



## Memorandum

**Memorandum No: 21-074**

**Date:** August 18, 2021

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Commissioners

**From:** Chris Lagerbloom, ICMA-CM, City Manager

**Subject:** Broward Commuter Rail and the New River Rail Crossing

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The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and Broward County are conducting a Project Development and Environment (PD&E) study for the Broward Commuter Rail from the planned Brightline station in Aventura to the Palm Beach County line. The PD&E study includes the New River passenger rail crossing which originated from the 2019 FDOT Feasibility Study that identified four New River passenger rail crossing options including a 21' bascule bridge, a 56' bascule bridge, an 80' fixed bridge, and a tunnel.

Over the past 15 years, FDOT and Broward County envisioned a countywide commuter rail system that could connect with Palm Beach and Miami-Dade to create a regional commuter rail system through the densely populated coastal cities located along the Florida East Coast Railway corridor. With the passage of the Broward County Transportation Surtax in 2018, project development progress on the Northeast Corridor commuter rail segment in Miami-Dade and renewed interest from the host railroad, the vision has advanced, and the two entities executed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2021 for the future rail service.

The current PD&E study, which started in early 2021, is reviewing the entire commuter rail system in Broward County and the New River rail crossings. FDOT will be hosting a series of public kick-off meetings for the PD&E study as identified below:

1. August 30 (1:00pm) Virtual Elected Officials/Agency Kick-off Meeting  
The meeting will have an open house, followed by a presentation, and a question/answer session. FDOT sent the meeting information directly to your office.
2. August 30 (5:30pm) Public Virtual Kick-Off Meeting  
The public can register to receive the link to join this Virtual Kick-off Meeting, go to [www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com](http://www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com) To attend by phone, call toll free 877-309-2074, access code 291-602-555.

3. August 31 (5:30pm) Public In-Person Kick-Off Meeting  
The In-Person Kick-off Meeting will be held at the Broward Center of the Performing Arts, 201 SW 5th Avenue. The meeting will start as an open house with project information on display boards, followed by a presentation. Registration is recommended, as space is limited. To register, go to the study's website: [www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com](http://www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com)
4. September 1 (5:30pm) Public Virtual Kick-Off Meeting  
The public can register to receive the link to join this Virtual Kick-off Meeting, go to [www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com](http://www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com). To attend by phone, call toll free 866-901-6455, access code 420-390-165.

In addition to their public meeting, City staff has invited FDOT to present at the October 5<sup>th</sup> City Commission Conference Meeting to share the project details and seek the Commission feedback on the New River Crossing.

For further information on this initiative, please contact Ben Rogers, Director of Transportation and Mobility, at [brogers@fortlauderdale.gov](mailto:brogers@fortlauderdale.gov).

Attachment: FDOT Broward Commuter Rail Newsletter

- c: Greg Chavarria, Assistant City Manager  
Tarlesha W. Smith, Esq., Assistant City Manager  
Alain E. Boileau, City Attorney  
Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Clerk  
John C. Herbst, City Auditor  
Department Directors  
CMO Managers



# BROWARD COMMUTER RAIL NEWSLETTER # 1

Summer 2021

Broward Commuter Rail

Project Development and Environment Study

Financial Management #:448942 1

Efficient Transportation Decision Making #14474



STAY INFORMED and GET INVOLVED

Thank you for your interest in the **Broward Commuter Rail Project Development & Environment (PD&E) Study**. This newsletter will provide you with information about the study and the PD&E process. Please visit the study's website [www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com](http://www.browardcommuterrailstudy.com) throughout the study to receive updates and provide input.

## ABOUT THE STUDY

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Four and Broward County are performing a PD&E Study for the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) along the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway from Aventura in Miami-Dade County to Deerfield Beach in Broward County.

FDOT and Broward County have executed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to continue efforts to improve mobility in the region. The scope of the BCR Project PD&E is to develop and analyze alternatives for commuter rail service along the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railway corridor from Aventura to Deerfield Beach. The corridor is owned by Grupo Mexico, who operates the rail freight service in the corridor. Brightline operates inter-city rail in this corridor, and has a passenger service easement within the FEC corridor right of way. The study is being conducted in coordination with many parties that have an interest in the FEC corridor. Miami-Dade County is also studying the implementation of commuter rail service in the FEC corridor for the segment from Downtown Miami to a proposed station in Aventura, known as the Northeast Corridor.

The BCR is a 27-mile segment of this commuter rail service that will include the necessary rail, signaling, safety and communications improvements, and passenger stations and amenities connecting to existing and planned local and regional transit service. Six potential stations will be studied and evaluated within the study limits.

The BCR PD&E Study will include a new rail crossing at the New River for passenger service through Downtown Fort Lauderdale. The existing railroad bridge will remain in place for exclusive use by freight rail.



### FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION MISSION STATEMENT

The Department will provide a safe transportation system that ensures the mobility of people and goods, enhances economic prosperity, and preserves the quality of our environment and communities.



## WHAT IS A PD&E STUDY?

A PD&E Study is FDOT's procedure for complying with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and associated federal and state laws and regulations. During this phase, FDOT performs preliminary engineering, evaluates the projects impacts to the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments, completes interagency coordination, and engages the public. Public involvement is a key aspect throughout the life of a project. The objectives of a PD&E Study is to support decisions concerning if, where, and what should be built to address the identified transportation needs.



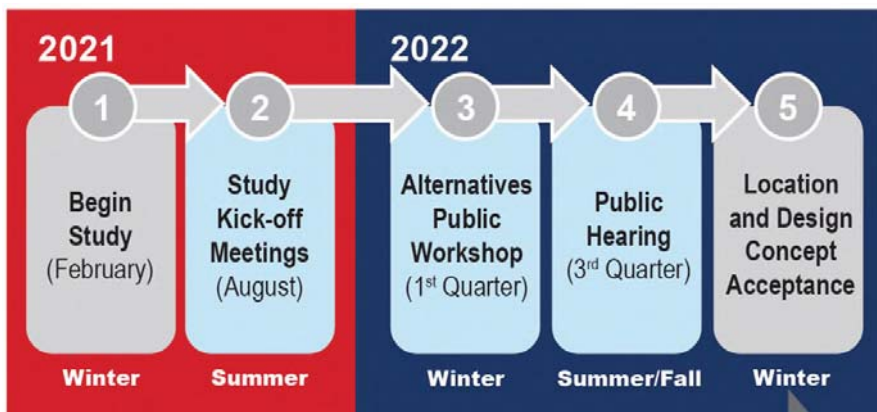
### Why it's done:

- Evaluate project feasibility, alternatives and potential environmental impacts (natural, physical, social, and cultural)
- Comply with federal and state environmental laws
- Required to secure federal regulatory approval and funding

### What it involves:

- Conducting preliminary engineering
- Evaluating options to enhance, avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential environmental impacts
- Coordinating with stakeholders, federal, state, and local agencies
- Engaging the public in evaluation of the alternatives project development
- Select a preferred alternative for the design phase once funding is identified

## PD&E STUDY SCHEDULE



### Community Outreach

A continuous community outreach process is integrated into every step of the project to ensure that the corridor residents, businesses, the traveling public, and other interested parties have meaningful participation in the process.

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

FDOT is required to comply with various non discrimination laws and regulations, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Public participation is solicited without regard to race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, disability or family status.

FDOT encourages the public to get involved throughout the study by providing comments, concerns, questions, and suggestions to the study team.

**If you would like to obtain additional project information, be added to the mailing list, request information, arrange a meeting, or submit a written comment, please contact:**

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