



LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

LTC No: 25-191

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*

DATE: September 30, 2025

**SUBJECT: New River Crossing Tunnel Initiative Update –
Broward County Extension Request**

The intent of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to provide the City Commission with an update on the New River Crossing. On April 15, 2025, the City Commission approved Resolution No. 25-71 directing me to take steps toward advancing the tunnel initiative with the goal of meeting Broward County's October 1, 2025 deadline to provide a viable tunnel proposal, among other deliverables.

At the August 19, 2025, City Commission Conference Meeting, staff shared various updates on the tunnel initiative, including external factors such as the status of funding opportunities. During the City Manager's Report discussion, I suggested, and the City Commission supported, that the City request an extension beyond the October 1, 2025 deadline. As a result of the discussion, on September 16, 2025, a letter was sent to Monica Cepero, Broward County Administrator, requesting an extension to July 1, 2026 (Attachment 1). On September 29, 2025, I received a response from Ms. Cepero agreeing to an extension to February 13, 2026 (Attachment 2).

I plan to discuss next steps at the October 7, 2025 City Commission Conference Meeting as part of the City Manager's Report. Should you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Attachments:

1. September 16, 2026, Extension Request Letter to Broward County Administrator
2. September 29, 2025, Extension Request Response Letter from Broward County Administrator

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
City Manager's Office
Department Directors



September 16, 2025

Ms. Monica Cepero
County Administrator
Broward County
115 South Andrews Avenue, Room 409
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Re: New River Crossing Tunnel Initiative

Dear Ms. Cepero,

As you are aware, Broward County Mayor Beam Furr and City of Fort Lauderdale Mayor Dean Trantalis exchanged written communication in the spring of 2025 regarding the status of the Broward Commuter Rail project and the New River Crossing. As part of those communications, Mayor Furr stated that the City of Fort Lauderdale needs to provide a viable tunnel proposal by October 1, 2025, otherwise the County would proceed with designating the New River Crossing as a bridge.

On April 15, 2025, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission adopted Resolution No. 25-71 (Attachment 1) that reaffirmed Resolution No. 24-280 and the construction of a tunnel as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the commuter rail train crossing the New River and acknowledged City efforts to advance the tunnel concept. The Resolution directed me, as the City Manager, to continue collaborating with Broward County, promote the tunnel project with industry experts, engage with Brightline and the Florida East Coast Railway, evaluate grant opportunities and develop proposed financial strategies.

The City has continued to make progress on these directives with the intention of meeting the County's October 1, 2025, deadline. City and County staff have continued to collaborate by establishing routine meetings including a monthly leadership strategy meeting, a monthly project team meeting, and ad-hoc meetings focused on specific project elements. City staff have engaged with various industry experts to promote the tunnel concept and gain feedback on how to structure a project of this magnitude. In addition, City staff attended industry conferences and presented the tunnel concept on industry webinars.

On July 28, 2025, the City of Fort Lauderdale hosted Industry Day at the Broward Center of Performing Arts – Mary N. Porter Riverview Ballroom. The agenda (Attachment 2) included presentations from the City, Broward County, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Build America Bureau. The estimated attendance was sixty (60) participants with over fifteen (15) different interested firms. The City conducted fifteen (15) one-on-one breakout sessions with each firm to further discuss the project, understand their interest in the project, gain industry feedback on potential next steps and associated timelines.

Office of the City Manager

100 North Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
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www.fortlauderdale.gov



The City has started developing financial strategies to fund the New River Crossing tunnel, including the exploration of ways to capture revenue along the railway. In addition, the City continues to work with USDOT on grant and financing opportunities. The City is already a Regional Infrastructure Accelerator (RIA) grant recipient, in the amount of \$974,000, and is actively working on the deliverables. On June 25, 2025, the City applied for another RIA grant in the amount of \$2 million for funding to support preliminary engineering work and assess innovative mechanisms for project funding and delivery.

As you know, there are several recent transportation-related developments that could affect advancement of the New River Crossing and other regional transit programs and initiatives. External and unforeseen challenges, such as a major change in State of Florida funding allocations, the reduction/termination of Federal transportation grants, and the lawsuit between the Florida East Coast Railway and Brightline, have impacted the City's progress and near-term outlook.

In consideration of these factors, I am writing to request an extension of the County's October 1, 2025, deadline to July 1, 2026. At such time, the State's legislative process would have concluded with its annual budget finalized. The extension will also allow the City to continue promoting the tunnel concept and working with industry experts to further define the scope and recommended deal structure for a viable proposal. The City is finalizing a Request for Information (RFI) solicitation to be released in September 2025 through the City's Procurement Division. In addition, the extension will provide additional time for the external elements to either be resolved, modified, or at least further understood based on the short-term or long-term impacts they may have.

We appreciate your consideration and understanding. If you have any questions, concerns, or require additional information, please contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,



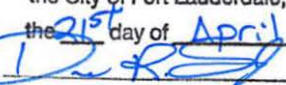
Rickelle Williams
City Manager

c: Kevin Kelleher, Deputy County Administrator
Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager



CERTIFICATION

I certify this to be a true and correct
copy of the record of the City of
Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

WITNESSETH my hand and official seal of
the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, this
the 25th day of April, 2025
 City Clerk

RESOLUTION NO. 25-71

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, REAFFIRMING RESOLUTION NO. 24-280 AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A TUNNEL AS THE LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE FOR THE COMMUTER RAIL TRAIN CROSSING THE NEW RIVER IN THE CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, AND ACKNOWLEDGING CITY EFFORTS TO ADVANCE THE TUNNEL CONCEPT, AND THE RESCISSION OF ANY OTHER CONFLICTING RESOLUTION PROVISIONS, AND AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, on December 17, 2024, the City Commission of the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, ("City"), adopted Resolution No. 24-280, which urged the Broward County Board of County Commissioners ("County" or "Broward County"), the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization ("MPO"), and the Florida Department of Transportation ("FDOT") to recommend construction of a tunnel as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the commuter rail train crossing the New River in the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, while continuing to work to reduce the project's construction costs and identify the necessary financing; and

WHEREAS, on March 3, 2025, the City received a letter from Broward County Mayor Beam Furr that identified his intent to submit a resolution to the Board of County Commissioners recommending a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) in April 2025 that would not specify the New River Crossing methodology to permit additional time to present a viable tunnel alternative as a crossing approach; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Furr's letter identified, *inter alia*, what a viable tunnel alternative should contain: written approval from both Brightline and Florida East Coast Railway (FECR), a formal proposal from a developer with economic terms with certain conditions, and a proposed financial plan that addresses how tunnel construction, operations and maintenance costs can be funded, given a fixed financial commitment from the County; and

WHEREAS, Mayor Furr's letter requested the City to provide a feasible and viable public-private partnership tunnel development proposal no later than October 1, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the City believes the tunnel concept remains the only solution to address the major impacts anticipated to be generated by the significant increase of passenger trains utilizing the Florida East Coast Railway, including the impacts on the marine industry and the detrimental impacts on pedestrian and vehicular traffic that traverse the FECR tracks within the City of Fort Lauderdale; and



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WHEREAS, the City appreciates the opportunity to continue advancing the tunnel concept and the ongoing collaboration with Broward County to deliver the tunnel as the LPA; and

WHEREAS, the City plans to further explore, with the tunneling industry, to identify experienced and qualified firms with an interest in the project that could deliver a financing plan, prepare construction documents and construct a tunnel with high operational reliability, a passenger platform or station, and includes a 30-year operational period of performance.

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

SECTION 1. The City Commission reaffirms Resolution No. 24-280 noting that the tunnel remains its recommendation as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the commuter rail train crossing at the New River in the City of Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

SECTION 2. The City Commission directs the City Manager to continue collaborating with Broward County staff on the tunnel concept with periodic meetings and provide, to the extent possible, a viable tunnel alternative update to the City Commission and the Board of County Commissioners before October 1, 2025, which shall illustrate the City's progress and define the City's remaining timeline and next steps.

SECTION 3. The City Commission directs the City Manager to promote the City of Fort Lauderdale's desire to advance the tunnel concept only; engage with and provide project information to qualified firms with tunneling experience; and survey the industry to identify if any developer(s) with tunneling experience would be willing to submit a formal proposal for the construction, operation, and maintenance of a tunnel.

SECTION 4. The City Commission directs the City Manager to engage with Brightline and the Florida East Coast Railway, in coordination with the County, FDOT, and the MPO, as may be required, to secure written documentation from each entity on their respective positions regarding the proposed tunnel project.

SECTION 5. The City Commission directs the City Manager to explore grant opportunities and financial strategies and develop a financial plan that addresses how tunnel construction, operations and maintenance costs may be funded.



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SECTION 6. That the City Commission agrees to collaborate with the Board of County Commissioners on a viable tunnel alternative and report on progress.

SECTION 7. That any other resolutions, or parts thereof, in conflict with this Resolution are hereby rescinded to the extent of such conflict.

SECTION 8. That this Resolution shall be in full force and effect upon adoption and final passage.

ADOPTED this 15th day of April, 2025.

Mayor
DEAN J. TRANTALIS

ATTEST:

City Clerk
DAVID R. SOLOMAN

Dean J. Trantalis Yea

John C. Herbst Nay

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND CORRECTNESS:

Steven Glassman Yea

Pamela Beasley-Pittman Yea

Interim City Attorney
D'WAYNE M. SPENCE

Ben Sorensen Yea

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Mayor
DEAN J. TRANTALIS

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City Clerk
DAVID R. SOLOMAN

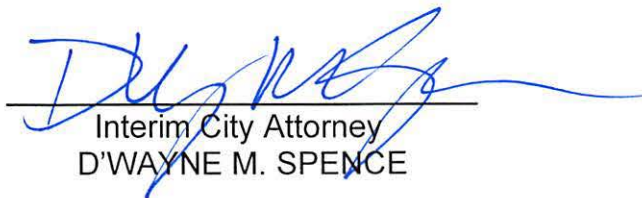
Dean J. Trantalis Yea

John C. Herbst Nay

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND CORRECTNESS:

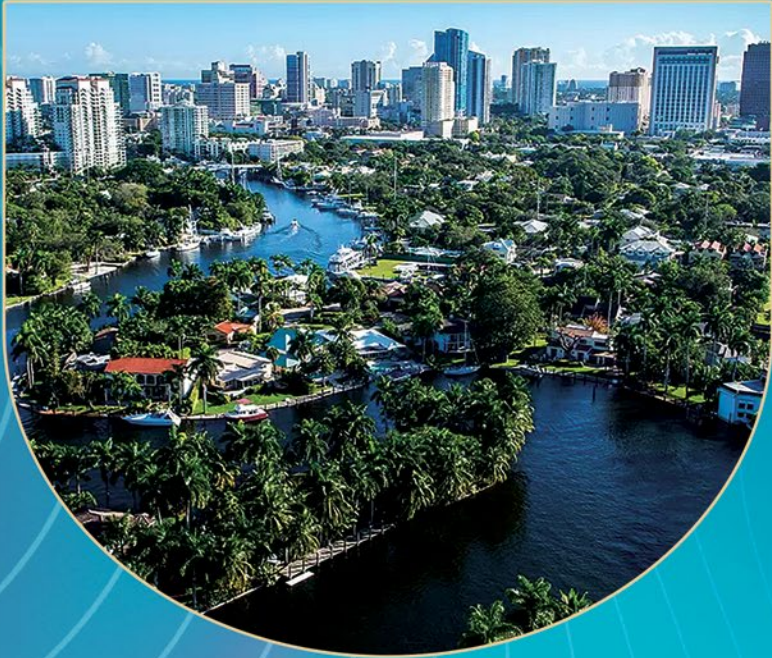
Steven Glassman Yea

Pamela Beasley-Pittman Yea



Interim City Attorney
D'WAYNE M. SPENCE

Ben Sorensen Yea



NEW RIVER CROSSING TUNNEL INDUSTRY DAY



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE



MONDAY, JULY 28, 2025

Broward Center for the Performing Arts

Mary N. Porter Riverview Ballroom

201 SW 5th Avenue

EVENT PROGRAM



8:30 a.m. | Registration and Networking

9:00 a.m. | Opening Remarks

Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

City Manager Rickelle Williams

Ekaete Ekwere, Transportation Division Manager

9:15 a.m. | US Department of Transportation

Carl Ringgold, Program Manager, Build America Bureau

9:30 a.m. | Broward County Transportation

Coree Cuff Lonergan, CEO/GM Broward County Transit

9:45 a.m. | City of Fort Lauderdale

Milos Majstorovic, Director, Transportation & Mobility

Ben Rogers, Assistant City Manager

10:15 a.m. | Florida Department of Transportation

Phil Schwab, In-house Consultant, Modal Development

10:30 a.m. | Closing Remarks

City Commissioner Ben Sorensen

BREAKOUT SESSIONS



10:45 a.m. | Fengate

11:25 a.m. | Plenary

12:15 p.m. | ASTM/Halmar

12:55 p.m. | AECON

1:35 p.m. | Laing

2:15 p.m. | Meridiam

2:55 p.m. | Sacyr

3:35 p.m. | Ghella

4:15 p.m. | CBNA

5:10 p.m. | Barnard

5:50 p.m. | Kiewit

6:30 p.m. | Acciona

7:10 p.m. | Cintra



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Vice Mayor John C. Herbst, District 1

Commissioner Steven Glassman, District 2

Commissioner Pam Beasley-Pittman, District 3

Commissioner Ben Sorensen, District 4

CHARTER OFFICERS

City Manager Rickelle Williams

Interim City Attorney D'Wayne M. Spence

City Auditor Pat Reilly

City Clerk David R. Soloman



MONICA CEPERO, County Administrator

115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room 409 • Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301 • 954-357-7354 • FAX 954-357-7360

September 29, 2025

Ms. Rickelle Williams, City Manager
Office of the City Manager
City of Fort Lauderdale
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

RE: New River Crossing

Dear Ms. Williams, *Rickelle*

This is in response to your letter dated September 16, 2025, wherein you, on behalf of the City of Fort Lauderdale (City), requested an extension of approximately 9 months from October 1, 2025 to July 1, 2026 to meet the deadline requested by Mayor Furr in his March 3, 2025 letter to the City.

As outlined in Mayor Furr's letter, the City is responsible for providing the County with a viable public-private partnership tunnel development proposal assuming a maximum County contribution of \$250 million towards the life cycle costs of the tunnel including a commuter rail station. Mayor Furr also elaborated details on what the viable tunnel proposal is expected to include in his letter. The deadline for the viable proposal was October 1, 2025.

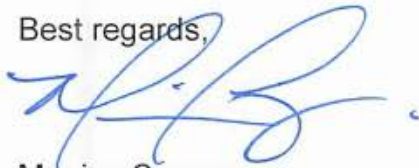
The County recognizes the challenges highlighted in your letter related to state funding programs and the lawsuit between the Florida East Coast Railway and Brightline. However, these challenges do not directly impede the completion of the tasks the City is undertaking. Instead, they remind us of the importance of preparing for foreseeable and unforeseeable risks that we need to manage when planning for mega scale projects such as a tunnel to cross the New River. They also affirm the soundness of the original approach of requesting industry input. The industry has abundant experience and profound knowledge to mitigate risks and develop reliable costs to account for any potential risks. As such, in response to Mayor Furr's request for a proposed financial plan, it would be prudent for the City to also prepare different financial plan scenarios to account for different funding risks and ensure successful project implementation. Understanding the need for transit solutions in our region, the County continues to move forward with the commuter rail projects despite these same challenges.

September 29, 2025
Ms. Rickelle Williams, City Manager
New River Crossing

That said, after conferring with Mayor Furr and in the spirit of collaboration and partnership, the County will agree to extend the deadline over four more months from October 1, 2025 to February 13, 2026 for the City to finalize the proposal. This will provide the City a total of almost one year. Please note that the County will continue to move forward with the Broward Commuter Rail North project and will not delay subsequent milestones while awaiting the outcome of the City's proposal beyond the new due date.

We appreciate the City's continued partnership and efforts to fulfill its role in this critical initiative. Should you have any questions or wish to discuss coordination further, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Best regards,



Monica Cepero
County Administrator

Cc: Broward County Board of County Commissioners
Kevin Kelleher, Deputy County Administrator
Laurette Jean, Assistant County Administrator
Coree Cuff Lonergan, Director, Transportation Department
Andrew Meyers, County Attorney
Robert Melton, County Auditor