



Broward County

Legislation Text

File #: 22-1247, Version: 1

Broward County Commission Regular Meeting

Director's Name: Monica Cepero

Department: County Administration

Information

Requested Action

A. **MOTION TO ADOPT** Resolution of the Board of County Commissioners of Broward County, Florida approving the designation of Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to certain proposed elements of a the Broward Commuter Rail-South Commuter Rail Public Transit Project (BCR-South) located on the Florida East Coast Railway Corridor; confirming independent utility and logical termini of the project, transferring \$15,500,000 of the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Capital Budget Appropriation for Regional Transportation and Commuter Rail to the project for development and environmental (PD&E) study costs; and directing County Administration to pursue grant funding.

ACTION: (T-10:19 AM) Approved Resolution No. 2022-376.

VOTE: 9-0.

B. **MOTION TO ADOPT** budget Resolution within the Transportation Surtax Fund in the amount of \$15,500,000 to transfer budget to the Broward Commuter Rail-South project for the purposes of engineering, design, project development, and environmental study tasks consistent with state and federal funding requirements.

ACTION: (T-10:19 AM) Approved Resolution No. 2022-377.

VOTE: 9-0.

Why Action is Necessary

The USDOT Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires LPA designation for projects to be eligible for Capital Investment Grants. The Board as the governing authority of Broward County's transit operator, FTA grantee, and sponsor of the Commuter Rail Public Transit Project is required to approve the LPA and document its financial commitment. This action will improve prospects of the County receiving Federal grant funding enabled by the recently passed Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Delays in advancing this and other transportation infrastructure projects increases the risk of funding no longer being available.

What Action Accomplishes

Approves LPA for the BCR-South project, approves additional \$13,150,000 in funding for PD&E and authorizes County Administrator to take necessary administrative and budgetary actions for the transfer of previously budgeted regional transportation funds for the project.

Is this Action Goal Related

Yes

Previous Action Taken

January 12, 2021, Item 42

December 14, 2021, Item 63

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.

As background, the BCR-South project is Broward's portion of the long-awaited "Coastal Link" tri-county commuter rail initiative launched almost 2 decades ago. Past efforts to develop the project made certain progress, but ultimately stalled due to the lack of dedicated funding sources in each County. The passage of the Broward County Surtax ballot initiative in 2018, and progress made by Miami-Dade in advancing their portion of the project, makes it possible now to renew efforts and turn this much-needed public transit project into a reality that would serve not only the County, but the broader Southeast Florida region.

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 preliminary 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 studies and consensus building efforts would be required prior to selecting a river crossing option needed to extend commuter rail service 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 expressed support for the option of moving ahead with a project in the southern portion of the County which will not require crossing the New River. Phased development is a normal approach used in developing public transit systems in the U.S. and around the world. Experience from other U.S. counties and cities shows that starting with smaller initial projects can help demonstrate benefits and generate greater support and momentum needed to achieve consensus for subsequent projects and phases of development.

Source of Additional Information

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

Fiscal Impact

Fiscal Impact/Cost Summary

Of the Fiscal Year 2022 Capital budget appropriation for Regional Transportation adopted by the Board of County Commissioners, \$13,150,000 is transferred to the Broward Commuter Rail-South project. A previously appropriated budget approved by the Board on 12/14/2021 totaling \$2,350,000 is also transferred to the project.