

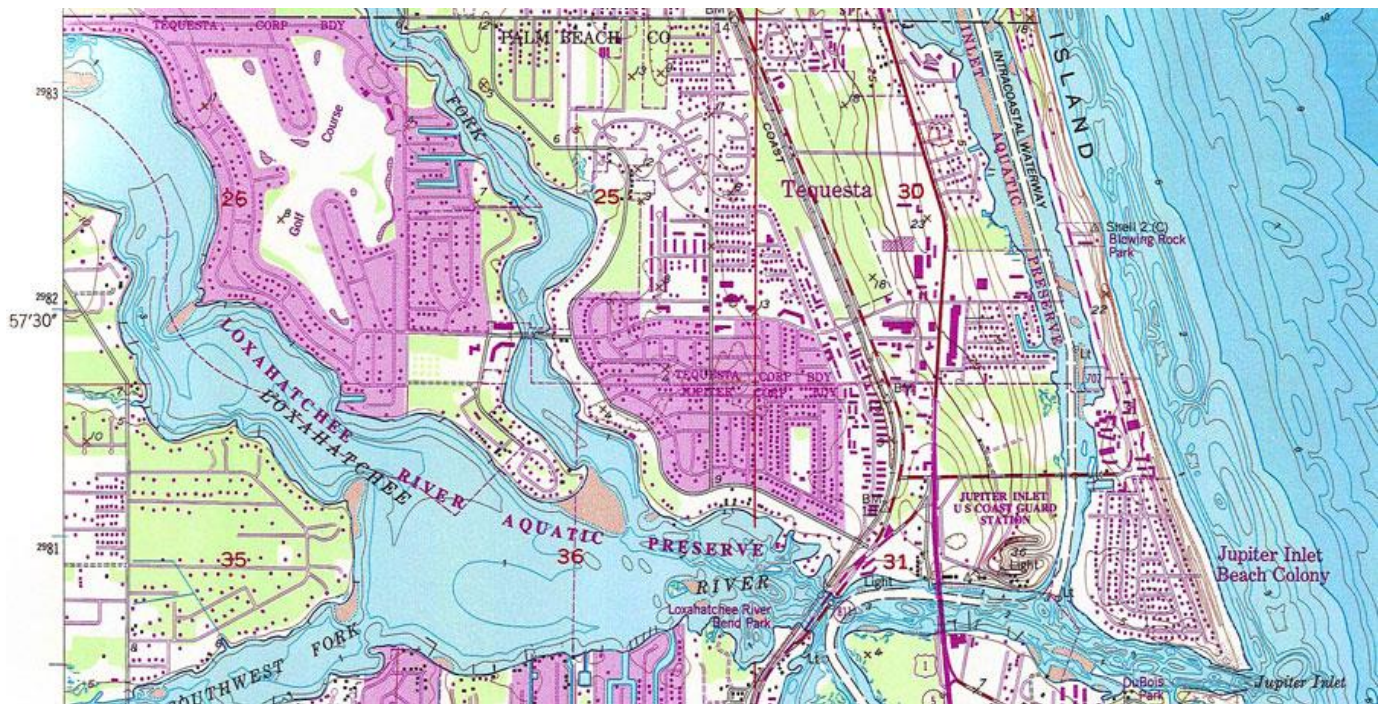


VILLAGE OF TEQUESTA

ALL ABOARD FLORIDA PROJECT

The addition of 32 daily passenger trains to the FECI railroad tracks affecting the Village of Tequesta and adjacent communities north of the Loxahatchee River Aquatic Preserve

CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS



Geography

- Bounded to the east by the Atlantic Ocean, the Jupiter Inlet and Intracoastal Waterway. Loxahatchee River wraps around southern and western sides. North fork of the Loxahatchee creates a peninsula west of the Tequesta Drive Bridge. Tequesta's is bordered to the north by Jonathan Dickinson State Park.



Population Location:

- Primarily single family and low density condos lie west of the railroad tracks. Approximately 85% of the population in Tequesta and adjacent areas live west of the tracks;
- US Highway 1 corridor, multi-family housing developments, all public schools, 95% of commercial property, medical facilities, retail and restaurants are situated east of the tracks;
- Condominiums and Town of Jupiter Inlet Colony lie east of the tracks on Jupiter Island.

Public Safety Facility Locations:

- Tequesta Public Safety Facility (police and fire rescue) is located west of the FECI railroad tracks. The fire rescue department serves the VOT municipality and is contracted to service pockets of Jupiter, unincorporated Palm Beach County and the Town of Jupiter Inlet Colony on Jupiter Island;
- The Village of Tequesta operates Marine-85, the only certified Advanced Life Support (ALS) boat in Palm Beach County. The ALS boat is docked at a Marina located east of the train trestle bridge.

Public Safety Challenges:

- Increasing traffic tie-ups at the three crossings;
- Difficulty for police to respond and receive backup to routine and emergency police calls;
- Inability to access, treat and transport victims of medical emergencies;
- Transports to Jupiter Medical Center requires emergency vehicles first travel east over the tracks and then re-cross to the west two miles south;
- Train bridge lowering and raising mechanism is decades old and frequently fails;
- Bridge difficulties cause southbound trains to block all three road closings – often for hours – the only way out is to travel west through Martin County on a one lane road and double back to cross the tracks at a far distant location;
- Train trestle bridge routinely takes well over 15 minutes to begin the process of being lowered and then raised after a train has passed. Bridge is often left in the lowered position when it is determined that another train will be crossing in 20 - 30 minutes;
- Passageway under the bridge is extremely narrow with strong currents. Two small boats can navigate in different directions but with extreme care;
- Increased lowering of train trestle bridge will cause boat backups on either side of the bridge and increase potential for collisions between boaters and the pilings through the passageway;
- Impossible for Tequesta Marine-85, certified Advanced Life Support boat, to pass under the bridge when lowered.



Social, Economic and Quality of Life Challenges:

- Bisects the Village;
- Train and gate crossing noise impact residents and businesses adjacent to the tracks;
- Curtails easy access by most residents to commercial, retail and restaurants along US Highway 1 corridor;
- Decreases home values impacting ad valorem revenue to Village of Tequesta;
- Stalls growth of recovering commercial, retail and restaurant establishments;
- Increases pollution at grade crossing while vehicles idle at crossings;
- Increases use of Island Way to avoid possible tie-ups at grade crossings;
- Increases unfunded mandates to grade and pave grade crossings after FEC track maintenance and repairs due to additional rail track and double-tracking;

Mitigating Considerations:

- Divert or decrease number of freight trains;
- Reschedule all or most freight trains to run at night;
- Limit # of train crossings per hour during peak times – combination of fast and freight;
- Locate a Public Safety substation east of the railroad tracks;
- Access to real-time train-monitoring for VOT public safety dispatch center;
- Quiet Zones on County Line Road, Tequesta Drive & Riverside Drive;
- Widen and upgrade pedestrian pathways at grade crossing between Cypress Drive and Old Dixie
- Install landscape screening along Old Dixie Highway and Cypress Drive;
- Access to fiber capability
- Improve grade crossing access to Jupiter Medical Center

Mitigating Considerations – Loxahatchee River Train Bridge:

- Replace the Loxahatchee train bridge;
- Replace raising and lowering mechanism – critical for both land and marine safety;
- Widen the span beneath the bridge for safer boat travel when the bridge is raised;
- Require bridge tender onsite during hours of passenger trains;
- Limit and schedule times that the bridge will be in the lowered position;
- Install count down time clock i.e. – “bridge will close in 8, 7, 6, etc. minutes”
- Create emergency marine vehicle mooring and land transport area west of the train bridge;
- Fund cost-sharing among neighboring marine patrols to maintain a unit west of the bridge on weekends and holidays.