



# Transportation Voice

*Increasing the use of our rail corridors to move people and freight*

Fall 2009

## A FLOWER THAT TRANSFORMED A CITY

Who would have thought 113 years of passenger railroad in Miami began with an orange blossom flower. Julia Tuttle, a local citrus grower also known as the “Mother of Miami”, had a vision for Miami, which was known then as Biscayne Bay Country. After several attempts by Ms. Tuttle to convince Henry Flagler to extend his railroad from West Palm Beach to Miami, she sent him an orange blossom flower during the State’s ‘big freeze’, which represented how productive the crops were in Miami. The plan worked with a contract agreed upon by Henry Flagler, Julia Tuttle, and William Brickell that stated Mr. Flagler would build the Florida East Coast (FEC) railroad and Ms. Tuttle and Mr. Brickell would provide the land. The first train arriving on April 13, 1896 with Mr. Flagler on board.

Competition for the FEC arrived in 1925 via the Seaboard Line. By 1931, just 18 years after Flagler’s death, the FEC railroad declared bankruptcy, but continued with scaled back services until 1963. Inter-city rail passenger service continued reaching its heights in the 1940’s with numerous routes connecting Miami to the Midwest and Northeast regions. These services continued until 1971

when AMTRAK assumed control leaving the Silver Star as the lone remaining route.

Meanwhile, as the city transformed, a streetcar system was constructed by the 1920’s with services stretching from Coral Gables to Miami on to Miami Beach. The streetcar era would be short-lived with all lines ceasing operations by the 1940’s. Finally, a new era of modern passenger rail began when the Metrorail system opened in 1984 much of it running along the former FEC railway corridor. Tri-Rail soon followed in 1989 introducing regional commuter rail services in South Florida.

An idea that started in 1895 with a flower, helped create transportation services, highways, hotels, schools, and hospitals. A city known as “Biscayne Bay Country” became the “Magic City”. The journey began long ago, but Miami-Dade is working on our Founders’ dream of a successful passenger rail system in South Florida. Today, there are various studies reviewing the best way to utilize existing rail corridors to provide passenger rail service.

Miami-Dade County has come a long way and it is important to learn from our past to understand the potential of rail service and how this mode can be an important piece in addressing our transportation needs.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- ☛ In 1513, Juan Ponce de León was the first European man to see the Miami area by sailing into Biscayne Bay. He wrote in his journal that he reached Chequescha, which was Miami’s first recorded name.
- ☛ In the early 1900s a construction team of 4,000 people built the FEC to Key West. During that time they were hit by 5 hurricanes.
- ☛ To develop the area surrounding the Miami Railroad Station, Flagler dredged a channel, built streets, instituted the first water and power systems, and financed the town’s first newspaper, the ‘Metropolis’.
- ☛ In 1896 citizens wanted to honor the man responsible for the city’s development by naming it, “Flagler.” He declined the honor, persuading them to keep the city’s old Indian name, “Miami.”
- ☛ The US-1 18-mile stretch from Florida City to Key Largo is on the site of the former FEC rail corridor.



The Past:  
The FEC Miami Railroad Station



The Present:  
Government Center Metrorail Station

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## SOUTH FLORIDA EAST COAST CORRIDOR

The South Florida East Coast Corridor (SFECC) Transit Analysis Study is developing a master plan for integrating passenger and freight transport in the existing FEC Railway corridor. The study includes Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, extending from downtown Miami to the Town of Jupiter. Study partners include the three MPO's, three county transit agencies, Tri-Rail, and the Florida DOT.

Travel along the eastern portions of the three counties has become increasingly difficult as development and resultant traffic continue to increase. The need for freight transport along the existing railways into the area's airports and seaports has also increased. Therefore, a regional solution is being sought to relieve roadway congestion while providing for necessary freight movement to and from Southeast Florida.

Service in the corridor would provide connectivity to existing and proposed transit, the three international airports, the three seaports, as well as numerous hospitals, 28 city centers, universities and other employment opportunities. Alternatives being considered include bus rapid transit (BRT), Metrorail, commuter rail, and light rail transit.

The study is seeking to assure that the increasing flow of freight to and from the seaports and airports adjacent to the FEC railway is not affected if those tracks are shared with passenger rail service. Such sharing has been achieved successfully in many other areas of the country.

Public workshops to receive comments are being held during 2009, with the study completion expected in Spring 2010. To learn more about this study visit [www.sfeccstudy.com](http://www.sfeccstudy.com).

## THE LUDLAM TRAIL

The existing Florida East Coast (FEC) corridor from the Dadeland North Metrorail Station to NW 12th Street near Miami International Airport (see map) is being studied as the future "Ludlam Trail."

The southerly five miles of the rail corridor has been abandoned and the tracks removed from SW 12th Street to the Metrorail station. The northern 1 ½ miles of the corridor remain in limited industrial use and are being evaluated as part of a rail-with-trail system. In most areas, the corridor measures 100-feet in width.

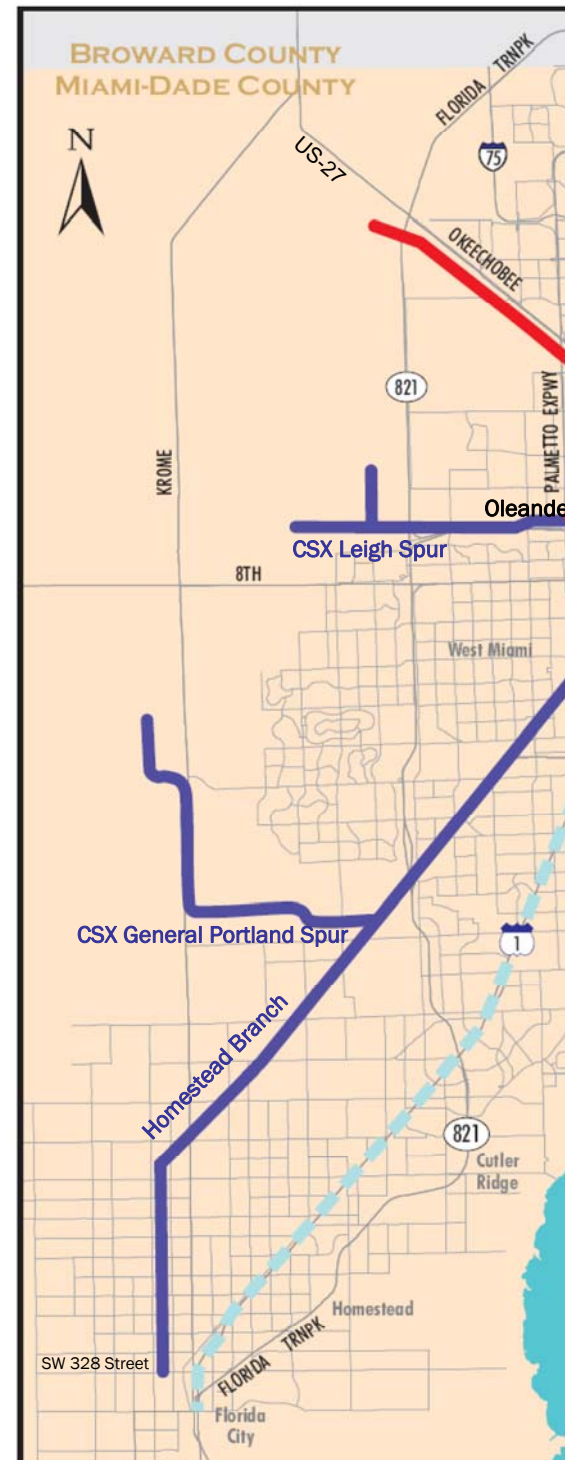
The corridor links more than 34,000 people within a ½ mile walkable service area, of which almost 18 percent are under the age of 18 and almost 20 percent are over 65.

It also links to:

- Five east-west greenways including the M-Path, which runs from Florida City to downtown Miami.
- Five public schools including South Miami Elementary, Middle, and High Schools.
- Four local or county parks including A.D. "Doug" Barnes and Robert King High Parks.
- Two transit hubs including the Dadeland North Metrorail Station.
- Three employment centers including the Dadeland Mall area.

Trail connectivity will expand travelers' choice of transportation modes, reduce air pollution, roadway congestion, and dependency on automobiles.

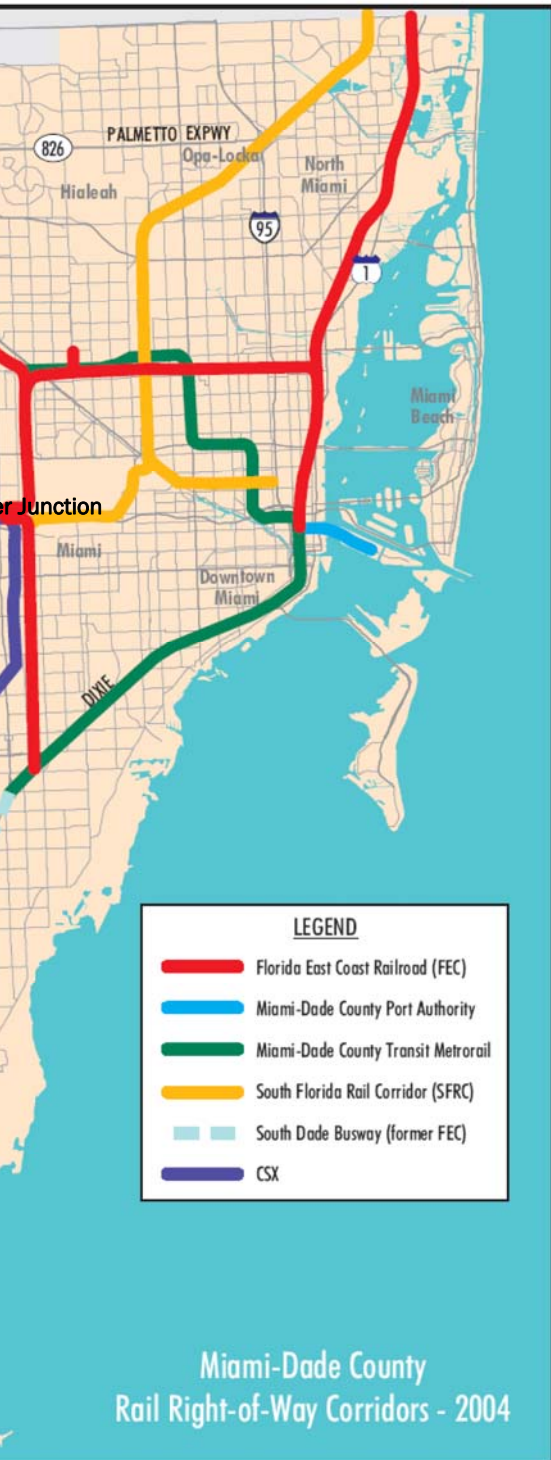
To learn about the Trail's progress visit [www.ludlamtrail.com](http://www.ludlamtrail.com).



### FLORIDA'S HI

Imagine riding a train reaching top speeds of 180 mph. It has been dusted off in an attempt to obtain funding for 2009. The FDOT is proposing to construct a HSR line. If funding is obtained, the Tampa-Orlando segment is expected to be completed by 2017. Current rail corridors in Miami-Dade County

# CSX CORRIDOR ANALYSIS STUDY



## HIGH SPEED RAIL

Plans for high speed rail (HSR) in Florida have come from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. A system along the Tampa-Orlando-Miami corridor. If built, it could be running by 2014 and Miami-Orlando in the future. Other potential routings into town for the HSR.

The CSX Corridor Evaluation Study is a supplementary analysis to the Kendall Link Study completed in 2007. The Kendall Link Study provided various recommendations including a proposed diesel light rail transit line along a portion of the CSX line in the Kendall area that would operate jointly on the same freight service tracks. The MPO Governing Board did not adopt the study recommendations, but rather directed staff to further analyze alternative transit options along the CSX corridor.

A primary issue facing the CSX Corridor Study is how to contend with the current freight service along the CSX rail line. To solve this issue, a new freight rail corridor link was proposed be-

tween the CSX General Portland Spur and the CSX Leigh Spur (see map) as a bypass for the Kendall area. With freight service possibly redirected to the west, the study team examined various bus rapid transit (BRT) concepts with recreational facilities.

The study team held two public meetings to provide information and gather input on the study's concepts. They also received input from a multi-agency Study Advisory Committee comprised of stakeholder agencies.

The results of the study will assist in the development of a rapid transit strategy for the greater Kendall area of Miami-Dade County. The final report is available on the MPO web site at [www.miamidadegov/mpo](http://www.miamidadegov/mpo).

## US-27 NEW RAIL STUDY

During the 2008 legislative session, Florida's leaders required FDOT to conduct a feasibility study for a new rail corridor along the US-27 corridor from Hialeah north to South Bay, providing a more direct rail connection between South Florida and the Lake Okeechobee area rail network.

This connection is seen as a key component to the transportation connectivity of an inland port, providing more direct connections to Miami's rail yards. In addition, the creation of this new rail corridor has the potential to reduce existing rail/highway conflicts along the existing FEC and CSX lines in South Florida by shifting freight traffic to a more rural area.

Phase I of the study will represent an overall evaluation and preliminary identification of alternatives and assess "feasibility" based on a fatal flaw analysis. Phase II will refine the evaluation

of the alternatives through a preliminary engineering analysis.

In Miami-Dade County there are three potential connections to the existing rail system:

1. Connection to the existing FEC Railway spur terminating northwest of the interchange of the Florida Turnpike at US-27/Okeechobee Road.
2. Connection to the existing CSX railroad spur north of North Kendall Drive and west of Krome Avenue.
3. Connection to the CSX spur north of Tamiami Trail and west of SR-836/Dolphin Expressway via an east-west connection to the new north-south corridor along Krome Avenue.

These connections are being evaluated independently and as one combined network.

Reports will be made available for each of the two phases upon their completion.

# CALENDAR OF MIAMI-DADE MPO MONTHLY MEETINGS

	SEPTEMBER 2009	OCTOBER 2009	NOVEMBER 2009
MPO	9/24	10/29	11/19
TPC	9/14	10/05	11/09
TPTAC	9/02	10/14	11/04
CTAC	9/23	10/21	11/18
BPAC	9/23	10/21	11/18
TARC	9/02	10/07	11/04
FTAC	TBA	TBA	TBA
LCB	9/15	No Meeting	No Meeting

- MPO** Metropolitan Planning Organization
- TPC** Transportation Planning Council
- TPTAC** Transportation Planning Technical Advisory Committee
- CTAC** Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee
- BPAC** Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- TARC** Transportation Aesthetics Review Committee
- FTAC** Freight Transportation Advisory Committee
- LCB** Local Coordinating Board for the Transportation Disadvantaged

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