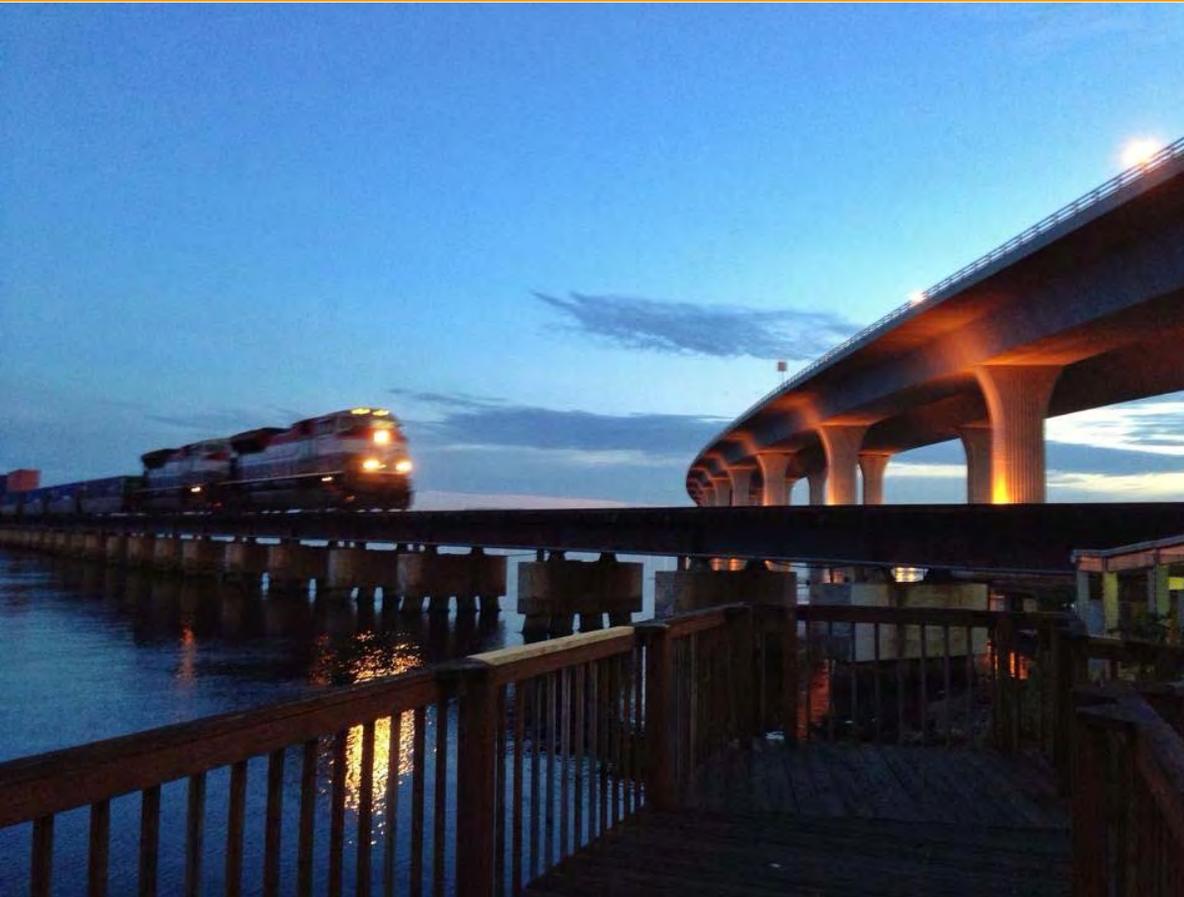


# All Aboard Florida



## DRAFT Environmental Impact Statement

Martin  
Metropolitan Planning  
Organization (MPO)  
Staff Review

Photo courtesy Carla McMahon

# Environmental Process

An environmental assessment (EA) is a public document that provides evidence that a project has a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or requires an environmental impact statement (EIS). An EA was prepared for the Miami to West Palm Beach segment of the rail corridor and resulted in a FONSI.

An EIS is also prepared when the lead agency has determined a proposal is likely to result in significant adverse environmental impacts. The EIS process is a tool for identifying and analyzing probable adverse environmental impacts, reasonable alternatives, and possible mitigation.

# All Aboard Florida Project Description

- Proposes intercity passenger rail service between Orlando and Miami
- Station stops in Orlando, West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami
- Service will run 32 passenger trains (16 NB/16 SB) daily
- Train speeds:

Miami-West Palm Beach	up to 79 mph
West Palm Beach-Cocoa	up to 110 mph
Cocoa - Orlando	up to 125 mph

# Passenger Rail vs High Speed Rail

## Passenger Rail from Miami to West Palm Beach

Part of public transportation and travels between stations where passengers may embark or disembark and provide daily commuter trips with high service frequency

## High Speed Rail from West Palm Beach to Orlando

Operates significantly faster than traditional rail traffic and is mostly used for long haul service

# All Aboard Florida Project Financing

AAF Project applied for a \$1.6 billion loan through the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF) Program:

- AAF Project is subject to Federal Regulations, specifically the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) which is the purpose of the Environmental Impact Statement, and Executive Order 12898 [DOT Order 5610.29(a)], Environmental Justice.
- If Private Activity Bonds are used instead of the RIFF loan, an environmental and safety review would still be required. However, the environmental review may not be in the form of the EIS process, which has a substantial public involvement component.

# Environmental Justice

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

The All Aboard Florida Project may disproportionately impact the safety of Martin County's low income and minority populations, particularly at grade crossings in East Stuart, Golden Gate and Port Salerno. All three of these communities are in Community Redevelopment Areas (CRAs) and have significant minority, low income and include limited English proficiency populations.

# Environmental Justice

## FEC Crossings

- Twenty-eight grade crossings within Martin County. Less than half (ten) of the crossings have pedestrian facilities. A sealed corridor (necessary due to the 110 mph train speed) would direct pedestrians to grade crossings that are unsafe for walking. Many CRA residents do not own cars, forcing them to walk or bike as their primary mode of transportation.

## Title I Schools

- Title I was established by the Federal Government to provide funding to local school districts to improve the academic achievement of disadvantaged students. “Disadvantaged” students are defined by this legislation as students who come from low-income families. Located within the vicinity of the AAF project, there are four Title I Schools. The two largest percentages of free and reduced lunch recipients are from JDP (75.56%) and PSE (62.27%).

# Federal NEPA and EJ Requirements

## Missing Information from the Draft EIS

- In Section 4.4.1 Communities and Demographics and 4.4.1.2 Affected Environment (Table 4.4.1-1)
  - Describes and lists incorporated municipalities crossed by the project
  - Includes Orange, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Palm Beach County incorporated municipalities
  - Martin County and City of Stuart are excluded from the analysis
- In Section 4.4.5-2 Designated Cultural Resources
  - Martin County was not consulted regarding its historic resources
  - Martin County General Services Department tracks properties on the Local and National Historic Registers

# St. Lucie River Rail Drawbridge

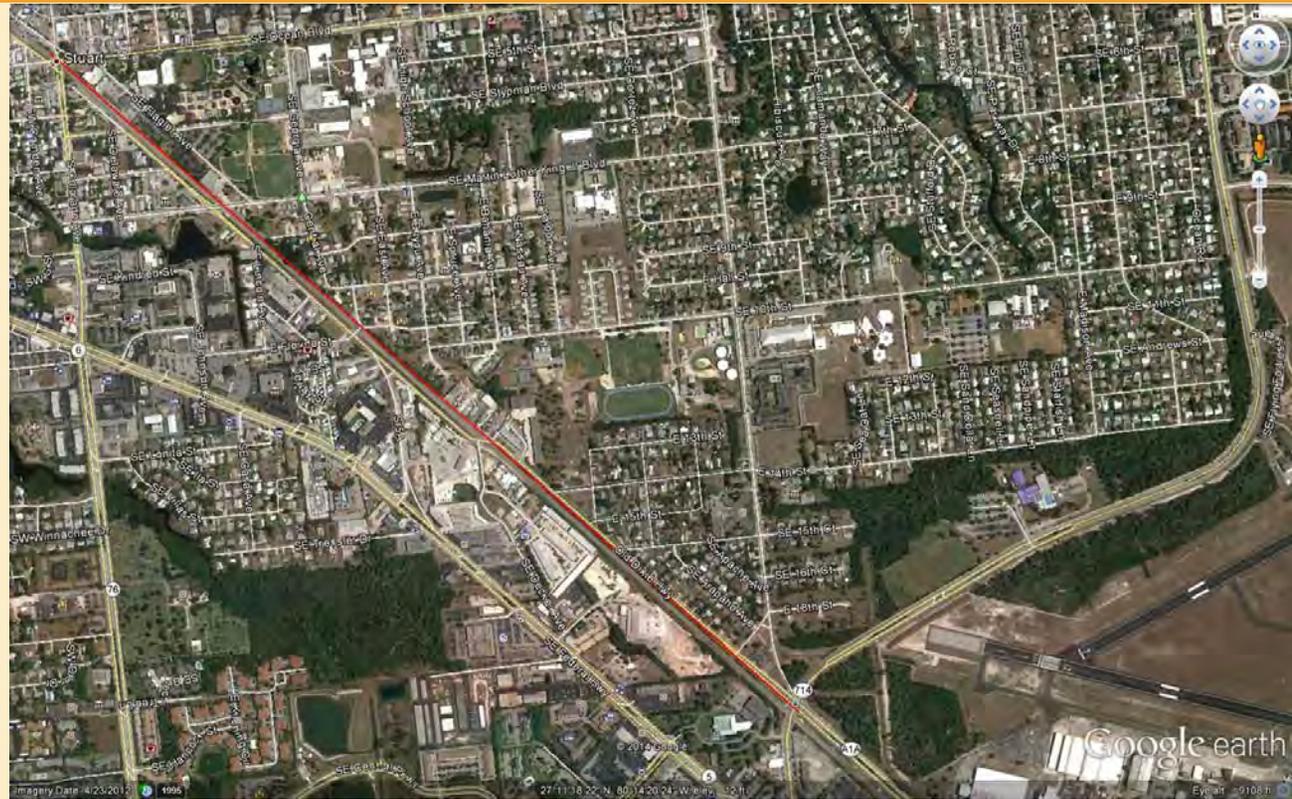
- Built in 1920's; nearly 100 years old
- Only segment within the project limits that will remain single tracked
- HSR portion of corridor between West Palm Beach and Cocoa
- Located in Downtown Stuart Business District
- Bridge crosses over the Okeechobee Waterway, a State designated Emerging Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility
- FRA, FDOT and USCG do not receive copies of bridge inspection reports
- Effect of bridge opening on automobile traffic delays are not addressed in Draft EIS --- the Report only evaluated traffic at two intersections Monterey and Dixie Highway (at Indian Street)

# Shared-Use Arrangement/Single Track Challenges

- Florida East Coast Railway (FECR) tracks will now accommodate passenger and freight traffic
- Historically, passenger rail takes priority along a Freight corridor
  - Passenger and Freight trains operate at different speeds; Freight trains are slower (limited to 70 mph)
  - Freight trains are longer (over 8,000 feet)
- A single track makes passing more challenging to negotiate
  - Passing trains moving in same direction
  - Passing trains moving in opposite directions

# Effect of Bridge Closing on Automobile Traffic

- Average Freight Train length: 8,150
- Includes 2 locomotives and 101 freight cars
- Stretches across all 6 intersections within Stuart City limits - Joan Jefferson, Colorado, MLK, Florida, Dixie (Decker), Monterey



Depicts distance of 8,150 from Joan Jefferson Way to Monterey/714

# Downtown Stuart Area Needs Further Study

## Air Quality (page S-10)

- “Air quality in the region would be improved through the reduction of vehicles from the roads and highways as riders move instead to the proposed passenger rail service.”
- “The Project would decrease emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (Nox), and sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), volatile organic compounds (VOCs), etc.”
- A detailed hot-spot modeling evaluation of intersections was not conducted as part of the air quality because traffic volumes and congestion at grade crossings
  - Emissions when cars idle while a Freight train is blocking grade crossings, awaiting Passenger trains to pass?

# Grade Crossings Need Further Study

- **Traffic Signal Preemption:**

- **Simultaneous** – initiation of traffic signal cycle at the same time the highway-railroad grade crossing warning system is activated
- **Advanced Preemption** – initiation of traffic signal prior to the grade crossing warning system being activated

**FRA Field Report-Part 2** recommends a thorough evaluation of the Traffic Signal Preemption needs to determine whether Simultaneous or Advanced Preemption is required at each grade crossing

# St. Lucie River Rail Drawbridge and Boat Traffic – Needs Further Study

- The Draft EIS reported an average daily vessel arrival of 157 per day passing through the Old Roosevelt Train Bridge
- In contrast, Martin County Engineering Department facilitated an independent study which showed a daily vessel count of 243 per day



Photo from Martin-St. Lucie Regional Waterways Plan

# Marina and Boat Slip Inventory Needs Further Study

- Draft EIS indicates:
  - 15 public and private marinas on the river (undefined subject area) with 439 total boat slips
  - Public and Private marine facilities are concentrated in eastern portion of the river (Stuart and Port Salerno) with 4 boat ramps
- In contrast, Martin-St. Lucie Regional Waterways Plan indicates:
  - 13 boat ramps **on the river** in both counties
  - Numerous marinas in both Martin and St. Lucie County with 2,200 private slips; 2,000 dry storage

# Recommendations

- **Martin MPO recommends AAF provide the following:**
  - **Pedestrian/bicycle crossings at all of the grade crossings**
  - **Replacement of the St. Lucie River Drawbridge-Double tracked; match opening width of Dixie Hwy bridge**
- **Martin MPO supports**
  - **Obtaining bridge inspection reports from FEC**
  - **FRA Field Report-Part 2/Traffic Signal Preemption-Thorough evaluation (that includes an independent consultant) of the Traffic Signal Preemption needs to determine whether Simultaneous or Advanced Preemption is required at each grade crossing along the entire AAF service route from Miami to Cocoa.**