High Speed Rail in America

Thomas Ducharme, Matt Schena, and Dan Bellis
The US Current Situation of High Speed Rail

- The US only has one high speed rail
  - Acela
    - Which runs from Boston to Washington D.C.
- A renewed interest in High Speed Rail
  - Due to increased congestion
  - Desire for cheaper travel
    - Mainly between cities
  - Interest in greener transportation
    - Most high speed trains are electric
  - Overseas experience
Q. If the fare and travel time were about the same, which of the following would you be more likely to use to travel to a city in your region?

- Airplane: 13%
- Car: 33%
- Train: 54%

© 2009 HNTB Companies

High Speed Rails Impact

• Would reduce annual carbon emissions by 2.8 million tons
  ◦ High speed trains use 1/3 the energy of planes and 1/5 that of cars
• Reduce Airport congestion
  ◦ By eliminating 900,000 city to city flights
• Give access to cheaper long distance travel
Impact Continued

• Improve economic situation
  - First by jobs created
  - Secondly by travel brought in by train
    ▪ Providence economy grew when linked to Boston and New York by the Acela
    ▪ In Europe several areas saw development increase
    ▪ Development was in office and retail
  
  http://m.wikitravel.org/en/Frankfurt
Possible effects on Freight Rail

• High speed rail usually hauls passengers, though new opportunities for freight exist
• Many of the new proposed corridors will connect with current freight line
  ◦ Resulting in improvement to those lines
  ◦ Reducing operating costs due to sharing rail
• Increase in freight hauled
  ◦ In Europe, some trains carry mail and parcels
    ▪ Allow for lower transportation costs (UPS, FedEx, USPS)

Election’s Effect on the Future of High Speed Rail

• Democratic chairman of the US House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee loses re-election in Minnesota
• Three Republican governors opposed to high speed rail are elected
• Mixed message from voters regarding government spending on rail projects
Oberstar out, Replaced by Mica

- Not opposed to high speed rails
- Wants to reevaluate where funding is being provided
- Prefers densely populated areas and true, high speed rails
- Wants to scale back $800 million dollar project in own home state to focus on only the congested, tourism-focused region

Votes for Funding

- Colorado votes down measure to limit state spending on road maintenance
- Florida votes down 1% increase to sales tax for various highway projects
- Rhode Island approves $80 million in bonds and notes for infrastructure
Major Projects Cancelled

• Scott Walker, incoming governor of Wisconsin, referred to the state’s rail project as “boondoggle”
• Barriers to cancellation include: agreement with federal authorities, creation of forty jobs at Patentes Talgo
• John Kasich, Ohio’s newest governor, called for the cancellation of two studies
• Called train “one of the dumbest ideas” and turned down $400 million in federal funding
Proposed High Speed Rail Systems in the United States

Local Impact: New Haven- Springfield

Florida High Speed Rail System
California High Speed Rail System
Pacific Northwest Corridor
Wisconsin High Speed Rail
New Haven Railroad
From Old to New

- The NHRR shuttled between Boston and New York
- Talks of resurrecting line as high speed rail
- $120 million in federal funding approved for New Haven-Hartford-Springfield connection
- Reduce carbon emissions by 10,000 tons per year
California High Speed Rail

Over a billion annual trips are projected to be made within the state of California in the next twenty years.
Scope of the California Project

- 800 miles of track
- Up to 24 stations
- From San Francisco to Los Angeles at speeds up to 220 mph
Florida High Speed Rail

- Connecting Tampa, Lakeland, Walt Disney Resorts, International Drive and Orlando International Airport.
- Florida is on track to open one of America’s first HSR express service between Tampa and Orlando in 2015.
- Trains are projected to reach speeds of at least 168 mph.
Benefits

Economical Benefits:
- Job creation and improved movement of people, goods and services.

Community Benefits:
- Cheaper, faster, safer and more convenient travel

Environmental:
- Improved air quality
- Foreign Oil: 12.7 million barrels less per year
- Greenhouse gas emissions: 12 billion pounds less per year
Is HSR worth the cost?

• Examples of Economic Impact:
  ◦ Japan
  ◦ European Union

• Environmental Impact:
  ◦ CO2 emissions
  ◦ Pollution caused from construction