



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

New River Crossing

Funding Request

\$500 million for design and construction of a tunnel. Specifically, the construction of a tunnel, if it is economically feasible, as it promotes the unobstructed mobility of regional commuter rail while keeping communities united. If we are unable to secure federal funding for a tunnel option, we request funding for a 55-foot bascule bridge.

Issue Summary

The marine industry is a major economic driver in Broward County and the region, supporting 121,000 middle-class jobs locally and 149,000 regionally, and generating \$9.7 billion in Broward and \$12.5 billion regionally in economic output. The New River Bascule bridge, used for both freight and passenger rail (including Brightline), currently balances marine and rail traffic, but proposals for a new commuter rail system called Coastal Link raise concerns about increased disruptions to marine activity. Broward County is exploring additional solutions, such as new river crossings and commuter rail projects on the Florida East Coast Railway corridor, to improve transportation and mobility while addressing marine traffic needs. The county expects to select a locally preferred alternative by 2026, with project costs ranging from hundreds of millions to over a billion dollars, depending on the chosen solution and excluding a low-level bridge due to marine traffic concerns.

Full Detailed Background

The marine industry is a significant driver of economic activity in Broward County, supporting approximately 121,000 middle-class jobs locally and 149,000 jobs throughout the region. These jobs are associated with a wide range of maritime businesses that promote boating lifestyles, from family cruising and fishing to luxury yachting. The goods and services supporting this sector generate an economic output of \$9.7 billion in Broward County and \$12.5 billion across the region.

The New River Bascule bridge, located just south of Andrews Avenue, has historically accommodated freight traffic and now also serves as a passenger rail corridor for Brightline. To date, collaboration among stakeholders has ensured that marine traffic continues to move efficiently. However, discussions regarding the proposed Coastal Link commuter rail system have raised concerns about potential disruptions to marine traffic. Coastal Link would establish commuter rail service with stops in Hollywood, Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport, Fort Lauderdale, Oakland Park, Pompano Beach, and Deerfield Beach. Negotiations are ongoing regarding access to the corridor owned by the Florida East Coast Railway.

Broward County has requested a feasibility study from the Florida Department of Transportation to explore additional solutions for crossing the New River while maintaining uninterrupted marine operations. Commuter rail is recognized as a vital component of the County's strategy to enhance transportation and mobility at both local and regional levels. The Broward Commuter Rail Project, like Tri-Rail and SunRail, would operate along the FEC railroad corridor, providing access to densely populated coastal communities in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Miami-Dade County is also moving forward with its Northeast Corridor commuter rail project on the FEC corridor. Compared to Brightline's intercity passenger rail service, commuter rail features more frequent stops—typically spaced two to five miles apart—making it well-suited for shorter trips, commuting, shopping, and



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

New River Crossing

recreational travel. The project is intended to connect with planned premium east-west transit corridors on Broward Boulevard and throughout Broward County.

The Broward County Commission expects to select a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) before 2026. Regardless of the chosen alternative, the project will require federal funding alongside local commitments. Construction costs are estimated to range from \$444 million, with \$98 million for right-of-way, to \$1.8 billion, with \$150 million for right-of-way (excluding the cost of a low-level bridge, which is not considered due to marine traffic concerns).

Benefits/Expected Outcome

A tunnel would eliminate the need for bridge openings altogether, allowing both rail and road traffic to flow continuously while permitting marine vessels to pass above unimpeded. This would help preserve the economic vitality of the region by reducing delays for both commuters and commercial vessels, supporting the boating lifestyle and maritime businesses that are central to Broward's economy. This solution would also reduce vehicular traffic, easing the onslaught of rush hour traffic.

Points of Contact

Milos Majstorovic, Director, Transportation and Mobility
MMajstorovic@fortlauderdale.gov, 954-828-5216

Daphnee Sainvil, Manager, Public Affairs
DSainvil@fortlauderdale.gov, 954-828-6075