Central Florida Commuter Rail Transit – Initial Operating Segment

Orlando, Florida

(November 2008)

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) is proposing to construct a new commuter rail system along the existing CSX "A" line Corridor from Volusia County through Lake County and Seminole County, to Orange County and downtown Orlando. The Central Florida Commuter Rail Transit (CFCRT) project would operate entirely at-grade, sharing track with existing freight and Amtrak services. The project includes the purchase of 15 vehicles and construction of 12 stations and approximately 2,100 parking spaces. In the opening year, service would operate every 30 minutes in the peak period and every 120 minutes during the off-peak, with no weekend service. By the forecast year of 2030, service would operate every 15 minutes in the peak period and every 30 minutes during the off-peak, with service every 60 minutes in the evenings and weekends.

The CFCRT runs parallel to Interstate 4 (I-4) and US 17-92, the region's primary north-south travel routes and the location of much of the region's population and employment. I-4 is scheduled for reconstruction, and the proposed project is intended to serve as a congestion mitigation measure, as well as more broadly provide a high capacity transit alternative to north-south travel in the corridor.

Summary Description	
Proposed Project:	Commuter Rail 32 Miles 12 Stations
Total Capital Cost ($YOE):	$357.22 Million (includes $900,000 in finance charges)
Section 5309 New Starts Share ($YOE):	$178.61 Million (50.0%)
Annual Forecast Year Operating Cost:	$55.31 Million
Ridership Forecast (2030):	7,400 Average Weekday Boardings
	3,700 Daily New Riders
Opening Year Ridership Forecast (2012):	4,300 Average Weekday Boardings
FY 2010 Local Financial Commitment Rating:	**Medium**
FY 2010 Project Justification Rating:	**Medium**
FY 2010 Overall Project Rating:	**Medium**

The rating described herein is based on information submitted when the project was rated for entry into final design in 2008. The project encountered schedule delays due to an inability to execute the negotiated railroad agreements with CSX pending passage of liability legislation by the Florida State Legislature. In December 2009, the State Legislature passed the necessary legislation and the project is expected to now move forward.

Before an FFGA will be awarded, FDOT must provide documentation of fully executed and completed railroad and other third party agreements. FDOT must then update the project scope, design, cost, schedule, and operating plans to reflect any changes necessitated by the executed railroad agreements as well as the recent change in vehicle type from low-floor, FRA-compliant, Diesel Multiple Unit vehicles to traditional push-pull commuter rail vehicles. FDOT must also provide FTA with updated information to ensure that Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements continue to be addressed appropriately. Lastly, FDOT must update the financial plan to address the issues described in FTA's draft financial capacity assessment and maintain a sufficient New Starts rating.

Project Development History and Current Status

FDOT completed an alternatives analysis on a 61-mile corridor in May 2004. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the entire 61-mile corridor in May 2006, with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) signed by FTA in April 2007. A 54-mile, 15-station project Locally Preferred Alternative was approved into Preliminary Engineering (PE) in March 2007. A Supplemental EA was prepared to assess the potential impacts of several project scope changes and to include a general analysis of the environmental impacts of moving freight from the CSX "A" Line to the "S" Line. FTA approved and signed the Supplemental EA in May 2008, and an addendum to the FONSI was issued by FTA in July 2008. During PE, FDOT decided to pursue entry into final design for only the current 32-mile, 12 station project, which was approved into final design in August 2008.

Significant Changes Since FY 2010 Evaluation (November 2008)

The proposed vehicle type changed from low-floor, FRA-compliant, Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) vehicles to traditional push-pull commuter rail vehicles as a result of the selected vendor for the DMUs going out of business. In addition, the footprint of several stations locations changed slightly, necessitating supplemental environmental review.

Project Justification Rating: Medium

The project justification rating is based on the average of the ratings for cost effectiveness and transit-supportive land use. Per FTA's 2006 *Final Guidance on New Starts Policies and Procedures*, once a project has been approved into final design, the project is not subject to any changes in New Starts policy, guidance, and procedures. Thus, the revised weighting of the project justification criteria that took effect in July 2009 does not apply to this project.

Cost Effectiveness Rating: Medium-Low

The cost effectiveness rating reflects the level of travel-time benefits (5,100 hours each weekday) relative to the project's annualized capital and operating costs based on a comparison to a baseline alternative. Due to the unique nature of the project, its travel forecast carries significant uncertainty.

Cost Effectiveness	
	New Start vs. Baseline
Cost per Hour of Transportation System User Benefit	$29.88*
Incremental Cost per Incremental Trip	$35.74

* Indicates that measure is a component of Cost Effectiveness rating.

Transit-Supportive Land Use Rating: Medium

The rating is based upon the average of the ratings assigned to the subfactors below, each of which contribute one-third to the land use rating.

Existing Land Use: Medium-Low

- Population density within ½-mile of the station areas is approximately 2,130 persons per square mile. The project has approximately 78,700 jobs within ½-mile of the proposed stations. The project provides direct service to the central business district (CBD), which contains approximately 729,700 jobs.
- The stations in the City of Orlando and Winter Park can be considered destination stations, with significant levels of development within walking distance and a pedestrian-friendly character.

Development levels within walking distance of the remaining suburban stations are low and land use is highly auto-oriented.

- Parking supplies in the corridor are high, even at stations within the City of Orlando, although parking rates at garages in downtown are high.

Transit-Supportive Plans and Policies: Medium

- The State of Florida Growth Management Act (SB 360) establishes growth management laws to ensure critical transportation infrastructure and services are in place to accommodate future urban growth and redevelopment. The act promotes regional planning through an incentive program and provides funding for transportation investments that support growth management.
- The City of Orlando's downtown redevelopment plan coordinates transportation and other public infrastructure improvements with private development, embodies "new urbanism" as a guiding principle, and emphasizes mixed land use, pedestrian connectivity, strong neighborhoods, and transit. The only other community along the corridor that has a specific development plan for the station area is Lake Mary, where a master plan has been developed for a small suburban town center. The comprehensive plans for several other corridor communities identify sections of the station areas for development at higher densities, with a varying degree of transit-supportive characteristics.
- Zoning in the downtown Orlando and Winter Park station areas requires higher development densities and transit-supportive character, including mixed uses and pedestrian-friendly design. Several other municipalities in the corridor have zoning provisions allowing reduced parking in activity centers or areas with high levels of transit service.
- Many efforts have been made to reach out to stakeholders. The project sponsor has coordinated station planning and design with major property and facility owners in station areas, including hospitals and utility companies.

Performance and Impacts of Policies: Medium

- Major redevelopment is occurring in downtown Orlando. Although they are subject to the policies incorporated in the downtown revitalization plan, many of the projects and proposals include substantial new parking supplies and thus are not strongly transit-supportive.
- Transit-supportive development at stations beyond Orlando and Winter Park has been minimal.

Mobility Improvements Rating: Medium-Low	
	New Start vs. Baseline
Transportation System User Benefits Per Passenger Mile (Minutes)	3.5
Number of Transit Dependents Using the Project	1,400
Transit Dependent User Benefits per Passenger Mile (Minutes)	2.9
Environmental Benefits Rating: Medium	
Criteria Pollutant Status	**EPA Designation** Maintenance or Attainment for all Pollutants

Local Financial Commitment Rating: Medium

The local financial commitment rating is based on the weighted average of the ratings assigned to each of the following criteria: the New Starts share of project costs is weighted 20 percent; the strength of the capital finance plan is weighted 50 percent; and the strength of the operating finance plan is weighted 30 percent.

Section 5309 New Starts Share of Total Project Costs: 50.0%
Rating: Medium

Locally Proposed Financial Plan		
Source of Funds	**Total Funds ($million)**	**Percent of Total**
Federal:		
Section 5309 New Starts	$178.61	50.0%
State:		
Florida New Starts Transit Program	$89.31	25.0%
Local:		
Volusia County	$6.60	1.8%
Seminole County	$45.56	12.8%
City of Orlando	$13.47	3.8%
Orange County	$23.68	6.6%
Total:	**$357.22**	100.0%

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

Capital Finance Plan Rating: Medium

The capital finance plan rating is based upon the weighted average of the ratings assigned to each of the subfactors listed below. The agency capital condition is weighted 25 percent, the commitment of capital funds is weighted 25 percent, and the capital cost estimate, planning assumptions and capital funding capacity subfactor is weighted 50 percent.

Agency Capital Condition: Medium-High

- FDOT does not have a bus fleet.
- FDOT's General Obligation bonds are rated as follows: Standard & Poor's Corporation A+, Moody's Investor Service Aa, and Fitch AA-.

Commitment of Capital Funds: High

- All of the non-New Starts funding is committed or budgeted. The non-New Starts share will be covered by state transportation trust funds and funds from Volusia, Seminole, and Orange counties and the City of Orlando.

Capital Cost Estimate, Planning Assumptions, and Financial Capacity: Medium-Low

- Assumptions in the capital plan are reasonable.
- The current project cost estimate is considered reasonable at this stage of development.
- There is no plan for cost increases greater than five percent of project cost.

Operating Finance Plan Rating: Medium

The operating finance plan rating is based upon the weighted average of the ratings assigned to each of the subfactors listed below. The agency operating condition is weighted 25 percent, the commitment of operating funds is weighted 25 percent, and the operating cost estimates, planning assumptions and operating funding capacity subfactor is weighted 50 percent.

Agency Operating Condition: High

- The current ratio of assets to liabilities as reported for the State Government Transportation Fund in its most recent audited financial statement is 2.7.

Commitment of Operating Funds: Medium-High

- The majority of operating funding is committed. For the initial seven years of operation, FDOT will fund all operating subsidies through its Strategic Intermodal System program using revenues from the State Transportation Trust Fund. Thereafter, operating subsidies will be provided by Volusia, Seminole, and Orange counties and the City of Orlando.

Operating Cost Estimates, Planning Assumptions, and Financial Capacity: Medium-Low

- Operating and maintenance costs have been lowered from those assumed last year and appear optimistic compared to other commuter rail systems around the country.
- Inflation assumptions are reasonable compared to historic trends.
- The financial plan shows a balanced budget throughout the 20-year plan.

Map