

**MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION  
POLICY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING**  
Martin County Administrative Building  
Martin County Commission Chambers  
2401 SE Monterey Road  
Stuart, FL 34996  
(772) 221-1498  
[www.martinmpo.com](http://www.martinmpo.com)

**Monday, October 20, 2014 @ 9:00 a.m.**

**AGENDA**

- | <u><b>ITEM</b></u>   | <u><b>ACTION</b></u> |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>1. CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 a.m.</b>  |                      |
| <b>2. PRAYER – Rev. James Brocious</b>   |                      |
| <b>3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE</b>   |                      |
| <b>4. ROLL CALL</b>  |                      |
| <b>5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA</b>   | <b>APPROVE</b>       |
| <b>6. PUBLIC COMMENTS</b><br>(PLEASE LIMIT YOUR COMMENTS TO THREE MINUTES; COMPLETE CARD TO COMMENT) |                      |
| <b>7. BUSINESS ITEMS</b>   |                      |
| <b>ALL ABOARD FLORIDA -<br/>DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT</b>                                 | <b>DISCUSSION</b>    |
| <b>8. COMMENTS FROM FDOT</b>   |                      |
| <b>9. NOTES</b>  |                      |
| <b>10. NEXT MEETING – December 15, 2014 @ 9:00 a.m.</b>  |                      |
| <b>11. ADJOURN</b>   |                      |

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Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Persons with questions or concerns about nondiscrimination, or who require special accommodations under the American with Disabilities Act or language translation services (free of charge) should contact Bonnie Landry, Senior Planner (Title VI/Non-discrimination Contact) at (772) 223-7983 or blandry@martin.fl.us. Hearing impaired individuals are requested to telephone the Florida Relay System at #711. Transportation assistance for disabled or elderly persons may be arranged by calling 1-866-836-7034. An agenda of items to be considered will be available to the public in the Administrator's Office, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida. Items not included on the agenda may also be heard in consideration of the best interests of the public health, safety, welfare, and as necessary to protect every person's right of access.



**MARTIN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION POLICY BOARD  
AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**

<b>MEETING DATE:</b> October 20, 2014	<b>DUE DATE:</b> October 13, 2014	<b>UPWP#:</b> 5.2
<b>WORDING:</b> <b>ALL ABOARD FLORIDA – DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT</b>		
<b>REQUESTED BY:</b> MPO	<b>PREPARED BY:</b> Beth Beltran	<b>DOCUMENT(S) REQUIRING ACTION:</b> N/A

**BACKGROUND**

Florida East Coast Industries (FECI) is developing a privately owned and operated intercity passenger rail project called All Aboard Florida (AAF). This new service will travel between South Florida and Central Florida, adding 32 passenger trains daily to the corridor. Stations stops are currently planned for Miami, Fort Lauderdale, West Palm Beach and Orlando.

Although FECI is a private entity, FECI has applied for a “Railroad Rehabilitation Improvement Financing” (RRIF) loan which makes the project subject to Federal Guidelines, including the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released the AAF Draft EIS on September 19, 2014, allowing for a 75 day public comment period. The FRA will be hosting a public information meeting on the Draft EIS on October 30, 2014 from 3:30pm-7:00pm at the following address:

The Kane Center  
900 SE Salerno Road  
Stuart, FL 34997

**ISSUES**

At the September 22nd MPO Policy Board meeting, staff was directed to schedule a Special MPO Board meeting before the October 30<sup>th</sup> public information meeting. Staff will present the MPO’s proposed response to the AAF Draft EIS for the Board’s review and input.

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION**

Provide input.

**APPROVAL**

MPO

**ATTACHMENTS**

Draft EIS PowerPoint Presentation

# All Aboard Florida



**DRAFT**

## **Environmental Impact Statement**

Photo courtesy Carla McMahan

# Draft Environmental Impact Statement

An environmental impact statement (EIS) is 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.

In this case, the lead agency is the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the proposal is the All Aboard Florida Project.

# All Aboard Florida Project Description

- Proposes 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:

- Provides authorization to the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Administrator to provide direct loans and loan guarantees to finance development of railroad infrastructure
- 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.

# 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 United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to ensuring all communities and persons enjoys the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards and equal access to the decision-making processes to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn and work.



# Environmental Justice

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 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

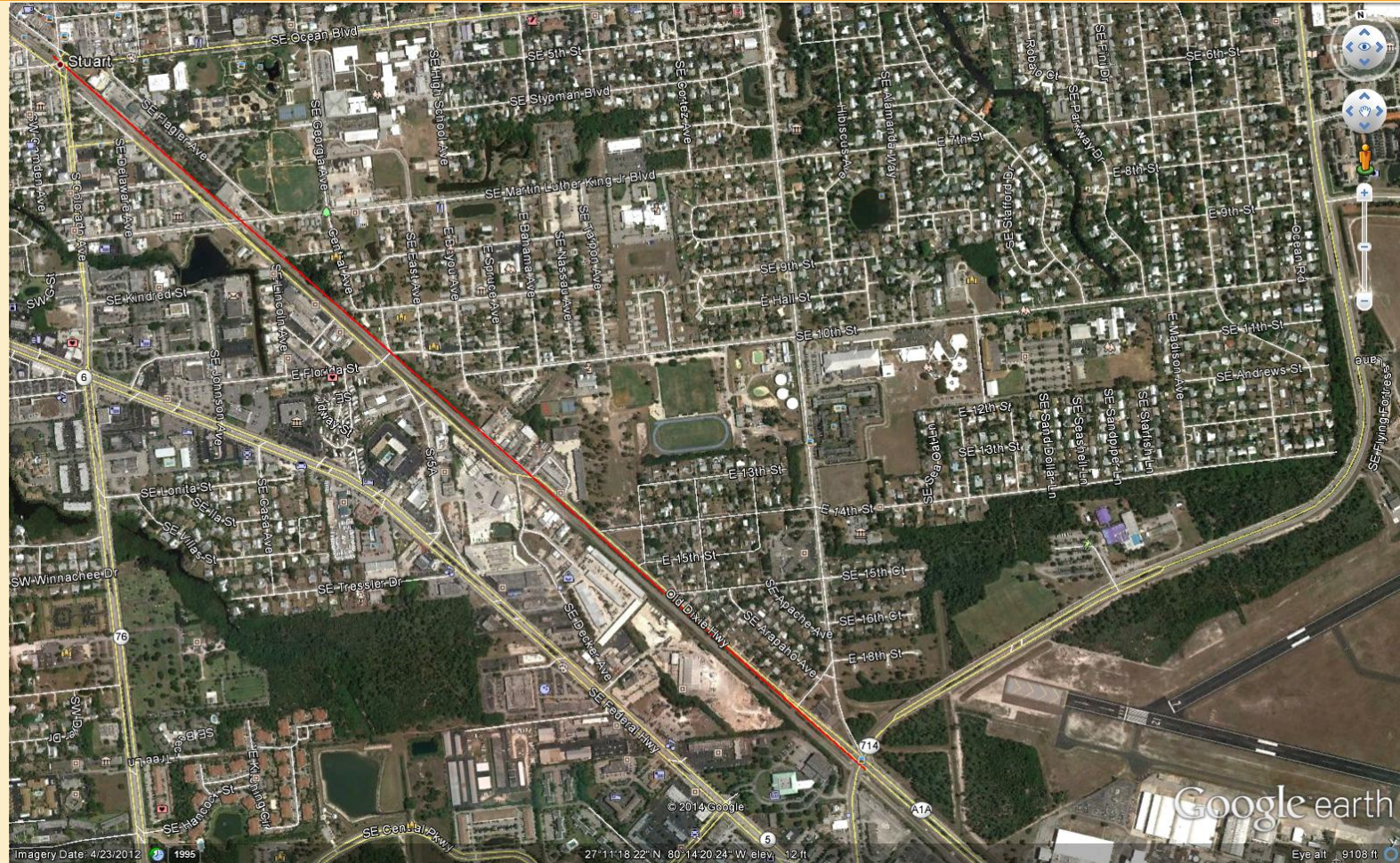
- Built in 1920's; nearly 100 years old
- Only segment within the project limits that will remain single tracked
- HSR portion of corridor between West Palm Beach and Cocoa
- Located in Downtown Stuart Business District
- Bridge crosses over the Okeechobee Waterway, a State designated Emerging Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) facility
- 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 Page 14

# 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 a car idles while a Freight train is stopped on tracks, 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
- **Support FRA Field Report-Part 2/Traffic Signal Preemption**
  - Thorough evaluation 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.