

I-95 Corridor Coalition

Southeast Rail Operations Study, Phase II

Tasks 1 and 2: Strategic Corridor Identification and Mapping

FINAL REPORT



**I-95 CORRIDOR
COALITION**

June 2011

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Prepared for:

I-95 Corridor Coalition

Sponsored by:

I-95 Corridor Coalition

Prepared by:

Cambridge Systematics

FINAL REPORT

June 2011

This report was produced by the I-95 Corridor Coalition. The I-95 Corridor Coalition is a partnership of state departments of transportation, regional and local transportation agencies, toll authorities, and related organizations, including law enforcement, port, transit, and rail organizations, from Maine to Florida, with affiliate members in Canada. Additional information on the Coalition, including other project reports, can be found on the Coalition's web site at <http://www.i95coalition.org>.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	ES-1
Passenger Rail Initiatives	ES-1
Freight Rail Initiatives	ES-5
Next Steps.....	ES-9
1.0 Objective.....	1-1
2.0 Background	2-1
2.1 Genesis of SEROps	2-1
2.2 Current Phase: Identify Regional Initiatives	2-2
3.0 Approach.....	3-1
4.0 Intercity Passenger Rail Network and Initiatives.....	4-1
4.1 Current Intercity Rail Network	4-1
4.2 Passenger Rail Priority Corridors and Initiatives	4-3
U.S. DOT High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program	4-3
Southeast Passenger Rail Initiatives	4-4
4.3 Passenger Rail Initiatives Summary	4-13
5.0 Freight Rail Network and Initiatives	5-1
5.1 Current Freight Rail Network	5-1
5.2 Freight Rail Priority Corridors and Initiatives	5-2
5.3 Freight Rail Initiatives Summary	5-9
6.0 Next Phase	6-1

List of Tables

ES.1 Intercity Passenger Corridor Initiatives	ES-4
ES.2 Freight Rail Corridor Initiatives	ES-8
4.1 Intercity Passenger Corridor Initiatives	4-6
5.1 Freight Rail Corridor Initiatives	5-5

List of Figures

ES.1 Intercity Passenger Priority Corridors and Initiatives	ES-3
ES.2 Freight Rail Priority Corridors and Initiatives	ES-7
4.1 Amtrak Intercity Passenger Network in the Southeast Region	4-2
4.2 U.S. Intercity Passenger Rail Network	4-4
4.3 Intercity Passenger Priority Corridors and Initiatives	4-5
4.4 Southeast High-Speed Rail (HSR) Corridor Major Segments	4-10
5.1 CSXT and Norfolk Southern Freight Rail Lines	5-2
5.2 Freight Rail Priority Corridors and Initiatives	5-4

Executive Summary

The Southeastern Rail Operations Study (SEROps) Phase IIA report identifies nationally and regionally significant passenger and freight-rail corridors and major terminal initiatives in the Southeastern United States. This report, the second in a series, builds on initial (Phase I) demographic and economic findings by describing the rail initiatives that might help the region accommodate future freight and passenger transportation demand.¹ Study participants include the five southernmost states of the I-95 Corridor Coalition – Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida – and five neighboring states – Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. Together, the 10-state study coalition is developing the vision, supporting data, and consensus on important regional projects to advance toward implementation. This project helps satisfy growing public interest in rail transportation and positions the Southeast to receive Federal funding for rail projects.

The freight and passenger rail initiatives presented in this report represent programs that are underway, programmed, planned, or are part of a collaborative long-term “vision,” and have been identified in planning documents and by Department of Transportation (DOT) and/or other agencies’ staff in each of the Southeast states, and by Amtrak, CSX Transportation (CSXT), and Norfolk Southern (NS) railroads. These projects represent investments in the region’s rail infrastructure which will preserve or expand freight and passenger service and contribute to economic (re)development throughout the region and beyond. In order to identify important initiatives, the study team canvassed state planning documents, consulted with staff, and collaborated with the region’s major rail carriers. Through this research activity, the 10-state coalition and study team developed consolidated lists and descriptions of major passenger and freight rail initiatives in the region that will serve as the focus of multistate collaborative planning efforts.

PASSENGER RAIL INITIATIVES

What is the state of passenger rail in the Southeast?

The current Amtrak network links many of the major population centers of the Southeast, moving nearly four million annual riders. Some of the routes, including the Carolinian, are supported by state funding. The most recent addition to the state-sponsored service is a new extension of the Northeast Corridor

¹ <http://www.i95coalition.org/i95/Projects/ProjectDatabase/tabid/120/agentType/View/PropertyID/183/Default.aspx>.

between Washington, D.C. and Lynchburg, Virginia on Norfolk Southern's Piedmont line. Despite progress by the states and Amtrak in connecting more cities and providing greater frequency of service, there are some notable service gaps – including the lack of service to Nashville, Tennessee and Louisville, Kentucky. Also, since 2005, the Sunset Limited, which previously connected Jacksonville with New Orleans, has been out of service due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. Several rail initiatives seek to address these gaps in the future.

Which initiatives will help meet future passenger demand in the Southeast?

The Southeastern states are actively engaged in at least a dozen major passenger rail corridor development initiatives, several of which coincide with the U.S. DOT high-speed rail designations. Sponsored by individual states and/or multistate consortia, these initiatives range from nascent efforts to mature multistate coalitions moving through the Tiered Environmental Impact Statement EIS process toward implementation. The initiatives include track upgrades to enable higher speed intercity passenger service (90 miles per hour); acquisition of rail rolling stock; and intermodal station infrastructure improvements. Many of these projects would benefit both Amtrak passenger and freight railroad operations. State passenger rail programs, including sponsorship of Amtrak service, have been an important driving force for implementing service in the Southeast.

A map of passenger rail initiatives on existing and proposed passenger rail corridors is presented as Figure ES.1 and corresponds to Table ES.1. In addition to existing Amtrak corridors, other rail corridors have been identified as opportunities to develop new intercity passenger rail corridors connecting major cities throughout the region. The full report contains detailed descriptions of each initiative.

Figure ES.1 Intercity Passenger Priority Corridors and Initiatives

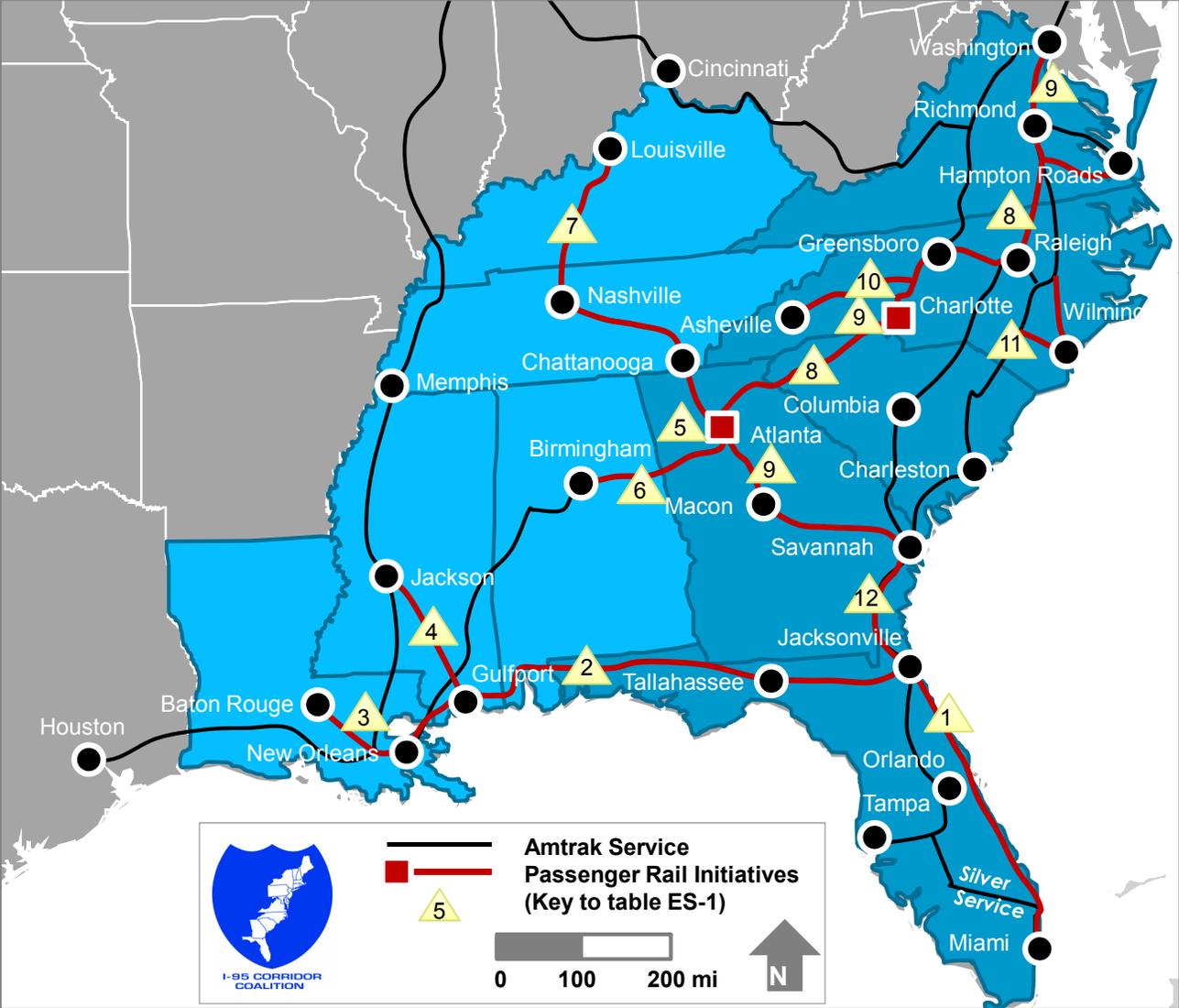


Table ES.1 Intercity Passenger Corridor Initiatives^a

Map Num.	Initiative or Project	Segment	Project Description	States Affected												
				FL	GA	SC	NC	VA	AL	MS	LA	TN	KY			
1	Florida East Coast Passenger Service	Jacksonville to Miami	Restoration of passenger service between Jacksonville and Miami; includes Jacksonville Transit Center	●												
2	Sunset Limited Restoration/HSR	Jacksonville to New Orleans (multisegment corridor)	Restoration/HSR upgrade of passenger service between Jacksonville and Miami.	●						●	●	●				
3	New Orleans-Baton Rouge HSR	New Orleans to Baton Rouge	Development of HSR corridor										●			
4	Gulfport-Jackson HSR	Gulfport to Jackson	Development of HSR corridor								●					
5	Atlanta Multimodal Passenger Complex	Atlanta	Anchor to multiple HSR corridors		●											
6	Atlanta-Birmingham HSR	Atlanta to Birmingham	Development of HSR corridor		●					●						
7	Atlanta-Louisville HSR	Atlanta to Louisville	Development of HSR corridor		●									●	●	
8	Southeast HSR Corridor	Washington to Atlanta (core route) with multiple extensions	Development of HSR corridor	●	●	●	●	●								
9	CRISP	Charlotte Region	Improved passenger and intermodal access and connectivity				●									
10	Western North Carolina Passenger Rail	Charlotte to Asheville	New passenger rail service				●									
11	Southeast North Carolina Passenger Rail	Wilmington, NC to I-95 Corridor	New passenger rail service				●									
12	Atlanta, Macon, Jacksonville HSR Feasibility Study	Atlanta to Jacksonville	Development of HSR corridor	●	●											

● = Project State

^a **Note on High-Speed Rail:** HSR is the abbreviation for high-speed rail, which in the case of some of the initiatives is true high-speed rail at speeds reaching 110 miles per hour or faster (49 USC §26405 (b)(4)). For most initiatives, HSR represents “higher” speed rail with speeds in the range of 90 miles per hour.

FREIGHT RAIL INITIATIVES

What is the state of the freight rail network in the Southeast?

The Southeast regional rail network is comprised of a set of primary Class I freight railroad corridors, secondary freight rail corridors, major intercity passenger corridors, and short-line freight and commuter/local passenger service corridors. NS and CSXT are the two Class I railroads with the greatest presence in the Southeast region, operating over 65 percent of the track mileage in the 10-state study area. The “western” Class I railroads such as Union Pacific (UP), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), and Kansas City Southern (KCS), and Canadian National (CN) have significant presence in the states located along the Mississippi River (Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky). Collectively, the freight railroads of the Southeast moved nearly 12 million carloads in 2008 and employed nearly 50,000.

Like the passenger rail network in the Southeast, the current freight rail network connects major population centers and other important rail demand centers – including the maritime Ports of Virginia, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville, Everglades, Miami, Tampa, Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans. Rail traffic in the Southeast and across the United States is beginning to rebound from the severe recessionary period. During this period of lower traffic, the freight railroads have made significant capital investments to prepare for the region’s long-term growth. As outlined in the first phase of the SEROps project, the Southeast will experience high population and employment growth in the coming decades. Another important dynamic affecting the freight rail industry in the Southeastern states is the enlarged Panama Canal, which has the potential to substantially increase shipments through East and Gulf Coast ports upon its completion in 2015. To prepare for these growth trends, the freight railroads and state partners are sponsoring several freight rail initiatives.

Which initiatives will help meet future freight demand in the Southeast?

The Southeastern states are actively engaged in at least 11 regionally significant freight rail corridor and terminal improvement initiatives, some with multiple major projects en route. In most cases, the initiatives are jointly supported by the railroads and state partners. Several of the major initiatives have recently received Federal funds appropriated by Congress or through the recent American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) rounds of Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) funding.

These projects range in maturity from early planning to partial implementation. Some projects, including NS’ Crescent Corridor and CSXT’s National Gateway have received Federal funding through the TIGER program. Other projects,

including CSXT improvements in Florida have received state funding. Projects include capacity improvements (e.g., sidings, double-stack clearances, terminals) and improvements to speed and operations. In the future, the successful implementation of projects will continue to depend on collaboration between public and private partners, including freight railroads, shippers, local agencies, states, and the Federal government.

The initiatives are illustrated on a map in Figure ES.2. Table ES.2 lists freight corridor and terminal initiatives identified in the planning documents and by interviewees. The full report contains detailed descriptions of each initiative.

Figure ES.2 Freight Rail Priority Corridors and Initiatives

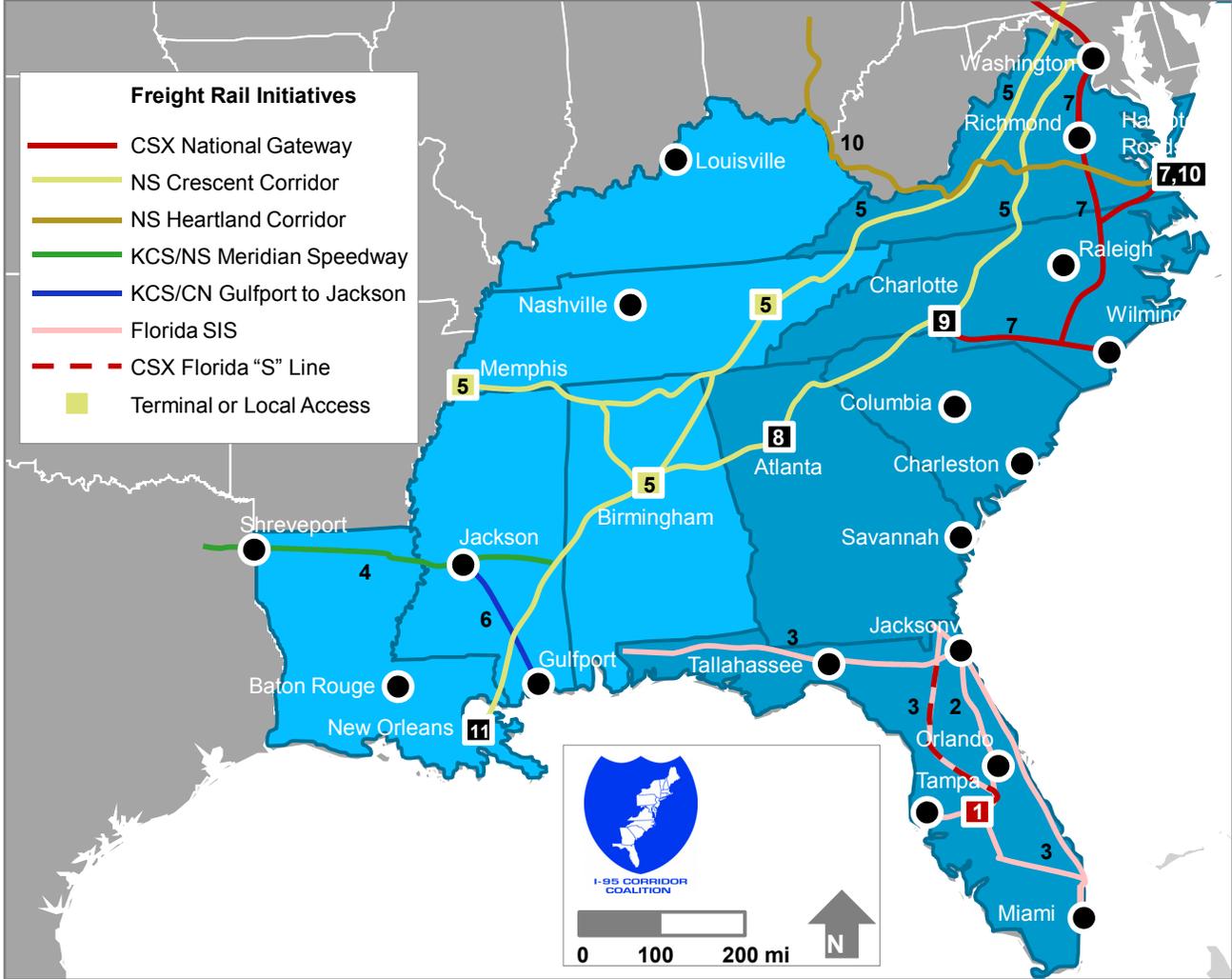


Table ES.2 Freight Rail Corridor Initiatives

Map Reference	Initiative or Project	Segment	Project Description	States Affected											
				FL	GA	SC	NC	VA	AL	MS	LA	TN	KY		
1	Integrated Logistics Center Winter Haven	Winter Haven, FL	Consolidated logistics and intermodal center to serve Tampa and Orlando markets	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2	CSXT “S” Line Improvements	Jacksonville, FL to Winter Haven, FL	Capacity, speed improvements	●	○	○	○	○							
3	Florida Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Improvements	Statewide	Improvements to enhance connectivity to ports and terminals	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4	KCS/NS Meridian Speedway	Shreveport to Meridian, MS	Capacity, speed improvements		○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○			
5	NS Crescent Corridor	New Orleans, LA and Memphis, TN to NJ	Corridor capacity and speed improvements and several terminal improvements		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
6	KCS/CN Gulfport to Jackson	Gulfport to Jackson	Capacity, speed improvements		○	●	○	○	○	●		○	○		
7	CSX National Gateway	Wilmington, NC and Charlotte, NC to Ohio	Double-stack, yard, and terminal improvements linking Mid-Atlantic to Ohio		○	●	●	●							
8	Atlanta Regional Improvements	Atlanta, Georgia	Alleviate freight and passenger bottleneck at Howell Junction; expand Austell Intermodal Yard		●	○	○		○						
9	Charlotte Intermodal Terminals and CRISP	Charlotte region	CSXT and NS Intermodal Terminals; CRISP grade separation and wye improvements		○	○	●	○							
10	NS Heartland Corridor	Hampton Roads, VA to Columbus, OH	Double-stack corridor improvements complete but two intermodal terminals needed					●							
11	New Orleans Gateway	New Orleans region	Improve traffic flow at convergence of six railroads at New Orleans		○				○	○	●				

● = Project State; ○ = Interstate network/connectivity effects

NEXT STEPS

The information on passenger and freight rail initiatives in the SEROps IIA report provides the foundation for future SEROps efforts. SEROps Phase IIB will advance the study on the following fronts:

- **Development of a more detailed rail program** – To provide more granular information for decision-making and prioritization, the I-95 Corridor Coalition will engage the states and railroads to more fully describe and document the characteristics of the current infrastructure – including maps depicting speed, capacity, technologies (e.g., signaling), freight and passenger flows.
- **Identification of benefits** – Using the successful template of the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Study (MAROps), the I-95 Corridor Coalition will apply the organizing principles of SEROps to quantify benefits of the initiatives – including reductions in traffic congestion, enhancements to safety and air quality, and other important factors.
- **Develop List of Pilot Projects** – Based on the benefits analysis or another mutually agreeable prioritization process, the SEROps states will cooperatively identify a set of “pilot” projects that might have the highest likelihood to qualify for Federal funding.
- **Application of lessons learned** – The I-95 Corridor Coalition will examine the success of other multistate rail initiatives, most notably the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MRRI) which has been successful in focusing the resources of its member states to advance the highest priority projects.

Through these efforts, the Southeastern states can emerge as a more unified and organized region to cooperatively advance mutually beneficial passenger and freight rail initiatives across all 10 states.

1.0 Objective

The purpose of this report is to describe the freight and passenger rail network in the Southeast Region, and to identify corridors where strategic investments for the benefit of the entire region are planned, programmed, or proposed in a long-range, “vision,” scenario. For the purpose of this study, “Southeast Region” refers to the five southernmost states in the I-95 Corridor Coalition region – Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida – and five neighboring states – Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Tennessee. This study has expanded its geographic scope beyond the I-95 Corridor Coalition states because many of the regionally significant freight and passenger rail corridors extend beyond the Coalition’s boundaries and major investments outside the region could have significant impacts and benefits for the Coalition states.

The initiatives presented in this report represent programs that are underway, programmed, planned, or are part of a collaborative long-term “vision,” and have been identified in planning documents and by DOT and/or other agencies’ staff in each of the Southeast states, and by Amtrak, CSXT, and Norfolk Southern railroads. These projects represent investments in the region’s rail infrastructure which will preserve or expand freight and passenger service and contribute to economic (re)development throughout the region and beyond.

- **Section 2.0** provides a brief summary of the genesis of the SEROps Phase II study.
- **Section 3.0** details the approach utilized to identify rail network features and potential improvement projects.
- **Sections 4.0 and 5.0** describe the priority corridors and initiatives identified by planning documents and interviewees on the major regional passenger and freight rail networks, respectively.
- **Section 6.0** proposes SEROps Phase II next steps to help advance the passenger and freight initiatives.

2.0 Background

2.1 GENESIS OF SEROPS

The I-95 Corridor Coalition is a partnership of state departments of transportation (DOT), regional and local transportation agencies, toll authorities, and related organizations (including law enforcement, transit, port, and rail organizations) from Maine to Florida with affiliate members in Canada. The Coalition and its member agencies have been actively addressing rail issues in other parts of the Coalition region through the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Study (MAROps), the second phase of which was completed in 2009; and the Northeast Rail Operations (NEROps) Study, the first phase of which was completed in 2007. These two studies examined the transportation systems in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions as a system, identified key infrastructure, operational, and institutional chokepoints affecting rail efficiency, and provided planning and policy guidance to the states and railroads to improve the efficiency of these systems moving forward.

In 2007, the Southeastern states of the I-95 Corridor Coalition (Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina), launched a similar rail planning effort to improve multistate coordination and infrastructure investment actions. The objective of the effort – named Southeast Rail Operations Study (SEROps) was to define a long-range vision for the role of rail in the region that answers the following questions:

- What is the appropriate role of rail within the region’s multimodal transportation system?
- How can the Southeast rail system meet future needs of growing urban areas and ports?
- Which projects, including potential new routes and connections, will fulfill the long-range rail vision?
- What level of investment will be needed to realize the vision?

The first phase of the SEROps effort sought to answer the first two questions through analytical and outreach efforts which identified trends that would affect the region’s transportation system. The Phase I effort culminated in a report published in the spring of 2008 that described key trends and issues affecting current and future operations of rail throughout the Southeast region and provided technical and institutional recommendations to guide the structure and management of the future SEROps phases.

In 2009 the I-95 Corridor Coalition and Southeastern states developed a scope of work for Phase II of the study to answer the last two questions – to identify initiatives and projects to achieve the long-term vision and to determine the investments necessary to deliver the projects. In the spring of 2010, the I-95 Corridor Coalition authorized Phase IIA, with the following objectives:

- Identify strategic freight- and passenger-rail corridors in the Southeast region; and
- Provide technical assistance to the Southeast states in advancing a regional rail program.

2.2 CURRENT PHASE: IDENTIFY REGIONAL INITIATIVES

SEROps Phase IIA expands upon Phase I with the addition of I-95 Corridor Coalition member Virginia and the adjacent states of Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Kentucky. While these adjacent states are not members of the I-95 Corridor Coalition, their economies are tightly linked with those of the original SEROps states and several of the states already are working together on passenger and freight initiatives. The I-95 Corridor Coalition is sponsoring this work in order to better position its member states and neighboring states to advance mutually beneficial rail initiatives. All participants in this study recognize that proactive planning and organization will enable the Southeast to work strategically and collaboratively toward the implementation of short- and long-term freight and passenger rail investments. Interest by the states in the joint SEROps effort is heightened by several recent national trends and unprecedented Federal interest and support of rail projects. These include:

- **Freight rail corridor initiatives are gaining momentum.** CSXT and Norfolk Southern have been national leaders in developing improvement programs to improve corridor capacity through the National Gateway (CSXT) and Crescent (NS) corridors. These initiatives transcend state boundaries and consequently require coordinated planning across multiple jurisdictions and private entities.
- **Southeastern markets are linked more effectively through planning.** The SEROps Phase I report described the rapid growth of the Southeastern states and illustrated how the transportation system links growing regional population and economic centers. Rail is a central part of coordinated planning efforts to accommodate future passenger and freight demand.
- **Federal grant programs favor multistate/collaborative efforts.** Grant awards under the High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) program and the TIGER I and II programs have favored projects that have demonstrated multistate collaboration and benefits.

Through SEROps activities, the states and their partners in the Southeastern region can respond to these trends in a cohesive manner to improve their ability to secure program funding leading to implementation. Ultimately, SEROps will help the Southeastern states and stakeholders to:

- Better integrate freight and passenger rail issues throughout the transportation planning and programming processes;
- Educate legislators and other transportation decision-makers about the importance of rail to the region;
- Actively participate in regional and national rail planning and policy efforts; and
- Help leverage rail investments made at the state/regional/national level.

3.0 Approach

To assess the state of the region's rail network and potential projects, the Coalition performed a scan of recent planning documents produced by each of the Southeast region's states. Recently completed state planning documents include:

- *Alabama Rail Plan*, Alabama DOT, 2008;
- *Alabama Statewide Transportation Plan*, Alabama DOT, 2008;
- *Florida Freight and Passenger Rail Plan*, Florida DOT, 2006;
- *Florida Intercity Passenger Rail "Vision" Plan*, Florida DOT, 2006;
- *2005-2035 Georgia Statewide Freight Plan*, Georgia, DOT, 2001;
- *2005-2035 Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan*, Georgia DOT, 2006;
- *State Rail Plan*, Georgia DOT, 2009;
- *Kentucky Long-Range Statewide Transportation Plan*, Kentucky Transportation Cabinet, 2006;
- *Louisiana State Rail Plan*, Louisiana DOTD, 2003;
- *Mississippi Unified Long-Range Transportation Infrastructure Plan (MULTIPLAN)*, Mississippi DOT, 2007;
- *Statewide Logistics Plan for North Carolina*, North Carolina DOT, 2008;
- "Future Service," North Carolina DOT Rail Division, available from: <http://www.bytrain.org/future/>;
- *South Carolina State Rail Plan*, South Carolina Department of Commerce, 2009;
- *High-Speed Trains: Nashville-Chattanooga-Atlanta*, Tennessee DOT, 2003;
- *Tennessee Long-Range Transportation Plan*, Tennessee DOT, 2005;
- *Vtrans 2035: Virginia's Long-Range Multimodal Transportation Plan*, Commonwealth Transportation Board, 2010; and
- *Virginia Statewide Multimodal Freight Study, Phase I*, Virginia DOT, 2008.

Because much has changed in the world of passenger and freight rail programming and planning since many of the reviewed documents were published, and because some of the region's states currently are updating their plans, the project team conducted telephone interviews with each of the states' DOTs or other agencies responsible for rail planning and project development. The project team interviewed planning, freight and/or rail staff at each state DOT (or related agency) in the Southeast Region. In addition, the team interviewed officials from Amtrak, and Norfolk Southern and CSXT (the two Class I railroads in the

Southeast), and the Southern High-Speed Rail Commission, a multistate advocacy and planning organization. The agenda of the interviews included a discussion of the existing rail network within each state and discussion regarding the status of projects which are underway, programmed, or planned. The project team also asked DOT staffs to identify corridor or other regionally significant initiatives that would fit into a longer-term strategic regional “vision.” A full list of agencies and groups interviewed is provided below:

- Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs;²
- Florida Department of Transportation;
- Georgia Department of Transportation;
- Kentucky Transportation Cabinet;
- Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development;
- Mississippi Department of Transportation;
- North Carolina Department of Transportation;
- South Carolina Department of Transportation;
- Virginia Department of Transportation;
- Norfolk Southern Corporation;
- CSX Transportation; and
- Southern High-Speed Rail Commission.

The project team mapped corridors and projects identified by interview participants to demonstrate the regional rail network and potential improvement projects. A final catalog of corridors and projects that contribute to a unified regional rail vision will be produced at the conclusion of this report. The remaining sections of this document outline the present regional rail network and identify the preliminary list of strategic corridors and projects.

² The Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) is the agency responsible for rail planning and programs in the State of Alabama.

4.0 Intercity Passenger Rail Network and Initiatives

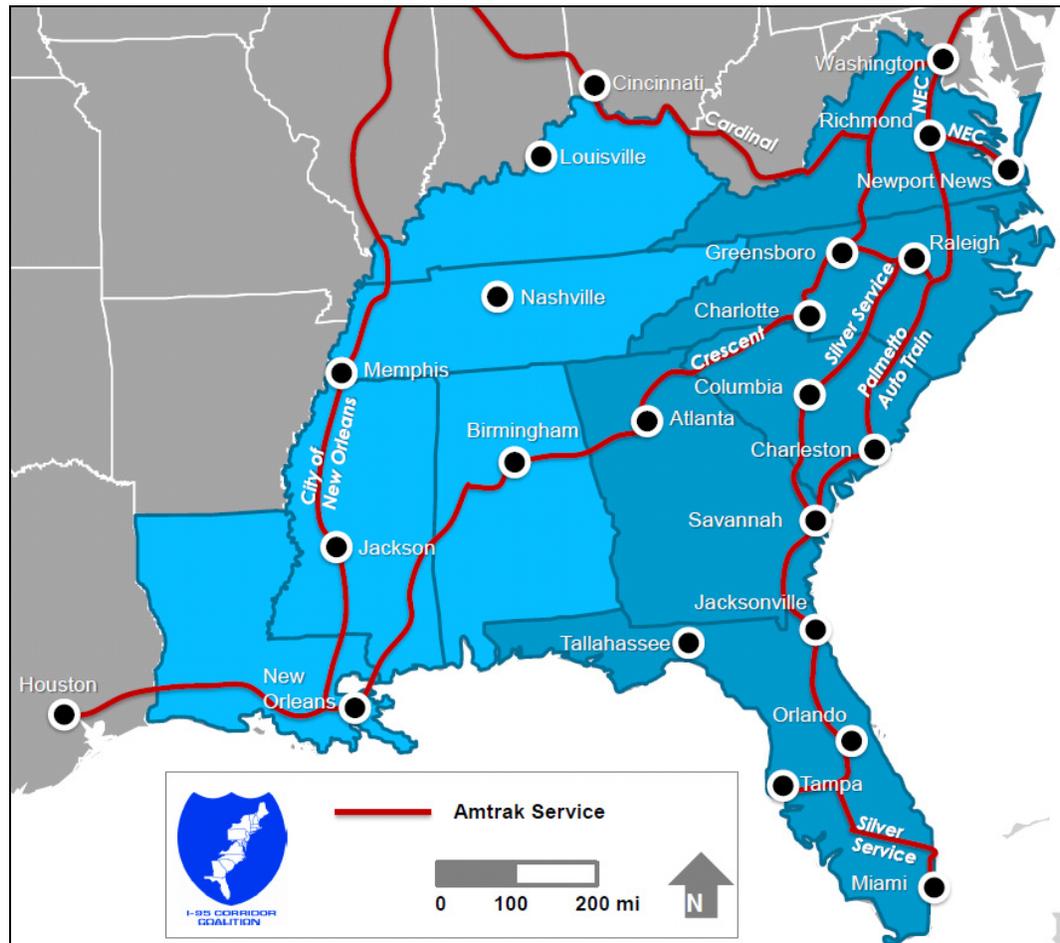
4.1 CURRENT INTERCITY RAIL NETWORK

Amtrak provides intercity passenger rail service in the Southeast Region, providing critical connections between Southeastern cities and other major U.S. population centers - including Chicago and New York. All of Amtrak's mileage in the Southeast operates over freight railroads, with the vast majority over either CSXT or Norfolk Southern. In 2009, more than 3.5 million passengers boarded or alighted Amtrak trains in study area stations. Amtrak's presence in the region includes the following nine services, which are mapped in Figure 4.1:

- **Northeast Corridor Spur** - Newport News, Virginia to Springfield, Massachusetts via Richmond, Virginia and Washington, D.C.;
- **Auto Train** - Lorton, Virginia (Washington, D.C. area) to Sanford, Florida (Orlando area);
- **The Cardinal** - New York to Chicago via Washington, D.C. and Charlottesville, Virginia;
- **Carolinian/Piedmont** - Washington, D.C. to Charlotte, North Carolina via Richmond, Virginia and Raleigh, North Carolina;
- **City of New Orleans** - Chicago to New Orleans via Memphis, Tennessee and Jackson, Mississippi;
- **Crescent** - New York to New Orleans via Washington, Charlottesville, Charlotte, Greenville, Atlanta and Birmingham;
- **Silver Service Palmetto** - New York to Savannah via Washington, Richmond and Charleston;
- **Silver Meteor** - New York to Miami via Washington, Richmond, Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville and Orlando;
- **Silver Star** - New York to Miami or Tampa via Washington, Richmond, Raleigh, Columbia, Savannah, and Orlando; and
- **Sunset Limited** - New Orleans to Los Angeles.³

³ Service between Jacksonville and New Orleans was suspended after Hurricane Katrina damaged track infrastructure along the Gulf Coast in 2005.

Figure 4.1 Amtrak Intercity Passenger Network in the Southeast Region



Source: Amtrak.

The current Amtrak network links many of the major population centers of the Southeast. Some of the routes, including the Carolinian, are supported by state funding. The most recent addition to the state-sponsored service is a new extension of the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C. and Lynchburg, Virginia on Norfolk Southern’s Piedmont line. Despite progress by the states and Amtrak in connecting more cities and providing greater frequency of service, there are some notable service gaps visible on the map – including the lack of service to Nashville, Tennessee and Louisville, Kentucky. Also, since 2005, the Sunset Limited, which previously connected Jacksonville with New Orleans, has been out of service due to damage caused by Hurricane Katrina. Several rail initiatives seek to address these gaps in the future.

4.2 PASSENGER RAIL PRIORITY CORRIDORS AND INITIATIVES

In response to growing public interest in rail transportation and an unprecedented amount of Federal funding for rail projects, transportation agencies across the country are swiftly preparing plans and projects to compete for funding for implementation. In the Southeastern U.S., several important passenger rail initiatives are advancing planning and engineering activities in hopes of securing Federal grants to leverage state funds. This section introduces the initiatives identified through interviews with the states and a review of current planning materials.

U.S. DOT High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program⁴

The single most important source of potential funding for passenger rail initiatives in the Southeast is the U.S. DOT High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR). The foundation for the HSIPR Program is contained in two pieces of legislation: the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA) and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA or Recovery Act). The HSIPR program is intended to realize a vision of high-speed intercity passenger rail corridors linking large metropolitan areas throughout the country. The goals of the program include building a foundation for economic competitiveness; ensuring safe and efficient transportation choices; promoting energy efficiency and environmental quality; and supporting interconnected livable communities.

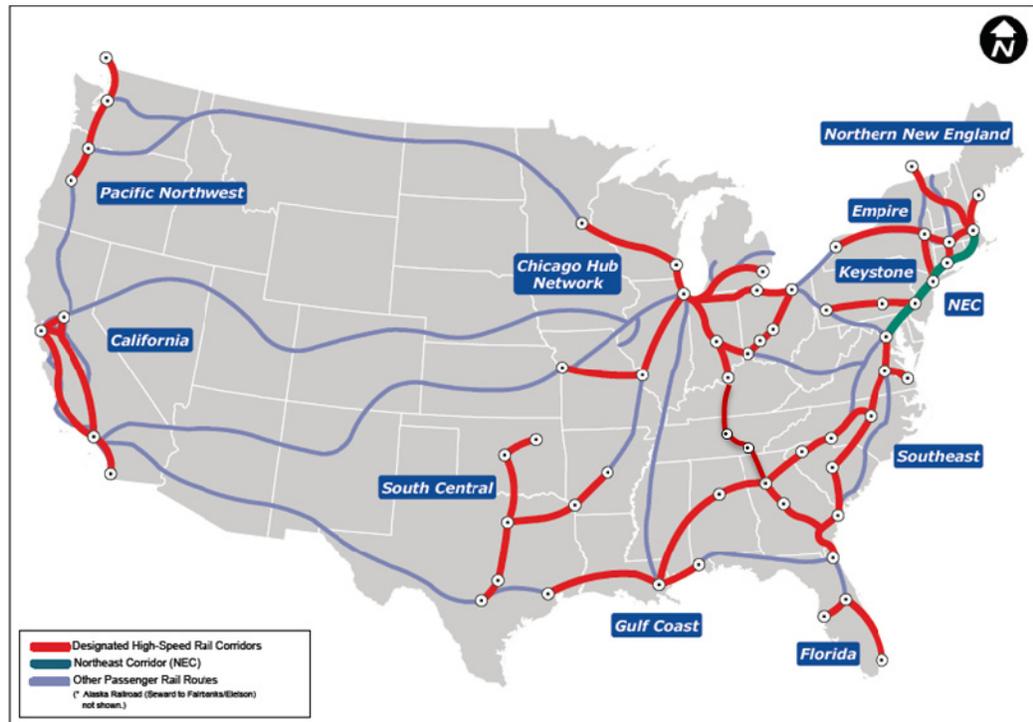
In a report published by U.S. DOT in April 2009 titled, *Vision for High-Speed Rail in America*, the initial set of designated high-speed rail corridors were identified. The corridor designations were made based upon applications from the states. Two of the corridor groups pass through or near the SEROps region:

- **Southeast Corridor** (Washington-Richmond-Raleigh-Charlotte-Atlanta-Columbia-Macon- Jacksonville); and
- **Gulf Coast Corridor** (Atlanta-Birmingham-Mobile-New Orleans-Houston).

The Federal Government has appropriated and awarded \$8 billion to support projects on designated HSIPR corridors through the ARRA, including \$620 million to the Washington-Richmond-Charlotte segment of the Southeast Corridor.

⁴ Note on High Speed Rail: HSR is the abbreviation for high-speed rail, which in the case of some of the initiatives is true high-speed rail at speeds reaching 110 miles per hour or faster (49 USC §26405 (b)(4)). For most initiatives, HSR represents “higher” speed rail with speeds in the range of 90 miles per hour.

Figure 4.2 U.S. Intercity Passenger Rail Network



Source: FRA, *Vision for High-Speed Rail in America*, 2009.⁵

Southeast Passenger Rail Initiatives

Within the Southeast, several of the passenger rail initiatives coincide with the high-speed rail designations. These initiatives seek track upgrades to enable high-speed intercity passenger service; to purchase rail rolling stock; and to improve intermodal station infrastructure. Many of these improvements would benefit both Amtrak passenger and freight railroad operations. A map of passenger rail initiatives on existing and proposed passenger rail corridors is presented as Figure 4.2 and corresponds to Table 4.1. In addition to existing Amtrak corridors, other rail corridors have been identified as opportunities to develop new intercity passenger rail corridors connecting major cities throughout the region.

⁵ Federal Railroad Administration, *Vision for High Speed Rail in America*, 2009, 7.

Figure 4.3 Intercity Passenger Priority Corridors and Initiatives

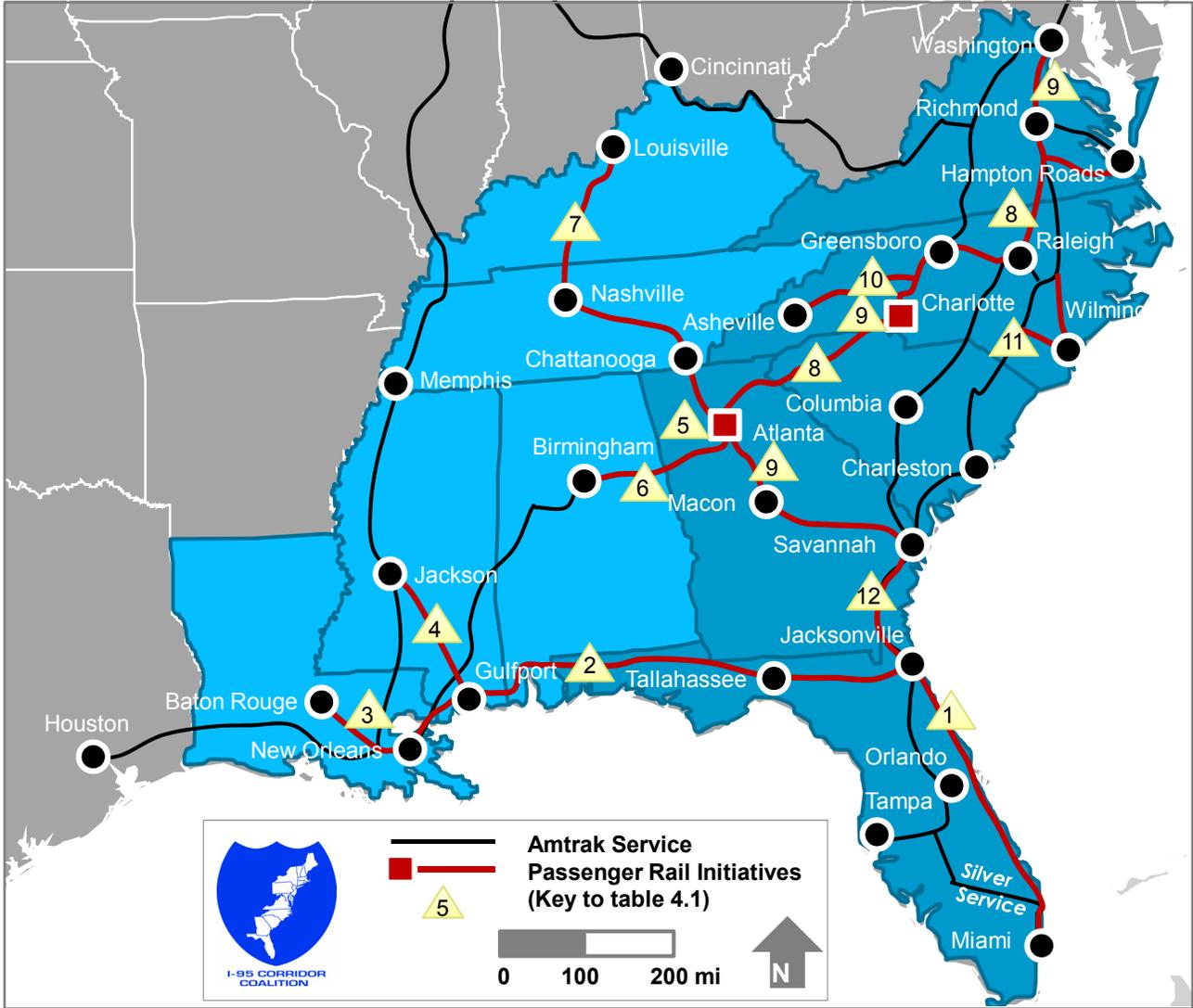


Table 4.1 Intercity Passenger Corridor Initiatives*

Map Num.	Initiative or Project	Segment	Project Description	States Affected												
				FL	GA	SC	NC	VA	AL	MS	LA	TN	KY			
1	Florida East Coast Passenger Service	Jacksonville to Miami	Restoration of passenger service between Jacksonville and Miami; includes Jacksonville Transit Center	●												
2	Sunset Limited Restoration/HSR	Jacksonville to New Orleans (multisegment corridor)	Restoration/HSR upgrade of passenger service between Jacksonville and Miami.	●						●	●	●				
3	New Orleans-Baton Rouge HSR	New Orleans to Baton Rouge	Development of HSR corridor										●			
4	Gulfport-Jackson HSR	Gulfport to Jackson	Development of HSR corridor								●					
5	Atlanta Multimodal Passenger Complex	Atlanta	Anchor to multiple HSR corridors		●											
6	Atlanta-Birmingham HSR	Atlanta to Birmingham	Development of HSR corridor		●					●						
7	Atlanta-Louisville HSR	Atlanta to Louisville	Development of HSR corridor		●									●	●	
8	Southeast HSR Corridor	Washington to Atlanta (core route) with multiple extensions	Development of HSR corridor (multisegment – see detail below)	●	●	●	●	●								
9	CRISP	Charlotte Region	Improved passenger and intermodal access and connectivity				●									
10	Western North Carolina Passenger Rail	Charlotte to Asheville	New passenger rail service				●									
11	Southeast North Carolina Passenger Rail	Wilmington, North Carolina to I-95 Corridor	New passenger rail service				●									
12	Atlanta, Macon, Jacksonville HSR Feasibility Study	Atlanta to Jacksonville	Development of HSR corridor	●	●											

● = Project State

* **Note on High-Speed Rail:** HSR is the abbreviation for high-speed rail, which in the case of some of the initiatives is true high-speed rail at speeds reaching 110 miles per hour or faster (49 USC §26405 (b)(4)). For most initiatives, HSR represents “higher” speed rail with speeds in the range of 90 miles per hour.

Florida East Coast Passenger Service

This project would restore passenger rail service between Miami and Jacksonville along Florida's densely populated Atlantic Coast. The service, which would utilize Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) infrastructure, would develop several new stations, and would be anchored by the Jacksonville Transit Center. The Jacksonville Transit Center is a \$127 project to develop a multimodal passenger terminal to serve the Jacksonville Transportation Authority (JTA) buses, the Skyway, Greyhound, and Amtrak.

Sunset Limited Restoration and HSR Upgrade

Amtrak's Sunset Limited service historically connected the East and West Coasts roughly following the I-10 corridor between Jacksonville and Los Angeles. During Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the sections of track along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama were flooded and badly damaged. While freight rail service over this CSXT-owned line resumed following the hurricane, the Amtrak service between New Orleans and Jacksonville remains suspended. This initiative would invest in repairs to restore the conventional Amtrak service and advance future investments to upgrade portions of the line to high-speed service, focusing initially on a connection between New Orleans and the Gulf Coast population and tourism centers of Gulfport, Biloxi, and Mobile.

Like other initiatives in the Gulf States, this one is backed by the Southern High-Speed Rail Commission,⁶ a legislatively enabled rail planning collaborative of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. The SHSRC has sponsored several studies focusing on high-speed options for the Sunset Corridor. The most recent have explored feasibility of high-speed rail between New Orleans and Mobile and between Lake Charles and Meridian

New Orleans to Baton Rouge High-Speed Rail⁷

This initiative, whose principal supporters include the Mayors of Baton Rouge and New Orleans, would connect Louisiana's two largest cities via a high-speed rail link. The State had sought \$300 million in HSIPR funding but withdrew the grant application over concerns of long-term financial sustainability (estimated at up to \$18 million annual cost to the State). The total capital cost of the project is nearly \$500 million to improve track over and 80-mile segment. Currently the cities and State are exploring other funding alternatives. As part of this initiative, the New Orleans Union Passenger Terminal would undergo improvements.

⁶ <http://www.southernhsr.org>.

⁷ <http://www.ble-t.org/pr/news/headline.asp?id=30397>.

Like other initiatives in the Gulf States, this one is backed by the Southern High-Speed Rail Commission, a legislatively enabled rail planning collaborative of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama.

Gulfport to Jackson HSR

This initiative would connect Jackson, the capital of Mississippi, with the populous tourism center of Gulfport-Biloxi on the Gulf Coast. The project, which is in the preliminary planning stages, would improve over 160 miles of rail to accommodate higher-speed passenger service.

Atlanta Multimodal Complex⁸

Envisioned as the premier hub for passenger rail in the Southeast, the Atlanta Multimodal Passenger Complex project would create a massive new mixed use transportation, office, and retail hub in Downtown Atlanta. The complex would accommodate high-speed and intercity passenger rail, regional express bus service, intercity bus, and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) citywide rail system. The terminal would support the community development goals of the City of Atlanta. To advance this project, the Georgia DOT has issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to develop the project as a public-private-partnership.

Atlanta to Birmingham HSR⁹

This initiative would improve Norfolk Southern's Crescent Corridor (also served by Amtrak Crescent service) between the capitals of Alabama and Georgia. The corridor currently is under examination through a \$500,000 feasibility study sponsored jointly by the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, the Georgia Department of Transportation and Norfolk-Southern railroad. The study will be complete in July of 2012 and will examine speed and technology, ridership, operating and maintenance costs and economic impact.

Atlanta to Louisville HSR¹⁰

This multistate corridor would link Atlanta to Nashville, Louisville, Indianapolis, and Chicago. Several intermediate segments have been the subject of feasibility studies and ongoing efforts by the states of Georgia, Tennessee, and Kentucky

⁸ Georgia DOT.

⁹ "Leaders announce \$500,000 study on Birmingham-to-Atlanta high-speed train." Bryant, Joseph D., *The Birmingham News*. Thursday, June 24, 2010. http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2010/06/leaders_announce_500000_study.html.

¹⁰ Georgia DOT.

which are advancing this initiative. The Georgia DOT recently received \$500,000 in Federal funding to examine the feasibility of this corridor. The following segments are under study as part of this initiative:

- **Atlanta to Chattanooga** – For more than a decade the Georgia DOT has been studying the feasibility of investments on this 104-mile corridor with the goal of reducing traffic congestion on Interstate 75. The most recent study – a TIER I EIS – was completed in 2008. The study (Atlanta to Chattanooga High-Speed Ground Transportation Study) analyzed several alignments and technologies, including commuter rail, conventional and high-speed intercity passenger rail, and Maglev (Magnetic Levitation). Georgia DOT currently is working to complete a Draft EIS by the end of 2010.
- **Chattanooga to Nashville** – The Tennessee DOT is actively studying alternatives to develop the segment extending 120 miles between Chattanooga and Nashville. A Maglev feasibility study was recently completed for the corridor.
- **Nashville to Louisville** – The DOTs of Georgia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, are exploring alternatives to examine the corridor.

Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor (SEHSR)

From its original high-speed corridor designation by U.S. DOT in 1992, the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor has been extended from its initial Washington, D.C. to Charlotte route to reach Atlanta and Macon, Georgia; Savannah, Georgia and Jacksonville, Florida; and Hampton Roads, Virginia. Planning efforts have advanced significantly through the collaborative efforts of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia which have formally cooperated on SEHSR efforts since 1994. Recently several major studies have been completed on the corridor. Other recent multistate planning efforts¹¹ include:

- Development of improved data through new travel and intercept surveys;
- Updates to the ridership/revenue model;
- Acquisition of Federal funds to advance NEPA process;
- Addressing sustainable funding needs;
- Development of a new memorandum of understanding between Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia to advance collaborative work.

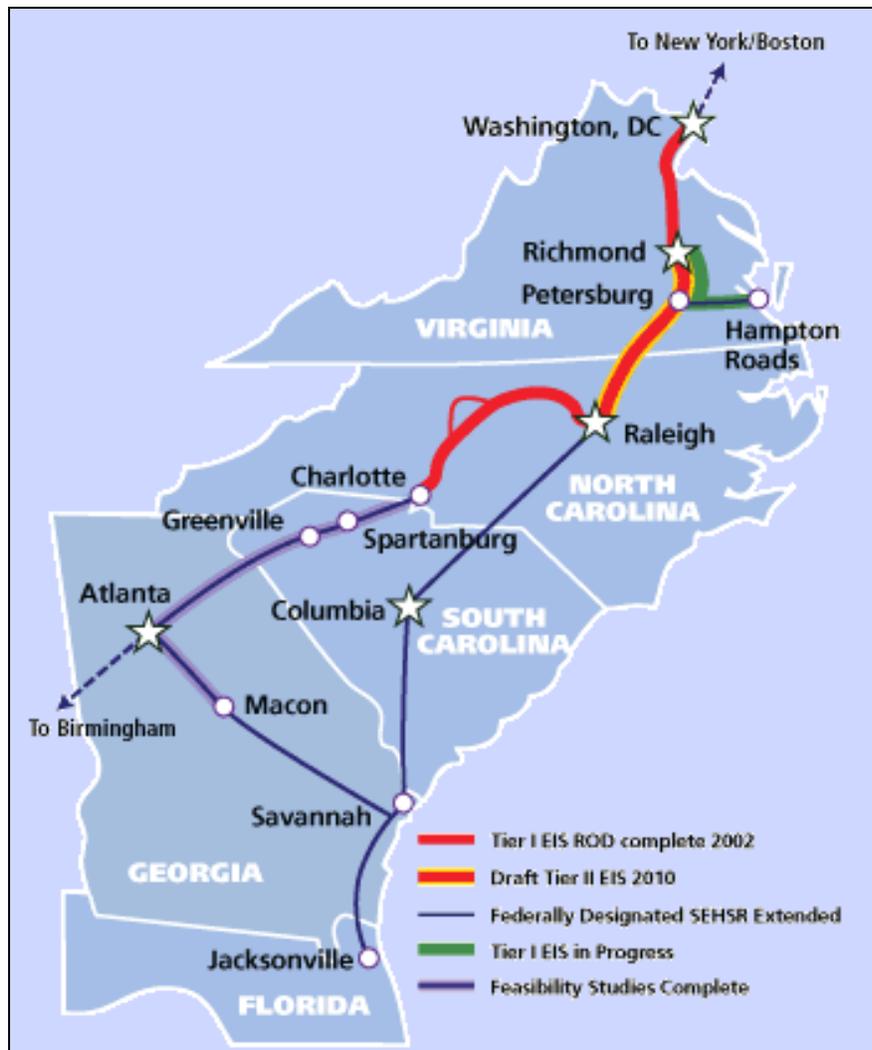
In addition, the state legislatures of North Carolina and Virginia recently entered into a congressionally authorized Virginia-North Carolina Interstate High-Speed

¹¹ Georgia DOT.

Rail Compact to advance high-speed rail, primarily on this corridor.¹² The states will work together on studies and to pursue Federal funding.

The following map illustrates the extent of the SEHSR Corridor and depicts the current corridor development status for major segments. The following paragraphs break down the corridor into major segments and highlight the current status of planning and implementation efforts.¹³

Figure 4.4 Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor Major Segments



Source: Southeast High-Speed Rail (www.sehsr.org).

¹² North Carolina DOT.

¹³ <http://www.sehsr.org/reports/ItsTime.pdf>.

- **Washington to Richmond** – The Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (VDRPT), CSXT and Virginia Railway Express (VRE) have made significant investments in this corridor to increase passenger and freight capacity. Most recently, this segment received \$44.3 million in HSIPR funding in October 2010 to complete a Tier II EIS and preliminary engineering to upgrade to high-speed rail operations.¹⁴ Improvement plans for 2013 to 2018 include the TIER II EIS, adding third track as appropriate; replacement and expansion of several bridges; upgrade of track to accommodate trains traveling 90 miles per hour; and access improvements to the Richmond Main Street station.
- **Richmond to Hampton Roads** – While Amtrak currently serves the north side of Hampton Roads (Newport News), this connection would link the more populous southern side of Hampton Roads anchored by Norfolk and Virginia Beach. VDRPT currently is purchasing train slots from Norfolk Southern and CSXT on the southern route to initiate passenger rail service in the near future. A Tier I EIS has been completed for this segment.
- **Richmond to Raleigh** – North Carolina, Virginia, and the Federal Railroad Administration, recently completed the Tier II Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Southeast High-Speed Rail Corridor between Richmond and Raleigh. The States are targeting construction between 2016 and 2018.
- **Raleigh to Charlotte**¹⁵ – In 2002, North Carolina DOT completed a TIER I EIS. Since then, the State has been incrementally funding improvements. Most recently, the State received \$22 million in HSIPR funds to:
 - Eliminate eight busy grade crossings to improve safety and reliability on the corridor;
 - Relocate the Charlotte Gateway Station to the city’s central business district (as part of the Charlotte Rail Improvement and Safety Project (CRISP) project) where it will connect with local transit and a transit-oriented development community and be in close proximity to a new maintenance facility currently being constructed under the FY 2009 ARRA award; and
 - Completes an incremental phase of a larger capital program that will improve capacity and reliability and eventually lead to a fifth intercity passenger rail frequency between Raleigh and Charlotte.

¹⁴ FRA High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail (HSIPR) Program: FY10 and Remaining FY09 Funding Selection Summary.

¹⁵ Ibid 13.

- In addition, the State is examining options to develop a spur of Raleigh to Charlotte line to provide direct access to Winston-Salem. The State is targeting 2016 to 2018 to provide a separate high-speed rail line in the corridor.
- **Charlotte to Atlanta** - A feasibility study was completed on this segment by the U.S. DOT's Volpe Center. Most recently the Georgia DOT was awarded \$4.1M to develop a "Charlotte-Atlanta Corridor Plan."
- **Atlanta to Macon** - The Georgia DOT is examining options to advance this corridor. Feasibility was assessed as part of the aforementioned study by the Volpe Center "Evaluation of High-Speed Rail Options in the Macon-Atlanta-Greenville-Charlotte Rail Corridor" published August 2008.

Charlotte Rail Improvement and Safety Project (CRISP)¹⁶

This integrated improvement program jointly supported by the Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS), CSXT, Norfolk Southern, and North Carolina DOT seeks to improve the movement of passenger and freight trains in the Charlotte region through several strategic projects. Projects include the Charlotte Gateway Station (mentioned under SEHSR); grade separations, and a new wye junction. These improvements will benefit both freight and passenger operations by reducing delays at Charlotte area rail bottlenecks.

Southeastern North Carolina Passenger Rail Corridor¹⁷

Following the recommendations of a 2005 study, this initiative would reinstate passenger rail service to Wilmington, North Carolina. The project would reconnect Wilmington to Amtrak's rail services to the Northeastern United States on the I-95 Corridor via one of two alternative alignments - through either Goldsboro or Fayetteville.

Western NC Passenger Rail Corridor¹⁸

This initiative would extend passenger rail service from Central to Western North Carolina, terminating at Asheville. The plan would renovate existing stations, add new stations, and make other community and safety improvements on the corridor.

¹⁶ North Carolina DOT.

¹⁷ <http://www.bytrain.org/future/> (North Carolina DOT Rail Division).

¹⁸ <http://www.bytrain.org/future/>.

4.3 PASSENGER RAIL INITIATIVES SUMMARY

The Southeastern states are actively engaged in at least 10 major passenger rail corridor development initiatives. The initiatives range from nascent efforts to mature multistate coalitions moving through the Tiered EIS process toward implementation. Federal stimulus funds have recently bolstered several of the initiatives in the region. Other efforts - including those of the Southeast High-Speed Rail Coalition - are focused on achieving higher-speed rail (90 miles per hour) by 2018.

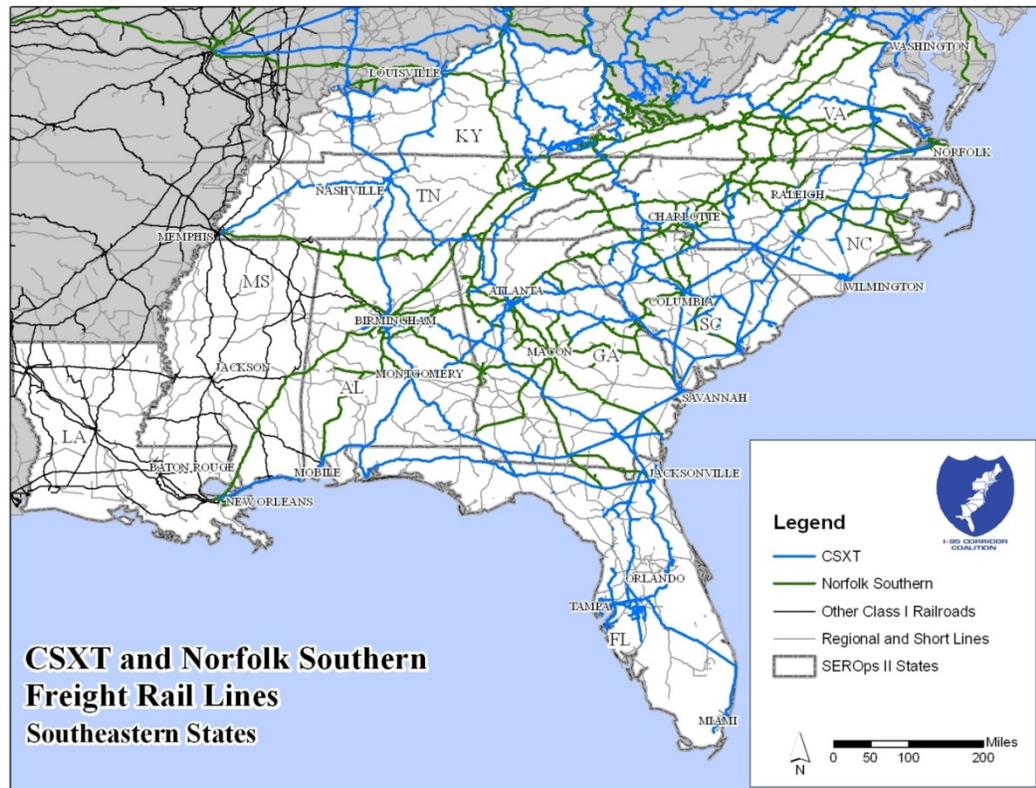
5.0 Freight Rail Network and Initiatives

5.1 CURRENT FREIGHT RAIL NETWORK

The Southeast regional rail network is comprised of a set of primary Class I freight railroad corridors, secondary freight rail corridors, major intercity passenger corridors, and short-line freight and commuter/local passenger service corridors. Norfolk Southern Corporation and CSX Transportation are the two Class I railroads with the greatest presence in the Southeast region, operating over 65 percent of the track mileage in the 10-state study area. The “western” Class I railroads such as Union Pacific (UP), Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF), and Kansas City Southern (KCS), and Canadian National (CN) have significant presence in the states located along the Mississippi River (Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky). Collectively, the freight railroads of the Southeast moved nearly 12 million carloads in 2008 and employed nearly 50,000. Figure 5.1 illustrates the primary Southeastern freight corridors of CSXT, NS, and the other Class I railroads.

Like the passenger rail network in the Southeast, the current freight rail network connects major population centers and other important rail demand centers – including the maritime Ports of Virginia, Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville, Everglades, Miami, Tampa, Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans. Rail traffic in the Southeast and across the United States is beginning to rebound from the severe recessionary period. During this period of lower traffic, the freight railroads have made significant capital investments to prepare for the region’s long-term growth. As outlined in the first phase of the SEROps project, the Southeast will experience high population and employment growth in the coming decades. Another important dynamic affecting the freight rail industry in the Southeastern states is the enlarged Panama Canal, which has the potential to substantially increase shipments through East and Gulf Coast ports upon its completion in 2015. To prepare for these growth trends, the freight railroads and state partners are sponsoring several freight rail initiatives. This section introduces the major freight rail initiatives of the Southeast.

Figure 5.1 CSXT and Norfolk Southern Freight Rail Lines



5.2 FREIGHT RAIL PRIORITY CORRIDORS AND INITIATIVES

U.S. freight railroads have recently been successful in securing Federal and state funds to advance major corridor and terminal improvement projects across the country. Government has partnered with the railroads because the projects produce public benefits resulting from joint investments – including diversion of truck traffic to reduce highway congestion, improve safety, and enhance air quality. Through these public private partnerships, freight railroads have been able to leverage private capital with public sector funding and financing to make large-scale corridor improvements; these improvements would have normally required many more years to implement without public funding. Freight railroads operating in the Southeast have received some of the largest Federal grants in the country to support several major initiatives.

For example, Norfolk Southern received nearly \$100 million through an earmark in the last surface transportation bill to support its Heartland Corridor initiative and both NS and CSXT received around \$100 million in the first round of 2010 TIGER funding for their Crescent Corridor and National Gateway Corridor

projects, respectively. In addition to Federal funding, several states in the Southeast support freight rail investments through grant programs, including Virginia's Rail Enhancement Fund which makes available \$25 million annually to worthy freight and passenger rail projects. Building on the success of recent public-private freight rail partnerships, this phase of the SEROps effort has canvassed state planning documents and conducted interviews with state officials and railroads to develop a list of projects of regional importance. The initiatives are illustrated on a map in Figure 5.2. Table 5.1 lists freight corridor and terminal initiatives identified in the planning documents and by interviewees. Descriptions of the SEROps freight rail initiatives follow.

Figure 5.2 Freight Rail Priority Corridors and Initiatives

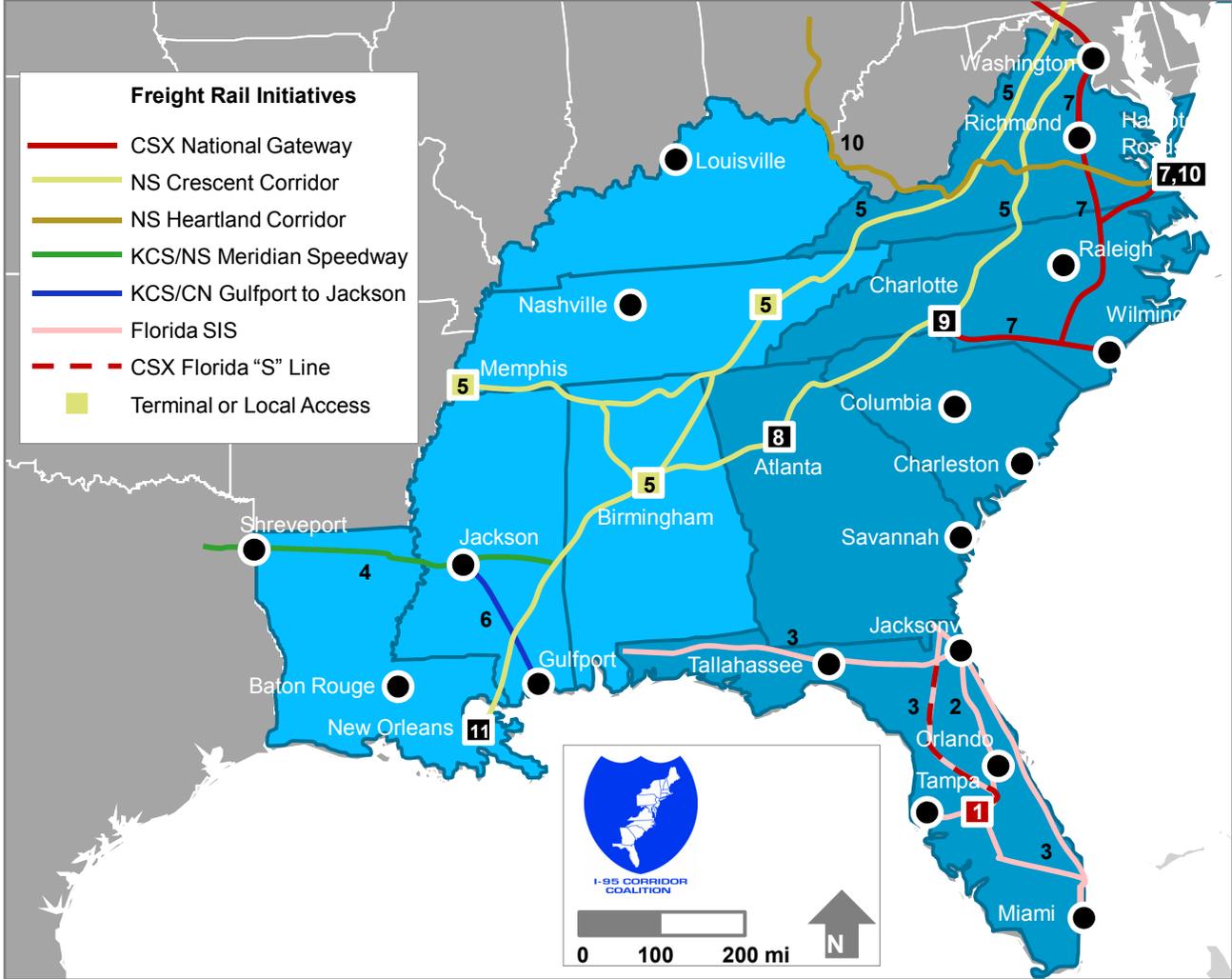


Table 5.1 Freight Rail Corridor Initiatives

Map Reference	Initiative or Project	Segment	Project Description	States Affected											
				FL	GA	SC	NC	VA	AL	MS	LA	TN	KY		
1	Integrated Logistics Center Winter Haven	Winter Haven, FL	Consolidated logistics and intermodal center to serve Tampa and Orlando markets	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
2	CSXT “S” Line Improvements	Jacksonville, FL to Winter Haven, FL	Capacity, speed improvements	●	○	○	○	○							
3	Florida Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) Improvements	Statewide	Improvements to enhance connectivity to ports and terminals	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
4	KCS/NS Meridian Speedway	Shreveport to Meridian, MS	Capacity, speed improvements		○	○	○	○	○	●	●	○			
5	NS Crescent Corridor	New Orleans, LA and Memphis, TN to NJ	Corridor capacity and speed improvements and several terminal improvements		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●		
6	KCS/CN Gulfport to Jackson	Gulfport to Jackson	Capacity, speed improvements		○	●	○	○	○	●		○	○		
7	CSX National Gateway	Wilmington, NC and Charlotte, NC to Ohio	Double-stack, yard, and terminal improvements linking Mid-Atlantic to Ohio		○	●	●	●							
8	Atlanta Regional Improvements	Atlanta, Georgia	Alleviate freight and passenger bottleneck at Howell Junction; expand Austell Intermodal Yard		●	○	○		○						
9	Charlotte Intermodal Terminals and CRISP	Charlotte region	CSXT and NS Intermodal Terminals; CRISP grade separation and wye improvements		○	○	●	○							
10	NS Heartland Corridor	Hampton Roads, VA to Columbus, OH	Double-stack corridor improvements complete but two intermodal terminals needed					●							
11	New Orleans Gateway	New Orleans region	Improve traffic flow at convergence of six railroads at New Orleans		○				○	○	●				

● = Project State; ○ = Interstate network/connectivity effects

Winter Haven Integrated Logistics Center (ILC)¹⁹

This new 1,250-acre terminal will provide a new location for intermodal and automotive traffic, allowing CSXT to focus on consolidated shipments in much of Florida and continue to serve the freight needs of the Tampa and Orlando metropolitan areas. The State of Florida is contributing funding to support the relocation of terminals and development of the new facility.

CSXT “S” Line Improvements²⁰

CSXT is poised to make capacity improvements between Callahan (just north of the City of Jacksonville) and the Integrated Logistics Center in Winter Haven. The improvements are needed to support flows to and from the ILC in Winter Haven and to accommodate additional freight traffic diverted from the “A” Line so that line can operate the new Central Florida Commuter Rail service. The State of Florida is providing funding to assist with the improvements.

Florida Strategic Intermodal System Improvements²¹

Established by Florida’s Legislature in 2003, the Florida Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) is a program to fund improvements to the State’s network of high-priority transportation corridor and facilities to support economic development. Within Florida, much of the freight rail network is part of the designated SIS system. Through a formal process, the State works with freight rail stakeholders to identify projects eligible for SIS funding. The State prioritizes the projects and provides funding from its discretionary surface transportation funds (up to 75 percent of the discretionary funds will support SIS projects by 2015). The network is divided into “SIS” and “Emerging SIS” corridors and facilities based on criteria for freight traffic. Figure 5.2 illustrates SIS corridors in Florida.

Meridian Speedway²²

Connecting Shreveport, Louisiana and Meridian, Mississippi, the “Meridian Speedway” is a joint initiative of Kansas City Southern (KCS) and Norfolk Southern (NS). The goal of the project is to increase speed and capacity to provide a more direct national connection between markets in the Southwest and Southeast. The improvements over the 320-miles long area are valued at more than \$300 million and will accommodate 45 trains per day once completed.

¹⁹ Florida State Rail Plan. 2006.

²⁰ Ibid 19.

²¹ Ibid 19.

²² Kansas City Southern.

Gulfport to Jackson Corridor²³

The State of Mississippi is actively working with Kansas City Southern and Canadian National to improve the corridor between Gulfport and Jackson for improved freight service and eventual passenger service. Between Gulfport and Hattiesburg the track currently is speed-limited to 10 miles per hour but needs improvement to accommodate future flows, including traffic resulting from Panama Canal expansion. The initiative was recently awarded a \$20 million TIGER Federal grant to improve the railroad between Gulfport and Hattiesburg. This initial funding will help improve rail connectivity between the port facilities and Gulfport and a junction at Hattiesburg where the KCS line feeds Norfolk Southern's Crescent Corridor (serving the Northeast) and Canadian National (serving the Midwest and Canada).

Norfolk Southern Crescent Corridor²⁴

The Crescent Corridor is a 2,500-mile rail corridor linking the U.S. Northeast with the U.S. Southeast and Southwest along one of the nation's most important trade paths. Between the Mississippi River and Northern Virginia the corridor consists of two roughly parallel corridors that connect a string of cities beginning at the termini of New Orleans and Memphis, respectively. The corridor terminates in the Northeast at Philadelphia and New Jersey. The initiative consists of numerous projects to improve the railroad corridor and the terminals along its route, including additional sidings, double track segments, improved signaling, and track speed enhancements. The total cost of improvements on the Corridor is estimated at \$2.5 billion through 2020, bolstered recently by a \$105 million TIGER grant and additional funding from Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Some improvements on the Crescent Corridor already have been completed, including improvements to the Shenandoah and Piedmont lines in Virginia. With the \$105 million TIGER grant, this initiative will develop new intermodal terminals at Memphis (Rossville, Tennessee) and Birmingham (McCalla, Alabama). Other priorities include the improvement and development of intermodal terminals at Franklin County, Tennessee and Atlanta.

CSXT National Gateway²⁵

Through the National Gateway initiative CSXT, Federal, and state partners are improving rail infrastructure between Mid-Atlantic Ports and the railroad's new mega-terminal in Northwest, Ohio. The project also will open new double-stack service between the Mid-Atlantic and the Southeast. The National Gateway consists of corridor projects - including double-stack clearance improvements - and

²³ Press Release. Governor Haley Barbour. February 17, 2010.

²⁴ Norfolk Southern.

²⁵ Norfolk Southern.

terminal projects along the I-95 corridor in North Carolina and Virginia and along the I-40 corridor in North Carolina. In the Southeast, National Gateway would improve service between the Port of Wilmington and Charlotte and would provide better linkages between the Ports of Wilmington and Virginia to the U.S. Midwest. In order to fully develop the corridor, the initiative seeks to remove major clearance bottlenecks in Washington, D.C. (Virginia Avenue Tunnel) and through the Allegheny Mountains of Pennsylvania (tunnel clearances). In 2010, the U.S. DOT awarded the initiative \$98 million and recently several states have committed funds to move the project forward. In the future, North Carolina and Virginia will work with CSXT to implement terminal and yard improvements at Charlotte (North Carolina), Kilby Yard (Virginia), and to advance the development of the Craney Island Terminal at the Port of Virginia, which also will feed NS' Heartland Corridor.

Atlanta Regional Improvements²⁶

Two major freight rail improvements are in the planning stages in Atlanta, Georgia. The first project involves Georgia DOT, NS, and CSXT in a joint effort to alleviate the bottleneck at Howell Junction in Northwest Atlanta where five freight rail lines converge at-grade. The junction accommodates traffic to regional and national destinations, including Amtrak's Crescent service and freight movements to Macon, Charlotte, Birmingham, and Chattanooga. The current at-grade crossing is at capacity and improvements are needed to accommodate future freight and passenger demand. Improvements to Howell Junction may become part of the Multimodal Passenger Terminal project (described in the passenger initiatives section of this report.)

The second project is the improvement and expansion of the Austell Intermodal Facility which serves the Atlanta region and will support intermodal flows on Norfolk Southern's Crescent Corridor.

Charlotte Intermodal Terminals and CRISP Freight Improvements²⁷

As part of a broader series of passenger and freight rail improvements in the Charlotte region, the North Carolina DOT, local government partners, NS, and CSXT are actively planning improvements to alleviate freight and passenger bottlenecks and to provide enhanced intermodal capacity. As part of these efforts, both NS and CSXT are improving intermodal terminals in the area: NS is developing a new intermodal terminal at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport; CSXT is doubling the capacity of its terminal at Hovis Road. The two intermodal facilities would support both the Crescent Corridor and National Gateway initiatives and would add needed capacity to the Charlotte intermodal

²⁶ Awwad, Alia. Atlanta Examiner. September 11, 2010. "GDOT applying for \$4 million to help resolve Howell Junction gridlock".

²⁷ North Carolina DOT.

market which serves parts of Tennessee, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Other improvements linked to the Charlotte Rail Improvement and Safety Project (CRISP) includes a mainline grade separation to alleviate an at-grade NS/CSXT crossing and the improvement of a wye junction where NS traffic from Atlanta and Charleston converges. Once complete, these improvements will improve freight and passenger flows and position the region for future growth.

Heartland Corridor²⁸

Norfolk Southern's Heartland Corridor links the Port of Virginia via a recently dedicated double-stack corridor to Columbus, Ohio and Chicago. The corridor improvements, which were completed in September 2010, were funded through a \$98 million Federal grant and NS funds. The clearance improvements allow for direct double-stack intermodal service between the growing maritime terminal complex in Hampton Roads and Midwestern distribution hubs through the Appalachian Mountains of Virginia and West Virginia. Moving forward, the potential of this investment will be more fully realized through the development of additional terminals, including the Craney Island Marine Terminal at the Port of Virginia.

New Orleans Gateway²⁹

The subject of several studies, the New Orleans Gateway freight rail project would improve speed, safety, and capacity at this critical union of six railroads in New Orleans. The proposed improvements would lessen congestion at this major bottleneck and improve flows between major western and eastern Class I carriers as well as local operations supporting the maritime terminals at New Orleans.

5.3 FREIGHT RAIL INITIATIVES SUMMARY

The Southeastern states are actively engaged in at least a dozen regionally significant freight rail corridor and terminal improvement initiatives, some with multiple major projects en route. In most cases, the initiatives are jointly supported by the railroads and state partners. Several of the major initiatives have recently received Federal funds appropriated by Congress or through the recent ARRA rounds of TIGER funding. In the future, the successful implementation of projects will continue to depend on collaboration between public and private partners, including freight railroads, shippers, local agencies, states, and the Federal government.

²⁸ Norfolk Southern.

²⁹ New Orleans Regional Planning Commission.

6.0 Next Phase

This report summarizes the efforts of the SEROps Phase IIA developed during the summer and fall of 2010. This effort identified the major multistate passenger and freight rail initiatives in the Southeast, culminating in this report. The information in this report provides the foundation for future SEROps efforts. SEROps Phase IIB will advance the study on the following fronts:

- **Development of a more detailed rail program** – To provide more granular information for decision-making and prioritization, the I-95 Corridor Coalition will engage the states and railroads to more fully describe and document the characteristics of the current infrastructure – including maps depicting speed, capacity, technologies (e.g., signaling), freight, and passenger flows.
- **Identification of benefits** – Using the successful template of the Mid-Atlantic Rail Operations Study (MAROps), the I-95 Corridor Coalition will apply the organizing principles of SEROps to quantify benefits of the initiatives – including reductions in traffic congestion, enhancements to safety and air quality, and other important factors.
- **Develop a list of pilot projects** – Based on the benefits analysis or another mutually agreeable prioritization process, the SEROps states will cooperatively identify a set of “pilot” projects that might have the highest likelihood to qualify for Federal funding.
- **Application of lessons learned** – The I-95 Corridor Coalition will examine the success of other multistate rail initiatives, most notably the Midwest Regional Rail Initiative (MRRI) which has been successful in focusing the resources of its member states to advance the highest priority projects.

Through these efforts, the Southeastern states can emerge as a more unified and organized region to cooperatively advance mutually beneficial passenger and freight rail initiatives across all 10 states.