

RESOLUTION NO. 23-

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, RESCINDING AND REPLACING RESOLUTION NO. 22-20, AFFIRMING A TUNNEL AS THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE'S LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE COMMUTER RAIL TRAIN CROSSING THE NEW RIVER IN THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING BROWARD COUNTY AS THE LEAD AGENCY FOR OBTAINING FUNDING AND OPERATION OF THIS PORTION OF THE RAIL PROJECT, SUPPORTING BROWARD COUNTY IN ADVANCING A MID-LEVEL BASCULE DRAWBRIDGE AS A LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE IF THE TUNNEL IS NOT FEASIBLE, AND PROVIDING FOR DISTRIBUTION, RESCISSION OF CONFLICTING RESOLUTION PROVISIONS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, the Commuter Rail Initiative began in 2004 and has been the subject of numerous studies, workshops, and public hearings: and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Lauderdale is supportive of the regional initiative to develop commuter rail service along the Federal East Coast (FEC) railroad tracks through Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties in an effort to reduce congestion on South Florida roadways and improve mass transit; and

WHEREAS, consensus has been reached on the commuter rail system from City of Miami to the New River Crossing and north of the New River from City of Oakland Park through Palm Beach County, and

WHEREAS, the cities of Hollywood, Oakland Park, Pompano Beach and Deerfield Beach, have already approved participation in the commuter rail project and identified station locations for the economic benefits to those governmental entities; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Lauderdale is aware that the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") is working on a preliminary design and engineering study of commuter rail service and is in the process of selecting a local preferred alternative for a New River crossing; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fort Lauderdale recognizes the challenges that the increased Brightline service has added, as well as the additional strain the commuter rail service would create at the crossing of the New River if the additional trains used the current grade level bascule bridge to traverse the waterway, particularly the inordinate burden that would befall the marine industries located upriver in that the bridge would be down so frequently as to impose a severe economic hardship on those companies and their customers; and

WHEREAS, there have been at least five (5) studies on the New River Crossing since 2020 which conducted research on four alternatives for the New River Crossing including use of a 25 foot bascule bridge, a midlevel bascule bridge, an high level fixed bridge and a tunnel, and

WHEREAS, in 2023, the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Broward County Commission authorized a joint study each paying \$250,000 to hire the Whitehouse Group to complete a comprehensive overview of the New River Crossing, and

WHEREAS, the Whitehouse Group retained Jacobs Engineering and Nick Chen, the engineer in charge of the Port of Miami Tunnel, to assess the four options and advise on viability, including aspects such as feasibility, time for completion, costs, as well as the availability for federal, state, county and city funding for each; and

WHEREAS, on December 5, 2023, Phil Purcell, CEO/President of the Marine Industries Association of South Florida (MIASF) testified at a Joint City of Fort Lauderdale/Broward County Commission workshop that a "40 foot bridge was acceptable and will accommodate a majority of the boat traffic on the New River", and

WHEREAS, the City Commission of City of Fort Lauderdale adopted Resolution No. 22-20 at its regular meeting of January 18, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Resolution No. 22-20 urged the Broward County Board of County Commissioners and the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization to adopt construction of a tunnel as the Locally Preferred Alternative to the exclusion of a bridge; and

WHEREAS, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners as the owner of the project has engaged in joint efforts with the City of Fort Lauderdale to identify a solution that will successfully promote commuter rail and protect the Marine Industries while offering the most feasible model for both construction and maintenance, and

WHEREAS, after adoption of Resolution No. 22-20, the Broward County Board of Commissioners and City Commission of the City of Fort Lauderdale considered additional data and information that prompted the reconsideration of the anticipated impact of a bridge; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. The City of Fort Lauderdale Commission continues to affirm a tunnel as the locally preferred alternative for commuter rail crossing New River. However, recognizing that Broward County will be the lead agency for obtaining funding and operation of this portion of the rail project, if after collaboration with the Broward County it is determined that a tunnel is not a feasible option then we will support the Broward County in advancing a mid-level bascule drawbridge as an alternative.

SECTION 2. The City Commission directs the City Clerk to transmit copies of this Resolution to the City's state lobbyists, Governor Ron DeSantis, Senate President Kathleen Passidomo, Speaker of the House Paul Renner, the Broward League of Cities, the Florida League of Cities, the Broward County Legislative Delegation, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, the Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, the Palm Beach County League of Cities, the Miami-Dade County League of Cities, and any other interested parties.

SECTION 3. That all resolutions or parts of resolutions in conflict herewith, be and the same are hereby rescinded to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 4. That this resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

ADOPTED this ____ day of December, 2023.

Mayor
DEAN J. TRANTALIS

ATTEST:

City Clerk
DAVID R. SOLOMAN

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
CORRECTNESS:

City Attorney
THOMAS J. ANSBRO

Dean J. Trantalis _____

John C. Herbst _____

Steven Glassman _____

Pamela Beasley-Pittman _____

Warren Sturman _____