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Train Station Workshop Draws Standing Room Only Crowd

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Reported by [Saul Saenz](#)

DAYTONA BEACH -- A workshop aimed at hearing interest in an Amtrak stop in Daytona Beach drew a standing room only crowd Wednesday night.

Enthusiasm filled the city hall meeting room to hear about the proposed station.

"I especially love to take the train and it's very difficult when you don't drive to get to the DeLand train station," said Patricia Lipovsky, who is in favor of the station.

Transportation officials are proposing the resurgence of an east coastline with stops in Daytona Beach, Cocoa and Melbourne.

This same line was proposed nine years ago, but came to dead halt when Amtrak was forced to restructure financially.

Now federal and local governments are on board to make it happen, putting the entire process on a fast track.

"The timetable is pretty tight," said Steve Olson, a spokesman for the Florida Department of Transportation. "If everything falls into place, we're hoping to see trains going from Jacksonville to Miami in three years. We would like to see it maybe in less time."

"The FEC has also indicated this is a big priority for them," said Kim Delaney from the FEC Planning Council. "They know that passenger service makes sense for them financially."

Future riders said they want to rely less on gas, which is hovering near \$4 a gallon, and more on passenger trains.

One workshop participant pointed to the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico as to why Floridians need a passenger train.

"With the oil spill in the Gulf, we should accentuate our misplaced reliance on oil," said Anthony Ehrlich, another supporter of the station. "This is the best time it can happen."

Officials have five proposed Daytona Beach station sites, but want to narrow it down to one.

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The city of Bunnell in Flagler County is also lobbying for a train station. But officials said that could be part of phase two if phase one is a success.

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