



Broward County

Legislation Text

File #: 22-1389, Version: 1

Broward County Commission Regular Meeting

Director's Name: Monica Cepero

Department: County Administration

Information

Requested Action

MOTION TO ADOPT Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Broward County, Florida, directing the County Administrator to work with the City of Fort Lauderdale to jointly plan, fund, and carry out an updated assessment for the purpose of building consensus on a cost-effective alternative to cross the New River; declaring the importance of achieving consensus on the locally preferred alternative required to cross the New River and allow commuter rail service to proceed to the north of the New River; authorizing the County Administrator to approve and execute any required agreements to conduct a joint assessment, subject to prior review for legal sufficiency by the Office of the County Attorney; authorizing the County Administrator to take all necessary administrative and budgetary actions needed to implement any required agreements and consensus building; and providing for severability and an effective date.

Why Action is Necessary

To build consensus on a cost-effective alternative of crossing the New River to improve the likelihood of receiving Federal and state grant funding necessary to facilitate commuter rail service from south of the New River to Deerfield Beach.

What Action Accomplishes

Authorizes County Administrator to undertake the assessment jointly with City of Fort Lauderdale, highlights the importance of building consensus for New River Crossing and subsequent commuter rail projects north of the New River.

Is this Action Goal Related

Yes

Previous Action Taken

January 12, 2021, Item 42

December 14, 2021, Item 63

August 25, 2022, Item 55

Summary Explanation/Background

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDS APPROVAL OF THE ABOVE MOTION

This item supports the Board's vision and values of "Cooperatively delivering an efficient and accessible regional intermodal transportation network. "

Commuter rail is a form of public transit that can help to improve mobility, reduce traffic congestion, leverage existing assets and corridors, contribute to reductions in emissions and generate other environmental benefits.

On January 12, 2021 (Item 42), the Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding, with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), committing to collaborate on project development and environmental (PD&E) studies, financial planning, outreach, and other actions aimed at advancing the Broward Commuter Rail project. FDOT has led the technical studies along the full 27-mile corridor, identifying potential stations and outlining different options for phasing the project.

One of the key parts of the studies to date was a review of alternatives for commuter rail to cross the New River in Fort Lauderdale. Based on cost estimates and feedback received from local stakeholders regarding four alternatives (low-level bascule bridge, mid-level bascule bridge, high-level fixed bridge, and tunnel), it was determined that further assessments and consensus building efforts would be required prior to selecting a river crossing option needed to move forward with commuter rail projects to the north.

In light of this, options for phasing the development of commuter rail were developed and presented at the public workshop held by the Board of County Commissioners on June 16th. The Board discussed the option of moving ahead with a project in the southern portion of the County which will not require crossing the New River (and subsequently adopted a locally preferred alternative for the southern phase at its August 25, 2022 Commission meeting - Item 55). At the June 16th Board Workshop, the Board also discussed engaging with the City of Fort Lauderdale to find a solution for crossing the New River, so that a future project could be developed that would facilitate commuter rail service north of the New River and allow municipalities along the FEC Corridor north of the New River to benefit from this important public transit system.

This proposed resolution provides direction on a joint assessment and consensus building and authorizes the County Administrator to take the necessary actions to accomplish this direction.

Source of Additional Information

Kevin Kelleher, Assistant County Administrator, (954) 357-7320

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Impact/Cost Summary

While an estimate of the cost of the County's portion of the joint assessment and consensus building is not yet available, existing budgeted sources of funding will be used.