Promoting Rail Transit in America

John Robert Smith
President and CEO
Reconnecting America

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Economic Development, Transportation and Cultural Affairs Committee
Memphis, TN
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At Reconnecting America, we help transform promising ideas into thriving communities – where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit.
Our Partners:

Creating a national marketplace for TOD, working with cities, transit agencies, developers, investors + communities
Improving practice through technical assistance, research + policy reform
On-line Clearinghouse of TOD + Transit Best Practices

A coalition with over 500 members of business, housing, environment, development, labor, health, aging and transportation interests
Campaign Focus on the Next Federal Transportation Bill
Transportation investments that are economically sound, respond to markets and improve the lives of people
Study Lines for Improving Intercity Rail Service with Major Airports and Interstate Highways

Legend
- Current Amtrak Service
- Needed Intercity Service
- FRA High Speed Rail Corridors
- Interstate Highways

Notes:
1. The definition of large hub airports is 1% or more of annual passenger boardings.
2. The service indicated is supported and expanded with a coordinated intercity bus network.
3. Routes were created with available data. Errors are possible.
4. High speed rail routes are generalized and not a reflection of final alignments or planning.

This map was developed by Reconnecting America and the Center for Neighborhood Technology in 2003 and updated in 2009. Recommendations for needed intercity rail lines were based on intercity travel demand from the American Travel Survey of 1995. High speed rail routes are generalized from the FRA's designated high speed rail corridors map.
2011 House Republican Votes for Amtrak

Legend
Amtrak Lines
Congressional District #
Republican House Member

Source: Census Bureau, ESRI, Federal Railroad Administration, Reconnecting America
Job Losses From Cuts to HSIPR

Texas: 7,394
North Carolina: 1,516
Nationwide: 583,578
Transportation Opportunities for a Small Town/Rural Area

- Revitalize and promote existing rural towns
- Improve our roads and bridges
- Allow our local officials to participate in planning
- Shift movement of goods from highways to freight rail
- Provide rural connectivity through multi-modal solutions
Small Towns and Rural Areas

The Myths:

• Large cities and small towns have nothing in common.
• A city is only defined by its population.
• A rural population is totally self-sufficient. They lead a sole existence on their farms and ranches and are not reliant on city/county services.
• Due to their self-sufficiency, they have no need for transportation options.

The Facts:

• People who live in large cities, small towns and rural areas all have the same concerns.
• A city is defined less by its population and more by the services it renders.
• No matter where people live, they depend on nearby cities for jobs, healthcare, education and services.
• Transportation options are needed for everyone – including veterans, students, the elderly, the economically-challenged.
How Rail Access Transformed Meridian: A Case Study

Union Station, Meridian, Mississippi
It’s All About Location…
Your Identity is Key

In any public project you need to know:

Who You Were in the Past

“Meridian, with its depots, store-houses, arsenal, hospitals, offices, hotels, and cantonments no longer exists.”

General William Tecumseh Sherman
February, 1864
Who You Are Now
Who You Aspire to Be
Making the ‘Impossible’ POSSIBLE
Restoring Public Confidence

Previous Meridian projects all faced challenges—both internally and externally

- Lack of confidence
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of creative financing
- Lack of partnerships
- Lack of design creativity

A “can’t do” mentality won’t succeed
Restoring Public Confidence

**Union Station**

- **NAME & LOCATION**: Union Station
- **OWNER**: Meridian, Mississippi
- **SIZE**: 44,000 sq ft
- **COST**: $15.8M
- **TIME**: 23 months
- **DESIGN AWARDS**:
  - 1999 American Institute of Architects, Mississippi Chapter Honor Award
  - 2000 International Downtown Association (IDA) Honor Award for Economic Development

**Identity**

A Multi-Modal Transportation Center occupying the original site of the city's twenty-first century elevated station. The facility contains a concourse, mezzanine, seating, waiting, and queueing areas for Amtrak, Greyhound, Meridian Transit Authority, NORTHERN Railroad, Railroad Claims Agency, Central Mississippi Business Development Center, Meridian Main Street, Railroad Museum, Visitor/Hospitality Center, and support spaces. Completed 12/99.

**Contacts**

- Wade Jones, Executive Director/FMDC: 601-492-1200
- Jim Farley, Community Development Director: 601-492-1200
- Ed Skipper, Chief Financial Officer: 601-492-1246

**Architects**

Archer Architecture, PLLC
& Deleeuw Associates
Transportation Center
To Build a Station Takes Partners
## Funding Union Station Development

### STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING

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<th>Grant Type</th>
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<td>Supplemental Grant (MDOT)</td>
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### LOCAL FUNDING

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### PREPAID LEASES

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= TOTAL PROJECT COST

$6,623,992
Play to Your Strengths

- Viable city core…save it
- Existing transportation hub…grow it
- Historic structures in place…preserve them
- Diverse population…house them
What Works Really Works

- Good community planning works on all levels
- Follow the guidance of the experts
- Smart design can tie everything together
Union Station at Completion

• Annually, Union Station hosts 250 events and 300,000 people
Union Station Development Resulted in:

- Private development of $135 million in surrounding area
- “Facelifts” for historic structures
Design of Union Station inspired:

Archer Architecture, p.l.c.
City Hall

City Hall

NAME: LOCATION: OWNER: CLIENT
MERIDIAN CITY HALL
City Hall Interior
Meridian, Mississippi
SIZE: 30,000 S.F.
COST: $1,500,000
TIME: 18 Months

CONTACTS:
Ed Stepp
Chief Financial Officer
601-485-1945

IDENTITY:

City of Meridian Central Fire Station

Archer Architecture, p.l.c.
Fire Station

City of Meridian Central Fire Station

NAME: LOCATION: OWNER: CLIENT
CENTRAL FIRE STATION
Meridian, Mississippi
SIZE: 3,150 S.F.
COST: $2,800,000
TIME: 20 Months

CONTACTS:
John Rasure Smith
Project Manager
601-481-1430

IDENTITY:
Five apparatus bays with three drive through, a hose drying tower, administrative offices, Firefighter bedrooms and support facilities.
A new Union Station helped bring about:
MSU Riley Center, a state-of-the-art performing and conference facility
Union Station also brought:

$17.3 million in HUD HOPE VI grants for development of attractive low to middle income duplex and single-family housing
Transportation Alternatives are Key
Other examples of making local connections and maximizing local value, also known as “Great American Stations”

Denver’s Union Station

Pittsburgh’s Pennsylvanian Union Train Station

Albuquerque Train Station
Three Key Points for Local Plan Implementation

• Partnerships are essential – put them in place initially

• Identify a key champion ("hero") for the project – one who will be spokesperson, cheerleader, visionary – for the public and the media

• Put a plan in place and begin implementation quickly – do not let it stagnate
Making Local Rail Connections Benefits All

• City wins
• Region wins
• Residents win
• Businesses win
• Travelers win

Connectivity = Livability

It’s All About Providing Choices
Thank you!

John Robert Smith
President and CEO
Reconnecting America
EMAIL: jrsmith@reconnectingamerica.org
PHONE: 202.429.6990 ext.205

Visit us at www.ReconnectingAmerica.org