

## Stimulus Funds Jump Start Construction at Airport

Tampa International Airport is making great strides towards the ultimate vision in its Airport Master Plan. The new North Terminal Complex to be constructed over the next 12 to 15 years will include a new terminal, parking garages, runway, cargo building, and extension of the access road (George Bean Parkway), as well as a regional transit station.

The first phase of the Master Plan will begin construction three years ahead of schedule since the Airport received \$8 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The stimulus funds will be used to complete a taxiway reconstruction and bridge project needed prior to the access road extension.

The two projects are expected to create more than 265 jobs. From utility and electrical workers, to site and concrete workers, equipment operators, and haulers, many of the jobs are estimated to pay over \$21 per hour! With a total project payroll of more than \$7.7 million for the taxiway and \$4.5 million for the infrastructure, these projects will provide much needed jobs to our region. For more information, contact **Nadine Jones** at **813/870-8773** or [njones@tampaairport.com](mailto:njones@tampaairport.com).



At the April 2010 MPO Board meeting, MPO Chair Mayor Joe Affronti (R) presented former Hillsborough County Aviation Authority executive director Lou Miller (L) with a plaque recognizing his many years of MPO service.



## Transportation Investments = Economic Improvements

### First High Speed Rail System in USA Starts Here! Tampa-Orlando



January 28th 2010 was an historic day for Florida. On that day, President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden visited the University of Tampa campus to make an announcement that will forever change options for traveling through Central Florida. Florida will receive \$1.25 billion in federal funds to build a high speed rail system connecting Orlando and Tampa. And, it's expected to be fully operational by 2015!



Not only does the announcement mean tens of thousands of construction and engineering jobs over the next four years to get it built, but also long-term jobs needed to operate it once the system is in place, like security guards, administrative staff, and maintenance workers. That doesn't even include the thousands of jobs expected to result from development around the stations.

President Barack Obama visited Tampa in January 2010 to announce funding to build a high speed rail system connecting Tampa and Orlando.

For more information, visit the Florida High Speed Rail website at [www.floridahighspeedrail.org](http://www.floridahighspeedrail.org), or contact **Nazih Haddad** calling toll-free **866/674-3362** or [info@floridahighspeedrail.org](mailto:info@floridahighspeedrail.org). ❖

# Job Connections: Opening the Door



Job Connections is a service provided by the Sunshine Line to help the transportation disadvantaged get to work. A person that is transportation disadvantaged is someone that must rely on others to get around, due to age, physical or mental disability, or income. These obstacles can make getting to jobs very difficult.

The Hillsborough County Department of Health and Social Service's Employment Opportunities Program has partnered with Sunshine Line to offer the Job Connections program to provide rides to job interviews, job training, and to and from work.

The program is funded by a federally-funded Jobs Access Grant. A unique aspect of the grant provides for case

managers to customize the program for participants by assessing the training needs of participants, developing individualized training plans and activities, and routinely following up to assure the participants' needs are being met. In addition, participants may access the full array of services provided by Health and Social Services, which operates five major intake centers known as "neighborhood service centers."

For more information about this program, or to find out if you are eligible, contact **Sunshine Line** at **813/272-7272** or visit [www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hss/sunshine](http://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/hss/sunshine). ❖



# Getting to Work Made Possible with Transit



Getting to and from the evening or weekend shift by bus just got easier on select routes in Hillsborough County. Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART) is using funds supplied through a Jobs Access Grant to extend service hours in the evenings and on the weekends. The routes serve core areas in Tampa. The grant program was created to help welfare recipients find and keep jobs.

Bus service on the weekends and later in the evening is especially important in Tampa because many jobs are in health care, tourism, and customer service. Hospitals, nursing and assisted living facilities, hotels, malls, theme parks, cruise ships, airports, and customer service call centers rely on access to an affordable workforce at hours beyond Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

For more information, contact **HART** at **813/254-4278** or visit [www.gohart.org](http://www.gohart.org). ❖

## TRANSIT HAS A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE ECONOMY

- **CHARLOTTE** – Has competed with Atlanta, a metropolis three times its size, and won major employers such as GMAC Financial Services, in part because of its investment in light rail.<sup>1</sup>
- **CHICAGO** – The transit system is estimated to directly and indirectly provide over \$12 billion in economic benefits and 120,000 jobs.<sup>2</sup>
- **DALLAS** – Transit has led to \$3.7 billion in economic activity and created 32,000 new jobs.<sup>3</sup>
- **LOS ANGELES** – \$15.0 billion in construction for public transit, transportation projects will generate \$32.1 billion over a 30 year period and more than 210,000 annual full-time equivalent jobs in Los Angeles County.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chapman, Dan. "Rivalry to be Economic King of the South Heats Up." Atlanta Journal Constitution. 10 May, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Mass Transit Capital Funding: The Need to Maintain, Enhance, and Expand. Chicago, IL: Regional Transportation Authority, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Clower, Terry, Bernard Weinstein and Michael Seman. Assessment of the Potential Fiscal Impacts of Existing and Proposed Transit-Oriented Development in the Dallas Area Rapid Transit Service Area. Denton, TX: Center for Economic Development and Research, University of North Texas, 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Freeman, Gregory and Myasnik Poghosyan. Construction Impact of LA Metro's Proposed Transportation Projects, 2009-2039. Los Angeles, CA: Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation, 2008.

## Breaking Ground on the Connector Could Bring Thousands of Jobs

The MPO Board's top priority for Federal stimulus grants, the I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector is under construction – years ahead of schedule! The Connector will link Interstate 4 to the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway, taking as many as 10,000 trucks traveling to and from the Port of Tampa each day off of the neighborhood streets, making it quieter and safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The \$389.5 million project is partially funded with stimulus dollars awarded to the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The project could create as many as 14,000 jobs over the three years it is expected to take to build, and most hires are expected to be from the local area.

The Connector will be a one-mile fully-elevated structure, linking two of the busiest roads in the region. This toll bridge will make traveling through this area much more convenient by allowing truck and car traffic to drive between the two roads without having to exit. Users of the Connector will pay electronically through an open road tolling system that will allow traffic to maintain highway speeds.

Currently, freight vehicles traveling between the Lee Roy Selmon Expressway, I-4, and the Port of Tampa use 21st and 22nd Streets, a pair of one-way streets running through Ybor City and Palmetto Beach, both historic City of Tampa neighborhoods. Members of the community hope the project will reduce noise and pollution and make 21st and 22nd Streets more attractive for walking and bicycling. These streets were never efficient for freight traffic due to the 10 sets of traffic signals and two railroad crossings between the Expressway and I-4.

The Connector will also allow the freight trucks to save time and fuel by eliminating the stop-and-go movement caused by traffic signals in the busy urban neighborhoods. The Connector project is expected to open to traffic by summer of 2013, about the same time the expansion of the Panama Canal is expected to generate additional container cargo traffic through the port.

For more information about this project, including graphics and a video, visit [www.mytbi.com](http://www.mytbi.com) and click on I-4/Selmon Expressway Connector. ❖



MPO Board members and other dignitaries at Crosstown Connector groundbreaking, April 2010. L to R: Martin Knopp (Federal Highway Administration, Florida Division Administrator), Joe Waggoner (MPO Board, Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Director), Don Skelton (Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District Seven), Stephen Diaco (Tampa-Hillsborough Expressway Board), Stephanie Kopelousos (Florida Secretary of Transportation), John Dingfelder (MPO Board, Tampa City Council), Kathy Castor (U.S. House of Representatives), Governor Charlie Crist, Lee Roy Selmon, Mark Sharpe (MPO Board, Hillsborough County Commission), Richard Wainio (MPO Board, Port Authority Director).



Tolls will be collected through an all-electronic toll system that will allow traffic to maintain highway speeds.

The Ybor City Vision Plan prepared by the Ybor City Development Corporation in 2005 calls for the character of the streets to eventually change as truck traffic is rerouted to the proposed Connector. These streets have the potential to become quieter, more pedestrian friendly streets and less of a barrier separating the eastern part of the study area from the rest of Ybor City.

