



## High-Speed Rail Plans from Orlando to Tampa Underway



In response to an unsolicited proposal by intercity rail operator Brightline, Governor Rick Scott has announced that the Florida Department of

Transportation (FDOT) has begun the process to allow for private investment in a high-speed rail connection from Orlando to Tampa.

FDOT and the Central Florida Expressway Authority (CFX) received an unsolicited proposal to lease property owned by the state and CFX to build a high-speed train along Interstate 4. Based on the unsolicited proposal, FDOT, on behalf of the State and CFX, is initiating an open, transparent procurement process so any interested private entities may apply. The request is for those interested in leasing FDOT and CFX owned rights-of-way to establish privately funded passenger rail service between Orlando and Tampa.

Governor Scott said, “This is an exciting opportunity for Orlando, Tampa and our entire state. Instead of placing taxpayers on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars, our goal is for the private sector to invest in this project.

Through private investment, we ensure that this major project has zero financial risk to Florida taxpayers.”

FDOT Secretary Mike Dew said, “The department is committed to creating a robust transportation system that meets Florida’s current and future needs. Privately-funded passenger rail will provide residents and visitors a transportation choice for one of the busiest corridors in the state.”

Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer said, “Orlando is a destination of choice for those visiting our world-class attractions, attending business conventions or enjoying a weekend getaway. As Mayor, I have worked to ensure that we offer residents and visitors, safe, efficient and affordable transportation options. Having more passenger rail options will create more jobs and make it easier to experience our great city.”

Tampa Mayor Bob Buckhorn said, “Whether it’s visiting our pristine beaches or catching a game, adding safe and affordable private passenger rail service will provide a needed alternative for those wanting to spend time in Tampa. Establishing private passenger rail service enables more public transportation options while creating jobs and reducing congestion on our roadways.”

To Read More See Excerpt: <https://www.moderncities.com/article/2018-jun-high-speed-rail-plans-from-orlando-to-tampa-underway>



### About The FDOT

The goal of the DBE Supportive Services Program is to increase the number of DBEs participating on FDOT contracts and facilitate the opportunity for DBEs to obtain contracts. The services are designed to:

- Assist established construction firms to move them from bidding as a subcontractor to bidding as a Prime Contractor to produce sound bids.
- Provide access to training increases DBE expertise in handling of daily business operations.

### About The Program

The Construction Estimating Institute (CEI) works with FDOT as the statewide provider of the federally funded Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) Supportive Services Program. We want to increase the number of certified DBEs participating in highway and bridge construction, as well as assist DBEs in growing and eventually becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, CEI provides supportive services by assisting prime contractors and consultants with identifying DBEs for subcontracting opportunities on priority projects.

## Securing Better Bonding

4 methods for overcoming the challenges that can lead to bad bonds



For contractors, securing bonding is the lifeblood of their businesses, but it comes with challenges that range from having the necessary working capital to demonstrating a track record

of success. Fortunately, with some work, these challenges can be overcome, making a contractor more attractive to a surety. This includes having sound financial statements and effective communications with all parties, as well as creating ongoing relationships based on trust. In the end, contractors require bonding for current and long-term business success. Taking the right financial management approaches can help open the door to future growth and opportunities.

### 1. *Keep Sound Financial Statements*

Sound financial statements are the foundation for persuading a surety to underwrite a bond, helping win a construction bid. However, these statements are not just a black-and-white compilation of numbers on a page; they tell bond underwriters that the contractor has the resources to do the job that would come with the winning bid.

Financial statements can also vouch for the historical performance of a contractor, which speaks to their ability to effectively manage a project. While these statements can be comprehensive (including a balance sheet, income statement, schedule of cash flow, schedule of contracts in-progress and completed contracts), they are necessary for proving that a contractor has a well-run business.

### 2. *Build a Network of Trusted Relationships*

Bond brokers rely on accounting firms with track records of generating products used to determine if a surety-contractor relationship is good for both parties. These relationships are symbiotic in nature because the bond broker's

recommendation of accounting firms with strong track records and the contractor's choice of the accountant to produce the financial narrative are at the front of a process that begins with a winning bid and ends with a successful project completed. This ultimately helps put bond underwriters in a more comfortable place. There's also room for forgiveness when showing a long-term pattern of success, broken by an occasional down year, after which there is a rebound.

### 3. *Manage Cash Flow*

The process begins with a balance sheet that reflects strong working capital, with a focus on the previous year's financial success. Sometimes, a lack of success a year earlier can be mitigated with an interim statement from the previous 3 or 6 months, indicating business is on the upswing. Cash in the bank is a critical element in this process. An owner's investment in the company can help with working capital, especially in its early years. Too often, contractors see their businesses fail, not due to lack of ability, but rather due to undercapitalization. For many contractors, especially those on the cash basis of tax reporting, it's better to delay billing later in December, as any cash received before year-end will be taxable in that year. This was a decision business owners had to make in 2017, in light of the lower corporate tax rates looming in 2018. Some decided to bill on December 31, 2017, collecting money in January 2018. These are a few tactics and considerations contractors use in business operations, and each tells a different story to surety underwriters seeking to determine the value of a potential or existing client.

To Read More, See Excerpt:<https://www.constructionbusinessowner.com/insurance/secure-better-bonding>

### *Reminder to all DBE's!*

All certified DBE firms must annually submit an affidavit, personal net worth statement and tax documentation to the FDOT EEO Office by the certification anniversary date to remain an active DBE.

## Supportive Services Offered



- Estimating Training
- Building Capacity
- Mobilization Financing
- Bonding Assistance
- Marketing Plan Development
- Creating a Business Plan
- Building a Website



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FINANCING,  
AND  
INSURANCE**

CEI is an educational organization providing the highest quality construction training in the industry. Over 100,000 owners, estimators, project managers, field supervisors, office support staff, foremen, laborers, and key management personnel have attended courses that are offered nationwide. The courses provide students with construction skills training and the critical information needed to be effective within their companies and organizations.

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