

Commuter Rail Serving Central Florida

July— 2010



Orange
Blossom
EXPRESS

WHAT IS THE ORANGE BLOSSOM EXPRESS?

The Orange Blossom Express is a proposed 36 mile commuter rail project that extends from the City of Eustis in Lake County to Downtown Orlando. The Orange Blossom Express would provide a significant new transportation choice for the region, support economic development at proposed station areas and provide an alternative to the already congested roadway corridors for commuters traveling to downtown Orlando for jobs. At the same time, the tracks would continue to provide freight service to the region.

WHY IS THE ORANGE BLOSSOM EXPRESS NEEDED?

Provide Transportation Choices and More Livable Development Patterns - Creating more transportation choices is a long-term community sustainability strategy. In addition to taking car trips off the road and helping to reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, providing premium transit service in the region can further other community goals to promote walking, biking and more compact development patterns. Anyone who has driven on the parallel US 441 corridor during rush hour knows that we can't build our way out of congestion by adding more pavement alone. The Orange Blossom Express is an opportunity for a cost-effective alternative to adding new multimodal capacity to the existing transportation network.

Create Economic Development Opportunities - Every community of every size across the country is looking to attract new jobs, especially high paying jobs. There are many factors that go into corporate decision on where to locate or expand, including economic and quality of life factors. When companies evaluate an area, one factor is the quality and accessibility of transit service and rail transit is a major plus. Many businesses know rail transit will increase access to their customers and to their employees, and rail transit will provide their employees more housing options and livable communities where they can live.

WHERE WILL THE ORANGE BLOSSOM EXPRESS OPERATE?

- Along the existing Florida Central Railroad tracks that run along the US 441 corridor from Lake County to Orange County

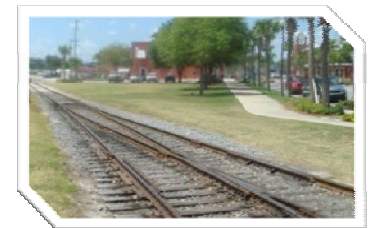


AT WHAT SPEEDS WILL THE ORANGE BLOSSOM EXPRESS TRAVEL?

- The trains will travel at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour

WHERE WILL TRAIN STATIONS BE LOCATED?

- Nine station locations have been proposed for consideration. Of those locations, key intermodal hubs are proposed for Tavares, Apopka and Orlando

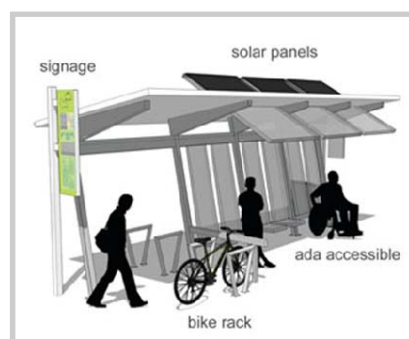


WHAT COMMUNITIES ARE ALONG THE CORRIDOR?

- Eustis, Tavares, Mt. Dora, and Lake Jem in Lake County and Zellwood, Lockhart, Apopka, Rosemont/Ben White, and Orlando in Orange County

WHEN WILL THE ORANGE BLOSSOM EXPRESS SERVICE BEGIN?

- Service could begin in three to five years



WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW?

We are:

- Informing the communities along the corridor and seeking input on the project
- Studying the feasibility of commuter rail
- Evaluating the costs and benefits of passenger rail service
- Coordinating with our Regional Partners
- Developing project funding alternatives
- Preparing a Scope of Services for an Alternatives Analysis

Orange Blossom EXPRESS

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Some of the major rail improvement costs usually associated with this type of project will be avoided because the tracks exist and are used daily by the Florida Central Railroad. However, some upgrades to the tracks will be required including continuous track welding in some locations, tie and surface improvements, and replacement of the Dora Canal Bridge. FDOT has set aside \$13.8 million for the freight rail upgrades and bridge replacement. The funding requires a 25% match from the local partners in the amount of \$4.6 million. The total project costs will be developed in the Alternatives Analysis.

WHO IS SUPPORTING THE PROJECT?

A broad range of local governments and elected officials have given their enthusiastic support. The Orange Blossom Express is included as a cost feasible project in the METRO-PLAN ORLANDO 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. It is currently considered a strong candidate to be included in the draft Lake~Sumter MPO cost feasible component of the LRTP (Transportation 2035). It is also included in Lake County, the City of Orlando and the City of Tavares Comprehensive Plans.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS?

- *Connects northern counties of the Central Florida Region to the SunRail and Florida High Speed Rail Network*
- *Provides an alternative route to US 441*
- *Cooperation from the railroad owner, Florida Central Railroad*
- *Existing tourist train operating in corridor*
- *Low risk project*
- *Can be implemented quickly*
- *Expanded markets for regional tourist attractions and special events*
- *Improved traffic flow and less congestion along US 441*



- *Decreased energy consumption*
- *Reduced air pollutant emissions and improved air quality*
- *Fewer environmental impacts on sensitive habitats and water resources*
- *Foster the growth of new businesses and encourage relocation of existing businesses to the Central Florida Region*
- *Job creation, temporary and permanent*
- *Transit-oriented development near stations*
- *Improved quality of life*

WHAT WILL THE FARE BE TO RIDE THE ORANGE BLOSSOM EXPRESS?

The fare has not been determined at this time. The fare will be proposed once operating costs are determined in the Alternatives Analysis. It is anticipated that the fares would be consistent with the fares used on the SunRail project and that the same fare media would be used to enhance network efficiencies.

Next Steps:

- *Engage project partners*
- *Develop a **creative and customized** approach to fund and conduct an Alternatives Analysis*
- *Identify sources to fund the project*
- *Work with **communities** on station area planning*



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