

7 COMMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) encourages public involvement activities early and throughout the process of alternatives development and environmental impact analysis. FDOT has conducted extensive public and agency involvement for the Central Florida Commuter Rail Transit Project. The approved EA highlights the public and agency activities that occurred during the NEPA process. This chapter documents the public involvement activities that have been conducted in relation to the project scope changes and follows procedures outlined in FDOT's Public Involvement Handbook.

7.1 Public Involvement Update

7.1.1 Media Outreach and Publicity

Project information is disseminated through the local media in the form of news releases, informational packets, video clips, brochures, newsletters, and stories. To date, numerous news stories have been aired and printed about the Project, including 41 print media stories currently posted on the Project website. The Project sponsor's staff continues to conduct media interviews for television, radio and Internet broadcast, as well as newspaper and magazine publication. The <http://www.cfrail.com> website includes scrolling banner notification on the website's home page about upcoming public events or new information related to the Project. A thorough description of the Project website can be found in the approved EA.

7.1.2 Additional Agency and Community Meetings

In addition to the meetings previously listed in the approved EA, a series of additional meetings have been held with a wide variety of public groups, government agencies, and major commercial and institutional stakeholders along the Project Corridor.

As part of the Interlocal Agreements executed by the local governmental partners in July 2007, a Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was formed to update the local government partners and stakeholders on the progress of the project and the coordination of technical issues. The Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission (CFCRC) meets on a quarterly basis and consists of the following representatives:

- Volusia County Council Member
- Seminole County Commissioner
- Mayor of Orange County
- Mayor of City of Orlando
- Osceola County Commissioner

All Commission meetings are noticed in accordance with state statutes and noticed on the project's website <http://www.cfrail.com>.

The TAC meets on a monthly basis and consists of the following representatives:

- Volusia County
- City of DeLand
- City of DeBary
- VOTRAN
- Volusia County Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Seminole County
- City of Sanford
- City of Lake Mary
- City of Longwood
- City of Altamonte Springs
- Orange County
- City of Maitland
- City of Winter Park
- City of Orlando
- Osceola County
- City of Kissimmee
- LYNX
- METROPLAN ORLANDO
- FDOT

All TAC meetings are noticed in accordance with state statutes and noticed on the project's website <http://www.cfrail.com>.

The following paragraphs describe the coordination meetings held to discuss the project scope changes as documented in this supplement to the approved EA.

Fort Florida Road Station

At the request of the Volusia County Commission and the City of DeBary, the DeBary/Saxon Boulevard Extension Station was moved to Fort Florida Road. The meetings documented in Table 7-1 were held to discuss the Volusia County Stations including the Fort Florida Road station.

Table 7-1 Agency and Community CRT Informational Meetings for Fort Florida Road Station

Date	Description
April 23, 2007	Volusia County Council – Project Presentation
May 8, 2007	Volusia County Council – Project Presentation
July 31, 2007	Volusia County Council – Commission Vote approving Interlocal Agreements
August 3, 2007	Volusia County Council – Station Meeting
August 27, 2007	Volusia County Council, Crossland Group – Station Meeting
September 6, 2007	Florida Power & Light, DeBary representatives, Volusia County and FDOT – Station Meeting
November 7, 2007	Florida Power & Light, DeBary representatives, Volusia County and FDOT – Station Meeting
November 28, 2007	TAC – Station Workshop
February 5, 2008	Volusia County Land Use Planning Workshop
March 18, 2008	Volusia County Land Use Planning Workshop

Maitland Station

The addition of the Maitland Station was a direct result of a City of Maitland Task Force that was created to discuss the CRT station location. Public meetings were held by the City of Maitland to discuss the addition of a Maitland station into the Full Build corridor. The meetings listed in Table 7-2 are in addition to the Maitland meetings listed in the approved EA.

Table 7-2 Agency and Community CRT Informational Meetings for Maitland Station

Date	Description
March 21, 2007	Maitland Task Force Meeting – Station Meeting
April 23, 2007	Maitland City Council Meeting – Resolution to include the Maitland station south of Greenwood Drive on US 17/92
May 23, 2007	Maitland Community Forum – Maitland Station Meeting
June 11, 2007	Maitland City Council Meeting – Maitland Station Meeting
July 10, 2007	Maitland City Council Meeting – Maitland Station Meeting
September 24, 2007	Maitland City Council Meeting - Maitland Station Meeting
November 28, 2007	TAC – Station Workshop
December 11, 2007	Maitland City Council Meeting - Maitland Station Meeting
December 21, 2007	Maitland City Council Meeting - Maitland Station Meeting
January 9, 2008	Maitland and Seminole County ROW Acquisition Conference
January 11, 2008	Maitland City Council Meeting - Maitland Station Meeting

Longwood Station

At the request of the City of Longwood, additional meetings were held with representatives of Longwood, Seminole County, and FDOT to discuss the re-configuration of the park-and-ride lot for the Longwood Station. Table 7-3 lists the meetings held to discuss the re-configuration of the park-and-ride lot for the Longwood Station.

Table 7-3 Agency and Community CRT Informational Meetings for Longwood Station

Date	Description
July 18, 2007	Meeting with Mayor and City Manager – Station Meeting
July 25, 2007	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and architect – Station Meeting
October 1, 2007	Meeting with Mayor, City Manager, and FDOT staff – Station Meeting
October 17, 2007	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and Public Works – Station Meeting
October 22 2007	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and Public Works – Station Meeting
October 30, 2007	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and Public Works – Station meeting
November 28, 2007	TAC – Station Workshop
February 12, 2008	Meeting with City of Longwood staff –Station meeting
April 1, 2008	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and Public Works – Station meeting
April 2, 2008	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and architect – Station Meeting
April 10, 2008	Meeting with City of Longwood staff and architect – Station Meeting

VSMF

Several coordination meetings and teleconferences have been conducted between representatives of FDOT and Amtrak to discuss the use of the Sanford Auto Train yard for DMU vehicle maintenance. The following is a list of dates of the coordination meetings and teleconferences:

- April 6, 2007
- June 22, 2007
- July 19, 2007
- September 5, 2007
- September 10, 2007
- September 13, 2007
- September 27, 2007
- October 12, 2007
- October 16, 2007
- October 18, 2007
- October 30, 2007
- November 26, 2007
- November 28, 2007

7.1.3 Florida Department of State, Division of Historical Resources

Correspondence detailing a cultural resource assessment methodology and area of potential affect (APE) for the CFCRT Project was prepared for the Project in February 2005 and reviewed with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). A full description of the Draft Cultural Resources Assessment Survey Report and a list of commitments to SHPO can be found in the approved EA.

A teleconference was held with SHPO on December 6, 2007 to discuss the Sanford Amtrak facility's role within the considered alternate VSMF site adjacent to the Amtrak Auto Train Facility. As the Rand Yard site has been determined as the preferred location for the VSMF, there will be no impact to the Sanford Amtrak facility from the CFCRT Project.

FDOT and the consultant team continues to consult with the Florida State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) regarding sensitive design solutions that will avoid and/or minimize impacts to historic properties and ensure that all concerns raised by the agency are addressed. In a letter dated June 20, 2008, SHPO has determined that the construction of the Fort Florida Road, Longwood and Maitland stations will have no effect on any significant historic structures or districts (Appendix C).

7.2 Public Comment

FDOT has completed a supplement to the approved EA for certain station changes associated with Fort Florida Road, Longwood, and Maitland of the CRT Project. In close coordination with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), FDOT is also undertaking a general analysis of noise and vibration and grade crossing delay impacts associated with CSXT's plan to move freight traffic from the A-Line to the S-Line, which extends from Jacksonville through Ocala to Lakeland, and portions of the A-Line from Lakeland to Auburndale. Public hearings were held to afford interested persons the opportunity to express their views concerning the location, conceptual design, social, economic, and environmental effects of Financial Identification Number 412994-2-22-01, otherwise known as, the Central Florida Commuter Rail Transit (CFCRT) Project.

Despite the fact that the CRT and the S-Line improvements are separate projects, FTA and FDOT have decided to include in this Supplemental Environmental Assessment a general analysis of the impacts of moving freight from the A-line to the S-line, in part due to the inaccurate statements made to the public in the past. This analysis is being completed to provide the public with "information useful in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the environment" in the spirit of Section 102(2)(G) of the National Environmental Policy Act. See 42 U.S.C. § 4332(G). The information is especially important because FDOT will not be performing its own environmental analysis on the relocation of freight since this is not required under State of Florida environmental review process. Further, the analysis contains no proposals for mitigation, as the proposal to move freight from the A-line to the S-line has been made by private entities with assistance from the State of Florida, and, as such, is outside the control and discretion of FTA.

The Supplemental EA was made available to the public for a 30-day public comment review period. The general public was notified of the availability of the document utilizing the following methods:

- Copies of the Supplemental EA and supporting technical documentation was placed in libraries located in Volusia, Seminole, Orange, and Osceola Counties and were available at FDOT District 1 offices in Bartow and FDOT District 5 offices in Orlando and DeLand.
- Legal advertisements were published in the following newspapers along the A-Line and S-Line
 - *Florida Administrative Weekly*
 - *Orlando Sentinel*
 - *La Prensa*
 - *Daytona Beach News Journal*
 - *DeLand Beacon*
 - *Osceola News Gazette*
 - *Lakeland Ledger*
 - *Ocala Star Banner*
 - *Gainesville Sun*
- E-mail notifications were sent to the project’s mailing list
- Notifications were made at the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings

7.3 CFCRT Public Hearings

Public hearings on the Supplemental EA were held on Thursday, June 12, 2008 in the City of Sanford (Seminole County) and the City of Maitland (Orange County) to give the public an opportunity to express their views about the CFCRT Project, as well as any comments regarding impacts associated with the movement of freight traffic from the A-Line to the S-Line. The public hearings were held at the following locations:

Public Hearing Sites	
City of Sanford City Hall 300 N. Park Avenue Sanford, FL 32771	Homewood Suites by Hilton Orlando North 290 Southhall Lane Maitland, FL 32751

Public hearing notifications were sent to those property owners residing within 300 feet of the proposed project scope changes even if not directly affected by the CFCRT Project. In addition, notifications were sent to elected officials along both the Project corridor and the S-Line corridor; media; government and agency personnel; the Central Florida Commuter Rail Commission; the Technical Advisory Committee and other interested parties. More than 293 individuals were notified – including about 64 federal, state and local elected officials representing communities along the S-Line. The <http://www.cfrail.com> website was updated to include a scrolling banner notification on the website’s home page about the upcoming public hearings. The Supplemental EA and supporting technical documentation regarding the S-Line general analysis were uploaded to the website for public inspection. Public comment also was solicited on the website, and public hearing locations were prominently displayed.

A legal advertisement for the public hearings was published in the *Florida Administrative Weekly* on May 16, 2008 and published a minimum of two times in the following publications: the *DeLand Beacon*, the *Daytona Beach News Journal*, the *Orlando Sentinel*, *La Prensa*, the *Osceola News Gazette*, the *Lakeland Ledger*, *Ocala Star Banner*, and the *Gainesville Sun*.

A total of 111 people signed attendance sheets at the two public hearings – 57 in Maitland and 54 in Sanford. The public hearings on the Supplemental EA included a description of the proposed project scope changes associated with the Fort Florida Road, Longwood and Maitland stations, as well as a general analysis of noise and vibration and grade-crossing delay impacts associated with CSXT's plan to move freight traffic generally from the A-Line (where the CFCRT is proposed) to the S-Line, which extends from Jacksonville through Ocala to Lakeland, terminating in Auburndale. Participants had more than an hour during the open house portion of the hearing to review boards that included a video loop providing information about the CFCRT Project, as well as aerial photographs of proposed changes at each station location along with potential transit oriented development opportunities at each station stop. Additional boards related to the movement of freight from the A-Line to the S-Line including large scale noise contour maps were also on display.

Project team members were available at both locations to answer questions and assist the public, as were FDOT right-of-way acquisition professionals. The formal portion of the public hearing consisted of a Power Point presentation that included maps and graphical illustrations; as well as the aforementioned project boards and included a discussion of the impacts of the movement of freight.

A court stenographer was available to take public comment and record the proceedings; comment forms were distributed and collected, as well as by mail and e-mail; and the public was given an opportunity to speak orally about the project at each public hearing. Public comments were received through June 23, 2008.

In general, the comments received through the public hearing process were favorable, though some expressed concern about impacts associated with CSXT's decision to relocate some freight from the A-Line to the S-Line and potential impacts to downtown Lakeland's historic resources, among other issues.

A total of 20 people provided statements during public testimony at the hearings – 14 at the Maitland hearing and 6 at the Sanford hearing. Nineteen people spoke in support of the CFCRT Project, though 7 also expressed concern about CSXT's plans to relocate freight traffic to the S-Line, the impact that decision would have on downtown Lakeland and the need for FDOT to further study the impacts of freight relocation. One person expressed concern about potential CSXT job losses. Comments received in support of the project focused on: how the commuter rail would assist in reducing traffic; provide an alternative mode of travel especially with the high cost of fuel; serve as an extension to other major employment centers such as the Orlando International Airport, the Burnham Institute, VA Hospital, and Innovation Way; and is just the starting point for future expansion.

Following the public hearings, 22 written comment forms were filled out and submitted via mail. Approximately 18 were in favor of the commuter rail; 2 expressed concern about the impacts of CSXT's freight relocation on the city of Lakeland; one was concerned about job security with CSXT; and one was concerned about the impacts that CSXT's freight relocation might have on historic downtown Lakeland.

An additional 91 comments or questions were submitted electronically or via the <http://www.cfrail.com> website. Approximately 36 of those comments were in favor and 6 were against the CFCRT Project. Four comments were opposed to CSXT's plan to relocate freight from the A-Line to the S-Line and/or questioned the methodology used in the Supplemental EA S-Line General Analysis of noise, vibration and grade-crossing impacts; one was opposed to Lynx budget cuts; 29 requested more information about bus feeder programs, right of way acquisition, hearing dates, land-use and project status; 14 requested more information about jobs, schedules and reprint permission; and one submitted no written comment but expressed favorable support for the Public Hearing facilities and information presented.

The public hearing transcripts, comment forms, and comments received through the project website are included in the *Comments and Coordination Report* prepared for this Supplemental EA.

7.4 S-Line General Analysis Public Information Workshop

A separate public information workshop was held on the S-Line general analysis on Wednesday, June 4, 2008 in Ocala. The workshop took place at the Central Florida Community College - Ocala Campus, Klein Conference Center located at 3001 SW College Road in Ocala, Florida from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The site was selected for its central location along the 200-mile S-Line corridor study area, to afford all interested residents an opportunity to review information, ask questions and provide comment. The purpose of the public information workshop was to discuss the potential impacts associated with the movement of freight traffic from the A-Line to the S-Line.

Notifications were made to the general public through legal advertisements. The Public Hearing notifications, as previously discussed in Section 7.3, also included information pertaining to the public information workshop and were published in the same newspapers as was done for the CFCRT public hearings. The <http://www.cfrail.com> website was updated to include a scrolling banner notification on the website's home page about the public information workshop on the S-Line. The Supplemental EA and supporting technical documentation was uploaded to the website for public inspection.

A total of 28 people signed attendance sheets at the public information workshop in Ocala. The format was informal and consisted of an open house setting where FDOT and study team members were available to answer questions. Detailed presentation boards and printed materials were made available for public review during the workshop. The boards included maps of the A-Line and the S-Line, a map of the additional freight traffic through the Lakeland area, and large-scale noise contour maps.

A handout of the results of the general analysis of noise and vibration and grade-crossing delay impacts associated with CSXT's plan to move freight traffic generally from the A-Line (where the CRT is proposed) to the S-Line was also distributed.

Seven written comment forms were completed. Two comments were supportive of the CFCRT Project; two included requests for additional information about the project and the methodology used for the S-Line analysis; two requested a formal presentation of information available at the workshop and additional information on the <http://www.cfrail.com> website; and one contained no comments, but responded favorably to the workshop facilities, project staff and display materials. The comment period was held open through June 23, 2008. A copy of the comment forms received are included in the *Comments and Coordination Report* prepared for this Supplemental EA.