Broward County Board of County Commissioners

Broward Commuter Rail Update

FDOT District 4

January 12, 2021

Today's Agenda

- Importance of Commuter Rail and History of the Corridor
- Miami-Dade Northeast Corridor
- New River Crossing Feasibility Study
- Eligibility for Federal Funding
- Broward Commuter Rail - Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study
- MOU and Next Steps

Why Commuter Rail is Important

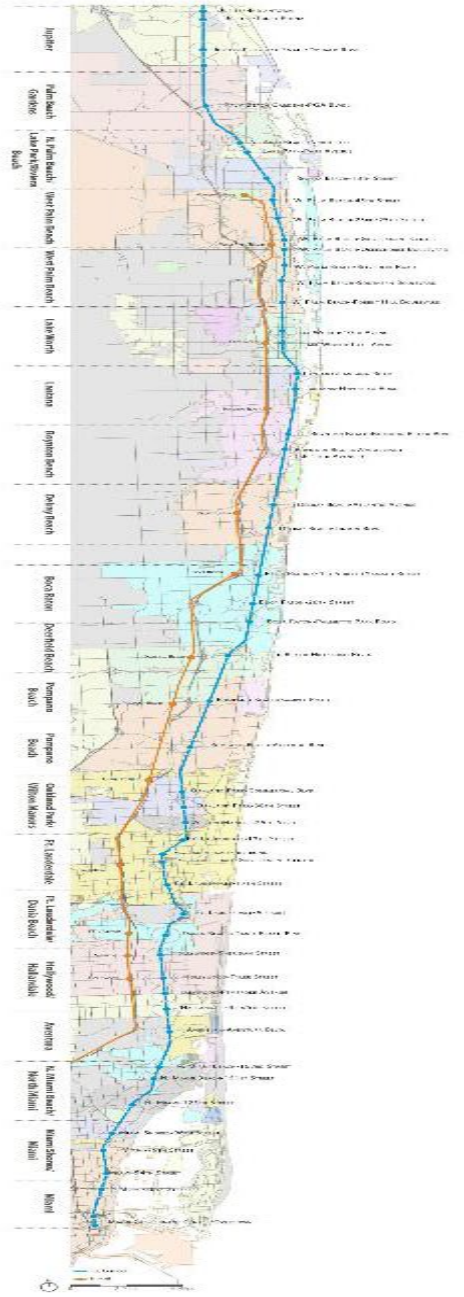
- **FEC is Florida's densest urban corridor with Broward at the center**
  - 2 million people in the corridor from Miami to Jupiter
  - Density will exceed 13,000 people per square mile by 2040
  - Sustainability, regional connectivity, economic development

- **The region's economic core**
  - Over 1 million jobs in the corridor
  - 3 CBDs, 3 international airports, 3 seaports and 27 downtowns
  - Extensive rail, truck, and marine freight

- **The region's transportation core**
  - 3 million daily auto trips in the corridor comprise 1/5th of region's travel
  - Highways are beyond capacity

History of the Corridor

- **2004 - 2010:**
  - MPOs and FEC request regional Transit Study by FDOT
  - FDOT held over 400 public meetings to develop System Master Plan
  - Resolutions of support from Broward MPO, Palm Beach MPO and cities
- **2012:**
  - Refined Master Plan for 85-mile commuter rail service from Miami to Jupiter
  - Integrated extension of Tri-Rail on shared tracks with FEC freight
  - All Aboard Florida (AAF) announced from Miami to Orlando
- **2013:**
  - MPOs authorize request for Entry into FTA New Starts Project Development (PD)
  - 25 stations identified for further evaluation in PD&E
- **2014:**
  - FDOT & SFRTA formally request Entry into PD from FTA
  - FTA and FRA later agree to put PD request on hold to avoid confusion with AAF

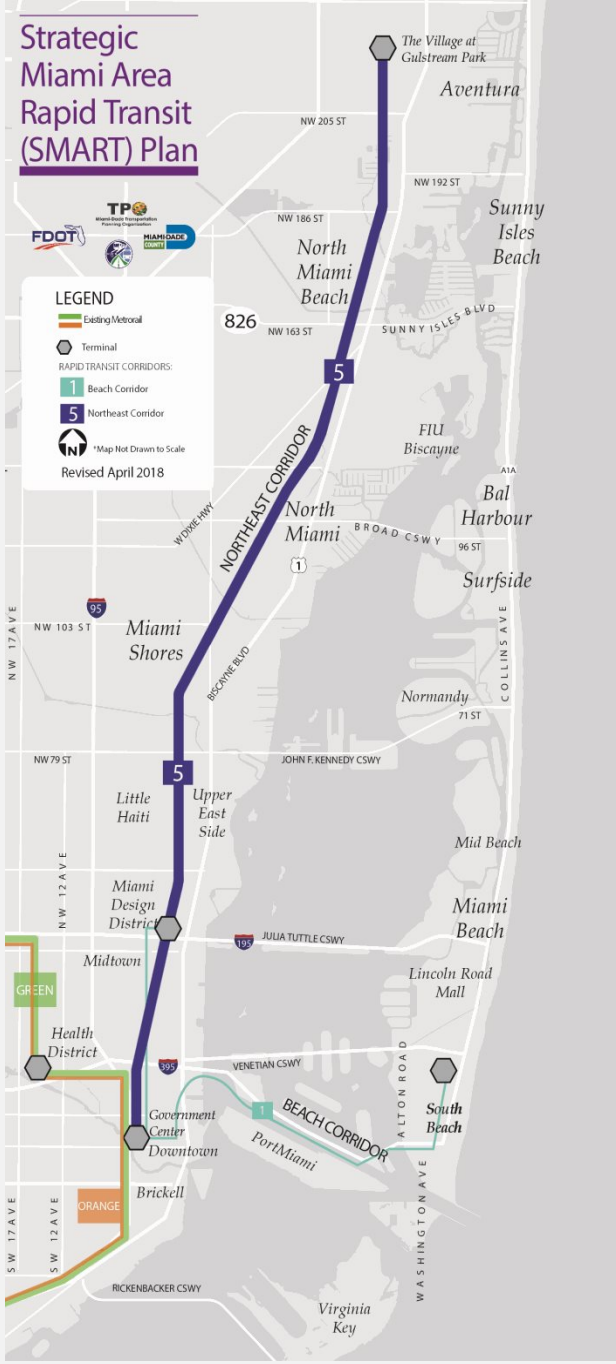


History of the Corridor

- **2018:**
  - Brightline starts revenue service from Miami to West Palm Beach
  - Miami-Dade begins negotiating track access
  - Broward passes penny surtax
  - Phased project implementation based on local funding share by county
- **2019:**
  - FDOT conducts New River Crossing Feasibility Study
- **2020:**
  - Miami-Dade County Resolutions for ongoing track access negotiations
  - Broward continues dialogue with Brightline and FDOT
  - ***Broward and FDOT draft MOU to advance commuter rail project***

Miami-Dade Northeast Corridor

- **Commuter rail on FEC tracks from Miami to Aventura**
  - Downtown Miami station jointly funded as public-private partnership
  - Negotiating track access as a 90-year lease with annual payments for 30 years
  - Operator to be determined
  - Construction and O&M agreements pending
- **Project development ongoing**
  - Selection of stations with cities and stakeholders' participation and funding
  - ½ cent surtax available for local capital match and O&M funding



New River Crossing Feasibility Study

New River Crossing Feasibility Study completed in 2019 for Florida Legislature

» **Stakeholder and Agency Coordination**
- Broward County and Broward MPO
- Marine Industry Association
- Marine Advisory Board
- City of Fort Lauderdale and DDA
- US Coast Guard, Brightline, FECR

» **Constraints**
- Maintain maritime, passenger and freight rail operations
- Existing bascule bridge and tracks to remain in service
- Accommodate east-west premium transit at second level
- Connect to Brightline station downtown

» **Identified 4 alternatives for consideration in PD&E, potential funding sources and next steps**

New River Crossing Feasibility Study

One alternative to be selected during upcoming PD&E

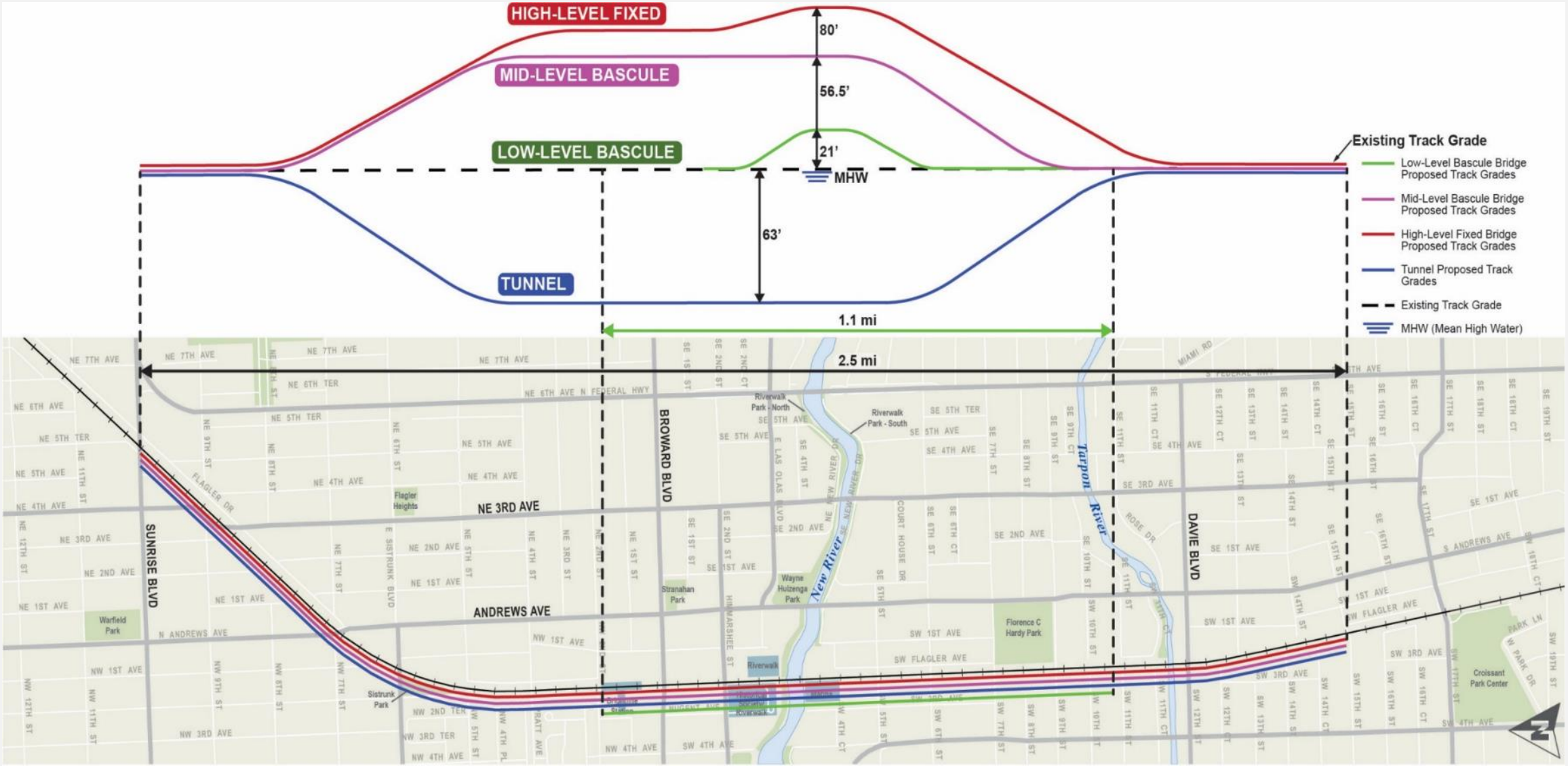
21-foot low-level bascule

56-foot mid-level bascule

80-foot high-level fixed bridge

Tunnel beneath New River

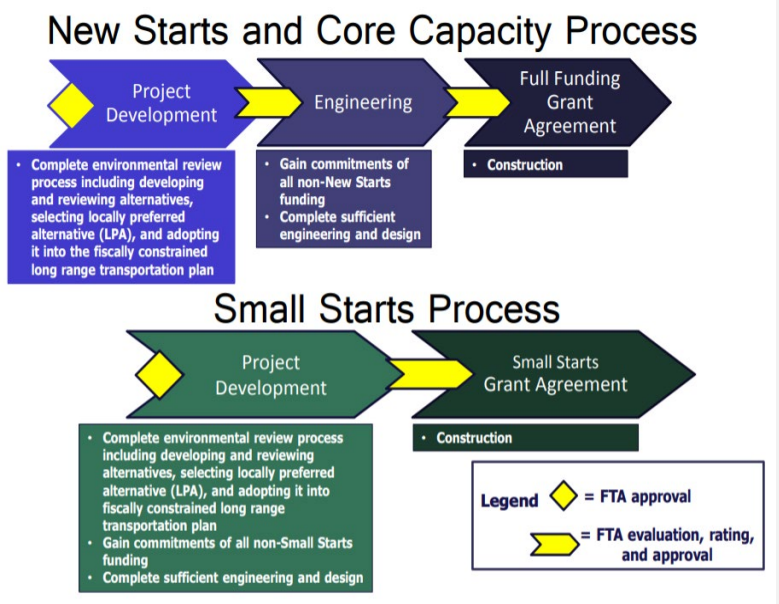
New River Crossing Feasibility Study



Maintain eligibility for Federal Funds

» **Apply for federal grants and loans for design, construction and O&M**
- Must follow all NEPA and federal rules to remain eligible
- Shorter process but each grant must be secured independently
- Grants are typically smaller than FTA capital improvements grants
- Loans are also available

» **Enter the FTA Capital Improvement Grant (CIG) process**
- New Starts has 3 phases – Project Development, Engineering and Full Funding Grant Agreement
  - *Longer process with stringent requirements; projects above $300 million*
  - *Must complete Project Development within 2 years of entry*
- Small Starts has 2 phases - Project Development and Small Starts Grant Agreement
  - *For projects less than $300 million and requesting a grant less than $100 million*

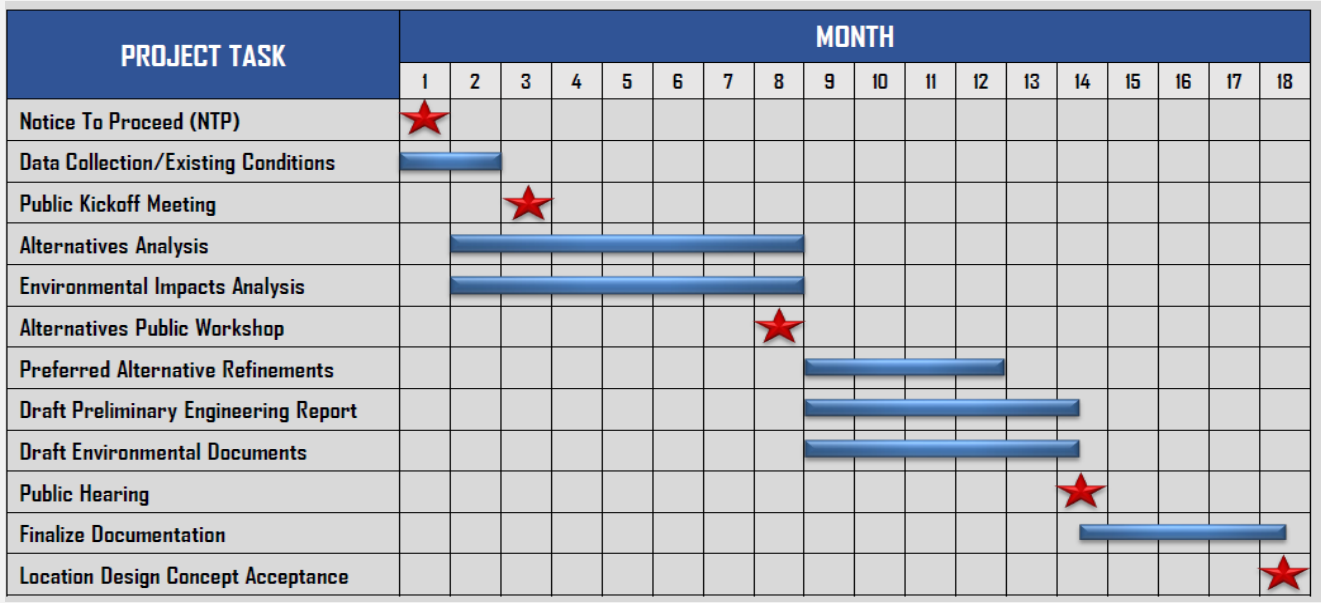


Broward Commuter Rail PD&E Milestones

- Project Scope, study limits and logical termini (FDOT/County)
- Stakeholder Support - Letters and/or Resolutions of Support (County)
- FTA and USCG Meetings & Determination of NEPA Class of Action (FDOT/County)
- PD&E Study Schedule, Agency & Public Kickoff Meetings (FDOT/County)
- MPO Board, Stakeholder Meetings and Presentations (County/FDOT)
- Track Access Agreement to construct, operate and maintain commuter rail service (County/FDOT)
- Draft and Final Financial Analysis and Funding Plan (County/FDOT)
- Alternatives Public Workshop (FDOT/County)
- Submittal of draft environmental document to the FTA and distribution to the public (FDOT)
- Public Hearing on the draft environmental document (FDOT/County)
- Issuance of the final environmental action (FDOT)

Broward Commuter Rail PD&E Schedule

» **PD&E will be conducted by FDOT**
- Assumes Categorical Exclusion Type 2
- Requires advance coordination with FTA and USCG
- FDOT will streamline the approximately 18-month schedule wherever possible
- Timeframe includes federal reviews and public hearing
- Elevated class of action or entry into FTA CIG process may result in a longer schedule



Broward Commuter Rail PD&E Study

- **Broward County has been an active participant from the start**
  - County coordinating with Brightline and FDOT
  - Downtown Brightline station was in service prior to COVID-19
  - ***Broward County and FDOT to execute MOU for PD&E in Broward***
    - *Includes FLL Airport station; other stations to be evaluated with local participation*
    - *Penny surtax funds available as local match to obtain state and federal funds*

- **FDOT has funds and consultant under contract for PD&E Study**
  - Environmental Analysis of Commuter Rail on FEC railroad
  - Aventura to Deerfield Beach including Pompano Crossover
  - Includes continued evaluation of the crossing at the New River

- **Broward County responsibilities for PD&E**
  - Stakeholder support
  - Financial plan
  - Identify local share of capital costs and annual O&M funds
  - Track access, construction and O&M agreements

MOU and Next Steps

Broward County

- Execute MOU and establish Project Executive Committee
- Responsibilities per MOU
  - *Coordination with FDOT, SFRTA, Brightline, Grupo Mexico, FECR, cities and other stakeholders to gain stakeholder support*
  - *Financial plan including local match for capital cost and O&M*
  - *Agreements for track access, construction and O&M*

FDOT

- Execute MOU and establish Project Executive Committee
- Responsibilities per MOU
  - *Coordination with Broward County, FTA and USCG*
  - *PD&E from Aventura to Deerfield Beach including New River Crossing*
  - *Public Involvement during PD&E*
  - *Coordinate with other transit initiatives*
  - *Establish project delivery method in coordination with Broward County*

Questions?

Florida Operation Lifesaver

See Tracks? THINK TRAIN™