

Public hearings focus on proposed I-95 interchanges

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August 10, 2006

PORT ST. LUCIE — More than a hundred residents attended a public hearing Wednesday evening to discuss the proposed interchange at Interstate 95 and the Crosstown Parkway.

Several residents from the Lake Charles neighborhood in St. Lucie West said they were concerned about noise from the interchange ramps and requested sound walls.

"We all have very expensive homes and we want to make sure the values are kept up," said Joan Hassler, president of the Lake Charles homeowners association. "We need high berms with trees."

Transportation officials said noise levels east of I-95 were projected until 2030 and determined that noise-reduction measures weren't needed.

Other residents said they were concerned about traffic patterns in other parts of the city, including where the Crosstown Parkway would cross the St. Lucie River to get to U.S. 1. There is no definite route for the river crossing yet. "I can't fathom they're doing a highway without it going anywhere," said Stephen Tator, 62.

Resident Paul McCaffrey said city leaders should be more concerned about a north-south corridor than the interchange. He said he was worried about accidents on I-95, which could increase traffic on other north-south roads.

Developers west of I-95 are paying \$15 million for the Crosstown interchange, and another \$15 million for one at Becker Road and I-95. Transportation planners said the interchanges will ease traffic on Port St. Lucie and St. Lucie West boulevards.

Construction could start in early 2007 and finish by 2009.

A public hearing on the Becker Road/I-95 interchange is scheduled for 6 p.m. today at the Port St. Lucie Community Center, 2195 S.E. Airoso Blvd.

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REPRINTED FROM THE PORT ST LUCIE NEWS AUGUST 10, 2006