

RightTrackFlorida

Weekly Newsletter Update – May 11, 2009

SunRail is Moving Forward

Working to Find a Way to Advance *SunRail*

Beginning last week, Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, Chairman of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission, Senator Lee Constantine, Florida Secretary of Transportation, Stephanie C. Kopelousos, and Congressman John Mica are all continuing to work together; to find a way to successfully advance *SunRail*. Joining them in this effort are Congresswoman Corrine Brown, District Secretary of Transportation, Noranne Downs, Speaker Designee and Representative Dean Cannon, and Senator Andy Gardiner, members of the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission, along with many other folks from "coast-to-coast" that are unwilling to give up on a better future; so they are all continuing to work together to find a way to successfully advance *SunRail*.

Here's What Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer Says

"As we have all seen, *SunRail* is much more than merely a commuter rail project. *SunRail* is the spark that created a new sense of common purpose, cooperation and partnership between Central Florida's governments, businesses and its civic and non-profit community. Our Central Florida community came together and said in one voice that rail transit is the most important transportation priority we have as a region."

"So, we cannot give up on *SunRail*. We are evaluating all possible opportunities and we hope to have some viable options and strategies ready to go in the very near future. Even though we have suffered a setback, I believe that the spirit of cooperation that made the *SunRail* effort possible in the first place will be a mechanism for other positive change and future successes. I look forward to a time when we will recall recent events, not with frustration, but with pride because we were unwilling to accept defeat for *SunRail* and our vision for a better, brighter future for Florida."

Congressman John Mica Says *SunRail* Should Move Forward

Congressman Mica is working with state and local leaders to explore all options for keeping *SunRail* moving forward. "In spite of the Florida legislature's failure to provide terms of liability for *SunRail*, the federal government has kept its commitment throughout the project." Congressman Mica is the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Republican Leader and in this role, received a personal confirmation of support from U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood.

"The Administration is fully committed to *SunRail*," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "I urge state and local leaders to work together to resolve any problems to move the project forward. Commuter Rail (*SunRail*) for Central Florida is important to the state and the nation."

President Barack Obama Says "Go *SunRail*"

Late last week, President Barack Obama recommended to Congress \$1.83 billion in funding for major transit projects that will create jobs and increase transportation options throughout the United States. More than \$600 million of those funds are being recommended for new projects including *SunRail*. A list of projects and their descriptions is available [here](#).

The spending plan, included in President Obama's Budget submitted to Congress, announces recommendations by the Federal Transit Administration to invest \$604.3 million in 10 new or expanding transit projects—[five projects](#) under the [New Starts Program](#), which provides federal funding for major capital construction projects; included in these five projects is *SunRail*.

Super Regional Leadership Conference Huge Success

Last week the Super Regional Leadership Conference, "hosted" by the [Central Florida Partnership](#) and the [Tampa Bay Partnership](#), was a huge success; with over 400 "folks" in attendance. Joining us were Civic, Business, and Government Leaders; who listened and learned from celebrated national experts in a variety of fields that encouraged us to better connect as a Super Region. By coming together, we are able to better learn how our two regions can better align our resources so that we can better tackle major issues, address the realities of the changing economic landscape, and emerge as stronger and more prosperous regions.

One of the segments of the Super Regional Leadership Conference included a panel of regional leaders who talked about "connectivity." Included on the panel were Carmen Dominguez, Co-Chair, Central Florida Transportation Corridors "Task Force"; Michael Weinberg, Co-Chair, Central Florida Transportation Corridors "Task Force"; Roy McCraw, Chair, Tampa Bay Transportation "Task Force"; Gow Fields, Commissioner, City of Lakeland; Pam Iorio, Mayor, City of Tampa; and Noranne Downs, District Secretary of Transportation. So you will know, everyone on the panel encouraged those in attendance to move forward with *SunRail*.

Where In the World Are We?

Another important gathering will happen this week, when the Board of Directors of [myregion.org](#) presents "Where in the World Are We?" This historic meeting, planned for Friday, May 15, 2009, will introduce our "first-ever" Progress Report for the Central Florida Region. It's an in-depth analysis of how the region has progressed during the last decade in the areas of Economic Leadership, Education, Environment, Quality of Life, Smart Quality Growth and Regional Resolves and Cooperation. The report also quantifies the progress being made on key regional indicators and compares it to other state, national and international comparable regions; examining the gaps where regional collaboration might exist and identifying the challenges that we must continue to address. This meeting will be another opportunity where Civic, Business, and Government Leaders are able to talk about the importance of developing a multi-modal regional transportation system; beginning with *SunRail*.

To Keep You Informed About Future Plans

To keep you properly informed; the [Central Florida Partnership](#) will continue to provide community updates regarding issues important to the Central Florida Region. We invite you to "bookmark" the web site for the [Central Florida Partnership](#) at [www.IdeasToResults.org](#) and "check back" frequently for "postings" and "current news."

More About the Central Florida Partnership

The *Central Florida Partnership* was created to anticipate the complexities of global markets, growth, and collaboration – and to respond with timely and appropriate action. The *Central Florida Partnership* is an essential place for leaders to convene, set priorities, and address our region's toughest challenges and identify our greatest opportunities. Serving business, civic and community leaders in Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole and Volusia Counties – the *Central Florida Partnership* is a business lead initiative where regional leaders come together to share regional conversations – moving "*Ideas to Results.*"

The *Central Florida Partnership* is America's Newest Regional Partnership – and is a platform where regional leaders can learn to better collaborate, cooperate and coordinate – resulting in improved communications throughout the Central Florida Region. The *Central Florida Partnership* is where positive ideas are advanced on behalf of our region – ideas that matter most to the millions of people who live, work, learn and play in Central Florida.