after the first steam engine pulled into Miami.¹¹⁶

In 1941, the Florida East Coast Railway entered bankruptcy. From the mid 1940s through the late-1950s, there was a legal battle between Ed Ball, who married into the DuPont family and controlled the trust of Alfred DuPont, and the Atlantic Coast Line over control of the Florida East Coast. Originally, the Interstate Commerce Commission ruled that Ball controlled the railway but reversed its decision in 1947 in favor of the Atlantic Coast Line. In 1954, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the Interstate Commerce Commission had exceeded its authority and remanded the case to the District Court. In 1958, the Interstate Commerce

¹¹⁵ Les Standiford, *Last Train to Paradise: Henry Flagler and the Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Railroad That Crossed the Ocean* (New York City, New York: Broadway Paperbacks, 2002), 225-255.

¹¹⁶ Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1947-1949* (Tallahassee Florida: Peninsular Paper Company, 1947), 165.

Commission returned control of the Florida East Coast Railroad to Ball. The Atlantic Coast Line accepted defeat.¹¹⁷

The Florida East Coast emerged from receivership in 1961 but lost revenue due to a freeze that cut citrus shipments and the elimination of car ferry traffic between Miami, Florida and Havana, Cuba that had proved quite lucrative prior to Fidel Castro's rise to power in Cuba. On 23 January of 1963, the Florida East Coast Railway's unions went on strike demanding pay raises. The railroad was unable to meet the strikers' demands and the railroad's operations were shut down for ten days. The Florida East Coast lost revenue as the Atlantic Coast Line from that point forward relied on the Seaboard Air Line to transport through cars to Miami. After ten days, Ed Ball allowed supervisors to operate the few through freights. After a couple of weeks, strikebreakers were hired that were paid according to an eight hour work day rather than the previous 100 mile a day pay schedule. Ball instituted other changes as well, such as the utilization of a single three-man crew to run a train from Jacksonville to Miami whereas it previously took three-five man crews; consolidation of seniority lists starting from the date an employee was hired; dropping the distinction between road and yard crews allowing for crews to operate all over the line; and, the running of trains without cabooses.

¹¹⁷ Turner, *The Making of America Series: A Short History of Florida Railroads*, 140-142.

The State of Florida, after being lobbied by then Miami Mayor, Robert King High, forced the Florida East Coast to operate an intrastate daily passenger train between Jacksonville and Miami. However, the operation ceased in 1968 after the railroad endured over 200 vandalism incidents conducted by aggravated former Florida East Coast Railroad employees. The vandalism ranged from sabotaging switches, to firing shots at passing trains, to bombing trains. As a precaution, the railroad operated trains with a dummy car in front of the locomotive to trip any explosives on the tracks. The railroad resisted numerous court challenges to the operation of a non-unionized railroad and by 1973 the work of 2,100 employees was being performed by a workforce of less than 1,000.¹¹⁸ In 1970, the unions finally agreed to go back to work.¹¹⁹

The Florida East Cost Railway continues to operate today. There are 351 miles of mainline track in Florida and sixty percent of the traffic begins and ends within Florida. In 2007, the railway was acquired by New York's Fortress Investment Group for a price of \$3.5 billion.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Richard Saunders, Jr., *Merging Lines: American Railroads 1900-1970* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2001), 284-287.

¹¹⁹ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 220-221.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 231-233.

Seaboard Coast Line

At the end of the 1950s, the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line were unlikely candidates for merger as both lines enjoyed strong leadership, were mile-for-mile competitors, and each had recorded their highest net earning to date. In January 1960, officials and stockholders from both railroads met in Jacksonville, Florida, where management pitched the merger to shareholders. In August of 1960, the shareholders approved the merger. The deal was immediately contested by the Southern Railway, the Florida East Coast Railroad, the Illinois Central Railroad, large paper companies, labor unions, and the Justice Department, to the Interstate Commerce Commission; all contested the merger based on their belief that the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line were the type of railroads that should not be merged. In the end, however, the Interstate Commerce Commission decided that there was a public benefit for shippers to deal with one railroad rather than two and approved the merger.¹²¹

The new railroad resulted in savings of \$39 million. The mainline became the Atlantic Coast Line's double tracked speedway from

¹²¹ Saunders, *Merging Lines: American Railroads 1900-1970*, 277-284.

Richmond, Virginia and Jacksonville, Florida. The Seaboard Air Line's freight mainline from Savannah, Georgia to Hamlet, North Carolina via Charleston, South Carolina was abandoned, though the Seaboard's passenger mainline through Columbia, South Carolina was maintained for fast passenger trains.¹²²

One hiccup in the merger negotiations was the Atlantic Coast Line's controlling interest of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad. The Louisville & Nashville was larger than both the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line. Although both the Atlantic Coast Line and Louisville & Nashville were operated separately as distinct companies, the Southern Railway and Illinois Central Railroad filed a suit to detach the Louisville & Nashville Railroad from the Atlantic Coast Line. The suit only served to delay merger proceedings as the court denied the plaintiff's pleas in the end.¹²³

The former rivals, the Atlantic Coast Line and Seaboard Air Line Railroads finally merged in July of 1967, becoming the Seaboard Coast Line and the country's eighth largest railroad.¹²⁴ For the first year, the railroad was run as it was prior to the merger. However, in 1968, changes in routes began to occur. The *Silver Meteor* began running

¹²² Ibid., 278.

¹²³ Ibid., 284.

¹²⁴ Turner, *The Making of America Series: A Short History of Florida Railroads*, 148.

from New York City to Miami, only, and the *Champion* began serving both coasts.¹²⁵

The final passenger schedule in December of 1970 listed the *Florida Special*, *Champion*, *Gulf Coast Special*, *Everglades*, *City of Miami*, *Silver Meteor*, and *Silver Star* as in service. Although, all routes were seeing a decline in ridership, some passenger trains were still earning a rare profit.¹²⁶

In 1978, the holding company, CSX, was created when Seaboard Coast Line Industries, or the "Family Lines System," - the holding company that held the Seaboard Coast Line and the Louisville & Nashville Railroad together - started purchasing shares in the Chessie System. The Chessie System ran from Buffalo, New York to Chicago, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri to Richmond, Virginia.¹²⁷ In 1983, and again in 1987, the railways that made up the Chessie System were merged into a single company when the Western Maryland Railroad was merged into the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and when the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad was merged into the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad. On 1 July 1986, the Family Lines System was merged into CSX Transportation. On 31 August 1987, the Chesapeake & Ohio

¹²⁵ Goolsby, *Seaboard Air Line Passenger Service: The Streamlined Era*, 45.

¹²⁶ Larry Goolsby, *Atlantic Coast Line Passenger Service: The Postwar Years* (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1999), 68-71.

¹²⁷ Richard Saunders, Jr., *Main Lines: Rebirth of the North American Railroads 1970-2002* (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press, 2003), 148-150.

Railroad was merged into CSX Transportation. CSX was an acronym where "C" represented Chessie, "S" stood for Seaboard, and "X" for together. In 1991, CSX Transportation acquired the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad; the double tracked railroad that stretched from Richmond, Virginia to Washington, District of Columbia.¹²⁸

In October of 1996, the Norfolk Southern Railroad and CSX Transportation were locked in heated negotiations with Conrail, a railway that was made up primarily of the former short-lived and ill-fated Penn Central Railroad and other faltering railways; both of the southeastern railways were trying to take over the northeastern giant. In January of 1997, Norfolk Southern officials floated the idea that Norfolk Southern would take the former New York Central Railroad from Cleveland to Chicago, the former Erie Lackawanna Railroad mainline, and the former Michigan Central; whereas CSX Transportation, the former New York Central Railroad mainline from St. Louis, Missouri to Montreal, Quebec and a branch line via Albany, New York to Boston, Massachusetts.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Ibid., 220-222.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 322-328.

CSX Transportation in 2006 earned revenues of \$9.56 billion making it one of the largest transport stocks on the New York Stock Exchange.¹³⁰

AMTRAK

In 1965, the Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroads were both were struggling financially and sought a merger. The newly-created Penn Central Railroad benefited from a newly-created \$35 million a year Northeast Corridor Project, which aimed to make improvements along the Northeast Corridor from Boston, Massachusetts to Washington, District of Columbia.¹³¹

In the mid 1960s, when the Pennsylvania Railroad needed to start replacing the aging fleet of GG1 locomotives that were built in the 1930s, which were capable of 100 miles per hour, the railroad invested in a 22 mile test track for future higher speed service. Japan made headlines in 1964 by launching its high speed rail line that was then attaining speeds of 130 miles per hour. In tests in the United States, trainsets during 1965 and 1966 reached speeds of over 150

¹³⁰ Turner, *A Journey Into Florida Railroad History*, 223-229.

¹³¹ Don Phillips, "The road to rescue," *Classic Trains*, Summer 2011, 25-26.

miles per hour. In January of 1969, the Pennsylvania Railroad inaugurated its *Metroliner* service to the Northeast Corridor.¹³²

By 1970, passenger rail operations, nationwide, were costing railroads a combined \$470 million per year. The Penn Central was losing \$1 million per day due to the fact that a merger between two struggling railroads failed to produce a profitable railway. In June of 1970, only 873 days after being created, the Penn Central declared bankruptcy. Such losses led to the creation of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation or "American Track," commonly referred to as AMTRAK, in 1970, which was signed into law in November of that year, with a 1 May 1971 operation start. On AMTRAK's first day of service, 110 of the 259 city pairs of intercity passenger rail that existed the day before were cut.¹³³

AMTRAK operations in Florida consisted of all southbound traffic entering the state in Jacksonville. If a train's sections split in Jacksonville, the west coast section traveled south over former Atlantic Coast Line tracks through Sanford, Orlando, and Lakeland to Tampa and St. Petersburg; the east coast section would travel south over former Seaboard Air Line tracks via Waldo, Ocala, and Wildwood to West Palm Beach, Ft. Lauderdale, and Miami. If a train split in

¹³² Greg Gormick, "Pennsy's fast track to the future," *Classic Trains Special Edition Number 7: Fast Trains in the Golden Years of Railroading*, 2009, 104-109.

¹³³ Phillips, "The road to rescue," 30-31.

Wildwood, the west coast section continued south to Tampa and St. Petersburg, and the east coast section continued to Miami. If the train split in Orlando, Kissimmee or Auburndale, the east coast section would continue south to Miami over former Seaboard Air Line tracks and the west coast section would continue on former Atlantic Coast Line tracks to Tampa and St. Petersburg. North of Florida if a train traveled via Charleston, South Carolina it operated over former Atlantic Coastline tracks; if it traveled via Columbia, South Carolina it ran over former Seaboard Air Line tracks; AMTRAK continues to operate its trains in this manner north of Florida today.

On 1 May 1971, AMTRAK's first day, four daily trains operated in Florida. The *Southwind* operated in two sections from Chicago, Illinois with one section going to St. Petersburg and the other to Miami. The *Silver Star* operated from New York City to both St. Petersburg and Miami. The *Silver Meteor* operated from New York City to Miami. Both *Silver* services would travel via the old Seaboard Air Line tracks through Columbia and through Wildwood when in Florida. The *Champion* operated from New York City to St. Petersburg over the former Atlantic Coast Line tracks, via Charleston and Sanford.¹³⁴ On 14 November 1971, the *Florida Special* was added to the time table

¹³⁴ National Railroad Passenger Corporation, "Nationwide Schedules of Intercity Passenger Service, Effective May, 1, 1971," 15, 18-19, and 22-23.

and traveled from New York City to Miami via Charleston, South Carolina and Wildwood, Florida.¹³⁵

On 11 June 1972, Florida service was cut to three daily trains: the *Floridian*, *Silver Star*, and *Meteor*. Two of the three trains operated with two sections that split in Orlando to serve both coasts. The *Meteor's* two sections split in Jacksonville.¹³⁶ In December of that year, the *Champion* and *Vacationer* were added and ran to New York City and St. Petersburg and Miami, respectively.¹³⁷ The *Carolina Special* ran between New York City and Jacksonville during the summer of 1973.¹³⁸

Beginning on 14 May 1974, service returned to the four daily trains: *Floridian*, *Silver Star*, *Silver Meteor*, and *Champion*.¹³⁹ During the winter of 1974-1975, the *Miamian* operated daily between New York City and Miami, via Charleston and Sanford.¹⁴⁰

Service remained the same with four daily trains from 1975 until 1 October 1979. After that date, however, only two daily trains (with

¹³⁵ National Railroad Passenger Corporation, "Nationwide Schedules of Intercity Passenger Service, Effective November, 14, 1971," 58-59 and 67.

¹³⁶ National Railroad Passenger Corporation, "Nationwide Schedules of Intercity Passenger Service, Effective June, 11, 1972," 48-49.

¹³⁷ National Railroad Passenger Corporation, "Nationwide Schedules of Intercity Passenger Service, Effective December, 15, 1972," 45.

¹³⁸ AMTRAK, "All American Schedules, Effective April 23, 1973," 30-31 and 34.

¹³⁹ AMTRAK, "All American Schedules, Effective May 14, 1974," 33-34 and 38-40.

¹⁴⁰ AMTRAK, "All American Schedules, Effective November 15, 1974," 38-40.

two sections apiece) ran in Florida - the *Silver Star* which split in Kissimmee and the *Silver Meteor* that split in Jacksonville.¹⁴¹

On 31 October 1982, the *Silver Palm* was added to run between Tampa and Miami over former Seaboard Air Line tracks.¹⁴² The *Silver Palm* was an intercity passenger train that was partnered with the State of Florida's Department of Transportation to serve Tampa and Miami. In order to continue to receive funding from the State, the *Silver Palm* had to maintain a 60% recovery of operation costs; that goal was never achieved. In spite of coming close to the goal, with a 58% cost recovery, the route was terminated.¹⁴³

On 6 December 1971, the Auto-Train Corporation began service between Sanford, Florida and Lorton, Virginia. The goal was to lure tourists from the Northeast to ride the train along with their automobiles that were loaded into specialized auto carrying cars. The venture proved successful and a second train was launched between Sanford and Louisville, Kentucky in 1974 in an effort to get tourists from the Middle West to do the same as their Northeastern counterparts. In 1977, the company decided to end service to

¹⁴¹ AMTRAK, "National Train Timetables, Effective October 1, 1979," 32-33.

¹⁴² AMTRAK, "National Train Timetables, Effective October 31, 1982," 28-29.

¹⁴³ Florida Transportation Commission, "Public Transit in Florida," (Tallahassee, Florida, February 23, 1989), 6.

Louisville. The company offered its final run between Sanford and Lorton on 30 April 1980.¹⁴⁴

AMTRAK brought the *Auto Train* back on 30 October 1983 with service between Sanford and Lorton, via Charleston.¹⁴⁵ The *Auto Train* was the last AMTRAK train to utilize dome diners, which were made famous in the 1950s, and were used until the 1990s.¹⁴⁶ The 30 to 40-year-old equipment was replaced between March 1995 and 1996 when AMTRAK placed the new bi-leveled Superliner coaches on the *Auto Train*, allowing for at least 450 passengers and their automobiles to travel between Lorton and Sanford.¹⁴⁷ In the early 1990s, AMTRAK started looking for a new terminal in Central Florida that could accommodate the new Superliner coaches. The choices were between the Rand Yard, which is less than a mile north of the current terminal in Sanford, and the Taft Yard, which is South of Orlando and would place tourists closer to Orlando area attractions along the Orlando Orange County Expressway Authority's Bee Line, or State Route 528. Also, the maintenance facilities had to be enlarged; it was thought the

¹⁴⁴ Al DiCenso, "The Train with Two Lives," *TRAINS*, January 2013, 27-28.

¹⁴⁵ AMTRAK, "National Train Timetables, Effective October 30, 1983," 32-33.

¹⁴⁶ "Challenging Times," *AMTRAK an American Story* (Washington, District of Columbia: National Railroad Passenger Corporation, 2011), 64.

¹⁴⁷ "Superliner... And Sanford," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 31, 1994, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1994-08-31/news/9408300713_1_superliner-cars-auto-train-amtrak.

27 acre site in Sanford was too small to fit AMTRAK's needs.¹⁴⁸ The City of Sanford held a special meeting of the City Commission to figure out how to keep the *Auto Train* in Sanford, as well as the 150 jobs connected with the passenger train.¹⁴⁹ Sanford Mayor, Bettye Smith, traveled to Washington, District of Columbia and met with AMTRAK officials to lobby in favor of keeping the terminal in Sanford once the new equipment was put into service in 1995.¹⁵⁰ In October of 1992, AMTRAK announced it no longer had plans to move the *Auto Train* terminal from Sanford once the Superliner coaches were put into revenue service. AMTRAK officials also said they would expand the maintenance facilities and terminal to accommodate the expected 25% increase in ridership. AMTRAK officials cited the Sanford terminal's proximity to Interstate 4, Interstate 95, the attractions, and the tolled Central Florida GreeneWay, or State Route 417 as the primary reason for their decision. An extension to Sanford was expected to open in 1993.¹⁵¹ During the first year that the Superliners were in revenue service, ridership was up 19.5%. The new Superliner coaches seat 74

¹⁴⁸ Gary Taylor, "Amtrak Scouting Area For New Auto Train Terminal Site," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 17, 1992, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1992-09-17/news/9209170735_1_auto-train-amtrak-train-terminal.

¹⁴⁹ Gary Taylor, "Sanford Rallies For Auto Train," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 22, 1992, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1992-09-22/news/9209220062_1_amtrak-auto-train-sanford.

¹⁵⁰ "Sanford Mayor Will Lobby To Keep Auto Train In Town," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 24, 1992, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1992-09-24/news/9209240672_1_amtrak-sanford-auto-train.

¹⁵¹ Mary Walkins, "Amtrak: Sanford Station Will Stay," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 4, 1992, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1992-10-04/news/9210040562_1_amtrak-sanford-auto-train.

passengers compared to only 54 available seats that in the older AmFleet II coaches.¹⁵²

On 29 April 1984, AMTRAK severed service via train to St. Petersburg. The West Coast sections of the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* terminated in Tampa and connected to St. Petersburg via motor coach.¹⁵³

In January of 1989, AMTRAK inaugurated the *Palmetto* which ran daily between Jacksonville and New York City, via Charleston.¹⁵⁴

On 2 May 1993, the *Sunset Limited*, which originates in Los Angeles, California, was extended to run from New Orleans, Louisiana to Miami, Florida.¹⁵⁵

Beginning 30 October 1994, the *Silver Meteor* would only run as one train between New York City and Miami via Charleston and Sanford. The *Palmetto*, also running over the same route, would terminate in Tampa rather than Jacksonville.¹⁵⁶

By 2 April 1995, the *Palmetto* was removed from service leaving the two sections of the *Silver Star*, *Silver Meteor*, *Sunset Limited*, and

¹⁵² "Follow Up: Amtrak Conversion," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 2, 1996, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1996-03-02/news/9603011244_1_amtrak-superliner-auto-train.

¹⁵³ AMTRAK, "National Train Timetables, Effective April 29, 1984," 28.

¹⁵⁴ AMTRAK, "National Train Timetables, Effective January 15, 1989," 32-33.

¹⁵⁵ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective May 2, 1993," 12-13.

¹⁵⁶ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective October 30, 1994" 12-13.

the *Auto Train* as the only intercity passenger service options in Florida.¹⁵⁷

By 10 November 1996, AMTRAK started to run the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* as one section trains from New York City to Miami. The *Silver Star* ran via Columbia and Sanford, whereas the *Silver Meteor* traveled via Charleston and Sanford. The *Silver Palm* was inaugurated between New York City and Miami via Charleston, Wildwood, and Tampa. The *Sunset Limited* route was shortened from Miami to Sanford. The *Auto Train* continued to run its normal route from Sanford to Lorton.¹⁵⁸

Beginning on 26 October 1997, the *Sunset Limited* ran thrice weekly between Orlando, Florida and Los Angeles, California.¹⁵⁹

On 27 October 2002, the *Silver Palm* was renamed the *Palmetto*.¹⁶⁰

On 1 November 2004, the *Silver Star* began running from New York City to Miami via Columbia, Sanford, and Tampa. The *Palmetto* terminated in Savannah, Georgia instead of in Tampa, Florida.¹⁶¹ This left the former Seaboard Air Line tracks from Jacksonville to Tampa

¹⁵⁷ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective April 2, 1995," 12-13.

¹⁵⁸ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective November 10, 1996," 28-29.

¹⁵⁹ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective October 26, 1997," 30-33.

¹⁶⁰ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective October 27, 2002," 30-33.

¹⁶¹ AMTRAK, "National Timetable, Effective November 1, 2004," 64-65.

(that also served Waldo, Ocala, Wildwood, and Dade City) without intercity passenger service. Low ridership led to the elimination of service. An average of four passengers a day boarded trains in Dade City and it lost the mail contract with the United States Postal Service that had previously sustained the route. Now passengers are able to take a bus that leaves north from Lakeland and runs to Jacksonville to catch a northbound train or a bus that runs south from Jacksonville to Lakeland to catch southbound trains.¹⁶²

As of 14 January 2013, the *Silver Star* continues to run from New York City to Miami via Columbia, DeLand, and Tampa. North of Florida into the Carolinas, the *Silver Star* runs over the former Seaboard Air Line tracks. The *Silver Meteor* runs from New York City to Miami via Charleston. North of Florida and through the Carolinas, the *Silver Meteor* runs over the former Atlantic Coast Line tracks. While in Florida, the *Silver Star* and *Silver Meteor* travel over former Atlantic Coast Line tracks and take the old Seaboard Air Line tracks from Auburndale into Miami. The *Auto Train* continues to run from Sanford to Lorton with a lone stop in Florence, South Carolina for a crew change and refueling. If the trains are running on schedule, the *Silver Star* departs Miami at 11:50 A.M. and arrives in New York City

¹⁶² "Loss of Amtrak service shouldn't derail Dade City," *St. Petersburg Times*, October 29, 2004, http://www.sptimes.com/2004/20/29/news_pf/Pasco/Loss_of_Amtrak_servic.shtml.

at 7:18 P.M. the following evening. The *Silver Meteor* departs Miami at 8:20 A.M. and pulls into New York City's Penn Station at 11:06 A.M. the following morning. The *Auto Train* leaves either Sanford, Florida or Lorton, Virginia at four o'clock in the afternoon and arrives at its destination city at 9:30 in the following morning.¹⁶³

On 31 October 2005, due to Hurricane Katrina, AMTRAK suspended service between New Orleans, Louisiana and Orlando, Florida with a date to be determined for service to be returned between the two cities.¹⁶⁴ In order to bring back New Orleans to Florida service, AMTRAK would have to contribute \$33 million to \$97 million to upgrade the damaged tracks to the level needed to sustain passenger service. Since then, CSX has repaired the line to a suitable standard for their freight operations as well as rerouted its two daily trains along another line. There are three proposals for returning New Orleans to Florida service: option one would be to reroute the three-times-a-week *Sunset Limited* to terminate in Orlando; option two would be to have the daily *City of New Orleans* which originates in Chicago, terminate in Orlando; and the third option would be to inaugurate stand-alone New Orleans to Florida service.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ AMTRAK, "Atlantic Coast Service, Effective January 14, 2013."

¹⁶⁴ AMTRAK, "System Timetable, Effective October 31, 2005," 70-73.

¹⁶⁵ "A new wrinkle to restoring the 'Sunset Limited' to Florida," *TRAINS*, January 8, 2010,

Florida High Speed Rail Committee

In 1976, just five years after AMTRAK began service, the Florida legislature authorized the formation of the Florida Transit Corridor Study to focus on the possible implementation of a high speed rail line between St. Petersburg and Daytona Beach. The study results determined that such a route was feasible. The study recommended that the Florida Department of Transportation preserve the right of way in between the lanes of Interstate 4 for a future high speed rail system. The estimated cost of a 150 mile per hour high speed rail line in 1976 was \$585 million. Other than preserving the right of way along interstates, no significant progress has been made to bring high speed rail to Florida.¹⁶⁶ The preservation of the right of ways can be observed when traveling throughout the state of Florida chiefly between East Tampa and South Orlando.

In 1982, Florida's Governor Bob Graham, a Democrat, visited Japan and was impressed with the *Shinkansen* (commonly referred to as the bullet train) high speed trains.¹⁶⁷ Upon Graham's return in April of 1982, he issued Executive Order 82-34 which created the Florida

<http://trn.trains.com/en/sitecore/content/Home/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/01/A%20new%20wrinkle%20to%20restoring%20the%20Sunset%20Limited%20to%20Florida.aspx>.

¹⁶⁶ Tampa Bay On Track, "History of High Speed Rail in Florida Chronology of Events,"

http://www.floridabullettrain.com/fhsra/uploaddocuments/p25/History_of_High_Speed_Rail_in_Florida.pdf.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

High Speed Rail Committee. The Committee was tasked with 5 duties: (1) to determine the possible benefits the public would receive from high speed rail service; (2) to determine what markets would be served and what type of engineering would be necessary to create a high speed rail system, as well as possible routes ranked in priority; (3) to establish construction and design criteria and specifications; (4) to determine the feasibility of using rights of way that were currently publicly owned; and, (5) prepare proposal requests for franchising, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the high speed rail system by either a single or multiple private entities.¹⁶⁸

The Committee looked at the transportation situation as it was in the mid-1980s as well as the future of the state. "Florida has labored over transportation problems since long before Henry Flagler's first train chugged into Miami and his Florida East Coast Railroad triggered phenomenal growth in the state." The then four-laned Howard Frankland Bridge was inadequately serving the needs of St. Petersburg and Tampa and traffic was bumper-to-bumper on the six lanes of Interstate 95 in South Florida at rush hour. In the 20 years between 1960 and 1980, Florida's population doubled from close to 5 million to 10 million residents, and the tourist population in 1967 was a little less than 20 million visitors. By 1983, that number had increased to over

¹⁶⁸ Florida Department of Transportation, *Florida's High Speed Rail Study* (Tallahassee, Florida, 1985), 4.

40 million. During the same period, the state's population distribution had also changed. In 1960, approximately 65% of the population lived in urban areas. By 1980, that number had ballooned to close to 85%, making Florida one of the most populated and urbanized states in the Union. Growth and development had been shaped by the Interstate Highway System's implementation over the previous 25 to 30 years.¹⁶⁹

The Committee estimated if growth levels were maintained over the next 25 years, or by 2010, the Howard Frankland Bridge would have to be expanded to 14 lanes to handle the traffic. By 2020 there would have to be 44 lanes on Interstate 95 to serve the traffic between Fort Lauderdale and Miami. The population estimated for the year 2000 was 17 million, over 21 million people by 2020, or double the population in 1985.¹⁷⁰ The population in 2000 was 15,982,378 residents, approximately a million shy of the 1985 estimate.¹⁷¹ By 2010 the population had increased to 18,801,310 - only two million shy of the Committee's estimate for 2020.¹⁷² The Committee concluded that highway construction would be necessary and could not

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 1.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷¹ United States Census Bureau, "Florida: 2000, Census 2000 Profile," <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kprof00-fl.pdf>.

¹⁷² United States Census Bureau, "2010 Census: Florida Profile," http://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10_thematic/2010_Profile/2010_Profile_Map_Florida.pdf.

be avoided as automobiles are the primary means of transportation of Floridians. However, mass transit systems such as bus lanes, rapid transit, and people movers would have to be studied and constructed in urban areas and there should be a way, other than additional highways and new airports, to connect the various urban areas within the state.¹⁷³

The Committee observed that the United States was falling behind the rest of the world when it came to high speed rail development. By implementing a high speed rail system, Florida would be poised to catch up in terms of technology, speed, and economic growth to that of Canada, France, Great Britain, Japan, and West Germany. There were three different methods of high speed rail that could be constructed in Florida. The first type would use high speed rail trainsets that could run on existing but upgraded track, reaching speeds of 100 to 130 miles per hour. The second type would use state of the art technology on high speed rail and dedicated rights of way throughout the state that would be capable of 130 to 170 miles per hour. The third type would utilize the new magnetic levitation technology to propel riders at speeds of 230 to 320 miles per hour. There would be two types of service on the new high speed rail system. The first would be an express service that would travel

¹⁷³ Florida Department of Transportation, *Florida's High Speed Rail Study* (1985), 2.

between major urban areas making few stops along the way. The second would be a local service that would stop at more stations and small urban centers along the route.¹⁷⁴

The Committee proposed linking St. Petersburg with Tampa, Orlando, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami.¹⁷⁵

In Pinellas County there were two proposed terminals. The first was located at the intersection of U.S. Highway 19 and State Road 60 in Clearwater that would use the Courtney Campbell Causeway to connect to the Tampa side of Tampa Bay. The second preferred location would be at the St. Petersburg-Clearwater Airport, which offered a more centralized location within the county. This option would utilize the Howard Frankland Bridge, which at the time was planned to be widened and if timed correctly, would be able to include a rail trestle to Tampa. There were plans for a commuter rail system in Pinellas County that would link Tarpon Springs, Clearwater, and St. Petersburg, along with plans to connect to the proposed high speed rail system.¹⁷⁶

There would be a stop at the Tampa International Airport with two proposed routes to travel from Tampa to Orlando. The first option

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 6.

¹⁷⁶ Florida Department of Transportation, *Florida High Speed Rail Study* (Tallahassee, Florida, September 1984), 4-57.

would be to travel along the Seaboard Coast Line tracks through Tampa and continue along that right of way to Plant City, where the route would then travel along Interstate 4. The second option was to follow Interstate 275 and Interstate 4 through Tampa along an elevated path over the highways.¹⁷⁷

Near Orlando, there were again two alignment proposals. The first would be to continue utilizing Interstate 4 and then to the Bee Line Expressway, or State Road 528, to the Orlando International Airport. The second alignment would veer off of Interstate 4 earlier and travel east to the southern end of the Orlando International Airport. This alignment option would eventually be the route of the Southern Connector of the Central Florida GreeneWay, or State Road 417. The second alignment also had the possibility of spurring into downtown Orlando, via the Seaboard Coast Line tracks, as well as creating a smooth transition to the Florida Turnpike, or State Route 91, one of two available routes into South Florida.¹⁷⁸

One proposed route from the Orlando International Airport to South Florida would be to continue east along the Bee Line Expressway until its intersection with Interstate 95. This alignment would be 30 miles longer than the Florida Turnpike route. However, this route

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 4-58.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 4-58 - 4-59

assumed an increase in ridership due to beach tourism and the Kennedy Space Center along the Atlantic Coast with stops in Brevard County and Fort Pierce, both of which were experiencing high levels of growth in the mid 1980s.¹⁷⁹

The Florida Turnpike alignment had three options for reaching West Palm Beach once passing Yeehaw Junction. The first option would be to follow the Turnpike until the intersection with Interstate 95 and then continue south along that route. The second option would be to follow U.S. Route 441 until the intersection with the Seaboard Coast Line. The third option would be a straight shot to Interstate 95 through wetlands, citrus groves, and cattle ranches. This would be the shortest option, though it presented problems of accessing potential passengers along the route.¹⁸⁰

Again, there were three options for connecting West Palm Beach with Miami. The westernmost alternative would be to follow the proposed Sawgrass Expressway, which would not interfere with existing development as the options and it would terminate at Miami's Metrorail elevated transit system at the Okeechobee station. The second option would be to continue south along the Florida Turnpike on an elevated route. This option presented fewer land use conflicts

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 4-59 - 4-60.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.,

than the proposed eastern alignment. The eastern option would follow Interstate 95 south, either above the Interstate or within the median, which may have presented problems because the Department of Transportation was planning to use that area for high occupancy vehicle lanes. The terminus for the second and third alternatives would be either east of the Miami International Airport and the Metrorail's 79th Street station or at the Metrorail's Allapatah station which is closer to downtown Miami.¹⁸¹

The east coast alternative would have stations in Dade County, Broward County, West Palm Beach, Fort Pierce, Cocoa, Orange County, Lakeland, Tampa, and Pinellas County. The Turnpike option would have stations in Dade County, Broward County, West Palm Beach, Orange County, Lakeland, Tampa, and Pinellas County. It was estimated that close to 6 million passengers would ride the new high speed rail system annually. The estimated cost, depending on which alternative and trainset was selected, was between \$2.3 billion and \$2.7 billion.¹⁸²

Florida High Speed Rail Commission

In 1984, the Legislature passed the High Speed Rail Act of 1984, and replaced the Florida High Speed Rail Committee with a newly

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 4-60 - 4-62.

¹⁸² Ibid., 6-3 - 6-26.

created seven member board that was responsible for the implementation of a high speed rail system within the State of Florida through a public/private partnership in order to minimize costs to the taxpayers.¹⁸³ In 1986, the Commission started accepting bids from French, Japanese, Canadian, and American companies and consortiums to build and operate the proposed high speed rail system. The proposals were to be returned in 14 months, the franchise would be awarded in 1989, and the operation was to begin in 1995.¹⁸⁴

The Florida High Speed Rail Commission asked local business and government leaders who would be served by the route to form task forces to plan how to link the high speed train to local transit projects. There were plans for a commuter rail system in Pinellas, a people mover in Tampa, and a light rail system that would connect Seminole, Orange, Osceola, and Brevard counties. Miami already had an elevated mass transit system, the Metrorail.¹⁸⁵ In 1987, after years of discussion regarding its use as a possible station location, the

¹⁸³ Florida High Speed Rail Transportation Commission, *Speeding Into the 21st Century... Florida's High Speed Trains* (Tallahassee, Florida, 1992), 2.

¹⁸⁴ Robert A. Liff, "State Will Seek Bids For High-Speed Rail," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 5, 1986, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1986-12-05/news/0280020146_1_venture-development-bid-package-development-rights.

¹⁸⁵ Elanie Bennett, "Buses, Trains, All Aboard For Light Rail Planning," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 15, 1989, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1989-12-15/news/8912153155_1_rail-authority-commuter-rail-rail-system.

Orlando International Airport announced it would indeed be a station for the new high speed rail system if the line was constructed.¹⁸⁶

The Florida TGV made a presentation to the Florida High Speed Rail Commission on 25 March 1988. The Florida TGV proposed to use either an electric or turbo diesel version of the famous French TGV 8-car trainsets with a capacity for 366 passengers and capable of achieving 186 miles per hour.¹⁸⁷

The proposed route would take place in three phases. Phase One, which was planned to start construction in 1991 and end in 1994, would be from Tampa to Orlando with stations at Tampa, Disney World, and Orlando. Phase Two would be from Orlando to West Palm Beach with stations at Melbourne, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale, and Miami. Phase Three would consist of a new right of way between West Palm Beach and Miami. Phases Two and Three were expected to begin construction between 1993 and 1996. Maintenance facilities would have been located in Tampa instead of Miami due to cheaper land values. However, there would be a layover facility in located in Miami. The network would be easily expanded in the future to serve more areas along the line, such as in Miami, Fort Pierce, Lakeland, and

¹⁸⁶ "All Aboard, Orlando International Airport would be a stop..." *Orlando Sentinel*, October 19, 1987, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1987-10-19/business/0150330121_1_orlando-international-airport-group-of-orlando-median.

¹⁸⁷ Florida TGV Inc., *A Presentation of The Florida TGV to The Florida High Speed Rail Transportation Commission*, March 25, 1988, 1-1 - 1-5.

East Tampa. With small extensions, the line could serve Miami International Airport, downtown Orlando, and Tampa International Airport; future expansion of the line could bring service to St. Petersburg, Port Canaveral, and Jacksonville. Florida TGV estimated there would be 5,805,487 users served annually by 16 separate trainsets. The projected cost of the project would be \$2,151,545,888.¹⁸⁸

The other major applicant was the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation, which sought to connect Miami, Orlando, and Tampa. This outfit proposed using Swedish X2, a nine-car electric trainset with a capacity of 480 passengers. Thirteen stations were proposed initially at downtown Miami, the Miami International Airport, Hialeah, the Fort Lauderdale International Airport, Boca Raton, Palm Beach International Airport, Palm Beach County, South Orange County, the Orlando International Airport, downtown Orlando, Lakeland, and Tampa Union Station. The proposed stations would have connections to planned and existing transit systems.¹⁸⁹

The system would be constructed in three phases: the first phase would be completed in 1995 and consist of a dedicated right of

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 1-37 – 1-54.

¹⁸⁹ Florida High Speed Rail Corporation, *Presentation Component for the Franchise Application Submitted To Florida High Speed Rail Transportation Commission*, March 25, 1988, 1-2 - 1-13.

way between West Palm Beach and south Orange County and improved tracks along the CSX right-of-way between the Miami International Airport and West Palm Beach, as well as between south Orange County and Tampa Union Station; the second phase, to be completed in 2000, would require grade separation between south Orange County and both Tampa Union Station and the Orlando International Airport, as well as between downtown Miami and Miami International Airport; the third phase, to be completed in 2006, would consist of grade separation between Miami International Airport and West Palm Beach and between south Orange County and downtown Orlando. The plan also called for extensions to the Tampa International Airport, and communities in Pinellas, Manatee, and Sarasota counties as well as other unnamed expansion points.¹⁹⁰

The estimated cost of the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation was \$1.9 billion with a projected ridership of 3.7 million passengers. One aspect that differentiated the two proposals was the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation's insistence that beyond liberal real estate development rights, there would be no need for public money to finance construction of the system. The Florida TGV proposal included public financing of their project.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ 1-119 – 1-123.

¹⁹¹ Tampa Bay On Track.

The Florida TGV proposal withdrew its application on 27 October 1989. On 3 November, just a week after Florida TGV pulled out of the running, the Florida High Speed Rail Commission voted unanimously for the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation as the presumptive franchisee to build Florida's high speed rail system.¹⁹²

In 1990, the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation decided to redraw part of the route that went through Orange County to directly serve the Orlando International Airport, with a connection to the main terminal. At this time, the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation proposed creating special taxing districts around counties with a rail station to help finance the project. This proposal was met with instant opposition. The proposed special taxation districts was the first mention of use of public money to finance the construction.¹⁹³

Lawton Chiles, a Democrat, after a surprising election win to the United States Senate in 1970, did not seek a fourth term and retired from the Senate in January of 1989.¹⁹⁴ He was elected as the 41st governor of Florida on 6 November 1990, beating Republican incumbent Bob Martinez by a vote of 1,995,206, or 56.5%, 1,535,068

¹⁹² Florida High Speed Rail Corporation, *Executive Summary* (Boca Raton, Florida, 1992).

¹⁹³ Mark Vosburgh, "Airport Back On Track For Bullet Train," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 9, 1990, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1990-10-09/news/9010090434_1_airport-bullet-train-speed-rail.

¹⁹⁴ Richard Pearson, "Florida Gov. Lawton Chiles Dies," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1998, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/daily/dec98/13/chiles.htm>.

votes, or 43.5%. Chiles carried 51 counties, losing only Escambia, Santa Rosa, Okaloosa, Suwannee, Nassau, Duval, Clay, St. Johns, Flagler, Marion, Lake, Brevard, Martin, Charlotte, Lee, and Collier counties.¹⁹⁵

During the transition, Governor-Elect Chiles mentioned that he would retain Governor Martinez's Department of Transportation Secretary, Ben Watts. However, he was not in favor of using taxpayer dollars to fund the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation.¹⁹⁶ Chiles, using his folksy charm, said "that dog won't hunt" in regard to the proposal to fund the high speed rail system with tax money.¹⁹⁷

Governor Chiles' first budget eliminated funding for the Florida High Speed Rail Corporation, which was seeking \$215 million in tax breaks. Chiles said that the planning should begin again to ensure that the system would be self sustaining.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Florida Department of State Division of Elections, "November 6, 1990 General Election Results Official Results Governor & Cabinet,"

[http://enight.dos.state.fl.us/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/6/1990&DATAMODE=.](http://enight.dos.state.fl.us/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/6/1990&DATAMODE=)

¹⁹⁶ Donna O'Neal, "Chiles likes Dot Chief But Not Bullet-Train Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 29, 1990, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1990-11-29/news/9011290233_1_chiles-watts-drawing-board.

¹⁹⁷ "The Trouble with High-Speed Rail," *Hoover Institution*, March 24, 2010, <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/5296>.

¹⁹⁸ Adam Yeomans, "Budget Would Derail Fund For High-Speed Rail," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 12, 1991, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1991-02-12/news/9102120493_1_high-speed-rail-high-speed-rail-rail-system.

Florida Overland eXpress

In 1992, the Florida Legislature enacted the New High Speed Rail Act, which gave control of high speed rail planning to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT).¹⁹⁹ FDOT's Secretary at the time was Ben Watts, who, as mentioned previously, was kept on by Chiles when he assumed the governor's mansion. Watts believed that increased construction and expansion of existing highways would not solve the State's transportation problem. He believed that high speed rail would be part of the solution for relieving congestion on Florida's roads and would eventually be built. When discussing the state's plan for high speed rail, Watts said that whether the project was built in phases from Tampa to Orlando or Miami to Orlando, or all at the same time, the City of Orlando was always part of the plan for high speed rail in the state. He also believed that a high speed rail system would have to be connected with local transit initiatives if it were to be successful.²⁰⁰

In 1994, FDOT announced that it would seek offers for a 30-year contract to construct and operate a high speed rail line and it would

¹⁹⁹ Florida Department of Transportation, "The Florida Rail System Plan Investment Element," December 2010, 3-23, <http://www.dot.state.fl.us/rail/PlanDevel/Documents/FinalInvestmentElement/A-2010FLRailPlan-InvestmentElement.pdf>.

²⁰⁰ Mike Oliver, "Agency Chief: Roads Not Only Way," *Orlando Sentinel*, July, 31, 1991, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1991-07-31/news/9107310589_1_ben-watts-orlando-international-airport-bullet-train.

pay up to \$70 million per year to help pay for the system. The money came from the annual \$250 million Gas Tax Fund. Deputy Secretary of Transportation, Nick Serianni, said, they “know that using 100 percent private funding won’t work. We’ll have to commit some funds to make this work.”²⁰¹ This proposal differed from previous high speed rail attempts because it included incentive from the state to construct the line rather than a reliance on private funding.²⁰²

The deadline to receive proposals to construct and operate the high speed line was 31 October 1995. Proposals were to include technology that had already proven to be effective elsewhere in the world. A consortium named the Florida Overland eXpress, who wanted to construct a high speed rail line with French TGV technology was seen as an early favorite to win the contract.²⁰³ The Florida Overland eXpress did eventually win the contract to build a high speed rail system to transport passengers from Tampa to Orlando and to Miami

²⁰¹ Rodger Roy, “State Makes High-Speed Trains Offer,” *Orlando Sentinel*, April, 1, 1994, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1994-04-01/news/9404010429_1_speed-rail-high-speed-trains-state-high-speed.

²⁰² Rodger Roy, “State Fund May Turn Paper Trails To Rails,” *Orlando Sentinel*, September 19, 1994, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1994-09-19/business/9409160820_1_orlando-international-florida-international-drive.

²⁰³ Jerry Jackson, “Rail Bid Gains Momentum,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 23, 1995, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1995-10-23/business/9510210662_1_abb-proven-technology-high-speed-train-project.

in less than three hours, with speeds greater than 200 miles per hour at times.²⁰⁴

The double tracked grade separated dedicated right of way of the mainline from Miami to Orlando was to be completed by 2004 and extended to Tampa by 2006; intersections with roads would be separated by approximately 100 underpasses and 60 overpasses. There would be departures from each city pair every half hour traversing the distance from Miami to Orlando in 90 minutes for a fare of \$54; it would take an additional 49 minutes and an additional charge of \$21 to travel to Tampa. Stations would be located at the Miami International Airport, West Broward County, West Palm Beach, the Orlando International Airport, an Orlando attractions stop, Lakeland, and Tampa.²⁰⁵

In 1998, when the estimated cost of the high speed rail system reached a total of \$6.2 billion, Florida's legislative leaders wanted to slow the project down. Florida's Speaker of the House, Daniel Webster, a Republican from Orlando, said, "We need a little better picture of the total cost. The state may have more liability than we previously thought." At the time, Tampa Bay and Orlando were

²⁰⁴ Jim Stratton, "High Speed Rail Gains A Little Steam After All," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 31, 1996, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1996-10-31/news/9610301509_1_watts-high-speed-rail-rail-system.

²⁰⁵ Trainweb, "Florida Overland eXpress," <http://www.trainweb.org/tgvpages/fox.html>.

submitting a joint bid to host the 2012 Summer Olympic Games and it was thought that a high speed rail system would increase the chances of a winning bid.²⁰⁶

1998 was an election year for the governorship. Then Democratic Lieutenant Governor, Buddy MacKay, was running against Republican Jeb Bush. Bush narrowly lost the 1994 election to the incumbent, Lawton Chiles. The final vote was Chiles' 2,135,008, or 50.8%, to Bush's 2,071,068, or 49.2%. Although Bush won 42 counties, it was the 25 counties that he lost that resulted in Chiles' reelection. The counties that Chiles won were Calhoun, Gulf, Gadsden, Franklin, Leon, Wakulla, Jefferson, Madison, Hamilton, Levy, Dixie, Alachua, Flagler, Volusia, Hernando, Pasco, Sumter, Pinellas, Hardee, St. Lucie, Glades, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, and Monroe.²⁰⁷ However, in 1998 Bush won by an impressive 55.3%, or 2,191,105 votes, to MacKay's 1,773,054 votes, or 44.7%. Bush improved on his 1994 bid when he won 42 counties. In 1998 he won 61 counties, losing only Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Alachua, Palm Beach, and

²⁰⁶ John Kennedy, "Brakes Applied To Bullet Train Plan," *Orlando Sentinel*, July 24, 1998, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1998-07-24/news/9807240169_1_bullet-train-legislative-leaders-orlando.

²⁰⁷ Florida Department of State Division of Elections, "November 8, 1994 General Election Results Official Results Governor & Cabinet," [http://enight.dos.state.fl.us/DetailRpt.Asp?ELECTIONDATE=11/8/1994&RACE=GOV&PARTY=&DIST=&GRP=&DATAMODE=.](http://enight.dos.state.fl.us/DetailRpt.Asp?ELECTIONDATE=11/8/1994&RACE=GOV&PARTY=&DIST=&GRP=&DATAMODE=)

Broward Counties.²⁰⁸ Ironically, MacKay became Governor before Bush, even though he lost the election, when Lawton Chiles died, Lieutenant Governor MacKay became the 42nd Governor of Florida for less than a month to finish out Chiles' remaining term.²⁰⁹

Six days into his term as Governor of the State of Florida, Jeb Bush decided to nix the funding for the Florida Overland eXpress. By that point, the state had already spent over \$22 million on planning and developing the high speed rail system (on top of the \$10 million that the State had spent between the mid 1980s to the mid 1990s dreaming of a high speed rail system). Bush cited better and more pressing needs for the State of Florida.²¹⁰

Florida High Speed Rail Authority Act

The night of 7 November 2000 is usually remembered as the night when the country watched the television networks incorrectly called the State of Florida's presidential voting results – not once, but twice. Early in the night they called the election for Democratic Vice President Albert Gore Jr. After the Panhandle returns came in, they

²⁰⁸ Florida Department of State Division of Elections, "November 3, 1998 General Election Results Official Results Governor & Cabinet," [http://enight.dos.state.fl.us/DetailRpt.Asp?ELECTIONDATE=11/3/1998&RACE=GOV&PARTY=&DIST=&GRP=&DATAMODE=.](http://enight.dos.state.fl.us/DetailRpt.Asp?ELECTIONDATE=11/3/1998&RACE=GOV&PARTY=&DIST=&GRP=&DATAMODE=)

²⁰⁹ Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1999-2000*, 311-312.

²¹⁰ Mark Silva, "Bullet Train Hits A Big Obstacle – Jeb Bush," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 14, 1999, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/1999-01-14/news/9901140221_1_jeb-bush-bullet-train-overland-express.

back peddled and announced the results “too close to call”. Then, the networks called the election in favor of the Governor of Texas, and older brother of Florida’s Governor Jeb Bush, George W. Bush. Finally, and again, the networks moved Florida into the “too close to call category.” The country would wait for over a month for the resolution of stalled and restarted recounts of ballots and lawsuits until the United States Supreme Court declared on 12 December 2000 that George W. Bush was to be the 43rd President of the United States.²¹¹

There was, however, another important election that day. A “yes” vote on Constitutional Amendment 1 would mean that the State of Florida would build a high speed rail system and that construction would begin in 2003.²¹² The constitutional amendment passed with 2,900,253, or 52.7% in yea votes, to 2,607,495, or 47.3% against. The 31 counties that passed the amendment were Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Nassau, Clay, Alachua, St. Johns, Marion, Flagler, Citrus, Sumter, Lake, Volusia, Seminole, Pasco, Polk, Orange, Osceola, Brevard, Pinellas, Hillsborough, Indian River, Manatee, Hardee, Highlands, Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, Broward, Dade, and Monroe. Support for the amendment was strongest in counties in Central and

²¹¹ Frank Kurtz, “Inspired by the 2000 election,” *The Crow’s Nest*, Volume 47, Issue 10, October, 29, 2012.

²¹² Fuchsia, “Derail Amendment,” *Orlando Sentinel*, October 27, 2000, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2000-10-27/news/0010270224_1_rail-network-rail-system-florida-constitution.

South Florida that would receive the benefits of high speed rail and Democratic strongholds in the Panhandle.²¹³

After the amendment passed, the Florida Department of Transportation did not exactly know what to do next. It decided to leave the decision to the legislature. The language of the amendment was kept vague to allow legislators a voice in how to fund the project and to allow flexibility regarding the route that was to be utilized to connect Florida's five largest cities. Support for the amendment was strongest in Central Florida's counties where it passed with over 60% of the vote.²¹⁴

The project would be built in phases, with the Tampa to Orlando segment constructed first. The Legislature approved a measure to provide \$8 million for the planning of the project. It was estimated to cost \$1.2 billion, and AMTRAK would cover up to 80% of the financing.²¹⁵

A lack of infrastructure, such as high speed rail and light rail in Tampa and Orlando, was one of the reasons given by the United

²¹³ Florida Department of State Division of Elections, "November 7, 2000 General Election Results Official Results Constitutional Amendment," <http://doe.dos.state.fl.us/elections/resultsarchive/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/7/2000&DATAMODE=>.

²¹⁴ Jim Stratton, "Train's Next Stop Uncertain," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 9, 2000, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2000-11-09/news/0011090248_1_miracle-feeney-rail-system.

²¹⁵ Jim Stratton, "Rail Chief: Train Good For Florida," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 24, 2001, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2001-04-24/news/0104240202_1_rail-in-florida-high-speed-rail-high-speed-rail.

States Olympic Committee when it took the Tampa and Orlando joint bid off the table for hosting the 2012 Summer Olympics.²¹⁶

The second phase of the proposed high speed rail line would be to connect St. Petersburg to Tampa as well as Orlando with Miami. Both of the expansion projects would begin construction in 2005. By 2002, the projected cost had increased from \$1.2 billion to close to \$6 billion.²¹⁷

In April 2002, the Florida High Speed Rail Authority received 11 different bids for the construction and operation of a high speed rail line to be built in two phases. Proposals varied in cost from \$1.2 billion to over \$6 billion from companies around the world.²¹⁸

The proposed route between Tampa and Orlando was projected to have an annual ridership between 1.93 and 2.27 million passengers with a guarantee of as much as \$35.4 million in revenues.²¹⁹

²¹⁶ George Diaz, "Lack Of Train Service Helps Derail State's 2012 Olympics Bid," *Orlando Sentinel*, October 27, 2001, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2001-10-27/news/0110270269_1_task-force-tampa-committee-member.

²¹⁷ "Train Route Start Urged," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 5, 2002, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2002-01-05/news/0201050323_1_bullet-train-tallahassee-high-speed-rail.

²¹⁸ "High-Speed Train Draws 11 Proposals," *Orlando Sentinel*, April 10, 2002, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2002-04-10/news/0204100157_1_aol-national-car-car-rental.

²¹⁹ "Tampa-Orlando Rail Evaluated," *Orlando Sentinel*, November 21, 2002, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2002-11-21/news/0211210187_1_orlando-international-airport-convention-center-high-speed-rail.

In February of 2003, the Florida High Speed Rail Authority said it would cost between \$2.1 and \$2.7 billion to construct and operate a high speed rail line between Tampa and Orlando. Officials in Orlando were unable to agree on a route that would favorably serve the region as they bickered over using either the Central Florida GreeneWay or the Bee Line Expressway.²²⁰

Governor Jeb Bush vetoed \$7.2 million from the state budget that would have started the construction of a high speed rail line to connect Tampa and Orlando and later expand to Miami. However, in order to comply with the constitutional amendment that was passed in 2000, Bush allowed \$4.9 million for the construction of stations along the proposed high speed rail route. This satisfied the 2003 construction commencement date written into the amendment.²²¹

Governor Bush called the estimates concerning the construction costs and potential ridership numbers unreliable. He also said that given the known cost of the project, it should be voted upon again by the citizens of Florida. This, in spite of the fact that Disney said it would shuttle its guests along the high speed rail line, guaranteeing at least 2 million riders and \$17 million in revenues. If the budget was

²²⁰ Jim Stratton, "High-Speed Rail Bidders Unveil Cost To Taxpayers," *Orlando Sentinel*, February 11, 2003, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2003-02-11/news/0302110240_1_high-speed-rail-rail-system-global-rail.

²²¹ John Kennedy, "Veto Slows High-Speed Rail," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 24, 2003, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2003-06-24/news/0306240272_1_veto-high-speed-rail-high-speed-rail.

Bush's primary concern, however, those concerns did not prevent him from allocating \$310 million to lure a biotech company to Florida from another state.²²²

Governor Bush asked the legislature to put the high speed rail measure back on the ballot for the 2004 election. At the time, Florida was experiencing its biggest budget crisis in over a decade, facing a \$4 billion shortfall. The thought of spending over \$2.6 billion to construct a high speed rail line was seen as irresponsible by Governor Bush. Lawmakers understood it would cost both state and federal tax dollars to construct the system but wanted private enterprises to pay for its operation.²²³

On 2 November 2004, voters in all 67 of Florida's counties supported Amendment 6, which was the repeal of the 2000 high speed rail amendment to Florida's Constitution, by 63.7%. There were 4,519,423 yes votes to 2,573,280 no votes.²²⁴

Even though voters flip flopped on their preference for high speed rail in the span of four years, there were a number of key

²²² Fuchsia, "Just The Facts," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 13, 2003, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2003-12-13/news/0312130042_1_rail-project-rail-system-walt-disney.

²²³ John Kennedy and Jim Stratton, "Voters May Revisit High-Speed Rail," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 16, 2003, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2003-01-16/news/0301160141_1_bullet-train-rail-authority-high-speed-rail.

²²⁴ Florida Department of State Division of Elections, "November 2, 2004 General Election Results Official Results Constitutional Amendment," <http://doe.dos.state.fl.us/elections/resultsarchive/Index.asp?ElectionDate=11/2/2004&DATAMODE=>.

studies that the Florida High Speed Rail Authority completed. These were on the backs of studies done over two and a half decades that would have allowed future planners of high speed rail to quickly propose new projects should funding become available.

Chapter Three: Florida High Speed Rail and the Stimulus Package

Application and Award

The State of Florida was seen as one of the leading candidates to receive a large portion of the \$8 billion for high speed rail projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and a large slice of \$1 billion per year in subsequent budgets. Department of Transportation Secretary, Ray LaHood, explicitly mentioned that both Florida and California were “way ahead of the curve” when it came to their plans for high speed rail systems for their States. In Florida, the first phase of the proposed route was to connect Tampa with Orlando via the Interstate 4 median, which had been largely protected by the Florida Department of Transportation. Stations along the line would include the old Morgan Street Jail in downtown Tampa, a yet to be determined station located in Polk County near Lakeland, a stop at Disney World, and a terminus at the Orlando International Airport.²²⁵

²²⁵ Janet Zink, “State officials hit major milestone in effort to build high-speed rail from Tampa to Orlando,” *St. Petersburg Times*, July, 6, 2009, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/transportation/masstransit/state-officials-hit-major-milestone-in-effort-to-build-high-speed-rail/1016211>.

The proposed downtown Tampa station location received criticism. The Morgan Street Jail was constructed in 1964 and was closed in 2003 because Hillsborough County's other two jails, Orient Road in Tampa and Falkenburg in Brandon were more economical to operate. The Orient Road and Falkenburg jails had recently been expanded and had plans for further expansion in the future.²²⁶ Instead of using Tampa Union Station, which is served by AMTRAK's *Silver Star* that runs from Miami to New York City, the proposed high speed rail system would use the site of the former county jail. The former Morgan Street Jail was located directly north of the Oaklawn Cemetery and opposite the Marion Transit Center operated by the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit. Jackson McQuigg, head of the Friends of Tampa Union Station, called this plan "very shortsighted" and observed that "everywhere in the world there's at least some connectivity between high speed and convention[al] rail systems." Tampa transit manager, Elaine McCloud, hoped Florida would reconsider the use of Union Station for high speed rail saying, "there has to be connectivity" and the high speed line "can't just be a train to nowhere." The Florida Department of Transportation District Seven Secretary, Don Skelton, said there would be either bus or light rail

²²⁶ Tamara Lush, "Morgan Street Jail era at end?" *St. Petersburg Times*, March 22, 2003, http://www.sptimes.com/2003/03/22/news_pf/Hillsborough/Morgan_Street_Jail_er.s.html.

connections between the new high speed rail terminus and Union Station allowing passengers to transfer between the two stations.²²⁷ Tampa Union Station opened on 15 May 1912, at a cost of \$250,000 contributed by the Atlantic Coast Line, Seaboard Air Line, and the Tampa Northern Railroad. The inside of the station was closed in 1984 due to neglect; AMTRAK trains continued to use the platforms of Tampa Union Station. It was re-opened in 1998 after \$2.1 million in renovations and repairs.²²⁸ In addition to the proposed connections between the two stations, the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit system would have been able to ferry passengers to all corners of Hillsborough County via local and express busses.²²⁹ The proposed high speed rail property remains vacant today.

There were five proposed locations for the Polk County station, all along Interstate 4. Unlike Tampa, there would be no station stop in downtown Lakeland due to the need for the new high speed rail system to travel along a dedicated right of way and not share tracks

²²⁷ "Plan: New station for Tampa," *TRAINS*, August 10, 2009, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/08/Plan%20New%20station%20for%20Tampa.aspx>.

²²⁸ Michael Mulligan, *Images of Rail: Railroad Depots of Central Florida* (San Francisco, California: Arcadia Publishing, 2008), 124-125.

²²⁹ Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, "HART Local, Limited Local, and Flex Service; Transit Guide Effective November 11, 2012," http://www.gohart.org/routes/hart/pdf/system_map_local_111112.pdf. Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, "HART Express, Limited Express, and Park-N-Ride Locations; Transit Guide Effective November, 11, 2012," http://www.gohart.org/routes/commuterexpress/pdf/system_map_express_111112.pdf.

with freight railroads. One proposed location was on the western terminus of the Polk Parkway, or State Route 570, along the Hillsborough and Polk County line. This location would be approximately 26 miles from the downtown Tampa station. Another option would be near the Kathleen Road interchange with Interstate 4. This location would pose the least amount of negative environmental impact as the area was already developed. However, it would be the most expensive option due to the need to elevate both the high speed rail line and station above the bridges that cross over Interstate 4. There were three options at various points along the eastern terminus of the Polk Parkway where the future campus of the University of South Florida Polytechnic (USF Poly) was being planned and was soon to begin construction. The USF Poly site was the preferred option among Polk County officials even though there was the possibility of wetland destruction and wildlife disruption. There was also the fear that a station located at one of the three proposed USF Poly sites would spark more urban sprawl as little development existed around the proposed site.²³⁰

Disney said it would support the new high speed rail line as long as there was a stop somewhere on Disney property, even though there

²³⁰ Kate Bradshaw, "Lakeland weighs possible high-speed rail station locations," *WMNF*, January 17, 2011, http://www.wmnf.org/news_stories/lakeland-weighs-possible-high-speed-rail-station-locations.

would also be a stop at the Orlando Convention Center. This was a change to Disney's original position that opposed any additional stops between Disney and the Orlando International Airport. This would allow millions of riders to utilize the system and help to underwrite some of the operational costs of the proposed system.²³¹

The Orlando International Airport decided to include a multi-modal transportation hub in its plans to construct a second terminal located south of the current one. In fact, planning in one form or the other for a connection between Orlando International Airport and a high speed rail system with the southern terminal dated back to 1988. The airport also agreed to have a maintenance facility for the new high speed rail system on its grounds. The other proposed transit connections would include the proposed SunRail, a people mover from the northern terminal to the new southern terminal, and a light rail system that connected the airport to International Drive. All would be located on the same level of the same terminal facility.²³²

On 27 January 2010, the Feds hinted that Florida would be among those states to be awarded high speed rail money as part of a

²³¹ "Disney throws its weight behind Florida high-speed rail," *TRAINS*, October 2, 2009, <http://trn.trains.com/en/sitecore/content/Home/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2009/10/Disney%20throws%20its%20weight%20behind%20Florida%20high-speed%20rail.aspx>.

²³² The Greater Orlando Aviation Authority, "Recommendations High Speed Rail Station & Maintenance Facility Locations & Related Issues, March 17, 2010, http://www.orlandoairports.net/poitras/HSR_presentation20100317.pdf.

federal stimulus plan. The Obama administration said the President would be in Tampa the day following the upcoming State of the Union Address.²³³

During the State of the Union President Obama said:

“Next, we can put Americans to work today building the infrastructure of tomorrow. From the first railroads to the Interstate Highway System, our nation has always been built to compete. There’s no reason Europe or China should have the fastest trains, or the new factories that manufacture clean energy products. Tomorrow, I’ll visit Tampa, Florida, where workers will soon break ground on a new high speed railroad funded by the Recovery Act. There are projects like that across this country that will create jobs and help move our nation’s goods, services, and information.”²³⁴

The following day, President Obama was at the University of Tampa to announce the states receiving awards

²³³ “Leaks: Florida, North Carolina, Wisconsin, likely to share in high speed funds,” *TRAINS*, January 27, 2010, <http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/01/Leaks%20Florida%20North%20Carolina%20Wisconsin%20likely%20to%20share%20in%20high%20speed%20funds.aspx>.

²³⁴ The White House, “Remarks by the President in State of the Union Address,” January 27, 2010, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address>.

for high speed rail projects. Florida received \$1.25 billion to fund an 84-mile line from Tampa to Orlando over a dedicated high speed railway line. It would be the first of its kind in the United States.²³⁵ The Florida proposal included funding for construction of 84 miles of new track as well as planning of the Orlando to Miami route, which would either follow the Turnpike or Interstate 95, for a total system of 324 miles.²³⁶

In November of 2010, the Department of Transportation announced a second round of funding for high speed rail projects. Florida received an additional \$808 million on top of the \$1.25 billion awarded in January. \$800 million of the second award was to cover the construction costs of the Tampa to Orlando route and \$8 million to conduct an environmental review, to cover preliminary engineering costs, and for the planning of the proposed Orlando to Miami extension.²³⁷ All seemed to be going well for the proposed

²³⁵ "A new kind of rollercoaster for Florida: \$1.25 billion for high speed rail," *TRAINS*, January 28, 2010, [http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/01/A%20new%20kind%20of%20rollercoaster%20for%20Florida%20\\$125%20billion%20for%20high%20speed%20rail.aspx](http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/01/A%20new%20kind%20of%20rollercoaster%20for%20Florida%20$125%20billion%20for%20high%20speed%20rail.aspx).

²³⁶ David Lustig, "High Speed Rail, Jobs, and the Recovery Act," *TRAINS*, January 28, 2010, <http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/01/High%20Speed%20Rail%20Jobs%20and%20the%20Recovery%20Act.aspx>.

²³⁷ Matt Van Hattem, "Which projects got high speed rail money in the second round of funding?" *TRAINS*, November 1, 2010, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/11/Which%20projects>

high speed rail network that President Obama had envisioned. That was, until the Election of 2010.

Other Stimulus Projects Around Florida

The proposed high speed rail line was not the only stimulus project that was awarded funding in Florida; there were a number of programs in education, transportation, energy and environmental, infrastructure, housing, research and design, public safety, health, family, and job training and unemployment assistance. As of 29 May 2013, the State of Florida has been awarded \$11,454,115,629 from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.²³⁸

The TECO Line Streetcar System in Downtown Tampa received stimulus funds to extend the streetcar line a third of a mile from Dick Greco Plaza to Whiting Street.²³⁹

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority was awarded \$15.1 million for the purchase of new buses, bus stop improvements,

[%20got%20high%20speed%20rail%20money%20in%20the%20second%20round%20of%20funding.aspx](#).

²³⁸ Recovery.gov, "Recipient Projects: Florida," <http://www.recovery.gov/Transparency/RecoveryData/Pages/RecipientReportedDataMap.aspx?stateCode=FL&PROJSTATUS=NPC&AWARDTYPE=CGL>.

²³⁹ Staff, "Streetcar system reaches more of downtown Tampa," *Tampa Bay Business Journal*, December 17, 2010, <http://www.bizjournals.com/tampabay/news/2010/12/17/streetcar-system-reaches-more-of.html>.

operations and maintenance facility upgrades, technology improvements, farebox upgrades, and repainting of the bus fleet.²⁴⁰

The Interstate 4 – Selmon Expressway Connector project in eastern Ybor City, that will connect the one mile between the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway, or State Road 618, with Interstate 4, received \$105 million in stimulus funding for the construction of roadway.²⁴¹ The project is expected to be completed by late 2013.²⁴²

Tri-Rail in South Florida was awarded \$2.5 million to purchase a new locomotive for the commuter rail system.²⁴³

High Speed Rail Elsewhere in the United States

Late in the 18th century, steam powered transportation was introduced to world by men such as Richard Thevithick and George Stephenson, which was capable of transporting passengers at speeds of 20 miles per hour, a speed that had been unheard of before that time. In the United States, by 1850, passenger trains traveled at speeds of 30 miles per hour. By the 1870s, the dream of traveling a

²⁴⁰ HART, "New Buses, More Riders," March 9, 2009, http://www.gohart.org/departments/marketing/press/new_buses_more_riders_3-3-09.html.

²⁴¹ Staff, "DOT: I-4 Connector project will generate 14,000 jobs," *The Tampa Tribune*, June 15, 2009, <http://tbo.com/brandon/dot-i--connector-project-will-generate--jobs-79198>.

²⁴² Tampa Bay Interstates, "I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector (new road)," <http://www.mytbi.com/projects/projectinfo.asp?projectID=175&RoadID=3>.

²⁴³ "Tri-Rail secures \$2.5 million in stimulus money," *South Florida Business Journal*, July 10, 2009, <http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/stories/2009/07/06/daily75.html>.

mile a minute, 60 miles per hour, was realized. On 10 May 1893 New York Central & Hudson River Railroad Engine No. 999 achieved the speed of 112.5 miles per hour. With no government speed regulations, railways that ran parallel to each other and served similar markets, used speed between cities as an advertising point. Trains routinely topped the century mark. Today, the only passenger trains that reach 100 miles per hour plus are at some points along the Northeast Corridor. The *Acela Express* and *Northeast Regional* trainsets both reach speeds of 150 miles per hour in New England.²⁴⁴

Train speed has been regulated by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Since 1951, the Commission ruled that train speed would be limited to 79 miles per hour. Speeds in excess of 79 miles per hour are only permitted in areas that have increased safety measures, such as a system that cuts power to a locomotive when the engineer does not comply with signal restrictions along the route.²⁴⁵

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 awarded \$8 billion in high speed rail grants to 12 separate projects throughout the country.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ Ed King, "Make her go fast" *Classic Trains Special Edition Number 7: Fast Trains in the Golden Years of Railroading*, 2009, 8-11.

²⁴⁵ "Ask Trains from November 2008," *TRAINS*, December 23, 2008, http://trn.trains.com/sitecore/content/Home/Railroad%20Reference/Ask%20Trains/2008/12/Ask%20Trains%20from%20November%202008.aspx?sc_lang=en.

²⁴⁶ David Lustig, "High Speed Rail, Jobs, and the Recovery Act."

The North Carolina and Virginia Departments of Transportation were awarded \$620 million to upgrade 480 miles of track.²⁴⁷

The Southeast Corridor that connects Charlotte and Raleigh, North Carolina, Richmond, Virginia, and Washington, District of Columbia was awarded funds to upgrade the line for top speeds of 110 miles per hour, reducing trip time between the District of Columbia and the Capital of Virginia by one third, and reducing travel time to four and half hours between Richmond, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina.²⁴⁸

The Florida Department of Transportation was awarded \$1.25 billion for the construction of an 84 mile line between Tampa and Orlando as well as for planning of the Orlando to Miami route.²⁴⁹

The California Department of Transportation received \$2.34 billion to be built in two phases. Phase One would connect Anaheim and Los Angeles through the central part of California to San Francisco by 2020. The second phase would extend north from San Francisco to Sacramento and south to San Diego by 2026. This would reduce

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

travel time between San Francisco and Los Angeles to 2 hours and 40 minutes as opposed to the 6 hours of travel time in an automobile.²⁵⁰

Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, District of Columbia and the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority received \$1.19 billion through both high speed rail grants as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and funds that were directed to AMTRAK to upgrade seven intercity passenger rail corridors. Those corridors include: the Northeast Corridor; Philadelphia to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, New York City to Albany to Buffalo, New York; New York City to Montreal, Quebec; Boston, Massachusetts to Portland, Maine, to New Brunswick; Albany, New York to Rutland, Vermont; New Haven, Connecticut to Springfield, New Hampshire to Burlington and St. Albans, Vermont.²⁵¹

Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois received \$244 million to upgrade 300 miles of track to connect Chicago, Illinois with Detroit, Michigan and to increase speeds to 110 miles per hour.²⁵²

Washington and Oregon received \$598 million to upgrade 437 miles of track resulting in trains that can now operate now at speeds up to 150 miles per hour.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

Wisconsin and Minnesota were awarded \$823 million to upgrade 144 miles of track and to increase speeds in parts of the corridor to 110 miles per hour, thereby reducing the travel time between Chicago, Illinois and Milwaukee, Wisconsin by 30%.²⁵⁴

Texas received \$4 million to upgrade signals between Austin and Fort Worth in order to improve the on-time efficiency of the *Texas Eagle*.²⁵⁵

Ohio was awarded \$400 million to construct 250 miles of new track to connect Cleveland, Columbus, Dayton, and Cincinnati.²⁵⁶

Illinois and the Missouri received \$1.13 billion to upgrade 570 miles of track to reach 110 miles per hour between Chicago, Illinois, St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri.²⁵⁷

Iowa was awarded \$17 million to install four remote controlled crossovers throughout Iowa which would reduce travel times within the state.²⁵⁸

It should be noted, that with the exception of the Florida and California projects, the high speed rail projects throughout the country that received funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

were, for the most part, to upgrade current railroad lines to allow for 100 miles per hour plus service or to make other adjustments that allowed for reduced running times. The Florida and California proposals were the only projects that were to be used for separate dedicated right-of-way high speed rail endeavors in a form that resembles European and Asian intercity high speed rail.

TRAINS columnist, Don Phillips, pointed out that the speeds that would be attained on most of these various rail lines had been attained in the late 1800s and when passenger service regularly exceeded 100 miles per hour during the early to mid 1900s.²⁵⁹

On Election Day 2010 in Florida, Rick Scott, a Republican, received 2,619,335 votes, or 48.9%, to win the Office of Governor of Florida over the incumbent Democratic Chief Financial Officer of Florida, Alex Sink, who received 2,557,785 votes or 47.7%. The race was too close to call on election night and was awarded to Scott the following day.²⁶⁰

Elsewhere in Ohio, John Kasich, a Republican, was elected over the incumbent, Democratic Governor, Ted Strickland, in Ohio. Kasich

²⁵⁹ Don Phillips, "High speed rail is only the past disguised as the future," *TRAINS*, May 2010, 8-9.

²⁶⁰ Election Results 2010," *New York Times*, November 2, 2010, <http://elections.nytimes.com/2010/results/florida>.

won with 1,889,180 votes, or 49%, defeating Strickland who received 1,812,047 votes, or 47%.²⁶¹

Governor-elect Kasich wanted to use Ohio's \$400 million to repair existing freight lines in the state, rather than for high speed rail connecting Cincinnati, Columbus, and Cleveland. During the campaign, Kasich repeatedly criticized the high speed rail plan in Ohio, whereas Governor Strickland defended the proposal.²⁶²

In Wisconsin, Scott Walker, a Republican, won an open seat for the governorship against Democratic candidate, Tom Barnett. Walker won with 1,128,941 votes, or 52.3%. Barnett garnered 1,004,303 votes, or 46.5%.²⁶³

Governor-elect Walker turned down \$823 million for high speed rail construction in Wisconsin that would have linked Chicago, Milwaukee, Madison, and Minneapolis-St. Paul.²⁶⁴

²⁶¹ "Election Results 2010," *New York Times*, November 2, 2010, <http://elections.nytimes.com/2010/results/ohio>.

²⁶² Jack Torry and Mark Niquette, "Kasich pitches his \$400M rail plan to Obama," *Springfield News Sun*, December 3, 2010, <http://www.springfieldnewssun.com/news/news/local/kasich-pitches-his-400m-rail-plan-to-obama-1/nMmGN/>.

²⁶³ "Election Results 2010," *New York Times*, November 2, 2010, <http://elections.nytimes.com/2010/results/wisconsin>.

²⁶⁴ Joan Lowy and Kevin Freking, "Wisconsin High-Speed Rail Money Goes Elsewhere: Republican Governor Rejects Federal Funds," *Huffington Post*, December 9, 2010, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/12/09/wisconsin-highspeed-rail-_n_794721.html.

Florida received an additional \$342.3 million from the grants that were returned to the federal government by Ohio and Wisconsin. This brought Florida's total award to \$2.4 billion for high speed rail.²⁶⁵

Florida's Rejection of Funding

On Wednesday, 16 February 2011, newly-inaugurated Governor of Florida, Rick Scott, told the United States' Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, that Florida would not accept any federal funds to build a high speed rail line from Tampa to Orlando and a future extension to Miami. Scott observed that Florida's taxpayers would be on the hook to make up the nearly \$3 billion in cost overruns. Scott also believed that the ridership and revenue projections were overly optimistic. The reason why Scott decided to cancel the program when he did was due to the fact that if construction had begun, the entire \$2.4 billion grant would have been forfeited. He hoped to use some of the money that was awarded to dredge Florida's ports to accommodate the larger ships that would be traveling through the widened Panama Canal. Governor Scott became the third Republican governor, in addition to those of Wisconsin and Ohio, to reject high speed rail funds from the American Recovery and

²⁶⁵ "Four states to share in forsaken Wisconsin, Ohio cash," *TRAINS*, December 9, 2010, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/12/Four%20states%20to%20share%20in%20forsaken%20Wisconsin%20Ohio%20cash.aspx>.

Reinvestment Act of 2009. What differentiated Scott from Governors Walker and Kasich was that the projects in Wisconsin and Ohio would have been upgrades to existing rail lines, whereas in Florida the funding would have been to establish a high speed rail line similar to that found in Europe or Japan.²⁶⁶ On the same day that Scott announced his rejection of the funds, the State of Washington declared its desire to add Florida's portion to the amounts declined by Wisconsin and Ohio to upgrade its AMTRAK *Cascades* route that runs from Portland, Oregon to Vancouver, British Columbia.²⁶⁷

After the Election of 2010, Governor-Elect Scott and Republican Congressman John Mica (who was the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman designate), signaled a possible end for the Florida High Speed Rail plan. Mica, who said after the election, "I am a strong advocate of high-speed rail, but it has to be where it makes sense." Mica thought that the Northeast Corridor was the only region in the United States that could support a high speed rail network.²⁶⁸ Scott and Mica were critical of the planned high speed

²⁶⁶ "Florida governor rejects high speed rail money," *TRAINS*, February 16, 2011, http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/High%20Speed%20Rail/2011/07/~/link.aspx?_id=7207E1725DBC4618AD2C4AEA63FDEE32&_z=z.

²⁶⁷ "Washington state says it wants rejected Florida funds," *Trains*, February 16, 2011, <http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2011/02/Washington%20state%20says%20it%20wants%20rejected%20Florida%20funds.aspx>.

²⁶⁸ "Mica, questions high-speed rail grants," *TRAINS*, November 4, 2010, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/11/Mica%20questions%20high-speed%20rail%20grants.aspx>.

rail project due to a lack of connectivity, in both Tampa and Orlando, with local transit systems. If any state turned down high speed rail money, it had to return the grant money. Which was then to be used on high speed rail projects elsewhere in the United States.²⁶⁹

Governor Scott's decision came after months of speculation on what he would do after he took office following his surprise nomination and election in August and November, respectively. In December of 2010, then Governor-Elect Scott said that he wanted to gather more facts about the project, such as what the total cost of the project would be, an examination of the ridership studies, and whether or not opportunities existed for private companies to pick up the remaining 10% of the cost of construction and operation; the Federal Government was already contributing 90% of the construction costs. Florida was even awarded high speed rail funds after a special session of Florida's Legislature in December 2009 that authorized a commuter rail project in Orlando and continued to fund South Florida's commuter rail, or Tri-Rail. The special session's success put Florida in a good

²⁶⁹ "Republicans: We might be able to kill Florida fast-train project, too," *TRAINS*, November 23, 2010, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2010/11/Mica%20questions%20high-speed%20rail%20grants.aspx>.

position to receive high speed rail funds when those monies would be announced in the early months of 2010.²⁷⁰

Governor Scott's rejection of funds for high speed rail was not (both of his 2010 elections aside) the first time he challenged the establishment in Tallahassee. On 4 January, Governor Scott fulfilled a campaign promise when he listed the two state-owned planes for sale without any warning to other politicians in Tallahassee. One 2003 Cessna and one 2000 King Air were sold to two separate companies for a combined total of \$3.7 million, thereby relieving the State of \$2.4 million annually for debt service, operations, and maintenance of the two planes.²⁷¹ On the same day, after being in office for only half of an hour, Governor Scott signed an executive order and followed with an electronic mail asking all state agencies to submit any new rules to the governor's office for his approval; this action proved to be consistent with his campaign promise of running the state like a business. Attorney General, Pam Bondi, Agricultural Commissioner, Adam Putnam, and Chief Financial Officer, Jeff Atwater - consistent with Florida's Cabinet tradition of resisting any attempt by a Governor

²⁷⁰ Scott Powers, "Scott backs Burnham but questions high-speed rail," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 10, 2010, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2010-12-10/news/os-scott-jobs-tour-20101207_1_burnham-institute-rick-scott-medical-city.

²⁷¹ Steve Bousquet, "Florida Gov. Rick Scott sells state planes, fulfilling campaign promise," *St. Petersburg Times*, February 11, 2011, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/stateroundup/florida-gov-rick-scott-sells-state-planes-fulfilling-campaign-promise/1151135>.

to gather more power - all politely declined to participate in Scott's program. The same executive order also made the Governor's approval necessary for any contract with the State of Florida valued over \$1 million; which included 150 \$500 million projects and 69 contracts valued over \$2 billion. This executive order is what gave Governor Scott the authority to veto the high speed rail project on 16 February.²⁷² The constitutionality of this executive order would be tested in Governor Scott's first three months in office.

The following day, on 17 February, the veto-proof Florida Senate sent Governor Scott a letter that urged Scott to take the high speed rail money. The Senate said, "politics should have no place in the future of Florida's transportation as evidenced by this letter of bipartisan support." The letter was signed by 26 Senate Republicans. Senator David Simmons, a Republican from Altamonte Springs, declared, "the bottom line is he can't reject this money. It was already approved by another legislature and another governor. It's like trying to veto a bill after it becomes law. It's too late." Other senators were disturbed that Scott did not give the legislature any warning before overturning a decision that they had made in the 2009 special session. It should be noted that the then-Florida Senate

²⁷² Janet Zink, "Cabinet to Rick Scott: No, you can't veto our regulations," *St. Petersburg Times*, January 13, 2011, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/aging/nursinghomes/cabinet-to-rick-scott-no-you-cant-veto-our-regulations/1145391>.

President, Mike Haridopolos, was not among the 26 senators that signed the letter to Governor Scott. He voted against high speed rail during the 2009 special session. United States Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, gave Florida one week to craft a deal to keep the high speed rail funds.²⁷³

Governor Scott would have to sign off on any deal that was made by state legislators to implement the high speed rail line. Florida State Senate Budget Committee Chairman, J.D. Alexander, said “the Constitution doesn’t allow the governor to not spend appropriations funds.” Though Scott could not stop the State from spending the money that it had already appropriated and approved during former Republican Governor, Charlie Crist’s, tenure, he could zero out any future appropriations.²⁷⁴

A week later, Scott did not change his position on high speed rail. State Senator Thad Altman, a Republican from Melbourne, asked Secretary LaHood for more time to challenge Scott’s decision on state constitutional grounds. The United States Department of Transportation assured Governor Scott’s office that the State of Florida would not be liable for any project cost overruns. The Department of

²⁷³ Alex Leary, Marc Caputo, and Bill Varian, “Rushing to reverse Scott,” *St. Petersburg Times*, February 18, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

²⁷⁴ Aaron Sharockman, “On rail, Scott holds most of the cards,” *St. Petersburg Times*, February 18, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

Transportation also said that if Scott rejected the funds, those funds would be used elsewhere in the United States for high speed rail projects, not for dredging of Florida's ports as the governor requested.²⁷⁵

The United States Department of Transportation gave the State of Florida an additional week to convince Scott to accept the federal grants to construct a high speed rail line from Tampa to Orlando. Hours after being granted an extension, Governor Scott said "my position on high speed rail remains unchanged. I believe high speed rail is a federal boondoggle as I said more than a week ago." The municipalities of Tampa, Lakeland, Orlando, and Miami agreed to create a "Florida Regional High Speed Rail Commission" to replace the Florida Department of Transportation as the entity that would accept the high speed rail funds if Governor Scott would sign off on the deal. Senator Altman hinted at the possibility of legal action in hopes of forcing Scott to accept the funds, and in order to ensure that Florida's Constitution was not being violated.²⁷⁶

On Tuesday 2 March 2011, Florida Senators Altman and Arthenia Joyner, a Democrat from Tampa, sued Governor Scott on the grounds

²⁷⁵ Ted Jackovics and Samara Sodos, "Scott won't budge on rail," *The Tampa Tribune*, February 25, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

²⁷⁶ Ted Jackovics and Samara Sodos, "Florida's rail deal not yet off tracks," *The Tampa Tribune*, February 26, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

that he had overstepped his authority when he rejected the high speed rail funds. The Florida Supreme Court gave Scott until Noon on 3 March to respond and gave Altman and Joyner until four o'clock in the afternoon on the same day to reply to Scott's response. Both Altman and Joyner hoped that the Florida Supreme Court would rule in the same manner as it did when both Governors Crist and Bush were sued early in their terms and found to have exceeded their authority. The two Senators also hoped that the Florida Supreme Court would rule the same way as the South Carolina Supreme Court did when legislators in that state sued their governor to accept stimulus funds. Florida's senior United States Senator, Bill Nelson, asked Secretary LaHood for an additional week before sending Florida's high speed rail funds elsewhere.²⁷⁷

Oral arguments were scheduled for Thursday 3 March 2011. Both sides of the lawsuit asked the Florida Supreme Court to issue a ruling by Friday, which would comply with the deadline set by Transportation Secretary LaHood to determine if the funding would go to the Sunshine State or be dispersed to other states; half a dozen of

²⁷⁷ Janet Zink and Alex Leary, "Scott sued on rail funds," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 2, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

which had submitted applications to receive Florida's high speed rail funds.²⁷⁸

Midmorning on Friday, 5 March 2011, the Florida Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of Governor Scott. This was the third time in a decade that funding for a high speed rail project was killed in Florida. Scott touted the decision as a victory for Florida's taxpayers.²⁷⁹

In spite of the Florida Supreme Court's decision, there was a small victory for high speed rail supporters as there were a number of key environmental studies that were completed allowing for less bureaucratic red tape should funding be available in the future for high speed rail. This situation is similar to when Florida's voters decided to discontinue funding high speed rail in 2004; the environmental studies that were performed between 2000 and 2004 laid the foundation for the high speed rail project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Florida's \$2.02 billion for high speed rail went to fund 22 high speed rail projects in 15 states. The Northeast Corridor received over \$1.5 billion for improvements throughout the route to allow for speeds

²⁷⁸ Janet Zink, "Scott says senators are asking court to push failed rail policies," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 3, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

²⁷⁹ Janet Zink and Alex Leary, "Ruling ends sag of high-speed rail," *St. Petersburg Times*, March 5, 2011, final edition, sec. A.

of 160 miles per hour and triple tracking. The Middle West was awarded over \$750 million to allow for speeds of 110 miles per hour in segments and to purchase seven locomotives and 48 railcars. California won \$68 million to purchase four locomotives and 15 railcars.²⁸⁰

In two separate ridership studies it was found that the proposed high speed rail system would have been profitable within its first year of operation (2016) and would result in operating surpluses after the first decade of operation. The average of the two studies resulted in 3 million riders with a \$4.3 million surplus in the first year of operation and 5 million riders with annual surpluses of \$38 million within the first decade of operation. The study was based solely on the Tampa to Orlando route because of unknown costs of the Orlando to Miami route. Once the Republican Party took control of the Federal House of Representatives in 2011, all high speed rail funding for future budgets was eliminated.²⁸¹

If Governor Scott had accepted the high speed rail funds, the Tampa to Orlando section of the project would have been built and

²⁸⁰ Robert Pisani, "Northeast Corridor wins a piece of Florida high speed rail funds," *TRAINS*, May 9, 2011, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2011/05/Northeast%20Corridor%20wins%20a%20piece%20of%20Florida%20high%20speed%20rail%20funds.aspx>.

²⁸¹ Ted Jackovics, "High-speed rail would have been profitable, state report says," *Tampa Tribune*, February 6, 2012, <http://tbo.com/news/florida/high-speed-rail-would-have-been-profitable-state-report-says-355492>.

operational; however, the construction of the Orlando to Miami segment of the State's high speed rail system would have remained unfunded.

Scott's decision to reject high speed rail money was politically motivated and consistent with other actions that he had taken since assuming the governorship. Scott was conscience of the bloc of voters, the "Tea Party," that elected him in both the Republican Primary and later in the General Election. This is evidenced by his selling of two state planes, asking state agencies to stop implementing regulations until he approved them, announcing his plan for his first budget at a Tea Party event in Eustis, and the signing of his first budget at another Tea Party event in The Villages. Scott received support from this wing of the Republican Party following his decision to reject the funds. The South Florida Tea Party, centered in Palm Beach County, stated that "In the end, the High Speed Rail Project could not overcome the cost or even logic of the project. Scott's decision was very logical and popular." The Tea Party's opposition to the project was grounded in the perceived "massive financial burden placed on taxpayers."²⁸²

²⁸² Anthony Man, "Palm Beach County tea party leader praises Gov. Rick Scott's high speed rail decision," *Sun Sentinel*, February 16, 2011, http://weblogs.sun-sentinel.com/news/politics/palm/blog/2011/02/palm_beach_county_tea_party_le.html.

Chapter 4: Effects on Local Mass Transit

Tampa Bay

On the November 2010 ballot in Hillsborough County was a Countywide Transportation Tax initiative that would have raised the sales tax by 1 cent to pay for the region's first light rail system, road expansions and a doubling of the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit's bus fleet. It was estimated that the penny increase in the sales tax would bring in close to \$180 million for transportation projects; 43% of that would go to construction and operation of the light rail line, 25% would go to road expansion in rural areas that would not have direct access to the light rail system, and the remainder would go to expanding the bus fleet. The proposed light rail system would connect the University of South Florida with downtown Tampa as well as the West Shore Business District.²⁸³

The transit initiative failed to pass by a vote of 172,988, or 58.11% no votes, to 124,720, or 41.89% yes votes. Voting precincts

²⁸³ Billy Varian, "In Hillsborough, voters will decide light rail and other questions," *St. Petersburg Times*, November 6, 2010, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/kyc/in-hillsborough-voters-will-decide-light-rail-and-other-questions/1126343>.

that would have benefited from the light rail system voted for the project, whereas voters from the more rural areas voted against it.²⁸⁴

The Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority, which was formed in 1979 and began service in 1981, currently has 50 routes and contains a fleet of 214 busses.²⁸⁵ During fiscal year 2012, the bus service saw a record ridership utilizing the bus system throughout Hillsborough County with 14,314,610 riders, up 3.8% from fiscal year 2011.²⁸⁶

On 28 May 2013, the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority introduced MetroRapid, the first bus rapid transit system in the State of Florida. MetroRapid runs along 59 stations spaced about three quarters of a mile from the University Area Transit Center near the University of South Florida, to the Marion Transit Center in Downtown Tampa; busses will run Monday through Friday every 15 minutes and complete the trip in 45 minutes. MetroRapid busses are equipped with a Transit Signal Priority system that extends green lights and shortens red lights at 40 intersections throughout the route which shaves 15% to 20% off transit time. Philip Hale, the CEO of the Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority said that MetroRapid is

²⁸⁴ Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections, "Official Results," <http://results.enr.clarityelections.com/FL/Hillsborough/22912/en/vts.html?cid=8035>.

²⁸⁵ Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, "Driven to Serve," <http://www.gohart.org/about/about-us.html>.

²⁸⁶ Hillsborough Area Regional Transit, "2012 HART Ridership At-A-Glance," http://www.gohart.org/about/at_a_glance_2012.pdf.

the first step to move Hillsborough County to light rail: "Once we develop a ridership, we can go to the federal government and say the need is there for light rail." MetroRapid is expected to have a ridership of 800,000 by September with 60% of the riders new to the bus system. The project cost \$25 million and was funded from Hillsborough County's Community Investment Tax.²⁸⁷ There was some confusion by riders on the first day of service as MetroRapid stops at dedicated stations every three quarters of a mile as opposed to the quarter of a mile stops for local busses. One rider said, "the stop is further from my house but it's quicker."²⁸⁸

On 3 April 2013, the Florida Department of Transportation selected four possible locations for a project it calls the "Westshore Multimodal Center." The platform would be located between northbound and southbound Interstate 275 and connected by a walkway to a parking garage of 750 spaces. Even with the 2010 setback, there is still a push for Tampa to modernize its transit system. The Interstate 275 widening project between State Road 60 and downtown Tampa is set to be completed by 2016. The Florida Department of Transportation is leaving a 44 foot right-of-way for future transit projects, whether light rail or rapid bus. The northbound span of the Howard Frankland Bridge is planned to reach the end of its

²⁸⁷ Shelley Rossetter, "Faster wheels roll out today," *tbt**, May 28, 2013, page 10.

²⁸⁸ Shelley Rossetter, "Slow rollout for fast ride," *tbt**, May 29, 2013, page 12.

useable life around 2020. State and local transit planners see an opportunity to have some sort of transit linking both sides of Tampa Bay to be included in the bridge's replacement project.²⁸⁹ On 4 April 2013, a day following the FDOT announcement, Tampa International Airport announced its plans for expansion. The expansion would be constructed over three phases: Phase One would no longer permit idling traffic at arrival lanes and includes the construction of a consolidated rental car facility at the southern edge of the airport's property; Phase Two would demolish the airport Marriot to make room for a new international airside; and Phase Three would be to expand the terminal northward to accommodate two more airside, expanded customs areas and additional security sites. Tampa International Airport also wants to expand its people mover to the Westshore Multimodal Center that was proposed by the Florida Department of Transportation.²⁹⁰

Streetcars in Tampa date back to 1892. The streetcar system reached its peak of popularity in 1926 when nearly 24 million passengers utilized the system that stretched from Downtown Tampa, Ybor City, Sulfur Springs, Ballast Point, and Hyde Park. Tampa's streetcar lines stopped operating in August 1946. In October of 2002,

²⁸⁹ Jamal Thalji, "Westshore picked for transit hub," *Tampa Bay Times*, April 4, 2013, St. Petersburg Edition, section A.

²⁹⁰ Jamal Thalji, "TIA's new vision," *Tampa Bay Times*, April 5, 2013, St. Petersburg Edition, section A.

the TECO Line Streetcar System began operation between Ybor City at 20th Street and 8th Avenue, through Channelside, to Downtown Tampa at Dick Greco Plaza just south of Platt Street. In 2010 the system was extended a third of a mile to Whiting Street in Downtown Tampa.²⁹¹ During hours of operation, the streetcar line runs trolleys every 20 minutes from each end of the line serving all 11 stops.²⁹²

Streetcars first arrived in St. Petersburg in 1901. In 1919, the City of St. Petersburg acquired the streetcar system and expanded the various streetcar lines around the city to extend from the Municipal Pier, north to 34th Avenue North along 9th Street, south to Big Bayou, southwest to Gulfport, and west to Jungle along Central Avenue. In 1949, the last of the streetcars rolled through St. Petersburg.²⁹³

In 1984, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority was established as the sole provider of public transportation in Pinellas County with 128 buses and 79 routes. In fiscal year 2012, the fleet numbered 199

²⁹¹ TECO Line Streetcar System, "What Goes Around Comes Around," <http://www.tecolinestreetcar.org/about/history/index.htm>.

²⁹² TECO Line Streetcar System, "Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About The TECO Line Streetcar System," http://www.tecolinestreetcar.org/about/everything_flyer.pdf.

²⁹³ James Buckley, *Street Railways of St. Petersburg Florida*, (Forty Fort, Pennsylvania: Harold E. Cox, 1983), 4 and 24-25.

buses serving 40 routes. There was record ridership during fiscal year 2012 with 14 million; an average of 44,642 riders per day.²⁹⁴

Leaders in Pinellas County originally wanted to place a similar proposal, to that of Hillsborough's proposed penny sales tax increase to fund transit projects on the 2012 ballot. However, after seeing the proposed tax increase defeated in neighboring Hillsborough County, Pinellas County leaders delayed placing the measure on the ballot, and decided instead to finish a study before taking the measure to the voters. Also, a pro transit county commissioner was replaced with an anti-tax commissioner during the 2010 general election.²⁹⁵

A proposed 24-mile light rail system that would run from downtown Clearwater, to the Gateway area, Tropicana Field, and to St. Petersburg, will be put to the voters of Pinellas County to decide on the November 2014 ballot.²⁹⁶ The Pinellas County Commission voted five to two in favor of placing the initiative, which has been planned since the early 1980s, on the 4 November 2014 ballot.²⁹⁷ It remains

²⁹⁴ Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, "History of PSTA," <http://www.psta.net/history.php>.

²⁹⁵ David DeCamp and Curtis Krueger, "Hillsborough rail defeat reverberates in Pinellas," *St. Petersburg Times*, 3 November, 2010, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/local/hillsborough-rail-defeat-reverberates-in-pinellas/1132102>.

²⁹⁶ Anna M. Phillips, "Transit tax may head to voters," *Tampa Bay Times*, February 26, 2013, St. Petersburg Edition, section B.

²⁹⁷ Anna M. Phillips, "Pinellas moves forward with putting transit tax on ballot," *Tampa Bay Times*, February 26, 2013, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/transportation/pinellas-county-moves-forward-with-putting-transit-tax-question-to-voters/1276672>.

to be seen how the voters feel about this issue. Transportation backers hope that the light rail system measure passes, which could provide the backbone of an alternative transportation system in the Tampa Bay area.

Central Florida

In January of 1990, the newly formed Central Florida Commuter Rail Authority started planning a commuter rail system for Central Florida. In 1992, it announced plans for a Sanford to Orlando route. In February of 2000, United States Congressman John Mica, a Republican from Winter Park, suggested an Orlando to Volusia route. In August of 2006, Governor Jeb Bush announced a deal for the State of Florida to purchase 61 miles of tracks from CSX in Central Florida to construct a commuter rail line to alleviate traffic from Interstate 4.²⁹⁸

The deal called for the Florida Department of Transportation to purchase the tracks from CSX in exchange for \$491 million. Included in the deal was a provision that no CSX freight trains could travel over the commuter line from 5 A.M. to 10 A.M., and between 3 P.M and 10 P.M. CSX also has exclusive use of the tracks from midnight to 5 A.M. The remaining seven hours would see mixed use of the corridor. The federal government agreed to pay 25% of the costs, city and county

²⁹⁸ "A long, winding path to commuter rail," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 9, 2009, Final Edition, section A.

governments agreed to pay 25%, and the State of Florida would pay the remaining 50%. The State agreed to pay operating costs through 2015. CSX would build a new freight facility in Winter Haven to replace the Taft Yard which would be located along the commuter rail corridor. CSX would also transfer the bulk of its Florida freight traffic from its "A Line," formerly Atlantic Coast Line tracks to the "S Line," the former Seaboard Air Line tracks. The commuter rail project was anticipated to open for revenue service in late 2009.²⁹⁹

The CSX deal was finalized in November of 2007. During the 2008 and 2009 regular sessions of the Florida Legislature, the House of Representatives passed legislation to construct a commuter rail line in Central Florida. The proposals stalled when they reached the Florida Senate.³⁰⁰

United States Department of Transportation Secretary, Ray LaHood, met with Florida officials and warned they would not receive as much money as they were requesting for high speed rail through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act if they did not pass the commuter rail project for Central Florida.³⁰¹

²⁹⁹ Jay Hamburg, "Commuter-rail line on tap for '09," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 3, 2006, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2006-08-03/A%20SECTION/MRAIL03_1_commuter-rail-freight-trains-central-florida.

³⁰⁰ "A long, winding path to commuter rail," *Orlando Sentinel*.

³⁰¹ Alex Leary, "Senate President Jeff Atwater wants December special session on SunRail," *St. Petersburg Times*, October 19, 2009,

During a special session of the Legislature in December 2009, the rail bill passed easily in the House of Representatives with 84 votes in favor and 25 against. However, once again the Senate stalled. The bill only survived committee by a 5-4 vote. The proposal included \$432 million to purchase the CSX tracks in Central Florida, earmarked \$2.6 billion over 30 years for high speed rail construction, increased Tri-Rail funding 13% to 15%, the purchase of a \$200 million liability insurance policy for SunRail, and created the Florida Rail Enterprise to manage all passenger rail systems within the State.³⁰²

The Senate passed the bill by a vote of 27 to 10. By providing a commitment to commuter rail by funding both Tri-Rail and SunRail, the Legislature believed that the State was in a good position to compete for high speed rail awards.³⁰³

The 61 mile commuter line would be built in two phases: Phase One would run from Deltona to Sand Lake Road, beginning service in

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/legislature/senate-president-jeff-atwater-wants-december-special-session-on-sunrail/1045268>.

³⁰² Steve Bousquet, Shannon Colavecchio, and Marc Caputo, "Rail bill, after sailing through Florida House, faces Senate fight," *St. Petersburg Times*, December 7, 2009, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/stateroundup/rail-bill-after-sailing-through-florida-house-faces-senate-fight/1056994>.

³⁰³ Marc Caputo and Lee Logan, "Senate Clears rail bill, on to Gov. Crist," *St. Petersburg Times*, December 8, 2009, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/stateroundup/senate-clears-rail-bill-on-to-gov-crist/1057417>.

2012; and Phase Two would extend North to DeLand and south to Poinciana and was expected to open in 2014.³⁰⁴

In 2011, there were calls for Republican Governor Rick Scott to cancel the SunRail plan as he had the proposed high speed rail system. Lawmakers such as Paula Dockery and Jack Latvala, both Republicans, urged Governor Scott to zero out funding for SunRail.³⁰⁵

On 1 July 2011, Governor Scott approved the \$1.28 billion to build the commuter line, saying he would likely lose if he suspended funding and was later sued. Congressman Mica said, "this is as significant for the state as when Henry Flagler brought the railroad to Florida and when President Eisenhower initiated the interstate." The project is expected to have a ridership of 2,150 daily passengers when it opens in 2014.³⁰⁶

The proposed SunRail system would help create close to 8,000 jobs, help ease traffic, and spur development around the commuter rail stations.³⁰⁷ It is hoped that transit oriented development such as apartments and shops will support the commuter rail system.

³⁰⁴ Dan Tracy, Josh Hafenbrak, and Aaron Deslatte, "YOUR NEW RIDE," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 9, 2009, Final Edition, section A.

³⁰⁵ Janet Zink, "Calls mount for governor to kill SunRail," *St. Petersburg Times*, February 22, 2011, Tampa Edition, section A.

³⁰⁶ Janet Zink, "Scott allows \$1.38B SunRail to proceed," *St. Petersburg Times*, July 2, 2011, Tampa Edition, section A.

³⁰⁷ Caleb Johnson, "SunRail brings jobs to cities," *Seminole Chronicle*, September 1, 2011, Final Edition, section A.

Employers such as Disney and Tupperware are offering to shuttle employees who choose to ride SunRail from the nearest station to their homes. Orlando Magic President, Alex Martins, has said the organization is in negotiations with SunRail to have the system run more trains before and after games and is willing to subsidize fares of Magic fans who choose to use SunRail to get to and from the games.³⁰⁸

In January of 2013, the Orlando International Airport Board voted unanimously to add a second terminal south of the current one that would have long term parking, serve as a train depot to the Florida East Coast Railway's "All Aboard Florida," a proposed SunRail extension from Sand Lake Road, and a rental car facility. A monorail would connect Orlando International's two terminals.³⁰⁹

The Orange Blossom Express is a proposed commuter rail project that would connect Orlando with Apopka and the Lake County cities of Tavares, Eustis, and Mount Dora. The project is expected to cost \$1.75 million and begin operation in 2014, connecting with SunRail at the LYNX Central Station.³¹⁰ The local governments of

³⁰⁸ Robert Trigaux, "Business lessons for Tampa Bay lurk in Orlando's success in winning SunRail go-ahead," *St. Petersburg Times*, July 6, 2011, <http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/venturebiz/content/business-lessons-tampa-bay-lurk-orlandos-success-winning-sunrail-go-ahead>.

³⁰⁹ Dan Tracy, "New monorail could be on way for airport," *Orlando Sentinel*, January 16, 2013, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/breakingnews/os-airport-monorail-orlando-20130116,0,7097418,print.story>.

³¹⁰ Martin E. Comas, "Will Apopka derail Lake train plan?" *Orlando Sentinel*, July 13, 2011, Final Edition, section B.

Orange and Lake Counties, as well as the municipalities of Apopka, Mount Dora, Tavares, and Eustis all contributed funds to upgrade the current Florida Central Railroad's tracks (which currently allow freight traffic to travel at 25 miles per hour) to allow for passenger trains to travel over them. This will also allow for more freight to travel on the Florida Central Railroad, thereby bringing more development in west Orange County and east Lake County, as well as offering citizens an alternative to traveling on congested roads.³¹¹

Atlanta based American Maglev proposed building a magnetic levitation train to run between the Orange County Convention Center and the Orlando International Airport. The cost of the project would be \$315 million and would result in no cost to taxpayers. There would be connections with SunRail and a fourth stop at the Florida Mall. Tickets to ride would be \$12. However, American Maglev has a history of starting projects and not finishing them. There was a failed Maglev train for Edgewater, Florida in 1994 and at Old Dominion University in Virginia during 2001. The only required asset needed from government, would not be tax money but the right of way. The

³¹¹ Martin E. Comas, "Apopka chips in for track repairs, bringing commuter service between Orange and Lake closer," *Orlando Sentinel*, September 27, 2011, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2011-09-27/news/os-lake-apopka-train-money-20110927_1_orange-blossom-express-freight-trains-commuter-rail.

company anticipates becoming operational by 2014.³¹² No significant progress has been made on this project to date.

South Florida

Tri-Rail began as a 67 mile commuter rail system that was originally intended as a temporary system so commuters would have an alternative when Interstate 95 underwent lane expansion in the late 1980s. Service began in January of 1989 between Miami and West Palm Beach.³¹³

In 2006, the number of daily trains increased from 30 to 40. In 2007, the number of daily trains increased again to 50. Tri-Rail carried a record 4,303,509 passengers in 2008. The system has been extended north of West Palm Beach to Magnolia Park and operations at the new Miami Central Station are anticipated to begin in 2013 or early 2014.³¹⁴

Tri-Rail was awarded a total of \$16 million dollars from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. \$2.5 million to

³¹² Dan Tracy, "Orange leaders like idea of paying nothing for \$315M train," *Orlando Sentinel*, June 27, 2012, Final Edition, section A.

³¹³ Florida Transportation Commission, "Public Transit in Florida," 6.

³¹⁴ Florida Department of Transportation, "The Florida Rail System Plan Investment Element," 2002, 3-11 – 3-17.

purchase a new locomotive and \$13.5 million to plug an \$18 million budget shortfall.³¹⁵

In May of 1984, Miami-Dade County debuted its elevated Metrorail mass transit system. The system is 24.4 miles long and operates with average speeds of 31 miles per hour and a top speed of 58 miles per hour. It takes 47 minutes to travel from one end of the rail line to the other. There are 23 stations along the route stretching from Palmetto at the northern terminus, to its southern terminus at Dadeland South. Metrorail owns 136 cars with a capacity of 164 passengers each. Each fare is \$2.00. The average weekday ridership is 60,200 and the average weekend ridership is 59,900 passengers. In Fiscal Year 2008, there were 18.5 million passengers, an increase of 5.9% over the previous fiscal year.³¹⁶

During the summer of 2012, the Metrorail opened up its Orange Line expansion which connected the Miami International Airport with the rest of the system.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ "Tri-Rail secures \$13.5M in stimulus money," *South Florida Business Journal*, July 24, 2009, <http://www.bizjournals.com/southflorida/stories/2009/07/20/daily88.html>.

³¹⁶ Florida Department of Transportation, "The Florida Rail System Plan Investment Element," 3-18.

³¹⁷ Alfonso Chardy and Kristofer Rios, "New Metrorail Orange Line to Miami International Airport Opens," *Miami Herald*, July 28, 2012, <http://www.miamiherald.com/2012/07/28/v-print/2917650/new-metrorail-orange-line-to-miami.html>.

The Metrorail expansion was only one part of the creation of the Miami Central Station. The station includes a people mover in order to shuttle people from the Metrorail station to the Miami International Airport as well as a Metro Bus terminal. There will also be rail platforms for the Tri-Rail commuter train, current AMTRAK trains, and any future high speed rail endeavors.³¹⁸

Miami's Metromover system began operation in April of 1986. It is a system of 8.5 miles of fixed guide way that is operated by three separate loops, a downtown inside loop, and two outer loops, Brickell and Omni. The Metromover is free and the capacity of each rail car is 96 passengers. There are 29 cars that make up the Metromover fleet. Average daily ridership is 25,500 passengers, and the average weekend ridership is 28,400. In Fiscal Year 2008 8.8 million passengers used the Metromover, a 2.5% increase over the previous fiscal year.³¹⁹

All Aboard Florida

In March of 2012, the Florida East Coast Railroad announced a plan to connect Miami with Orlando with private passenger rail service

³¹⁸ "Groundbreaking set for Miami multi-modal station," *TRAINS*, September 26, 2011, <http://trn.trains.com/en/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2011/09/Groundbreaking%20set%20for%20Miami%20multi-modal%20station.aspx>.

³¹⁹ Florida Department of Transportation, "The Florida Rail System Plan Investment Element," 3-18.

by 2014. The proposed route would travel along the tracks already owned by the railway and then on to Orlando via the Beach Line Expressway (the Martin Anderson Bee Line Expressway or State Road 528 was renamed the BeachLine after the hurricanes of the mid 2000s in an attempt to boost tourism). The trip would take about three hours to complete at speeds of up to 110 miles per hour. If the line is successful, service could expand to Tampa and Jacksonville. The cost of the project would be \$1 billion, with all funds coming from the Florida East Coast Railway.³²⁰

Construction was set to begin in early 2013 and includes four stations: Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach, and the Orlando International Airport. The Florida East Coast Railroad reported that fares will be priced to compete with the \$160 plane ticket and \$120 for a rental car between the two cities. There will be both first and second class seats as well as a café car and free wireless internet. The name of the project is "All Aboard Florida."³²¹

On Christmas Day 2012, the Florida East Coast Railway received the authority to negotiate for use of the Beach Line Expressway's right

³²⁰ Dan Tracy, "Rail company proposes \$1 billion Orlando-to-Miami train," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 22, 2012, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-03-22/business/os-train-orlando-miami-20120322_1_private-sector-high-speed-train-system-passenger-trains.

³²¹ David Adams, "Railway company to build passenger service from Miami to Orlando," *Reuters*, August 8, 2012, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2012/08/08/usa-florida-rail-idINL2E8J87P920120808>.

of way to construct a new rail line that would connect the Orlando International Airport with downtown Miami. It was the only applicant for the use of the right of way. Construction would begin in 2013 and service could begin in late 2014 or early 2015.³²²

In May of 2013, managers of the Desert Ranch, a 300,000 acre tract of land that covers Seminole, Orange, and Osceola counties (which is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), asked the State to include an extensive environmental planning process for All Aboard Florida. This would add additional time and cost to the already ambitious schedule of the Florida East Coast Railroad. In 1965 the Ranch donated portions of its property during the construction of State Road 528, which runs along the ranch's northern border.³²³

Less than a fortnight later, the General Manager of Desert Ranches of Florida, Erik Jacobsen, wrote to the *Orlando Sentinel* stating that the goal of asking the State to add environmental studies to the project was not to delay the proposed rail line; instead, it was an attempt to ensure that the rail line should "preserve the ability to

³²² Dan Tracy, "All Aboard Florida wins OK to negotiate for BeachLine right of way," *Orlando Sentinel*, December 18, 2012, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-12-18/news/os-all-aboard-florida-train-20121218_1_beachline-expressway-authority-train.

³²³ Dan Tracy, "Desert Ranch concerns could delay Miami-Orlando train," *Orlando Sentinel*, May 10, 2013, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2013-05-10/news/os-miami-train-ranch-fight-20130510_1_aboard-florida-train-project-beachline-expressway.

widen the BeachLine Expressway, accommodate commuter and freight rail, and construct interchanges when needed.” Jacobsen also stated that the Ranch supports the plan to link South Florida with Orlando by rail, adding that there is a possibility of having a long term vision for the region rather than the piecemeal approach that growth management in Florida has generally followed.³²⁴

By 2018, the railway is expected to earn \$145 million annually from fares that will cost approximately \$100 per trip; an estimated 1.5 million passengers will ride the train in the first three years. The cost of the project has increased to \$1.5 billion, but no reason has been given for the increase.³²⁵

In March of 2013 the Florida East Coast Railroad submitted a request to the Federal Railroad Administration for grants to help fund the project which is slated to begin service in 2015. The railroad plans to have 16 round trips daily between Orlando and Miami with a one way trip taking three hours.³²⁶

³²⁴ Erick, Jacobsen, “My Word: Desert Ranches supports rail, big picture,” *Orlando Sentinel*, May 20, 2013, final edition, sec. A.

³²⁵ Dan Tracy, “Orlando-to-Miami train could generate \$145M in fares annually,” *Orlando Sentinel*, December 25, 2012, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-12-25/business/os-miami-to-orlando-train-20121225_1_orlando-to-miami-train-freight-trains-beachline-expressway.

³²⁶ “Delayed All Aboard Florida project now seeks Federal loan guarantee,” *TRAINS*, March 21, 2013, <http://trn.trains.com/Railroad%20News/News%20Wire/2013/03/Delayed%20All%20Aboard%20Florida%20project%20now%20seeks%20Federal%20loan%20guarantee.aspx>.

The Orlando International Airport proposed the building of a second terminal located to the south of the existing one. The new terminal would have 16 gates to start, an addition to a parking garage, a monorail to connect the two terminals as well as serve to both Florida East Coast's All Aboard Florida project and SunRail's airport extension. The cost of the expansion project is estimated to cost \$2.1 billion.³²⁷

³²⁷ Dan Tracy, "OIA terminal and train depot," *Orlando Sentinel*, March 20, 2013, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2013-03-20/news/os-orlando-airport-board-20130320_1_train-depot-train-station-director-of-airport-affairs.

Conclusion

Florida has planned numerous high speed rail networks. These proposed high speed rail lines, if constructed, would have been operational as early as the late 1980s. Since that time, multiple attempts to establish high speed rail networks early 1990s, late 1990s, early 2000s, the mid 2000s, late 2000s, and most recently 2016. Once the price tag of each of the systems was revealed, the public and political leaders decided not to fund the project, balking at the large price tags. With each and every new high speed rail proposal, the cost increases due to rising land values, the scarcity of undeveloped land, and inflation, all of which raise the right of way acquisition costs and increased construction costs including labor, equipment, and materials.

However, these same political leaders continue to fund highway projects across the state. The typical response to road congestion is to widen the routes that are already congested, instead of pursuing alternatives to automobile travel.

For instance, in Tampa Bay, over \$1 billion has been spent in the past decade and a half to upgrade the existing expressways and

freeways. In 2001, the Suncoast Parkway, or State Road 589, opened the 42 miles between the Veteran's Expressway and U.S. Road 98 along the Hernando and Citrus county line. The cost of the project was \$500 million.³²⁸ In April of 2010, a new four laned section of Interstate 275 opened northbound in the two miles between Himes Avenue and the Hillsborough River as the first phase of the transformation of Interstate 275 at a cost of \$110 million.³²⁹ Construction began on the second phase, 4.2 miles between Tampa International Airport to the Hillsborough River, in July of 2012. The project is expected to be completed in Autumn of 2016 and will include four lanes in each direction of Interstate 275 from downtown Tampa to Tampa International Airport. The cost of these upgrades is expected to be over \$215 million.³³⁰ The one mile connector between Interstate 4 and the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway is expected to open in late 2013 at a cost of \$400 million.³³¹

Greater than twice the amount that has been spent upgrading expressways and freeways in Tampa Bay has been spent on expanding

³²⁸ Tony Marrero, "Since 2001, Suncoast Parkway hasn't been the smoothest ride," *St. Petersburg Times*, February 4, 2011, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/transportation/roads/since-2001-suncoast-parkway-hasnt-been-the-smoothest-ride/1149624>.

³²⁹ Tampa Bay Interstates, "Northbound I-275, from Himes Avenue to the Hillsborough River (new alignment, completed April 2010,)" <http://tbinterstates.com/projects/projectinfo.asp?projectID=158&RoadID=1>.

³³⁰ Tampa Bay Interstates, "I-275 Widening from east of SR 60 to downtown Tampa (Hillsborough River)," <http://tbinterstates.com/projects/projectinfo.asp?projectid=202>.

³³¹ Tampa Bay Interstates, "I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector (new road)."

the capacity of the expressways and freeways that circle Central Florida. The Wekiva Parkway, the name of the 25 mile proposed route through Orange, Lake, and Seminole Counties that will finish the “beltway” around Orlando first planned in the 1970s, began construction in February of 2013. The cost of the parkway is expected to be \$1.8 billion and construction is not expected to be completed and the parkway open to traffic until 2021.³³² The Florida Department of Transportation is currently reviewing bids from some of the largest companies in the world to construct the 21 mile expansion of Interstate 4 from Kirkman Road to State Road 434. The project will include two tolled lanes in each direction (the toll will vary according to the time of day) and other capacity improvements along the highway; the projected completion date is 2020 with an anticipated cost to be \$2.1 billion.³³³

Imagine if developers in the states of Missouri, Kansas, and Pennsylvania, all of whom claim to have the first section of interstate highway, decided that the interstate project would not work and was too expensive and then stopped construction on those first sections.

³³² Dan Tracy, “Construction set to start in February on Wekiva Parkway,” *Orlando Sentinel*, December 7, 2012, http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2012-12-07/news/os-wekiva-construction-starts-20121207_1_wekiva-parkway-orlando-authority-noranne-downs.

³³³ Dan Tracy, “State picks same 4 finalists for I-4 makeover,” *Orlando Sentinel*, June 5, 2013, <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/local/breakingnews/os-interstate-4-bids-again-20130605,0,6591496.story>.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower Interstate and Defense Highway System took 50 years and \$425 billion in public works dollars to complete the system that began construction in 1956.³³⁴

What if Florida's transportation officials thought in the early 1960s that the lone section of Interstate 4 between Plant City and Lakeland was sufficient for meeting Central Florida's highway needs? What if Interstate 75 still terminated in downtown Tampa and did not snake south all the way to Miami? Or if Interstate 95 stopped in Daytona Beach and Miami was connected with the Northeast via Florida's Turnpike to Orlando and Interstate 4 to the coast before reaching the now singular super-highway that is Interstate 95? These leaders that saw a public good that would be served by building new highways and expanding existing ones.

When it comes to transportation planning in the State of Florida, highways and more highways are the projects that are usually proposed and committed to. Commuter rail or other alternative transportation options are typically disregarded. Tri-Rail in South Florida was originally seen as a temporary undertaking while Interstate 95 was being widened in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Tri-Rail will celebrate its 30th year of operation in 2019. SunRail, the commuter

³³⁴ Al Neuharth, "Traveling Interstates is our sixth freedom," *USA Today*, June 22, 2006, http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/opinion/columnist/neuharth/2006-06-22-interstates_x.htm.

rail project in Central Florida, which has plans dating back to the early 1990s, was only approved during a special session of the legislature in 2009 when the Federal Department of Transportation hinted that if the project did not go forward it would be unfavorable for Florida's then-high speed rail funding application. It is thought that construction along Interstate 4 over the next decade will push some commuters off the blacktop to the rails when SunRail begins operation of its first phase in 2014. It is also hoped that SunRail will become the backbone of transportation within the Orlando area and will connect with future transit plans such as the Orange Blossom Express serving West Orange and South Lake Counties, the International Drive light rail project, and All Aboard Florida.

Alternatives to automobiles have been thought about in Tampa Bay since the 1980s. A people mover was planned in Tampa during the 1980s as well as a commuter rail project in Pinellas County. It was hoped that the construction of the northern span of the Howard Frankland Bridge in the 1980s would produce a connection of Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties via high speed rail; and if such action was not taken, the bridge would have to be expanded to 14 lanes by 2010. Anyone who has recently traveled the Interstate 275 Bridge, knows that this is not the case. The current school of thought centers on a need, within the decade a replacement of the southern span of the

Howard Frankland Bridge, for some sort of mass transit system to be included in the bridges' upgrades. Time will tell if such a project is undertaken. The recent expansion of Tampa International Airport allows for connection to planned future mass transit systems. Pinellas County is placing a commuter rail transit initiative on the 2014 ballot.

This author suggests that a study is warranted for a proposed mass transit system similar to Miami's Metrorail system that would run between St. Pete Beach, Tropicana Field, the University of South Florida St. Petersburg, downtown St. Petersburg, Tampa International Airport, Raymond James Stadium, downtown Tampa, the Tampa Bay Times Forum, Union Station, Ybor City, and the University of South Florida as a way to alleviate automobile traffic within the Tampa Bay Area. The results of this research suggest that like most proposals for mass transit in Florida, a plan might be championed and discussed, but never executed.

If the nearly past 40 years serves as a template, high speed rail will continue to be debated in Florida for years to come. The price tag is often the point that drives most supporters or those who are on the fence away. What if the designers of the Interstate Highways System decided that \$425 billion was too much money to commit to one project?

If the Florida East Coast Railroad's *All Aboard Florida* between Orlando and Miami project is proven successful, then the Florida Department of Transportation should work to expand service to Tampa and Jacksonville. If those expansions are successful, then perhaps it will be time again to discuss a dedicated right of way high speed rail service. Almost 40 years of studies are available to inform the planning process.

"You see the railroads *made* Florida. They played a major role in most states, but not like here, where their influence was an iron fist... I'm not saying it was wrong or right; I'm just saying it worked. Completely opened up the peninsula."³³⁵ This is how author Tim Dorsey's serial character, Serge A. Storms, explains to a Palm Beach County Judge the role that the railroads played in developing Florida. During the Florida land boom of the 1920s, northern developers shipped building materials south to Florida without any specific destination. Within a century, between 1900 and 2000, the City of Miami evolved from a village to an international banking capital.

By the continual denying Florida of the opportunity to utilize a high speed rail system, Florida's political leaders have shortchanged the State's citizens. Such a system would allow the citizens of the

³³⁵ Tim Dorsey, *The Stingray Shuffle* (New York City, New York: Harper Torch, 2005), 90.

southern portion of the State the ability to move about with faster speeds than automobiles and, in many cases, would provide more affordable travel than the airlines; with plans to expand to the rest of the state in time. It would be another program to reduce the effects of urban sprawl and unbridled growth that has characterized the post-war decades in Florida.

Eventually there will be no room to expand highways and streets. Will Florida's political leaders deal with growth management to ensure this does not happen? Will Florida's voters and transportation agencies continue to approve alternative transportation projects? Pinellas County voters will take up the issue of light rail again in 2014. Perhaps, if there are local transportation systems in place the next time high speed rail is proposed in Florida, the outcome will be different. Supporters of high speed rail cannot let proposed systems be described as only the initial segment, from Tampa to Orlando, as was the case under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

2014 is also the same year that Governor Rick Scott is up for reelection. Will voters remember his veto of the high speed rail project? Will the voters even care? Or will voters be preoccupied with some other issue?

Beginning in 2013, Rick Scott began to change his tone, politically. He proposed a \$74.2 billion budget that included a raise for teachers, massive highway expansion, money earmarked for land conservation, and additional funding for the State University System of Florida; this, his third budget looked nothing like his first two and was similar to the one that he inherited when he became entered office.³³⁶

Scott went even further when he said he was in support of Medicaid expansion under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2009; the same piece of legislation that launched Scott's political career by being opposed to it (not to mention the \$73 million of his own money spent). This proposal was met with instant opposition by Republicans in both the House of Representatives and Senate. Early supporters of Scott have turned against him in light of his political repositioning and his failures to deliver on campaign promises. "First SunRail, now Obamacare. Seems you are not standing firm on the topics that got you voted in sir... Thank you for showing me I can't believe anyone in politics," wrote one former supporter. Another said that Medicaid expansion "is your 'Charlie Crist hugs Obama moment'." Republican State Senator Jeff Brandes of St. Petersburg questioned where Scott's base would be should Scott make

³³⁶ Steve Bousquet, "Gov. Rick Scott proposes \$74.2 billion budget," *Tampa Bay Times*, January 31, 2013, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/politics/stateroundup/gov-rick-scott-proposes-largest-budget-in-florida-history-at-742-billion/1273110>.

it through the 2014 primary. Former Governor Charlie Crist offered “maybe soon he’ll become an advocate for high speed rail.” One explanation for Scott’s change of heart could be winning the Governorship with less than 50 percent of the vote in 2010, President Obama’s re-election in 2012, a 38 percent January approval rating for Scott, diminishing tea party power, and the upcoming 2014 election cycle.³³⁷

On Monday 4 November 2013, former Republican Governor Charlie Crist announced that he will be seeking election to his old office, as a Democrat. He is attempting to become the first ex-governor in history to switch parties and unseat the man that succeeded him. Crist is seeking to become the first Democrat elected as Governor since Lawton Chiles in 1994. “Chain Gang Charlie” Crist’s first speech included what he would do if elected Governor: incentives for graduate students in engineering, medical, and science programs to remain in Florida after graduating and to boost the State’s investment in bridges, ports, and roads.³³⁸

What will happen during the 2014 Election Cycle? One thing is for sure – it will be interesting.

³³⁷ Adam C. Smith, “Rick Scott’s new ideology? ‘Getting re-elected’ some say,” *Tampa Bay Times*, February 21, 2013, <http://www.tampabay.com/news/health/rick-scotts-new-ideology-getting-re-elected-some-say/1276130>.

³³⁸ Sandra Amrhein, “As ‘proud Dem, Crist fires 1st salvo in governor’s bid,” *Orlando Sentinel*, November 5, 2013, Final Edition, Section B.

The overall assessment of Florida's high speed rail projects was written by *Orlando Sentinel* staff reporter Rodger Roy in 1994, when he penned: "When it comes to high-speed trains, Florida has been like a high-school kid with empty pockets and a hankering for a new Camaro."³³⁹

I hope that Florida finally gets the Camaro.

³³⁹ Rodger Roy, "State Makes High-Speed Trains Offer."

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About The Author

Francis Henry Kurtz was born in Concord, California. In 2006, he graduated from Oviedo High School with his High School Diploma. In 2008, he graduated from Seminole Community College with an Associates' in Arts Degree. In 2011, he graduated from the University of South Florida with a double Bachelors' Degree, History and Political Science. In 2013, he graduated from the University of South Florida St. Petersburg with a Masters' Degree in Liberal Arts: Florida Studies.