

APPENDIX B

Review Agency Comments to Date



An Equal Opportunity Employer

Southwest Florida Water Management District

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Bartow, Florida 33830-7700
(863) 534-1448 or
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Sarasota Service Office
6750 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, Florida 34240-9711
(941) 377-3722 or
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Lecanto Service Office
3600 West Sovereign Path
Suite 226
Lecanto, Florida 34461-8070
(352) 527-8131
SUNCOM 667-3271

September 27, 2002

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Assistant Executive Director

William S. Bilenky
General Counsel

Ms. Sharon M. Phillips, Deputy Project Manager
Florida High Speed Rail Authority
PBS&J, Inc.
5300 West Cypress Street, Suite 300
Tampa, FL 33607

Subject: **Florida High Speed Rail**
Screening Report Comments

Dear Ms. Phillips:

On September 13, 2002, the District received your request for our review comments to the *Florida High Speed Rail Screening Report September 2002* (Screening Report). Since the Screening Report primarily documents only the initial stage of analysis for the five corridor alternatives between the Tampa Central Business District and the Orlando International Airport for the Florida High Speed Rail Project, the District's review comments are general in nature.

The District's Governing Board has adopted permitting requirements designed to conserve water resources, preserve water quality, protect wetlands and reduce flooding. In accordance with these permitting requirements, the construction of the Florida High Speed Rail will require an Environmental Resource Permit (ERP). A few of the more important ERP permitting issues for this project will include addressing District rule requirements for the following:

- Water Quantity (flood protection)
- Water Quality (treatment of surface water runoff)
- 100-year flood plain (encroachment and compensation)
- Environmental (wetlands, threatened and endangered species, etc.)

While the District has and will continue to provide salient input relative to the above items, please note that, in accordance with the District's operating agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the FDEP is the agency to review and take final action on ERP permit applications for high speed rail facilities. Per our brief discussion of September 26, 2002, you may wish to lift this up as a discussion item at your next meeting in order to clearly define the evaluation/permitting responsibilities of the various agencies.

Also, it should be noted that during the permitting of the Interstate 4 (I-4) expansions within Polk County, the District informed the Florida Department of Transportation that components of the surface water management system (i.e., flood plain compensation, water quantity/quality ponds, etc.) located within the median of I-4 would be potentially impacted by the Florida High Speed Rail project. Consequently, it is expected that future Florida High Speed Rail permit applications will address any permit modifications that will be required to existing permitted facilities, such as the I-4 expansion.

Ms. Sharon M. Phillips, Deputy Project Manager
Florida High Speed Rail Authority
PBS&J, Inc.
September 27, 2002
Page Two

Finally, the District highly recommends that a pre-application meeting(s) be conducted prior to submittal of all ERP Applications for the Florida High Speed Rail Project. These meetings will be essential to the expeditious permitting of this project.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me or Robert Dasta, P.E., in the Bartow Service Office.

Sincerely,



William A. Hartmann, P.E.
Surface Water Regulation Manager
Bartow Regulation Department

WAH/RAD/po114

cc: B. Starford
A. Mas
M. Hopkins
D. Carpenter
H. Higgenbotham
J. Burke
R. Dasta
M. Hurst

Phillips, Sharon M

From: James Golden [jgolden@sfwmd.gov]
Sent: Thursday, September 26, 2002 11:26 AM
To: sphillips@pbsj.com
Cc: Terrie Bates; Robert Robbins; Tony Waterhouse; Ed Yaun; Marc Ady; Thomas Genovese; Fred Davis; William Helfferich; David.Layne@DEP.State.FL.US; Keith Smith; George Ogden; Michael Green
Subject: High Speed Rail Screening Report



Card for James
Golden

South Florida Water Management (SFWMD) staff has completed its review of Screening Report which evaluates potential high speed rail corridors between Tampa and Orlando. Our findings/comments are as follows:

- (1) Within SFWMD boundaries, the corridors still under consideration primarily occupy/parallel existing rights-of-way, including I-4, the CSX railroad, the Bee Line Highway, and the Central Florida Greenway.
- (2) Under the Operating Agreement between DEP and the SFWMD, DEP will be conducting the Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) review of this project. Consequently, the SFWMD's review will focus on potential impacts to District lands/works and water use permitting issues.
- (3) Since the Screening Report does not include an evaluation of potential water resource-related/environmental impacts, staff cannot provide you with a detailed analysis at this time. The only potential issue that staff has identified at this time concerns the crossing of Shingle Creek at the Bee Line Highway and the Central Florida Greenway. It appears that SFWMD-owned Save Our Rivers (SOR) lands may be impacted by the proposed crossings. The SFWMD's land manager for the Shingle Creek SOR project is Mike Green. He is based in the SFWMD's Orlando Service Center and can be reached at (407) 858-6100.
- (4) The information that will be provided in the future Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for this project should provide the basis for SFWMD staff to conduct a detailed analysis of the proposed alternatives and related water resource-related issues/impacts.

If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (561) 682-6862.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
TAMPA REGULATORY OFFICE
P.O. BOX 19247
TAMPA, FLORIDA 33686-9247

September 24, 2002

Regulatory Division
West Permits Branch
Tampa Regulatory Office

Sharon M. Phillips
PBS&J
5300 West Cypress Street, Suite 300
Tampa, FL 33607

Dear Ms. Phillips:

Reference is made to the Florida High Speed Rail Authority (FHSRA) Screening Report, dated September 2002. This report describes the initial stage corridor analysis for the high speed rail alignments being considered by the FHSRA.

There are many issues that the Department of the Army (DA) considers when reviewing an application for works in wetlands and waters of the United States, such as avoidance and minimization of wetland impacts, federally listed plant and animal species, historical and archaeological resources. Based on the submitted report, the FHSRA alignment review is considering these issues. The DA has no specific comments on any of the alignments, retained or eliminated, at this time.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact John Fellows in the Tampa Regulatory Office at 813/840-2908, ex. 230.

Sincerely,

Charles A Schnepel
for Ronald H. Silver, C.E.P.
Chief, West Permits Branch



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

ORLANDO AIRPORTS DISTRICT OFFICE
5950 Hazeltine National Dr., Suite 400
Orlando, Florida 32822-5024
Phone: (407) 812-6331 Fax: (407) 812-6978

September 17, 2002

Ms. Sharon M. Phillips
PBS&J
5300 West Cypress St., Suite 300
Tampa, FL 33607

Dear Ms. Phillips:

Re: Florida High Speed Rail Authority
Screening Report

Thank you for the opportunity to review the information contained in the Screening Report dated September, 2002, for the above referenced project. We have no comments at this time. However, you should review the reporting requirements contained in Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Part 77, as to whether an FAA Form 7460-1 may need to be submitted depending on the proximity of the project relative to any public use airports.

The FAA would primarily be concerned with structure elevations and associated high-mast lighting in the vicinity of an airport, as well as water retention/detention facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bud Jackman".

Bud Jackman
Program Manager



St. Johns River Water Management District

Kirby B. Green III, Executive Director • John R. Wehle, Assistant Executive Director
David Dewey, Altamonte Springs Service Center Director

975 Keller Road • Altamonte Springs, FL 32714-1618 • (407) 659-4800

September 27, 2002

Ms. Sharon M. Phillips
PBS&J
5300 West Cypress Street, Suite 300
Tampa, Florida 33607

Re: Florida High Speed Rail Authority Screening Report

Dear Ms. Phillips:

The staff of the St. Johns River Water Management District have reviewed the document referenced above. Listed below are our comments.

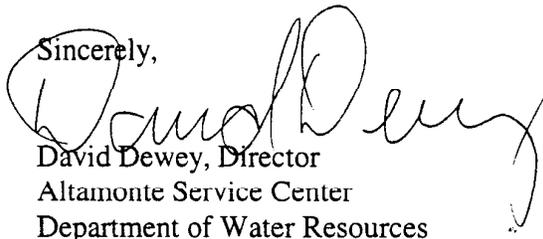
-Based upon the information submitted, it appears that only a portion of Corridor D is within the boundaries of this agency.

-An Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) is required as stated within Chapter 40C-4, F.A.C. In accordance with the Operating Agreement Concerning Regulation Under Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S., Between St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) And Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), the FDEP will be the reviewing any application for an ERP.

-A Consumptive Use of Water Permit (CUP) will be required, from the District, for any dewatering activities that meet the permitting thresholds contained within Chapter 40C-2, F.A.C. SJRWMD will be the reviewing agency for any activity that requires a CUP.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the submitted document. If you have any questions, please contact me at (407) 659-4821.

Sincerely,



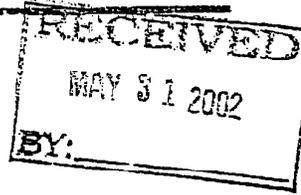
David Dewey, Director
Altamonte Service Center
Department of Water Resources

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CITY OF ORLANDO



May 29, 2002

Mr. Nazih Haddad, Staff Director
Florida High Speed Rail Authority
605 Suwanee Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

Dear Mr. Haddad:

RE: Advance Notification for Florida High Speed Rail (HSR) PD&E Study
FPID: 411253 1
Hillsborough, Polk, Osceola and Orange Counties, Florida

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Advance Notification Fact Sheet for the Florida High Speed Rail PD&E Study. As you know the City of Orlando strongly supports balanced transportation systems and rail initiatives as an integral part of our transportation solutions for the 21st century. I continue to be surprised however that the High Speed Rail studies propose a connection directly to Orlando International Airport but will not connect to Downtown Orlando. Urban areas throughout the United States are copying successful world-class cities by locating major transportation hubs in their central cities. The lessons learned over the past century are the same: central city intermodal facilities fulfill aspirations for quality of life in vibrant downtowns, provide increased capacity in constrained transportation corridors, and support alternative transportation solutions for commuters and business trips as well as tourist travel. High speed rail connecting to Downtown Orlando is logical, since the planned intermodal terminal and light rail transit will complement the existing LYNX bus transit terminal, AMTRAK's Downtown Orlando rail service, and access to Interstate 4.

Based on the information contained in the fact sheet, the City of Orlando offers the following comments:

1) **Need for Project**

The fact sheet states that HSR was developed to address concerns over increasing auto congestion on Interstate 4; lack of convenient alternatives for commuter, business and tourist markets; and pressure to develop increased capacity in a constrained transportation corridor. Moreover the metropolitan, tourist attraction and port connections foreseen by the communities along the corridor suggest a strong support for an alternative transportation solution based on the following needs: commuter travel, business travel, tourist travel and freight movement.

The commuter and business travel demand in the Interstate 4 corridor through Downtown Orlando reinforces the need for this project to connect directly to Downtown Orlando. Downtown Orlando and the employment centers along I-4 are characterized by the highest intensities of development found anywhere in the Central Florida region. As a result, the I-4 corridor strains to accommodate commuter travel to and from these employment centers daily. Planning for great cities of the world has always included downtown rail stations to serve dense population and employment centers. Similarly, key elements of the Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service Vision Plan (FIPRSVP) include the connection of Florida's major urban centers and improved service in existing rail corridors.

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Meeting freight movement needs through high speed rail presents a formidable challenge. The freight movement needs in Central Florida are met largely by the highway system with 80% of freight, goods and services shipped by truck. Previous rail studies and the recently adopted Freight, Goods and Services Mobility Strategy Plan of METROPLAN ORLANDO assume continued primary use of trucks for shipping. The network distribution requirements for freight combined with the payload limitations of some high speed rail technologies make dependence on HSR unlikely to meet primary freight movement needs in Central Florida.

The study's focus appears to weigh the needs of tourists over the needs of Central Floridians. As the Plant City, Lakeland, Celebration and Orlando portions of the I-4 Corridor become fully developed, the need for alternatives to I-4 will become even more critical.

Consideration of a tiered rail system for our region may be an acceptable solution if planned concurrently with light rail for the region, high-speed service for intercity rail, and existing short line freight carriers for local distribution to truck transfer centers. The tiers need to be supportive and connected to optimize their use and strive for seamless rail transportation in Central Florida.

2) Description of the Project

The project is described as an evaluation of the existing corridor alternatives of Interstate 4 and the CSX railroad alignment from Tampa to Orlando. The study will investigate two possible alternative high-speed corridor alignments including an evaluation of technology, engineering and environmental costs and other factors affecting selection of the corridor. Following development of alternative conceptual corridor alignments, an analysis of the socioeconomic, natural and physical environmental impacts within proposed corridors will be completed.

When Florida voters approved a new amendment to the Florida Constitution on November 7, 2000, they directed the State Legislature to link the five largest urban areas of the State and provide for access to existing air and ground transportation facilities and services. As I understand the current study, it does not consider a linkage to existing air transportation facilities in Tampa nor does it adequately connect to existing ground transportation facilities in Orlando. The study approach may result in legal challenges if the intent of Florida voters is not honored. In Orlando we fully understand the importance of a HSR connection to the Orlando International Airport but we believe the failure to link HSR to the Orlando urban core fails to respect the voice of Florida voters, and does not include in its purpose the reduction of traffic congestion in the primary inter-city corridor, Interstate 4. I strongly support alternative transportation modes as relievers to Florida's Intrastate Highway System. The Study's approach unfortunately will compound already unacceptable level of service conditions on many of Central Florida roadways if an Orlando terminal is not easily accessible to business travelers.

This oversight ignores the activity centers along Interstate 4 and the dense growth that supports alternative transit modes instead of the single occupant vehicle. I encourage your project team to re-evaluate the recommended study strategies with increased sensitivity to existing land use and development intensities.

I believe the study is inconsistent with the FIPRSVP because it does not provide a connection to AMTRAK and recommends a separate travel system. The study approach does not adequately address Amtrak's Network Growth Strategy for Florida or the goals of the Florida Transportation Plan (FTP).

The FTP advances the transportation goals and objectives of the citizens of Florida, including direct rail connections to urban centers. The HSR study would require the Rail Vision Plan be amended to support transportation concepts and investments inconsistent with the adopted FTP. The project team should

Page 3

evaluate the AMTRAK Network Growth Strategy reflected in the Rail Service Vision Plan, including enhanced service to the Downtown Orlando Amtrak Station via CSX. FDOT and the Legislature should consider AMTRAK initiatives to utilize tilt-train technology in Florida. In combination with selected upgrades to tracks, signals, crossings, and safety systems, trains with existing technology can cost-effectively use the CSX alignment, operate at speeds comparable to the Coast to Coast Rail preferred alternative, avoid significant investment in other corridors, and help achieve the goals of the Rail Service Vision Plan.

The two selected alternative high-speed corridor alignments end service before reaching Orlando's urban center. This inconsistency with FDOT's adopted vision for statewide rail initiatives fails to consider the importance of system and intermodal connectivity. For consistency with the Rail Service Vision Plan, I recommend your project team evaluate a direct connection to the Downtown Orlando Amtrak Station via CSX.

I believe the standard project approach for project development and environmental studies should be supplemented by other analyses that will help evaluate significant impacts not measured by traditional approaches to corridor projects. For instance, the study should evaluate the impact on vehicle miles of travel, since the selection of a corridor away from the highest density population and employment centers of Central Florida may result in increased vehicle miles of travel for automobile or bus access to proposed rail terminals.

Another essential comparison is the variation in ridership where seamless connecting systems are not provided. It's difficult to believe that inter-city rail passengers would be willing to change modes to bus, taxi or rental car instead of a direct connection to intra-city rail, yet the HSR station location at Orlando International Airport will limit HSR users to more costly, time-consuming, and inconvenient transportation choices.

3) Environmental Information

The project is described according to the environmental information areas required of the NEPA process. A detailed multi-phase Public Involvement Program is planned to commence with the onset of data collection and will continue throughout the development of the project.

Public Involvement Program: The City of Orlando encourages you to hold public meetings in the urban core of the City as well as the southwestern locations where meetings in May 2002 were conducted.

Cultural Resources Survey: The City of Orlando respectfully requests the opportunity to review the Cultural Resources Assessment Summary.

Noise: The City strives to develop and maintain a high quality of life for its residents. Please contact the City of Orlando Transportation Planning Bureau staff prior to neighborhood contacts so that we may be informed and involved in the communication of any environmental impacts, including noise.

Summary:

I recommend you take the following actions steps to be more consistent with the Florida Transportation Plan, the Amtrak Network Growth Strategy, and the Florida Intercity Passenger Rail Service Vision Plan:

1. Re-evaluate the recommended study strategies with increased sensitivity to existing land use and development intensities.
2. Evaluate a direct connection to the Downtown Orlando Amtrak Station via CSX.

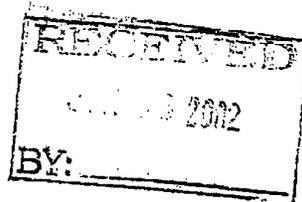


DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

May 28, 2002



Mr. Nazih Haddad, Staff Director
Florida High Speed Rail Authority
605 Suwanee Street, MS 67
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0450

Dear Mr. Haddad:

Thank you for the advance notification package for the Florida High Speed Rail PD&E Study, Financial Project ID No. 4112531, Hillsborough, Polk, Osceola, and Orange Counties. We understand that the Authority will be planning, administering, and managing the preliminary engineering and preparation of the environmental assessment (EA) for the intrastate high-speed rail system. We understand that this Advance Notification was prepared to initiate the early review process as provided for by the Executive Order 95-359 and Presidential Executive Order 12372. We are responding on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), U.S. Public Health Service.

We do not have any specific comments to offer at this time. However, we do recommend that the topics listed below be considered and addressed if appropriate for this project. Mitigation plans which are protective of the environment and public health should be described in the EA wherever warranted. We believe that addressing these areas of public health concern will result in a final plan protective of human health to workers and also to nearby residents.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN:

I. Air Quality

- dust control measures during project construction, and potential releases of air toxins
- potential process air emissions after project completion
- compliance with air quality standards

II. Water Quality/Quantity

- special consideration to private and public potable water supply, including ground and surface water resources
- compliance with water quality and waste water treatment standards
- ground and surface water contamination (e.g. runoff and erosion control)
- body contact recreation

Page 3 - Mr. Nazih Haddad

While this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible impact topics, it provides a guide for typical areas of potential public health concern which may be applicable to this project. Any other health related topics which may be associated with the proposed project should also receive consideration when developing the EA.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please send a copy of this EA to the following address for our review and comment when it becomes available:

Paul Joe, DO, MPH
Medical Officer
National Center for Environmental Health
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
4770 Buford Highway, MS (F-16), NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3724

Sincerely,



Paul Joe, DO, MPH
Medical Officer
National Center for Environmental Health (F16)
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC)
Atlanta GA 30341-3724

March 28, 2002

Mr. David Valenstein
Environmental Program Manager
Federal Railroad Administration
1120 Vermont Avenue (Mail Stop 20)
Washington DC 20590

Dear Mr. Valenstein:

We understand from the Federal Register Notice 67 FR 14763 March 27, 2002 that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Florida High Speed Rail Authority, will prepare an EIS for a proposal being considered by the Authority to construct a high speed rail project between Orlando, and Tampa, Florida. We understand the 90 mile long project, which would allow trains to operate at speeds in excess of 120 miles per hour, would include acquisition of right of way and construction of guide way structures and track, stations, park and ride lots, storage and maintenance facilities, and other ancillary facilities. We are responding on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), U.S. Public Health Service.

We do not have any specific comments to offer at this time. However, we do recommend that the topics listed below be considered and addressed if appropriate for this project. Mitigation plans which are protective of the environment and public health should be described in the EIS wherever warranted. We believe that addressing these additional areas of public health concern will result in a final plan protective of human health to workers and also to nearby residents.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN:

I. Air Quality

- dust control measures during project construction, and potential releases of air toxins potential process air emissions after project completion
- compliance with air quality standards

II. Water Quality/Quantity

- special consideration to private and public potable water supply, including ground and surface water resources
- compliance with water quality and waste water treatment standards
- ground and surface water contamination (e.g. runoff and erosion control)
- body contact recreation

III. Wetlands and Flood Plains

- potential contamination of underlying aquifers
- construction within flood plains which may endanger human health
- contamination of the food chain

IV. Hazardous Materials/Wastes

- identification and characterization of hazardous/contaminated sites
- safety plans/procedures, including use of pesticides/herbicides; worker training
- spill prevention, containment, and countermeasures plan

V. Non-Hazardous Solid Waste/Other Materials

- any unusual effects associated with solid waste disposal should be considered

VI. Noise

- identify projected elevated noise levels and sensitive receptors (i.e. residential, schools, hospitals) and appropriate mitigation plans during and after construction

VII. Occupational Health and Safety

- compliance with appropriate criteria and guidelines to ensure worker safety and health

VIII. Land Use and Housing

- special consideration and appropriate mitigation for necessary relocation and other potential adverse impacts to residential areas, community cohesion, community services
- demographic special considerations (e.g. hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers, schools)
- consideration of beneficial and adverse long-term land use impacts, including the potential influx of people into the area as a result of a project and associated impacts
- potential impacts upon vector control should be considered

IX. Environmental Justice

- federal requirements emphasize the issue of environmental justice to ensure equitable environmental protection regardless of race, ethnicity, economic status or community, so that no segment of the population bears a disproportionate share of the consequences of environmental pollution attributable to a proposed project. (Executive Order 12898)

While this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible impact topics, it provides a guide for typical areas of potential public health concern which may be applicable to this project. Any other health related topics which may be associated with the proposed project should also receive consideration when developing the EIS.

Page 3 - Mr. David Valenstein

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Please send a copy of this EIS to the following address for our review and comment when it becomes available:

Paul Joe, DO, MPH
Medical Officer
National Center for Environmental Health
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
4770 Buford Highway, MS (F-16), NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30341-3724

Sincerely,



Paul Joe, DO, MPH
Medical Officer
National Center for Environmental Health (F16)
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention