



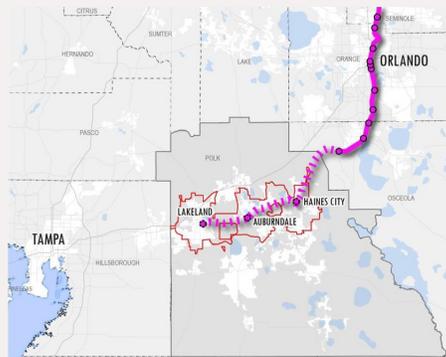
PROJECT BACKGROUND

The project builds on prior work that envisions SunRail in Polk County

This study builds on previous planning efforts that examined multiple passenger rail alternatives for Polk County. Of all the various passenger rail alternatives considered in the Phase I effort, most promising have been alternatives that link Polk County to the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission's new SunRail System.

Phase I of SunRail, with twelve stations ranging from DeBary in the north to Sand Lake Road in the south, held its grand opening on April 30, 2014, with revenue service starting on May 19, 2014. Phase II, extending south to Poinciana in the south is expected to open in 2016-2017.

There are significant movements of people between Polk County and areas to the east. Connecting to SunRail would provide travel alternatives for the tens of thousands of people who move between Polk County and its neighbors to the north and east. The 2035 Polk County Mobility Vision Plan envisions extending SunRail into Polk County.



DETERMINING STATION LOCATIONS

Ten station locations were considered and four were advanced for study

To identify the best station areas for Polk County, the rail corridor was screened for locations with good access to major roads or development and were free of environmental or operational constraints. The ten locations identified were then evaluated based on four (4) primary criteria:

- **Rail Operations** - Includes travel distance, travel time, additional trains needed, and capital cost
- **Existing Activity** - Includes station area population and employment
- **Development Character** - Includes publicly-owned land and block length
- **Transportation** - Includes major roadway crossings, existing bus routes, and freight activity on the rail corridor

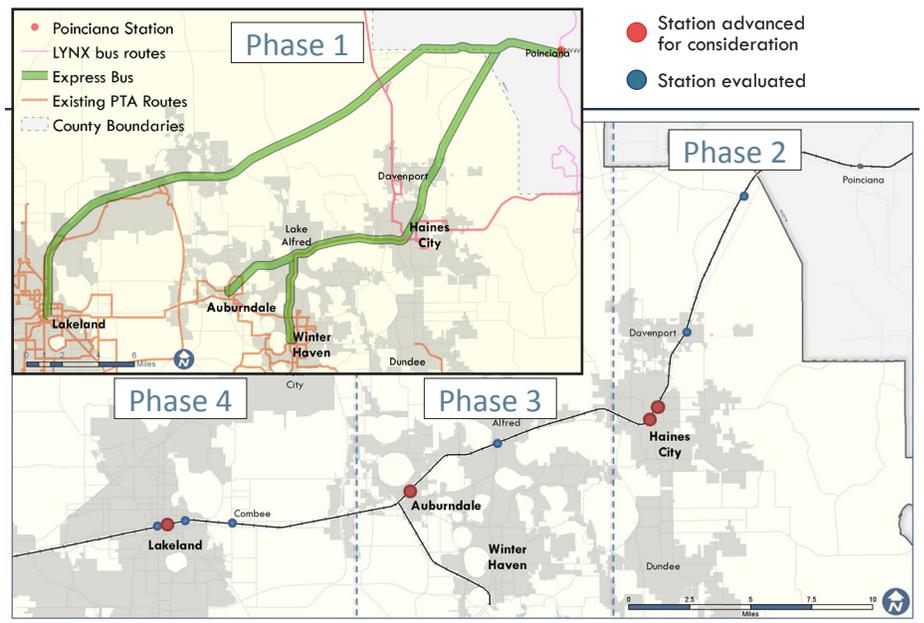
This evaluation yielded strong candidate stations in downtown Lakeland, Auburndale, and Haines City. Two Haines City stations were advanced for consideration, with further study helping to finalize a selection.

PHASING

One express bus phase and three rail expansion phases were considered

The potential expansion of SunRail into Polk County was evaluated in four stages that account for the long timeline and significant cost of any major transportation project, and allows for evaluation of initial extensions or transit alternatives. A four (4) phase approach was taken:

- **Phase 1:** Express Bus Service to SunRail Poinciana Station
- **Phase 2:** SunRail extension to Haines City
- **Phase 3:** SunRail extension to Auburndale
- **Phase 4:** SunRail extension to Lakeland



Evaluated station locations and phasing plan



INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The project builds on prior work that envisions SunRail in Polk County

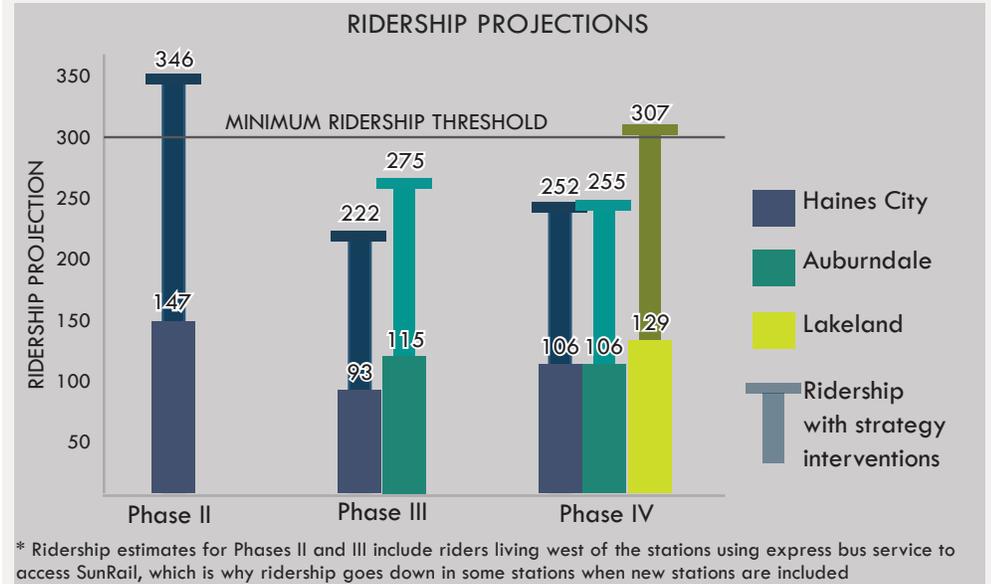
As efforts move forward to extend SunRail service into Polk County many, if not all, existing operating agreements between SunRail partners will need to be amended to reflect Polk County’s inclusion into the SunRail system. Some of the more critical institutional issues that must be addressed include:

- FDOT funding period ends in 2020, before any possible extension into Polk County. Polk County would need to be prepared to assume a share of any future operating deficits.
- Assuming 50 percent federal and 25 percent state funding could be secured, Polk County would need to be prepared to contribute the remaining 25 percent of capital costs in addition to a share of any operating deficits.
- The portion of the CSX A-Line south of Poinciana remains in CSX ownership. There would need to be an agreement to allow commuter rail to operate on the portion of the A-Line south of Poinciana.
- It is unknown if FDOT would purchase the additional portions of the CSX A-Line needed for Polk County, or under what terms CSX would be willing to accommodate commuter rail operations.

RIDERSHIP PROPENSITY ANALYSIS

Future ridership with and without policy intervention was projected

Using 2040 population and employment projections, along with an analysis of current ridership patterns on SunRail, a future ridership projection was created. These estimates are below expectation, suggesting the need for strategies to increase ridership through policy, incentives, or other outside measures. If strategies such as infill development, increased density, shifts in mode choice, or rider subsidies were included, ridership could reach higher, as shown in the bar chart below. It is assumed that 300 riders per station are needed at minimum for the project to be viable.



FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Costs were estimated for all 4 project phases

Capital and operating costs for all four project phases are provided below. What they show is that a rail extension is likely to cost several hundred million dollars, even to Haines City, although the local share could be much less. Extending to Lakeland would require relocation of existing CSX freight lines, adding nearly \$1 billion to the cost.

COST ESTIMATES	Capital Cost	Minimum Local Share	Annual Operating Cost
Phase I (Feeder Bus Only)	\$5,982,583	\$5,982,583	\$877,655
Phase II	\$146,046,337	\$26,791,468	\$1,965,668
Phase III	\$292,092,674	\$53,582,935	\$3,089,483
Phase IV	\$1,323,008,834	\$71,946,278	\$4,206,765

ACTION STEPS

Recommended steps moving forward

There are significant hurdles to the extension of SunRail in Polk County. However, these hurdles are not insurmountable. Below are a series of action steps future extensions of SunRail to Polk County.

1. Plan for initial bus transit connections to Poinciana SunRail station;
2. Monitor usage of Poinciana Station for an initial period of two years, and determine if ridership supports rail;
3. Perform phased PD&E rail study;
4. Promote transit-oriented development in station areas;
5. Initiate discussions with partners: FDOT, CSX, Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission; and
6. Apply for federal funding.