

New River crossing

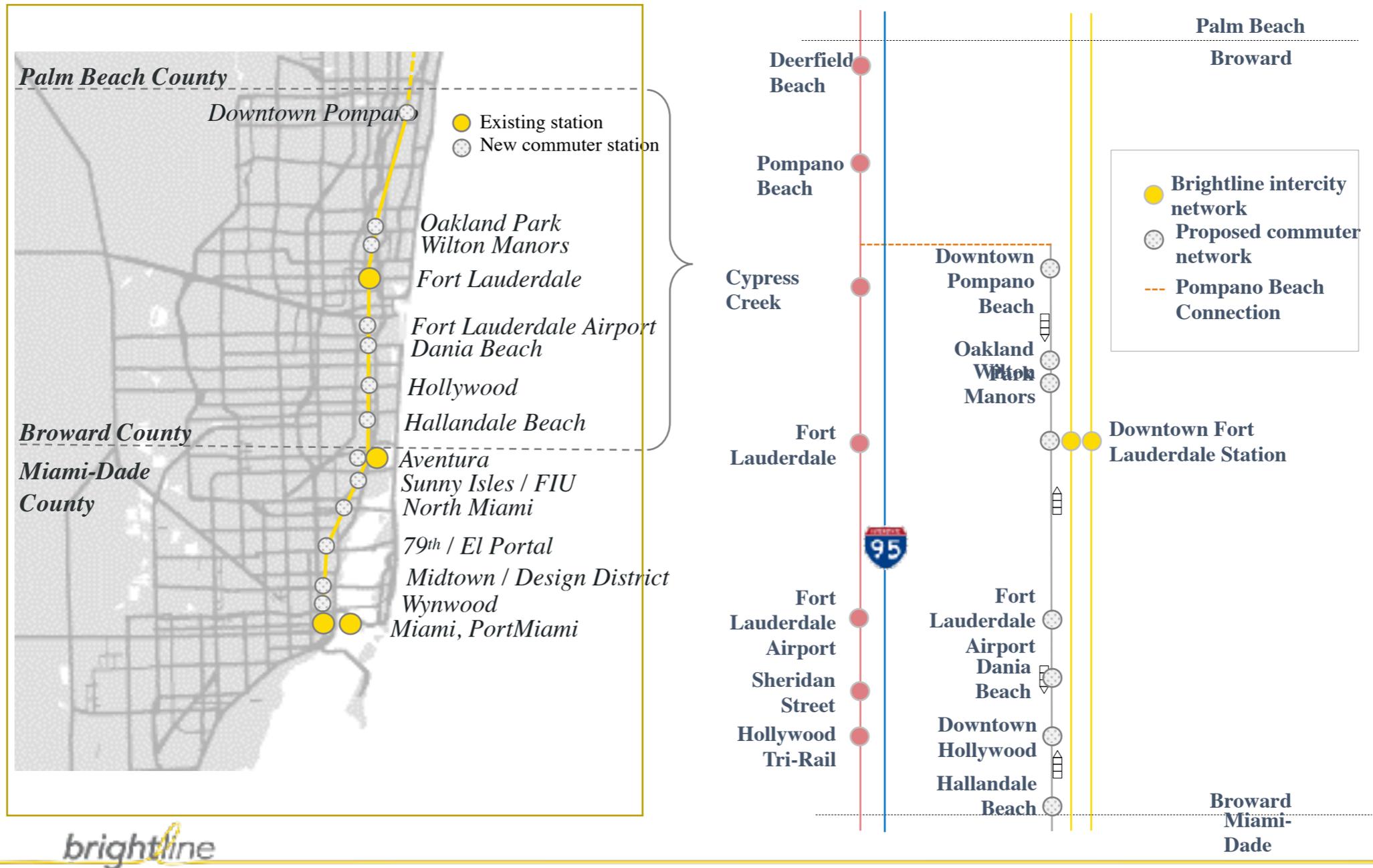
Commuter rail service for South Florida:
How to cross the New River in Fort Lauderdale



The rail plan

- When Brightline launched, it offered service between stations located in downtown Miami, Fort Lauderdale and West Palm Beach with plans to link to Orlando in central Florida.
- As part of restarting following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Brightline has decided to add more stations, including one in Aventura that is under construction and one in Boca Raton that is in the planning stage. They also launched talks with Miami-Dade and Broward county officials about taking over a long-planned localized commuter service called the Coastal Link.
- The Coastal Link concept is to build multiple local stations that are mere miles apart and running trains on 30-minute headways 18 hours the day. The hope is that residents would decide not to drive but use the train to go between home, work, shopping and entertainment. This would add dozens of train movements throughout the day beyond the pre-COVID mix of Brightline passenger trains and Florida East Coast Railroad freight.
- The plan provides great interconnectivity among South Florida communities and would substantially help address traffic congestion. For Fort Lauderdale, it would provide commuters easy access to downtown businesses and residents in general easy access to downtown's wealth of restaurant, bar and entertainment venues.

Map of Proposed Commuter System



Where it stands

- The Florida Department of Transportation and Broward County are performing a Preliminary Design & Engineering Study for commuter rail along the FEC corridor from Aventura to Deerfield Beach.
- FDOT and Broward have executed a Memorandum of Understanding and the scope of the PD&E Study is to analyze alternatives for commuter rail. Florida East Coast Railway owns the right-of-way and operates freight service along the corridor. Brightline operates inter-city passenger rail via an easement. The commuter rail would share tracks with freight and Brightline.
- FDOT will hold two town hall meetings on Jan. 27 and Jan. 31. The agency is asking the County Commission to select a Locally Preferred Alternative at its Feb. 22 meeting. It then wants the Broward MPO to vote on a LPA at its March or April meeting.

Consequences of commuter rail

- There currently is a low-rise draw bridge over the New River. The volume of train traffic would lead to the bridge remaining down for prolonged periods. This threatens the viability of the boatyards in the city's western areas that service the economically important marine industry.
- The marine industry generates more than 120,000 jobs and gross wages and earnings of \$9.7 billion in Broward County.



❑ Marine Industry Impact on the Economy (2019)

- State – \$23.3 billion
- Tri-county – \$12.5 billion
- Broward county – \$9.7 billion
- Broward represents 41.6% of the marine economic impact to the state

❑ Marine Industry Jobs (2019)

- Tri-county – 149,000 jobs
- Broward County- 121,000 jobs
- Marine jobs pay 16% higher than the state average

❑ Mega Yachts Economic Trends

- An estimated 1,800 mega yachts (larger than 80 feet long) were present in Tri-County waters
- A median sized mega yacht (140 feet) spends over \$2.0 million annually in operating expenses
- In Broward County, a mega yacht generates over \$1.4M in direct labor and over \$850K in indirect/induce labor

* From the mega yachts in south Florida - Trends, Impacts & Issues report by Thomas J. Murray & Associates, Inc. (2018)



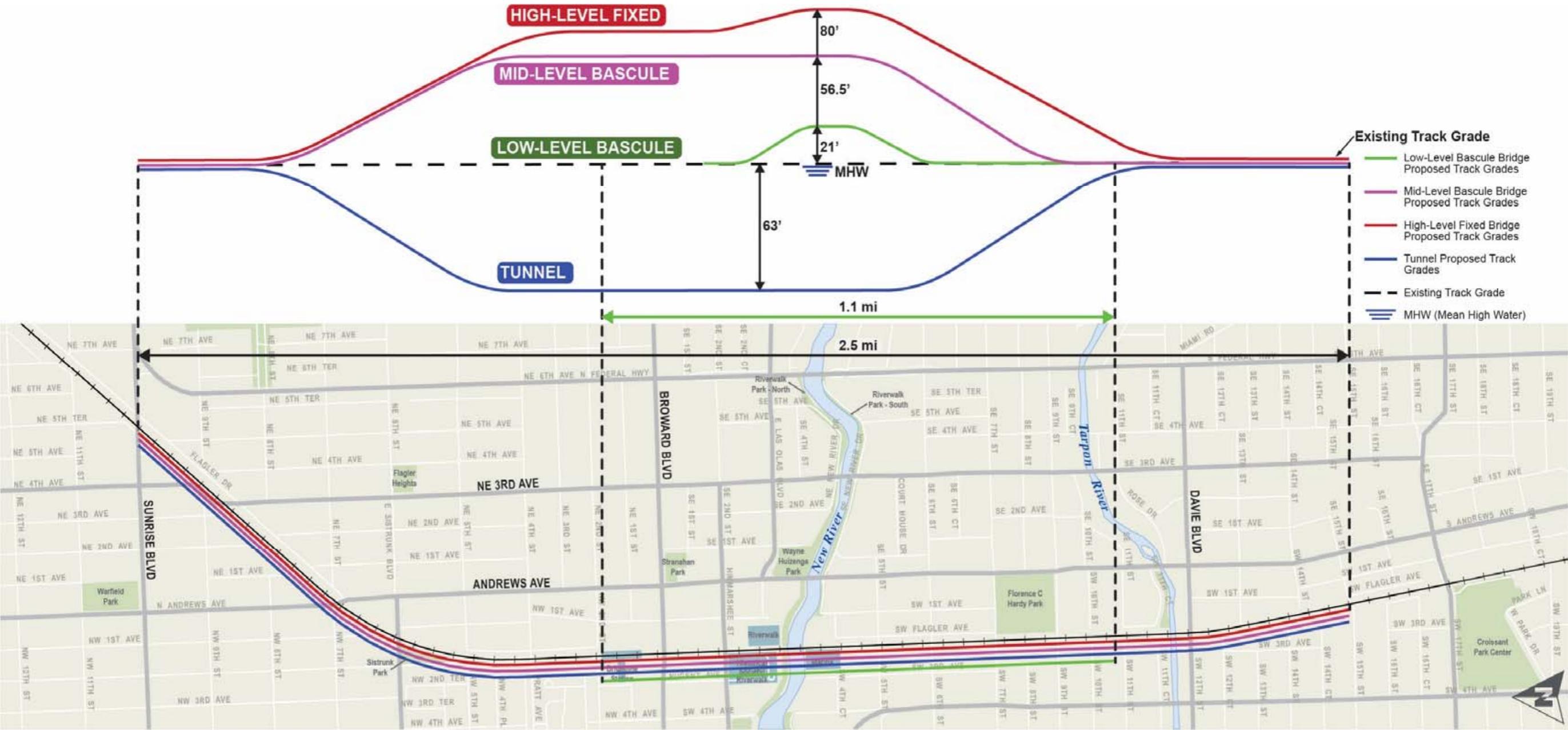
Lauderdale Marina Center shown at night with Downtown Ft Lauderdale in the background.

Options for New River Crossing

FDOT is exploring four solutions:

- A low-level bascule bridge with a 21-foot clearance over the New River. This option has largely been rejected by the marine industry as not much of an improvement over the current draw bridge.
- A mid-level bascule bridge with a 56-foot clearance over the New River, which is equivalent in height to the 17th Street Causeway. It would run for about 1.3 miles through downtown.
- A fixed bridge with an 80-foot clearance over the New River that would run for about 1.5 miles.
- A tunnel at 63 feet below grade.

Alternatives Overview



Concerns about a bridge

Downtown Renaissance

- A high-rise bridge would have a seriously detrimental effect on the transformation of downtown into a vibrant urban center of offices, residences, commerce and entertainment.
- Many recent development and proposed projects sit hard against the bridge, including the new Society residential high-rise, the proposed Hines' FATVillage project, the Kushners' 300 W. Broward project and the proposed city-county government campus.
- The future features more than 20 new developments in the urban core with 13,000 more residential units, 600,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, 1.1 million square feet of office space and 1,000 new hotel rooms.





Hines' FATVillage site The bridge would be at about 25 feet high at NE 7 St. and reach its maximum 56 feet height by NE 5th St.



Raintree Riverwalk Residences and 1st Avenue Residences sites. The bridge would be at its maximum height passing by both, beginning a descent to the south around SW 5th St.

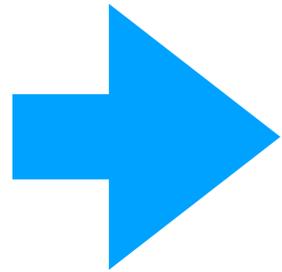


Kushner's 300 W. Broward site The bridge would be at its maximum 56 feet height here.

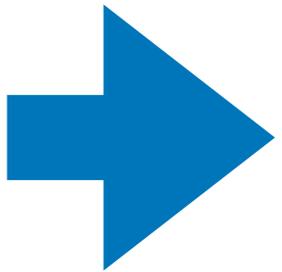


Here is how FDOT envisions a bridge interacting with a new joint county-city government center

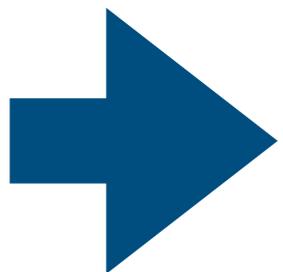




Downtown Fort Lauderdale has nearly a \$30 billion annual economic impact, equivalent to hosting a Super Bowl every weekend.



Downtown Fort Lauderdale has a greater impact citywide and regionally than peer downtowns like Atlanta, Austin, Charlotte and Dallas, according to an International Downtown Association benchmark study.



Downtown Fort Lauderdale's population has grown 41 percent from 2010 to 2020 and is projected to grow an additional 45 percent by 2025.

Downtown Fort Lauderdale 2030



Key Destinations

- 1. Inland Station
- 2. Broward Center for the Performing Arts
- 3. Brick Van Hees Ice Den
- 4. County Courthouse
- 5. Las Olas Reservoir
- 6. Fort Lauderdale Beach

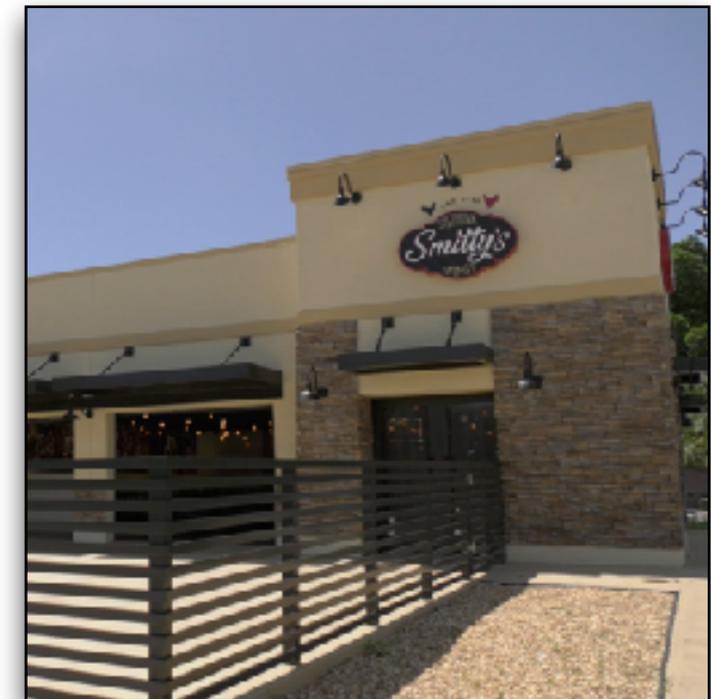
Proposed & Potential Future Developments

- A. IAT Village
- B. Secordtown
- C. Bagler Creative
- D. Inwood Crossing
- E. Regis Six 1's
- F. IAT City
- G. City / County Government Campus
- H. City Center Venue
- I. Rainier Riverwalk Residences
- J. 317 N Federal Highway
- K. River 10th on 2th
- L. New River Yacht Club West
- M. Hoxa Las Olas
- N. First Ave Residences
- O. 485 Residences
- P. RC Las Olas
- Q. Fivepark Square
- R. Riverwalk Residences
- S. New River Central
- T. 227 Residences



Northwest CRA

- A bridge would divide the city's historic black community surrounding Sistrunk Boulevard from downtown and the adjacent Flagler Village.
- For some 20 years, the city has endeavored to have the economic success of downtown and Flagler Village cross over to the Sistrunk area and has spent millions improving the streetscape and investing in business projects.
- Beginning in the 1920s and throughout the Jim Crow era, the train tracks were the boundary for segregation in Fort Lauderdale.
- One of the concepts of New Urbanism is to correct or reshape some of the transportation infrastructure that was used to divide communities.
- One of the key goals of President Biden's transportation secretary is reconnecting communities through the administration's infrastructure program.



Riverwalk and the Historic District

- The city's historic district would be overwhelmed by the height of the bridge as the New River Inn, the history center and the early historic homes are located directly next to the train tracks.
- A bridge would impact the picturesque Riverwalk. The Riverwalk serves as the cornerstone of the city's arts, science, cultural, and historic area that features the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Museum of Discovery and Science, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale and Fort Lauderdale History Center.



It's questionable whether a bridge can be suitably integrated into the design of a great urban core.

Here are some of FDOT's ideas...



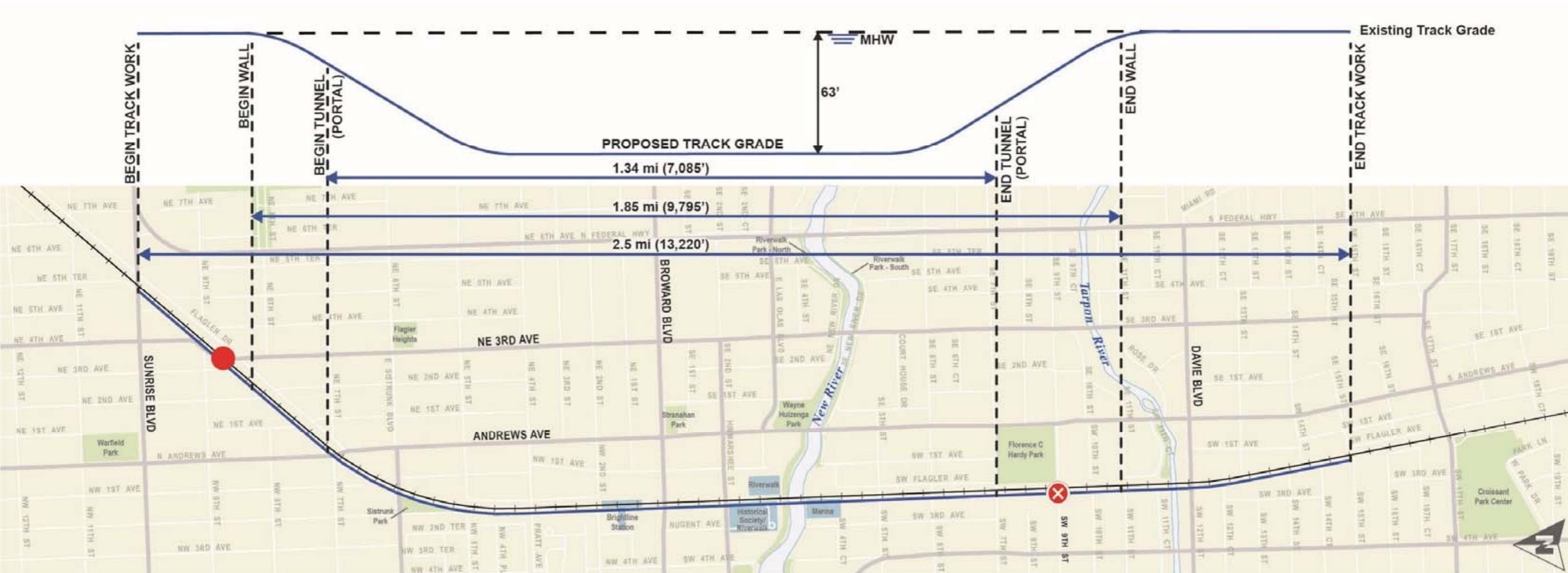
It's true that the world is full of beautiful bridges. The Golden Gate Bridge and the Sunshine Skyway Bridge are elegant as they cross San Francisco Bay and Tampa Bay.

But their impact would be substantially the opposite if they instead ran through the center of their neighboring cities. The same rationale applies to building an elongated 17th Street Causeway through downtown Fort Lauderdale.



**A tunnel is viable...
financially and technically**

Tunnel Alternative



- Length of tunnel = 7,085 feet
- Portals located North of Andrews Avenue and South of SW 7th Street
- Length of Track Modification = 13,220 feet Sunrise Blvd to SW 15th Street
- Places New Brightline/Virgin Trains Station Platform underground, approximately 63 feet below existing platform

We've reached out to some of the world's foremost tunneling contractors to discuss the New River crossing.

All of them say the cost is not nearly as astronomical as FDOT has long claimed — \$3.8 billion. Rather, they say a tunnel could be built for between \$700 million and \$1.8 billion. FDOT recently revised its estimate to the high end of that range.

They also say there is nothing technically complex about this project or the area's geology that would make a tunnel difficult to construct.





Mayor and city manager inspect Traylor Bros.' work on Los Angeles subway under the La Brea tarpits.



Ghella tunnels under Sydney harbor for a metro line project.



FCC opens an expansion of the metro system in Romania's capital of Bucharest.



FCC works on a train tunnel in northern Spain.

Further cost savings may be possible

- FDOT's current estimate of \$1.8 billion includes a 25 percent contingency for cost overruns. This is a substantial markup and way beyond what the city budgets for a contingency on its own construction projects.
- FDOT incorporates more than \$300 million in professional services fees. Industry experts have stated that this is a very high figure for such a tunnel project and could be reduced.
- Industry representatives state that FDOT's plan relies on a very expensive design for the new underground station needed to serve Brightline and commuter rail passengers. They believe there are more cost-efficient ways to construct a station. Also, the station could incorporate other commercial or residential aspects above ground using the transit-oriented development concept and help defer some cost in doing so.

Financing options are available outside the traditional federal and state funding methodology

- FDOT could consider a P3 model for the project. State law has a specific section allowing the agency to use P3s on major transportation projects.
- The project's scope could be expanded to be deemed an economic development initiative as well in that downtown would greatly benefit from both commuter rail service as well as the construction of a tunnel rather than a bridge.
- The city's DC lobbyist team at Akin Gump identified many funding sources in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that Congress passed that could be considered. These include the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost Savings Transportation Grant Program, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program and the National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program. Akin Gump also noted funds for public transit innovation, growing and high-density communities and transit-oriented development.

A longer tunnel would increase benefits

Both FDOT's bridge and tunnel options run just south of Sunrise Boulevard and end just north of Davie Boulevard. This misses the opportunity to ease traffic delays on those two primary east-west commuter streets in addition to Broward and Sistrunk boulevards.

A tunnel going underneath Sunrise and Davie as well as Broward boulevards would ease delays in the following traffic patterns:

- Sunrise: 49,000 cars a day
- Broward: 46,000 cars a day
- Davie: 28,500 cars a day



**This is a legacy project impacting
the city for generations to come**

Imagine what would have happened if city leaders made a different decision about Federal Highway and the New River in the late '50s when they chose to build the Kinney Tunnel.

Las Olas would be much different than the quaint street of shops and restaurants that exists today. There would be a large bascule bridge servicing Federal Highway right in the center of the street between the Riverside Hotel and the Stranahan House.



Post-war traffic congestion, especially at the New River drawbridges, led to the replacement of the Federal Highway bridge with Florida's first (and still, only) public vehicular tunnel. The proposed tunnel was quite controversial, with many opposing it as "too northern" in character. In 1958, with a wave from the bridge tender, the last car crossed the bridge before it was demolished to make way for the New River Tunnel. (5-37184, Gene Hyde Collection.)



Support grows for tunnel

- Michael Albetta, president of the Lake Ridge Civic Association
- Leann Barber, president of the Flagler Village Civic Association
- Doron Broman, manager of the Moderno Development Group
- Sonya Burrows, member of the Northwest Community Redevelopment Agency
- Patrick Campbell, executive vice president of The Related Group
- Christina Currie, president of the Rio Vista Civic Association
- Asi Cymbal, president of Cymbal Development
- Genia Ellis, CEO of Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale
- Jim Ellis, president of Ellis Diversified Inc.
- Bill Feinberg, president of Allied Kitchen & Bath and former chairman of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Ron Feldman, manager of Putnam Realty and 441 Developers
- Gregory Freedman, co-chief executive officer of BH3 Management
- Austin Forman
- Miles Forman
- Dr. George Hanbury, former Fort Lauderdale city manager and president of Nova Southeastern University
- Alan Hooper, principal of Urban Street Development
- Steve Hudson, CEO of the Hudson Capital Group
- Jeff John, owner of Damn Good Hospitality

- Milton Jones, president of the Milton Jones Development Corp.
- John Joyner, managing partner of Water Capital Partners LLC
- Charlie Ladd, president of Barron Commercial Development
- Jack Loos
- J. Scott Maclaren, president of Stiles Corp.
- Jenni Morejon, president and CEO of the Downtown Development Authority on behalf the authority board.
- Marilyn Mammano, chair of the Infrastructure Task Force
- Dev Motwani, managing partner of Merrimac Ventures
- Jeff Ostrow, managing partner of Kopelowitz Ostrow
- Tim Petrillo of The Restaurant People
- Ed Rebholz, president of the Lauderdale Harbors Improvement Association
- Jackie Scott, president of the Collee Hammock Homeowners Association
- Jay Shechtman, president of the Tarpon River Civic Association
- Stephen Tilbrook, partner at Akerman and former chairman of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Stephanie Toothaker, attorney