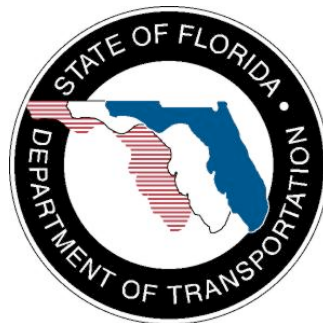


**SOUTH FLORIDA EAST COAST CORRIDOR  
TRANSIT ANALYSIS (SFECCTA) STUDY**

**Federal Aid No. FTAX004  
FTA Grant No. FL-90-X372-07  
FM No. 417031-1-22-01  
Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties, Florida  
Contract: C-8F66**

**FINAL SUMMARY OF ADVANCE NOTIFICATION RESPONSES  
TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM**



**Prepared by:**



**Gannett Fleming, Inc.  
Miami, Florida**

**JULY 2006**

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## Introduction

The South Florida East Coast Corridor Transit Analysis (SFECCTA) extends approximately 85 miles (100 miles with connecting spurs) from north of Indiantown Road in Jupiter (Palm Beach County) through Broward County to two potential southern termini: (Downtown Miami and the Miami Intermodal Center) in Dade County. The SFECCTA is roughly centered upon the alignment of the Florida East Coast Railroad (FEC) and paralleled in large part by the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC), Interstate 95 (I-95), Dixie Highway and US Route 1 (US-1).

Existing transit services in the SFECCTA are outlined in the *Existing Conditions Report* (available on the project study website: [www.sfeccstudy.com](http://www.sfeccstudy.com)). A range of new passenger transport services are also being considered in the Corridor to address growing regional transportation needs. These new services would be additive and/or supplemental to the services already operating in the study area.

The purpose of this memorandum is to summarize the Advance Notification (AN) responses. The AN responses provided in this memorandum include the 20 agencies, municipalities, and other entities that responded to the January 23, 2006 AN (See Appendix A).

### 1.0 ADVANCE NOTIFICATION

The AN for the SFECCTA is the first step in Tier 1 of a Tiered, Programmatic Environmental Impact Study (PEIS) that includes Transit Feasibility and Alternatives Analysis. Advance Notification fulfills the Intergovernmental Coordination and Review (ICR) Process that is required by the President's Executive Order 12372 and the Governor's Executive Order 95-359. This document serves as the initial public outreach and coordination effort of Tier 1, to be followed by separate ANs for each future Tier 2 Analysis of independent SFECCTA sections as they are each initiated. The format of the AN for the SFECCTA incorporates both the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidelines for public notification of Alternatives Analysis Studies for New Starts Funding while simultaneously addressing Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidelines as per Part 1, Chapter 2 of the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Project Development and Environmental (PD&E) Manual. This hybridized approach followed a modified AN outline that is summarized below in Section 1.1.

#### 1.1 Advance Notification Package

Due to the magnitude of the project and the readily available digital data for the Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis conducted for the SFEECTA from local, state (e.g., Florida Geographic Data Library (FGDL), South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), universities such as Florida International University, University of Florida, and University of Miami), and federal sources, a very detailed AN (over 70 pages) was circulated in January 2006 to a large

distribution of federal, tribal, state, local agencies, municipal and county governments, and other interested parties (over 1,300 recipients were copied on the AN, see the complete copy list on the AN transmittal letter in Appendix A). The AN was circulated both by mail and by uploading the AN to the Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM). The AN was uploaded via the Environmental Screening Tool (EST) for Environmental Technical Advisory Team (ETAT) members to review. The AN had an expanded outline (a hybrid of FTA and FHWA/FDOT formats) as follows:

1. Introduction and Background
2. Purpose and Need for the Project
  - a. Project Status
  - b. Capacity
  - c. System Linkage
  - d. Legislation
  - e. Social Demands or Economic Development
  - f. Modal Interrelationships
  - g. Safety
  - h. Local and Regional Plan Consistency
3. Description of the Project
  - a. Study Goals and Objectives
    - 1.) Comprehensive Public Involvement Plan, Study Outline, and Inter-Governmental Team
    - 2.) Freight and Commerce Transportation Needs
    - 3.) Rapid Transit Passenger Demands
    - 4.) Financially Feasible Alternatives and Solutions
    - 5.) Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining
      1. Utilizing information technology, primarily Florida's Efficient Transportation Decision Making (ETDM) process
      2. Early, active/full, and continuous agency collaboration
      3. Active and comprehensive public involvement (beginning at planning stage)
      4. National Priority Project listing
      5. Special Experimental Project (SEP 15)
      6. Early acquisition of right-of-way (R/W)
  - b. Preliminary Evaluation Measures
    - 1.) Effectiveness
    - 2.) Impacts
    - 3.) Cost Effectiveness
    - 4.) Financial Feasibility
    - 5.) Equity
  - c. Description of Conceptual Alternatives
    - 1.) Intercity Passenger Rail (IPR)
    - 2.) Commuter Rail Transit (CRT)
    - 3.) Heavy Rail Transit (HRT)
    - 4.) Monorails
    - 5.) Light Rail Transit (LRT)

- 6) Automated Guideway Transit (AGT)
- 7) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- 8) Waterborne Transit
- 9.) Express Bus
4. Socio-Economic Information:
  - a. Community Cohesion
  - b. Environmental Justice and Equity
  - c. Mobility
  - d. Economic Growth and Development
    - 1.) Local
    - 2.) State and Regional
    - 3.) National
  - e. Relocations
5. Environmental Information
  - a. Land Uses
    - 1.) Existing Land Uses
    - 2.) Future Land Uses
    - 3.) Transit Supportive Land Uses and Future Patterns
    - 4.) Redevelopment Potential
  - b. Wetlands
  - c. Floodplains
  - d. Wildlife and Habitat
  - e. Outstanding Florida Waters
  - f. Aquatic Preserves
  - g. Coastal Zone Consistency Determination is Required
  - h. Cultural Resources
  - i. Coastal Barrier Resources
  - j. Contamination
  - k. Sole Source Aquifer
  - l. Noise and Vibration
  - m. Essential Fish Habitat
  - n. Other Comments (Secondary and Cumulative Impacts, Air and Water Quality)
6. Navigable Waterway Crossing?
7. Permits Required
8. Priority Project Listing

## 1.2 Advance Notification Response Summary

The table in Appendix B summarizes the responses that were received to the AN. This table categorizes the comments based upon the following project issues:

- Affected Environment & Consequences
- Indirect and Cumulative Effects
- Construction Impacts
- Mitigation
- Other

The AN responses provided below include the 20 agencies, municipalities, and other entities that responded to the January 2006 AN. All concerns have been addressed or have been deferred to Tier 2 if that is the most appropriate course of action. The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), through the AN process, informed a number of Federal, State, and local agencies of the existence of this project and its scope. The FDOT initiated early project coordination on January 18, 2006, by distribution of an AN package to the Florida State Clearinghouse. A total of over 1,200 individual packages were also sent to local governments and other recipients directly by FDOT District 4. The following agencies, governmental bodies, and other entities received AN Packages. An asterisk (\*) indicates those agencies or officials that responded to the package.

### **Federal**

Federal Railroad Administration\*  
Federal Airport Administration\*  
Federal Emergency Management Agency\*  
Federal Highway Administration  
National Marine Fisheries Service  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency\*  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Coast Guard  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
U.S. Surface Transportation Board\*  
U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management  
U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service  
U.S. Geological Survey  
U.S. House of Representatives  
U.S. Senate - State of Florida – Senators  
U.S. House of Representatives – Congressmen

### **State**

Florida Department of Community Affairs  
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission\*  
Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources  
Florida Department of Environmental Protection\*\*\*  
Florida Department of Transportation  
Florida Senate – Senators  
Florida House of Representatives  
Legislative Delegation

### **Tribal**

Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida  
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians

Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma  
Poarch Band of Creek Indians  
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma  
Seminole Tribe of Florida

**Regional**

South Florida Water Management District  
South Florida Regional Planning Council  
Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council  
South Florida Regional Transportation Authority\*

**Local**

Miami-Dade County  
Miami Dade Transit (MDT)\*  
Broward County MPO  
Martin County MPO  
Indian River County MPO  
Palm Beach County MPO  
Palm Beach County\*\*  
Broward County - Port Everglades\*  
Dante B. Fascell Port of Miami-Dade  
Port of Palm Beach District  
Miami-Dade County Aviation Department  
Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport  
Boca Raton Airport Authority  
Palm Tran  
Palm Beach County Airpark (Lantana Airport)  
Pompano Beach Air Park  
Broward County Transit  
Miami Shores Village\*  
City of Oakland Park\*  
City of Wilton Manors\*  
City of Hollywood\*  
City of Fort Lauderdale\*  
City of Dania Beach\*

**Other/Private**

Broward Workshop, Inc.  
Economic Council of Palm Beach County, Inc.  
The Beacon Council  
Aventura Chamber of Commerce  
Broward Chamber of Commerce  
Deerfield Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Ft. Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce

Greater Hollywood Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Lantana Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Miami Shores Chamber of Commerce  
Greater North Miami Shores Chamber of Commerce  
Hollywood Chamber of Commerce  
Jupiter/Tequesta/Juno Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Lake Worth Chamber of Commerce  
Lighthouse Point Chamber of Commerce  
Miami-Dade Chamber of Commerce  
North Palm Beach County Chamber of Commerce  
Oakland Park Chamber of Commerce  
Palm Beach Chamber of Commerce  
The Greater Boca Raton Chamber of Commerce  
The Greater Boynton Beach Chamber of Commerce  
The Greater Dania Beach Chamber of Commerce  
The Greater North Miami Chamber of Commerce  
The Greater Pompano Beach Chamber of Commerce  
Women's Chamber of Commerce of Miami Dade County  
Women's Chamber of Commerce of Palm Beach County  
Black Economic Development Coalition, Inc.  
Catholic Charities for Economic Development  
Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, Inc.  
Downtown Miami Partnership  
Empowerment Zone Assembly  
Inter Cities Economic Development Corp  
Miami Dade Affordable Housing Foundation  
Workforce Alliance  
Workforce One  
Broward County League of Cities  
Gold Coast League of Cities  
Miami-Dade League of Cities  
Palm Beach County League of Cities  
Amtrak  
CSX Transportation  
Florida East Coast Industries, Inc.  
Florida East Coast Railway  
Haitian American Foundation  
AboveNet Communications  
Adelphia Cable  
AT&T Corp.  
Atlantic Broadband (ex Charter Communications)  
Bellsouth Telecommunications  
Comcast Cable Company (ex AT&T Broadband)  
Everglades Pipeline Co.  
Florida City Gas  
Florida Gas Transmission Co. (FGT)\*

Florida Power and Light Co.  
Florida Public Utilities Co.  
FPL Fibernet, LLC  
Florida Inland Navigation District\*  
Jupiter Inlet District\*  
Lake Worth Drainage District  
MCI Technologies  
Palm Beach County Water Utility  
Peoples Gas Systems, TECO  
Professional Engineer Associate, Inc.  
Gannett Fleming Inc.  
L.B. Limited & Associates Inc.

Stated below are the pertinent comments from the agencies, municipalities, and other entities which responded to the AN. Copies of these agency letters are contained in Appendices C through G .

**United States Department of Transportation Federal Railroad Administration – FRA (Exhibit 1, Appendix C):**

Comment: The agency expressed their inability to attend the study related meetings in Florida. They requested to be kept informed regarding the progress of this study. FRA is the USDOT operating administration for intercity passenger rail and requested further correspondence to Mark Yachmetz in Washington, DC.

Response: No response required.

**United States Federal Aviation Administration – FAA (Exhibit 2, Appendix C):**

Comment: The agency mentioned that they are undertaking projects in and around the study area and did not see any impacts on its projects based on the information that was provided.

Response: No response required.

**Federal Emergency Management Agency - FEMA (Exhibit 3, Appendix C):**

Comment: The agency mentioned the Executive Order (EO) 11988 which requires federal agencies to avoid the direct or indirect support of floodplain development whenever there is practicable alternative. Encouraged FDOT District 4 to incorporate the objectives of EO 11988.

Response: The FDOT will comply with EO 11988. As per the FDOT PD&E Manual, Part 2 Chapter 24 Floodplains, during the individual Tier 2 NEPA studies coordination with the FEMA and appropriate State and local governmental agencies should be undertaken for each regulatory floodway encroachment.

**United States Environmental Protection Agency – EPA (Exhibit 4, Appendix C):**

Comment: The agency identified that the project area lies within the boundaries of the Biscayne Aquifer system. Based findings of “no significant impact” on the expectation that the project will adhere to all federal, state and local government rules and regulations and will follow best management practices.

Response: All applicable best management practices and emergency plans specified in the latest edition of FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction will be followed throughout the construction of any project or projects that result from Tier 2 of this study.

**United States Surface Transportation Board (Exhibit 5, Appendix C)**

Comment: Assuming that the FEC Railway will continue to own the rail line over which freight service is provided and will continue to provide for-hire freight service over the line, the chairman did not believe that participation by the Surface Transportation Board in the Tier 1 review is necessary.

Response: No response required.

**Florida Department of Environmental Protection - FDEP (Exhibits 1-2, Appendix D):**

Comment: Director of Intergovernmental Programs response - stated that based on information received from state agencies, the state has no objection to allocation of federal funds for the project and, the funding award is consistent with the Federal Coastal Management Program (FCMP). Also mentioned the requirement to address the concerns expressed by the state agencies submitting responses to the SCH. Waste Cleanup Supervisor response – Suggested / recommended various procedures and actions to address environmental issues that may arise during the project planning and / or execution. Advised proper disposal of land clearing or construction debris. Suggested construction projects requiring “dewatering” should be discouraged or kept limited. Mentioned innovative technologies, such as special storm water management systems, engineering controls and institutional controls, such as conditions on water production wells and dewatering restrictions that may be required, depending on the results of Environmental Assessment (EA). Suggested developing a construction contingency plan in the event of natural disasters, spill, fire or release of hazardous materials. Air Resource Management Section response - inquired what air pollutants will be collected, how many sites will be utilized, and usage of air quality models to determine future air impacts.

Response: The FDOT has coordinated with the FWC regarding protection of the West Indian manatee and its habitat through the ETDM process. A cultural resource reconnaissance survey has been conducted for the project corridor and

coordination with the SHPO has been initiated, and a meeting was held with them in Tallahassee, Florida on June 9, 2006. regarding the survey methodology. In addition, the FDOT would likely acquire an ERP and a Water Use Permit prior to any dewatering activities, permits will be determined necessary in Tier 2 studies. Waste cleanup suggestions will be addressed more explicitly in Tier 2. Tier 1 assessment of air quality is not appropriate phase for air quality modeling, however Tier 2 independent NEPA studies may utilize such models and report/circulate the results in appropriate environmental documents (e.g., Tier 2 EIS, EA or CatEx-2) or reports (Air Quality Report or Technical Memorandum).

**Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Exhibit 3, Appendix D):**

Comment: The project may have possible potential loss / degradation of upland and wetland habitats due to the location of potential spurs from the proposed alignments, work in or near marine bays and other waterways, and potential loss or degradation of habitat from direct impacts. Concerned about the secondary cumulative impacts from increased development spurred and facilitated by transit system improvements. Recommended that the future construction projects selected to improve or modify transit system be reviewed by the Environmental Technical Advisory Committee (ETAT) composed of state and federal resource, permitting, and management agencies.

Response: The FDOT has coordinated with and will continue to coordinate with the FWC through the ETAT on this project. In addition, coordination with FWC will continue throughout both Tiers of this NEPA study, Tier 1 (current phase) is focusing on secondary (indirect) and cumulative effects, which are a mixture of beneficial and potentially adverse.

**South Florida Regional Transportation Authority – SFRTA (Exhibit 1, Appendix E):**

Comment: Suggested implementation of quiet zones for residential development. Mentioned minor technical errors in the AN.

Response: No response required.

**Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resource Management – PBDERM (Exhibit 1, Appendix F):**

Comment: Opposed any proposal that can adversely impact, directly or indirectly, any county-owned or managed natural areas or areas on Florida Natural Areas Inventory (FNAI). Provided a list of areas on FNAI that were not included in AN. Expressed interest to be on the stakeholders' mailing list for any scoping or other study related meetings. Suggested contacting the Town of Jupiter and the City of Boca Raton for exact locations of environmentally sensitive properties that they have purchased.

Response: The project study is utilizing FNAI data in the GIS analysis for alternatives analysis and will continue to involve all County and municipal stakeholders in the scoping process that is continuing throughout Tier 1 and will continue during Tier 2 segmental studies.

**Palm Beach County Department of Engineering and Public Works (Exhibit 2, Appendix F):**

Comment: The department does not have any comments at the present time.

Response: No response required.

**Broward County Department of Port Everglades (Exhibit 3, Appendix F):**

Comment: Emphasized importance of achieving a balance between freight/goods and commuter movement along FEC. Recommended utilization of the Atlantic Coast Corridor Study for the project. Provided specific comments on parts of the report and provided a few suggestions.

Response: A Freight Integration Summary Report has been incorporated into Tier 1 of the SFECCTA. Furthermore, the Atlantic Commerce Corridor Study, An Assessment of Seaport Rail and Other Regional Mobility Opportunities (2003) have been included in the research conducted as part of the Prior Studies Report that is also a part Tier 1.

**Miami Dade Transit - MDT (Exhibit 4, Appendix F):**

Comment: Strongly encouraged all the efforts required to develop the study corridor. Mentioned the agency's initiative in 2002. Showed willingness to evaluate and make recommendations regarding future premium transit options.

Response: No response required.

**City of Dania Beach (Exhibit 5, Appendix F):**

Comment: Stated that the geographical location of the City as a "proper" location for a station. Mentioned a CRA plan, its future land use plan and recently issued permits for specific high-density developments in and along the study corridor that could support a transit service. Expressed willingness to modify the city's shuttle service routes to provide connectivity to a transit station.

Response: No response required.

**City of Fort Lauderdale (Exhibit 6, Appendix F):**

Comment: Expressed commitment and support of the study corridor for passenger transit. Provided copy of Resolution No. 02-179 by the City Commission in 2002

support FDOT and RTA for strategic investment in transit along the FEC Corridor area. Stated that the FEC right of way is an important and strategic transportation corridor. Drew attention to economic growth along the FEC.

Response: Resolution No. 02-179 has been included in Appendix F of this memorandum.

**City of Hollywood (Exhibit 7, Appendix F):**

Comment: The city did not have any comments but expressed willingness to participate in the study. Requested documents pertaining to this study.

Response: No response required. Project documents are available for public review during comment periods for Public Hearings and can be downloaded from the project website at <http://www.sfecstudy.com/documents.html>

**City of Wilton Manors (Exhibit 8, Appendix F):**

Comment: Wanted quiet zones to be implemented for residential areas. Supports passenger rail service along the FEC corridor. Suggested coordination between the City and the FDOT to address land planning issues such as consideration for future developments along FEC right-of-way.

Response: The FDOT has implemented a Quiet Zone application approach for communities in “Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings; Interim Final Rule. 49 CFR Parts 222 & 229”, February 25, 2005. This can be found in Appendix I of this document.

**City of Oakland Park (Exhibit 9, Appendix F):**

Comment: Expressed concerns about train horn noise. Mentioned double-tracking FEC corridor can have significant impact. Underscored importance of creating quiet zones along the corridor and considering safety issues related to at-grade railway crossings. Supported the study and provided justification for locating a transit station in the City. Mentioned transit-oriented development in the City that could be complimentary to a transit service.

Response: The FDOT has implemented a Quiet Zone application approach for communities in “Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings; Interim Final Rule. 49 CFR Parts 222 & 229”, February 25, 2005. This can be found in Appendix I of this document. Railroad (RR) crossing safety will be an important component of the SFECCTA, and Tier 1 is identifying the benefits of implementing a program of analyses to consider at-grade consolidations or grade separations throughout the project study corridor. Such a program of RR crossing studies are anticipated to be implemented in Tier 2 concurrent with the independent segmental NEPA studies.

**Miami Shores Village (Exhibit 10, Appendix F):**

Comment: Expressed concerns about noise level at the railroad crossings in the village. Demanded mitigation measures to the fullest extent possible for any type of mass transit service. Opposed to any type of elevated train service as believes it would severely impact quality of life due to its adverse impacts such as noise and aesthetics. Concerned about vehicular traffic at-grade railroad crossings in case frequency or length of trains is increased.

Response: The FDOT has implemented a Quiet Zone application approach for communities in “Use of Locomotive Horns at Highway-Rail Grade Crossings; Interim Final Rule. 49 CFR Parts 222 & 229”, February 25, 2005. This can be found in Appendix I of this document. Railroad (RR) crossing safety will be an important component of the SFECCTA, and Tier 1 is identifying the benefits of implementing a program of analyses to consider at-grade consolidations or grade separations throughout the project study corridor. Such a program of RR crossing studies are anticipated to be implemented in Tier 2 concurrent with the independent segmental NEPA studies.

**Jupiter Inlet District (Exhibit 1, Appendix G):**

Comment: Concerned about the project’s potential impacts on the Loxahatchee River in northern Palm Beach and Southern Martin Counties. Inquired to what extent any increase in rail transit along the FEC Railway will impact boat traffic where it crosses the Loxahatchee River. Inquired how and at what point in the study will the location of the rail yard be determined.

Response: It is anticipated that a program of navigable crossing studies will be necessary in Tier 2 during individual NEPA segmental studies. The location of any rail yards such as O&M facilities or smaller layover siding locations is being preliminarily assessed in Tier 1 but will continue to be evaluated in Tier 2 during the independent segmental NEPA studies.

**Florida Inland Navigation District (Exhibit 2, Appendix G):**

Comment: Expressed its role as the state sponsor of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Stated that the clarity of the maps should be revised to include the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Response: No response required.

**Florida Gas Transmission Co. – FGT (Exhibit 3, Appendix G):**

Comment: Concerned about its multiple pipeline facilities located within the SFECCTA. Requests that a FGT representative must be present when any work is done within 10’ of its facilities. Also FGT requests that machine excavation may

not be performed within 5' of a physically verified FGT facility. The physical verification will be performed by an FGT representative.

Response: No response required.

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## **Appendix A: Advance Notification and Transmittal Letter**

**Appendix B: Advance Notification Response Summary Table**

## **Appendix C: Advance Notification Responses – Federal Agencies**

**Appendix D: Advance Notification Responses – State Agencies**

**Appendix E: Advance Notification Responses – Regional Agencies**

**Appendix F: Advance Notification Responses – Local Agencies**

**Appendix G: Advance Notification Responses – Other/Private Agencies**