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SOUTH FLORIDA EAST COAST CORRIDOR
TRANSIT ANALYSIS STUDY
FEDERAL AID NUMBER FTAX004
FTA GRANT NUMBER FL-90-X372-07
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT NO. 417031-1-22-01

PUBLIC HEARING
NOVEMBER 8, 2006

TIME: 6:02 P.M. to 7:29 P.M.

1 BE IT REMEMBERED, that the following comments
2 and proceedings were taken in the above-entitled action
3 at the Cohen Pavilion at the Raymond F. Kravis Center for
4 the Performing Arts, 701 Okeechobee Blvd., City of West
5 Palm Beach, County of Palm Beach, State of Florida,
6 beginning on Wednesday, the 8th of November, 2006 to wit:

7 (Comment by Kevin Raymond at 6:02 p.m.)

8 MR. RAYMOND: Hi, my name is Kevin Raymond. I
9 live at 610 Clematis Street in West Palm Beach,
10 Florida. I live in between two railroad tracks, the
11 CSX and the FEC. The CSX has been amenable to quiet
12 zones, and one is going into effect in December.

13 However, I've felt that the FEC is somewhat,
14 acts in somewhat of a superior posture and has not
15 been amenable to these quiet zones that I can see. As
16 such, I'm strongly opposed to any double tracking of
17 the FEC tracks that will significantly impact, in a
18 negative way, the quality of life of tens of thousands
19 of people who are living in municipal areas.

20 I understand people are stating that there is a
21 safety issue in reference to train noise. However, no
22 one blows their horn when they're going through a
23 green light in order to take a chance that somebody
24 inadvertently is going through that light. And I
25 think we need the same type of thinking in reference

1 to train tracks. With some education, obviously,
2 people should know that being on train tracks is a
3 dangerous situation.

4 I understand that the train, the FEC track, the
5 FEC administration is concerned about their legality
6 in terms of someone getting hurt on the tracks. If
7 that's the case, I think that should be addressed from
8 a legal issue, so that they don't get sued for
9 somebody's stupidity, rather than having trains blow
10 their horn all night and significantly disrupt the
11 quality of life of people who are trying to revitalize
12 urban areas.

13 As such, I will continue to try to take any
14 political action and mobilize any constituency in the
15 area to reduce any train traffic until someone takes
16 this issue seriously.

17 (Comment by Kevin Raymond concluded at 6:04
18 p.m.)

19 (Comment by John Reilly at 6:08 p.m.)

20 MR. REILLY: I'm John Reilly with the City of
21 Boca Raton. And the City of Boca Raton is in favor of
22 passenger service on the Florida East Coast Railroad.
23 The city of Boca Raton would like to see a station at
24 an appropriate location within the city, and will work
25 in acquiring or using existing city-owned property for

1 this purpose. The city is concerned with additional
2 noise created by passenger service, and supports the
3 elimination of Emergency Order 15 and the
4 implementation of a quiet zone within the city limits.

5 Congestion on adjacent, on the adjacent
6 redway system is another concern which must be
7 addressed as part of this project. Finally, a feeder
8 bus system must be in place to provide the necessary
9 connectivity to major businesses, shopping centers and
10 high density residential areas.

11 (Comment by John Reilly concluded at 6:10
12 p.m.)

13 (Comment by Clint Oster at 6:17 p.m.)

14 MR. OSTER: I love the concept and look
15 forward to implementation. I do think the FEC train
16 proposal as proposed in stage one is too similar to
17 the Tri-Rail services. I would like to see this train
18 geared to the riders going short distances, ten miles
19 maximum. That means a stop every one or two miles at
20 the most. I could use this sort of system twice every
21 week. I presently rarely use Tri-Rail because if I go
22 more than ten miles from my home, I will be out of
23 familiar territory and will want my car.

24 I've found there is no reliable
25 transportation after Tri-Rail drops you off. For

1 instance, going to a Marlins game. I would use
2 Tri-Rail more often if there were buses going to
3 special events. What I'm getting at is the necessity
4 of a feeder loop bus system that would be at every
5 train station and would run on similar times to the
6 train, so if a train ran or dropped you off at the
7 station every fifteen minutes, the loop system would
8 also run a bus that would drive around the neighboring
9 community and pick up people and be at that station
10 every fifteen minutes.

11 I think the collector bus loop system is an
12 integral part to get support for the FEC train system,
13 and the loop bus system should not be left up to the
14 municipalities to fund. It must be a part of the
15 train system. Thank you.

16 (Comment by Clint Oster concluded at 6:21
17 p.m.)

18 (Additional comment by Clint Oster at 6:21
19 p.m.)

20 MR. OSTER: I'm still not convinced that a
21 trolley system on US-1 would not be used more than the
22 FEC train. I think the system would appeal to local
23 riders more than regional riders. If a monumental
24 system is proposed and has the blessing of the cities
25 that it would go through, it would become not only a

1 tourist attraction, such as the trolley in San
2 Francisco, but it would be used daily by residents.

3 If the proposed FEC train rail system costs
4 one hundred thousand dollars, and I think the
5 implementation of the trolley system going down US-1
6 would be an additional two hundred million dollars, I
7 think it would be money well spent, because it would
8 get people out of their cars daily. So rather than
9 spend one hundred million dollars and have a very
10 similar system to Tri-Rail, I would rather spend three
11 hundred million dollars and have a unique system that
12 would serve me daily.

13 How many models of other transportation
14 systems are there in the United States that have the
15 lack of a major town center and as much sprawl as the
16 US-1 corridor in south Florida that runs through Dade,
17 Broward and Palm Beach Counties? We need to think big
18 and dedicate a transportation system that the
19 residents of south Florida and the business community
20 can rally behind.

21 On another note, if the FEC train does go
22 through, I hope serious consideration is given to many
23 stops. One such stop would be located between the
24 Jeffrey Street location in north Boca Raton and the
25 Delray/Boca line. In that area currently there are

1 plans to build a multi- use project that's of regional
2 significance. And it is also associated with the
3 Caldwell Theatre. And I think the draw there would
4 be, would appeal to many riders. Thank you for your
5 time.

6 (Comment by Clint Oster concluded at 6:25
7 p.m.)

8 (Comment by Judith Goldenberg at 6:28 p.m.)

9 MS. GOLDENBERG: I represent a group of
10 concerned citizens committed to preserving and
11 protecting our quality of life in the Palm Beach
12 County area. I'm a resident of Jupiter and we have
13 many, many communities that are concerned about the
14 train traffic along the Federal East Coast railroad.

15 For the past five years the train traffic
16 along the FEC has more than doubled, with over forty
17 trains running per day. With the prospect of Tri-Rail
18 commuter lines being added to northern Palm Beach
19 County the train traffic is predicted to double again.

20 Train horn sound levels must range between a
21 minimum of 96 decibels and a maximum of 110 decibels.
22 And sound in the standard sequence of two longs, one
23 short, and one long blast. This means that residents
24 and businesses in proximity to the FEC railroad line
25 are subjected to more than four hundred horn blasts

1 every day, twenty-four hours per day, seven days a
2 week.

3 We support all efforts necessary by local,
4 county, state and federal authorities to provide the
5 following:

6 Allow the revocation of Emergency Order 15,
7 which bans quiet zones on the FEC railroad line.

8 Establish quiet zones at all railroad
9 intersection crossings in Palm Beach County.

10 Work with all interested parties, local, state
11 and federal agencies, private investors and commercial
12 enterprises to provide sufficient funding to upgrade
13 all railroad intersection crossings to the standards
14 required by the federal railway administration's train
15 horn rule for quiet zones with final implementation by
16 June 1st, 2008.

17 In addition, in particular for the Jupiter area,
18 we have grave concerns with respect to the east/west
19 corridor emergency access for vehicles trying to
20 cross. Trains currently span more than two
21 intersections in length. Waiting can be several
22 minutes. This is unacceptable time limits for
23 emergency vehicles to be blocked.

24 If the Tri-Rail extension is ultimately approved
25 for Jupiter, we would support a train location at

1 Jupiter Lakes Boulevard at the Jupiter Medical Center.
2 This is close to Indiantown, which does not have
3 available land, and it would be good for the hospital
4 and it would provide adequate parking for the train
5 station there. That's it. Thank you very much.

6 (Comment by Judith Goldenberg concluded at
7 6:30 p.m.)

8 (Public hearing commenced at 6:30 p.m.)

9 MR. SEEBURGER: Good evening and welcome. The
10 time is now 6:30 and the public hearing for the South
11 Florida East Coast Corridor Transportation Analysis in
12 Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties is now
13 open. Is there anyone in the hall waiting to get in?
14 I think not. Okay. So, first, what we will do is ask
15 if there is anyone here who would like assistance in
16 the Spanish and Creole languages.

17 MR. CEJAS: Si necesita traduccion en Espanol,
18 por favor levante la mano para recibir ayuda.

19 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No illegal aliens.

20 MS. YACINTHE: Pou translasyon en Kreole, sil
21 vous plait leve men nou e ou manm etid la ap asiste'w
22 ou.

23 MR. SEEBURGER: All right. Thank you.

24 This public hearing is being held to receive
25 your comments regarding proposed public transportation

1 improvements in the South Florida East Coast Corridor
2 between Miami and Jupiter in Miami-Dade, Broward and
3 Palm Beach Counties. My name is Scott Seeburger. I
4 work for the Florida Department of Transportation, and
5 I'm the project manager for the project. Here tonight
6 are representatives of the department's consultant
7 planning and engineering team led by the engineering
8 firm Gannett Fleming.

9 At this time, I would like to recognize any
10 elected officials here tonight. If there are elected
11 officials here this evening -- I know there's at least
12 one -- who wish to be recognized, please stand and
13 introduce yourself.

14 MR. MOSS: Do you want me to come up?

15 MR. SEEBURGER: If you can yell loud enough,
16 it will work.

17 MR. MOSS: I'll go to that mike.

18 MR. SEEBURGER: Okay.

19 MR. MOSS: Did you want me to just -- can I
20 make a statement?

21 MR. SEEBURGER: I'll ask for a statement
22 later.

23 MR. MOSS: So at this point you just want to
24 know who I am.

25 MR. SEEBURGER: Yes.

1 MR. MOSS: Okay. I'm Bill Moss. I'm a city
2 commissioner in the city of West Palm Beach.

3 MR. SEEBURGER: Okay. Bill, thank you.

4 MR. MOSS: Thank you.

5 MR. SEEBURGER: This public hearing is being
6 held in accordance with federal and state requirements
7 listed on the screen and on the board behind me.

8 The public hearing was advertised in Miami-Dade,
9 Broward and Palm Beach County newspapers in accordance
10 with federal and state requirements. The newspapers
11 in which ads were placed are shown on the screen.
12 Notice of this meeting was also provided on the
13 project website. In addition, adjacent property
14 owners, interested citizens and elected and public
15 officials were notified by mail of tonight's meeting.

16 This meeting is also being held in
17 compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of
18 1964, and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968,
19 as amended. Public participation at this hearing is
20 solicited without regard to race, color, religion,
21 gender, age, national origin, disability or family
22 status. Persons wishing to express their concerns
23 relative to adherence to Titles Six and Eight of the
24 Civil Rights Act may do so by contacting Florida's
25 equal opportunity office at the address shown in the

1 handout that you received at the registration desk.
2 All inquiries or complaints will be handled according
3 to department procedures in an expeditious manner.

4 The purpose of tonight's public hearing is
5 to provide the latest project information to the
6 public and to receive formal comments from the public.
7 After the close of the comment period for the public
8 hearing and consideration of the comments received,
9 the environmental documents will be finalized.

10 This hearing is being held relative to the
11 South Florida East Coast Corridor Transit Analysis,
12 also referred to as Financial Management Number
13 417031-1-22-01, Federal Aid Number FTAX004, and
14 Federal Transit Administration Grant Number
15 FL-90-X372-07.

16 This study is being conducted by the Florida
17 Department of Transportation Districts Four and Six,
18 in conjunction with Region IV of the Federal Transit
19 Administration. It was sponsored by the Metropolitan
20 Planning Organizations of Palm Beach, Broward and
21 Miami-Dade Counties and conducted in coordination with
22 the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal
23 Railroad Administration, US Maritime Administration,
24 US Coast Guard, Federal Aviation Administration and
25 the US Environmental Protection Agency. Input has

1 been sought from the South Florida Regional
2 Transportation Authority, Miami-Dade Transit, Broward
3 County Transit, Palm Tran, the South Florida and
4 Treasure Coast Regional Planning Councils, the
5 tri-county League of Cities, CSX Transportation and
6 the Florida East Coast Railway.

7 A Public Involvement Program was conducted
8 for this project in conformance with federal and state
9 guidelines. This hearing is part of that program.
10 Numerous meetings were held with affected and
11 interested groups and individuals.

12 Project information is available for review
13 at nine locations in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm
14 Beach Counties until December 11th, 2006.
15 A list of locations is available at the registration
16 desk here this evening.

17 Handouts and brochures regarding the project
18 are available at the registration desk. You were
19 invited to listen to an introductory presentation
20 describing the project earlier this evening, and that
21 presentation will be incorporated into the final
22 record of this hearing.

23 We welcome any oral or written comments
24 that will help us make decisions regarding this
25 project. You may make an oral statement tonight in

1 one of two ways:

2 First, you can make an oral statement during
3 the public testimony session that follows my remarks.
4 If you have not already filled out a speaker
5 registration card and would like to make a statement,
6 please raise your hand and our staff will provide you
7 with one.

8 Second, you can make an individual statement
9 directly to the court reporter over to my right. The
10 court reporter will be available to record your
11 statement after the public testimony session, if you
12 haven't talked with her already.

13 Regarding written comments, you may make a
14 written statement by completing and submitting a
15 comment form that's also available at the registration
16 desk. You may do that either here tonight or take it
17 home and mail it back later. Written statements or
18 exhibits may be submitted for the record in lieu of or
19 in addition to verbal statements. If you think of
20 other ideas later, you can submit them by letter, fax,
21 or e-mail to the addresses listed on the screen.
22 You can also submit your ideas and comments on the
23 study website which is (www.sfecstudy.com).

24 Written statements received at the district
25 offices of the Florida Department of Transportation by

1 December 11th, 2006 will be documented as part of this
2 hearing. However, please be advised that the last day
3 written comments will be received is December 11th,
4 2006.

5 At this time I would like to invite any
6 elected and public officials who would like to make a
7 public statement relative to this project to please
8 step up to the microphone. Please repeat your name
9 and office for the reporter.

10 MR. MOSS: Thank you. I'm Bill Moss. I'm a
11 city commissioner in the City of West Palm Beach. And
12 first I want to thank the DOT and representatives of
13 the consulting firm for including the public in these
14 hearings to hear from us and to try to alleviate some
15 of this traffic congestion that we have in south
16 Florida, which of course, is the ultimate goal here.
17 We only have to figure out how many people probably
18 would have been here tonight, but they're probably
19 still stuck in traffic some place.

20 The City of West Palm Beach, city commission
21 and mayor discussed this Monday evening in our
22 commission meeting. And while there was no formal
23 vote taken, there was consensus and unanimous
24 consensus that we support the program of the FEC
25 railroad to include passenger service along the

1 corridor. We think, actually, the FEC rail corridor
2 was probably a much better corridor for passenger rail
3 that the CSX one, because the FEC one is closer in the
4 to the residential areas. And so, therefore, we
5 support it.

6 We support it with a couple of caveats.
7 One, we would ask that if this does move forward and
8 the double tracking program of the CSX, included along
9 with the double tracking program would be a quiet zone
10 program or a four-quadrant gate program at the
11 crossings. Not as an afterthought, after the program
12 is done, as the CSX or the Tri-Rail did, but during
13 initial construction, we would like it to be done
14 during that phase. West Palm Beach has more crossings
15 than any other city in the county. And therefore, we
16 are impacted more by the trains and the horns that are
17 being blown than any other city in the county. So we,
18 because of the impact, would ask that one, to garner
19 our complete support we would ask that that be
20 included as part of that construction.

21 Two, along with that, we would offer our
22 support towards the closing of certain aggregate
23 crossings to facilitate the movement of the passenger
24 trains in a more effective manner. We would have to
25 work with DOT and the FEC to determine what aggregate

1 crossings could close, but we understand the necessity
2 to allow for -- when you have double the amount of
3 trains going back and forth, it only makes sense to
4 have as fewer crossings as possible. So we would
5 cooperate as that moves forward.

6 We will also cooperate with any overpasses
7 that the train, the DOT would like to contemplate. We
8 think Okeechobee Boulevard, of course, should be one
9 that would be considered for an overpass because of
10 the amount of traffic that Okeechobee Boulevard
11 carries on a daily basis as well as the number of
12 train trips that will be going back and forth.

13 So taking all that into account, West Palm
14 Beach offers its support to this program. Thank you.

15 MR. SEEBURGER: Thank you. Okay. Any other
16 elected officials or public officials? All right.

17 Persons who wish to make a statement or
18 submit written views and/or exhibits relative to this
19 project will now have the opportunity to do so. If
20 you are holding a speaker registration card, please
21 turn that in now so we can call you. If you have not
22 received a speaker card but wish to speak, please
23 raise your hand and our staff will provide one for
24 you. As this testimony period continues and you think
25 that you may want to speak, please raise your hand and

1 we'll get a card for you.

2 I ask that you please be respectful of
3 everyone who wants to speak tonight by limiting your
4 comments to about three minutes. If you feel three
5 minutes just isn't enough time, if you can kind of cut
6 it off at a convenient point, we'll give you the
7 opportunity to continue later after others get a
8 chance to speak.

9 It is important for you to remember that we
10 are here only to receive your input into the project
11 record. Limited time and resources require us to
12 restrict our responses to any questions you may have
13 to only those for clarification. When you are called,
14 please state your name, address and affiliation, if
15 representing a group, for the reporter.
16 And let me also apologize in advance if I mispronounce
17 anybody's name.

18 Okay. First, Ms. Sara, I'm sorry, Marcella
19 Clavijo.

20 MS. CLAVIJO: Okay. Hello, my name is
21 Marcella Clavijo and I live on Florida Avenue. And
22 I'm just here because I'm a resident. And basically I
23 just have some brief comments on how to reduce traffic
24 congestion.

25 I thought that maybe there could be more

1 bicycle lanes, like they have at some universities,
2 such as in Gainesville. Also maybe the bus lines
3 could be separated from general traffic, so you'd have
4 cars on one lane and maybe buses on another lane. And
5 you want to, in order to persuade people to ride the
6 buses more, maybe we can have trailers that are
7 attached to the back of the buses so that more
8 bicycles could be loaded up on the buses and then
9 people, you know, would ride their cars more, I mean,
10 would ride their bicycles more, and that will kind of
11 like eliminate traffic congestion.

12 And maybe there should also be like
13 preferential parking for ride sharers with the
14 benefits of discounts that can be considered for,
15 maybe, the near future. And also maybe there could be
16 like roundabouts, can be implemented, like they do in
17 certain parts of Europe or like in England or
18 Australia. Roundabouts, I don't know, are basically
19 like roads which allow traffic from different
20 directions to share the space and the intersection.
21 And what else? That's pretty much it. That's pretty
22 much all I have to say.

23 MR. SEEBURGER: All right. Thank you. John
24 Parsons.

25 MR. PARSON: John Parsons, 141 Wooden Mill

1 Terrace, Jupiter, Florida. The previous speaker acts
2 like this is already a done deal. I'm one of those
3 that hopefully, or wish it's not a done deal. I mean,
4 I don't know if it's going to be needed or not in
5 2030, but it depends a lot on taxes, whether people
6 are really going to move here anymore or not. But,
7 obviously it's going to cost billions and billions of
8 dollars. I don't know what the study is costing but,
9 you know, it's just kind of discouraging to have
10 something kind of feel like it's going to be jammed
11 down your throat no matter what you say. And I don't
12 know who you have to write to stop it, whether you
13 have to write the governor or you have to write
14 congress to tell them not to fund it.

15 But the politicians, obviously, probably
16 want it because if it builds up along the railway or
17 whatever, they'll probably have more tax money to
18 spend. But it would be easy to kind of freeze the
19 current traffic if they'd just pass a low density law
20 where not too many more are going to be moving in.
21 And, you know, hopefully, this, in 2030, will not look
22 like New York City with umpteen stories of people
23 living there, and you know, then you might need it.
24 But, if it ever gets to that, it's certainly not going
25 to be Florida anymore.

1 But I just as soon see it come to a
2 screeching halt and, you know, have the politicians
3 have the guts or maybe it will take petitions, you
4 know, to put something on the ballot to change the
5 density law. But, you know, that would be one way,
6 obviously, to not have the traffic increase any more
7 than it already is. Thank you.

8 MR. SEEBURGER: All right. Thank you very
9 much. Bruce Allen.

10 MR. ALLEN: And now we have another study.
11 We've been having a lot of studies since I've been in
12 Florida. We used to have a bunch at Broward council.
13 And in Miami we did the 20/20 study. Now, we're
14 coming here for this. And we're spending a lot of
15 money for studies, but nothing is happening. There's
16 no transit improvements. Palm Beach County has one of
17 the worst -- they have to improve their transportation
18 better than the west coast. The west side has nothing
19 and just, just got, something's got to be done.
20 That's it.

21 MR. SEEBURGER: All right. Thank you very
22 much. Steven Shoppe. Richard Shores.

23 MR. SHORES: Thank you. This is the, I
24 believe the sixth meeting I've attended and I want to
25 thank Scott and Tom and the rest of the group for

1 doing an excellent job with this study. I am a
2 systems analyst and a computer network engineer for a
3 hurricane shutter company, which is probably more
4 interesting to the people of south Florida than
5 commuter rails, but that's another subject. I agree
6 that the FEC right way is an ideal route, because
7 Henry Flagler knew that if you build a railroad,
8 people would come. I also agree that the current
9 proposed rail equipment that's used on the Tri-Rail
10 now is probably the most efficient and effective way
11 of transporting the people.

12 But I'm not here for that. I don't question
13 the logic behind the solutions or the selections that
14 have been made as far as equipment or the route. But
15 rather my concerns are about issues that have been
16 brought up over the last six meetings that I've
17 attended that remain unresolved.

18 The first one is logistics. The Florida
19 East Coast railroad is single track most of the way
20 with passing sidings every ten to twenty miles. It's
21 enough for the railroad as it exists, the freight
22 railroad that exists right now with twenty-six trains
23 a day. It's a little more so that they can handle the
24 increase in transportation needs for freight in the
25 future. It will never handle all this additional

1 service we're talking about for commuters.

2 Another thing is the FEC is efficient and the FEC is
3 profitable. The reason why is because they promise
4 on-time delivery to such companies as Rinker, UPS, The
5 Post Office and Wal-Mart. The only way they're going
6 to keep those customers is by keeping on-time
7 delivery. It is my belief that the FEC will never
8 risk their promises to their customers, risking it on
9 the success or failure of this particular project.

10 It is my belief that they will not share
11 tracks, okay, that if this project goes forward, it
12 will have to provide its own tracks, not just double
13 siding. The FEC was the primary choice to begin with
14 when Tri-trail was first proposed. There's a reason
15 why it didn't go to the FEC. It cost a billion
16 dollars to get the rights from the CSX to put Tri-Rail
17 service. And it took four hundred million dollars
18 more to double track the right of way.

19 Now, we're going to move it a couple miles
20 over to the FEC. What kind of costs are we actually
21 going to face? Also the congestion, two hundred and
22 three railroad crossings without I-95 right next to it
23 to make it easy to put in overpasses. Count how many
24 overpasses there are in Palm Beach County on the CSX,
25 line where Tri-Rail runs, versus the FEC. Many, many,

1 times more, because US-1 put us right along side of
2 it. Okay. So there's going to be congestion on
3 there.

4 If we're adding all these trains, I propose
5 an alternate route for the FEC freight trains. The
6 FEC freight trains are usually staged down in Hialeah
7 in Hialeah Yard. And the rock trains, which is the
8 majority of them, are actually built in an area called
9 the Medley League. I propose that there be a route
10 built out of the west side of the Medley League that
11 travels out to South Bay, where it just so happens
12 that the FEC owns what's called the K-Branch, which
13 would allow them to travel without ever venturing
14 those long trains into the coastal towns. So far I
15 have not seen an alternate route to at least allow the
16 freight trains to be lowered so that the commuter
17 traffic could go into place.

18 The other issue, of course, more trains and
19 safety issues. CSX trains or the CSX right of way has
20 quadrant gates, which means four gates to prevent cars
21 from getting out of the track. The FEC does not. All
22 two hundred and three crossings would have to be put
23 into the quadrant gates.

24 Also, what are we going to do to provide
25 safety for the additional trains between those gates

1 for pedestrians and kids and stuff crossing the
2 tracks? Of course, you add more trains you get more
3 noise.

4 And then, of course, there's the issue of
5 cost. One way or another we're talking about
6 additional tracks, stations. It's easy to sell
7 stations. Every city on that line wants to put in a
8 station on there to make it convenient. But there's
9 costs involved. The safety costs for such things as
10 barrier walls or noise dampening. And then, of
11 course, what would be the cost to provide an alternate
12 route for the freight trains?

13 These are things -- are they impossible?
14 No. But although I've seen selections made on how we
15 want to go, so far I've not seen these issues
16 adequately addressed. Thank you very much.

17 MR. SEEBURGER: Okay. Barbara Susco.

18 MS. SUSCO: Thank you for letting us address
19 you. And I don't know how you follow the act of the
20 man here who just spoke who is very informed and
21 really gave us a lot of good information. I'm really
22 suspicious of the whole project because right now I
23 wouldn't even take Tri-Rail. It's not safe. Your
24 automobile is not safe.

25 Anybody who wants to travel east and west to

1 get to these north and south corridors is really
2 risking his automobile. I had the directional lights
3 stolen out of my car a month ago right in front of
4 IHOP in the broad daylight. So if you put it into one
5 of these parking lots, you don't know if it's going to
6 be if one piece when you come back to get it. So I'm
7 really adamantly against park and ride situations. We
8 have such a bad crime problem here with the drugs and
9 everything that they don't seem to be able to get a
10 handle on it.

11 Also, how about the bullet train? We just
12 about got rid of that because we just don't have the
13 density here in Florida to accommodate all of these
14 trains. We're spending, what? Seventy dollars a
15 passenger right now in Palm Tran per trip, round trip.
16 And this is just another costly boondoggle.

17 I think -- I rode Palm Tran recently, I
18 don't think there was an American on the bus with me.
19 So we're really providing more for illegal aliens, I
20 think, than we are the tax payers and legal residents
21 of this country.

22 Also, I just feel like this is just one
23 small part of this whole security and prosperity
24 partnership being formed between Canada, the United
25 States and Mexico to form what they call the North

1 American Union. And they're just getting ready to
2 make, just tear our communities apart, making all
3 these corridors. I rode down Military Trail today and
4 I see these noise barriers all of a sudden. Who's
5 asking for all these noise barriers? Same thing with
6 I-95. This is just a whole plan that's a nationwide
7 plan to, you know, turn us into just corridors linking
8 all our little sustainable communities. And like John
9 said earlier, I think we ought to just forget about
10 this project. Thank you.

11 MR. SEEBURGER: I think this lady left, but
12 I'll call her anyway. Judith Goldenberg. Mary Ward.

13 If there's anyone else wishing to speak, this
14 is my last card.

15 MS. WARD: Hi. My name is Mary Ward. I'm
16 from 28 Starboard Way in Tequesta. I just want to say
17 that I think you guys are doing a great job with this
18 project and I hope that it continues to go forward.
19 It's inevitable that we're going to have growth in
20 Florida. I mean, we're the most beautiful state in
21 the United States. That's why probably ninety percent
22 of you moved here from some place else. I hope that
23 they do interact some bike trails in with this system.
24 And I just think that it's inevitable. You're either
25 going to sit in traffic on I-95 or US-1, or you can

1 sit in a train. Thank you.

2 MR. SEEBURGER: Thank you. Rick Rose.

3 MR. ROSE: Hi, Rick Rose, 1608 Lake Avenue in
4 West Palm Beach. I'm a third generation local here,
5 and I can say that it's amazing how much it has grown,
6 south Florida. And I can say that I don't necessarily
7 like it all the time, but it's unrealistic to expect
8 that it's not going to continue to grow. So I belong
9 to a group called Citizens For Quiet Trains here in
10 West Palm Beach. And I can't really speak officially
11 for the group, because we don't have a, sort of an
12 organized method of polling each other to find out how
13 we all want to represent each other. But the main
14 goal of this group is to simply minimize the impact of
15 train noise going through our communities.

16 And I'm also the president of the Grandview
17 Heights Citizen's Association. That's the historic
18 district here in West Palm Beach. And our historic
19 district is saddled by two train tracks, the CSX
20 tracks and the FEC tracks. And I'm only bringing that
21 up because I want to remind everybody that West Palm
22 Beach does have a lot of historic districts, and as
23 our commissioner already pointed out, that we have a
24 unique situation in that we have, nowhere else in
25 south Florida do both sets of tracks, the CSX tracks

1 and the FEC tracks, come so close to each other. So I
2 think that whatever you do do, and generally speaking,
3 I think it's a fantastic idea to improve public
4 transportation. I want to just put that down for the
5 record. But whatever you do, do make sure that the
6 quality of life of the people living around the tracks
7 is not negatively impacted. Thank you.

8 MR. SEEBURGER: Thank you. Gerald Ward.

9 MR. WARD: Good evening. Gerald Ward. 31
10 West 20th Street, Riviera Beach. Mr. Brady, Mike
11 Brady, your PR guy, told me that you only give three
12 minutes to now. But that's way inadequate for the
13 substance that's being discussed here tonight. I do
14 want to complement the man with the long sleeve blue
15 shirt. And I think you need to transcribe his
16 statements and send multiple copies to Tallahassee and
17 to your supervisors in Ft. Lauderdale so that his
18 astute comments get to the people who are paying for
19 this.

20 It was only today that I visited the website
21 and found that you had filed, on the 13th of October,
22 this DEIS, Draft Environmental Impact Statement,
23 pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of
24 1969. We've lost one third of our time to comment on
25 it, and that comment date that you did site is 11

1 December, which is not very far off, just a month off.
2 I would like to request a copy of the CD. When I
3 looked at the website, it's humongous in numbers of
4 bites. And most of us do not have the printing
5 capability to possibly do it. So a CD is requested to
6 the post office address you have there.

7 If this should ever proceed past the tier
8 one -- and I really think, as Ms. Susco just said, it
9 ought to be terminated at this stage -- you do need to
10 go back to the rail connections. The rail connections
11 proposed in Riviera Beach are obnoxious. You have had
12 pointed out to you multiple times and you keep
13 ignoring it, that one of the closest points of the two
14 rail lines, FEC and CSX, is 45th Street, which is also
15 a major hospital, which would be a nice station
16 location. The connection should be there so that, and
17 the topography would accommodate it.

18 The ridership, we discussed it at previous
19 meetings, and I'm not sure it's ever in the record
20 when you say something here, but the proposed hundred
21 thousand or so ridership is totally inadequate to
22 support the massive cost of this project.

23 You've ignored what one funder of yours, is
24 the water-born transit. There's no rational
25 justification presented as to why you dropped

1 considering either the intercoastal route or the
2 straits of Florida route. We have nine inlets that
3 would be served by the area that you're talking about
4 that could conceivably provide efficient unobstructed
5 transport by the types of vessels that were in the
6 first proposal that was presented over a year ago.

7 The failure to consider the obstruction to
8 the public for the two hundred or so intersections is
9 a gross mistreatment of the public. Mr. Moss of West
10 Palm raised the issue about noise, as did one of the
11 other speakers subsequent to him, but in reality grade
12 separations have to be considered as part of the
13 project for every one of those intersections. His
14 consideration of closing intersections is obnoxious
15 and causes further traffic congestion, because it
16 routes people to other intersections with the railway
17 and raises major traffic constrictions.

18 Navigation impacts on the New River.
19 Navigation impacts at the Loxahatchee River. You
20 still have not abandoned the idea of crossing the
21 Loxahatchee. The maps that are back there today show
22 further northward transport. So we can't, unless you
23 find a way to elevate at high levels the rail, we
24 can't put up with further navigation impact.

25 Lastly, the east/west usage of

1 transportation improvements with Tri-Rail. That's the
2 cheapest thing. That's the cheapest and quickest
3 thing for the public today. Most of these tracks are
4 not but two miles apart at the largest distance. It's
5 not unreasonable for you to come up with rapid
6 transit, whether it be jitneys, whether it be small
7 buses, whether it be other small segments of even rail
8 that go east/west from the west side of the
9 intercoastal to the existing Tri-Rail. Those analyses
10 are not being made, because there is certainly a
11 cheaper and much quicker way to solve these problems.

12 MR. SEEBURGER: If, you know, we kind of
13 loosely said about a three-minute, just to be
14 courteous to others that wish to speak. So, Mr. Ward,
15 if you want to speak longer, you certainly have the
16 opportunity to do so. And just let me know and we'll
17 put your card back in line. Kenneth Hawthorne.

18 MR. HAWTHORNE: Good evening. I'm Kenneth
19 Hawthorne, and I live at 22116 Embassy Drive, West
20 Palm Beach, Florida. This is the first meeting that
21 I've come to and the information is rather new to me,
22 and I can't get technical like some of the persons did
23 here and don't intend to. But I do come as an
24 advocate of this rail system. I bring a uniqueness in
25 that I have worked in a metropolitan transit

1 authority. I also have lived as a gypsy. I've lived
2 in San Francisco. I've lived in New York. I've lived
3 in Houston. And some of the persons, some of the
4 comments that I heard about not having this, you will
5 gladly rue the day that you stop it, if you do, when
6 you get traffic congestion like you do, did and do in
7 New York and in Houston and in San Francisco. They
8 bit the bullet long ago and have put these systems in.
9 And I'm going to say, for those who are against it,
10 that once they start putting more 95s in and start
11 paving all of the pretty green Florida that you moved
12 here for, you will rue the day that you fought it.

13 Now, what I thought I might make a
14 contribution on is to remind you of something that, I
15 don't know how far along you are in the business
16 development of this, but the biggest complaints that
17 you have about mass transit systems is and are that
18 people have just gotten spoiled by their automobiles
19 and just don't want to be bothered with them. The
20 other is the cost involved in them. And the failure
21 of operations, operators to do a marketing program
22 that gets the ridership up to minimize that cost. It
23 almost goes without saying that rarely do you do
24 enough to pay off, to make these profitable, except if
25 you were like Manila or Singapore or London or some

1 place like that where they mandate you to use it. And
2 they don't have as much discretionary cash as we do.

3 But to bring it down to my three minutes,
4 and to bring my comment down to some contribution I
5 thought I could make, I have a serious observation,
6 and I don't want to say this critically, but I do want
7 to say it objectively, that I notice here in Florida,
8 like some other places, that it's fragmented,
9 operations are fragmented. Like Tri-Rail is run by
10 the county, but one portion of the county. Palm Tran
11 is run by the county, but another portion of the
12 County. Now, you're the DOT, the Department of
13 Transportation with the state. So now you have three
14 entities not concerned with maximizing ridership as
15 you would if you had one operator that you paid, that
16 you gave him the whip or the carrot for making the
17 ridership come up and making the cost come down.

18 So what I'm saying and asking, if you have
19 gone beyond the technical things that you've gone here
20 and started thinking about operations, and then that
21 is maximizing ridership, and how do you now make it
22 not just a ride from Miami to West Palm and you just
23 get off the train, you make a destination. How do you
24 get to the Jai-Alai, or how do you get to the
25 Dolphins' stadium? And then have you then start

1 thinking: How do we get Palm Tran involved? So that
2 you won't do like I read recently where there was a
3 free day on Tri-Rail and Palm Tran had nothing to do
4 with it. So people from Miami could ride up here and
5 get off and couldn't go to Okeechobee Boulevard. So
6 that's the business part of this that I'm wondering
7 and suggesting that you start thinking about along
8 with the technical aspects here.

9 I'm not getting technical, I'm not getting
10 into anything technical, but I did think that I wanted
11 to make those contributions, because I would like to
12 see this go. I think it's important. And anyone that
13 has not lived in just sunny Florida when it was very
14 small, and had moved, had lived in, like, Houston that
15 was like seven hundred thousand at one time, there's
16 now three million -- and you just can't keep building
17 roads, so you must get efficient, clean systems in.
18 Like in Paris, where you can go there and you don't
19 have to rent a car. You can get on their system and
20 look at their symbols and look at their destination
21 and figure out where you're going and do something and
22 get around. So that's my comment. Thank you.

23 MR. SEEBURGER: Thank you. Dean Taffel.

24 MR. TAFFEL: My name is Dean Taffel. I live
25 in the unincorporated area of West Palm Beach. I have

1 my address on the card. I'd like to speak about this
2 from the standpoint of the United States Constitution,
3 Bill of Rights, our inalienable rights.

4 But first let me say that this whole project
5 is built with public money. That's your money and my
6 money. And a lot of that money comes by floating
7 bonds and creating debt that you are responsible for,
8 and I'm responsible for. And none of these people are
9 responsible for.

10 What we have here, in 1832 as started by
11 Abraham Lincoln and Henry clay, it actually started
12 earlier than that, is something called an eternal
13 improvements program, which is a system of corporate
14 welfare where corporations are subsidized against
15 failure. And you can be sure that there will be
16 plenty of failure associated with this project, and
17 you will pay for their failure. That's why America
18 was founded on a system of private enterprise,
19 where corporations, companies and individuals who
20 thought that they should make a profit from an
21 enormous project like this, would have to risk their
22 own money and be extremely efficient and careful on
23 how they spent their money, because if they didn't
24 spend it well, they would go out of business.

25 This kind project never goes out of

1 business. Every time it fails the public has to pay
2 for the failure, and the project goes on and on with
3 the same incompetent people at the head of the project
4 eternally. So this is a great, the term boondoggle,
5 yes, but it's a great jobs opportunity for people
6 living on corporate welfare.

7 Now, this is termed an east coast
8 transportation corridor. And for those who are not
9 aware, the United States is involved with Canada and
10 Mexico right now in building multiple transportation
11 and trade corridors that run from as far south as the
12 south end of Mexico into the northern regions of
13 Canada. There are multiple corridors like this that
14 are scheduled to be built in the north, generally in
15 the north/south direction, going from east to west
16 across the United States. This 85-mile strip is part
17 of the eastern corridor, which is scheduled to go from
18 Key West, Florida to Nova Scotia. They said, "Well,
19 how can we build all these corridors across three
20 countries? What kind of problems are you going to
21 have?" Well, right now all the executive branches of
22 these three countries are in the process of creating a
23 North American Union, which will be a brand new
24 country with a common exterior border and a common
25 tariff. And in this process, the governments of these

1 three countries will be abolished, and a new regional
2 government called the North American Government -- and
3 they're all referring to everybody in this room as
4 north Americans -- will be created. And the governing
5 document for this North American Union will not be
6 United States Constitution with its Bill of Rights and
7 protection for inalienable rights, life, liberty and
8 property. It will be a new document built on a UN
9 type constitution, where your rights are given to you
10 at the whim of the governing authority. So property
11 rights as we know them will disappear.

12 If this project gets to the stage where it's
13 implemented, the North American Union has been formed
14 and this project -- in case, you know, it's planned
15 for 2030. Well, you ought to know that the North
16 American Union is scheduled to go into effect in 2010.
17 So if you're here and you own property, and you think
18 your property may be taken under eminent domain for
19 this project, you will not have any property right
20 protection after 2010. And they will much more easily
21 be able to take your property.

22 So, one thing I want to point -- I'm just
23 going to conclude with this. I recommend that you get
24 in touch with your congressmen. These people are not
25 God. They don't have total authority over anything.

1 We still live in a country that has the United States
2 Constitution. And there is a movement in Congress not
3 to just bring this 85-mile strip to a complete halt,
4 but to bring all of these corridor plans to a complete
5 halt. Because they're being done illegally, in
6 violation of the constitution of the United States.
7 And they're going to trample on your rights as a
8 citizen. There was a movement in Congress, there is a
9 sense, a joint resolution that's been proposed by
10 representatives Goods and Crato, Jones and Paul to
11 recommend that all this be brought to a halt while
12 proper investigation can be done and the people of the
13 whole country can be heard on this issue.

14 The only people who are going to object to
15 what I'm saying are people who are part of this
16 corporate welfare complex. These will be government
17 employees and well-paid consultants. They're going to
18 be unhappy. But other citizens should object to this
19 and contribute to bringing it to a stop. Thank you.

20 UNIDENTIFIED MALE VOICE: What spaceship did
21 you come in on?

22 MR. TAFFEL: What department of government do
23 you work for, sir?

24 MR. SEEBURGER: Can we -- anyone else wish to
25 speak? If you do, raise your hand, we'll get a card

1 to you. Okay. Steven Shoppe, did you come back in?
2 Okay.

3 Okay. I wish to remind you now that written
4 comments and/or exhibits may be presented in addition
5 to the verbal comments we have received. A comment
6 card is provided with the handout that was distributed
7 at the front door this evening. All written materials
8 we receive at this public hearing or by mail will
9 become part of the official public hearing record as
10 long as they're received by December 11, 2006.

11 A verbatim transcript of tonight's
12 proceedings, together with all written materials
13 received as part of the hearing record and all
14 studies, displays and informational material provided
15 at the hearing will be made a part of the project
16 decision making process and made available at the
17 Florida Department of Transportation District Four
18 Office for public review upon request.

19 I thank you for attending the meeting
20 tonight and providing your input on this project. It
21 is now 7:21 and I hereby officially close the public
22 hearing for the South Florida East Coast Corridor
23 Transit Analysis in Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach
24 Counties.

25 The study team will remain here as necessary

1 to answer any further questions that you may have.

2 Good night. And thank you for coming.

3 (Public hearing concluded at 7:21 p.m.)

4 (Comment by Carlos Santamaria at 7:25 p.m.)

5 MR. SANTAMARIA: My name is Carlos Santamaria
6 of 204 Meadows Drive, Boynton Beach. This is the
7 first time I've come to these meetings of the South
8 Florida East Coast Corridor Study. We've certainly
9 heard a lot of wide ranging opinions, but I believe
10 that this corridor is an unwanted but necessary evil,
11 if you want to call it that, but it's necessary. And
12 maybe we could find ways of improving our current
13 Tri-Rail system along with building a corridor from
14 Miami to West Palm. I think that's all. Thanks.

15 (Comment by Carlos Santamaria concluded at
16 7:25 p.m.)

17 (Comment by Gerald M. Ward at 7:27 p.m.)

18 MR. WARD: I'm Gerald M. Ward, 31 West 20th
19 Street, Post Office Box 10441, Riviera Beach, Florida,
20 here in Palm Beach County. This afternoon I looked at
21 the website and by deduction concluded that you had
22 filed what is now entitled Draft Programmatic
23 Environmental Impact Statement for the South Florida
24 East Coast Corridor Transit Analysis Study. On
25 arrival here tonight at the outside desk and what I

1 submit as Ward's Exhibit, was a half page description
2 that the public review process did begin on the 13th
3 of October with publication, I guess in the federal
4 register, and that comments would be concluded for the
5 forty-five days in December on the 11th. I inquired
6 at the environmental booth as to whether any notice
7 was provided to those who have attended these
8 meetings. I think I must have attended four or five
9 meetings already, five meetings already, and my name
10 and address has been certainly in the records.
11 Initially I was told yes, there was a mail out.
12 Subsequently, when I got to the director of
13 environmental affairs for the consultant, he said,
14 "No, there is not. We have merely provided the legal
15 notice, which is the federal register and a newspaper
16 ad."

17 It's unfortunate that the department of
18 transportation has not noticed this widely. And
19 although it was subsequently noticed in tonight's
20 presentation, it may very well be that an extension of
21 the 45 days is needed after the word gets out for this
22 matter, because this is a very important issue for the
23 public to comment on. Thank you.

24 (Comment by Gerald Ward concluded at 7:29
25 p.m.)

1 (Hearing concluded at 7:29 p.m.)

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1 THE STATE OF FLORIDA)

2 COUNTY OF PALM BEACH)

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5 I, Raquel Robinson, RPR, certify that I was
6 authorized to and did stenographically report the
7 foregoing proceedings and that the transcript is a true
8 and complete record of my stenographic notes.

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12 Dated this _____ day of _____, 2006.

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Raquel Robinson, RPR

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