

Ask an Expert About The Crescent Corridor

A Series of Conversations with Transportation Experts

Patrick Murphy Jr. is senior vice president of economic development for the Birmingham Business Alliance. The alliance's mission is to serve as a catalyst for economic development and business prosperity for a seven-county region in north-central Alabama, including Jefferson County, where Norfolk Southern plans to construct a \$112 million intermodal freight facility as part of its Crescent Corridor project. In his position, Murphy is responsible for economic development recruiting, business retention, and expansion activities, and he also oversees targeted marketing of the Birmingham region to the global business community. Murphy has extensive experience in economic development, including stints as a commercial real estate broker and site location consultant and as project manager for the Georgia Department of Economic Development.

Question: As you work to promote the growth of business and job opportunities in the Birmingham region, what role do you expect Norfolk Southern's planned intermodal freight facility in Jefferson County to play?

Answer: The Birmingham region has a long history with railroads, and we are blessed to have a lot of infrastructure in the transportation sector in regards to railroads, interstates, and airports. This planned intermodal facility will greatly enhance our opportunities to work with existing companies to support business expansion projects that rely on intermodal access. It also will be a large attractor for new economic development projects - not only for distribution and warehouse facilities, which traditionally follow intermodal, but also for manufacturing. We've already gotten inquiries from several manufacturing companies that are interested in the location of this intermodal facility.

With the studies done on its economic development potential, we anticipate that Norfolk Southern's facility will help retain and attract more than 8,000 jobs over the next 10 years. That's extremely important for us. In particular, the intermodal facility will enhance the marketability of the Jefferson Metropolitan Industrial Park in McCalla, which literally is located across the railroad tracks from the intermodal site. We have two large distribution facilities currently located in the park, and we know existing tenants will benefit both in terms of supply chain logistics and improved access to markets. Besides improving intermodal service between the Gulf Coast and the Northeast, we understand the Crescent Corridor and this new intermodal facility will give our businesses greater access to international markets, opening a lot of new opportunities for business growth.

Question: Funding for the Crescent Corridor has been supported through a public-private partnership that involves the investment of federal and state tax dollars in improvements that carry clear public benefits. In your view, how will the people of Alabama benefit from Norfolk Southern's investment in the corridor and the intermodal facility in Jefferson County?

Answer: The primary public benefit is that you have another excellent company that is expanding its business operations in Alabama. That means the company will generate more tax revenue for state and local governments, help create good paying jobs, and serve as a driver for future economic development projects. That's a benefit for our region and it expands to the entire state. Over the years, Norfolk Southern has proven itself to be an excellent corporate citizen and partner. Based on figures we've seen, the company already pays almost \$20 million in state and local taxes in Alabama. During the past decade, the railroad has helped attract nearly \$4 billion in new or expanded business development that has created more than 10,000 jobs. We've worked hand-in-hand with Norfolk Southern's industrial development group on industrial development projects. They are first-class. We have watched as this intermodal project has unfolded, and Norfolk Southern has done an excellent job of going the extra mile to be accessible, informative, and transparent in its dealings with the community.

Visit www.TheFutureNeedsUs.com for more information about Norfolk Southern's public-private partnerships to expand America's transportation capacity.

