

Village of Tequesta

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May 8, 2020

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

Yesterday I received a call from the Chief of Staff of Virgin Trains, formerly Brightline. Although service between Miami and West Palm Beach and Miami has been stopped because of COVID-19, the railroad continues to move forward with construction of the West Palm Beach to Orlando segment. As many of you will recall, the Village of Tequesta took a strong stance of objection to the condition of the Loxahatchee River Train Bridge because of a threat to the health safety and welfare of our Village residents. The bridge and its mechanism hail from the original train service constructed by Henry Flagler and routinely fails to open and close properly often preventing our Fire Rescue team from transporting patients to Jupiter Medical Center in a timely fashion.

Most of us are disappointed that the train service is going to proceed. However, Virgin Trains has procured all of the permits and permissions to move forward. Previous lawsuits and appeals have been either lost or withdrawn. That said, Virgin Trains has now agreed to replace the entire bascule mechanism and most of the entire span as they rebuild the bridge thus greatly improving our ability to take care of residents in times of emergency.

Attached you will find a press release and frequently asked questions being issued by Virgin Trains. The Village will remain vigilant and monitor Virgin Trains to ensure they maintain the work promised on the timetable at which they agreed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Village Manager Jeremy Allen or me.

Best regards,

Abby Brennan
Mayor

Vice-Mayor Kyle Stone
Council Member Frank D'Ambra

Mayor Abby Brennan
Village Manager Jeremy Allen

Council Member Laurie Brandon
Council Member Bruce Prince



MEDIA CONTACT:

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Virgin Trains Begins Construction on Bridges Along North-South Corridor

ORLANDO, FL. (May 7, 2020) –Virgin Trains, formerly Brightline, continues progress on the Orlando extension, connecting South Florida with Central Florida, beginning construction on 28 bridges located along the 129-mile north-south corridor between Brevard and Palm Beach Counties.

Bridge work has begun on bridges over Crane Creek in Melbourne, Turkey Creek in Palm Bay, Goat Creek in Grant-Valkaria, Sebastian River on the Brevard/Indian River County line and the Loxahatchee River in Jupiter.

Specific bridge work varies by location with initial work including the mobilization of cranes, materials, equipment and crews as well as pile driving to install temporary work trestles for crane access. The majority of bridge work, including pile-driving, will take place during daylight hours between 7AM and 7PM. Bridge work is expected to continue until mid-2022. The removal and replacement of existing bridges has been extensively coordinated with the Army Corps of Engineers, the State Historic Preservation Office, multiple state water management districts, and, for any bridges over navigable waterways, the U.S. Coast Guard. Virgin Trains will work with the U.S. Coast Guard to provide information for Notices to Mariners for bridges over any waters used by recreational and commercial boaters. Specific construction information for each bridge project can be found online at <https://www.gobrightline.com/railroad-construction> and photo downloads can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/VTUSABridgesMay7>.

Virgin Trains' Orlando \$2.5B extension project consists of 170 miles of track and 53 bridges from West Palm Beach to Orlando International Airport and is expected to be completed in late 2022.

Virgin Trains has taken significant proactive steps amid COVID-19. The construction teams, comprised of more than 750 workers spread out over 170 miles, are following the lead of the CDC and state and local health officials and employing safety measures including social distancing, face coverings, temperature checks, limiting work teams to small groups and increased use of disinfectants in work areas.

About Virgin Trains

Virgin Trains, formerly known as Brightline, is the first privately funded passenger rail system in America in over a century. Virgin Trains is designed to reinvent travel and take cars off the road by connecting city pairs and congested corridors that are too close to fly and too long to drive. Providing fast, efficient, hospitality-driven transportation featuring the latest in customer-friendly amenities, Virgin Trains currently operates in Florida between Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach, with plans to expand to Orlando, Boca Raton, Aventura and PortMiami. The company is also on track to break ground between Las Vegas and Southern California in 2020.

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BRIDGE FAQ SHEET

Loxahatchee River Bridge Project – Milepost 282.58

- **Jupiter, FL (Palm Beach Co)**
- **What is the timetable for construction on the bridge?**
 - Work began in December 2019 and will last through February 2022.
- **Is the bridge being rehabilitated or replaced?**
 - The girders, electrical and mechanical components are being replaced. This bridge is considered eligible as a contributing resource towards the linear FECR Historic District and Virgin Trains has met all state and federal guidelines for historic preservation of the district.
- **What work is being done to the bridge?**
 - All of the electrical and mechanical components that operate the bridge, including computers, sensors, motors, brakes, gears and generators will be replaced. All structural steel will be replaced. The existing concrete piers and the existing boat fender system will remain.
 - In cooperation with the Jupiter Inlet District, the contractor will be dredging span 4 to help with water depth in that span.
 - Work will include replacing the existing track and adding back the second track that was previously on the bridge from the Henry Flagler days.
- **What will the initial work consist of?**
 - Initial work will be to clear the approaches to the bridge and install a temporary work trestle (platform) on the west side of the railroad tracks north of the bridge for cranes and material to access the construction site.
 - Offsite fabrication of bridge components has already begun.
- **What is the timeframe for initial work and when will bridge demo work begin?**
 - Initial work will begin on the north side of the river between Riverside Dr. and the bridge to build a temporary track platform for moving cranes to the river. This work, including pile driving, is expected to take place the weeks of May 11 and May 18 during daytime hours.
 - Once the track platform is completed, a temporary river access work bridge will be installed to access the waters north and west of the bridge. This will take place throughout most of June. This will also include pile driving.
 - Once the river access bridge is completed, barges will be assembled in the water for the cranes. Barge assembly is expected to begin after July 4 and completed by the end of July.
 - Demolition work will begin on the south side of the bridge and continue north. It will include removing girders from the dormant and live sides of the bridge. This demolition will occur from August through the end of the year.
 - During the initial access and barge work, the channel will not be blocked to watercraft, however there may be short windows when the river traffic is interrupted for safety as heavy loads are swung into place with the cranes, plus a larger half-day channel outage to load the cranes onto the barges.



- Work on the bascule (lift) span and other work having substantial impact to watercraft is expected to begin in 2021 and will include coordination with the U.S. Coast Guard and local municipalities and residents.
- **How will we construct the bridge?**
 - First, a temporary trestle will be built along the northwest side of the bridge.
 - For Spans 1 and 3 thru 9, barges will be used to remove the existing girders and replace them with new girders atop the existing concrete piers.
 - For Span 2 (the bascule span or “drawbridge”), first the mechanical and electrical equipment will be removed from the bridge. During this, the existing span will be lifted in and out of place with a crane once or twice per day for boats. The replacement steel girders will be partially assembled on barges and then swapped out with the existing girders and similarly lifted in and out with cranes once or twice per day. This will be communicated in more detail through Notices to Mariners.
 - The remainder of the Span 2 girders will be installed in-place on the bridge, requiring a multi-day boating and train outage, then the new mechanical and electrical equipment attached and tested for movable operation.
- **What is the cost?**
 - The total cost of the bridge is approximately \$34M.
- **For more information contact:**
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