

Federal Transit Administration Region IV Broward County Commuter Rail South Project Finding of No Significant Impact

Introduction

This document provides the basis for a determination by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) South Project. This determination is made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and FTA's implementing procedures under 23 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 771.121.

Broward County, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) on behalf of the FTA for the BCR South Project. That EA was developed pursuant to 23 CFR Part 771.119 and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR 1500). The EA was also prepared in accordance with State of Florida laws and regulations. The EA describes the potential impacts on the human and natural environment that may result from the project and was made available for public comment from July 19, 2024, to August 18, 2024.

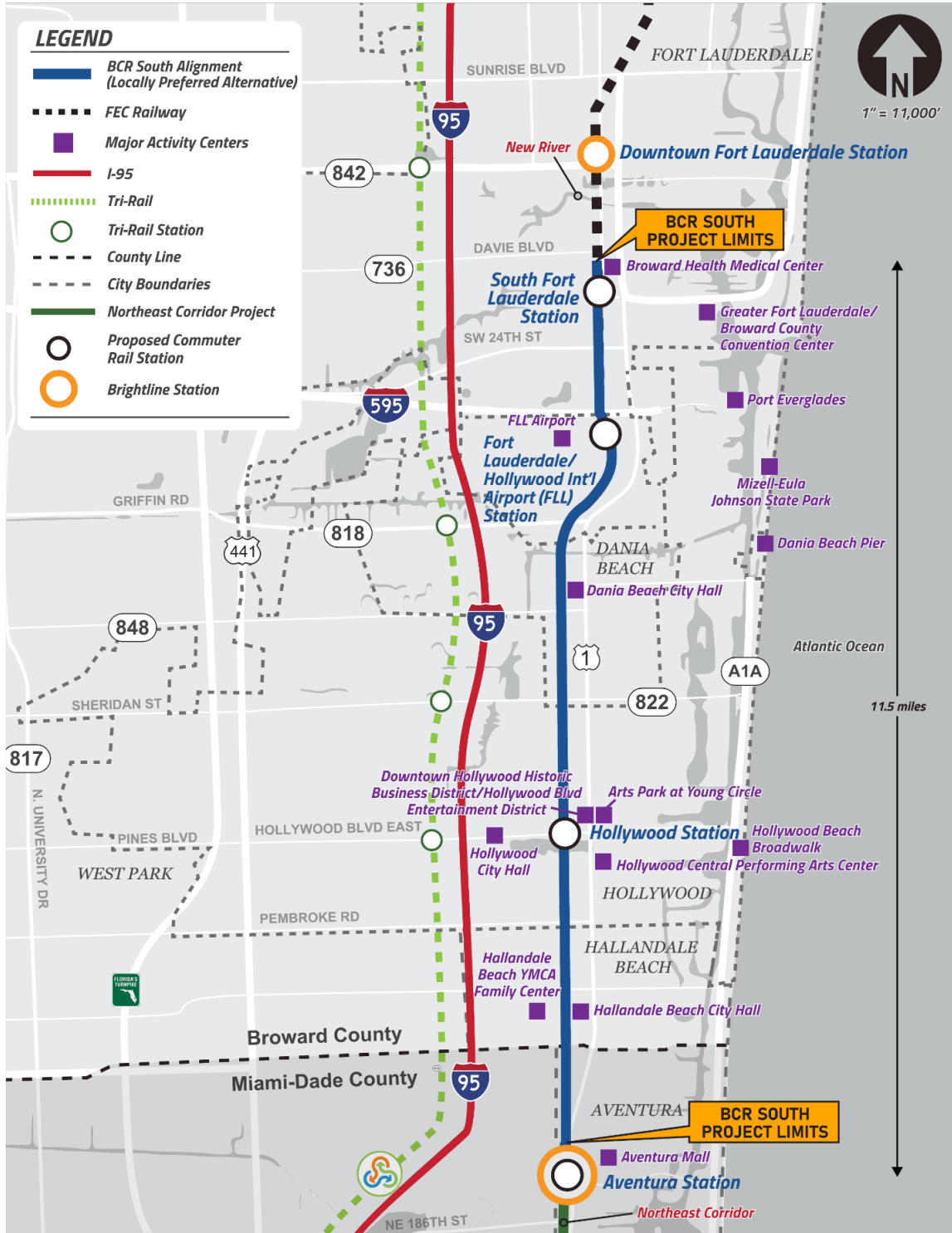
Description of Project

The BCR South Project will add commuter rail service to the existing freight rail and intercity passenger rail services that currently operate on the Florida East Coast Railway (FEC) Corridor between the City of Aventura, located in Miami-Dade County, and the City of Fort Lauderdale, located in Broward County. This is a total distance of approximately 11.5 miles. The project will include three new passenger stations at the following locations:

- 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

The project alignment and stations are depicted in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: BCR South Project Location and Alignment Map



CONCEPTUAL - SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The primary needs for this 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 project 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 safety and intermodal connectivity through the introduction of passenger rail service and three new passenger stations. 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.

The project includes track modifications at the approaches and three proposed commuter rail stations along with commuter parking improvements. All three station platforms will be located next to siding tracks and an additional dwell track is proposed north of the South Fort Lauderdale station.

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

SFTL Station Parking Alternatives

The project identified two candidate sites, Parking Alternative 1 and Parking Alternative 2, that could be developed as parking structures to accommodate the proposed station in South Fort Lauderdale (see **Figure 2**). The BCR South project 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.

Parking Alternative 1: Parking Alternative 1 is located between SW 1st Avenue and Flagler Avenue alley close to the station platform in the block south of SW 16th Street (shown in purple). This potential parking site has one property owner and will require the relocation of two separate business tenants.

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. This potential parking site is accessible from SW 17th Street via the SW 1st Avenue entrance. This potential parking site has three property owners and will require two business relocations.

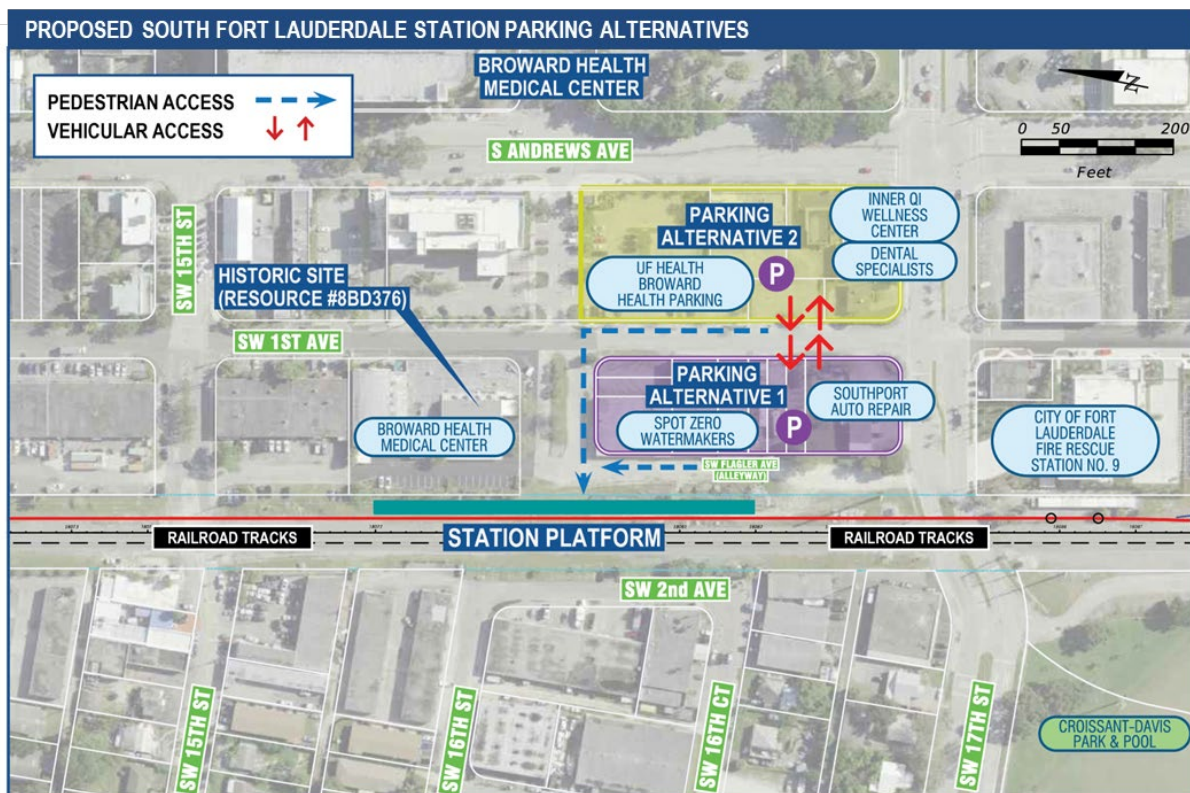


Figure 2: SFTL Station Location & Parking Alternatives

Summary of Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

The EA was made available for a public and agency comment period from July 19, 2024, to August 18, 2024. Copies of the EA were made available for review online and at Broward County Transit Headquarters (1 North University Drive, Suite 3100A, Plantation, Florida 33324), at FTA Region 4 Office (230 Peachtree Street, NW Suite 1400, Atlanta, GA 30303) and also at the following Broward County Public Library locations:

- 100 S Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
- 1 Park Avenue East, Dania Beach, FL 33004
- 2600 Hollywood Boulevard, Hollywood, FL 33020
- 300 S Federal Highway, Hallandale Beach, FL 33009

A series of notices of the availability of the EA were published in the local newspaper of general circulation in the project area in English, Spanish, and Creole. These were the Sun Sentinel (English), El Heraldo (Spanish), En USA (Spanish), and Haiti en Marche (Creole). A project website was also established and contained notices, maps, and project documentation. An in-person Public Meeting was also held on May 22, 2024, and a Virtual Public Meeting was held on May 23, 2024. A summary of the public and agency comments received during the public and agency comment period of the EA and responses to these comments are included in **Attachment A** along with a letter of support from the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization. Minor updates to the EA have been addressed as a result of the comments and an Errata Sheet that summarizes these updates is included as **Attachment B**.

Summary of Environmental Consequences

The potential for the BCR South Project to result in impacts to the human and natural environment is discussed in detail in the EA and summarized below. No significant impacts were identified.

Social

The project will enhance connectivity to communities by introducing commuter service and three new passenger stations. The project will also enhance the economy by improving connectivity, mobility, and access to residential, employment, business and travel centers. The project will not directly impact any community facilities and the project will not result in barriers dividing established neighborhoods. 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.

Visual/Aesthetics

The passenger stations, parking garages, bus stops, and passenger drop-offs that will be introduced by the project are similar to existing infrastructure in the vicinity of the project. 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. No unique landscape or aesthetic resources that might be impacted by the project were identified. Plans will be coordinated through final design to incorporate features that fit the local development standards, and no significant direct impacts to aesthetic or the visual environment are anticipated.

Transportation

The project will 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 populations that rely on public transportation. Providing additional modes of transportation will have a positive impact on these populations as it allows them to travel more affordably and conveniently between areas and reduces barriers to accessing important resources such as jobs, education opportunities and health care. The FLL Airport Station will provide visitors with alternatives to transportation options such as car rentals and ride share services. The Hollywood and South Fort Lauderdale Stations will provide additional means to move between residential and commercial areas as well as access the Broward Health Medical Center and FLL Airport. Impacts to traffic patterns are anticipated to be minor and localized, as discussed above. Traffic analysis indicated that the queues generated by a BCR South commuter train crossing a roadway will generally clear prior to the next train crossing. The project is anticipated to enhance mobility and connectivity with the introduction of passenger rail service and three new passenger stations linking communities and providing multiple transit options besides automobiles.

Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, requires that 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 project area at each of the three proposed passenger stations. Adverse effects from the project are anticipated to be experienced equally by all populations in the project area and will not be predominantly borne by minority or low-income populations. 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.

Acquisitions and Federal Uniform Relocation Act Compliance

The project will 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. Under Parking Alternative 1, one property owner will be impacted, and this displacement will require the relocation of two separate business tenants. Under Parking Alternative 2, three property owners will be impacted, and the displacement will require two business relocations.

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. For these reasons, no significant impacts from relocations are anticipated.

Section 4(f) of the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966

Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 is a national policy which states that the Secretary of Transportation may not approve transportation projects that use publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or any significant historic site unless a determination is made that there is no prudent or feasible alternative to using that land, and that all possible planning has been done to minimize harm. There are no wildlife refuges, preserves, or protected lands in or adjacent to the project area. Furthermore, no Section 4(f) use of any historic resources is anticipated. Croissant Park and Dowdy Field are publicly owned parks available for recreation and are located near the proposed project. The project will not directly impact or occupy any parks or recreational resources. No right-of-way is anticipated from Dowdy Field or Croissant Park, no long-term impacts to park property or operations are anticipated, and there will 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 of protected resources is anticipated.

Cultural Environment and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

A Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS) was conducted to identify National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) -eligible or potentially-eligible resources as well as any archaeological resources in the project's Area of Potential Effect (APE). The CRAS resulted in the identification of four historic resources that are NRHP-listed or determined NRHP-eligible. 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. Archaeological monitoring of ground disturbing activities occurring within the locally designated South Bank New River – Tarpon River Archaeological Zone is recommended during construction. The CRAS concluded that no adverse direct or indirect

effects to cultural resources are anticipated. The State Historic Preservation Officer reviewed and provided concurrence on June 7, 2024.

Endangered Species Act

A Natural Resources Evaluation Report was prepared for this project and determined that no adverse effects are anticipated to any Federal or state listed species from the project. 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. The Standard Protection Measures for the Eastern Indigo Snake will be implemented during construction, as described in the Mitigation Measures section of this document.

Floodplains

According to the Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, parts of the project fall within the 100-year floodplain at the FLL Airport Station and SFTL Station. Although the proposed improvements involve work within the horizontal limits of the 100-year floodplain in some areas, no work will be performed below the 100-year flood elevation and, as a result, no floodplain impacts are anticipated.

Water Resources and Water Quality

The Biscayne Sole Source Aquifer underlies the project, and a Water Quality Impact Evaluation and US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Sole Source Aquifer Checklist were completed. Coordination with the USEPA determined that no significant impacts are anticipated to any Sole Source Aquifer if certain conditions are adhered to and Best Management Practices (BMPs) are implemented. Those conditions and BMPs are described below in the Mitigation Measures section of this document.

All stormwater discharges will be treated in compliance with all Federal, state, and local requirements and Standard BMPs will be implemented to avoid and minimize impacts to downstream waters during construction. Direct impacts to surface waters under the project will occur to an existing, manmade stormwater pond at the FLL Airport Station. That stormwater pond is considered an Other Surface Water. 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.

Noise and Vibration Findings

The existing FEC Corridor currently experiences noise from freight rail and increase in rail activity due to the BCR South Project are not anticipated to introduce new or significant noise or

vibrations. Construction of the proposed stations, associated facilities, and track improvements are not expected to have any significant noise or vibration impact.

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 total of 36 sites of potential contamination risk to the project were identified and include 11 Medium Risk and 25 Low Risk sites. Risk ratings are the same for Parking Alternative 1 and Parking Alternative 2, which will each require ROW from a Low Risk site. No other ROW from contaminated sites is required. Broward County has established procedures regarding Real Property acquisition and related contamination investigations that will be followed, as described in the Mitigation Measures section of this document.

Utilities

The proposed BCR South improvements will not significantly impact existing utilities. Broward County Transit has identified existing Utility Agency/Owners (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.

Safety

The project 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. The project will provide safety improvements, including enhanced sidewalk connectivity between parking, vehicle drop-offs and the proposed passenger stations with ADA-compliant ramps at intersections as well as relocated or new traffic signals, highway-rail grade crossings modifications including new flashers and gates, new or relocated advance warning devices, and new or reconstructed sidewalks.

Construction Impacts

Noise and vibration during construction will be short in duration and highly localized around the site of construction. Downstream erosion and sedimentation as well as air pollutants and fugitive dust will be minimized through the implementation of BMPs, as described in the Mitigation Measures section of this document. Access to businesses will be maintained throughout the construction of the project, minimizing impacts to existing businesses. Temporary impacts to traffic anticipated during construction will occur, but these impacts will be highly localized and short-term in duration.

Other Resources and Federal Laws

No impacts will occur to wetlands, air quality, farmlands, navigable waterways, wild or scenic rivers, essential fish habitats, coastal resources, or energy.

Mitigation Measures

Sole Source Aquifer

To avoid and minimize impact to the Biscayne Sole Source Aquifer and consistent with coordination with the USEPA, Broward County will adhere to the following BMPs during road construction:

1. FDOT Design Manual Chapter 320 Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
2. FDOT Standard Specification for Road and Bridge Construction
 - a. Section 6 – Control of Materials
 - b. Section 104 – Prevention, Control, And Abatement of Erosion and Water Pollution
 - c. Section 455 – Structures Foundations
3. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Engineering Geology Field Manual – Chapter 20 Water Control.
(<https://www.usbr.gov/tsc/techreferences/mands/geologyfieldmanual-vol2/Chapter20.pdf>)

Furthermore, all debris from any demolition of the existing structures must be properly contained and removed from the site prior to construction of the new structure. If applicable, all county flood plain management plans and public notification processes must be followed. During construction, it is the EPA’s understanding and expectation that those responsible for the project will strictly adhere to all Federal, State, and local government permits, ordinances, planning designs, construction codes, operation, maintenance, and engineering requirements, and any contaminant mitigation recommendations outlined by federal and state agency reviews. All best management practices for erosion and sedimentation control must also be followed and State and local environmental offices must be contacted to address proper drainage and storm water designs. Additionally, the project manager will contact State and local environmental officials to obtain a copy of any local Wellhead Protection Plans.

Cultural Resources

Archaeological monitoring of ground disturbing activities occurring within the locally designated South Bank New River – Tarpon River Archaeological Zone is recommended during construction.

Endangered Species

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.

Contamination

During design and prior to construction, and in support of any Real Property acquisitions, further contamination 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 and will 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.

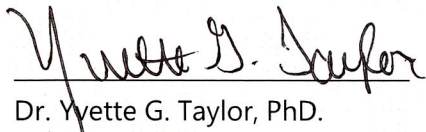
If dewatering is necessary during construction, a South Florida Water Management District Water Use/Dewatering Permit will be required. Additionally, Chapter 27 of the Broward County Code requires that dewatering approval be obtained from Broward County for any dewatering within one-quarter mile of contamination. 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 contamination impacts. All permits will be obtained in accordance with Federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Water and Air Quality

Potential impacts to air quality and downstream habitats, wetlands, and Other Surface Waters will be avoided and minimized through the application of BMPs from the *FDOT Standard Specification for Road and Bridge Construction*.

NEPA Finding

FTA has reviewed the EA and supporting documents, public and agency comments, and responses to comments. Based on the Environmental Assessment of the Project and its associated supporting documents, which are incorporated herein by reference, the Federal Transit Administration, pursuant to 23 CFR §771.121, finds that there are no significant impacts on the quality of the human environment associated with the construction and operation of the BCR South Project, and therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not necessary.


Dr. Yvette G. Taylor, PhD.
Regional Administrator

Date: 9-5-2024

Attachment A: Environmental Assessment Comments and Responses

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RECEIVED

No.	Question/Comment	Topic	Response
1a	<p>Can we receive a summary of information contained within the EA in a video or live presentation at our next meeting, August 7th at 6 pm?</p> <p>We are one of the few neighborhood associations within the city of Fort Lauderdale who have meetings during the summer months, most take a recess between June and late August.</p>	General	<p>Sorry for the delay. I am sending you a link to the video created from our virtual public information meeting in May that presents the analysis that had been done that is now summarized in the Environmental Assessment (EA) document. Please take a look and let if this is sufficient for your group at this time. Please note the limits for this study our south of your community and only covers the BCR South limits which start in Aventura and extends north to 15th Street by the hospital.</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pgl2Z_VPOWg (Link to virtual project meeting from May 23, 2024)</p> <p>https://www.fdot.gov/projects/broward-commuter-rail-south/documents-and-publications (Link to documents and publications where you can navigate to exhibits and the slides shown at the May meetings, this link also gets you to the EA document and appendices)</p> <p>Please let me know if you have any questions. I am copying Jie Bian, who is Broward County Transit's (BCT) Project Manager and Anna Bielawska BCT's Deputy Project Manager as well Jennifer Straw and Lauren Hatchell, who are both helping with our public involvement activities.</p> <p>If you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to call me at (954)593-0042.</p>
1b	<p>Does the new video cover the information contained within the Environmental Assessment document and attachments? I think these areas are where we had a number of questions which, at the time you presented, were yet to be addressed during this EA stage of the process.</p>		<p>Let me know if you would like to discuss. I want to make sure I understand the area you are concerned with. You can reach me at (954)593-0042. I could set up a teams meeting later today if you are available or if you would like me to call you, I would need your number</p>
1c	<p>I looked at the EA documents yesterday and now understand your initial response way better... and that this particular EA is just focused on the aventura to south ftl section. If that is correct, thank you and do let me know when the next section is ready to review.</p>		<p>That is correct. As future sections move forward in Broward County the Broward County team (some copied above) will be the ones that most likely will provide the update.</p>
2	<p>I wanted to inform you of some major operation issues that make taking the tri rail very frustrating for people at the sheridan and Hollywood stations, in case you were unaware: about 50% of the time that the track is changed from 1 to 2 at Hollywood station (or Sheridan) the train still shows up on track 1. For example P627 the other day the PA announcement said track 2, I called to confirm and they said track 2, people were waiting on the bridge to see on which track it showed up bc it is wrong so often. And guess what, it showed up on track 1! It takes too long to cross over to the other side when the train shows up on the other side. I called back customer svc and talked to the same person and all she can say is sorry. I even asked one of the train employees about this and he said they are aware of the problem but cant do anything about it. Please help. Thank you for your attention to this matter.</p>	Tri-Rail	<p>The comment that was submitted below is an SFRTA/Tri-Rail related issue. I am providing Victor Garcia's contact information at SFRTA (garciav@sfrrta.fl.gov) who will be able to address your concerns. Victor is also copied above.</p> <p>A passenger feedback #121605 has been entered for this person for SFRTA to review and follow up.</p>
3	<p>Are you wanting a CZMA review too or just standard NEPA review? Was this ETDM #14474?</p>	Review Process	<p>The State Clearing House granted Coastal Zone Consistency as part of the ETDM review for the overall Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) study. After the ETDM process (ETDM#14474), the County adopted the Locally Preferred Alternative to be just between City of Aventura in Miami-Dade County and South Fort Lauderdale station in Broward County, which is the south portion of the BCR study limit. The project was then named BCR South project. FTA determined the NEPA class of action for BCR South to be Environmental Assessment last September. We have now completed the draft EA and FTA just approved the draft EA to be posted on our project website for public comments (30-day). What you received through my previous email was the notification that the EA is now available.</p> <p>Please let me know if you have any questions or need any additional information.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RECEIVED

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4	As a local resident this seems to be a duplication of the tri-rail with similar stops.	Service	<p>While both the existing Tri-Rail service and the proposed BCR South project service generally run in parallel corridors, the actual service, service characteristics, and areas served are very different. The ridership base for the two services are completely different. The existing Tri-Rail service is suburban and origin based, and provides 60 minute base and 25 minute peak service. The majority of the ridership is from park and ride patrons, then bus transfer patrons, as the locations of the stations are in highway oriented strip commercial areas with little opportunity to walk up to the station.</p> <p>The proposed BCR South/Northeast Corridor is a destination urban core based service that connects the traditional downtowns and major commercial areas within the corridor with each other, with 60 minute off peak, 30 minute peak service. The ridership is a lot more walk up based, due to the land use surrounding the proposed stations in southern Broward County. The major destinations within the corridor include Broward Health, a direct connection to FLL, the Hollywood historic entertainment district, Aventura (connection to Brightline). Based on our ridership model projection, BCR South is expected to have minimal impact to Tri-Rail ridership. Please see the FAQ on our project website (browardcommuterrailstudy.com) for ridership information as well as other information: https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/projects_browardcommuterrail/bcr-south-frequently-asked-questions-may-2024.pdf?sfvrsn=d6fd3ead_1</p>
5	<p><Note, this comment is a continuation of a conversation that started following the May 2024 Public Information Meeting></p> <p>Could you provide the data for the increase in ridership that is seen with greater frequencies and the corresponding data of the impacts of these greater frequencies (I'm assuming operational costs etc) ?</p> <p>We filed a freedom of information request from the FTA, we recently got the document request back from them but what we got back only showed Broward as submitting documents from a 30 min peak 60 min off peak schedule.</p> <p>There has to be greater analysis of ridership and frequency somewhere correct ?</p> <p>I understand why the FTA scoring process is important to securing funding for this project, but should there not be data and costs published for what greater frequency would cost regardless of whether it is submitted to the FTA or not?</p> <p>Even if this data is not submitted with FTA documents, this data should be clearly presented to county commissioners, the public and the surtax board to see if elected officials would like to increase their contribution to increase the headways?</p>	Ridership	<p>No additional frequencies have been evaluated due to several limiting factors which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The BCR South/MD Northeast Corridor proposed schedule was dictated by several items, including the current and anticipated schedule of existing users, the most critical being the Brightline intercity services, who own the passenger rail easement for the corridor. Brightline is faster and has less stations. Thus, the BCR South/MD Northeast Corridor Service must be "out of the way" of the intercity rail service, by being on the various station tracks when the services meet. In addition, FECR, the corridor owner, has several time critical freight services that must be accommodated. The current proposed schedule optimizes those available time windows and infrastructure capacities. - There will be a considerable increase in capital costs to accommodate an increase in frequency such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Additional train sets o Potential need for Right-of-Way (ROW) to accommodate an expanded Hialeah rail yard or additional maintenance yard o Additional track infrastructure that could include additional linear tracks for much of the length of the corridor as well as crossovers to mitigate the impacts additional trains will have on Brightline and FECR operations o Additional Operations and Maintenance costs to accommodate the additional crews needed for the additional trains as well as maintenance of the vehicles and the expansion/additional yard amenities that may be required - The potential impact to traffic on the east west crossroads. Current traffic analysis reflects that queues/stacking from a train crossing (gates down) can clear prior to the next train. Additional train crossings/gate closures could require vehicles to wait through multiple gate closures and create an unacceptable Level of Service (LOS) for east west traffic (cars, buses, pedestrians, bikes, etc.). <p>I know this sounds discouraging, as it pertains to optimism for higher frequency service, but once the project starts operations, we will observe the actual ridership and consider future projects if ridership exceeds our expectation. We appreciate your passion and insights in providing us feedback. Please contact Jie Bian if you would like to discuss this in greater detail.</p>
6	<p>We are a manufacturer of Overhead Catenary System Trucks. On the plans for the new Rail System planned for Broward County, is the train propulsion going to be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heavy Diesel? 2. Catenary Overhead Power Line? 3. Third Rail Power? <p>Information on our trucks for the Catenary system is attached. If heavy diesel or third rail power we have no connection needed. If Catenary Overhead Power then I request who to talk to about the project.</p>	Vehicles	<p>Thank you for reaching out to us!</p> <p>The train propulsion is proposed to be diesel/diesel-electric. The commuter rail service is proposed to share tracks with active freight rail and intercity passenger rail services. The railroad is privately owned by FECR, the operator of the freight rail service. Please let us know if you have any questions.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RECEIVED

No.	Question/Comment	Topic	Response
7	<p>This is Josue Aceituno soil scientist at USDA-NRCS. NRCS is the agency responsible for ensuring that the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) is implemented. It is the responsibility of other Federal agencies and entities receiving federal funds to lessen the effects of conversion activities on “farmland” and to ensure that their programs or activities are compatible, to the extent practicable, with state, local, and private programs to protect farmland. “Farmland” means prime or unique farmlands as defined in section 1540(c)(1) of the FPPA or farmland that is determined by the appropriate state or unit of local government agency or agencies with concurrence of the Secretary of Agriculture to be farmland of statewide local importance. Regarding the implementation of a commuter rail service on the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway corridor from the passenger station in the City of Aventura northward to the City of Fort Lauderdale; if it is believed that this project scope has a potential to impact farmland we would need to review the project area or activities taken place. In order for us to review, the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) requires a submission of an original copy of AD-1006 or NRCS - CPA 106 , submitted by the federal agency funding the project. Parts I and III of the Form submitted must be completed by the agency in order for us to move forward with our review. It would also be of great assistance to us if a GIS Shapefile layer or a Google earth file with the boundary of the project is provided along with the forms. I will attach the forms. Please let us know if there is any questions or concerns. For more information on FPPA please visit the following links: 1. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/conservation-basics/natural-resource-concerns/land/cropland/farmland-protection-policy-act 2. https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2022-06/FPPA_Rule_7cfr658.pdf</p>	Environmental	<p>Thank your for reaching out to us! The project occurs entirely within an urbanized area (Miami-Fort Lauderdale). There are no farmlands that may be potentially impacted by the project. The project team does not believe that this project scope has a potential to impact farmland. We documented this in Appendix E of the Environmental Assessment - Advanced Notification, as shown below: 7. Farmlands Project PED Comments Prime farmlands were not reported within 500 feet of the project limits. Lands within the project vicinity do not meet the definition of farmland as defined in 7 CFR 658 and the provisions of the Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1981 do not apply because the entire project area is located in the urbanized area of Miami (which includes Broward County) with no designated farmlands adjacent to the project corridor. No involvement with farmlands is anticipated as a result of this project. Below is the link to access the Appendix E from our project website: https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/projects_browardcommuterrail/appendices-environmental-assessment/app-e-advanced-notification.pdf?sfvrsn=147ff5d2_1 Please let us know if you have any questions.</p>
8a	<p>We haven’t met yet but I wanted to take the opportunity to introduce you to Windhoff Rail Technology for the Broward Commuter Rail South Project. Attending the PREMO Light Rail Industry Day back in January has been very informative and was a well organized event! I’d like to follow-up with you and ask if it would be possible to learn more about your plans to build and set up a LRT maintenance facility, and maybe get the opportunity to present our North American reference projects during a video call/face-to-face meeting? WINDHOFF is a global supplier of MOW Equipment and Rolling Stock Maintenance solutions with a location in Alpharetta, GA. Since 2007, we have successfully completed projects for several North American manufacturers, train car builders, and authorities in the rail industry (California, Chicago, Maryland/Washington DC, Indiana, Utah, Massachusetts, British Columbia, Ontario and others). We offer full OEM turn-key solutions which include a concept for the infrastructure, installation and maintenance of all types of rolling stock vehicles. I’ve listed some of our main products and turnkey solutions, just to mention a few: -Zero-emission shunting solutions and vehicles -Battery-driven shunters -Portable Lifting Jacks sales and rentals that meet Buy America requirements -In-floor lifting systems -Bogie drop equipment -Lifting tables for bogies/bogie drop tables -Bogie measuring stands -Complete workshop facilities -Turntables of different diameters, for indoors and outdoors -Traversers -Stationary and movable access platforms -Universal Working Platforms for Maintenance and Repair I’m also attaching our main US brochure about our activities on the North American territory. When interested, please let me know how to start first talks about our rail technologies.</p>	Procurement	<p>Thank you for reaching out to us! The Broward Commuter Rail South project is a commuter rail project, not a Light Rail project. As specified in Section 2.0 Alternatives of the draft Environmental Assessment for this project , the project scope does not include a maintenance facility. If you are interested in the LRT maintenance facility, please contact Ms. Anna Bielawska at abielawska@broward.org to inquire about the LRT project PD&E study that is currently under procurement and subject to the County’s Cone of Silence policy.</p>
8b	<p>Thanks for the clarification between both existing programs, the Broward Commuter Rail South project and the PREMO Light Rail opportunity. I will certainly reach out to Ms. Anna Bielawska but wanted to make you aware as well about our capabilities should there be any need for modernizing your maintenance equipment at some point. Thanks and have a great day</p>		<p><No response needed></p>

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9	<p>Thank you for providing the document for comment. I have some minor comments below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.1.3 – Community Impacts and Surrounding Population - mentioned the other stations, but does not mentioned the Fort Lauderdale station in the narrative • P21 – the station is located “west” of the Broward Health Medical Center, not “east”. • Section 3.1.9 – Cultural Resources/Historic Sites – the car museum is identified earlier in the document but not mentioned in this section • Section 3.3.1 - Noise and Vibration – there are references to the Hollywood Station that the rail came first but not Fort Lauderdale. • Section 3.3.3 – Hazardous Materials – the narrative states that there are 4 locations with medium risk around Fort Lauderdale Station but the map does not show any locations colored yellow that the key says is medium risk • P47 – the project bullets have some formatting issues in the first few lines. The second bullet should be indented as scope, and the 2020 FDOT Railroad Dynamic Envelope Pavement Marking Project should be a new bullet with the dynamic envelopes as the scope. • P48 – there is a Fire Station directly adjacent to the Fort Lauderdale station and the new rail station will impact that so should be mentioned in the narrative, there is mention of the emergency signal coordination in another part of the narrative • Section 3.3.7 Impacts to Pedestrian Movements – I think you can add more language how the crossing improvements will be improvements not only for passengers but pedestrians and bicyclists traveling through the area. • P51 – Indirect Impacts – I think it would be important to list that the Fort Lauderdale station is located within a designated Regional Activity Center that the city has designated this area as an activity center and supports mixed use growth in the area so it is positive indirect impacts. 	Document Edits	<p>Thank you for reviewing the EA report and providing comments. Please see the responses to your comments below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 3.1.3 – Thank you for your comment. The proposed station is within the City of Fort Lauderdale and is located near the medical center, adjacent to the FEC line. • P21 – Thank you for your comment. The text will be corrected to change “east” to “west” on the online document. • Section 3.1.9 – Thank you for your comment. The car museum was addressed in the Cultural Resources Assessment Survey and related coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer. • Section 3.3.1 – Thank you for your comment. The FEC rail line was one of the first developments in south Florida and the cities of Hollywood and Fort Lauderdale experienced development along the rail line. For that reason, existing rail traffic has been present as much of the surrounding area was developed. The impacts analysis regarding noise and vibration took into account the existing baseline noise levels in Hollywood and Fort Lauderdale. • Section 3.3.3 – Thank you for your comment. The online document will be updated for the map and will show 4 medium risk contamination sites highlighted in yellow. • P47 – Thank you for your comment. We have updated the formatting of the online version to adjust the formatting in this section. • P48 – Thank you for your comment. The existing fire station is adjacent to the project but there would be no direct impacts to fire station property. The project would not require any permanent or temporary right-of-way from the fire station. • Section 3.3.7 – Thank you for your comment. The crossings will be improved and enhanced in a way that serves vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists, including new warning signalization and timing. • P51 – Thank you for your comment. The project is consistent with the local land use plans and the Regional Activity Center.

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10a	<p><Note, this comment is a continuation of a conversation that started following the May 2024 Public Information Meeting></p> <p>On behalf of the downtown property owners association, we still did not get the question answered of what parking spaces we would be losing along the n 21st corridor south of Hollywood blvd? Can you please let me know this asap?</p>	Parking	<p>The number of parking spaces that are proposed to be removed removed along 21st Ave south of Hollywood Blvd is 16. These were the 2 bullets originally highlighted in the breakdown provided in the email response below. As the attached board shows there are 83 spaces impacted to the north and 16 spaces to the south of Hollywood Blvd along 21st Ave. This board was on display at the BCR South May public information meeting and is also available in the documents and publications section of the project website: https://www.fdot.gov/projects/broward-commuter-rail-south/documents-and-publications. Please let us know if you have any additional questions.</p> <p><Below is the email response referenced above, provided on May 7, 2024, to the downtown property owners association's parking inquiry></p> <p>The proposed parking spaces to be removed is 99 spaces on N. 21 Avenue. Here is a breakdown of the number and location of the 99 parking spaces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pierce Street to Fillmore Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 5 spaces are being lost on the west side due conversion from angled to parallel parking. • Fillmore Street to Tyler Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 56 spaces are being lost on the west side due to the added tracks and the station platforms. o 8 spaces are being lost on the east side due to the Complete Streets modification, as well as bus bays and drop-off /pick up area. • Tyler Street to Hollywood Blvd: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 14 spaces are being lost on west side due to the added tracks. • Hollywood Blvd to Harrison Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 10 spaces are being lost on the west side due to the added tracks. • Harrison Street to Van Buren Street: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 6 spaces are being lost on the west side due to the added tracks. <p>All the other existing parking spaces along N. 21 Avenue will remain in place.</p>
10b	<p>Thank you, a loss of 99 parking spaces is not a good thing for the business's and property owners of downtown. A lot of owner rely on these spaces especially just south of the blvd along 21st between Harrison and Hollywood blvd. I see we kept some spaces in further south? See attached, is there anyway to reconfigure these plans to not remove these spaces? I circled the areas of greatest concern on the attached</p>		<p>The team has looked to minimize the number of parking spaces impacted by the project. Due to the need to add track sidings for the station and accommodate the necessary offset requirements, signal equipment and lane widths, 16 parking spots south of Hollywood Boulevard are expected to be removed.</p> <p>The project team is in the process of completing the Environmental Assessment (EA)/Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) phase and these concepts are preliminary. Even once the environmental phase is complete and approved, the team will continue to coordinate with the City of Hollywood and stakeholders while finalizing the design. In addition, City staff has indicated that 22 spaces of on-street parking along Van Buren will be put back into service once the current new private developments under construction are completed. It should be noted that these redevelopments will have their own parking and will be replacing older buildings that did not have parking. These developments are anticipated to be open by early 2026. An additional 120 city public parking spaces will be made available in the spring 2025 in the garage north of Hollywood Boulevard, currently under construction.</p> <p>Please contact Jie Bian at jbian@broward.org or 954-357-8532 if you would like to discuss in more detail as the team looks forward to further coordination during final design with DHPOA.</p>

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10c	<p><Note, these comments were submitted in two separate emails></p> <p>Myself and the downtown Hollywood Property Owners Civic Association strongly object to the loss of parking along the 21st south of the blvd. There are buildings and businesses that rely on these spaces. Some buildings have been using these spaces since the 1950's. I understand there will be a new garage with more spaces, however business customers are using these spaces to operate their business, and removing these not only negatively affect their revenue, it also will affect property values. This isn't a brightline stop, this is a commuter rail... We cannot just think about new buildings, we have to consider the older existing ones too.</p> <p>My association who represents over 1mil square feet of property ownership and membership in this area, cannot support this project with this loss of parking in this specific area...</p> <p>Please send me your complete public schedule so I can speak against this project moving forward, public hearings. This is a major issue for local property owners and business's.</p> <p>Also, is it the county commission that has to vote on this too along with the City? Id like to know how I can further voice my concerns to our elected officials.</p> <p>Our civic association has previously supported this project and we would like to continue to be supportive of it. I believe it does have an overall positive impact locally. However, any loss of parking is a very serious issue for downtown Hollywood and our members. I would ask that your conceptual drawings be reconfigured to avoid any unnecessary loss of parking spaces. A lot of business's rely on these spaces to survive and keep their doors open. My association and I have expressed these concerns multiple times previously and did not hear back from anyone nor were they addressed.</p> <p>I just spoke to the city It appears this area has a 100 foot corridor (south of the Blvd along 21) I believe there should be room for both the tracks and parallel parking spaces. On your plans it appears there is room for spaces further south that were left in place.</p> <p>Our membership would very much like to see parking preserved in this area and a plan using parallel parking to do so. The City believes there is room to change the angled spaces to parallel while keeping the required tracks.</p> <p>I recognize this is only a conceptual design, but I would ask the we rework the design with preservation of parking as a priority. It is not just my association that has expressed concerns about losing these spaces the other two associations have the same concerns.</p> <p>Let me know if there is a way to reconsider the parking layout and change the design slightly to satisfy this concern.</p> <p>I thank you all very much for your consideration in this matter</p>	Parking (cont.)	<p>Thank you for your support of the project. We appreciate the concerns you have voiced over the potential public parking loss south of Hollywood Boulevard. As you recognize this is a conceptual design and we must make provisions for the possible equipment and necessary offsets needed to operate the trains and the signal system to meet all the requirements including FECR's. We understand your desire to preserve public parking in this area. As the project moves forward and the design details are developed further, we will work with FECR as well as the city and community for opportunities to further reduce the loss of on-street public parking in this area as well as others, where possible. This includes looking at solutions such as replacing angled parking with parallel parking. There will be more outreach events during the final design to solicit additional feedback and keep the city and stakeholders informed of progress.</p>

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT - COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS RECEIVED

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11	<p>The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency reviewed the Draft Environmental Assessment for the Broward Commuter Rail South Project, in accordance with Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act. The purpose of this project is to implement commuter service along the existing Florida East Coast Railway Corridor from Aventura in Miami-Dade County into Broward County, Florida, a distance of approximately 11.5 miles. The BCR South Project will provide a reliable, sustainable, and permanent transportation option for north-south commuters by connecting to major activity centers and neighborhoods adjacent to the line.</p> <p>The draft EA examined the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Build Alternative. Under the Proposed Build Alternative, commuter service would be added to the existing freight rail and intercity passenger rail services that currently operate on the FEC Corridor between the City of Aventura, located in Miami-Dade County, and the City of Fort Lauderdale, located in Broward County. Additionally, three new passenger stations are proposed in Hollywood, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, and South Fort Lauderdale.</p> <p>Based on our review of the draft EA, the EPA has the following comment for your consideration.</p> <p>Sole Source Aquifer: The BCR South Project is underlain by the USEPA designated Biscayne Sole Source Aquifer. The EPA Region 4, Groundwater and GIS Section provided a SSA review letter dated May 1, 2024, and located in Appendix D of the draft EA. The letter states, "The EPA finds that, if the conditions outlined above are adhered to, this project should have no significant impact to the aquifer system. This no significant impact finding is based on compliance with the requirements outlined above and on the information provided."</p> <p>Recommendation: The EPA recommends adherence to the Best Management Practices outlined within the SSA review letter that address construction, demolition, erosion and sedimentation, and stormwater runoff so that potential impacts to the Biscayne SSA can be adequately reduced or properly mitigated.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the BCR South draft EA. Upon completion of the final EA, please submit an electronic copy to the EPA. If you have any questions regarding the EPA's comments, please contact me by phone at 404-562-9339 or via email at Singh-White.Alya@epa.gov.</p>	Environmental	<p>Thank you for your comment. Your Sole Source Aquifer (SSA) concurrence letter dated May 1, 2024, is included in Appendix D of the EA (https://fdotwww.blob.core.windows.net/sitefinity/docs/default-source/projects_browardcommuterrail/appendices-environmental-assessment/app-d-epa-concurrence-letter-wqie-ssa.pdf?sfvrsn=87eb02a8_1). As stated in the letter, the EPA finds that this project should have no significant impact to the aquifer system if all the conditions including the Best Management Practices (BMPs) as outlined in the letter that address construction, demolition, erosion and sedimentation, and stormwater runoff are adhered to so that potential impacts to the Biscayne SSA can be adequately reduced or properly mitigated.</p>



Metropolitan Planning Organization

Move People & Goods | Create Jobs | Strengthen Communities

August 12, 2024

Jie Bian

Transit Director, Capital Planning and Project Development
Acting Assistant General Manager, Capital Programs
Broward County Transit (BCT)
1 North University Drive-Suite 3100A
Plantation, Florida 33324

RE: NOTICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW For
Broward Commuter Rail South (BCR South)

Dear Ms. Bian,

I am writing on behalf of the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to express our strong support for the Broward Commuter Rail South project. This vital initiative aligns with our commitment to enhancing regional transportation infrastructure, promoting sustainable mobility, and improving the quality of life for Broward residents. In addition, the project is consistent with the Broward MPO's *Commitment 2045* Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the September 8, 2022 Broward MPO Board endorsement of the August 25, 2022 Resolution of Broward County Commission related to the Broward Commuter Rail South project.

The Broward Commuter Rail South project is poised to significantly improve connectivity and accessibility within the region. By providing an efficient, reliable, and resilient transportation alternative, it will help manage roadway congestion, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support economic growth by linking key employment, residential, and commercial centers.

We believe that this project is essential for meeting the growing transportation needs of our community. It represents a forward-thinking investment in our region's future, ensuring that Broward County remains a vibrant and accessible place to live, work, and visit.

Chair

Yvette Colbourne

Vice Chair

Joy Cooper

Deputy Vice Chair

Byron Jaffe

Members | Alternates

Torey Alston
Vinnie Andreano
Antonio V. Arserio
Samson Borgelin
Felicia M. Brunson
Chris Caputo
Tycie Causwell
Yvette Colbourne
Joy Cooper
Kicia Daniel
Richard DeNapoli
Tim Fadgen
Lamar Fisher
Beam Furr
Bill Ganz
Thomas Good Jr
Bob Hartmann
William "Bill" Hodgkins
Byron Jaffe
Lori Lewellen
Tim Loneragan
Lisa Mallozzi
Lawrence "Jabbow" Martin
Andrea McGee
Hazelle Rogers
Tim Ryan
Joseph A. Scutto
Caryl S. Shuham
Joshua Simmons
Warren Sturman
Dean J. Trantalis
Michael Udine
Kyle Van Buskirk
Rich Walker
Sandra L. Welch
Michelle Whitman

Executive Director

Gregory Stuart

General Counsel

Alan Gabriel



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The Broward MPO is committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the Broward Commuter Rail South project. We look forward to working closely with you and other partners to realize this important vision for our region's transportation network.

Thank you for your work shepherding this transformative project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory Stuart". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Gregory Stuart
Executive Director

Cc: Phil Schwab, Florida Department of Transportation, District 4
Lisa Maack, Florida Department of Transportation, District 4

Attachment B: Errata Sheet

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.