**Letter 2 – For State Senator or State Representative**

**Please use this “as is” or as an outline for a “make it your own” email to the MPO, use all, part or change with your own comments. Feel free to use these points – Safety, Security, Home Value and Environmental Concerns**

Date: March 2023

Dear [State Senator] or [State Representative],

This email is to make you aware of a situation that has been proposed in your district and to urge you to vote against funding the Sun Trail bill as presented now and, if approved, to allow those funds to be used for all bike trails, not just for railroad improvements.

There is a proposed bill to fund up to $100 million Sun Trail funds for the improvement of railroads into linear parks including bike paths. With the devastation of Hurricane Ian still upon us, we should not be committing that money to such railroad improvements. In addition, if approved, those funds should not be limited in use for railroad property improvements, but for any and all bike and pedestrian path improvements.

Lee County is working on a plan to purchase the local “abandoned” Seminole Railway starting in North Naples and running through Bonita Springs, Estero, San Carlos Park and ending at Alico Rd. Once purchased, the bigger plan is to convert the existing “rail” to a bike/walking path. One stretch of the existing rail bisects a gated community (Estero Country Club at the Vines) and will run right through the backyards of the San Carlos Park homes. This would negatively impact the community in several ways:

1. Safety of existing homeowners within these communities
2. Those using the trail would have easy access to the county club facilities (bathrooms, clubhouse, etc.)
3. The Vines has only one access for emergency vehicles, who will need to stop at the intersecting road/rail prior to advancing, negatively affecting arrival time at the scene of the emergency. There are many times where seconds are critical to the outcome of the emergency.

We are generally in favor of the rail conversion to a bike/walking path south of Estero Parkway, but we are confident that a better mutual solution could be engineered so that our intimate, united, community of which 440 families call home, and the homes in San Carlos Park, can continue to experience the safety and security that they have had until now.

We are all taxpayers and deserve the same consideration as a gated community that is large and has many more members.

Our voice is one of reasoning and one that we would hope our government officials will support the residents of the Vines in an effort to save our gated community and safe lifestyle.

Sincerely,

[Name/Address]