St. Augustine Multimodal Transportation Center

Feasibility Study

- Community
- Mobility
- Connectivity
- Tourism
- Economic Development
- Historic Preservation
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Few things are more immediately recognizable than great civic spaces such as a historic city hall or train station, which more often than not is the heart of a community’s visual identity. For visitors, encounters with such elegance and grandiosity inspire a combination of awe and envy, sending a message about community pride and legacy that more often than not is etched into the collective memories of those visitors. Communities across the country are developing new stations or restoring their old centers not only as a means to travel, but also as civic spaces and centers of economic exchange. Such principles embodied Henry Flagler’s vision for connecting Florida, and in particular St. Augustine to the rest of the nation.

While it has been nearly 50 years since the last passenger train stopped in St. Augustine, finding a way connecting the 6 million annual visitors to this Old World city, and providing a more sustainable transportation option for residents in the region continues to be major objectives for Northeast Florida. Over the past decade, there has also been much deliberation about how and where rail transit could be accommodated once again within a multimodal center. Despite the fact that Amtrak has identified FEC as one of the most promising corridors for expansion—with ridership and economic impact projections providing strong evidence of the potential success of such service for the area and the state of Florida—there is still some disagreement on what types of service and how and where they could provide the most benefit for the St. Augustine community. In 2010, a series of locations were evaluated by the community in a cursory and subjective format based largely on the need to support a federal grant application effort by the state. With the potential for a variety of passenger rail service operations and supporting transit connections in the short and long term, the St. Augustine community.
community determined that there was a need to provide a fresh, objective analysis for a center based on measurable demographic, economic, and transportation criteria.

From the fall of 2012 through the summer of 2013, the North Florida TPO, the City of St. Augustine, St. Johns County and the St. Augustine-St. Johns County Airport Authority examined options that would best support a multimodal transportation center in the St. Augustine area. With the potential to restore Amtrak service on the FEC rail line and to develop regional commuter rail, the community evaluated potential sites for a future transportation hub. A new multimodal center would enhance economic development and tourism while providing new mobility choices to better connect the St. Augustine area with the North Florida region.

Site options were selected by a GIS-based, suitability analysis using weighted criteria. Factors considered include population, employment, accessibility via rail, plane, car, bus, trolley and bike, and environmental impacts. A stakeholder working group was formed at the outset of the study including government officials, economic development experts, community activists, rail historians and interested citizens. The group worked to identify potential sites, weight selection criteria and evaluate parcels, ensuring a thorough and neutral assessment. Sites were not ranked by the working group or the project team given the lack of operational service. Workshops were conducted with the public in order to elicit feedback regarding each of the candidate locations.

This report is a summary of these efforts and documents the importance of continuing the passenger rail conversation as part of a regional dialogue aimed at improving mobility and economic competitiveness for Northeast Florida. No matter where your personal taste for travel and mobility lies, we hope that this study will inspire, delight and prove once again that restoring passenger rail travel as part of a regional transportation effort in St. Augustine will confirm that Mr. Flagler’s vision is as relevant and impactful today as it was well over a century ago.
**WHY BUILD A MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER?**

**OVERVIEW AND STUDY PURPOSE**

In the context of improving regional transportation and mobility throughout Northeast Florida, passenger rail has often been cited as the missing piece. Over the past decade, Amtrak, the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC), and the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) have investigated the possibility of restoring passenger rail service between Jacksonville and St. Augustine. Many advocates feel that such a service would be a welcomed addition to the region, allowing increasing numbers of commuters, tourists, and business travelers an alternative means of transportation. The benefits of passenger rail are numerous and include enhancing connectivity, economic development, and quality of life. For the St. Augustine area, and the region for that matter, the development of a passenger rail system can provide a foundation for better integration of future regional transportation services and connectivity, which will reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Additionally, building a center to accommodate multiple modes of travel is more than just an investment for improving mobility; a center also provides an effective means to support revitalization and economic development efforts, creating new synergies that lead to future development investments and, ultimately, increased revenues. Finally, emerging demographic trends suggest the convergence of new location and housing preferences, as well as declining automobile dependency among Millennials and retiring Boomers, who represent almost 51% of America. Such a scenario is resulting in greater demand for new mobility options near compact, mixed-use centers.

As the region continues to grow and develop new transportation solutions to our mobility challenges, passenger rail is likely to be a major part of this equation. St. Augustine is well-positioned to be part of this future interconnected regional transportation system. Part of planning for the introduction of passenger rail must consider the potential, future station area(s) that will allow for a convenient interface between modes. While there is currently no passenger rail along the FEC line, there is a great opportunity...
to begin identifying potential sites that are most suitable to establish a future facility that will support a
more destination and transfer efficiency within the overall regional transportation network.

This study seeks to provide a framework for decision-making with respect to the identification of potential
location(s) for a new, multimodal transportation center serving the St. Augustine area. The specific study
area includes the St. Augustine Urbanized Area, as defined by the 2010 Census. This is consistent with the
context of previous studies and provides the best opportunity for supporting regional multimodal
outcomes. The identification of potential locations is based on an objective, spatial-based analysis using a
set of defined and measurable criteria developed through input by a Stakeholder Working Group and the
public. Recognizing shifting market and real estate realities, this analysis provides a best-picture
“snapshot” of the most suitable locations, given current information. In some cases, the study confirms
previous recommendations, but also provides additional areas that may have not been considered.

In summary, this document outlines best practices and case studies from other areas as analogues for St.
Augustine; illustrates the methodologies and procedures carried out based on measurable criteria and
community-based outcomes; articulates minimal station design requirements based on the St. Augustine
travel market and anticipated service; describes the selected areas based on minimal facility requirements,
multimodal activities and potential mixed-used opportunities that best support transit-oriented
development (TOD) and joint development agreements. Additionally, planning and implementation
strategies are included for reference.

**Contextual Framework**

The St. Augustine Multimodal Transportation Center Study builds upon a number of previous initiatives.
While some of these are directly tied to the specific development of a future transportation hub in the
area, others reflect an emphasis on improving regional transportation and shaping more sustainable
development patterns throughout Northeast Florida, as revealed by the 2009 Urban Land Institute-
sponsored (ULI) Reality Check.
St. Johns County, in particular, has experienced tremendous growth and development over the past decade, experiencing a 54.3% population increase from 2000-2010, compared to Florida’s growth rate of 17.6%. In addition to having nearly 200,000 residents, the County is part of the Jacksonville Metropolitan Statistical Area, with a population of more than 1 million people. The County’s labor force has also grown by more than 45% over the last ten years. Given its proximity to the major employment center of Jacksonville, nearly 50% of the workforce in St. Johns commutes north to this area for work.

Tourism also plays a major part in the transportation equation for St. Augustine and the County as a whole. Despite the recent “Great Recession,” almost 6 million people visit the area on an annual basis, spending more than $700 million. The historic, Old World charm of St. Augustine, the area’s magnificent beach communities and the array of leisurely activities continue to attract more and more visitors to the area, serving to strengthen the St. Johns County destination brand. Most of these visitors to the area arrive by car, particularly straining roadways in the historic, Downtown St. Augustine core, which is more oriented to pedestrian, bicycle, and trolley tram/horse carriage traffic. Exploring multimodal transportation solutions that can include passenger rail and other enhanced modes has thus been an elevated topic of conversation. Additionally, recognizing the increased awareness of St. Augustine, given the forthcoming 450th Commemoration activities, there is a great opportunity to begin planning for alternative mobility options necessary to accommodate tourists that will descend upon the City and region. The success and impact of this event can be lasting and can cement global impressions about St. Augustine as an attractive destination. Continuing this dialogue and planning for integrating rail-based transportation into the area will serve to promote long-term economic development and improve the quality of life during and well-after the 450th events are complete.

Other relevant studies more specifically addressing the topic of rail transportation and the development of a multimodal center in the area include the following:

1 U.S. Census 2010
2 St. Johns County Chamber of Commerce
St. Augustine/St. Johns County Multimodal Transportation Study (2001)—This study, prepared for the Northeast Florida Regional Airport, recommended the development of a new multimodal center to be located immediately west of the airport terminal with a pedestrian overpass across U.S. 1. The study determined that this would be a long-term solution for meeting regional transportation needs by creating a convenient link between the Jacksonville and St. Augustine business and recreation centers, providing regional and national transportation options for both passengers and freight.

Amtrak/Florida East Coast Corridor Project (2009-2010)—As Amtrak began contemplating the development of enhanced and expanded service as result of the intercity passenger service’s growing popularity, the Florida East Coast (FEC) rail line was prioritized as the “most promising” for the implementation of future Corridor Service by Amtrak. Previous coastal passenger service in Florida was last offered in 1968. Diverting the existing Silver Star passenger service to the FEC was projected by Amtrak to attract more than 100,000 new riders and increase Amtrak revenues by almost $7.9 million annually. Concurrently, The Florida Department of Transportation, in conjunction with the Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council, conducted a series of visioning workshops around eight new rail stations along the FEC corridor between West Palm Beach and Jacksonville. During this process, the City of St. Augustine identified and endorsed a future passenger rail station at the present site of the old FEC terminal at U.S. 1 and San Marco Avenue immediately north of Downtown St. Augustine. Widespread support for this project was reflected in the Department’s 2010 application through the Federal High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR). Although the state was not successful in procuring federal funding at the time, the project is viewed as a priority for Amtrak and is awaiting future funding opportunities.

St. Augustine Mobility Institute (2012)—This North Florida TPO-sponsored effort was designed to more effectively address the mobility needs in the City of St. Augustine. The community engaged in week-long process in September, 2010 to solve transportation and design problems and develop conceptual alternatives along three key gateway corridors into Downtown St. Augustine. The recommendations largely focused on opportunities to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety, reduce congestion and crashes, address parking demand, improve access and provide context-sensitive design enhancements within these corridors. Contemplating a remote
parking and transit circulator system was also a key long-term idea. Most importantly, such investments are anticipated to result in a total economic benefit of $76 million over 20 years.

**Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) Commuter Rail Planning (Ongoing)**—A feasibility study completed in 2009 evaluated seven candidate corridors for possible commuter rail service in the region and identified the top three corridors to begin the system. One of the three rail lines, and the one considered the most favorable for initial commuter service, includes the St. Augustine to Jacksonville link, which would be connected to the proposed system’s hub at the Jacksonville Regional Transportation Center (JRTC) in Downtown Jacksonville. The Jacksonville-St. Augustine line could carry an estimated 5,000-5,500 passengers once in operation, according to the 2009 study. The report estimated that it would take 51 minutes to go from St. Augustine to Jacksonville by rail. Some of the proposed stops identified include Palencia, The Northeast Florida Regional Airport, the St. Johns County Complex, downtown St. Augustine and West Augustine. The JTA is currently moving forward with a System Plan to prioritize the three candidate rail corridors identified in the Feasibility Study. Following the System Plan, the project will advance into Project Development and commence with the FTA New Starts process. It is expected that the first Commuter Rail Corridor will be implemented 7-13 years from initiation of the Systems Plan.

**All Aboard Florida (Ongoing)**—This privately owned, operated and maintained intercity passenger rail service is tentatively scheduled for implementation in 2015. This service is designed to provide business and leisure passengers a new, convenient travel option between South and Central Florida in approximately three hours. Developed by Florida East Coast Industries (FECI), the route will feature passenger service along the existing FEC corridor between Downtown Miami and Ft. Lauderdale north to the Space Coast area and the creation of new tracks into Central Florida and Orlando. Future plans contemplate possible extension north to Jacksonville and further west to Tampa.
1881
Passenger train service along the east coast of Florida first began in 1881 when the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Halifax River Railway opened its line between its namesake cities.

1885
Flagler purchased the company in December of 1885. On September 7, 1895, the name was changed to Florida East Coast Railway. In addition to improving the railroad, Flagler built schools, a hospital and churches in St. Augustine, systematically revitalizing the largely abandoned historic city.

1930s
During the Great Depression, business declined and fewer trains operated. However, the company continued innovating. The Florida Special, which was operated during the 1935 to 1936 season, had a swimming pool its passengers could use.

1950s
By the mid-1950s, almost all FEC passenger service trains were diesel-operated and streamlined. Some of the most famous trains in the country have operated along the railway, including the Florida Special, Miamian, East Coast Champion and Havana.

1968
Passenger service operated along the FEC Railway until the 1960s. The last regularly scheduled train made its way between Jacksonville Union Terminal and the railroad’s North Miami station on August 31, 1968.

1981
The Key West Extension opened on January 22, 1912. The southernmost point in the U.S. was connected to the rest of the country by railroad and to Havana, Cuba, by steamship. Service ended in September of 1935 when the Labor Day hurricane, the strongest hurricane to ever hit the U.S., destroyed forty miles of right of way.

2001
The former St. Augustine/St. Johns County Airport Authority evaluates the potential for a new multimodal transportation center across from the airport, bounded by the FEC tracks to the east and Avenue B to the west. The center, as proposed, would be connected to the airport terminal via a pedestrian walkway bridge over US 1.

2006
City opens St. Augustine Visitor’s Information Center (VIC) multimodal parking facility.

2009
Amtrak envisions FEC Corridor Service as the “most promising initiative for expansion” and formal federal application submitted for restoration of service.

- JTA completes “First Coast Commuter Rail Feasibility Study”

2010
City and FEC/Amtrak Coalition select the “San Marco Station”, a renovated 1960s-era depot south of Winn-Dixie on U.S. 1 North to serve as future Amtrak station.

2012
All Aboard Florida begins developing a privately funded, quick, convenient and affordable intercity rail service that will connect passengers from South to Central Florida by 2015.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM BENEFITS

As mentioned, leveraging such an investment often yields future investment and development opportunities. According to the American Public Transportation Association, every $1 invested on public transit projects generates on average $6 in local economic development activity. Research shows that businesses often realize a gain in sales of three times the public sector investment in transit (for example, a $100 million transit investment results in a $300 million increase in business sales).

From a jobs standpoint, this translates into between 3,140 and 5,700 jobs created for every $100 million invested in public transit\(^3\). The Florida Department of Transportation determined that federal funds invested in the State’s fixed-route transit programs have increased annual economic output by $464 million, supporting 4,041 jobs annually, while increasing labor income by $192 million\(^4\). Likewise, such investments—particularly those which result in successful transit-oriented development (TOD) outcomes—illustrate how quality transit can better shape development and urban form, supporting sustainable neighborhoods and increasing property values. In fact, according to the National Association of Realtors, high-capacity transit investments, such as rail lines and stations can increase the development potential of real estate as well as surrounding property values by more than 150 percent\(^5\). This depends largely on the local regulatory environment, the presence of regional connections and economics. While this is best be achieved through mixed-use development at higher densities, the National Association of Realtors points out that developers are more likely to take on such risks if other TOD projects in a city have been successful.

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\(^{4}\) “Economic and Community Benefits of Urban Fixed-Route Transit in Florida,” Florida Department of Transportation Office of Public Transit.

\(^{5}\) “Transportation and Real Estate: Making the Connections,” www.realtor.org/transtools.
It should come to no surprise then that St. Augustine and St. Johns County—which continue to grow and develop their tourism niche—would seek to invest in infrastructure to provide a cost-effective means of transporting tourists to and around the City and surrounding areas. A regional, fixed-route system based on passenger rail that provides connections to other destinations is attractive to tourists, particularly those from other areas who are accustomed to utilizing premium systems. Redefining how people travel to the area can help to make the area an even more attractive destination. Amtrak’s prioritization of the FEC line for expansion of intercity service is reflected by their projected ridership numbers of 250,000 annually on the corridor (including 175,000 new riders above and beyond those on the current inland route), bringing a $2 billion economic impact to the state. Most of these users are expected to be tourists and business travelers attracted to the experience offered by rail.

Minimizing vehicular travel and pressure in the historic Downtown St. Augustine area has been a key objective for the city. Its compact street network was designed at the pre-automotive scale, with land uses and urban design features that naturally reinforce walking and cycling through narrow the street widths, building frontage and enclosure, and short block distances. This “walkable” framework is part of the fundamental appeal and experience of St. Augustine for visitors. The existing traffic patterns in the downtown core, however, confuses motorists, particularly visitors from out of town who are unfamiliar with the area and are searching for the limited supply of convenient surface parking opportunities. This has driven the need and on-going discussion, for well over a decade, of remote parking and transit circulator concepts to potentially address the problem. The development of a new, multimodal transportation center linking passenger rail travelers, bus and other visitors to the area can be part of this solution, in addition to preserving the safety, mobility and accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists in the walkable, historic core of downtown.

While there should be little expectation that tourists and locals will completely abandon vehicles as a mode of travel and access, there is a great opportunity to improve current traffic circulation and develop solutions through an incremental approach to reduce vehicular travel and parking in St. Augustine by developing a new premium transportation option and facility.

**Transit and Community Benefits**

The need to improve coordination among public/private transit systems in the region has also been raised as a key objective. This includes existing services such as Sunshine Bus, local trolley, airport shuttles, and JTA service with future premium services such as Amtrak and Commuter rail. Multimodal hubs along the FEC line will be integrated with other fixed route services to improve operational efficiencies and effectiveness within the system. Multimodal centers and facilities can provide convenience, comfort and safety for passengers during periods of transfer and most importantly create a more positive image of transit for the public, while also providing a gateway for outside travelers to the local community. The ability of these centers to include multiple potential uses and leasable space contributes to a facility’s convenience while providing the community with a return on investment and increased taxable revenues.

**Environmental and Safety Benefits**

Public transit has been shown to reduce air pollution and greenhouse gases (GHG) by limiting automotive travel. According to FDOT, fixed-route transit service in the state results in net reduction of 9,992 tons of carbon monoxide (CO) and 259 tons of volatile organic compounds. The reduced CO emissions are the equivalent of removing 128,000 cars from the roads annually. Fixed-route transit also reduces GHGs by an estimated 255,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually, which is the equivalent of eliminating 52,000 cars from traveling on...
Florida roads annually. As a secondary benefit, this reduces energy use by almost 43 million gallons of gasoline, which is the equivalent of removing 73,000 cars from the road annually. This serves to reduce travel delay and congestion by almost 6.6 million hours annually. From a safety standpoint, transit in Florida has been shown to reduce fatalities and injuries on the roads by virtue of reducing travel in private automobiles. FDOT estimates that this results in 66 fewer traffic fatalities (a 2.1% reduction) and 2,600 fewer traffic injuries on an annual basis\(^6\).

In summary, it is clear that rail development in St. Augustine can provide numerous benefits, positioning the area for economic development and improved regional and national connectivity. This study provides the City with an opportunity to contemplate the benefits and potential areas that would be most suitable for a multimodal facility and services that can meet short and long-term needs, relative to the type of service (intercity or commuter or both) that comes on-line first. At a minimum, continuing the dialogue and building partnerships around this concept will best ensure that the City is ready when the potential rail mode is implemented.

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\(^6\) “Economic and Community Benefits of Urban Fixed-Route Transit in Florida,” Florida Department of Transportation Office of Public Transit.
There really isn’t a one-size-fits-all approach to developing a multimodal center. The design and functionality are driven by the type and frequency of transit services, the specific location within a municipality (urban vs. suburban), the size of the market, and the extent to which other development opportunities can be integrated with the station or facility. It has been often said that a transit station is more than just a place where passengers rush to and from trains, buses, or automobiles. A well-planned station can be one of the best investments a community can make as it seeks to expand its appeal for greater tourism and business opportunities. Whether used by tourists or local residents, well-planned stations have proven to be valuable and lasting economic centers. There are many great examples of stations built or underway that can serve as positive and scalable examples for the City of St. Augustine. It serves little purpose in this context to discuss the grandeur and effects of Penn Station in New York or the 30th Street Station in Philadelphia relative to the market size and passenger service level expected for St. Augustine. Rather there are a handful of small and midsized cities across the country that have realized the long-term value in developing new or restoring old passenger rail stations as a key revitalization strategy:

- Cincinnati, Ohio developed its abandoned train station into a vibrant tourist attraction that houses an Amtrak ticket office, waiting room, the city of Cincinnati’s reference library, a multiple story museum, an Omni Max Theater, gift shops, ice cream parlor and restaurants. In addition, the Great Hall serves as the site for many local choir concerts and school trips.
- The once nearly empty rail passenger station in Memphis, Tennessee is being converted to apartments, restaurants, shops, corporate offices and an Amtrak facility that includes a waiting room, ticket office, baggage room and platform with canopy. This project was the key part of an extensive downtown revitalization process.
- Joliet, Illinois, with help from the state of Illinois, transformed an old decaying structure into a vibrant transportation center that connects Amtrak with Metra (Chicago) commuter trains and city buses. The rehabilitation of this grand old railroad station was the centerpiece of a major downtown redevelopment that included the addition of several floating casinos. Most recently, the center is being expanded into a new regional, multimodal center to improve passenger safety and ease freight congestion.
- Meridian, Mississippi built a new train station in 1997 similar to the landmark station demolished in the 1950s. This structure now houses Amtrak, Greyhound and city offices.
- The cities of Holland, Michigan, Warrentsburg, Missouri, Mendota, Illinois and Walnut Ridge, Alaska each purchased their rail stations and converted them into Chamber of Commerce offices or museums and Amtrak waiting rooms.
On a more complex scale, the city of Lafayette, Indiana, with state and federal funds, relocated all the rail lines that ran through city streets and consolidated them into one area and then moved their old station a few blocks and turned it into a multimodal transportation center.

Demonstration Projects

The following examples are highlighted as demonstration projects for the City of St. Augustine and are summarized in terms of size, location, multimodal activities, design components, and implementation strategies. Many cities (including Birmingham, AL; Raleigh, NC; Jackson, MS; Syracuse, NY; McComb, MS; Athens, GA; Kansas City, MO; Lynchburg, VA; Raton, NM; Plano, IL; Charlottesville, VA; Hammond, LA; Hastings, NE; Fort Madison, IA; and Oklahoma City, OK) have either completed their station renovations, are developing, or have plans to redevelop their train stations or build new stations as economic, cultural and historic centers of their communities. A number of the examples also illustrate the site selection criteria that were utilized for each project. Common themes and approaches of these projects were integrated into our study process and methodology with respect to the scale and future transit needs for St. Augustine.
Raleigh, North Carolina is reusing its existing Dillon Supply Company Warehouse, also known as the Viaduct Building, for the location of its new Raleigh Union Station. Planning and construction of the new station is a joint initiative between the North Carolina Department of Transportation, Rail Division and the City of Raleigh. Funding for the first phase of design and construction of the project is provided by grants from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). Subsequent phases of Union Station will include connections to bus and parking, commuter rail and light rail, as well as facilities for taxis, bicyclists, and pedestrians. Phase I of the project has currently reached 25% of design completion.

On June 22, 2012, the City of Raleigh received notice that it was successful in its bid for a Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant from the USDOT to fund the first phase of the Raleigh Union Station. The Union Station Phase I project was one of 47 projects awarded a total of nearly $500 million nationwide. This phase of the project will replace the downtown Amtrak facility. For the City of Raleigh, the $21 million award will help fund first phase of construction of the multimodal transit center. The TIGER grant program provides a unique opportunity for the U.S. Department of Transportation to invest in road, rail, transit and port projects that promise to achieve critical national objectives. The City, in partnership with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) and Triangle Transit (TTA), applied for federal funding from this popular program in March 2012.

The City has pledged a $3 million match for construction of the station, as part of the Transportation Bond passed in October 2011. Additionally, NCDOT has pledged matching funds of $9 million. Alternate funding sources are currently under development to allow the completion of Phase I. The community, including citizens, boards and commissions, stakeholders, and technical experts have continued to shape the project as an iconic civic gateway into Raleigh. The project is continuing its outreach and public participation process throughout the fall of 2013.
The Athens-Clarke County Multimodal Transportation Center, opened in the fall of 2006, has earned national recognition as a model transportation hub. The center links transit riders, bicyclists and pedestrians with the Athens Transit System/University of Georgia Campus Transit System, intercity buses, the Oconee River Greenway and a downtown parking deck. The facility is adjacent to a historic railway line that will provide commuter rail service between the Atlanta Metro region and the Athens Urbanized Area. As such, the design of the center will accommodate this service. The Center serves approximately 4,000-5,000 daily passengers and features a bus transfer facility, including 17 covered bus bays; climate-controlled waiting areas; administrative offices; public restrooms; passenger drop-off area; ticket/information booth; and bicycle storage. A pedestrian bridge connects the facility to downtown via the parking deck and the Classic Center Convention and Performing Arts Theatre Complex. The parking deck was designed to meet the parking needs of both the multimodal center and the theatre.

This facility was constructed utilizing local funds only. Typically, federal grants would be used to cover 80 percent of the costs for public transit facilities. In this case, the citizens of Athens-Clarke County approved a one-cent “Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax” (SPLOST) by referendum to fund the project. This tax also paid for associated roadway and infrastructure improvements to enhance access to the facility.

The center has been a huge success as a transportation facility, also serving as a redevelopment catalyst for the historic warehousing area downtown, including new mixed-use and multifamily residential development. The close proximity to the facility, the greenway and the central business district has contributed to this development.

7 The Urban Land Institute (ULI) of Atlanta recognized the MMTC with one of its most prestigious honors – the 2007 “Development of Excellence” Award; the 2007 American Institute of Steel Construction “Innovative Design in Engineering and Architecture with Structural Steel” Award; the 2007 Brick Institute of America Brick In Architecture Award and the 2006 Athens Grow Green Coalition’s “Best New Development”.
Uptown Station (Normal Multimodal Transportation Center) — Normal, IL
Opened in July 2012, the Uptown Station in Normal, IL serves as a multimodal transportation center, connecting the community's aviation, Amtrak rail, local and intercity bus, taxi services, automobile, and pedestrian facilities.

Normal is located in central Illinois along a major rail corridor between Chicago and St. Louis, and at the intersection of three interstate highways (I-55, I-74 and I-39), resulting in high levels of intercity bus traffic. Uptown Station is less than four miles from the Central Illinois Regional Airport and the station's location strategically sits on the primary leg of a heavily used 30-plus-mile dedicated bicycle and pedestrian pathway connecting Normal with Bloomington.

The center serves as host to numerous public and private transportation providers. The four-floor station consolidates transportation and municipal functions into the single center. The first floor includes ticketing and parking information, restrooms and a Subway sandwich café, while the upper floors serve as the Town of Normal's municipal offices and Council Chambers.

The $45.9 million project received $22 million from TIGER funding, as well as $10.6 million in additional federal funding and more than $13 million in state and local contributions. Six months after receiving funds, it was the first TIGER project in the nation to break ground and begin construction. The station has been able to successfully accommodate the growing Amtrak ridership in the area and was opened in advance of the new 110-mph service in the region (Amtrak Lincoln Service Trains), facilitating reduced travel times between Normal and the Chicago and St. Louis markets.

Key Practices and Site Selection Criteria
In planning for a new multimodal center to accommodate a range of services, particularly passenger rail modes, the identification and selection of an appropriate site(s) are perhaps the most fundamental parts of the process. For the St. Augustine Urbanized Area, this scenario is complicated by the lack of current operational passenger rail and/or premium, high-frequency fixed-route service. A “silver bullet” location for the area at this particular time is difficult based upon this lack of mode, which dictates the particular service and station area requirements. In meeting with stakeholders it was clear that the identification of multiple, ideally-suited candidates would be more beneficial (than a “build it and they will come” approach). This approach would better position the community with multiple options that can best meet short and long-term intercity or commuter rail-oriented service goals, regardless of the order of implementation at this time.
Providing multiple locations for consideration also offers the community greater flexibility in terms of economic development potential and TOD.

While many of the demonstration areas described offer different scale and types of high-frequency transit services, there are commonalities among the range of criteria used to select the most optimal locations. For all examples, accessibility to the planned location as well as connectivity with existing and planned transit services represented the biggest drivers for site selection. Many communities engaged in a weighted evaluation of potential sites, recognizing that some components such as connectivity and potential for redevelopment are more significant than potential environmental issues or permitting. The following matrix provides examples of key site selection and suitability criteria for planned multimodal centers across the country, in various stages. Many of the projects shown are initially connecting bus transit services, but also contemplate future passenger rail connections, where feasible. Most significantly, the planning process undertaken by the various stakeholders in each is not only designed to simply create a new center, but also to strengthen transit options as well as provide greater mobility and economic development:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Key Practices</th>
<th>Site Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Duluth Multimodal Center, Duluth, MN | - Implement a multimodal center in order to strengthen the presence and image of the Duluth Transit Authority  
- Designed with the goal to resolve a barrier created by Interstate 35; ultimately connecting the city center to their waterfront  
- Selected sites located within vacant lots and existing privately owned parking structures  
- Selected a cost effective location, considering several factors such as site acquisition/demolition and proximity to existing transit lines  
- Final site plan chosen with considerations to future transportation development (Fixed Guideway system) | - Accessibility and Location to City Center and existing transit lines  
- Site characteristics including vacant lots and existing privately owned parking structures  
- Cost effectiveness (reduced acquisition and demolition)  
- Future potential for economic development opportunities |
### Location: Wilmington Multimodal Center, Wilmington, NC

**Key Practices:**
- Future hub for WAVE transit (bus), Downtown Trolley, Greyhound, taxis, car parking, walk/cycle, and future commuter rail service
- Selected downtown area to optimize connectivity with existing transit services and TOD potential
  - Increase economic activity
  - Increase residential, commercial and employment opportunities
- Higher visibility for transit services and utilization
- Strategic placement to increase adjacent property values

**Site Selection Criteria:**
- Develop a weighted average score based on:
  - Site Acquisition/Utilization Issues including historic preservation and future development potential
  - Transportation Impacts (meeting short and long-term transportation needs)
  - Compatible with neighborhood and minimize environmental impacts

---

### Location: Sellwood Multimodal Center, Portland, OR

**Key Practices:**
- Complements the Sellwood Bridge Replacement Project with 5 possible locations for a new center identified
- Select a site with high connectivity with existing transit lines
- Create a facility with minimal environmental impacts and obtaining LEED certification
- Allocated additional square feet for rental properties within the facility (commercial, retail)

**Site Selection Criteria:**
- Site characteristics such as availability, minimum size, ownership
- Health and safety concerns
- Intermodal connectivity with existing and future services
- Permitting restraints
- Environmental aspects
- Social assessment (aesthetics, safety, ADA Requirements)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Key Practices</th>
<th>Site Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Albany Multimodal Center, Albany, GA         | - Locate in Downtown Albany (CBD) to encourage TOD as part of a revitalization effort for economic development in the region  
- Strategically place to achieve the goal of improving regional transit to private development projects  
- Maximize use of existing parking structures to offset lost parking spaces within the project area  
- Implement facility to establish a permanent transfer station site within the transit services (bus, rural transit, Greyhound, taxis, bikes/pedestrians) of Albany  
- Implement facility to reduce operational costs of transit services within the region | - Size  
- Ownership  
- Availability  
- Surrounding Land Use and Potential for new development  
- Environmental Considerations  
- Location  
- Traffic Circulation and Accessibility |
| Troy/Birmingham Multimodal Transit Center, Troy and Birmingham, MI | - A joint effort by both communities to strengthen existing transit options in the area through a centralized facility that will allow users to access intercity rail service (Amtrak), regional bus routes and other modes such as air and taxi services  
- Strategically placed between employment/retail center (Troy) and historic downtown Birmingham  
- Incorporated site plan into existing mixed use site to accelerate TOD opportunity  
- Low maintenance site plan to reduce operational costs, incorporates “green” building principles | - Proximity to Downtown Birmingham and Troy  
- Proximity to Retail and Employment Centers  
- Right-of-Way for future development |
**What Is Our Process?**

With the recognition that the concept of a new rail/multimodal center has been discussed and vetted previously through a number of initiatives (including specifically debating the merits of a center at the airport versus Downtown) the St. Augustine community determined that a fresh, objective examination of this concept in a less time-constrained and zero-sum game scenario was needed. This effort is enabling the St. Johns County and the St. Augustine community to contemplate previous assumptions regarding the proposed center as well as build stronger local and regional support around a set of updated recommendations.

The study commenced with a thorough review and incorporation of previous studies and initiatives, where appropriate, to identify key issues and insights that will better inform the overall selection process. This also included an examination of the minimum station requirements and services that could be accommodated in both the short and long term. It was determined that a GIS-based, suitability analysis and evaluation would be the most objective means to establish a preferred set of alternatives and recommendations for the location and development of a future multimodal transportation facility.

**Stakeholder Working Group**

In order to establish a reasonable framework for public feedback and decision-making and overseeing the process to ensure the highest degree of objectivity throughout the project, a stakeholder working group was formed. This group consisted of government officials, economic development experts, community activists, rail historians and interested citizens. The group convened for four, two-to three-hour working sessions from late fall 2012 through the spring of 2013, to identify challenges and opportunities, develop and weigh site selection criteria and to evaluate suitable areas and parcels ensuring a thorough and objective assessment for public input. The graphic on page 22 illustrates the analysis process. Once the analysis was completed, it was determined that a number of potentially suitable locations for multimodal development would be more appropriate for further consideration, given the lack of operational passenger rail service and the need for the center to maximize future economic and tourism development.

**Major Considerations and Overarching Themes from Stakeholder Working Group:**

- Gear our transportation services to reflect the dominant trip purposes, be they tourists or commuters
- Interconnectivity between activity centers and transportation centers
- Multiple locations will allow us to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach
- Scalable to the needs of the St. Augustine Area
- Proximity to existing rail is key
- Major consideration of development potential (enhancing tourism)
- Promoting gateways and enhancing entry corridors
- Near major corridors to include a feeder system
- Public or privately-owned locations (with single ownership to ease acquisitions)
- Avoid regulatory hurdles
Stakeholder Meeting 1
Challenges and Opportunities Exploration
Identify Minimum Station/Facility Requirements

Stakeholder Meeting 2
Further Suitability Analysis
Preliminary Zone Recommendations

Stakeholder Meeting 3
Analysis/Site Drill Down/Recommended Locations

Stakeholder Meeting 4
Final Recommendations
Summary Report

Best Practices & Cursory Assessment
Cursory Testing & Analysis of Site Selection Criteria

2 Public Workshops/Open Houses
The Stakeholder Working Group engaged in a number of group exercises for the purpose of developing the suitability criteria. An initial “Challenges and Opportunities” session at the kickoff meeting was designed to develop some fundamental themes and considerations which would be synthesized into measurable criteria. Key themes included the need for connectivity with existing services, interconnectivity with other activity centers, as well as good accessibility to and circulation within a potential center. The ability of the center to catalyze future development was also a key theme.

Additionally, the group was presented with a range of components and facility design parameters, which they were to classify as “essential”, “desired”, or “not necessary.” Stakeholders felt that, at a minimum, a full staffed station building with auto pick up/drop off (“kiss and ride”), parking, with access for all multimodal transportation services was essential. Other support services, including baggage handling assistance, bicycle racks, information kiosks and the potential for ancillary retail were considered “desired” features. Given this, it was important to describe the minimum station design and service features and the minimum land area that could accommodate such features for a station fitting the St. Augustine market area.

Minimum Station Requirements

Based on information from the 2009-10 Amtrak FEC Corridor Project, including interviews with Amtrak representatives and other rail professionals, a passenger rail station serving the St. Augustine area could be accommodated, at a minimum, by a prototypical, “medium” staffed station. This is based on the anticipated ridership and revenue forecast for the area which anticipates at least 50,000 in annual ridership (50-150 peak hour passengers) and $500,000 in annual revenue. This is consistent with other Florida Amtrak station locations, including Ft. Lauderdale, Kissimmee and Hollywood which had a range of 38,000 to 56,000 annual passengers and largely serve the tourism/leisure-based market. A 1-5 acre location would be the ideal land area acceptable for the minimum desired design and service features. The following table and diagram illustrate the station guidelines and most appropriate development site components. This would serve as the basic design framework from which to explore suitable areas and locations in the study area. This is not to suggest that, in the long-term, other larger centers with additional features could not be developed, such as locations that could function as a more regional park and ride, requiring greater surface parking demands:
### Development Site Components and Layout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Heated Sq Feet</th>
<th>Platform Length</th>
<th>Minimum Annual Ridership</th>
<th>Design &amp; Service Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1 Acre</td>
<td>&lt;1,000</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Platform/Canopy/Signage/E Ticket Booth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Acres</td>
<td>2,500-5,000</td>
<td>700-1000</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>Platform/Canopy/Vehicle Access and Wayfinding/Ticketing/Baggage/Passenger Information/Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 Acres</td>
<td>~10,000</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
<td>All the Above/Rental Cars/Major Parking Requirements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Rail Platform (1,000’ minimum)
- Rail Station (~2,500 s.f.)
- Bus/Taxi/Car Drop-off
- Patron/Employee Parking (25-40 spaces min.)
- Adjacent Parcel Development Opportunities
**METHODOLOGY AND SUITABILITY ANALYSIS**

Based on the themes and principles developed by the Stakeholder Working Group, the analysis framework was centered upon the development and integration of **community**, **mobility** and **environmental**-based criteria, which supports the many interrelated goals and objectives of the study. While the selection of a suitable location for a new multimodal center can be based on a number of criteria and practices (as illustrated in the case study examples), the Stakeholder Working Group selected the following variables within these three categories as the most effective, measurable criteria to ensure objective site analysis. Additionally, much of the criteria are quantitative and can be integrated into spatial analysis tools with Geographic Information Systems (GIS):

**COMMUNITY**
- Population/Employment
- Parcel Characteristics
- Proximity to Destinations & Downtown (Tourism/Historic Preservation)

**MOBILITY**
- Accessibility/Roadway Connectivity
- Connectivity with other Existing Transportation (Rail, Transit & Air Service)
- Bike/Pedestrian Access

**ENVIRONMENT**
- Environmental Constraints (Wetlands)

Each of the criteria is also described in terms of their contribution to the performance and goals of a future multimodal center(s). A weighting and scoring scheme was developed (in this case, the areas of suitability were denoted as “hot spot zones”) for the potential siting of a new center based upon a negative, neutral, or positive characteristic. This allows for comparison of supporting elements such that a zone with dense population and employment would be scored higher than a remote one. Just as a zone that is within walking distance (typically 1/2 mile or less) of existing transit routes would be more suited than an area that is beyond such a distance. A weighting scale was incorporated to give priority to criteria viewed as more important to the success of finding a suitable location(s). Criteria weighting includes weights of 1 (least supportive), 3 (moderately supportive) and 5 (most supportive). The following table illustrates the criteria and measures the average scoring and key comments regarding each. The comments in red denote common, recurring considerations. Most of the stakeholders agreed that all of the criteria were equally contributive to the outcome, with most being weighed in the 3.5 to 4.5 range. Most felt accessibility of a potential location was slightly more significant than environmental constraints or bicycle connectivity, but that the latter certainly were not insignificant:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Weighting Average Score</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantitative/Spatial-Based Ranking of Candidate Zones</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Population/Employment                        | Zone is in remote location relative to population and employment | Zone is proximate to Zone of dense population and employment | Zone is within an dense Zone of population and employment | 3.5 | -Tourism use brings in more money than local  
- Serve the greatest number of people  
- Consider future employment centers |
| Ease of Access & Circulation                 | Zone is in remote location that is distant from major roadway facilities and dense street network to promote adequate access and circulation | Zone is located either along major corridors or proximate to dense street network, but not both | Zone is located within major roadway facilities, dense street network and manageable parcel shapes to promote adequate access and circulation | 4.8 | -Look at future development that could occur around center  
- Should include funded projects  
- Parking is major consideration  
- Promotes ease of customer use |
| Connectivity with other Existing Transportation Services (Bus/Air/Trolley) | Zone that is further than ½ mile from transit route and/or other modes of existing transportation | Zone that is between ½ mile and ¾ mile of transit route and/or other modes of existing transportation services | Zone within ¼ mile (the typical walking distance for transit) of transit route and/or other modes of existing transportation services | 4.6 | -Proximity to existing rail very important  
- Paramount  
- City vision=local interface; National/Airport Vision=Not so focused on local modes  
- Important but possible to create that connection  
- Rail access and consider connectivity to all lines, including Wilbur Wright Industrial Lead  
- Emphasis as a rail transit hub (esp. with future commuter rail) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Negative</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle/Pedestrian Accessibility</td>
<td>Zone with no bicycle or pedestrian access</td>
<td>Zone with pedestrian and bicycle access, but more than ½ mile to other activities</td>
<td>Zone with good pedestrian and bicycle access and close (within ½ to ¾) to other activities</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>- Willing to trade walkable proximity for accessibility via trolley train, bus, car - Peds./Bikes important, but can be managed with other modal connectivity - Nice but not top priority - Less expensive to create this access - Easiest to improve in future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to Destinations (Tourism/Activity Centers)</td>
<td>Zone that is considerably distant (beyond 1 mile) from major tourism, shopping and commerce centers</td>
<td>Zone that is between 1 mile and ½ mile from major tourism, shopping and commerce centers</td>
<td>Zone that is proximate to (within ½ mile of) major tourism, shopping and commerce centers</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>- Key to this transportation center; bringing money into community, as tourism is largest and fastest growing sector - A must to accomplish goal of being multimodal - Local transportation can get you to ultimate destination, more beneficial to not be in the heart of the center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parcel Size, Use and Availability</td>
<td>Parcel(s) that are smaller than 35,000 square feet in total may be difficult to provide all of the multimodal facility requirements within the space. In addition, parcel(s) is currently in private ownership and generally residential in nature</td>
<td>Parcel(s) between 35,000 and 45,000 square feet could accommodate many of the multimodal facility requirements but may need more design to do so. In addition, parcel(s) is currently in private ownership, vacant and/or non-residential in nature</td>
<td>Parcel(s) larger than 45,000 square feet can more easily fulfill the multimodal facility requirements and offer the potential for joint development agreements. In addition, parcel(s) is owned entirely by a public entity and generally vacant and/or non-residential in nature</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>- Parcels should be public or private - Fewer parcels should rank higher than more parcels - Minimum and maximum limits and affordability - Single ownership to ease negotiations - Consider future expansion and TOD planning and private investment - Private business development; wholesale markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Weighting Average Score</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
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<td>-----------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Centralized Location (Proximity to Downtown) | Zone that are significantly outside the downtown core of the City | Zone that is near the Downtown core, but not within it | Zone which are located within the Downtown core of the City | 3.8 | - Closest proximity to Downtown is crucial to tourism aspect  
- Central proximity to promote tourism  
- Not as important as access  
- US 1 and King St. or as close to as possible; just to west of Downtown district with feeder system |
| Environmental Constraints         | Zone with significant wetland and/or other environmental concerns      | Zone with minimal wetland and/or other environmental concerns            | Zone without significant and/or environmental concerns                  | 2.8 |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

Notes: The weighting scale is designed to give priority in the scoring to those criteria that are viewed as more important to the success of the project. Criteria weighting includes weights of 1 (least supportive), 3 (moderately supportive) and 5 (most supportive). The scoring scheme serves as a guideline for the ranking the Zones based upon a negative, neutral, or positive characteristic.
CommunityViz™

Following the development and weighting of the criteria, a formal suitability analysis was conducted to identify potential areas of focus, or “hot spot zones”. This is a spatial-based process of determining which locations are best suited for certain uses. The analysis was conducted using a geographic information systems (GIS) suitability tool known as Community Viz™. This planning analysis software allows for each of the Stakeholder-developed criteria to be integrated into a grid cell which functions as a “suitability layer” and weighted relative to their importance in identifying the most suited location for a successful multimodal center. The tool also permits the user to dynamically modify the weighting of each and view results immediately.

The study area was broken down into ½ mile grids for analysis with the criteria integrated to determine the suitability score, 0-100, or least suitable to most suitable, for each of the grids. To be considered “suitable,” a score of 75 or higher was required. Based up the results, five zones emerged through a cluster analysis as candidate locations for further evaluation. Each of the five zones is comprised of four (4) ½ mile grids. At least two of the grids within the zone had a minimum suitability score of 76. The five zones consisted of the following areas: Airport, Fullerwood, Uptown, Downtown, and West Augustine. These hot spots are identified on the following page.
In order to drill down further to identify candidate parcels, each of the five zones was broken down into 16 grids, each ¼ mile wide. The same weighted criteria and suitability exercise using the Community Viz™ tool were applied to these zones for analysis uniformity. These results are displayed below with the hot spot areas denoted in orange and red:
Recognizing that a substantial amount of the property within the “hot spot” zones is theoretically suitable based on the initial criteria, the project team and stakeholders elected to incorporate additional property disposition criteria in order to elevate specific parcels that could best accommodate a future station, regardless of operational characteristics. Much of these criteria were consistent with that utilized in the CommunityViz™ analysis, including adjacency to rail and roadway infrastructure. Given the importance of single ownership in acquisition negotiations and the ability to consider the potential for redevelopment opportunities however, this assessment was determined necessary to provide a clearer direction for positioning the St. Augustine community with options for when the particular rail mode is implemented.

Parcels were selected out of the five zones in accordance with the following criteria. The presence of underutilized properties in the area was measured in terms of the how a particular parcel may not be achieving “highest and best use” relative to zoning and land use regulations. A number of candidate parcels were also targeted based on the ability for a potential center to catalyze development both on-site and on adjacent or surrounding parcels. As previously described, the minimum 1 acre parcel size was selected based on the “medium” staffed station guidelines.

- Adjacency to existing rail infrastructure
- Connectivity with existing roadway infrastructure
- Minimum 1 acre parcel size
- Vacant/underutilized property
- Single ownership
- Minimal environmental impacts (wetlands)
- Minimum rail station design considerations for St. Augustine context

A total of six (6) properties within the five (5) zones were identified with characteristics that met the minimum criteria for the development of a multimodal center, they are described in the following section.
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WHERE COULD THE CENTER GO?

POTENTIAL LOCATIONS

Six sites have been identified as potential candidates for additional evaluation and prioritization. This does not mean that all six locations will or should be developed into a multimodal center. For the purposes of this study, there is no ranking exercise among the six locations. This is in part due to the lack of current operational passenger service, which will more effectively dictate location needs based on market and frequency; and because the different characteristics of each site can serve both short-term and long-term goals. Moving toward the selection of one or more sites, in concert with specific design and service needs, should reflect the extent to which each can best meet future needs as new modes of transportation are introduced and supported by the public.

Each of the candidate sites consist of currently vacant, developable parcels, both publicly and privately owned. Vacant parcels are prioritized in this case for the purposes of facilitating acquisition and development:

- Site 1-U.S. 1 North at the Northeast Florida Regional Airport (Airport Zone)
- Site 2-U.S. 1/San Marco Avenue (Fullerwood Zone)
- Site 3-U.S. 1/Mission Avenue (Uptown Zone)
- Site 4-U.S. 1/Carrera Street (Downtown Zone)
- Site 5-King Street/Depot Street (Downtown Zone)
- Site 6-Rodriquez Street (West Augustine Zone)

The map to the right illustrates the locations (highlighted in yellow) along the FEC line relative to the existing public transit and activity features such as hotels, schools, shopping centers and cultural sites. Three of the six locations were identified as potential sites in the 2010 Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project. In this case, the analysis simply confirmed these as suitable locations, supporting previous assumptions.
Airport Zone

The Airport Zone contains one property identified as Site #1 (shown in yellow) that is adjacent to the FEC rail line. This property is consists of 4.9 acres of right-of-way, owned by the FEC Road Trust, LLC. There is existing Sunshine bus transit connectivity along U.S. 1 and there are bicycle facilities (including the combination of shared routes, lanes, or paved shoulders for such use) along U.S. 1. However, there are no hotels or activity centers within ¼ mile of this site. This property is located on the west side of the rail line and was previously examined in the 2001 St. Augustine Airport Multimodal Center Study. In that case, all of the properties outlined in the orange dashed line in the below map would be developed with a major pedestrian crossing over U.S. 1 to the airport’s terminal facilities.

In the most recent Amtrak/FEC study, the center was contemplated as a linear station layout (as shown in the green dashed line to the right), with parking along the narrow strip of U.S. 1 right-of-way between the highway and the rail line. While the location is considered relatively remote from St. Augustine’s key historic downtown and destinations, the ability to accommodate such features as a regional park and ride service linked to a commuter rail-based mode provides a strategic advantage, assuming all necessary property can be acquired. Such a service can be greatly enhanced in the long-term, should frequently-scheduled, commercial aviation services be restored at the airport.
**Fullerwood Zone**

The Fullerwood Zone contains a total of eight parcels that are adjacent to the rail line and greater than one acre in size. Two of the properties are built-out and five of the properties are located within the wetlands and/or the Intracoastal Waterway. The candidate parcel in yellow (Site #2) is owned by the Florida East Coast Railway and is the former site of a historic passenger rail station.

This property is 7.2 acres and contains an existing 4,000 s.f. building that would exceed the minimum station area requirements identified for the St. Augustine market. It is located along both the existing Sunshine bus transit line on U.S. 1 and is accessible by bicycle via the shared route and paved shoulder sections. There are several shopping, activity centers, and neighborhoods within ¼ mile of the site, including a Winn Dixie anchored shopping plaza to the immediate north (Shoppes of Northtowne), as shaded in pink. As such, this site presents an opportunity for a joint redevelopment project adjacent to the proposed station area, supporting future infill and TOD. This site was also previously examined in the 2010 Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project and was endorsed by the St. Augustine City Commission as their recommended site for a future station to support Amtrak Corridor Service.
Uptown Zone

The Uptown Zone contains a single, 1.5 acre, vacant, commercially-zoned property (Site #3) immediately north of the intersection of Old Mission Avenue and U.S. 1. This site is a newly identified location that is currently owned by the Fountain of Youth and is immediately adjacent to the rail line. The site could be served by the existing Sunshine bus transit line that runs south on U.S. 1 and is next to the same bicycle facilities identified on the previous 2 locations. The local tourist-based trolley trams are also capable of serving the location. There are several shopping and support uses and neighborhoods within ¼ mile of the site with approximately 520 hotel rooms within ¼ mile, including a Quality Inn next to the site. While the site itself is relatively small, with some potential wetland issues, the potential for assembling the adjacent parcels to the north provides opportunity to accommodate a larger facility and additional parking needs, if warranted.
**Downtown Zone**

The Downtown Zone contains two candidate sites that are adjacent to the rail line and greater than one acre in size. Florida East Coast Railway owns the property identified as Site #4, which was also previously examined in the 2010 Amtrak/FEC Corridor Project. This site, at the intersection of Carrera Street and U.S. 1, is 2 acres in size and zoned open land. The developable portion of the site is denoted in the yellow hatched portion of the parcel between the rail line and U.S. 1. It is also located along the existing Sunshine bus line and bicycle facilities and can be served by the local trolley trams.

Within the vicinity, there are several shopping, activity centers, and neighborhoods within a comfortable walking distance. With necessary infrastructure enhancements, including pedestrian crossings and intersection treatments, the site could provide safe and direct walkable access to the historic district. While it has been previously discussed that the development of a multimodal center on this site may be complicated by the required rail curvature, wetland issues and the potential need for a new rail bridge to support any additional sidings, further engineering analysis would be required to determine if such conditions would present fatal flaws.
Site #5 consists of a vacant, 3.1-acre parcel currently owned by Broudy Brothers Ltd., which operates the adjacent Broudy’s Liquor Store at the corner of King Street and U.S. 1. Similar to the Old Mission Avenue Site #3, this location had not been previously explored. It is presently zoned industrial warehouse and is immediately surrounded by a number of vacant and/or underutilized parcels, including many with substandard or dilapidated structures fronting West King Street.

The site is accessible via Depot Street and could also be served by the existing Sunshine Bus route and trolley trams along U.S. 1 and King Street. The area is also within ¼ mile of several shopping, activity centers, and historic neighborhoods and is walkable to the historic district. The site is also close to the West Augustine Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). A multimodal center integrated with other uses provides a future TOD opportunity. Adjacent redevelopment could greatly assist the neighborhood in addressing the need to eliminate blighted conditions, stimulate affordable housing and encourage future infrastructure investment.
West Augustine Zone

The final candidate location was identified in the West Augustine Zone and consists of a County-owned, 4.2-acre parcel that is currently zoned residential. In this case, the site is located north of the Wilbur Wright Industrial Lead spur line and any passenger trains would have to pull off the main line onto the spur to service passengers and then back out onto the main line to travel north or south. While this scenario would not preclude passenger rail service, it is typically not the most desirable solution. The site’s size and vacant, county-owned disposition makes it a good target, in addition to being proximate to tour buses and transit service that could pick up and drop off passengers. In addition, the site could also serve as a place for storing rolling stock overnight without obstructing the FEC’s main line freight traffic. It’s location on the north side of the tracks, however, would require additional pedestrian and crossing safety considerations. While direct access is provided via Rodriguez Street north of King Street, the site lacks overall visibility from major corridors.
PUBLIC OUTREACH
Immediately following the identification of candidate sites, two public workshops were conducted in summer of 2013 to provide an overview of the project, the suitability analysis process and to gain feedback on potential locations. The two meetings, attended by approximately 40 residents, were held at the St. Johns County Commission Auditorium on July 30th and the Alcazar Room, St. Augustine City Hall on August 29th, 2013. A number of media outlets were informed of the study and provided television coverage of the meetings and potential station locations, including the local CBS/FOX Action News affiliate, the City of St. Augustine Government website, metrojacksonville.com, St. Augustine Record, the Historic City News, and the Jacksonville Business Journal. Additionally, a City of St. Augustine Government e-News release was distributed to more than 500 members of the public and neighborhood associations.

Following a brief team presentation, participants were encouraged to review and analyze each of the candidate locations and to complete an open-ended survey regarding each site. While the project team communicated to the audience that this process would result only in a range of options for further evaluation and consideration, the survey was designed to gain perspective on the range of attitudes toward each location. This was followed by a question and answer session. This survey, along with presentation materials and a project executive summary were also included on the North Florida TPO website as an additional opportunity for input.

The vast majority of the participants felt that the process was objective and, most importantly, encouraged meaningful dialogue regarding the need to support alternative transportation and mobility options in the area in both the short and long term. Some of the key comments reflected the following:

- “Who is the market?”
- “…Decisions should be based on facts, not lobbying”
- “…needs to be centered on what brings people (to St. Augustine) to begin with.”
- “…Need a connection to Jacksonville”
- “Shuttles and a multistory parking facility could serve the airport site”
- “Determine what comes first, intercity or commuter rail, which may have different station needs”
More than 80% of public respondents favored the FEC-owned (Site #2) and Depot St. (Site #5) locations. This was largely due to anticipating how best to serve the tourism market and provide more direct access to Downtown. This also reflects the likely direction of Amtrak intercity rail. A few of the respondents did acknowledge that if the airport were to expand regional commercial services with more direct flights, it could be a future location.
What Is Our Implementation Strategy?

Assuming there is operational service and community consensus around the need to build a new center, constructing a center will require active and engaged dialogue and collaboration. Such a center can be a major statement for economic development and revitalization. Such a project will require significant resources in time, money and commitment. Such costs will likely reflect land acquisition, engineering and capital construction, but also recurring costs such as maintenance, any debt service and necessary building upgrades. Ensuring a reliable revenue stream will be necessary to support the long-term viability of such an investment. While there are a range of funding (including discretionary grants and recurring sources of revenue) and implementation vehicles for a proposed multimodal center, the local community’s ability to rely on local contributions and to formulate strategic development agreements and other partnerships should be explored as a more effective means to implementation.

Planning and Partnerships

Leadership

Project champions at the local and regional level will be perhaps the most instrumental way to establish a commitment to carry such a project forward. This will include providing leadership, staff support and other resources, such as active involvement from future passenger rail providers and local transit providers such as Sunshine Bus, JTA and the local tourist trolley companies. In addition, once consensus on a direction to implement the project is achieved, the study team strongly recommends to “house” the project within a formal agency or institution (St. Johns County Economic Development, City of St. Augustine Administration, or even Flagler College, for example) that would be responsible for championing implementation. This establishes a reputable project clearinghouse that can help set clear priorities—including project messaging—and achieve results through the involvement of staff, elected officials, educational, tourist development and chamber of commerce stakeholders and business merchants.

Regulatory Planning

The City of St. Augustine and St. Johns County should also coordinate to provide regulatory planning assistance by instituting policy mechanisms that would help protect potential locations. Whether through acquisition, demolition, infrastructure and utility improvements and/or design guidelines, the development of a master planning and regulatory framework around the prioritized location(s) will provide a valuable tool to facilitate future entitlements, funding support and design. This will provide a sense of community predictability around a future use and position the site(s) as a marketable destination for prospective developers and tenants.
Attracting outside investors will be imperative to the success of the project as more than a multimodal center, but an economic development generator. Attracting partners and investors will be imperative to create an attractive development center around transit for a variety of complementary uses. The potential for TOD and mixed-use housing opportunities will be much greater by implementing policies and tools such as re-zonings and area specific design guidelines, including formal station area master plans (SAMPs), which will define public needs relating to multimodal transportation and ensure consistent and compatible design outcomes. Likewise, such tools can be used for more direct actions, such as land assembly, where parcels can be acquired and sold at a reduced price or held until the market demand is stronger so as to leverage higher density projects and encourage a greater mix of uses around a future station site. Providing development assistance to encourage private investment around a station can be achieved through a mix of investing public funds, tax or fee abatements and fast tracking development review and permitting. Such tools can provide for flexibility and establish the vision and implementation framework for each potential station area.

**Funding Resources**

In order to be most successful, a mix of funding resources, both public and private will likely be required. Typically, federal and/or state funding combined with a local match is most often used to get the basic station project off of the ground. Additional partnerships and investment from private sources, such as educational or institutional sources may be required to bring additional infrastructure and/or associated TOD opportunities adjacent to the site. Reliance on local funding support will be a key, however, to leverage such federal or private dollars. Given the current political and economic climate, funding for such projects can be challenging. Only the most competitive...
projects that truly demonstrate livability and sustainability (places that best coordinate transportation, housing and jobs to serve those living in the area) combined with strong partnerships are those most often selected for funding. The following provides a list of potential sources to for the St. Augustine community to consider:

**Federal**
Projects such as a multimodal center for St. Augustine would fall under the increasingly limited amount of discretionary grant programs available through the United States Department of Transportation via the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), respectively. The most recent authorization bill for federal funding, MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) was approved in June of 2012, without any increases in transportation user fees, such as the gas tax. Given the decline in federal earmarks from which projects of this sort were largely funded, there will be less federal dollars available, outside of competitive discretionary funding. Most grant opportunities require at least a 20% local match.

**TIGER Discretionary Grants**—Some of the case study examples were funded through the use of TIGER monies. Discretionary funding opportunities through the TIGER program are available to projects that foster innovative, multimodal and multi-jurisdictional transportation solutions and which demonstrate significant economic and environmental benefits to an area. To date there have been five rounds of TIGER funding, the most recent of which was in 2013 where 52 projects in 37 states received a total of $474 million.

**Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**—Replacing the older Transportation Enhancement Program, this program offers funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices through 12 eligible activities related to surface transportation, one of which is the rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals) for transportation improvements.

**FTA Joint Development Funding**—Joint development refers to the development of real property that was purchased with Federal Transit Administration funds. Such property is developed while maintaining its original public transportation purpose by placing residential, commercial or community service development on, above or adjacent to property purchased with FTA funds. Examples may include the construction, renovation and improvement of intercity bus and intercity rail stations and terminals and/or the renovation and improvement of historic transportation facilities. Specific activities include real estate acquisition, demolition, site preparation, intermodal transfer facilities, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, parking, and other improvements. To be eligible for such funds, joint development improvements must satisfy certain economic criteria and provide a public transportation benefit and revenue stream for public transportation.
United States Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Program—Should a candidate site have environmental or contamination issues that would result in costly site cleanup, there are grant funding opportunities through the Brownfields Assessment Grant Program and the Brownfields and Land Revitalization Programs. These provide funding for planning/assessment and site cleanup, including the restoration of such brownfield sites to productive uses and the revitalization of affected neighborhoods.

State and Local

Florida Historic Preservation Grants Program—The Preservation Grants Program allocates state funds appropriated by the Legislature and federal funds apportioned to the state by the U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, for the preservation and protection of the state’s historic and archaeological sites and properties. The program is administered by the Bureau of Historic Preservation, Division of Historical Resources. Two types of grants are awarded through this program: Small Matching Grants and Special Category Grants. The existing FEC passenger Depot on U.S. 1 and San Marco Avenue may be eligible for rehabilitation and restoration grant assistance as it is at least 50 years old.

Tax Increment Financing and Value Capture—Community redevelopment areas (CRA) are used in Florida as dependent special districts for funding infrastructure projects. In such districts, future increases in property valuations are set aside to support infrastructure and economic development projects within those districts, known as tax increment financing. There are three designated Community Redevelopment Areas within the St. Augustine Urbanized Area: the West Augustine CRA, Downtown St. Augustine CRA and the Lincolnville CRA. Some of the candidate sites—including Sites 5 and 6—are not technically within the limits of these existing CRAs. If such areas meet the statutory requirements relative to a CRA Finding of Necessity, consideration of expanding existing CRA boundaries to capture potential sites or even adjacent parcels can facilitate redevelopment activities around a potential center.

Leasing Options—As a sustainable source of operations and maintenance funding for a future multimodal center, rent and lease payments are likely to be generated on the site if additional retail or office space is provided as part of the center. Such monies can help cover potential debt service. As St. Augustine develops a potential station area master plan and contemplates other uses and adjacent facilities as part of the overall multimodal center, it can develop a pro forma to specifically estimate the rent/lease revenues to support project costs.

Local Option Taxes—County governments are authorized to levy up to 12 cents of local option fuel taxes in three separate levies on fuel sold within the county. The funds are used for transportation expenditures:

- The ninth-cent fuel tax is a tax of 1 cent on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold within a county.
- A tax of 1 to 6 cents on every net gallon of motor and diesel fuel sold within a county.
A tax of 1 to 5 cents on every net gallon of motor fuel sold within a county. Diesel fuel is not subject to this tax. The funds may also be used to meet the requirements of the capital improvements element of an adopted local government comprehensive plan.

While St. Johns County currently collects local option fuel taxes, the proceeds are generally used for operations and maintenance activities as opposed to funding capital improvements. The additional second option fuel tax hasn’t been implemented in any county with the North Florida region, thus revenues with the additional five cents in St. Johns County could be available for such projects.

The local option sales tax (also known as the “Local Government Infrastructure Surtax”) can be levied by county governing bodies at a rate of 0.5% or 1% up to 15 years. It is generally adopted through a countywide referendum. The tax applies to all purchases subject to the regular 6% sales tax, except for sale amount purchases exceeding $5,000. Tax proceeds can be expended only to plan and construct infrastructure, or to acquire land for public recreation, conservation, or to protection of natural resources.

St. Johns County does not currently exercise its option to impose any portion of the local option sales tax and could implement the Local Infrastructure Surtax up to 1%.

In addition, transient rental/tourist development taxes could be raised in St. Johns County to help offset the costs of a potential multimodal center. Florida law allows counties to impose local option transient rental taxes on rentals or leases of accommodations in hotels, motels, apartments, rooming houses, mobile home parks, RV parks, condominiums, or timeshare resorts for a term of six months or less. Such revenues can be used for capital construction of tourist-related facilities and tourist promotion.

**Private**

**Sponsorships and Naming Rights**—Sponsorships and the sale of advertising rights and the naming of facilities can serve as a potential means of funding support. With a highly visible center in the tourist-dominated St. Augustine market, there are a variety of programmatic elements and facility components that can be “themed” (i.e. around the historic, Flagler legacy) and subsequently purchased or financially sponsored. Such agreements can be short or long term and renegotiated as needed.

**Capital Campaigns**—Recognizing the need to form public private partnerships around such a project, a potential support entity could establish events and fundraising goals to undertake the capital investment associated with a potential center. Events and marketing efforts can be coordinated using local volunteers or with the assistance of outside expertise with goal of raising a particular amount over a given timeframe.