

Environmental Assessment

National Environmental Policy
Act Study

Broward Commuter Rail South

Broward County, Florida

August 2024

Financial Project ID: 452240-1

Errata Sheet- Attachment to the Environmental Assessment Broward Commuter Rail South

Changes Made to Environmental Assessment

Following the public comment period, three minor changes were made to the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) South project. Those changes are described in this errata sheet.

Change made to EA Pg 21:

The text was revised to replace the word “east” with the word “west” to reflect the proper cardinal direction.

Change made to EA Figure 3-11:

The online document was updated by updating Figure 3-11 to 4 Medium Risk contamination sites at the Fort Lauderdale Station.

Change made to EA Pg 47:

The formatting of the bullets was revised to reflect the proper level of indentation for projects and scopes.

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1.0 Project Description and Purpose and Need

1.1 Project Description

The proposed Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) South Project will add commuter service to the existing freight rail and intercity passenger rail services that currently operate on the Florida East Coast Railway Corridor (FEC Corridor) between the City of Aventura, located in Miami-Dade County, and the City of Fort Lauderdale, located in Broward County, approximately 11.5 miles. The project proposes three new passenger stations, depicted on **Figure 1-1** and at the following locations:

- Hollywood (between Tyler Street and Taylor Street)
- Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International (FLL) Airport
- South Fort Lauderdale (between SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street)

The proposed BCR South weekday commuter service is intended to have 60-minute base headways, with 30-minute peak service, and 60-minute weekend and holiday service. The weekday peak hours are estimated to be between 5:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Detailed schedules will be based on additional corridor modeling and adjusted during subsequent phase. The BCR South project entered Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Project Development (PD) phase in December of 2022.



CONCEPTUAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Figure 1-1: BCR South Project Location and Alignment Map

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to implement commuter service along the existing FEC Corridor from Aventura in Miami-Dade County into Broward County, Florida. The project would provide a new and reliable option for north-south commuters by connecting to major activity centers and neighborhoods adjacent to the line and support economic development and land use plans and policies in eastern Broward County.

BCR South will provide a sustainable and permanent transportation investment that is strongly supported by local land use plans, Broward County, the City of Hollywood, the City of Hallandale, the City of Dania Beach, the City of Fort Lauderdale, and the surrounding communities.

The primary needs for the project are based on providing an alternate mode of transportation for critical north-south regional and local travel capacity and serving the existing and future population growth in the region and corresponding sustainable land use and economic development in the study area.

The secondary needs for the project are based on enhancing intermodal connectivity by developing a seamlessly integrated multimodal network and improving transit service in the eastern high-density travel market. The project enhances intermodal connectivity by providing quality access to transit-dependent populations and improving the environment and transportation safety. It will help address congestion issues by providing person trip capacity via a regional commuter rail transit option in the FEC Corridor.

1.3 Purpose of Environmental Assessment

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is a federal law that requires consideration of environmental impacts before approval of any federally funded project that may have significant impacts on the environment or where impacts have not yet been determined. This EA provides an assessment of potential social, cultural, natural, and physical impacts of the BCR South Project.

2.0 Alternatives

As required by NEPA, this EA compares a No Build against the proposed Build Alternative for the BCR South Commuter Rail Project. The No Build Alternative provides an environmental baseline for assessing potential impacts from the proposed project. The No Build Alternative would not involve any actions and would not introduce new commuter service on the FEC Corridor in Broward County or construct any passenger stations. The No Build Alternative would not meet the Purpose or address the Needs of the proposed project. The Build Alternative is further detailed in this section and was used in assessing the potential environmental impacts from the proposed project.

2.1 General

The Build Alternative includes track modifications at the approaches to the proposed commuter rail station, proposed commuter rail stations, and commuter parking improvements. Three stations are proposed along the corridor with the northern termini occurring at the South Fort Lauderdale Station in Broward County. The BCR South platforms will be located next to siding tracks and an additional dwell track is proposed north of the South Fort Lauderdale station.

2.1.1 Stations

The proposed BCR South stations include:

- Hollywood Station located between Fillmore Street and Tyler Street
- Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL) Station located between the two Terminal Drive overpasses that access the airport from I-595 and US 1
- South Fort Lauderdale Station located between SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street

All three stations include the following amenities:

- Ticket Zone with at least two Ticket Vending Machines (TVM) (Operator Specific)
- Staff Information Booth
- ADA Compliant Clear Zone(s)
- Fixed Canopy
- Benches for Seating Compliant with Department of Justice 28 CFR Part 36 ADA Standards for Accessible Design
- Lighting (direct with minimum 5-foot candles (FC) on all portions of platform and off-platform areas)
- Information Sign(s) (e.g., passenger information, logo, route maps, and schedules)
- Station Stop ID Sign(s)
- Trash Receptacle(s)
- Hose bibs along platform for maintenance
- Emergency Fire Hydrant
- Wayfinding Totem

- Public-Address System (Operator Specific)
- Emergency Call Boxes
- CCTV (Operator Specific)
- Wi-Fi Access
- Handrails as necessary along platform, ramps, and sloping sidewalk
- Inter-Track Fence
- Level-Boarding Platform (Operator Specific)
- Staff and Customer Bathroom Facilities

2.1.2 Track Work

The corridor consists of existing double mainline tracks previously constructed by FEC Corridor and Brightline for freight and intercity passenger service. Track work proposed in the Build Alternative includes adding sidings for the station platform locations and mainline track shifts at Hollywood Station. The sidings run the length of the stations and extend an addition to the length needed to tie back into the mainline double tracks. See **Figure 2-1** for example of dual side platform with sidings. Crossovers are included in the vicinity of the stations to allow for flexibility of train operations as the commuter trains approach the stations.

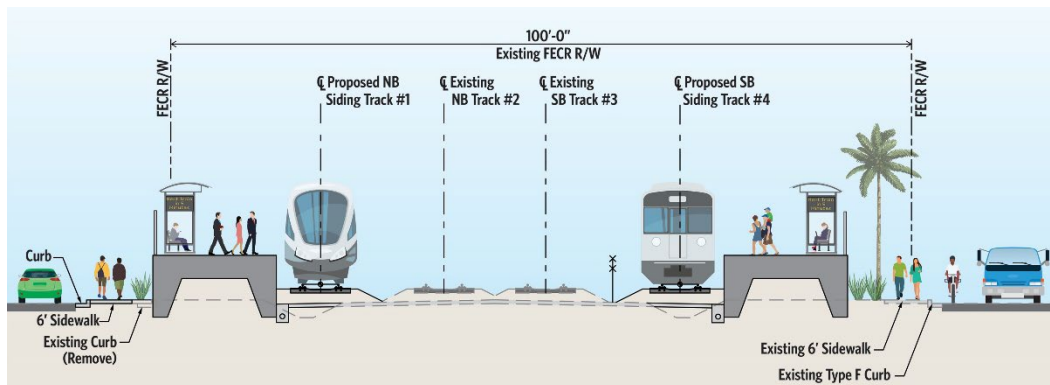


Figure 2-1: Example of Dual Side Platform Station Typical Section

2.1.3 Parking

Provisions for commuter parking at two of the three stations proposed were also examined in developing the Build Alternative. These parking alternatives are further described below in detailing station improvements proposed.

The following Sections describe the Build Alternative in detail at each station.

2.2 Hollywood Station

The Hollywood Station is located between Fillmore Street and Tyler Street in Hollywood, FL, west of downtown. At this station the rail corridor is bordered by North 21st Avenue to the east and Dixie Highway to the west.

The station concept includes providing the following:

- Two track sidings with two mainline track shifts to center the tracks and platforms within the FEC Corridor Right-of-Way (ROW).
- Two 17 feet wide by 500 feet long side platforms
- 150 feet bus drop-offs along North 21st Avenue and Dixie Highway (south of Fillmore Street)
- 100 feet vehicle drop-offs along North 21st Avenue and Dixie Highway (south of Fillmore Street)
- Sidewalk connectivity between the parking garage alternatives, the bus drop-off, and the vehicle drop-offs; this includes existing sidewalk repairs or reconstruction along the route and ADA ramps at the intersections along the route
- In coordination with the City of Hollywood and Broward County Traffic Department, the project will reconstruct two existing through lanes (one-way traffic) on North 21st Avenue and Dixie Highway between Fillmore Street and Tyler Street to accommodate bus and vehicle drop-offs
- Mill and overlay work at all at-grade highway-rail grade crossings
- Pedestrian access via Fillmore Street and Tyler Street highway-rail grade crossings (no pedestrian overpass). Platform will be end loaded 17 feet wide platforms.
- The City's Complete Streets program was reviewed, and the station concept should accommodate future City construction without having to impact the main BCR South features.

2.2.1 Track Layout

Per the Timetable Speeds chart dated 3/18/2021 and the Track Charts dated 3/22/2021 provided by Brightline, the following existing train speeds are running through Hollywood Station:

- 60 MPH Freight (FEC Corridor)
- 79 MPH Passenger (Brightline)

Due to the close highway-rail grade crossing spacing, the siding / dwell tracks are extended south of Van Buren/Harrison Street before they can connect back to the mainline tracks. To accommodate the four tracks in the station area, the existing FEC Corridor mainline tracks will be shifted to be centered within the FEC Corridor ROW. Crossovers are proposed on either side of the stations to provide flexibility on accessing either siding for commuter service. The Hollywood Station track schematic is shown in **Figure 2-2**. Refer to the Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) Attachment H-1 for track layout details, Attachment H-2 for roadway detailed layouts and dimensioning, and Attachment H-3 & H-4 for typical sections.

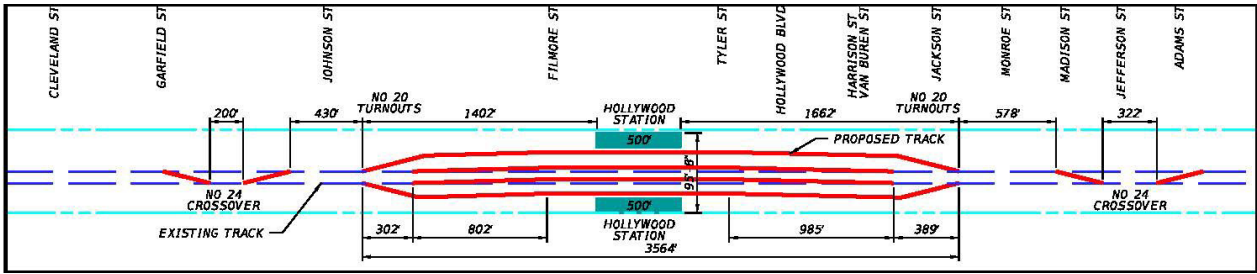


Figure 2-2: Hollywood Station Track Schematic

2.2.2 Parking

The City of Hollywood has indicated they can provide the BCR South parking spaces with their University Station project jointly developed by the city and private sector for attainable housing and 15,000 square feet of retail space for Barry University’s College of Health Sciences. No additional improvements to the parking garage shown in purple in **Figure 2-3** are proposed as part of this project.

The Build Alternative includes additional ADA parking spaces provided on either side of Polk Street just east of the North 21st Avenue intersection. Pedestrian connectivity between parking and the station is included as part of this Build Alternative.

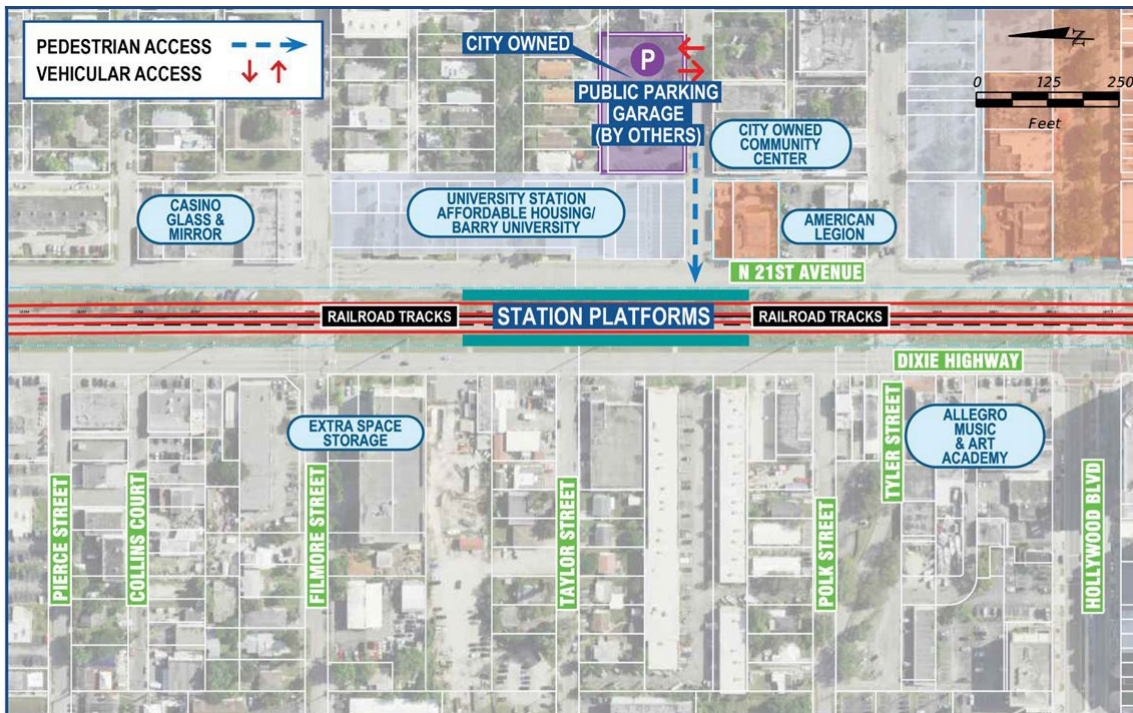


Figure 2-3: Hollywood Station Parking Build Alternative

2.2.3 Bus Stops/Vehicle Drop-offs

Planned and existing bus stops, as identified below, will meet the same style as the recently constructed Hollywood Boulevard Complete Streets project (2023) as shown in **Figure 2-4**, if practicable.

The following is a summary of the bus stops near Hollywood Station:

- The recently constructed Hollywood Boulevard complete streets eastbound and westbound bus stops just west of Dixie Highway will remain.
- A southbound bus stop will be added at Dixie Highway on the far side of Fillmore Street.
- To provide for passenger and ride share vehicles, a drop-off is proposed on the far side of the new Dixie Highway bus stop. The existing northbound bus stop along North 21st Avenue on the near side of Fillmore Street will be moved to the far side to allow for the left turn lane on the narrower North 21st Avenue Complete Streets roadway section at the station.
- A new North 21st Avenue northbound vehicle drop-off will be located on the far side of Polk Street.



Figure 2-4: Hollywood Boulevard Complete Streets Bus Stop

2.2.4 Traffic Signals / Crosswalks

Due to the track shifts and additions for the station, several of the parallel street traffic signals and crosswalks will be affected.

- Eleven relocated or new traffic signals including pedestrian push buttons, mast arms, loop detection, signal preemption, signal timings, etc.
- New pedestrian mid-block signal across North 21st Avenue at Polk Street
- New pedestrian mid-block signal across Dixie Highway at Polk Street

2.2.5 Railroad Crossings

The Build Alternative includes upgraded highway-rail grade crossings at Filmore Street, Tyler Street, Hollywood Boulevard and Van Buren / Harrison Street, including:

- New railroad flashers / gates set outside the new siding track on the east and west sides.
- New or relocated advance warning devices (signs, detectable warning surface, etc.).
- New and reconstructed sidewalks for station access and connectivity.
- Additional railroad crossing panels for siding and on mainline FEC Corridor track shifts.
- Other safety features to be determined from the Safety Analysis Memorandum and coordination with FEC Corridor, Brightline and FRA.

Safety and traffic analysis were performed, and the results show that the Build Alternative would have no significant impact on safety or traffic. The results of the safety analysis can be found on **Section 3.3.6** and the results of the traffic analysis can be found on **Section 3.3.7**.

2.3 Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport (FLL Airport) Station

Passengers at the BCR South FLL Airport Station will primarily be airport travelers who have arrived via airplane to the station terminal or passengers who are departing the commuter train to reach the airport terminal. The FLL Airport station will support commuter passengers arriving by car but no additional parking is being provided at the station for commuters. In this way, the FLL Airport Station will function as a connecting commuter service to bring commuter rail passengers to the airport and take airport passengers to other stations on the BCR South commuter rail line.

The curved platform will be elevated with a pedestrian walkway to connect to the bus-drop off area on the west side of the tracks, shown in **Figure 2-5**. See PER Attachment A-2 for roadway concept and dimensions.

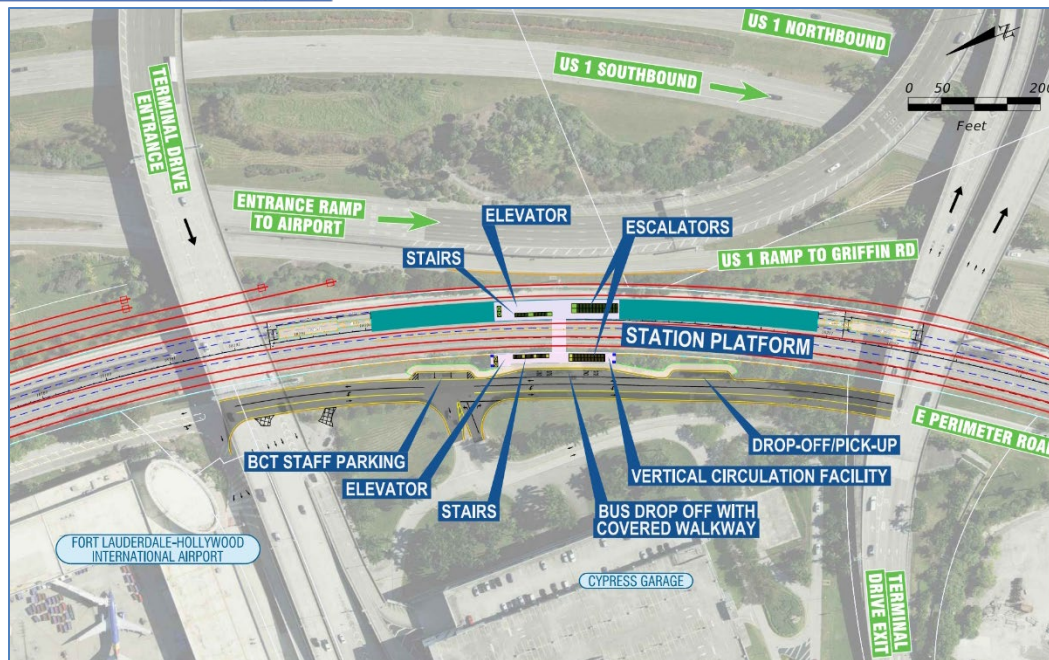


Figure 2-5: FLL Station Layout (No Parking)

Pedestrians will be able to take a designated shuttle bus going to and from the station covered platform to the airport terminals. County buses may also access the drop-off area for the station.

The station concept includes providing the following:

- A single 30-foot wide 675-foot-long station platform centered between sidings/dwell tracks
- Relocated freight storage tracks via several ladder tracks north of westbound Terminal Drive bridge to offset the storage lost from introducing the platform and sidings/dwell tracks
- Reconfigured existing stormwater pond due to relocated freight storage tracks
- Vertical circulation on platform to/from pedestrian overpass (escalator, stairs, elevator)
- Pedestrian overpass (23'-6" vertical clearance over tracks, 58' span, 20' wide)
- Staff parking spaces next to the bus drop-off
- Vehicle drop-off for commuters
- Sidewalk connectivity to the airport terminals is being evaluated for potential inclusion
- Widening of Perimeter Road between Terminal Drive overpasses to accommodate bus drop-off lane
- Shuttle bus drop-off facility with vertical circulation (escalator, stairs, elevator) includes 195-foot bus drop-off lane along Perimeter Road
- Upgraded highway-rail grade crossing at Griffin Road due to mainline track shifts
 - New railroad flashers / gates on the east and west sides
 - New or relocated advance warning devices (signs, detectable warning surface, etc)
 - Additional railroad crossing panels for mainline FEC Railway track shifts
 - Other safety features to be determined from Safety Analysis Memorandum and coordination with FEC Railway, Brightline and FRA

2.3.1 Track Layout

Refer to the PER Attachment A-1 for more detailed track layouts with dimensions and stationing and Attachment A-3 and A-4 for typical sections.

Per the Timetable Speeds chart dated 3/18/2021 and the Track Charts dated 3/22/2021 provided by Brightline, the following existing train speeds are running through FLL Airport Station:

- 40 MPH Freight (FEC Railway)
- 40 MPH Passenger (Brightline)

The existing mainline and storage track curvature limits the ability of trains to travel fast through this airport area. The proposed station platform is in the center of two new siding / dwell tracks with the two mainline tracks relocated to the outside. The station work and existing bridge piers will require the existing FEC Railway storage tracks to be reconfigured. Refer to **Figure 2-6** for a schematic of track work.

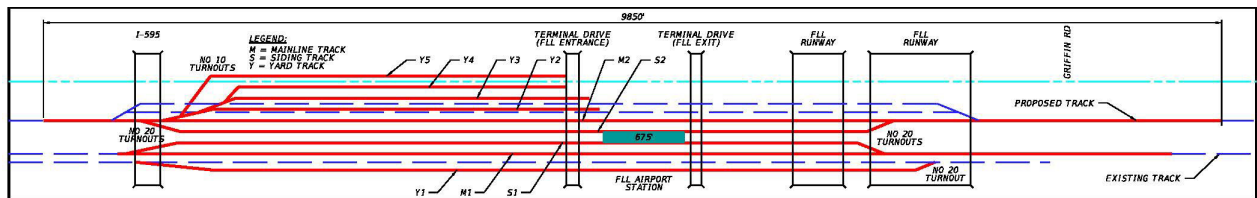


Figure 2-6: FLL Station Track Layout

To accommodate the storage track reconfiguration, the following will be provided:

- Proposed single storage track 14 feet to the west of the west Mainline track.
- Continuation of the northeast ladder storage tracks to the east to add four new storage tracks at 14 feet centers. These storage tracks will be stubbed out prior to the passenger station area near the Terminal Drive Overpass.
- Crash protection walls will be provided at the Terminal Drive overpass structures and under I-595, as required.
- The additional ladder storage tracks will require the modification of the existing US 1 pond on the east side of tracks to fill in more to the south infield area. The offset storage will be achieved by expanding the pond to the south and reconnecting the airport's irrigation facilities. See below at **Figure 2-7** for the pond modifications and ladder track layout.

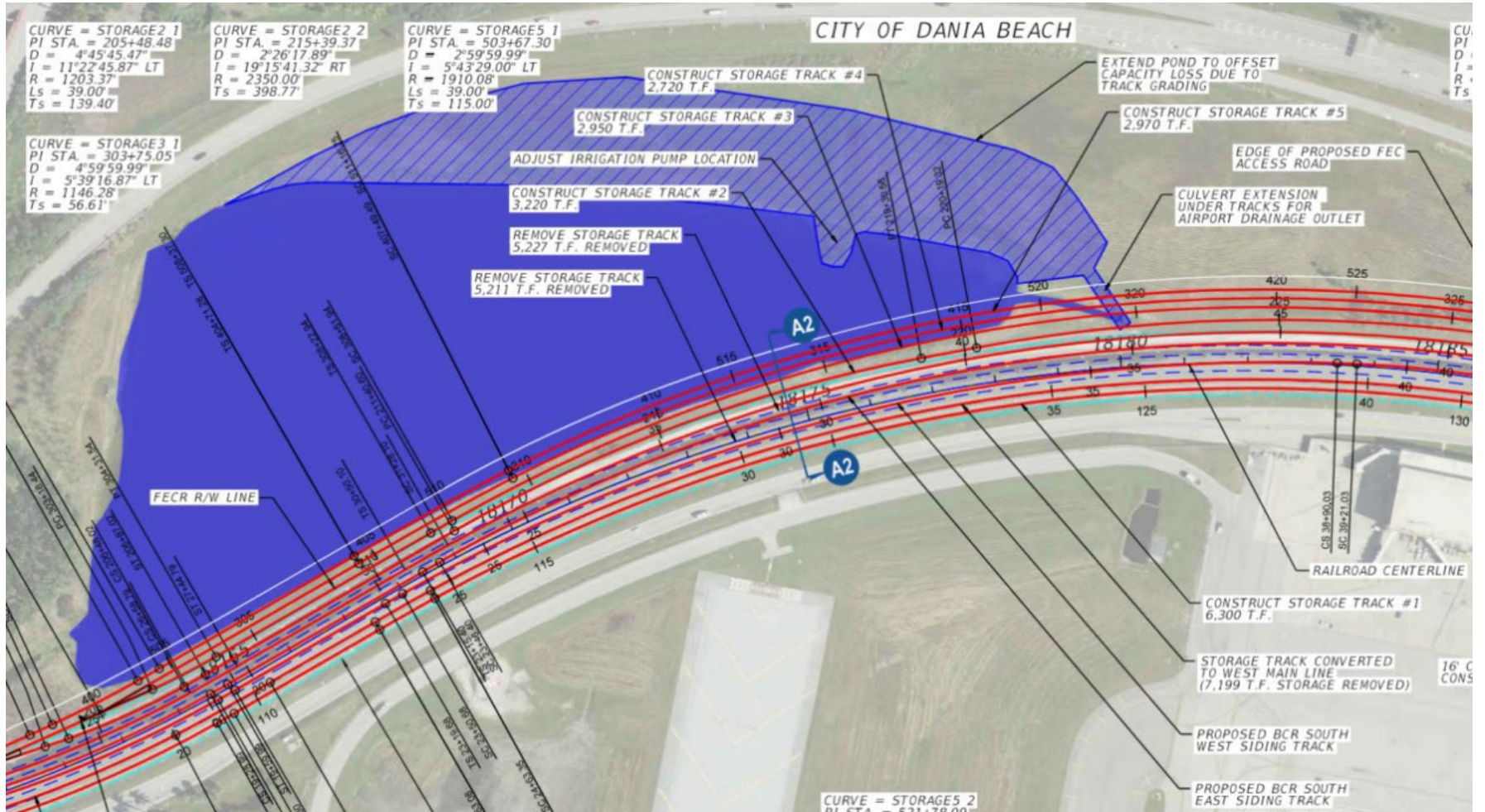


Figure 2-7: FLL Station Pond Modification

2.3.2 Parking

Parking will not be provided at the FLL Airport station.

2.3.3 Bus Stops/Vehicle Drop-offs

The FLL Airport station will have a covered walkway leading from the bus stop to the vertical circulation/pedestrian bridge to access the platform. Pedestrians will only be able to take a designated shuttle bus circulating to and from the platform to the airport terminals. The County buses will have limited access to the bus drop-off areas for the station.

Passenger vehicle drop-off areas will also be available at the station for commuters.

2.3.4 Traffic Signals/Crosswalks

There are no existing traffic signals nor crosswalks in the vicinity of the FLL Airport station.

2.3.5 Railroad Crossings

There are no railroad crossings in the vicinity of the FLL Airport station. However, the Griffin Road highway-railway grade crossing, south of the FLL Airport, will have profile adjustments related to the main track shifts.

2.4 South Fort Lauderdale Station (SFTL Station)

The SFTL Station is located between SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street in Fort Lauderdale, south of downtown. The platform is centered on SW 16th Street between Flagler Avenue and the FEC Railway tracks. Flagler Avenue remains an alley from SW 16th Street to SW 17th Street.

The station concept includes providing the following:

- A single 17 feet wide by 500 feet long side platform on the east side.
- A temporary dwell track extension of the siding on the east side of mainline tracks, all within existing rail ROW.
- Separate 150 feet bus drop-off lane either along Andrews Avenue or SW 1st Avenue (Broward County is holding internal transit meetings to determine various services)
- 100 feet vehicle drop-off along SW 16th Street circular drive.
- Sidewalk connectivity between the parking garage, the bus drop-off, and the vehicle drop-offs; this includes existing sidewalk repairs or reconstruction along the route and ADA ramps at the intersections along the route.
- Accommodation for a future City Complete Streets typical section at SW 17th Street will include the new warning devices and railroad crossing surface (concrete panels) placed so the City does not have to rework these elements with the future project.
- Pedestrian access via SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street highway-rail grade crossings (no pedestrian overpass). Platform will be end loaded and have a center access point in line with the SW 16th Street Plaza vehicle drop-off area.

- Parking garage with access from SW 1st Avenue
 - Turn lane into the proposed SW 1st Avenue parking garage

2.4.1 Track Layout

Per the Timetable Speeds chart dated 3/18/2021 and the Track Charts dated 3/22/2021 provided by Brightline, the following existing train speeds are running through SFTL Station:

- 60 MPH Freight (FEC Railway)
- 79 MPH Passenger (Brightline)

A single platform and siding/dwell track are proposed on the east side of the mainline tracks. A 845 foot dwell track (575 functional length) stub out will be provided on the north side of the station north of SW 15th Street. This component will provide a location for holding a commuter train as needed to meet operational goals and safety inspections.

BCR South track work construction will require coordination with FEC Railway for “track windows” to accomplish the mainline track connections at the No. 20 turnouts and No. 24 crossover south of the station. See **Figure 2-8** for track schematic and refer to the PER Attachment F-1 for full track layout details, Attachment F-2 for roadway layout details, and Attachment F-3 & F-4 for typical sections.

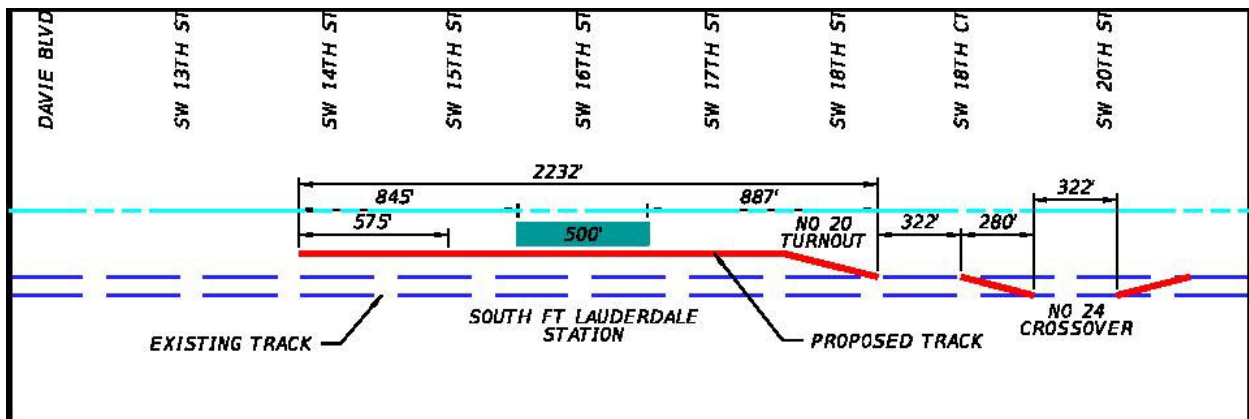


Figure 2-8: SFTL Station Track Schematic

2.4.2 Parking

The City of Fort Lauderdale does not have any large public parking facilities within the ¼-mile area of the station, only on-street parking. Therefore, parking alternative screening was analyzed for this

station. Two candidate sites within ¼ mile of the station location were identified that could be developed as parking structures and are shown in **Figure 2-9**. Both sites screened and evaluated can accommodate the required parking for the station. Note that each parking alternative site will be accommodated within the current zoning height of 100 ft.

A new parking garage would be constructed, as part of the project, to accommodate the parking needs of the station.

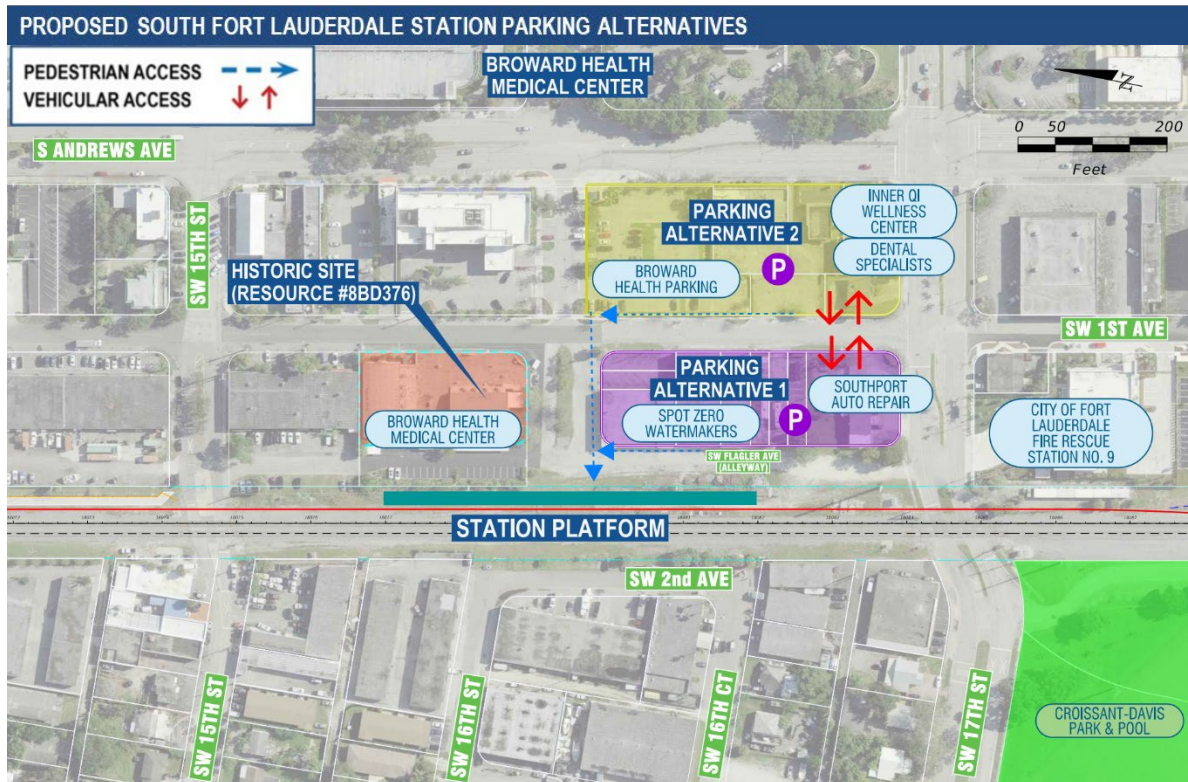


Figure 2-9: SFTL Station Location & Parking Alternatives

Parking Alternative 1: Parking Alternative 1 is located between SW 1st Avenue and Flager Ave alley close to the station platform in the block south of SW 16th Street (shown in purple). This potential parking site has no historic resources, has one property owner, and would require the relocation of two separate business tenants. There is an existing historic resource, the (former) Fort Lauderdale Antique Car Museum/1527 SW 1st Avenue (shown in orange), across the street from Alternative 1. The proposed parking garage Alternative 1 would have no adverse effects on the historic resource. Additional details on historic resources can be found in **Section 3.1.9** and the Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) in **Appendix B**.

Parking Alternative 2: Parking Alternative 2 is located between Andrews Avenue and SW 1st Avenue and is further away from the station platform in the block south of SW 16th Street (shown in yellow). This potential parking site is accessible from SW 17th Street via SW 1st Avenue entrance. This potential parking site has no historic resources, has three property owners, and may require two business relocations. The proposed parking garage Alternative 2 would also have no adverse effects on the existing historic resource, the (former) Fort Lauderdale Antique Car Museum/1527 SW 1st Avenue (shown in

orange).

The BCR South proposes to build a new parking garage for the commuter station on one of these sites. A Preferred Parking Alternative will be selected during final design.

2.4.3 Bus Stops/Vehicle Drop-offs

Any new or relocated bus stop for BCR South will meet the same style as the recently constructed Andrews Avenue bus stop project, if practicable. The following is a summary of the bus stops and new vehicle drop-offs near the South Fort Lauderdale Station.

- New northbound and southbound bus stops may be added at SW 1st Avenue on the far side of SW 16th Street (BCT is developing a revised regional transit operation plan).
- New vehicle drop-offs will be accommodated along the reconstructed SW 16th Street as a horseshoe turn around with a pedestrian plaza in the median.
- The existing northbound and southbound bus stops along Andrews Avenue on the far side of SW 16th Street will remain. These sites have a covered waiting area for customers.

2.4.4 Traffic Signals/Crosswalks

The existing traffic signals will remain along Andrews Avenue and SW 17th Street in the project vicinity. The following crosswalks will be included in the project:

- Potential new mid-block pedestrian signal and crosswalk on Andrews Avenue to the north of SW 16th Street to provide pedestrian connectivity between the station and Broward Health complex.
- Potential new pedestrian signal and crosswalk on SW 17th Street at SW 1st Avenue to provide connectivity between the station and Poinciana Crossings affordable housing site.
- Potential modifications or new traffic signal interconnection with railroad active warning device systems, existing fire station emergency signal and new pedestrian signal.

2.4.5 Railroad Crossings

Upgraded highway-rail grade crossings at SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street, including:

- New railroad flashers / gates set outside the new siding track on the east side
- New or relocated advance warning devices (signs, detectable warning surface, etc.)
- New and reconstructed sidewalks for station access
- Additional railroad crossing panels for siding and on mainline FEC Railway tracks
- Other safety features to be determined from Safety Analysis Memorandum and coordination with FEC Railway, Brightline and FRA.

3.0 Environmental Analysis

The purpose of this section is to describe the potential social and economic, cultural, natural, physical, and indirect or cumulative effects of the BCR Commuter Rail South Project. Relevant resources related to the social, natural, and physical (man-made) environment are discussed within each subsection.

3.1 Social and Economic Environment

To assess the potential social impacts that could result from the project, potential impacts to community cohesion, safety, and community goals/quality of life were analyzed and documented in a Sociocultural Effects Evaluation (SCE) (**Appendix A**). Public input, further described in **Section 4.0** of this EA, contributed to determining the potential for community and business impacts.

The term “Project Area” represents a smaller area that encompasses the existing and proposed ROW for each of three new passenger stations and parking at the South Fort Lauderdale Station. The term “SCE Study Area” represents a broader area that encompasses everything within one-quarter mile of the Project Area.

3.1.1 Land Use and Zoning Impacts

The project is consistent with the City of Hollywood 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Fort Lauderdale 2024 Comprehensive Plan, and the Broward County 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan. The limits of construction from the proposed project were superimposed onto land use mapping from the South Florida Water Management District to evaluate potential impacts.

Minimal changes to land use are anticipated as a result of the project because the proposed stations and track work fall predominantly within the existing FEC Corridor ROW. Maps show the existing land use in the SCE (**Appendix A**). The only proposed land use change that would result from the project involves parking at the South Fort Lauderdale Station. Parking Alternative 1 and Parking Alternative 2 at the South Fort Lauderdale Station are both mapped by the South Florida Water Management District as Commercial and Services land use (FLUCCS 1400) and would potentially be converted to transportation related use under the Build Alternative. The Build Alternative minimized relocations as much as possible while still providing parking to meet the purpose and need of the project. For the above reasons, no significant impacts to land use are anticipated. The City of Hollywood will have surplus public parking that they have agreed to dedicate to the commuter station’s parking needs.

The area encompassing the proposed Hollywood Station is currently part of the Downtown Regional Activity Center and is zoned as DH3 (Dixie Highway High Intensity Mixed Use District) to the

immediate west of the proposed station and GU (Government Use) to the immediate east of the proposed station. The FEC rail corridor at the proposed Hollywood Station is zoned as “Other.” No zoning changes in the City of Hollywood are required as result of the proposed project. The FLL Airport Station project area partially overlaps the limits of the City of Fort Lauderdale as well. No zoning changes are anticipated under the BCR South project at either the Hollywood or FLL Airport Stations.

The implementation of Parking Alternative 1 or Parking Alternative 2 at the SFTL Station may necessitate zoning changes. According to the City of Fort Lauderdale 3d Interactive Zoning map and Code Information (available at: <https://www.fortlauderdale.gov/government/departments-a-h/development-services/urban-design-and-planning/property-zoning-and-land-use-information>), the proposed SFTL Station and the area of Parking Alternatives 1 and 2 is zoned as part of the South Regional Activity Center-South Andrews west (SRAC-SAw). The SRAC-SAw zoning district is intended to meet the shopping and service needs of the community as well as limited wholesale uses. Residential uses are permitted and encouraged to promote a diverse character. The SRAC-SAw zoning district is generally located within the same zoning boundaries of the previous Community Business District zoning district of the area. Parking for the SFTL Station will be compatible with the SRAC-SAw zoning district. No specific zoning changes were discussed with City of Fort Lauderdale or Broward County. Any zoning changes and proposed parking will be compatible with the South Regional Activity Center. Any necessary zoning changes will be identified and carried out in coordination with Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale.

3.1.2 Relocation Potential

The Build Alternative would not result in any residential relocations. Business displacements and relocations are anticipated at the South Fort Lauderdale Station as a result of constructing a new commuter parking garage. The Build Alternative includes two parking location alternatives. Under Parking Alternative 1, one property owner would be impacted and this displacement would require the relocation of two separate business tenants. One of those businesses is Southport Auto Repair, the other business is Spot Zero Watermakers, a maker of water purification systems. Additional similar sites are available for rent and purchase for the businesses to be able to relocate in the general area, if desired.

Under Parking Alternative 2, three property owners would be impacted and the displacement would require two business relocations. Those business relocations would be to Dental Specialists of Broward Group and Inner QI Wellness Center, an acupuncture and eastern medicine supplier. The community does not rely on either of these businesses and additional similar sites are available for rent and purchase for the businesses to be able to relocate in the general area, if desired. The Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act) will be carried out in accordance with CFR Title 49, Subtitle A, Part 24. (Public Law 91-646 as amended by Public Law 100-17) to ensure that all displaced owners and tenants will be compensated fairly. No significant

impacts from relocations are anticipated.

3.1.3 Community Impacts Surrounding Population

The proposed project would use the existing FEC Corridor from the existing Aventura Station in Miami-Dade County to the proposed new passenger stations in south Broward. The FEC Railway line passes through the cities of Aventura, Hallandale Beach, Hollywood, Dania Beach, and Fort Lauderdale (see **Figure 1-1**). **Table 3.1** reports population and ethnicity data from the 2020 US Census. Under the Build Alternative, construction activities would only occur in three distinct areas with proposed new passenger stations (Hollywood, FLL Airport, Fort Lauderdale), all of which are urbanized and within Broward County. The proposed Hollywood Station SCE Study Area is entirely within the limits of the City of Hollywood. The proposed FLL Airport Station SCE Study Area overlaps parts of Dania Beach and Fort Lauderdale. Additional population information is available in the SCE report (**Appendix A**) and additional information on minority and low-income populations is provided in the Environmental Justice Impacts section of this document.

The City of Hollywood is located immediately north of the City of Hallandale Beach, which extends from the southern edge of Broward County north to Pembroke Road. The City of Hollywood extends north to City of Dania Beach and covers the area from the Atlantic Ocean to as far west as SR 817. The SCE Study Area in the City of Hollywood includes the Parkside, Highland Gardens, Royal Poinciana, and North Central neighborhoods. According to the 2020 Census, the City of Hollywood had a population of 153,067.

Table 3.1: Median Income and Race/Ethnicity for County and Municipalities

	Broward County	Hallandale Beach	Hollywood	Dania Beach	Fort Lauderdale
Median Household Income	\$64,522	\$41,905	\$56,912	\$44,477	\$66,994
Race/Ethnicity	Population (Percentage)				
White	763,913 (39.56%)	20,073 (48.70%)	71,051 (46.42%)	15,568 (49.07%)	94,692 (51.82%)
Black or African American	548,131 (28.39%)	6,774 (16.43%)	26,523 (17.33%)	6,661 (21.00%)	50,509 (27.64%)
American Indian and Alaska Native	4,092 (0.21%)	159 (0.39%)	1,109 (0.72%)	175 (0.55%)	595 (0.33%)
Asian	69,798 (3.61%)	763 (1.85%)	4,109 (2.68%)	708 (2.23%)	3,640 (1.99%)
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1,121 (0.06%)	21 (0.05%)	72 (0.05%)	31 (0.10%)	88 (0.05%)
Some Other Race	106,585 (5.52%)	4,527 (10.98%)	16,305 (10.65%)	3,071 (9.68%)	10,739 (5.88%)
Two or More Races	437,343 (22.65%)	8,900 (21.59%)	33,898 (22.15%)	5,509 (17.37%)	22,497 (12.31%)
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	618,443 (32.03%)	15,661 (38.00%)	67,442 (44.06%)	10,978 (34.61%)	42,688 (23.36%)
TOTAL	1,930,983	41,217	153,067	31,723	182,760

Community Facilities

Community facilities or focal points are any public or private places where members of a community gather or are relied upon for goods or services. Parks, churches, emergency services, and community organizations are such facilities that may be important to the residents of a community. Those community focal points are shown on **Figure 3-1** through **Figure 3-3**.

The SCE Study Area around Hollywood Station includes four social service organizations, one education and entertainment center, four parks, five religious centers, and two schools. The Hollywood Station SCE Study Area also includes the Hollywood Fire Department and Rescue Station 5 (1819 N 21st Ave., Hollywood) (**Figure 3-1**).

The SCE Study Area around the proposed FLL Airport Station overlaps the limits of the City of Dania Beach and includes the neighborhood of Melaleuca Gardens, just south of the FLL Airport and north

of the Dania Cutoff Canal. The SCE Study Area around the proposed FLL Airport Station also overlaps the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Edgewood and Poinciana Park neighborhoods. Community facilities within the SCE Study Area around FLL Airport Station include one social service organization, one education center, one law enforcement facility, two religious centers, and one transportation hub. The FLL station SCE Study Area also includes the US Customs and Border Protection - Dania Beach Station (1800 NE 7th Ave., Dania Beach), the Broward County Fire Department and Rescue Station 1 (116 W. Dania Beach Blvd, Dania Beach), and the Broward County Sheriff's Office at the FLL Airport (100 Terminal Drive) (**Figure 3-2**).

The SCE Study Area around the proposed South Fort Lauderdale station includes the communities of Croissant Park and Poinciana Park in the City of Fort Lauderdale. According to the 2020 Census, the city had a population of 182,760. The proposed Fort Lauderdale passenger station is located just west of the Broward Health Medical Center complex. Community facilities within the SCE Study Area around South Fort Lauderdale Station includes three community/fraternal centers, one cultural center, one hospital, one recreational facility, two public schools, one veteran organization facility, and three group care facilities (**Figure 3-3**).

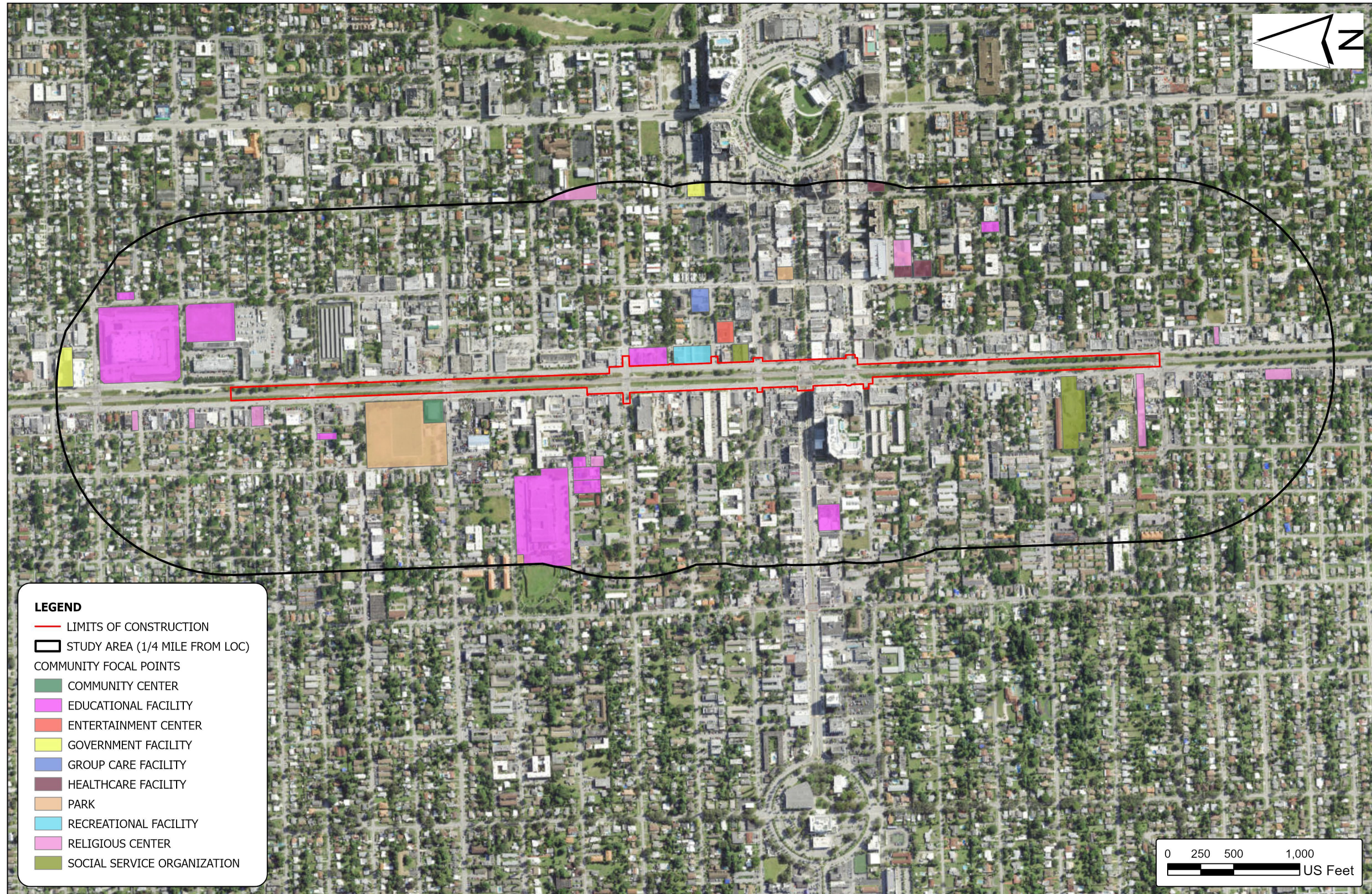


Figure 3-1: Hollywood Station SCE Study Area and Community Focal Points

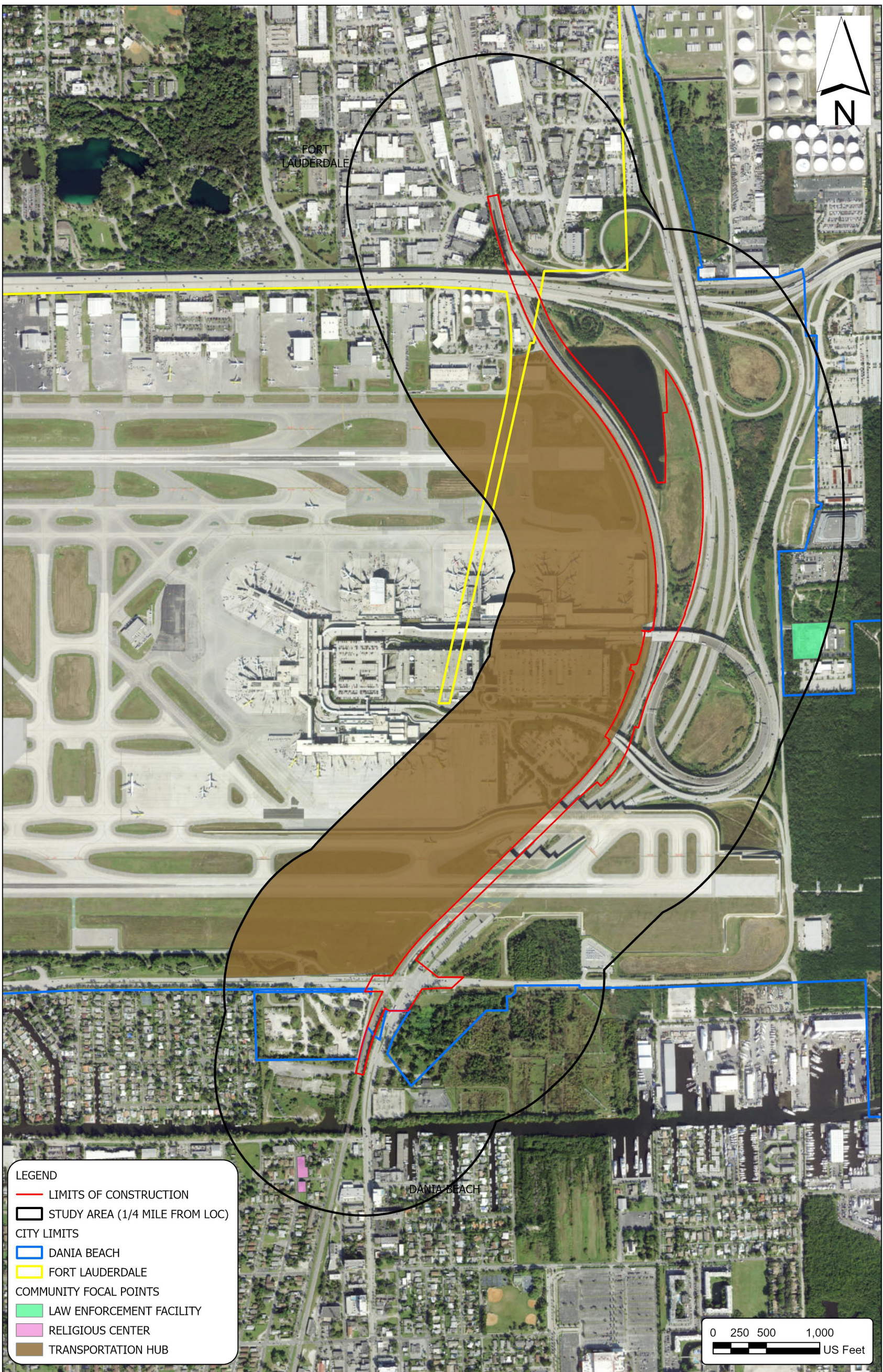


Figure 3-2: FLL Airport Station SCE Study Area and Community Focal Points



Figure 3-3: South Fort Lauderdale Station SCE Study Area and Community Focal Points

Community Cohesion

The Build Alternative would not impact any community facilities. The project would not result in any barriers dividing established neighborhoods and is not expected to change social relationships or patterns. The proposed project would enhance connectivity to communities by introducing commuter service and three new passenger stations. The FEC Corridor was one of the earliest developments in Broward County and preceded the establishment of many cities and some communities in Broward County. Although the FEC Corridor forms the border between several neighborhoods in the SCE Study Area, the proposed project will not separate residences from existing community facilities or divide any existing communities. For these reasons, the proposed project will not contribute to social isolation of any special populations (elderly, disabled, Limited English Proficiency, minority, or low-income) and no significant impacts to community cohesion are anticipated.

The project is compatible with the Broward County 2045 LRTP, the City of Hallandale Beach 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Hollywood 2024 Comprehensive Plan, the City of Dania Beach 2024 Comprehensive Plan, and the City of Fort Lauderdale 2024 Comprehensive Plan. The Build Alternative will enhance connectivity and access to many community facilities and points of interest with three new passenger stations on an existing rail line. No direct impacts to community service or religious facilities, schools, cemeteries, or historical sites are expected as a result of the proposed project. Community leaders and residents have had multiple opportunities to provide input throughout the NEPA project (additional detail is available in the public comments and Coordination Report) in order to ensure the proposed project is consistent with the community vision. Detailed demographics and other community data is available in the full SCE Evaluation Report (**Appendix A**). For these reasons, no significant community impacts are anticipated.

3.1.4 Economic Impacts

The Build Alternative proposes three new passenger stations and would enhance the economy by improving connectivity, mobility and access to residential, employment, business and travel centers. The general response from the business community during Public Involvement efforts has been supportive and in favor of the project. At the SFTL Station, Parking Alternative 1 and Parking Alternative 2 would each require two business relocations. The tax revenues from those businesses would no longer be available, representing a small reduction in the tax base. This reduction is not considered a significant change. The project is anticipated to enhance the economy because the proposed stations are located predominantly in urban centers and improve access to businesses and other places of employment.

The Build Alternative may result in minor direct impacts to businesses and commercial activities during construction due to noise or disruption, but these impacts will be limited in area and short-

term in duration. The Build Alternative will minimize impacts by maintaining access to businesses throughout construction. Business displacements from Parking Alternative 1 and Parking Alternative 2 would not cause substantial displacement of businesses or substantial disruption of business activities. No significant direct impacts on the economic environment are anticipated.

3.1.5 Visual/Aesthetic Impacts

The parking garages, bus stops, and passenger drop-offs that would be introduced by the project are similar to existing infrastructure in the SCE Study Area. Proposed station platforms will have Ticket Vending Machines, an information booth, a fixed canopy, benches, lighting, and restroom facilities. The architecture and final aesthetic design elements of each station have not been determined at this time and will be further developed during final design. The project is located along an existing rail line that already experiences regular passenger and freight rail traffic, with associated noise and vibration. No unique landscape or aesthetic resources that might be impacted by the proposed project were identified. The proposed project will introduce station platforms and canopies as well as a new parking garage at the South Ft. Lauderdale Station. These structures will be coordinated through final design to incorporate features that fit the local development standards, so no significant direct impacts to aesthetics are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

The project area is heavily urbanized and no vistas or viewsheds were identified that would be blocked by the proposed improvements. The existing FEC Corridor is surrounded by urbanization and the project is anticipated to blend visually with the area. The Hollywood and South Fort Lauderdale Station Platforms will be at ground-level and will include fixed canopies. The FLL Airport Station will include elevators and stairs/escalators to access a raised platform and pedestrian overpass. The area around the FLL Airport Station includes large highway interchanges with flyovers and large buildings at the airport, and the FLL Airport Station platform is anticipated to blend in visually with the existing urban surroundings. For the above reasons, no significant impacts to aesthetics are anticipated.

3.1.6 Public Parks and Recreational Facilities

Two parks, Dowdy Field and Croissant Park, are located in proximity to the project. Those parks are publicly owned and available to the public for recreation. Both are active-use parks, not passive recreational sites. Dowdy Field is located approximately 50 feet west of the limits of construction at the proposed Hollywood Station and Croissant Park borders the limits of construction at the proposed South Fort Lauderdale Station. Dowdy Field is owned and managed by the City of Hollywood as a public park. The park is approximately 4 acres and includes four separate sports fields. The primary function of Dowdy Sports Park is to provide active recreation including soccer and other sports, running, tournaments, youth organizations, and special events. The park includes an entrance building in the southeast corner of the park property, parking in the southwest corner

and along the northern edge of park property, with sports fields occupying the majority of the park property. The park is separated from the project by North Dixie Highway. Trees along the eastern edge of park property provide a visual screen of the FEC Corridor and the proposed project.

Impacts from construction, including noise/vibration and traffic disruptions, will be short-term and no permanent operations of the commuter service will impact the parks or the enjoyment of the parks, in addition access to Dowdy Field will be maintained. No long-term impacts from traffic are anticipated, and access will be enhanced by the proposed project through improved mobility and new passenger stations. The project area currently experiences noise from existing trains on the FEC Corridor and the project is not anticipated to result in any significant increases in noise levels. Dowdy Field and surrounding areas currently contain nighttime lighting, and any exterior lighting installed as part of the proposed project will be shielded to ensure that the light source is not directly visible from the park, so no lighting impacts from the project area anticipated. Neither traffic, noise, or lighting are anticipated to impact any of the features or attributes that qualify Dowdy Field as a Section 4(f) resource. There would be no temporary or permanent acquisition of land from Dowdy Field.

Croissant Park is owned and managed by the City of Fort Lauderdale as a public park. The park covers 16.3 acres and is located at 245 W Park Drive. The Park features lighted athletic fields, a pool, a recreation center, a water playground and is able to host special events. Croissant Park is located on a parcel immediately adjacent to the project. SW 2nd Avenue separates the park from the FEC Corridor ROW, but SW 2nd Avenue is mapped by the Broward County Property Appraiser as within the parcel that includes Croissant Park. Impacts from construction, including noise/vibration and traffic disruptions, will be short-term and access to Croissant Park will be maintained. There would be no temporary or permanent acquisition of land from Croissant Park. The project area currently experiences noise from existing trains on the FEC Corridor and the project is not anticipated to result in any significant increases in noise levels. Croissant Park and surrounding areas currently contain nighttime lighting, and any exterior lighting installed as part of the proposed project will be shielded to ensure that the light source is not directly visible from the park, so no lighting impacts from the project are anticipated. Neither traffic, noise, or lighting are anticipated to impact any of the features or attributes that qualify Croissant Park as a Section 4(f) resource. There would be no temporary or permanent acquisition of land from Dowdy Field.

Section 4(f) refers to the original section in the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, which provided protections to park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites from transportation projects. Section 4(f) applies only to the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT)-funded projects, now codified at 49 U.S.C. § 303 and 23 U.S.C. § 138.

Section 4(f) protects public parks and other resources from “use” as defined in 23 CFR 774.17.

There are no wildlife or waterfowl refuges within the project area. The project would not directly impact or occupy any parks or recreational resources. No ROW is anticipated from Dowdy Field or Croissant Park, no long-term impacts to park property or operations are anticipated, and there would be no impacts to the features and attributes that qualify these parks as Section 4(f) resources. For the above reasons, no Section 4(f) use is anticipated from the proposed project.

3.1.7 Protected Lands

There are no wildlife refuges, preserves, or protected lands in or adjacent to the project area of impacts. For these reasons, no significant impacts are anticipated to recreational Section 4(f) resources and there will be no involvement with other protected lands under the Build Alternative.

3.1.8 Environmental Justice Impacts

Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, national origin, or educational level with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, requires the U.S. Department of Transportation and the FTA to make environmental justice part of their missions by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority populations and/or low-income populations (collectively referred to “Environmental Justice populations”).

Environmental justice populations occur in the SCE Study Area at each of the three proposed passenger stations. Low-income populations are mapped by Census-block group in **Figure 3-4** and minority populations are mapped in **Figure 3-5**. Broward County had a minority population of approximately 60 percent. The largest minority percentages in Census block groups in the SCE Study Area are 76.56 percent at the Hollywood Station, 88.82 percent at the FLL Airport Station, and 46.37 percent at the SFTL Station.

In Broward County, the percentage of the population below the poverty line (12.49 percent) is slightly less than the Florida average (13.1 percent). The percent of low-income populations in Census block groups at the Hollywood Station ranges from as low as zero percent to as high as 31.50 percent. There are four Census block groups in the Hollywood Station SCE Study Area with a low-income population greater than 20 percent. Low-income populations at the FLL Airport Station range from 8.69 to 41.46 percent. The SCE Study Area at the FLL Airport Station contains fewer residential areas and most of the land is devoted to transportation uses for highways and the airport. Only one Census block group in the FLL Airport Station SCE Study Area has a low-income population exceeding 20 percent. Low-income populations in Census block groups in the SFTL Station SCE Study Area range from 1.84 percent to 19.9 percent. There are four Census block

groups in the SFTL SCE Study Area that have low-income populations exceeding 12 percent.

In accordance with Executive Order 12898 and its implementing regulations under FTA Circular 4703.1 and US DOT Order 5610.2(a), federal projects must consider the potential for impacts to Environmental Justice populations and whether the project has the potential to cause disproportionately high and adverse effects to Environmental Justice populations. An adverse effect is defined as one that:

- Is predominately borne by a minority or low-income population, or
- will be suffered by the minority or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than adverse effects suffered by non-Environmental Justice population.

Adverse effects from the proposed project are anticipated to be experienced equally by all populations in the SCE Study Area and will not be predominantly borne by minority or low-income populations. The impacts from noise and traffic disruption during construction will be short-term and localized around the sites of construction. A Noise Study Report was prepared and anticipates no significant permanent impacts from noise.

The project is anticipated to enhance community cohesion, safety, connectivity, and mobility. Those benefits will be available to minority and low-income populations, many of which may not own vehicles and may be more reliant on public transportation. Adverse effects will not be appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude where there are minority or low-income populations. For these reasons, disproportionately high or adverse effects to Environmental Justice populations will not occur.

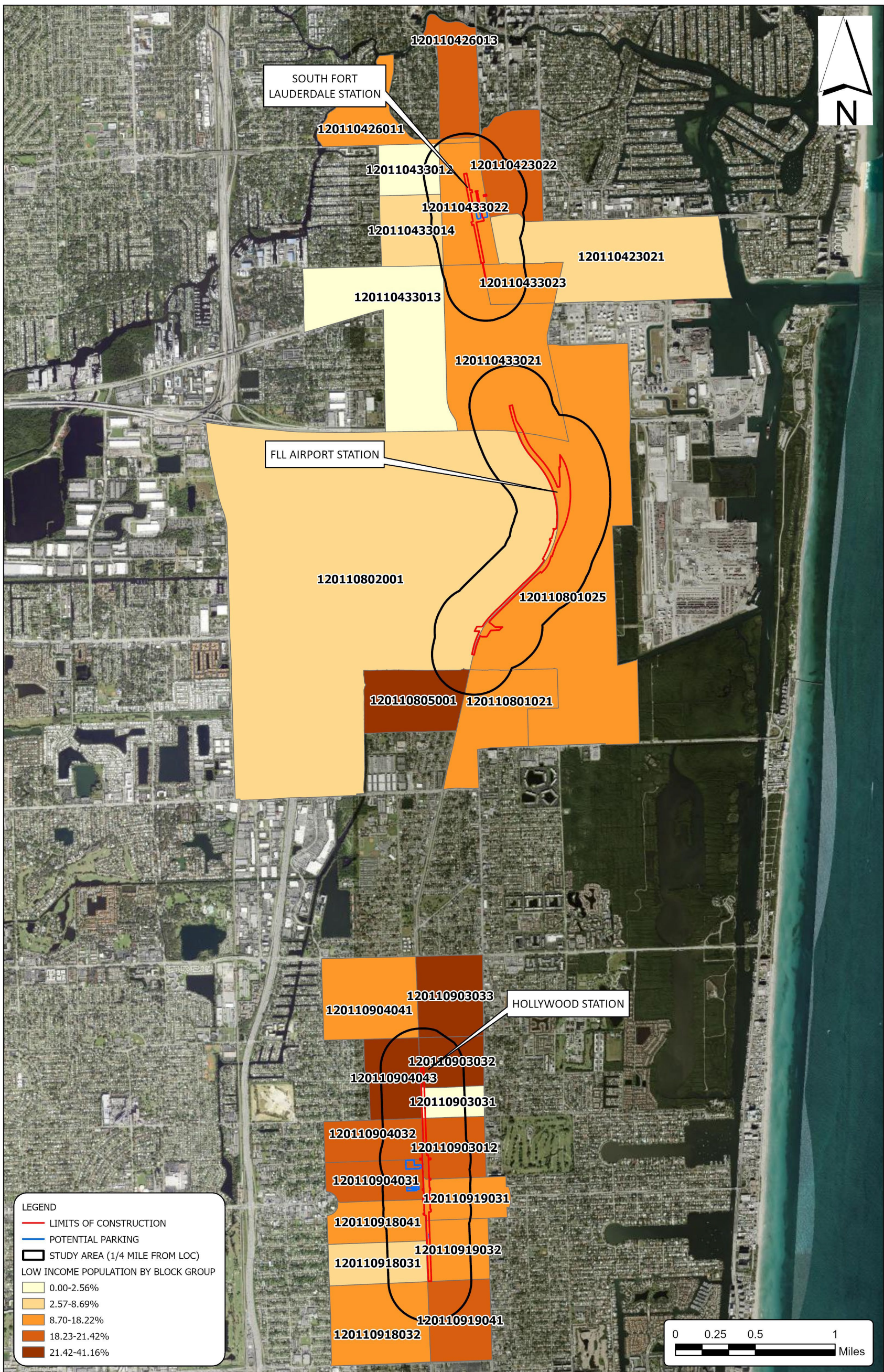


Figure 3-4: Low Income Population by Block Group

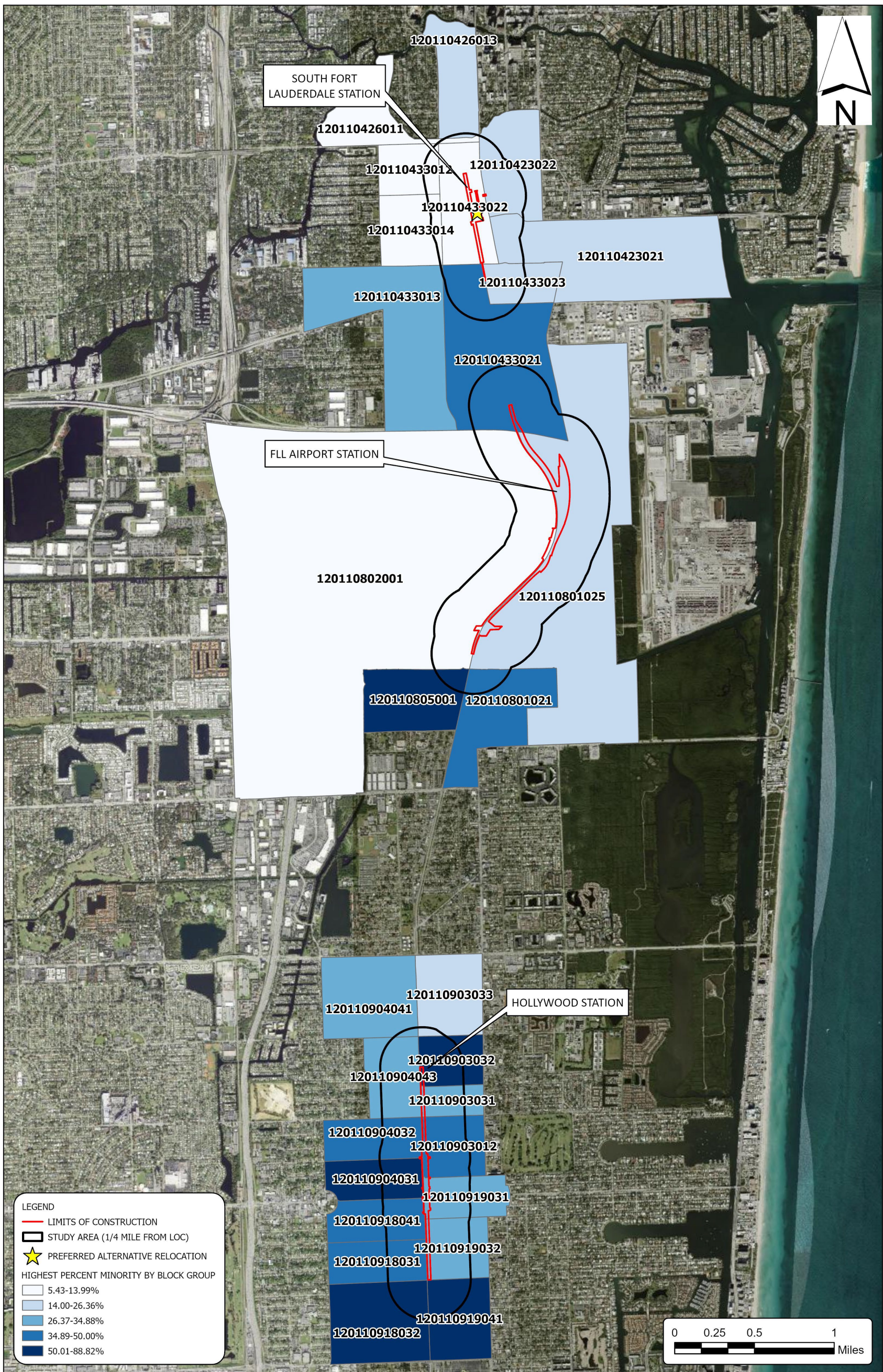


Figure 3-5: Minority Population

3.1.9 Cultural Resources Historic Sites/Districts

Through coordination with FTA and the State Historic Preservation Officer, a cultural resources Area of Potential Effect (APE) was established and is shown on maps in **Appendix K**. The APE is a geographic area within which the project may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties. Tribal entities and local governments were also notified of the project and provided an opportunity to comment or participate.

According to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800, and the Florida Historical Resources Act (FHRA), Chapter 267, Florida Statutes (F.S.), Federally-funded projects must consider their effects on historic resources. Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of all federal undertakings and programs on historic properties in the planning and delivery of the proposed action or program.

A Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS) (**Appendix B**) was conducted to identify National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) -eligible or potentially-eligible resources in the APE.

The CRAS concluded that no significant impacts to cultural resources are anticipated. The CRAS resulted in the identification of four resources that are NRHP-listed or determined NRHP-eligible. The Hollywood Boulevard Commercial Historic District (8BD3284) is listed on the NRHP under Criterion A in the areas of Commerce, and Community Planning and Development. Two contributing resources to the District, Broward Building/2032-2050 Hollywood Boulevard (8BD573) and Ingram Arcade/2033-2051 Hollywood Boulevard (8BD574), are located within the project APE. The two contributing resources to the District are not individually eligible for the NRHP. The fourth resource is the Florida East Coast Railway (8BD4087), which has been determined NRHP-eligible under Criteria A for its role in the development of Florida as the first railroad that connected the east side of the state. The FEC Railway (8BD4087) extends along the entire project corridor.

The proposed activities at the FEC Railway (8BD4087) will maintain the railway and return the railway to its original configuration and use. Similar activities on the railway in previous projects were determined to have no adverse effect to the FEC Railway (8BD4087). The resource is not sensitive to indirect effects such as noise and vibration, and the direct activities are restoring the resource to its original use (passenger rail). Therefore, the current proposed project will have no adverse effect on the FEC Railway (8BD4087). This effects evaluation is consistent with other similar projects that have been undertaken on the FEC Corridor.

The Hollywood Boulevard Commercial Historic District (8BD3284) and two contributing resources to the District that are within the current APE: Broward Building/2032-2050 Hollywood Boulevard (8BD573) and Ingram Arcade/2033-2051 Hollywood Boulevard (8BD574) are located over 40 feet from the existing railway ROW.

The proposed project activities, the construction of a new station, parking garage, and shifting of the tracks, will not have a direct impact on the resources. The location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, association, and access for the resources will not change as result of the proposed project. In relation to indirect effects, noise and vibration studies found that the District and the two contributing resources within the APE are not within the area for potential noise or vibration impacts. The Build Alternative is consistent with the aesthetics of the surrounding area and no visual impacts are anticipated. For the above reasons, the CRAS found that the Build Alternative is not anticipated to have any adverse effect on NRHP-eligible or potentially-eligible resources. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) reviewed and provided concurrence on the historic eligibility and effects findings of this project on June 7th, 2024 (**Appendix B**).

Section 4(f) applies to some historic resources and potential impacts to historic Section 4(f) resources were considered in the CRAS. No Section 4(f) use of any historic resources is anticipated. Tribal nations and local governments were notified of the project and no comments were received regarding cultural resources.

Archaeological Sites

In addition to historic resources, the CRAS identified and evaluated potential impacts to archaeological resources. Through coordination with FTA and the State Historic Preservation Officer, a cultural resources Area of Potential Effects (APE) was established and is shown on maps in **Appendix K**. . Background research identified no previously recorded archaeological sites within the archaeological APE. One approximately 620-foot-long segment at the northern end of the archaeological APE for the South Fort Lauderdale Station is within an area recently designated as part of the South Bank New River – Tarpon River Archaeological Zone. This part of the archaeological APE is entirely within the existing active railroad ROW, and subsurface utilities are also present. No subsurface archaeological testing could be conducted during this survey due to the presence of the existing railroad, roads, airport, buildings, stormwater facilities, berms, other hardscape, and buried utilities and drainage systems. The archaeological APE is considered to have low potential to contain intact archaeological resources based on the extent of previous disturbance and past environmental variables. However, archaeological monitoring of ground disturbing activities occurring within the locally designated South Bank New River – Tarpon River Archaeological Zone is recommended during construction. No adverse effects to archaeological

resources are anticipated. The State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed and provided concurrence on the effects findings of this project on June 7th, 2024 (**Appendix B**).

3.2 Natural Environment

3.2.1 Wetlands

No natural wetlands are located in or adjacent to the project limits of construction so there would be no involvement with wetlands. The proposed project does not impact any wetlands, and, therefore, Executive Order 11990 does not apply. Because of a lack of wetlands, no significant impacts are anticipated.

3.2.2 Aquatic Preserves and Outstanding Florida Waters

There are no Aquatic Preserves or Outstanding Florida Waters in the project area, so there would be no impacts. The nearest Outstanding Florida Waters to the project are located in conservation lands over 3,000 feet east of the project, along the south side of the Dania Cutoff Canal. The nearest Aquatic Preserve is over 2.5 miles south of the proposed Hollywood Station, in Highland Oaks Park. Due to these distances from the project, no impacts to Aquatic Preserves or Outstanding Florida Waters is anticipated.

3.2.3 Water Resources

Water resources were mapped and evaluated using South Florida Water Management District Land Use Mapping, Broward County environmental databases, the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory and field inspections. There are no natural water bodies in or adjacent to the project limits of construction. There are no Other Surface Waters mapped within 500 feet of limits of construction at the Hollywood or SFTL Stations.

Three Other Surface Waters are mapped within 500 feet of the limits of construction at the FLL Airport Station. Those include a wetland approximately 500 east of the limits of construction that would not be impacted because of distance and separation by a major highway. The second Other Surface Water is the Dania Cutoff Canal, which is located approximately 450 feet south of the limits of construction and would not be impacted because of the large distance to the project. The Dania Cutoff Canal is considered navigable and no work is planned in on or over the canal.

The third Other Surface Water is within the limits of construction at the FLL Airport Station. It is a manmade stormwater pond located east of the FEC Corridor. The Build Alternative would expand that stormwater pond as shown in **Figure 2-7**. This expansion is needed to accommodate additional ladder storage tracks to offset the impacts to the freight train storage tracks caused by the project. Because that pond is considered a manmade Other Surface Water, impacts would not require mitigation. Additional information is available in the Natural Resources Evaluation

(NRE) (**Appendix C**). A Water Quality Impact Evaluation and Sole Source Aquifer Checklist were developed as part of this project and documentation of coordination with the USEPA is provided in **Appendix D**. The EPA found that this Project would have no significant impact to the aquifer system.

The project occurs in the Broward County MS4 system. The Hollywood Station would discharge into North Lake approximately one mile east, the FLL Airport Station would discharge into the Dania Cutoff Canal 0.2 miles to the south, and the South Fort Lauderdale Station would ultimately discharge into the Tarpon River approximately 0.3 mile north. All three waterways are verified impaired for bacteria and copper. Impaired waters do not meet applicable water quality standards, including designated uses, water quality criteria, Florida’s antidegradation policy and moderating provisions. It is anticipated that a finding will be made of no significant impacts to impaired waters.

Pursuant to 40 CFR Part 149, the project area was assessed to identify any Sole Source Aquifers that may be impacted. The project is underlain by the Biscayne Sole Source Aquifer and a USEPA Sole Source Aquifer Checklist was completed to determine potential impacts. To reduce the risk of pollution to the aquifer, wellfield protection zones are designated in areas based on geological characteristics and water flow. According to Wellfield Protection Zone maps (updated 9-20-2023) provided by Broward County, the project does not overlap or intersect any wellfield protection areas as defined in Section 27-376 of the draft wellfield protection ordinance for Chapter 27, Article XIII of the Broward County Code. Because the project limits of construction do not reach any wellfield protection zones, no impacts to wellfield protection zones are anticipated. It is anticipated that a finding from the Sole Source Aquifer Checklist will be made of no significant impacts to the Biscayne Sole Source Aquifer.

Coordination regarding Coastal Zone Consistency was carried out through the Florida State Clearinghouse during the Advanced Notification and documentation is provided in **Appendix E**. The project will have no impacts to coastal resources, and it is anticipated that it will be consistent with the Coastal Zone Management Plan.

No natural surface waters or navigable waterways that are protected under the Clean Water Act or other Federal regulations occur within or adjacent to the limits of construction. The Biscayne Sole Source Aquifer underlies the project and a Water Quality Impact Evaluation and Sole Source Aquifer Checklist were completed (**Appendix D**). All stormwater discharges will be treated in compliance with all Federal, state, and local requirements and Standard Best Management Practices will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to downstream waters during construction. Direct impacts to surface waters under the Build Alternative would occur to an existing, manmade stormwater pond at the FLL Airport Station. That stormwater pond is considered an Other Surface Water. No impacts to navigable waterways are anticipated. An

Environmental Resource Permit from the South Florida Water Management District will be required. For the above reasons and because the project will comply with all applicable Federal, state, and local stormwater regulations and criteria, no significant impacts to water resources are anticipated.

3.2.4 Wild and Scenic Rivers

The closest Wild and/or Scenic River is the Loxahatchee River, located over 50 miles north of the project. Therefore, the proposed project will have no involvement with Wild and Scenic rivers.

3.2.5 Floodplains

According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (**Figures 3-6 through 3-8**), parts of the project fall within the 100-year floodplain. Flood insurance rate maps and additional details are included in the Drainage Report prepared as part of this project. At the Hollywood Station (FIRM #12011C0569H), the area of proposed construction is entirely outside any special flood hazard areas.

Part of the proposed improvements at the FLL Airport Station are within 100-Year Flood Zone AE (FIRM #12011C0559H). The flood elevation is 6-ft NAVD. Any infrastructure improvements on the mainline will occur within existing FEC Corridor ROW. Although the proposed improvements involve work within the horizontal limits of the 100-year floodplain in areas, no work will be performed below the 100-year flood elevation and, as a result, no floodplain impacts are anticipated.

Part of improvements at the South Fort Lauderdale Station are within Special Flood Hazard Area Zone AH (FIRM #12011C0557H). The flood elevation is 7-ft NAVD. The project improvements within the flood Zone AH are milling and resurfacing of existing roadways. Therefore, there is no floodplain impact due to proposed improvements at the station.

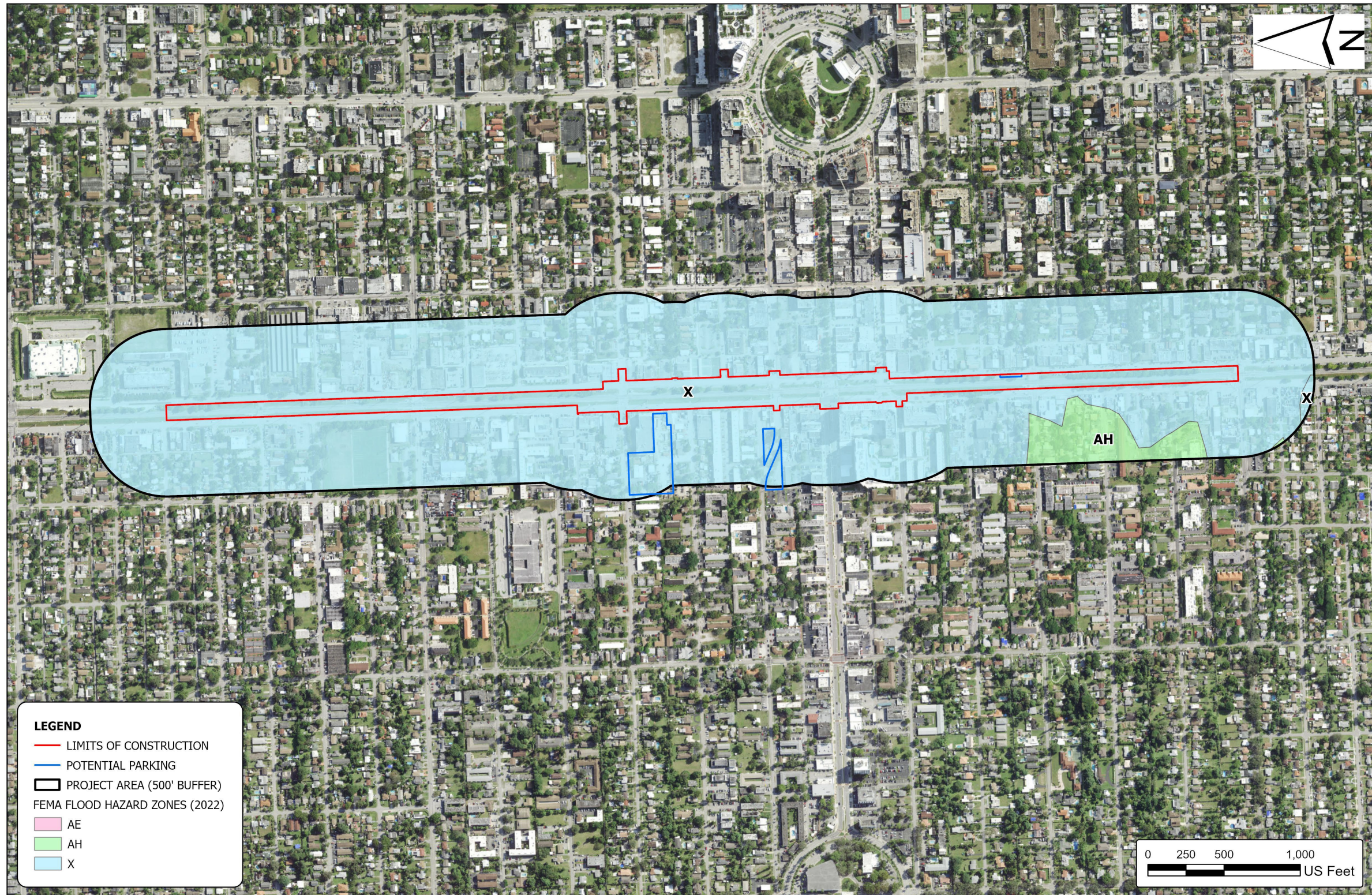


Figure 3-6: Flood Zone Mapping at Hollywood Station

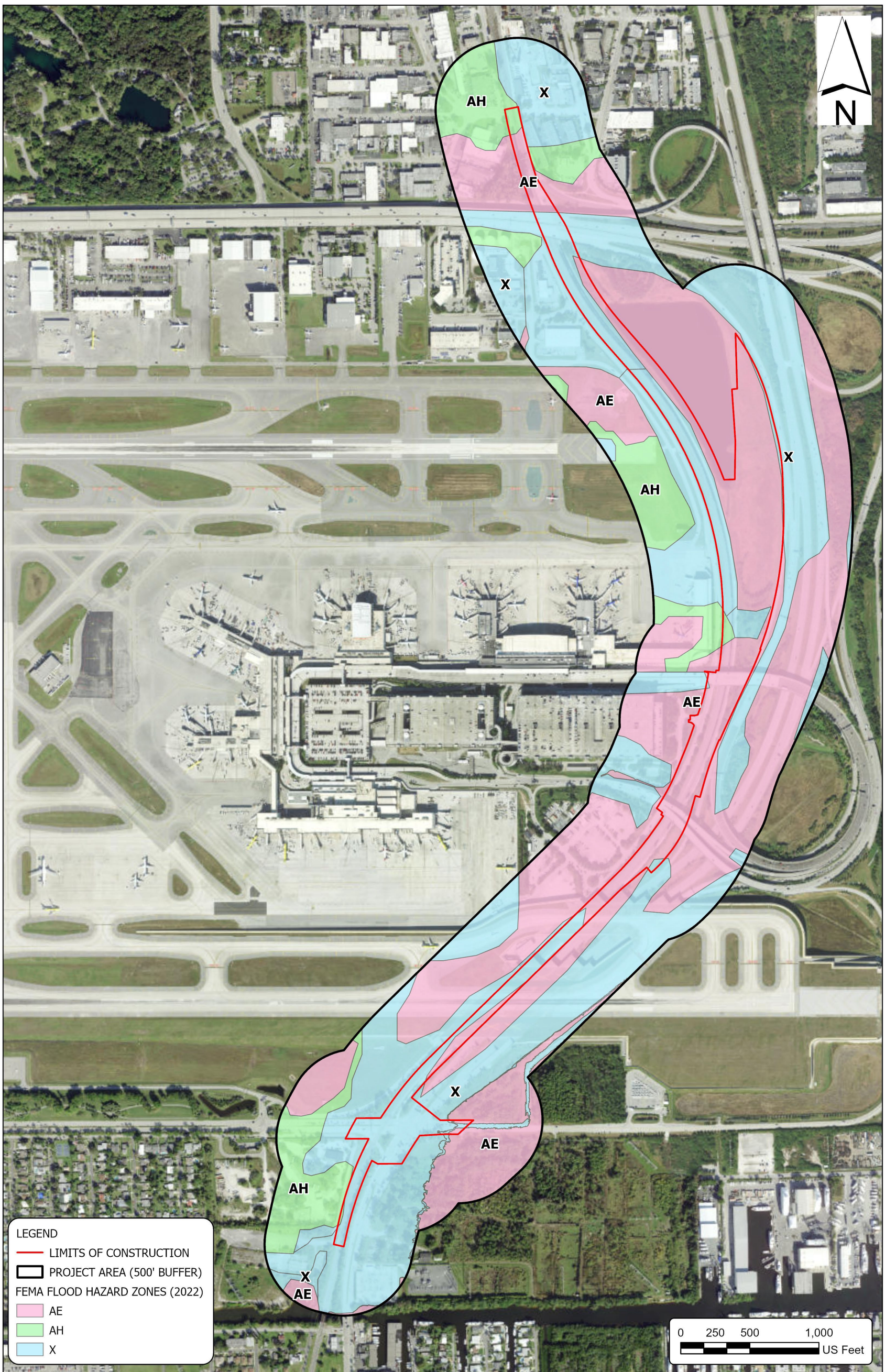


Figure 3-7: Flood Zone Mapping at FLL Airport Station

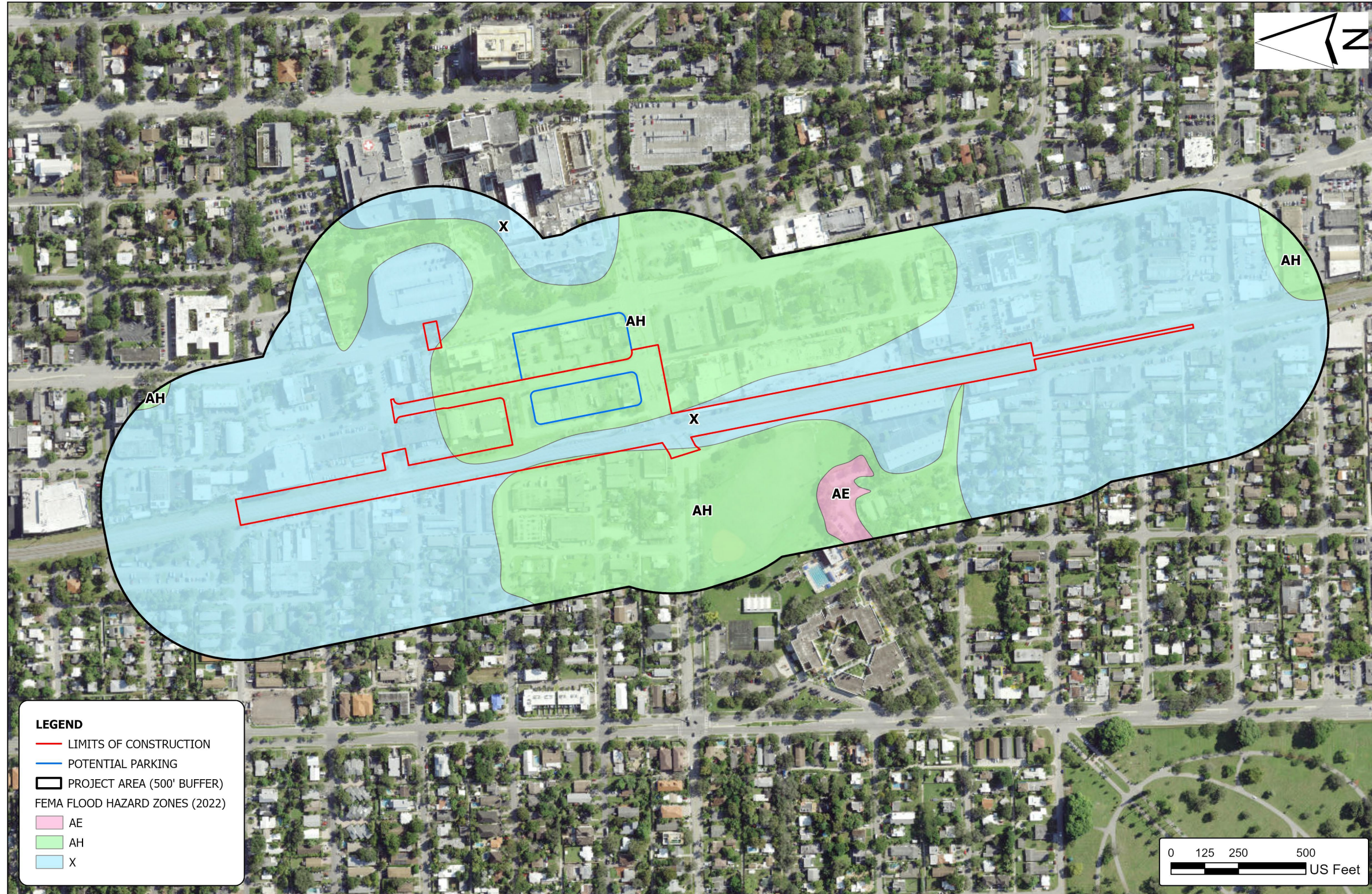


Figure 3-8: Flood Zone Mapping at South Fort Lauderdale Station

3.2.6 Protected Species and Habitat

A Natural Resources Evaluation Report was prepared for this project (**Appendix C**) and determined that no adverse effects are anticipated to any protected species from the Build Alternative. The project corridor is heavily urbanized and lacks natural habitats for wildlife. No designated Critical Habitat occurs in or adjacent to the project, so no destruction or adverse modification of Critical Habitat is anticipated. A determination of May Affect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect was made for the Eastern indigo snake using the US Fish and Wildlife Service Effect Determination Key. In accordance with that key, Broward County commits to implementing the US Fish and Wildlife Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake during construction (**Appendix C**). All other listed species with potential to occur in the project area were assigned a determination of No Effect due to a lack of suitable habitat. A Natural Resources Evaluation Report along with documentation of coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service is included in **Appendix C**. Because no adverse impacts are anticipated to any listed species or designated Critical Habitat, no significant impacts are anticipated.

3.2.7 Essential Fish Habitat

The limits of construction for the proposed project do not occur in or adjacent to any Essential Fish Habitat. This project was coordinated with NMFS and there is no involvement with, or adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat; therefore, Essential Fish Habitat consultation and preparation of an Essential Fish Habitat Assessment are not required.

3.3 Physical Environment

3.3.1 Noise and Vibration

A Noise and Vibration Report was developed as part of this NEPA Study (**Appendix F**) and followed the FTA Manual. Residences and businesses located within 500 feet of the proposed project may be susceptible to temporary noise or vibration impacts resulting from construction activities. General dialogue with the public during Public Involvement Efforts revealed concerns about noise level and what studies are being conducted, including concerns about horns and long-term effects of rail traffic on adjacent buildings.

The FEC Corridor has been an active rail line for over 100 years, and pre-dates the town of Hollywood. The increase in rail activity, due to BCR South, is not anticipated to introduce new or significant noise or vibrations. In addition, the associated commercial land uses do not represent noise or vibration sensitive resources as defined by FTA. The re-establishment of passenger service on the rail line returns the rail resource to its historic use. Refer to the Noise and Vibration Report (**Appendix F**), for more detailed analysis. Construction of the proposed stations, associated facilities, and track improvements are not expected to have any significant noise or vibration impact.

3.3.2 Air Quality

An Air Quality Technical Memorandum was prepared and is included in **Appendix G**. The USEPA EPA maintains a list of nonattainment areas for all six principal pollutants on their Green Book web site. Broward County is in attainment for all criteria pollutants. The project proposes to implement new commuter service and is anticipated to benefit air quality. For these reasons, no significant impacts to air quality are anticipated.

3.3.3 Hazardous Materials

Sources of potential contamination risk to the project were identified within a 150-foot buffer of the limits of construction at each of the three proposed passenger stations. A Contamination Screening Evaluation Report (**Appendix H**) was developed and identified a total of 36 sites of potential contamination risk to the project within that 150-foot buffer (**Figure 3-9 to 3-11**). Those sites include 11 Medium Risk and 25 Low Risk sites. Medium Risk sites are those for which a potential contamination impact to the project has been identified. Low Risk sites are those for which there is an indication of a potential contamination issue, but one that is not likely to result in contamination impacts to the project. There were no High Risk sites identified and there were no NPL or Superfund sites identified within 150 feet of the limits of construction. No substantial impacts from contamination are anticipated.

The most common types of sites identified within 150 feet of the limits of construction are those monitored through FDEP's Storage Tank and Petroleum Contamination/Cleanup Monitoring (STCM/PCTS) programs and are typical of urban areas. Risk ratings are the same for Parking Alternative 1 and Parking Alternative 2, which would each require ROW from a Low Risk site (Sites 33 and 34, respectively). Broward County has established procedures regarding Real Property acquisition and related contamination investigations that will be followed. No other ROW from contaminated sites identified in this document is required under the Build Alternative.

There are six Medium Risk sites within 150 feet of the limits of construction at the proposed Hollywood Station; however, none of those sites are immediately adjacent to the limits of construction. There is one Medium Risk site at the FLL Airport Station and it overlaps the project limits of construction. At the SFTL station there are four Medium Risk sites and each is adjacent to the limits of construction.

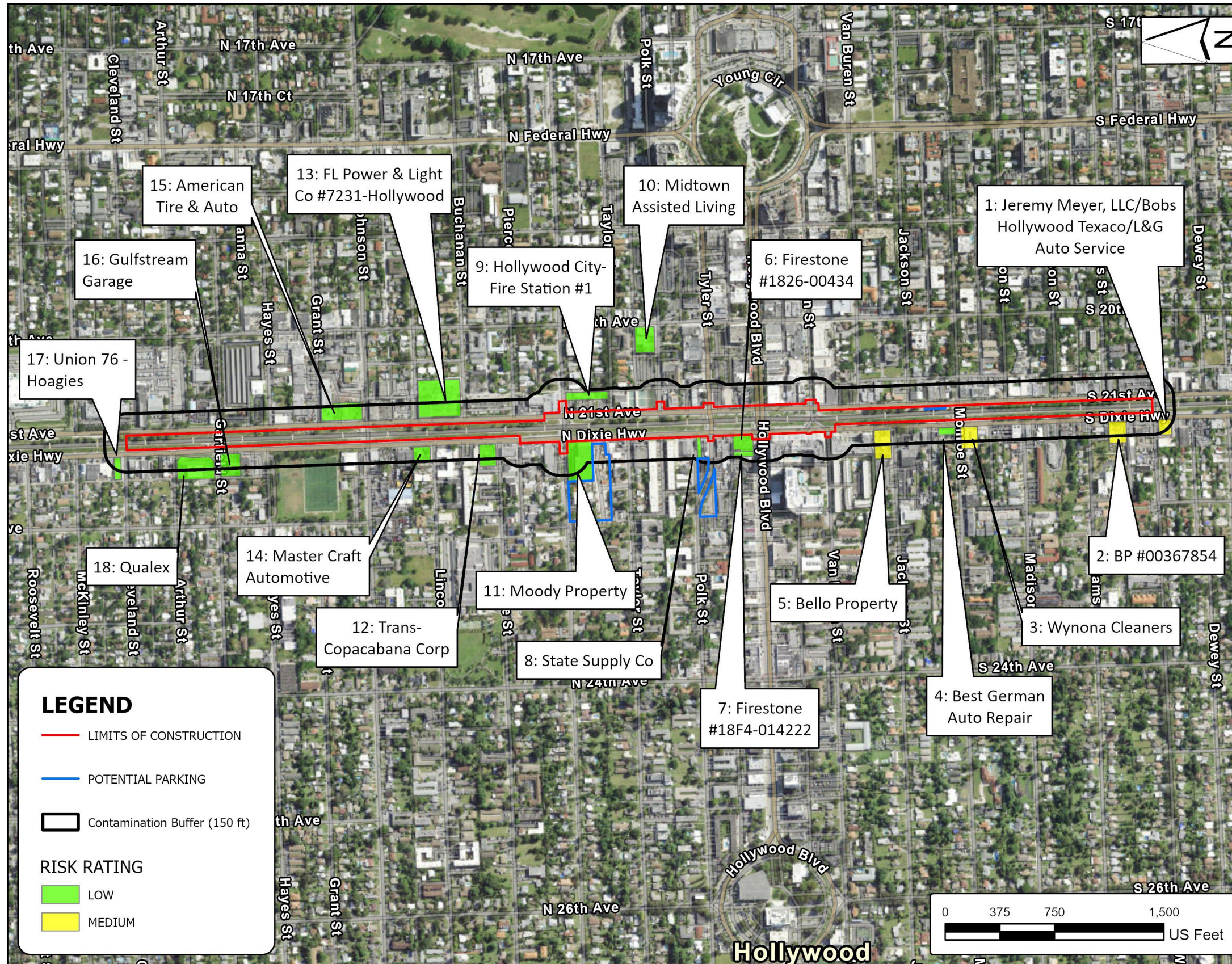


Figure 3-9: Potential Contamination Risk at Hollywood Station



Figure 3-10: Potential Contamination Risk at FLL Airport Station

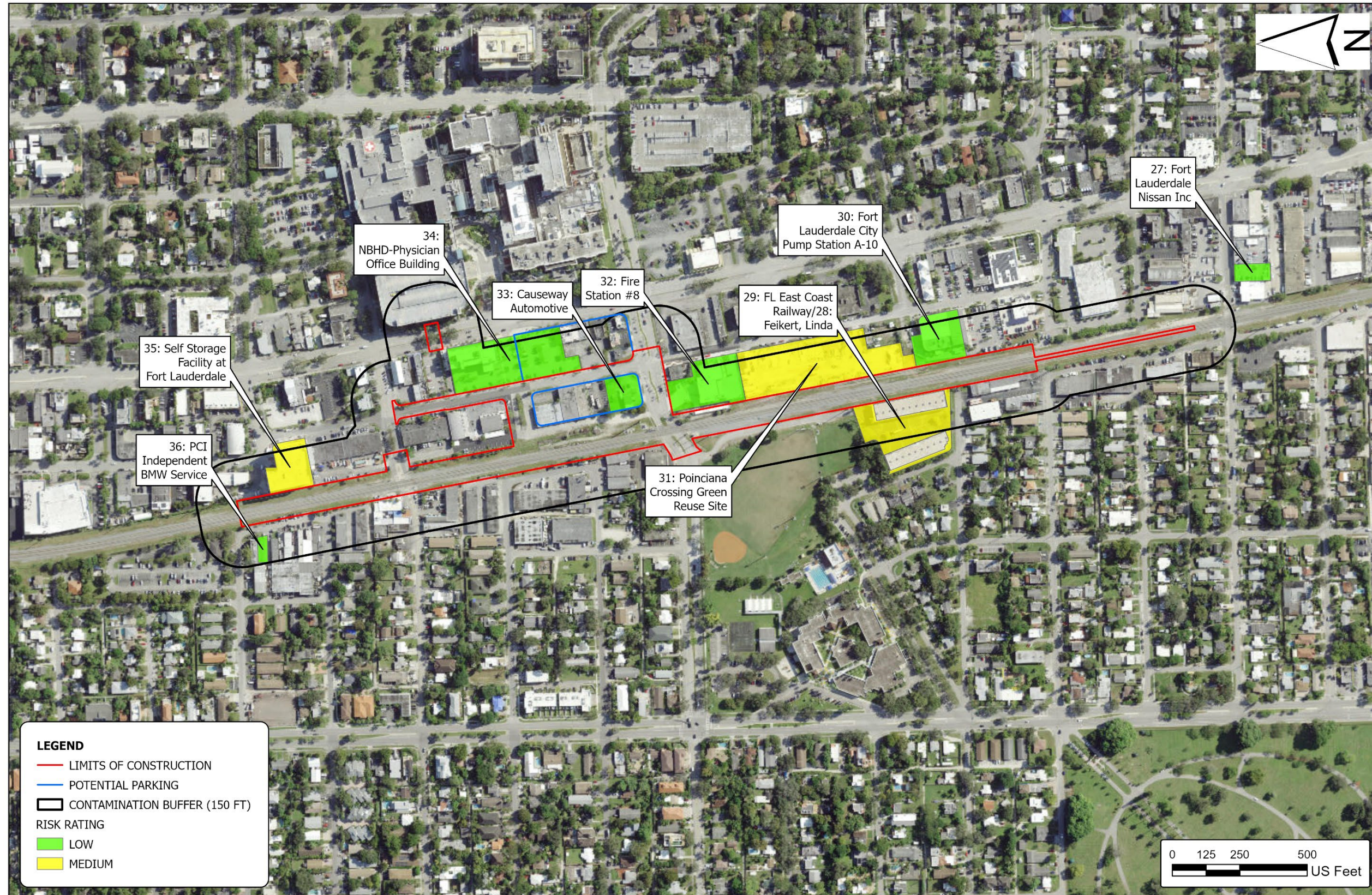


Figure 3-11: Potential Contamination Risk at South Fort Lauderdale Station

During design and prior to construction, and in support of any Real Property acquisitions, further investigations (e.g. Phase II Contamination Assessments, additional regulatory database document review) could further reduce risks to the project from contamination. These additional investigations are most warranted at sites rated Medium Risk in this document and would further characterize and evaluate the potential for encountering hazardous materials or contaminated soils. Any hazardous materials that are encountered will be handled and disposed of in accordance with all local, state, and Federal regulations.

If dewatering is necessary during construction, a South Florida Water Management District Water Use/Dewatering Permit will be required. Additionally, Chapter 27 of the Broward County Code requires that dewatering approval be obtained from Broward County for any dewatering within one-quarter mile of contamination. An FDEP National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit is anticipated and any discharge from a petroleum-contaminated site may also require a generic permit from FDEP. The contractor will be held responsible for ensuring compliance with any necessary dewatering permit(s). A dewatering plan will be necessary to avoid potential contamination plume exacerbation. Standard Best Management Practices will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts. All permits will be obtained in accordance with Federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Based upon the above considerations, it is determined that there is no practical alternative to the proposed action, and that all practical measures have been included to eliminate or minimize all possible impacts from contamination involvement. For the above reasons, no significant impacts from hazardous materials are anticipated.

3.3.4 Utilities and Railroads

Some minor adjustments or relocations of utilities will be required by the Build Alternative. However, due to the nature of the existing conditions throughout the project corridor and ongoing coordination, it is anticipated that the proposed BCR South improvements will not significantly impact existing utilities. Coordination with Utility Agency/Owners (UAOs) will continue and mitigation measures will be taken during the design phase of the project to minimize possible impacts to existing utilities. Broward County Transit has identified existing UAOs and will continue to coordinate with utility providers prior to and during construction to minimize impacts. If impacts are unavoidable, design alternatives will be reviewed to allow for the relocation of impacted facilities in a manner that minimizes cost to the UAO and disruption to their customers. No significant impact to utilities is anticipated.

The proposed project is within an existing railway corridor with freight and passenger services currently operating on it. FDOT and Broward County will continue to coordinate with FEC Railway as design plans are further developed. For the above reasons, no significant impact to railroads is anticipated.

3.3.5 Construction Impacts

Construction impacts can result from the operation of heavy machinery and other construction/demolition activities occurring within the ROW. Heavy machinery and construction/demolition can cause noise and vibration and can also contribute to erosion and sedimentation as well as air quality issues. A Noise and Vibration Study was conducted (**Appendix F**) and determined that there would be no significant impacts from noise and vibration. Noise and vibration during construction would be short in duration and highly localized around the site of construction. Downstream erosion and sedimentation will be minimized through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs); specifically, those found in the FDOT *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, which identifies devices such as silt fences and silt socks to reduce downstream impacts. Construction activities like the operation of heavy equipment can contribute to fugitive dust and may cause short-term air quality impacts. Those impacts will be minimized by adherence to applicable state regulations and to applicable Best Management Practices in the FDOT *Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*. The project is in attainment for all national air quality standards and no significant impacts to air quality are anticipated during construction. Access to businesses will be maintained throughout the construction of the project, minimizing impacts to existing businesses. Temporary impacts to traffic anticipated during construction may occur, but these impacts will be highly localized and short-term in duration. A Maintenance of Traffic Plan will be developed and implemented to minimize impacts.

Potential impacts to Eastern indigo snake during construction will be avoided and minimized through the implementation of the USFWS *Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake*. Potential impacts to downstream habitats, wetlands, and other surface waters will be avoided and minimized through the application of Best Management Practices from the FDOT *Standard Specification for Road and Bridge Construction*, which includes measures to address erosion and sedimentation. The project will also comply with all applicable Federal, state and local laws and regulations. For the above reasons, no significant impacts from construction area anticipated.

3.3.6 Safety Impacts

The assessment of safety impacts included review of potential impacts to emergency services as well as pedestrian safety. Safety is the highest priority for the BCR South Build Alternative. The increase in the number of incidents on or near the railroad in recent years has brought south Florida into a national spotlight. There are several active on-going safety initiatives in the BCR South study area by FDOT, Broward County, Broward MPO, Brightline and FEC Railway.

The following is a list of these initiatives:

- 2017 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Grant & Broward County Delineation Project (BCDP)
 - Added exit gates, edge line and median pavement markings with reflective pavement markings (RPM) and delineators.
- 2020 FDOT Railroad Dynamic Envelope (RDE) Pavement Marking Project
 - Added pavement marking hatching at railroad dynamic envelopes.
- 2022 FDOT / Brightline Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant
 - Adding crisis signs, No Trespassing signs, “Do Not Stop on Tracks” signs, ROW fence, railroad dynamic envelop and edge line and median pavement markings with delineators.
- 2022/2023 Brightline Safety Campaign (Phase II operations)
- 2022 Broward MPO Rail Crossing Elimination Program (RCEP) Grant
 - Adding exit gates, raised median, and evaluate highway-rail grade crossings for grade separation and closures.

These safety initiatives are anticipated to be implemented prior to the BCR South Project and were considered existing conditions for the purposes of this Environmental Assessment.

The assessment of safety impacts of the Build Alternative included review of potential impacts at modified highway-rail grade crossings, emergency services, as well as pedestrian safety. The safety analysis followed a 5-step process that consisted of identifying safety analysis locations, gathering vehicle crash data history in the vicinity of stations and establishing trends, gathering Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) train incident history and establishing trends, identifying ongoing safety improvements by others, and identifying Best Practices for Crossing Safety.

At the Hollywood Station, specific safety/security improvements under the Build Alternative include sidewalk connectivity between parking vehicle drop-offs and the proposed passenger stations, with ADA-compliant ramps at intersections. Eleven relocated or new traffic signals would be installed with new pedestrian mid-block signals across North 21st street and Dixie Highway. The Build Alternative includes highway-rail grade crossings modifications at Filmore Street, Tyler Street, Hollywood Boulevard and Van Buren/Harrison Streets, including new flashers and gates, new or relocated advance warning devices, and new or reconstructed sidewalks.

At the proposed FLL Airport Station the Build Alternative does not provide pedestrian access or private passenger drop-off since passengers would be dropped off by shuttle bus. The highway-rail crossing at Griffin Road would include new or relocated railroad flasher/gates and new or

relocated warning devices, a profile adjustment related to the shifted mainline tracks and adjusted sidewalks with pedestrian protection features.

At the proposed South Fort Lauderdale Station, the Build Alternative includes sidewalk connectivity between parking, drop-offs, and the proposed passenger stations, with ADA-compliant ramps at intersections. New bus and vehicle drop-offs are included, and a pedestrian plaza will be constructed at SW 16th Street. New pedestrian crosswalks and signals will be provided to link parking and station areas, and potentially to link to the Broward Health complex. Highway-rail crossings at SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street include new railroad flashers/gates, new or relocated advance warning devices, and new and reconstructed sidewalks with pedestrian protection features.

The Build Alternate is not anticipated to result in any long-term impacts to safety or emergency response times. No fire or law enforcement facilities will be directly impacted. Signalization at some highway-rail crossings will be modified. The project is consistent with the Comprehensive Plans from the City of Hollywood, City of Fort Lauderdale, and Broward County. For the above reasons, the Build Alternative and neither Parking Alternative 1 nor Parking Alternative 2 are not anticipated to result in any significant impacts to safety. A Safety Analysis Memo was developed and is included in **Appendix I**.

3.3.7 Transportation Impacts Pedestrian Movements

At the Hollywood Station, new pedestrian movements are anticipated between the parking area and the proposed passenger station. No pedestrian access or parking are planned at the FLL Airport Station, so pedestrians' movements are not expected to be impacted. New pedestrian movements are anticipated at the proposed SFTL station at crosswalks and between proposed parking areas and the proposed station. Parking Alternative 1 would not necessitate pedestrians cross street traffic as they move from the parking area to the SFTL passenger station because Flagler Avenue between the proposed station and parking is an alleyway. Parking Alternative 2 would require pedestrians cross SW 1st Avenue, which would have local impacts on traffic.

Bicycle and Mobility/Connectivity

The proposed project includes bicycle locking/storage facilities at the Hollywood and South Fort Lauderdale stations and BCR South trains would be able to transport bicycles, enhancing mobility and connectivity for bicyclists. At the Hollywood Station existing sidewalks would be repaired/reconstructed and ADA ramps would be provided at intersections. Pedestrian access to the station platform would be provided via Filmore Street and Tyler Street. There would be no bicycle or pedestrian access at the FLL Airport Station, but passengers who are dropped off at the station can take an elevated walkway to the station platform. At the South Fort Lauderdale Station, existing sidewalks would be repaired/reconstructed and ADA ramps would be provided at

intersections. Pedestrians would utilize the improved SW 15th Street and SW 17th Street highway-rail grade crossings and pedestrian access to the station platform would be in line with the SW 16th Street Plaza vehicle drop-off. For the above reasons, the project is anticipated to enhance bicycle and pedestrian use.

Traffic Patterns

The project is anticipated to help relieve traffic locally and enhance mobility and connectivity by providing transportation options that do not require roadways and automobiles. Local impacts to traffic are anticipated around the new passenger stations and proposed new parking at the SFTL station. The project team conducted a study of traffic volumes on east-west roadways in the vicinity of the project. Two types of traffic analyses were performed as part of the PD&E Study. Each traffic analysis followed a 4-step process that consisted of identifying traffic analysis locations, collecting data, estimating future traffic demand, and performing traffic operational analysis. Under the Build Alternative, the BCR South commuter trains will traverse through railroad grade crossings at similar speeds and durations to Brightline trains. The total roadway closure time at each railroad crossing will be less than 90 seconds per single BCR South train crossing (advanced warning time + crossing time + clearance time). The traffic analysis also indicates that the queues generated by a BCR South commuter train crossing will generally clear prior to the next train crossing.

A qualitative assessment of traffic impacts around proposed parking at the SFTL station is included below. Additional traffic analyses may be conducted to determine what, if any, traffic control strategies can be implemented to help minimize travel time delays caused by the trains.

Traffic patterns at the Hollywood Station could potentially be impacted by the introduction of a new destination in a passenger station. Traffic patterns may also be impacted by the introduction of a new southbound bus stop and ride share drop-off at Dixie Highway. The existing northbound bus stop will be moved to better accommodate traffic, and a new northbound vehicle drop-off will be installed at Polk Street that may affect traffic patterns. The additional trains would result in east-west traffic stopping at the downed gates more often, however, the traffic will clear prior to the next train event and thus be minimal time delays over the No-Build.

Under the Build Alternative, the FLL Airport Station would introduce new bus and passenger drop-off facilities to and from the FLL Airport and would improve conditions at the Griffin Road crossing. The Build Alternative would improve the highway-rail crossing at Griffin Road with new railroad flasher/gates on the east and west sides, new or relocated advanced warning devices, and additional railroad crossing panels.

Traffic patterns could potentially be impacted at the SFTL Station by the introduction of a new destination. These impacts to traffic patterns could result from trips to and from the proposed passenger station as well as the new parking garage. Traffic patterns may also be impacted by the bus stops at SW 1st Avenue and new passenger drop-offs along SW 16th Street. A new mid-block pedestrian crosswalk may be added on Andrews Avenue along with a potential new pedestrian signal and crosswalk on SW 17th Street at SW 1st Avenue that would affect local traffic. Because these impacts are anticipated to be localized and because the project would relieve traffic and mobility and connectivity, no significant traffic pattern impacts are anticipated.

The proposed project is anticipated to enhance mobility and connectivity by providing three new passenger stations along the existing FEC Corridor. Those passenger stations will help link residential and employment centers as well as the FLL airport and the Broward Health Medical Center. The proposed project would expand the modes of transportation available to the public and provide a means of transportation other than the use of roadways. The introduction of transit options may be particularly important for special populations that rely on public transportation, such as low-income populations or those that are over 65 or under 18. Providing additional modes of transportation would have a positive impact on these populations as it allows them to travel easier between areas. The FLL Airport Station would provide visitors with alternatives to transportation options like car rentals or ride share services. The Hollywood and South Fort Lauderdale Stations would provide additional means to move between residential and commercial areas as well as access the Broward Health Medical Center and FLL Airport.

Mobility, connectivity, and access to public transportation would be enhanced as a result of the Build Alternative because it would introduce three new ADA-compliant passenger stations on an existing rail line. Impacts to traffic patterns during construction are anticipated to be short term and access to businesses will be maintained. The potential presence of passenger stations along with parking, bus loading, and passenger drop-offs was evaluated and coordinated in conjunction with the City of Hollywood, Broward County, and the City of Fort Lauderdale. Impacts to traffic patterns are anticipated to be minor and localized and the project is anticipated to enhance mobility, so no significant impacts to traffic are anticipated.

3.3.8 Energy

The proposed project would increase the transit options available to the public and provide travel options besides private vehicles. This would result in a decreased demand on fossil fuels, manufacturing of vehicles, and need for expanded roadway infrastructure. The proposed project also supports the regional and local energy goals and strategies as outlined in the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact and the Broward County Climate Change Action Plan. No additional power generation infrastructure would be needed to accommodate the proposed

project. For the above reasons, no significant impacts on energy resources are anticipated.

3.4 Indirect and Cumulative Impacts

Federal agencies' responsibility to address and consider direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts in the NEPA process was established in the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500-1508). The CEQ regulations define the impacts that must be addressed and considered by federal agencies in satisfying the requirements of the NEPA process.

Indirect Impacts

Indirect impacts are defined by 40 CFR 1508.8 as impacts not caused by the proposed project but separated by time or distance. This may include impacts like induced growth and development from enhanced mobility and connectivity. These are consistent with regional and local Comprehensive and Land Use Plans and goals and there are no adverse impacts anticipated.

No changes in land use are anticipated under the Build Alternative at the Hollywood of FLL Airport Stations. At the South Fort Lauderdale Station, Parking Alternatives 1 and 2 would each require a change in land use to accommodate new parking, but those are considered direct impacts from the project. No indirect impacts from changes in land use area anticipated and the project is consistent with local and regional Land Use Plans. For these reasons and because the project is located in a highly urbanized area and would predominantly use the existing FEC Corridor ROW, no adverse indirect environmental impacts are anticipated.

Cumulative Impacts

Under CEQ regulations, cumulative impacts can be defined as the impact on the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the action regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1508.7). It should be noted that direct, indirect/secondary, and cumulative impact can result in beneficial outcomes such as improvements in mobility, expanded mode choice, improved regional air quality, and enhanced economics. The intent of the cumulative impacts analysis is to determine the magnitude and significance of cumulative impacts, both beneficial and adverse, and to determine the contribution of the proposed action to those aggregate impacts. The cumulative effects analysis considers the aggregate impacts of direct and indirect impacts (from federal, non-federal, public, or private actions) on the quality or quantity of a resource.

Past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects include the Northeast Corridor (NEC) passenger rail project being conducted by Miami-Dade County. That project will provide

commuter service in Miami-Dade County on the FEC Corridor.

Overall, the effects of the BCR South project is anticipated to enhance the social and economic environments through improved connectivity and mobility and the projects are consistent with local and regional transportation goals and development plans. No significant impacts are anticipated, and no other adjacent projects are programmed in the timeframe of the construction of this project or dependent upon this project for completion.

4.0 Public and Agency Coordination

A Public Information Plan was prepared for this project and opportunities to comment were provided to various stakeholders. Those activities are noted below and documented in a Public Involvement Comments and Coordination Report along with a log of meetings with the public, cities, and stakeholders (**Appendix J**).

4.1 Advance Notification

An Advance Notification package was distributed to applicable regulatory agencies and stakeholders on August 16, 2021 and is provided in **Appendix E**. That Advance Notification contains a copy of the transmittal list, which included local, state, and Federal agencies as well as tribal entities. The Florida State Clearinghouse was provided the Advance Notification for distribution to state agencies (**Appendix E**). Comments received from agencies were reviewed and incorporated into the evaluation of potential impacts section in this EA.

4.2 Public Engagement

The NEPA process has involved coordination and multiple opportunities for public participation. A project website was established and includes contact information, a project description with maps, details about public meetings and how to participate, and links to request project materials translated into Spanish and Creole. Project information and public notices were directly mailed to those whose property lies within 300 feet of the centerline of the FEC Corridor, as well as other local citizens who may be impacted by the proposed project. Briefings were provided to local officials in the fall of 2023. Invitational and informational letters and newsletters were distributed to elected and appointed officials, property owners/tenants, business owners/operators, and interested parties. A newsletter was distributed with the notifications for the Public Information Meetings.

Spanish and bilingual communication was provided during public involvement efforts as the population percentage for Limited English Proficiency persons in the study area is 44%. The BCR South PD&E project website provides links for Spanish translations of outreach materials. Native American Tribes were notified of the project and provided an opportunity to comment. No comments were received within 30 days of the notification. A Meeting Log is provided as **Appendix J**.

The first in-person Public Information Meeting was held on December 4, 2023 and a virtual Public Information Meeting was held on December 6, 2023. Both Public Information Meetings included a presentation with maps and a description of the project, and project staff were available to

answer questions from the public. At the first Public Information Meetings members of the public were afforded the opportunity to provide input verbally, via email, or on comment cards for the in-person meeting. At the first in-person Public Information Meeting there were 40 attendees from the general public plus 3 elected officials and 10 appointed officials. Two verbal and five written comments were submitted. The verbal comments involved the Mayor of Hollywood asking about ticket fares and if a pedestrian bridge will be built at the Hollywood Station. It was clarified that ticket fares have not been determined yet and that the Preferred Alternative does not include a Pedestrian Bridge at the Hollywood Station. At the first Virtual Public Information Meeting 37 comments were submitted. Comments and questions addressed multiple topics, including questions about traffic impacts and adjusting the timing of railroad crossing barrier arms to reduce wait times. Questions were also received about what payment systems would be available, the costs of tickets and parking, bathroom availability, and how security at the passenger stations would be provided. Other questions asked if shuttles will be provided from parking areas and if bikes will be allowed on the trains and how they will be stored at stations (racks or lockers). Questions were also received about the availability of Wi-Fi and power outlets on trains and what noise studies are being conducted (a concern was expressed about train horns). A comment was also received asking if any mixed use spaces like apartments, offices, or businesses are part of the project. It was clarified that those types of developments are not part of the Build Alternative. Public comments also noted the potential economic benefits and enhancements to mobility and connectivity.

A second in-person Public Information Meeting (In-Person PIM#2) was held on May 22nd, 2024 and the second virtual Public Information Meeting (Virtual PIM#2) was held on May 23rd, 2024. Both meetings included a presentation with maps and a description of the project with staff available to answer questions from the public. These two meetings presented the Build Alternative and results of the environmental and traffic analysis. At the in-person PIM#2, there were 35 attendees from the general public plus four elected officials and one appointed official. Twenty-three verbal and one written comment were submitted. At the virtual PIM#2, there were 70 attendees from the general public and no elected nor appointed officials. A total of forty-four public comments were submitted. Comments were reviewed, responded to, and included in the NEPA documentation. Comments were also incorporated into the analysis of impacts and final findings of this Environmental Assessment.

This Environmental Assessment was updated with the date and a summary of public participation and comments. A detailed and complete summary of all public meetings, including meeting notifications, presentations, display materials, comments, sign-in sheets, and media coverage can be found in the Public Involvement Comments and Coordination Report (**Appendix J**).