

SOUTH FLORIDA FREIGHT & PASSENGER



RAIL ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Phase 1B · IRIS NE Connection

Categorical Exclusion
Worksheet - FINAL
May 2014



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration



**Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION WORKSHEET**

The purpose of this worksheet is to assist Project sponsors in gathering and organizing materials for environmental analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), particularly for projects that may qualify as Categorical Exclusions. Categorical Exclusions are categories of actions (i.e. types of projects) that the FRA has determined, based on its experience, typically do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment and which generally do not require the preparation of either an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA). Decisions to prepare EAs and EISs are made by FRA.

Submission of the worksheet by itself does not meet NEPA requirements. FRA must concur in writing with the Categorical Exclusion recommendation for NEPA requirements to be met.

The Project sponsor is responsible for providing FRA with a sufficient level of documentation and analysis to help inform FRA's determination that a Categorical Exclusion is the appropriate NEPA class of action. Documentation and analysis may include background research, results of record searches, field investigations, field surveys, and any past planning or studies.

Instructions for completing this worksheet are available on the FRA website at: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/eLib/Details/L02708>. Please complete this worksheet using compatible word processing software and submit and transmit the completed form in MS Word electronic format.

The following documents must be submitted along with this worksheet:

1. Include maps or diagram of the Project area that identifies locations of critical resource areas, wetlands, potential historic sites, or sensitive noise receptors such as schools, hospitals, and residences.
2. Include maps or diagrams of the proposed modifications to existing railways, roadways, and parking facilities.
3. Copies of all agency correspondence particularly with permitting agencies.
4. Representative photographs of the Project area.

I. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Project Sponsor Florida Department of Transportation	Date Submitted to FRA 11/21/2013	FRA Funding (TIGER, HSIPR, Rail Line Relocation, RRIF, etc.) or other FRA Action 2013 TIGER Grant
Contact Person Mr. Robert Bostian	Phone 954-777-4427	E-mail address Robert.Bostian@dot.state.fl.us
Proposed Project Title South Florida Freight & Passenger Rail Enhancement Project; Phase 1B IRIS NE Connection; FPID: 433514-1		
Location (Include Street Address, City or Township, County, and State) City of Hialeah, Miami-Dade County, FL Refer to Exhibit 1 Project Location Map, Exhibit 2 Quadrangle Map and Exhibit 8 for Photographs		
NEPA Contact Ms. Ann Broadwell	Phone 954-777-4325	E-mail Address Ann.Broadwell@dot.state.fl.us

Description of Proposed Action (Project): Fully describe the Project including specifics that may be of environmental concern such as: *widening an embankment to stabilize roadbed; repairing or replacing bridge pier foundations, extending culverts, including adding rip-rap in a waterway; earthwork and altering natural (existing) drainage patterns and creating a new water discharge; contaminated water needing treatment; building a new or adding on to a shop building; fueling or collection of fuel or oil and contaminated water; building or extending a siding; and building or adding on to a yard. Where applicable fully describe the operational characteristics of the facility to be improved by the proposed action and any anticipated operational changes that may result.*

The proposed action is to construct a new single track connection from the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway Little River Connection to the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) to provide direct access to the north for the movement of freight from PortMiami to the SFRC and to allow access to the Tri-Rail/CSX Transportation (CSXT) Hialeah Yard. The FEC Railway serves existing freight and historically served passenger service until 1968. The SFRC serves Amtrak service, Tri-Rail commuter rail service and CSXT freight. The connection will be constructed within the existing Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) right-of-way and will diverge from the FEC Railway to the interlocking at SFRC, known as "IRIS" by FEC. The project limits and proposed improvements are shown in Attachment 1 (Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 7). The proposed project has independent utility in that it provides access to/from PortMiami to inland multimodal facilities, including the Central Florida Intermodal Logistics Center (ILC) located in Winter Haven and operated by CSX, the Port of Tampa, and the proposed inland port south of Lake Okeechobee. In addition, the proposed project will provide access from the FEC Railway to the Tri-Rail/CSXT Hialeah Yard located just north of the study area (shown in Exhibit 1).

The proposed project will accommodate existing freight traffic and projected growth in freight rail operations following the expansion of the Panama Canal and freight intermodal improvements at Port of Palm Beach, Port Everglades and PortMiami. The proposed improvements for this phase, known as Phase 1B, include: the construction of approximately 1,700 linear feet of new single track providing a new connection to the FEC and SFRC and a modified grade crossing at NW 37th Avenue/FEC Railway to accommodate the new track. The proposed action assumes the following rail operations: (1) Freight trains traveling at 15 miles per hour (mph) (maximum speed limited due to track geometry); 12,000 feet to 14,000 feet in length; between 7 P.M. and 7 A.M. (2) Up to 6 trains in each direction (12 trains daily) by 2035, including: up to 4 trains in each direction (8 trains daily) from Jacksonville/Cocoa to PortMiami; and up to 2 additional trains in each direction (4 trains daily) after FEC intermodal transfer at PortMiami is operational.

Property acquisition = None; Property is FDOT-owned. Drainage construction will include linear swales within the railway limits of construction (50 feet wide). The existing Little River Connection track is constructed above grade and this connection will meet the existing profile of the connecting railroads. Refer to Attachment 3, Drainage Technical Memorandum.

Potential staging areas for construction activities are anticipated to include the area east of the SFRC and southwest of the proposed connection, which is entirely located on FDOT property. FDOT anticipates minimal utility relocations at the existing grade crossing within the right-of-way. FDOT anticipates that the grade crossing will be modified to replace the existing rail; FDOT anticipates that construction will occur at night to avoid peak hour traffic and minimize travel delay. During these temporary construction activities, the surrounding grid roadway network within the study area will allow FDOT to maintain transportation connectivity during construction with temporary detours per FDOT Roadway and Traffic Design Standards.

Purpose and Need of Proposed Action (Project).

There is no direct connection between the FEC and the SFRC to efficiently serve freight connectivity from the ports and existing freight industry customers at the IRIS junction. The IRIS Northeast (IRIS NE) Connection will provide trains access to the Hialeah maintenance facility and to the north while allowing freight connectivity from PortMiami. Because of the anticipated growth of cargo shipments into the Florida ports, it is important for the rail to take advantage of all of the resources available in order for the region to be economically competitive.

The proposed project aims to address both short-term and long-term transportation needs in the region. In the short-term, the proposed connection between the SFRC and FEC will allow for essential connectivity and flexibility for freight movement in the region. In the long-term, the proposed connection will accommodate projected growth in freight rail operations following the expansion of the Panama Canal and freight intermodal improvements at the Port of Palm Beach, Port Everglades and PortMiami.

Maintaining intermodal connectivity and satisfactory freight operations on both the SFRC and FEC are essential to efficiently serve the movement of goods and people in the region. Freight service provides an efficient and highly economical mode of transportation to support the transfer of intermodal freight between major industries and major Strategic Intermodal System (SIS) transportation hubs including airports, seaports and intermodal yards.

Because of the anticipated growth of cargo shipments into the ports, enhanced freight rail connectivity is important for the region and State of Florida to be economically competitive. The proposed project will improve rail mobility and increase cargo movement by rail, which will alleviate existing and future truck traffic on South Florida's congested roadways.

Between 2000 and 2010, the Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, Florida metropolitan area (located within Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties) experienced approximately 11.1% population growth and, as of the 2010 Census, the population in the tri-county region was more than 5.5 million people. Much of this population growth has been focused on the east coast - population density on the coast is three times that in the western section of Miami-Dade County. Rapid population growth is expected to continue in the foreseeable future. The IRIS NE Connection will prepare the rail network for increased passenger service in the area by allowing for some freight traffic on the FEC corridor to be rerouted to the SFRC, opening up capacity on the FEC and allowing potential restoration of historical passenger rail service.

II. NEPA CLASS OF ACTION

Please check the category or categories that the Project best fits. If no category applies, contact FRA as an EA or EIS may need to be prepared.

- Changes in plans for a Project for which an environmental document has been prepared, where the changes would not alter the environmental impacts of the action. *(Describe the full consequences of the changes only in part III)*
- Maintenance of: existing railroad equipment; track and bridge structures; electrification, communication, signaling, or security facilities; stations; maintenance-of-way and maintenance-of-equipment bases; and other existing railroad-related facilities. *("Maintenance" means work, normally provided on a periodic basis, which does not change the existing character of the facility, and may include work characterized by other terms under specific FRA programs)*

- Temporary replacement of an essential rail facility if repairs are commenced immediately after the occurrence of a natural disaster or catastrophic failure.
- Operating assistance to a railroad to continue existing service or to increase service to meet demand, where the assistance will not result in a change in the effect on the environment.
- Financial assistance for the construction of minor loading and unloading facilities, provided that proposals are consistent with local zoning, do not involve the acquisition of a significant amount of land, and do not significantly alter the traffic density characteristics of existing rail or highway facilities.
- Minor rail line additions *including construction of side tracks, passing tracks, crossovers, short connections between existing rail lines, and new tracks within existing rail yards*, provided that such additions are consistent with existing zoning, do not involve acquisition of a significant amount of right of way, and do not substantially alter the traffic density characteristics of the existing rail lines or rail facilities.
- Acquisition of existing railroad equipment, track and bridge structures, electrification, communication, signaling or security facilities, stations, maintenance of way and maintenance of equipment bases, and other existing railroad facilities or the right to use such facilities, for the purpose of conducting operations of a nature and at a level of use similar to those presently or previously existing on the subject properties.
- Research, development and/or demonstration of advances in signal, communication and/or train control systems on existing rail lines provided that such research, development and/or demonstrations do not require the acquisition of substantial amounts of right-of-way, and do not substantially alter the traffic density characteristics of the existing rail line.
- Improvements to existing facilities to service, inspect, or maintain rail passenger equipment, *including expansion of existing buildings, the construction of new buildings and outdoor facilities, and the reconfiguration of yard tracks.*
- Alterations to existing facilities, locomotives, stations and rail cars in order to make them accessible for the elderly and persons with disabilities, *such as modifying doorways, adding or modifying lifts, constructing access ramps and railings, modifying restrooms, and constructing accessible platforms.*
- Bridge rehabilitation, reconstruction or replacement, the rehabilitation or maintenance of the rail elements of docks or piers for the purposes of intermodal transfers, and the construction of bridges, culverts, or grade separation projects, predominantly within existing right-of-way, that do not involve extensive in-water construction activities, *such as projects replacing bridge components including stringers, caps, piles, or decks, the construction of roadway overpasses to replace at-grade crossings, construction or reconstruction of approaches and/or embankments to bridges, or construction or replacement of short span bridges.*
- Acquisition (including purchase or lease), rehabilitation, or maintenance of vehicles or equipment that does not cause a substantial increase in the use of infrastructure within the existing right-of-way or other previously disturbed locations, *including locomotives, passenger coaches, freight cars, trainsets, and construction, maintenance or inspection equipment.*
- Installation, repair and replacement of equipment and small structures designed to promote transportation safety, security, accessibility, communication or operational efficiency that take place predominantly within the existing right-of-way and do not result in a major change in traffic density on the existing rail line or facility, *such as the installation, repair or replacement of surface treatments or pavement markings, small passenger shelters, passenger amenities, benches, signage, sidewalks or trails, equipment enclosures, and fencing, railroad warning devices, train control systems, signalization, electric traction equipment and structures, electronics, photonics, and communications systems and equipment, equipment mounts, towers and structures, information processing equipment, and security equipment, including surveillance and detection cameras.*

- Environmental restoration, remediation and pollution prevention activities in or proximate to existing and former railroad track, infrastructure, stations and facilities conducted in conformance with applicable laws, regulations and permit requirements, *including activities such as noise mitigation, landscaping, natural resource management activities, replacement or improvement to storm water oil/water separators, installation of pollution containment systems, slope stabilization, and contaminated soil removal or remediation activities.*
- Assembly or construction of facilities or stations that are consistent with existing land use and zoning requirements, do not result in a major change in traffic density on existing rail or highway facilities and result in approximately less than ten acres of surface disturbance, *such as storage and maintenance facilities, freight or passenger loading and unloading facilities or stations, parking facilities, passenger platforms, canopies, shelters, pedestrian overpasses or underpasses, paving, or landscaping.*
- Track and track structure maintenance and improvements when carried out predominantly within the existing right-of-way that do not cause a substantial increase in rail traffic beyond existing or historic levels, *such as stabilizing embankments, installing or reinstalling track, re-grading, replacing rail, ties, slabs and ballast, installing, maintaining, or restoring drainage ditches, cleaning ballast, constructing minor curve realignments, improving or replacing interlockings, and the installation or maintenance of ancillary equipment.*

III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Potential impacts from both construction and changes to operations (where applicable) should be analyzed and identified for each resource type below. Where appropriate, the Project sponsor may commit to mitigation measures to avoid, reduce, or minimize impacts, including the use of Best Management Practices (BMP). Mitigation measures necessary to comply with other laws or regulations (e.g. Clean Water Act Section 404) should also be identified and the impacts from mitigation considered.

A. Affected Environment: Briefly describe the ecosystems and environmental conditions in the area affected by the Project (defined as broadly as necessary to evaluate potential impacts and address Project area habitats).

The project is located within an existing urbanized and industrial area near the two active SFRC and FEC rail corridors. The north-south railroad at the proposed connection is the SFRC, and the east-west railroad is the Little River connection of the FEC. A project location is provided in Exhibit 1, and a quadrangle map is included as Exhibit 2.

The project is within close proximity of residential areas, to the southwest of the proposed improvements; however, only a few residences are within 1,000 feet of the proposed improvements. FDOT anticipates that the project will have no impacts on residential areas (shown in Exhibit 3) since the communities were built around the historic FEC Railway that operates freight service today.

There are two Standing Historic Structures (DA06528 and DA06529) within the study area, both of which are ineligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). FDOT, in consultation with FRA and SHPO, prepared a Cultural Resource Assessment Survey (CRAS) during the environmental study phase to assess these resources and all potential unrecorded resources within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) as discussed further in Section C (Cultural Resources). The proposed improvements were developed to avoid adverse effects to cultural resources; no adverse effects to cultural resources are anticipated.

There are no wetlands or other significant habitat/natural features within the study limits.

FDOT anticipates that the project will not impact documented contamination sites within the study limits.

B. *Location & Land Use:* Briefly describe the existing land use of the Project site and surrounding properties and resources and identify and discuss any potential inconsistencies the Project might have with local land use plans and policies.

The project will be constructed within the state-owned (FDOT) right-of-way and is compatible with the existing zoning and both existing and future land use designations; therefore, the project will result in minimal economic impacts. Adjacent land uses are industrial. Due to the industrialized nature within the study area, the project has the potential to provide economic enhancements in the form of cargo/freight oriented development. In addition, and as discussed above, the connection of the two rail corridors has the potential for regional economic enhancements, increased mobility and would support future potential passenger rail connectivity. Existing (Exhibit 3) and future (Exhibit 4) land use maps are attached in Attachment 1.

C. *Cultural Resources:* Is the Project of the type where there is no potential to affect historic properties? Check yes or no depending on whether resources have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the Project (Area of Potential Effect)

Yes, explain how Project has no potential to affect historic properties. (Continue to D)

FDOT prepared a Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS), including background research and a field survey coordinated with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Refer to Attachment 3 for the CRAS.

No potentially NRHP-eligible historical sites, properties or archaeological sites were identified, nor are any expected to be encountered during subsequent project development. The FRA and FDOT determined that no resources listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP will be impacted. On January 23, 2014, the SHPO concurred with that determination. The SHPO coordination letter is provided in Attachment 2.

No, there is potential to affect historic properties. Describe identification procedures to determine the existence of cultural resources in the Project area.

Describe any resource(s) identified in the project area and then describe any potential effect of the Project on the resource(s).

Has consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office occurred?

No, contact FRA

Yes, describe and attach relevant correspondence

A consultation meeting, between the FRA and SHPO, was held on November 19, 2013. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the proposed action, the Area of Potential Effect (APE), and potential effects. A meeting summary is provided in Attachment 2.

FDOT completed a Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Study for IRIS as part of the Phase II Analysis for the larger Tri-Rail Coastal Link/South Florida Freight & Passenger Rail Enhancement Project; this analysis included the proposed connection at IRIS.

Attachment 2: SHPO Letter dated 01/23/14; DHR File 2014-51: A CRAS was prepared for this project. A Letter of Concurrence was received from SHPO.

What resources of interest to Federally-recognized Native American Tribes are known to be present in the Project area?

No resources of interest are within the study area. An Advance Notification Package (October 2013) was sent to Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Poarch Band of Creek Indians, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, and Seminole Tribe of Florida. No responses were received from the tribes.

D. Parks and Recreational Facilities: *Are there any publicly owned park, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or recreational area of national, state, or local significance within or directly adjacent to the Project area?*

No, include a short statement describe efforts to identify parks and recreational facilities in the Project area.

No publicly owned park, wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or recreation area of national, state, or local significance is located within the study area.

Yes, include a detailed description of the property, including map or drawing, describe the recreational uses of the property, any unique characteristics of the property, any consultations with the entity with legal jurisdiction over the property, and the potential impact on the property.

E. Transportation: *Would the Project have any effect (beneficial or adverse) on transportation including but not limited to other railway operations, road traffic, or increase the demand for parking?*

No, explain why the Project would have no effect (beneficial or adverse) on transportation

FDOT conducted an analysis of grade crossings to determine the effects the proposed action may have upon the local roadway network. Refer to Attachment 3, Grade Crossing Analysis, for further information.

The grade crossing analysis at IRIS NE Connection Phase 1B was based on the rail operation assumptions provided above in the Description of the Proposed Action. Based on information provided by FEC, FDOT assumes that no more than two train crossings will occur in a single hour. Given these parameters, results indicate that for both the opening year (2015) and the design year (2035), vehicular queues and delay incurred at the rail crossing near IRIS at NW 37th Avenue will be nominal and can be accommodated without impacting roadway traffic operations at adjacent locations.

Further, adequate clearance time of approximately 20 minutes is needed between the two crossing events to allow drivers in queue to

complete the rail crossing prior to the next rail crossing event. This ensures that no driver is affected by both crossing events without the opportunity to cross. Refer to Attachment 3, Grade Crossing Analysis, for further information.

In terms of rail operations, FDOT anticipates that the proposed action will enhance intermodal connectivity to major freight and multi-modal centers in the region, provide needed rail access to the heavy maintenance facility from the south, enhance freight connectivity between the SFRC and FEC Railway and support bringing additional future passenger rail options to Florida's East Coast.

- Yes, describe potential transportation, traffic, and parking impacts, and address capacity constraints and potential impacts to existing railroad and highway operations. Also, summarize any consultation that has occurred with other railroads or highway authorities whose operations this Project will impact.

F. Noise and Vibration: Are there any sensitive receptors in the Project area?

No, describe why there are no sensitive receptors (residences, parks, schools, hospitals, public gathering spaces) in or near the Project area. (Continue to G)

Yes, will the Project change the noise and/or vibration exposure of the sensitive receptors when applying the screening distances for noise and vibration assessment found in FRA and Federal Transit Administration's noise impacts assessment guidance manuals? Such changes in exposure might include changes in noise emissions and/or events, or changes in vibration emissions and/or events.

Overall, FDOT anticipates that the proposed train operations associated with the proposed action will not impact any noise sensitive sites. FDOT considers the project noise impacts to be minimal due to the limited number of impacted residences and type of exposure (i.e., net increase of cumulative noise level exposure of 1 A-weighted decibel, (dB(A)) or less).

Noise and vibration sensitive land uses occur within the 750-foot screening distance used to assess potential impacts in noisy urban areas (Table 4-1, CREATE Assessment Methodology, December 2007). The areas within the screening distance include residences within two residential areas, including the Miami Heights Mobile Home Park and Apartments and the Mojica Subdivision. FDOT selected representative receptor sites within each of these residential communities, closest to the proposed IRIS NE Connection. FDOT performed its General Noise and Vibration Assessment to estimate the severity of noise impacts and to determine the need for abatement measures.

The results of the General Noise and Vibration Assessment indicate that the estimated ground-borne vibration and noise levels for the operation of the FEC Railway trains at the closest sensitive site were 78 vibration decibels (VdB) and 28 dB(A), respectively. Since these values are less than the impact criteria [i.e., 80 VdB and 43 dB(A)], the train operations associated with the IRIS NE Connection are not anticipated to have significant ground-borne vibration or noise impacts.

If the Project is anticipated to change the noise or vibration exposure of sensitive receptors, complete and attach a General Noise and/or Vibration Assessment. Describe the results of the Assessment and any mitigation that will address potential impacts.

Based on the results of the General Noise and Vibration Assessment, FDOT expects that the proposed connection will not result in any moderate or severe noise impacts at the closest residential areas. Therefore, FDOT anticipates that the proposed action will not result in any significant permanent noise impacts to any noise sensitive land uses. In addition, FDOT anticipates that the train operations on the IRIS NE Connection will not change the type of noise sources nor substantially increase the overall cumulative noise levels in the surrounding sensitive land uses.

FDOT considers that the overall noise exposure level at the noise sensitive receptors identified is not a moderate or severe impact and does not warrant the consideration of noise abatement measures. Refer to Attachment 3, Noise and Vibration Technical Memorandum, for further information.

G. Air Quality: Is the Project located in a Non-Attainment or Maintenance area?

No, identify any air emissions increases or benefits that the project will create.
(Continue to H)

The proposed action is located in Miami-Dade County, which is currently designated as being in attainment for all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) criteria air pollutants including: Ozone (O₃), Nitrous Oxides (NO_x), Particulate Matter (PM_{2.5}, less than 2.5 microns in diameter) and PM₁₀ (less than 10 microns in diameter), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), Carbon Monoxide (CO), and Lead (Pb). As part of this project, FDOT performed an assessment of potential air quality impacts (refer to Attachment 3, Air Quality Technical Memorandum). Emissions from the locomotives and emissions associated with idling vehicles in queue at the NW 37th Avenue grade crossing will be expected to occur up to two times per hour. Most of the emissions associated with the project will occur in the evening/night when traffic volumes along 37th Avenue are low. Also, there are no sensitive air quality receptor sites or sidewalks in the immediate vicinity of the proposed crossing. The closest residence is greater than 700 feet from the 37th Avenue crossing.

Due to the nature of the project, which FDOT anticipates will reduce overall emissions, and the location of the project in an industrial area with low traffic volumes, the project will not result in an overall increase in emissions of the criteria pollutants; lead to levels that exceed the NAAQS and/or lead to the establishment of a new non-attainment area; or delay achievement of attainment. The project is also anticipated to reduce CO emissions from trucks that would, otherwise, have to transport the goods associated with the increased freight rail traffic. The project is in an area which is designated in attainment for all of the NAAQS under the criteria provided in the Clean Air Act. Therefore, the Clean Air Act conformity requirements do not apply to the project. Construction activities will cause short-term air quality impacts in the form of dust from earthwork and unpaved roads. Adherence to all applicable State and local regulations and to the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction will minimize these impacts.

Yes, for which of the following pollutants:

- Carbon Monoxide (CO) Ozone (O₃), volatile organic compounds or Nitrous Oxides (NO_x)
- Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})

Will the Project, both during construction and operation, result in new emissions of criteria pollutants including Carbon Monoxide (CO), Ozone (O₃), volatile organic compounds, or Nitrous Oxides NO_x, Particulate Matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})?

No Yes, Attach an emissions analysis for General Conformity regarding CO, O₃, PM₁₀, and NO_x.

Based on the emissions analysis, will the Project increase concentrations of ambient criteria pollutants to levels that exceed the NAAQS, lead to the establishment of a new non-attainment area, or delay achievement of attainment?

No Yes, Describe any substantial impacts from the Project.

H. Hazardous Materials: *Does the Project involve the use or handling of hazardous materials?*

No (continue to I)

Yes, describe the use and measures that will mitigate any potential for release and contamination.

Freight trains traveling on the FEC and SFRC have historically transported hazardous materials and FEC freight trains are currently equipped to haul hazardous materials. Although there is no regularly scheduled transport of hazardous materials, these types of cargo shipments are hauled on an average of once a week along the FEC Railway. FEC anticipates no change in the frequency or quantity of hazardous materials hauled along the FEC mainline associated with this project. There is a potential for existing FEC freight shipment of hazardous materials to transfer to the SFRC via the proposed connection. Based on the existing and historical FEC cargo shipments, FDOT anticipates minimal hazardous material transport within the limits of the proposed project. FEC does not plan to use or store hazardous materials along the proposed connection. All hazardous materials will be transported by FEC in accordance with federal Hazardous Materials Regulations found in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Additionally, the US Department of Transportation (DOT) enacts and enforces all hazardous material shipping laws. Compliance with DOT and federal requirements included in FRA's Hazardous Materials Compliance Manual will be overseen by the railroads who transfer the cargo shipments to/from industry customers. Adherence to these federal shipping regulations governs the shipment of hazardous materials and mitigation measures in the event of an unanticipated contamination release.

I. Hazardous Waste: *Is the Project site in a developed area or was previously developed or used for industrial or agricultural production,*

No, describe the steps taken to determine that hazardous materials are not present on the Project site. (Continue to J)

Yes. *If yes, is it likely that hazardous materials will be encountered by undertaking the Project? (Prior to acquiring land or a facility with FRA funds, FRA must be consulted regarding the potential presence of hazardous materials)*

Yes, complete a Phase I site assessment and attach.

FDOT conducted a Contamination Screening Evaluation (Phase 1 Site Assessment) for the proposed action, which is provided in Attachment 3.

High Risk Potential Sites:

There are no Federal Superfund sites or major landfills within 1 mile of the 1,000-foot buffer width from the proposed improvement (study area), and no High Risk sites were identified.

Medium Risk Potential Sites:

Seven Medium Risk sites were identified because of their potential contamination concerns immediately adjacent to the project and/or because they are within the typical dewatering radius of influence.

No, explain why it is unlikely that hazardous materials will be encountered.

If a Phase I survey was completed, is a Phase II site assessment recommended?

No, explain why a Phase II site assessment is not recommended.

Yes, describe the mitigation and clean-up measures that will be taken to remediate any hazardous materials present and what steps will be taken to ensure that the local community is protected from contamination during construction and operation of the Project.

FDOT will construct the IRIS project on fill placed on the existing grade, and no subsurface work is proposed; therefore, there will be no involvement with soil or groundwater contamination.

There are no known activities where a regulatory agency is taking, has taken, or may take action on any property where potential contamination could have an impact on the proposed project. FDOT will re-evaluate the identified contamination sites during the design phase to verify that construction activities will not encounter contaminated sites. FDOT will conduct the Level 2 testing on medium/high risk sites impacted by the proposed alignment during the design phase. FDOT will also re-evaluate any changes to the proposed improvements, including modifications to the surface drainage, infiltration or groundwater movement that results in proposed construction activities at the identified contamination sites, during the design phase.

J. Property Acquisition: *Is property acquisition needed for the Project?*

No (continue to K)

Yes, indicate how much property and whether the acquisition will result in relocation of businesses or individuals. **Note:** *acquiring property prior to completing the NEPA process and receiving written FRA concurrence in the NEPA recommendation may jeopardize Federal financial participation in the Project.*

K. Community Impacts and Environmental Justice: *Is the Project likely to result in impacts to adjacent communities? Impacts might be both beneficial (e.g. economic benefits) or adverse (e.g. reduction in community cohesion).*

No, describe the steps taken to determine whether the Project might result in impacts to adjacent communities. (Continue to L)

In accordance with the U.S. DOT Final Order on Environmental Justice in Executive Order 12898, a socioeconomic analysis was performed for this project. As shown in Exhibits 5 and 6, the 2010 U.S. Census and the 2007-2011 American Community Survey document populations with low income (below poverty level), minorities and limited English proficiency within the study area; however, no disproportionate impacts to these populations are anticipated.

FDOT anticipates that the project will have no adverse effects on nearby neighborhoods or communities since the communities were built around the historic FEC Railway, which operates freight service today. There will be no community cohesion impacts as land uses were built adjacent to the railroad and no right-of-way impacts are

anticipated.

In compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, FDOT developed this project and solicited public participation without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status. Refer to Section W for a description of the public outreach efforts undertaken as part of this project.

Yes, characterize the socio-economic profile of the affected community, including the presence of minority or low-income populations.

Describe any potential adverse effects to communities, including noise, visual and barrier effects. Indicate whether the Project will have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on minority or low-income populations. Describe outreach efforts targeted specifically at minority or low-income populations.

L. Impacts On Wetlands: *Does the Project temporarily or permanently impact wetlands or require alterations to streams or waterways?*

No, describe the steps taken to determine that the Project is not likely to temporarily or permanently impact wetlands or require alterations to streams or waterways.

FDOT evaluated the project corridor for wetlands. In September 2013, a field reconnaissance to locate and delineate wetlands within the 1,000-foot buffer width was conducted in accordance with the "Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands" (United States Army Corps of Engineers [USACE], 1987), "The Florida Wetlands Delineation Manual" (Florida Department of Environmental Protection [FDEP]), 1995), the Florida Land Use Cover Classification System (FLUCCS, 1999), and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) classification system as described in "Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the United States, 1979."

The 1,000-foot buffer width is heavily urbanized with few open areas, and no wetlands were identified within it. The cut banks of the canal in the western portion of the 1,000-foot buffer width are too steep to support jurisdictional wetlands.

The additional analysis, described above, concluded that there are no wetlands located within the proposed alignment or the limits of the proposed improvements.

Yes, show wetlands and waters on the site map and classification. Describe the Project's potential impact to on-site and adjacent wetlands and waters and attach any correspondence with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

Is a Section 404 Permit necessary?

Yes, attach all permit related documentation

No

M. Floodplain Impacts: *Is the Project located within the 100-year floodplain or are regulated floodways affected?*

No

Yes, describe the potential for impacts due to changes in floodplain capacity or water flow, if any and how the Project will comply with Executive Order 11988. If impacts are likely, attach scale maps describing potential impacts and describe any coordination with regulatory entities.

N. Water Quality: *Are protected waters of special quality or concern, or protected drinking water resources present at or directly adjacent to the Project site?*

No, describe the steps taken to identify *protected waters of special quality or concern, or protected drinking water resources present at or directly adjacent to the Project site.*

There are no protected waters of special quality or concern, or protected drinking water resources present at or directly adjacent to the limits of the proposed project. The project, once completed, will not result in additional water runoff or generation of wastewater, nor will it change the existing drainage or groundwater recharge patterns of the area. Therefore, no long-term negative impact on local groundwater or surface water quality will occur as a result of the project. There is no involvement with essential fish habitat or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) trust fishery resources.

Yes, describe water resource and the potential for impact from the Project, and any coordination with regulatory entities.

O. Navigable Waterways: *Does the Project cross or have effect on a navigable waterway?*

No (continue to P)

Yes, describe potential for impact and any coordination with US Coast Guard.

P. Coastal Zones: *Is the Project in a designated coastal zone?*

No (continue to Q)

Yes, describe coordination with the State regarding consistency with the coastal zone management plan and attach the State finding if available.

Q. Prime and Unique Farmlands: *Does the Project impact any prime or unique farmlands?*

No, describe the steps taken to identify *impacts to prime or unique farmlands.*

Yes, describe potential for impact and any coordination with the Soil Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture.

R. Critical Habitat and Endangered Species: *Are there any designated critical habitat areas (woodlands, prairies, wetlands, rivers, lakes, streams, and geological formations determined to be essential for the survival of a threatened or endangered species) within or directly adjacent to*

the Project site?

No, describe the steps taken to identify critical habitat within or directly adjacent to the Project site.

Yes, describe them and the potential for impact.

Due to the developed nature of the area, limited threatened and/or endangered species and associated habitat exist in the study area. FDOT evaluated a 1,000-foot buffer from the proposed improvements for potential impacts to critical habitat areas. Based on a literature review (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission [FFWCC], Florida Natural Areas Inventory [FNAI], and USFWS), available Geographic Information System (GIS) data, and field reconnaissance (September 2013), no critical habitat areas were observed within the 1,000-foot buffer width. Therefore, FDOT has determined that there will be no effect on protected natural resources/critical habitat areas.

Are any Threatened or endangered species located in or adjacent to the site?

No, describe the steps taken to identify the presence of endangered species directly adjacent to the Project site.

FDOT evaluated a 1,000-foot buffer from the proposed improvements for potential impacts to threatened and endangered species. Based on a literature review (FNAI, FFWCC, USFWS), available GIS data, and field reconnaissance (September 2013), no species were observed within the 1000-foot study area.

Therefore, FDOT has determined that there will be no effect on any protected species. USFWS concurrence is provided in Attachment 2 .

Refer to Attachment 3, Natural Resources Technical Memorandum, for further information.

Yes, describe them and the potential for impact. Describe any consultation with the State and the US Fish and Wildlife Service about the impacts to these natural areas and on threatened and endangered fauna and flora that may be affected. If required prepare a biological assessment and attach it and any applicable agency correspondence.

S. Public Safety: Will the Project result in any public safety impacts?

No, describe method used to determine whether the Project results in any safety or security impacts

The project is in a heavily industrialized area. No aspects of the project will adversely impact the safety and security of the railroad and/or railroad operations. FDOT will implement pedestrian safety measures such as adequate signage at the modified grade crossing consistent with the guidelines set forth in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (Federal Highway Administration [FHWA], 2009. A summary of the grade crossing is shown in Attachment 1 (Exhibit 9).

Yes, describe the safety or security concerns and the measures that would need to be taken to provide for the safe and secure operation of the Project during and after its construction.

T. Cumulative Impacts: A “cumulative impact” is the impact on the environment that results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts may include ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or resulting from smaller actions that individually have no significant impact. Determining the cumulative environmental consequences of an action requires delineating the cause-and-effect relationships between the multiple actions and the resources, ecosystems, and human communities of concern.

Are cumulative impacts likely? No Yes, describe the impacts:

FDOT evaluated the All Aboard Florida (AAF) project (www.allaboardflorida.com) and the planned Tri-Rail Coastal Link Study (refer to Section W for brief discussion), to identify reasonably foreseeable future actions and the potential for cumulative impacts.

The AAF project proposes high-speed intercity passenger service on the FEC Railway and there are no plans to use the SFRC for the proposed high-speed service. The proposed AAF passenger trains on the FEC Railway for the AAF project were documented in the approved Finding of No Significant Impact (January 2013). The AAF project is being studied further as part of an ongoing Environmental Impact Statement; however, FDOT anticipates that the proposed Northwood project will not result in increased freight traffic on the FEC Railway and that cumulative impacts will not occur. The AAF project has an identified funding plan and is a federally approved action and, therefore, is a reasonably foreseeable action.

As of February 2014, the Tri-Rail Coastal Link project is in the planning phase and the environmental study is anticipated to begin in 2014 (pending Federal Transit Administration [FTA] approval). There is no funding programmed for the future design, construction or operations phases. The Tri-Rail Coastal Link project is not federally approved and no funding plan has been identified to date and, therefore, is not a reasonably foreseeable action for the purposes of cumulative effects analysis. The operating plan proposes use of the existing Pompano Connection (Broward County) for passenger service between the SFRC and the FEC Railway. The IRIS NE Connection will provide improved connectivity to the CSXT/Tri-Rail Hialeah Yard that Tri-Rail uses today. There is a potential for increased non-revenue (unscheduled) maintenance traffic on the IRIS connection as part of that proposal. However, any future non-revenue service for passenger trains would be periodic and would result in minimal traffic and noise impacts.

Based on the above evaluation, FDOT anticipates no significant cumulative impacts from the proposed project.

U. Indirect Impacts: “Indirect impacts” are those that are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect impacts may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

Are Indirect impacts likely? No Yes, describe the impacts:

- V. **Mitigation:** Describe all mitigation measure commitments which address identified impacts that have been incorporated into the Project, if any.

Mitigation is not anticipated.

- W. **Public Notification:** *Briefly describe any public outreach efforts undertaken on behalf of the Project, if any. Indicate opportunities the public has had to comment on the Project (e.g., Board meetings, open houses, special hearings).*

The Tri-Rail Coastal Link Study proposes reintroducing passenger service along an 85-mile segment of the FEC Railway corridor between Jupiter and Miami. The Tri-Rail Coastal Link will serve 28 cities including the urban core central business districts (CBDs) of West Palm Beach, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. The Tri-Rail Coastal Link Service is being developed to integrate with the existing Tri-Rail commuter rail service.

The IRIS Connection was included as a component of the proposed improvements associated with the larger Tri-Rail Coastal Link project, and as such has been presented at numerous outreach activities, including public workshops/open houses, staff and elected officials briefings, and Board meetings during the Phase 2 and Phase 3 analysis of the Tri-Rail Coastal Link Study. There has been no known public concern expressed and no significant public controversy about the proposed action; it is generally supported by the public, agencies and elected officials.

FDOT conducted coordination with the City of Hialeah Mayor Carlos Hernandez to confirm continued support for the project. In addition, FDOT distributed an Advance Notification Package in October 2013 to federal, state, regional and local agencies, and elected/appointed officials. No objections or opposition to the project were recorded.

In addition, coordination between FDOT, local governments and the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has taken place prior to this evaluation.

Has the Project generated any public discussion or concern, even though it may be limited to a relatively small subset of the community? Indicate any concerns expressed by agencies or the public regarding the Project.

The project has not generated any known public discussion or concern among members of the public, interested stakeholders or agencies.

- X. **Related Federal, State, or Local Actions:** *Does the Project require any additional actions (e.g., permits) by other Agencies? Attach copies of relevant correspondence. It is not necessary to attach voluminous permit applications if a single cover Agency transmittal will indicate that a permit has been granted. Permitting issues should be described in the relevant resource discussion above.*

- Section 106** *Historic Properties*
- Section 401/404 of the Clean Water Act;** *Wetlands and Water Quality*
- Section 402 of the Clean Water Act**
- USCG 404** *Navigable Waterways*
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act**

- Endangered Species Act** *Threatened and Endangered Biological Resources*
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act** *Essential Fish Habitat*
- Safe Drinking Water Act**
- Section 6(f) Land and Conservation Act**
- Other State or Local Requirements** (Describe)

This project will be permitted under the FDEP 10-2 Self Certification process.

