

2016

FRA Rail Program Delivery

Meeting

Gulf Coast Working Group – Report to Congress

- **Knox Ross**, *Executive Committee Member, Southern Rail Commission*
- **Marc Dixon**, *South Central Regional Manager, FRA*

Overview

- ▶ **FAST Act Requirement**
- ▶ **History of Gulf Coast Passenger Rail Service**
 - ▶ Southern Rail Commission's efforts pre-FAST Act
- ▶ **Gulf Coast Working Group's efforts since FAST Act enactment**
 - ▶ Milestones & Current Status

FAST Act – Section 11304

Gulf Coast Working Group

FAST Act – Section 11304

- ▶ Required DOT/FRA to convene Gulf Coast Working Group (GCWG) 90 days after Dec. 4, 2015

- ▶ GCWG Membership:
 - ▶ FRA , Chair
 - ▶ Southern Rail Commission, CSX, Norfolk Southern, Amtrak, state & local governments, MPOs/RPCs, U.S. Coast Guard, etc.

FAST Act – Section 11304

▶ **Mission:**

- ▶ Evaluate all options for restoring intercity rail passenger service in the Gulf Coast region.
- ▶ Submit report to Congress 9 months from FAST Act enactment date – Sept. 4, 2016.

▶ **Report content:**

- ▶ Preferred option;
- ▶ Prioritized list of capital projects & other actions required to restore service;
- ▶ Costs & benefits of service in the region;
- ▶ Cost estimates; and
- ▶ Federal & non-federal funding sources

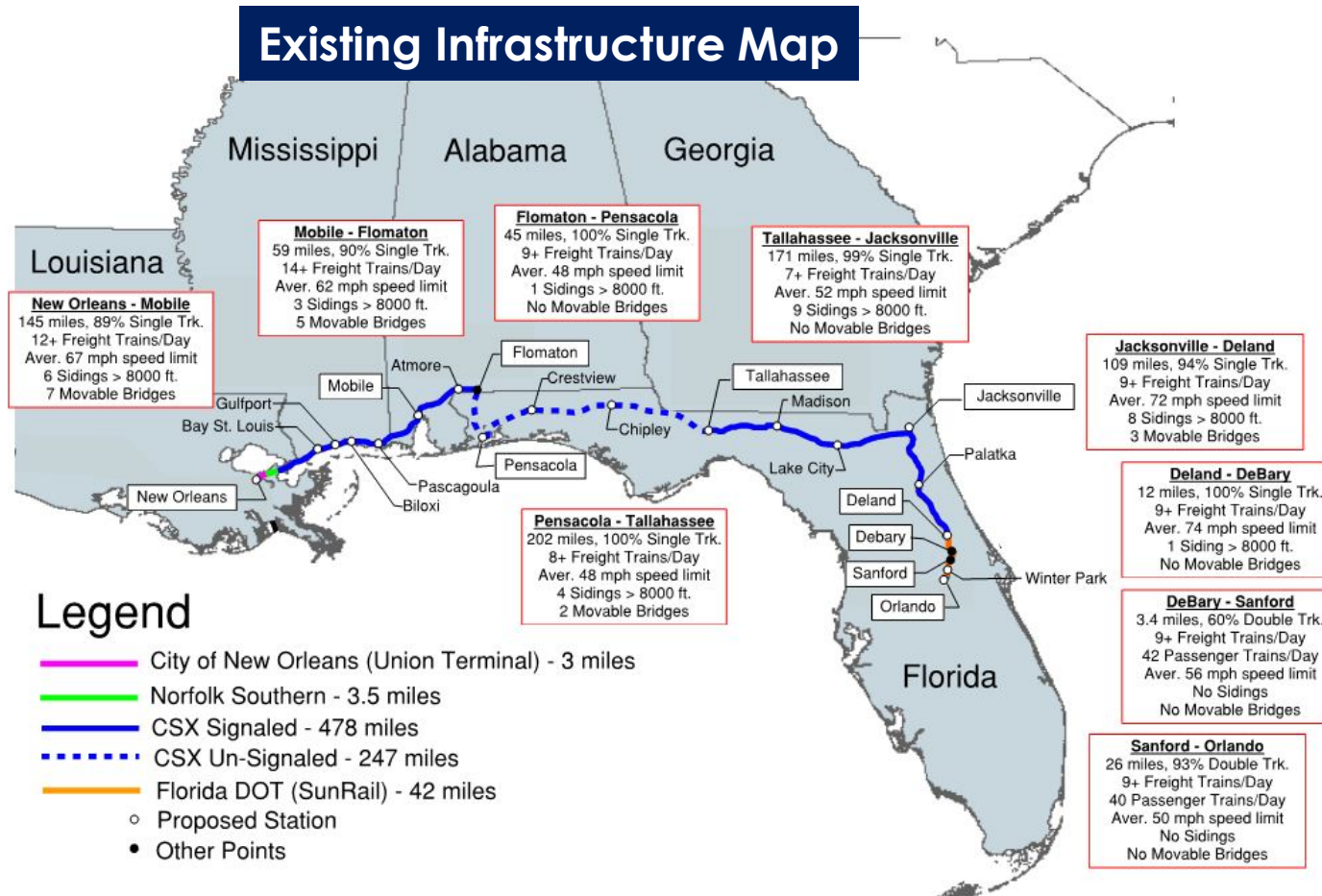
History of Gulf Coast Passenger Service

And SRC's Efforts to Restore Service

History of Gulf Coast Passenger Service

- ▶ **Pre-1971 & 1984 – 2005:** some form of passenger service existed.
- ▶ **1993:** Amtrak's *Sunset Limited* route extended from L.A. to New Orleans...and onto Jacksonville, Orlando, and Miami (initially)
 - ▶ Tri-weekly trips
 - ▶ Many challenges (delays, on-time perf., declining ridership)
- ▶ **Aug. 2005:** [Hurricane Katrina hits](#) and *Sunset Limited* service was suspended east of New Orleans...
 - ▶ ...cost & challenges with restoring service shortly after Katrina.

History of Gulf Coast Passenger Service



History of Gulf Coast Passenger Service

- ▶ Many efforts to restore service since Hurricane Katrina/Aug. 2005
 - ▶ **2008:** PRIA requirement for Amtrak to develop a plan → *July 2009, Gulf Coast Service Plan Report.*
 - ▶ 2009 report updated with Amtrak's Dec. 2015 *Report for the [SRC], Potential Gulf Coast Service Restoration Options.*
 - ▶ **2010 - 2012:** Mayors, business leaders, and civic organizations initiated discussions and provided recommendations for service
 - ▶ **2014:** SRC began leading efforts with local agencies & communities

GCWVG's efforts since Dec. 2015 & Milestones

GCWG's Efforts since 12/2015 & Milestones

- ▶ **Dec. 2015 – Jan. 2016: GCWG Formed**
 - ▶ FRA led ramp up efforts to form GCWG and set inaugural meeting
 - ▶ GCWG consists of ~30 member organizations
- ▶ **February 16 -19, 2016: Inaugural Meeting in New Orleans**
 - ▶ GCWG agrees on preferred option
 - ▶ Two-day inspection train travels the corridor
- ▶ **GCWG meets twice per month**
 - ▶ One in-person meeting and one teleconference

GCWG's Efforts since 12/2015 & Milestones

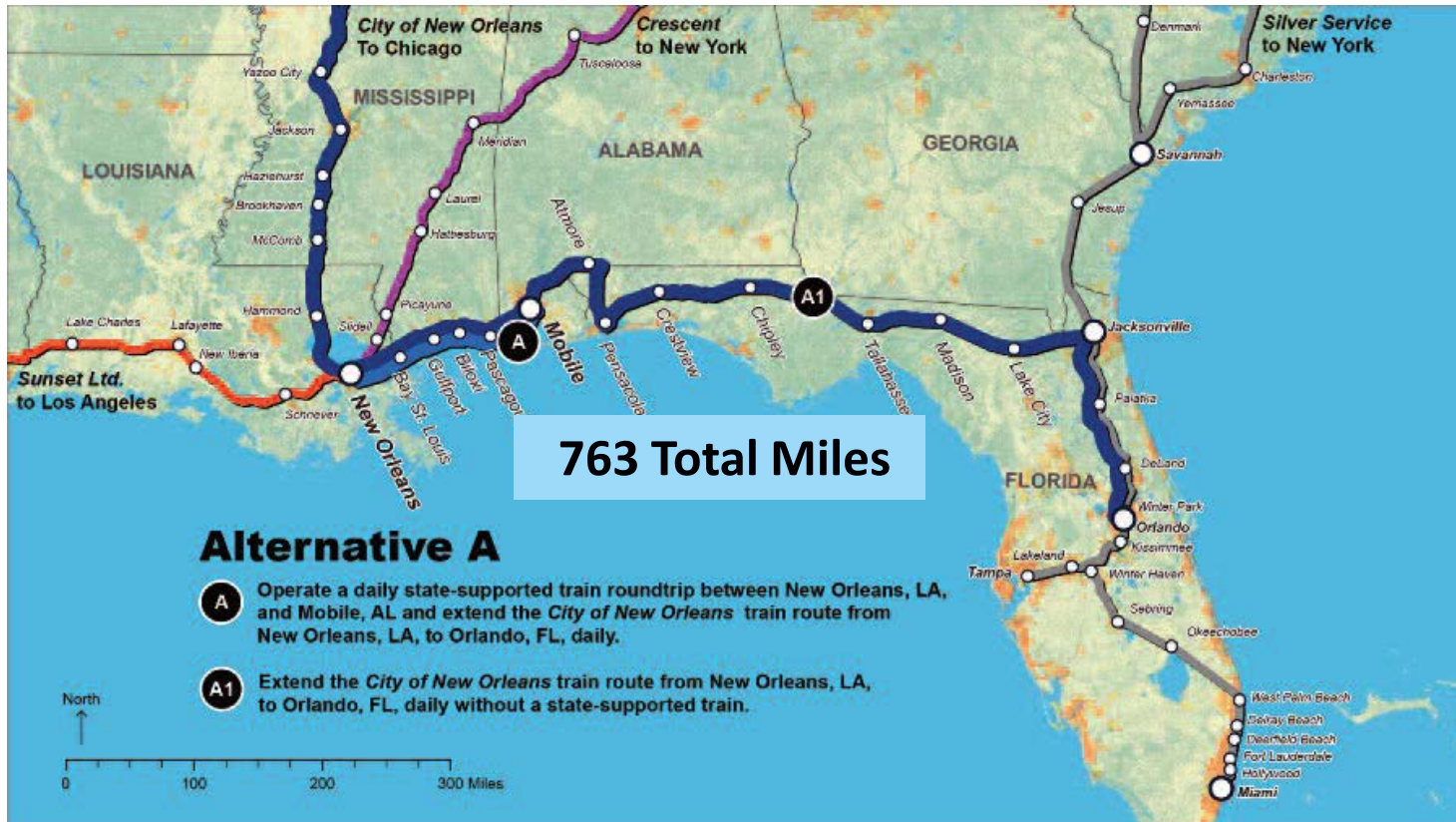


*Feb. 18 – 19, 2016
Amtrak Inspection Train*



Source: http://www.al.com/news/mobile/index.ssf/2016/02/after_10_years_amtrak_returns.html#incart_river_home; Accessed site on 11/19/2016

GCWG's Efforts since 12/2015 & Milestones



The preferred option analyzes daily roundtrip service between New Orleans to Orlando AND a new daily roundtrip, state-supported service between Atmore, AL and New Orleans

GCWG's Efforts since 12/2015 & Milestones

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- ▶ **May – early August 2016: Operations Modeling**
 - ▶ CSX & HDR, Inc. completed operations simulation/modeling

- ▶ **July – Sept. 2016: Amtrak Station Assessment**
 - ▶ On-site condition assessment survey of 12 stations (MS, AL, & FL)
 - ▶ Cost estimates: \$7.8 – \$13 million

- ▶ **Sept 2, 2016 – Status update letter to Congress**
 - ▶ FRA sends GCWG status update letter to Congress, in lieu of the report

GCWG's Efforts since 12/2015 & Milestones

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▶ **Current Status: In-depth Analysis In Progress...**

- ▶ Continued collaborative discussions and technical meetings to refine the results of the operations modeling work.

▶ **Near Future...**

- ▶ **Dec. 9, 2016:** FRA will submit and second status update letter to Congress
- ▶ **March/April 2017:** Submit full report to Congress!

2016

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Meeting

Thank you!

Marc Dixon, *South Central Regional Manager*

Marc.Dixon@dot.gov

(202) 493-0614