



BEAM FURR, Mayor

Board of County Commissioners District 6
115 S. Andrews Avenue • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
(954) 357-7006

March 3, 2025

Dear Mayor Trantalis,

It was a pleasure meeting with you recently and discussing our mutual interests in advancing the Broward Commuter Rail Project. As we both know and can agree, Broward County Commuter Rail will be a game changer for our transportation network, is important, and provides a vital and essential mobility alternative for our County's two million residents and serves as a regional connector for both Miami-Dade and Palm Beach Counties. Among the three counties, this new service has the potential to serve over 30,000 passengers each day and will be available to the millions of people who visit, live, work, and play in our region. Affectionately dubbed the "spine" of our PREMO Program, Broward Commuter Rail will seamlessly connect major economic engines within the County, promote economic growth, improve environmental resiliency, and be a catalyst for affordable housing development. In fact, we have already witnessed these trends in action as many cities welcome new developments near proposed station locations.

The sooner the commuter rail project is operational, the sooner both the County and the City of Fort Lauderdale can begin enjoying the economic, mobility, and environmental benefits that premium transportation projects are credited with delivering. It is for this reason, as well as overwhelming interest from various stakeholders and the general public, that I will be requesting a resolution by the Board of County Commissioners naming Broward Commuter Rail North as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in April 2025.

As we discussed during our recent meeting and based on conversations held by you and other City Commissioners at the City Commission meeting on February 18, 2025, the City of Fort Lauderdale has asked that the County refrain from identifying a bridge system as the preferred method for crossing the New River as part of said resolution and to allow the City additional time to present a viable alternative tunnel crossing. We also loosely discussed that the County could consider contributing no more than 25% of the estimated costs for constructing (\$150 million for a bridge system estimated at \$600 million including a new station) and maintaining a bridge system (\$250,000 annually), for a combined total amount not to exceed \$250 million, to a viable tunnel development option. Given the uncertainties to date of the viability and costs associated with a tunnel alternative, a significant financial contribution from the County to a tunnel development would be predicated on clearly defined assurances and outcomes that protect taxpayer interests and preserve the long-term operational needs of our commuter rail system.

To that end, although the County is the project sponsor and has the ability to unilaterally assign a bridge system as the preferred crossing alternative, I will not include in the proposed Resolution being brought to our Board an identified method of crossing the New River as part of our LPA, to allow the City seven months (no later than October 1, 2025), to provide the County with a feasible and viable public-private partnership tunnel development proposal that shifts all of the project development, operation, and maintenance responsibilities to a third-party provider that the Board of County Commissioners can then consider as a possible alternative to the less-expensive bridge crossing.



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A viable tunnel alternative from the City must include, at a minimum:

- Written approval from both Brightline and the Florida East Coast Railroad (FECR) confirming that they will allow the construction and operation of a tunnel within the FECR right-of-way and that Brightline will use this tunnel as their sole means (with the exception of the occasional adverse operational conditions) of crossing the New River.
- A formal proposal from a developer, with economic terms, for the construction, operation, and maintenance of the tunnel, along with documentation evidencing that the proposed developer:
 - Has extensive and demonstrated experience designing and building railroad tunnels under navigable waterways during active railroad operations and can deliver a fully operational tunnel within a 24-month period after issuance of Notice to Proceed (NTP);
 - Has experience in, and the current capacity to, successfully maintain an operating railroad tunnel under navigable waterways for a period of performance for no less than 30 years;
 - Will commit to no less than a 99% tunnel annual availability scheme that minimizes disruptions to all passenger train operations;
 - Has the technical and financial expertise to provide cost estimates, financial plans, and a pro forma for a period of performance for no less than 30 years;
 - Is sufficiently capitalized and credit worthy to guarantee funding availability for a period of performance of no less than 30 years, including the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance phases of project delivery, and provide a financial plan that covers said period of performance;
 - Has successfully delivered multiple large-scale public-private partnership projects within the last 10 years; and
 - Will agree, as part of the development of the tunnel project, to fully indemnify the County for all claims associated with the development, construction, and operation of the project; has the ability to, and will obtain, insurance covering all third-party claims relating to the project and the operation of the tunnel (including, without limitation, insurance coverage for rail passenger claims in the maximum liability amounts provided under federal law), and naming Broward County as an additional insured on such policies.
- A proposed financial plan from the City that addresses how tunnel construction and operations/maintenance costs can be paid given the County's fixed commitment. This proposed financial plan should include how rehabilitation and/or overhaul maintenance costs will be paid outside of the period of performance by the developer.



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Further, as we recently discussed, I believe that the County's consideration of further delaying its identification of the preferred crossing method over the New River will be based on the City's commitment that if it cannot provide a viable tunnel alternative for the County's consideration within the next seven months, the City will no longer oppose the County's intentions to pursue what it believes is the most prudent and economic system for crossing the New River (which, given the current state of conditions and existing variables, is a bridge crossing option).

Given that resolutions adopted by both the Board of County Commissioners and the City Commission will be needed to confirm these matters, as well as the public mandate to get Broward Commuter Rail in service as soon as possible, we appreciate your quick consideration of this matter. Our County Attorney's Office is ready to work with the City Attorney's Office to draft appropriate resolutions that can be brought to our respective boards for consideration.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beam Furr".

cc: Broward County Board of County Commissioners
Monica Cepero, County Administrator
Dr. Kimm Campbell, Deputy County Administrator
Kevin Kelleher, Assistant County Administrator
Coree Cuff Lonergan, Director, Transportation Department
Andrew Meyers, County Attorney
Robert Melton, County Auditor