

# Rural Transportation Needs: Stations, Livability and Economic Development


John Robert Smith  
President and CEO  
Reconnecting America

State Agriculture and Rural Leaders  
Phoenix, Arizona  
January 15, 2011

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:

**CTOD** CENTER FOR  
TRANSIT-ORIENTED  
DEVELOPMENT

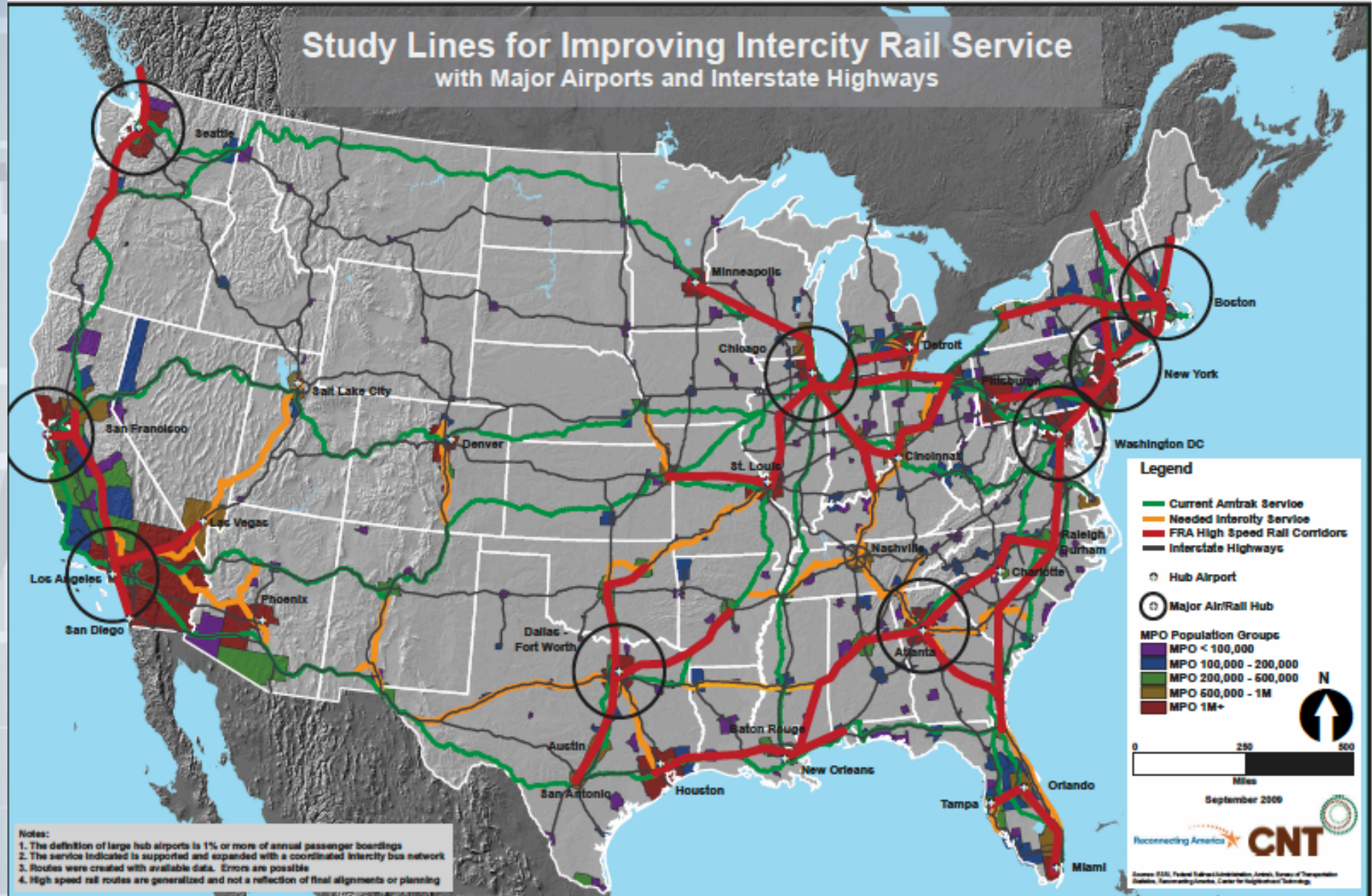
 The image cannot be displayed. Your computer may not have enough memory to open the image, or the image may have been corrupted. Restart your computer, and then open the file again. If the red x still appears, you may have to delete the image and



- 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



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.

## 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 Myth:

- Do not have the same concerns as larger cities
- No interest in transportation options
- Are happy with status quo and see no need for change
- Are all self-contained and non-reliant on each other
- Have extremely small populations

## The Facts:

- Have the same basic concerns – services, healthcare, transportation
- Often no transportation alternatives other than driving or bus
- Veterans, students, the elderly, the economically-challenged...all need options other than driving
- Serve as a regional gathering point for commerce
- Small towns and rural areas range in size, but are less populated than urbanized areas, which are over 50,000<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2000 U.S. Census

# Station Area Development and Economic Growth A Case Study

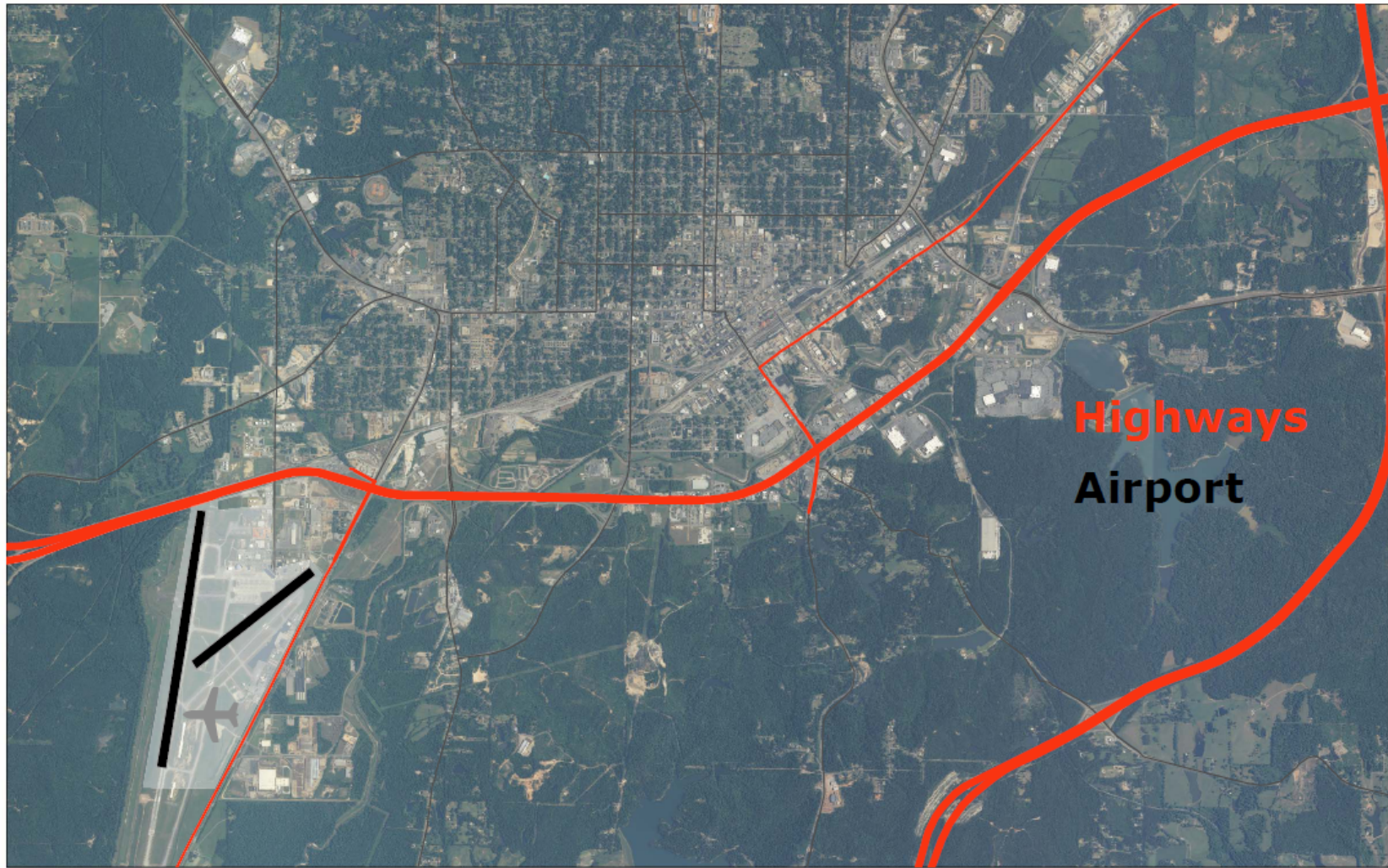


Union Station, Meridian, Mississippi

# It's All About Location...







**Highways**  
**Airport**



**Highways**  
**Airport**  
**Amtrak**

# 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

Archer Architecture, pllc  
& Dale and Associates  
Transportation Center

## Union Station

NAME - LOCATION - OWNER - CLIENT  
UNION STATION  
Meridian, Mississippi

SIZE 40,000 S.F.  
new structure and renovation to existing structure

COST \$6,661,000

TIME 22 months

### DESIGN AWARDS

1998 American Institute of Architects,  
Mississippi Chapter Honor Award

1998 International Downtown Association (IDA)  
Honor Award for Economic Development



**CONTACTS**  
Wade Jones  
Executive Director of EMBDC  
601-683-1906

**CITY OF MERIDIAN**  
Don Farrar  
Community Development Director  
601-485-1908

Ed Skipper  
Chief Financial Officer  
601-485-1946

### IDENTITY

A Multi-Modal Transportation Center occupying four city blocks encompassing the original site of the city's twentieth century railroad station. This facility contains offices, meeting rooms, waiting and queuing areas for Amtrak, Greyhound, Meridian Transit Authority, Norfolk Southern Railroad Claims Agency, East Mississippi Business Development Center, Meridian Main Street, Railroad Museum, Visitor/Hospitality Center and support spaces. Completed 12/98



# To Build a Station Takes Partners





# Funding Union Station Development

## STATE/FEDERAL FUNDING

\$2,544,960  
Enhancement Grant (MDOT)  
971,040  
Grant (MDOT)  
640,571  
Transfer  
290,281  
+ 700,000  
Grant (MDOT)  
**\$5,146,852**  
Contribution

ISTEA  
Supplemental  
STIP Grant  
STP-93  
Supplemental  
Federal/State

## + LOCAL FUNDING

**\$1,046,140**

## + PREPAID LEASES

**\$431,000**

## = 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 passengers



# 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.l.c.  
City Hall

**City Hall**

NAME • LOCATION • OWNER • CLIENT  
**MERIDIAN CITY HALL**  
 City Hall Interior  
 Meridan, Mississippi

SIZE 30,000 S.F.  
 COST \$15,505,941  
 TIME 18 Months






CONTACTS Ed Skipper  
 Chief Financial Officer  
 601-485-1945



IDENTITY 1915 Beaux Arts City Hall  
 Interior demolition was conducted in 2007.  
 Exterior Restoration occurred in 2008-2009  
 with Interior Restoration & Renovations occurring in 2009-2011.

Archer Architecture, p.l.l.c.  
Fire Station

**City of Meridian  
Central Fire Station**

NAME • LOCATION • OWNER • CLIENT  
**CENTRAL FIRE STATION**  
 Meridan, Mississippi

SIZE 23,143 S.F.  
 COST \$2,680,000.00  
 TIME 20 Months


CONTACTS John Robert Smith  
 Mayor  
 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:

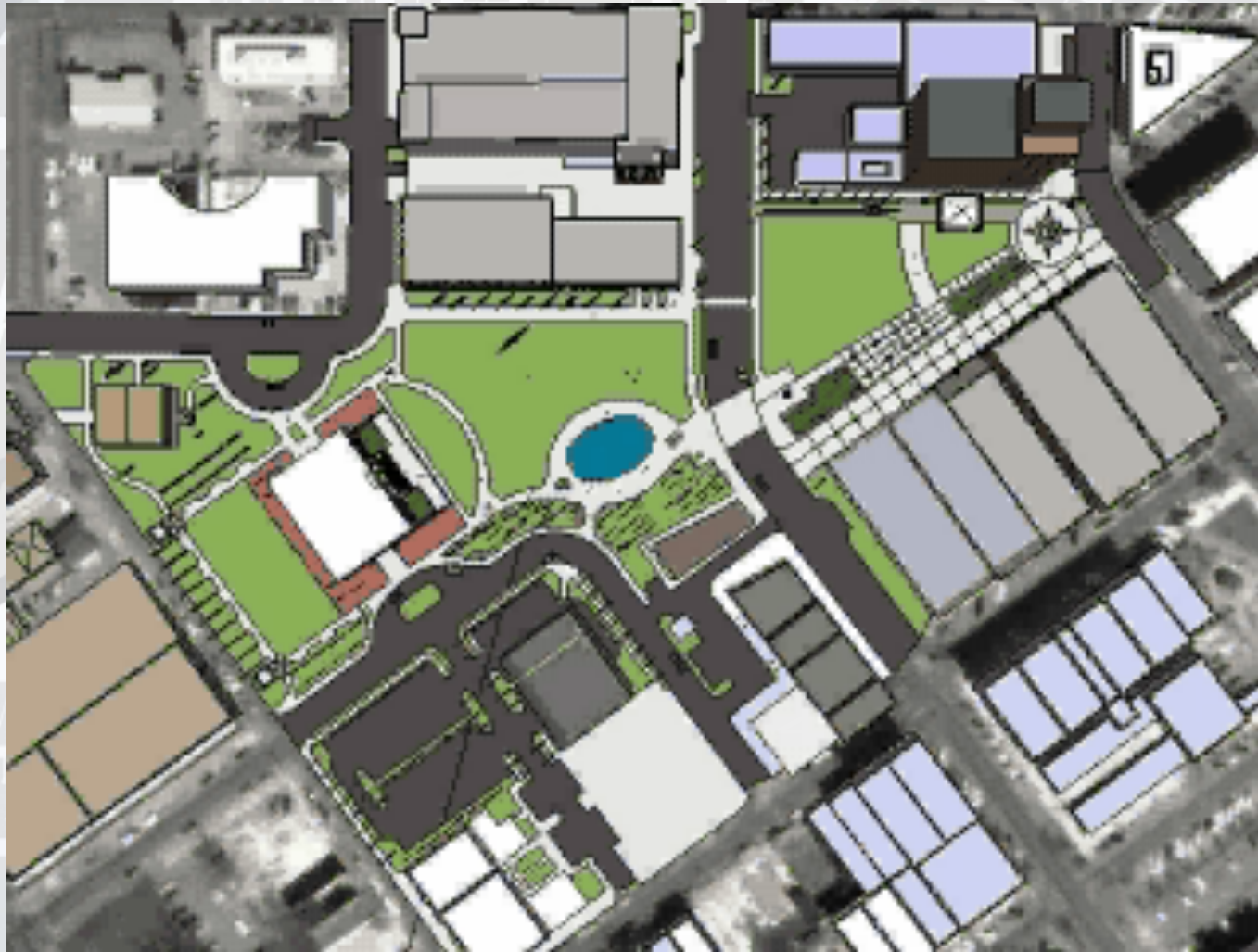
\$17.3 million in HUD HOPE VI grants for development of attractive low to middle income duplex and single-family housing







# Ultimately, Establish a Vision for the Future





Thank you!

Reconnecting America

**EMAIL:** [www.reconnectingamerica.org](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org)

**PHONE:** 202.429.6990 ext.201

**WEB:** [www.reconnectingamerica.org](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org)