



**SOUTH FLORIDA EAST COAST (FEC)
ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS**

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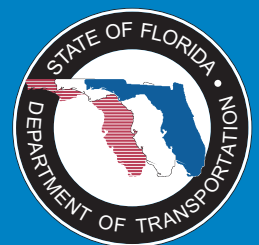
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***Summary of Agency Invitation
Response Memo***

Prepared by:



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May 2009

To: Scott Seeburger

From: Jim Schwarzwaldner

Date: May 21, 2009

Subject: South Florida East Coast Corridor Transit Analysis (SFECCTA) Study:
Summary of Agency Invitation Response Technical Memorandum

This memorandum summarizes early efforts taken to initiate the environmental review process for Phase 2 of the South Florida East Coast Corridor Transit Analysis (SFECCTA) as defined by Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (P.L. 109-059) (SAFETEA-LU), codified as Section 139 of amended Chapter 1 of Title 23, United States Code (23 U.S.C. 139).

Invitation Packet

Agency Invitation Packets were prepared and mailed on February 20, 2009 to approximately 140 federal, state, and local agencies inviting them to participate in the environmental review process for the SFECCTA study. The Invitation Packet included an invitation letter, an agency designation form, and the Coordination Plan (CP). The Invitation Packet was designed to encourage interested agencies to participate in the environmental review process, inform them of their roles and responsibilities, and solicit comments on the CP. Agencies were asked to respond by March 30, 2009.

Federal and state agencies invited consisted mainly of Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) members. Other agencies invited because of their expertise and desired input included Amtrak, U.S. Maritime Administration, Federal Aviation Administration as well as mayors and managers of the 28 municipalities within the project study area, and commissioners (locally elected officials) from Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Agency responses were facilitated by providing an agency designation form the agencies could return after accepting or declining the invitation to participate in the study. In some instances, multiple Invitation Packets were mailed to the same agency, county or municipality in an effort of reaching the appropriate contact and making the invitation process as consistent as possible throughout the project study area.

Attachment A identifies the agencies invited to participate in the environmental review process and summarizes their response, or lack of response to the invitations. Duplicate agencies, counties and municipalities have been removed from Attachment A where a representative response has been received.

Coordination Plan

The CP was prepared and circulated as part of the Invitation Packet to inform interested stakeholders of the process by which the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will solicit comments from and communicate information to cooperating and participating agencies about the SFECCTA study.

The CP served to:

- Clarify cooperating and participating agency roles and responsibilities
- Identify important project milestones or coordination items
- Establish time limits for review and comment periods
- Provide an avenue to identify and resolve issues of concern
- Identify agencies invited to become either participating or cooperating agencies.

Members of the ETAT generally meet the criteria for participating agencies as defined by SAFETEA-LU. As such, ETAT members from FDOT Districts IV and VI are also considered participating agencies and were mailed a letter asking they acknowledge their roles and responsibilities as participating agencies on the SFECCTA study. The United States Coast Guard (USCG) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) were recognized as cooperating agencies in Phase 1 of the study, therefore they received letters confirming their roles and responsibilities. Other potential cooperating and participating agencies were identified based on their possible interest in the project and/or their jurisdiction or special expertise with respect to potential environmental impacts associated with the SFECCTA study.

Included in the CP were the project's purpose and need, goals and objectives, and a description of the range of alternatives to be evaluated during Phase 2 of the study. Agencies receiving the Invitation Packet were encouraged to review and provide comments on these early milestones as well as the overall environmental review process described in the CP. However, no specific comments were received on any of the milestones/coordination items or the CP.

Agency Response and Coordination Tracking Spreadsheet

An Excel tracking spreadsheet has been prepared to track mainly agency participation efforts and dates review documents are sent to participating agencies, when a response should be expected and when a reminder should be submitted. The tracking spreadsheet may also serve to track comments, however the “Confer” Comment Management System that has been implemented for this project is better suited for this task. Participating agencies will have the opportunity to provide their input via the SFECCTA website or email/mail them directly to FDOT. Comments received by email or mail will be scanned and entered into the Confer Comment Management System and the appropriate response prepared. Agencies providing, or not providing, comments on coordination items will be noted in the tracking spreadsheet so that agency review efforts may be tracked.

The tracking spreadsheet will also be maintained to reflect the appropriate point of contact for participating agencies. As the environmental review process proceeds, the tracking spreadsheet may be modified or even transferred to a different application such as Microsoft Office Access to ensure participation efforts are tracked in the most efficient and effective manner.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The CP is considered a working document and may be revised as needed throughout the project. Any revisions will be noted in the CP and participating agencies notified of the changes. The most current copy of the CP will be maintained on the project website.

As noted on Attachment A, two ETAT members and one potential key agency (Federal Aviation Administration) declined the invitation to participate in the environmental review process while others provided no response at all. In the interest of preserving decisions made during Phase 2 of the study and tracking agency participation, it is important for ETAT members and other key agencies to recognize the importance of their roles and responsibilities in the SFECCTA environmental review process. Perhaps key agencies that declined to participate or those that did not respond may not have understood their role in the environmental review process as described in the Invitation Packet and/or CP and may benefit from a follow-up letter or phone call. The following table summarizes responses to the Invitation Packet:

<i>Responses Received</i>	<i>Invitations Accepted</i>	<i>Invitations Declined</i>	<i>No Response Received</i>	<i>Total</i>
51	42 (Cooperating Agencies: 1, Participating Agencies: 40)*	9	55	106

* Two responses were received from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers