

What's Next...

Joint High Speed Rail Statement Tampa Bay Partnership and Central Florida Partnership February 24, 2011

Yesterday, representatives of the Cities of Tampa and Orlando along with representatives from the federal government presented to Governor Scott proposals for High Speed Rail designed to meet his stated concerns. These proposals showed **how the State could “privatize” high speed rail, shifting the financial risk of the project to the private sector.** The Governor rejected these proposals and remained resolute in rejecting \$2.4 billion in federal funds offered to our State to build the first bullet train in the United States.

We agree with the Governor that **Florida needs to approach decisions like this in a business-like manner.** That's been our view all along, which is exactly why we have supported High Speed Rail in Florida. Although every business needs to improve operational efficiency year in and year out, any business that wants to secure its future must also invest in the drivers of its success. No business can cut its way to growth.

The [Tampa Bay Partnership](#) and the [Central Florida Partnership](#) seek to create sustainable, productive, and inclusive prosperity for our Super Region. This is not a short-term proposition, but one that **requires long-term vision, discipline, and investment.** To accomplish this goal, we have to develop the drivers for regional prosperity, which include innovation, talent, health, education, economic development, and infrastructure. The proposed High Speed Rail project would have helped our region and our State enhance each and every one of these drivers materially.

The Super Region stretching across Central Florida includes world-class airports, international seaports, the Medical City in Orlando comprising a growing cluster of top health care, educational, life-science, and bio-tech enterprises driving innovation and attracting top talent, the High Tech Corridor supporting hundreds of developing high-tech companies, USF's Poly-Tech Campus in Lakeland, USF's new Innovation Corridor in Tampa, UCF's modeling and Simulation Center, NASA, numerous top educational, health care, life science, aerospace and bio-tech organizations across Central Florida, world-renown tourist attractions, and burgeoning metropolitan areas. Our efforts for Florida's Super Region have shown **there are real opportunities if we can connect these assets.** The proposed High Speed Rail system would have created a powerful link among all of these high-potential centers across our Super Region driving their growth and continued success. We therefore supported this project as a crucial investment in our future and one well worth making.

We cannot allow the demise of this project, as unfortunate as it may be, to impede our efforts to develop the potential of our Super Region. The Tampa Bay Partnership and the Central Florida Partnership will continue to work our plan – [Connecting for Global Competitiveness](#) – which has focused on developing all the drivers for success of this region, including much-needed infrastructure like mass-transit, well before the federal dollars for high speed rail were even on the table. **In the final analysis this is all about vision, and our vision for this region remains resolute.**

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