



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

---

# NEW RIVER CROSSING PROJECT

Revolutionizing Connectivity: New River Crossing and the Transformation of Fort Lauderdale's Downtown into a Premier Mobility Hub

2024 RAISE Grant Application

February 28, 2024



# CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

## NEW RIVER CROSSING

Revolutionizing Connectivity: New River Crossing and the Transformation of Fort Lauderdale's Downtown into a Premier Mobility Hub

### PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Fort Lauderdale is seeking a RAISE grant to fund planning activities the New River Crossing Project, fostering better connectivity across the City and transforming the downtown Mobility Hub. The initiative represents a significant opportunity to transform community infrastructure. The project will improve how residents move, live, work, and engage in recreational activities..

### RATIONALE

The City sees the New River area's potential with its waterfront, arts, retail, and growing population. Yet, connectivity issues and vehicle-focused infrastructure limit its vibrancy compared to other cities. Challenges like unsafe parks and poor land use also detract from its potential. Investing in better connectivity, leveraging the federally funded Mobility Hub, promises job growth, business expansion, increased tourism, and improved air quality by diversifying transportation options in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

### FUNDING SUMMARY

RIA Funding:	\$974,000
RAISE Request:	\$2,500,000
City's Match:	\$500,000
Project Cost:	\$3,974,000

### KEY CRITERIA FOR PROJECT STUDY



#### Economic Development

- 2 Million+ residents and 1 Million jobs along the rail corridor
- Marine Industry generates \$23.3B impact with over 120,000 jobs
- Adding 18,000 units with 48 active or planned projects
- Free flow of Marine traffic is much needed for any infrastructure choice



#### Property Impact

- Downtown population has doubled in the past 10 years
- Anticipated 13,000 people per square mile by 2040
- Current alternatives have an impact on properties including historic district



#### Traffic & Congestion

- 3 Million+ daily auto trips along the corridor
- 19 at-grade crossings with high accident rates
- Handful of downtown roadways experience 160,000 vehicles per day
- At-grade crossings generate significant traffic delays in heart of downtown



#### Equity

- 15.91 square miles (44%) of the City is considered as disadvantaged through the Climate and Economic Justice screening tool (CEJST)



#### Environment

- Protect the environment, marine life, and downtown livability

### PROJECT GOALS

**Resiliency:** Project will account for environmental and fiscal resiliency

**Sustainability:** Project will consider reduce traffic, congestion, exhaust, and air pollution, minimize noise, visual impact and surface disturbance

**Connect Communities And Protect Residents:** Project will promote integration via Mobility Hub and TOD principles.

**Promotes Development & Growth:** West of FEC Railroad has seen has started to see growth spill over of development growth.

**Improves Diversity & Income Growth:** Merger of East and West of FEC Railroad corridor will promote diversity and job opportunities for residents

**Reduces City's Congestion:** Eliminates crossings, reduces traffic congestions and limited impact on existing roads

**Justice40:** Approx. 70% of the Project Costs will be spent in areas that identify as APP and Historically Disadvantaged.



# CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

## NEW RIVER CROSSING

Revolutionizing Connectivity: New River Crossing and the Transformation of Fort Lauderdale's Downtown into a Premier Mobility Hub

### WHY NOW?

The Project area includes APP and HDC areas. The City sees the New River Crossing's ability to provide increased connectivity as a catalyst to pull people out of poverty and advance future generations by increased economic activity.

### PROJECT LOCATION



### CURRENT STATE

Fort Lauderdale



### PLEASE CONTACT

Ben Rogers  
Director  
City of Fort Lauderdale  
Transportation and Mobility  
290 N.E. 3rd Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
(954) 828 - 3781  
brogers@fortlauderdale.gov

### TRANSFORMING THE NEW RIVER PROJECT



#### Current Project Status: Planning

- Preliminary evaluations of tunnel and bridge options have been conducted. However, current alternatives have not been deemed viable due to adverse effects on stakeholders, including right of way and access rights owners, residents, and developers
- Development of both tunnel and bridge conceptual designs is underway, with completion expected by end of 2024. RAISE grant funds will supplement the extensive planning and impact studies to define the best solution.
- The goal is to select a preferred design that considers the urban impact and aligns with the City and County's strategic goals. The RAISE grant will support critical studies essential to this decision-making process.



#### Funding

- The City requests for \$2,500,000 under the Federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant
- The City was awarded \$974,000 under the Federal Regional Infrastructure Accelerators program in 2024 for planning activities.
- Additionally, the City will contribute \$500,000.00 of its own funds to advance this significant and transformational Project

### REVOLUTIONIZING FORT LAUDERDALE CONNECTIVITY

**Riverwalk:** Riverwalk District as the urban center of Broward County, provides a unique South Florida destination and a cosmopolitan experience. Efforts to connect North to the South for bicyclists, pedestrians, and commuters will enhance the quality of life.

**Mobility Hub:** is located within a multi-block area that will connect multiple transit services including the Brightline (a privately developed inter-city passenger rail), light rail connector, commuter rail, the Wave Streetcar Downtown Circulator, a dedicated BRT line, a commuter rail passenger service and regional express bus services. NRC Crossing will provide an alternate mode of transport from this Mobility Hub.

**New River Crossing:** is more than an infrastructure asset, it is the Project that will connect North to South and enhance connectivity within the County, South Florida and the region. This crossing will redefine the way people commute by reducing vehicular dependence and improve accessibility.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PROJECT OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ENVISIONING A MOBILITY HUB AND THE RIVERWALK MASTER PLAN</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>APP, HDC, AND URBAN AREAS</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>ADDRESSING TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PROJECT HISTORY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CURRENT DESIGN STATUS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PROJECT STATEMENT OF WORK</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PROJECT BUDGET</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BUDGET OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SOURCES, USES, &amp; AVAILABILITY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>COST ESTIMATES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>COST SHARE OR NON-FEDERAL FUNDING MATCH</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MERIT CRITERIA</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SAFETY</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>MOBILITY AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS AND OPPORTUNITY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>STATE OF GOOD REPAIR</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>PARTNERSHIP &amp; COLLABORATION</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>INNOVATION</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PROJECT READINESS</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PROJECT SCHEDULE</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>TECHNICAL CAPACITY ASSESSMENT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>TEAM EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CITY RESOURCES</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PROJECT DELIVERY</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PROJECT PLANNING</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>REQUIRED APPROVALS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>NEPA STATUS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INFORMATION ON REVIEWS, APPROVALS, AND PERMITS BY OTHER FEDERAL AND STATE AGENCIES</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>RIGHT-OF-WAY AND LAND ACQUISITION PLANS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION REQUIREMENTS AFFECTING STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>PROJECT RISKS</b>	<b>5</b>

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### Project Overview

The City of Fort Lauderdale (the City) is requesting \$2,500,000 in federal funding under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program in a legacy effort that will address traffic and congestion, severe flooding caused by sea-level rise, a lack of accessibility along the Riverwalk, improvement in public safety and air quality, and provide a generational opportunity for how communities move, live, work and play. The City intends to achieve these objectives by addressing a key development project, New River Crossing (“NRC” or the “Project”), which will build connectivity between North and South Fort Lauderdale. This Project is a critical element of the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) project, which is a part of the larger, Broward County Premium Mobility Plan (PREMO) plan. The PREMO plan aims to establish a commuter rail service to connect all 3 counties, starting from Miami Airport in Miami-Dade County to Jupiter in Palm Beach County with up to 25 stations covering coastal cities with co-locations to other transit services. The PREMO plan synchronizes transport in the City by harmoniously creating a transportation ecosystem in which rail service, light rail transit (LRT), bus rapid transit, high frequency bus service, bike trails, pedestrian bridges, and micro mobility options work seamlessly to enhance mobility and connectivity in Broward County (the County). With over 200 miles of proposed improvements and an estimate cost of \$4.4B, the PREMO plan will be implemented over the next 15 years with the first service enhancement scheduled for 2027 and NRC is an integral part of the PREMO plan.

### Envisioning a Mobility Hub and the Riverwalk Master Plan

The City acknowledges the potential of the New River area to become more than the sum of its parts, with its accessible waterfront, vibrant arts and entertainment venues, thriving retail spaces, and a growing downtown population spurred by recent and upcoming developments. However, a lack of connectivity hampers the downtown area from reaching the vibrancy of other urban centers, due to vehicle-centric infrastructure, incomplete



Figure 1: PREMO Network that Provides Regional Connectivity



Figure 2: New River Crossing in its Current State

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

pedestrian pathways, and urban discontinuities. Misguided land use, such as waterfront government buildings and the underutilized Riverfront retail complex, also limits the area's potential. Investing in connectivity, as envisioned with the downtown Fort Lauderdale Mobility Hub, which includes a new commuter rail station, LRT connections to key destinations, and integration with bus services and the Brightline station, could transform the area.



The Project will build an alternate crossing of either a tunnel or a bridge, to accommodate additional commuter rails as the existing infrastructure operates at maximum capacity catering to freight rail and Brightline operations. The NRC will intersect four at-grade crossings which are arterial state roadways that have an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) combined of 160,000. This infrastructure, aimed at enhancing connectivity and shown in Figure 1, promises job growth, business expansion, increased tourism, and improved air quality by offering diverse transportation options.

## Project Location

The geographical boundaries for the Project are included in the City of Fort Lauderdale, located in Broward County. Broward County is Florida's 7th largest county with a total area of 1,224 square miles. The City of Fort Lauderdale is the 10th largest in Florida and the 3rd largest in South Florida and has 165 miles of inland waterways. The City's boundaries align with Broward County's PREMO plan with the largest connectivity planned in downtown Fort Lauderdale. The specific study area being requested by the City is approx. 2.5 miles. The location begins alongside the railroad tracks, from Sunrise Blvd passing through the Census Tracts census tracts 415, 416.01, and 417, Historically Disadvantaged Communities (HDC) and Areas of Persistent Poverty (APP), through the urban core and crosses the New River to end on Davie Street.

## APP, HDC, And Urban Areas

The Project area intersects the City where approx. 30-40% poverty lies. The Project's goals of reducing inequities across the transportation system, ensuring that communities benefit from the safe, efficient, and sustainable movement of people and goods, align with the objectives set forth in the Justice40 Initiative.



Figure 4: Project Map

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

The Project's goals of Broward County experiences four commonalities often associated with disadvantage communities these are as follows:

- **FLOOD RISK:** Disadvantaged communities are frequently located in areas more prone to flooding. Housing in these areas may also be older or not built to withstand floods, increasing vulnerability. Broward County falls into the 93<sup>rd</sup> percentile.
- **UNDERGROUND STORAGE TANKS AND RELEASES:** Releases from underground storage tanks can contaminate soil and groundwater, posing significant health risks to nearby communities. Broward County falls into the 98<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- **LACK OF HIGHER-EDUCATION:** Limited access to higher education in disadvantaged communities can lead to lower-paying jobs and fewer employment opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and contributing to higher unemployment rates within these communities. Broward County falls into the 11<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- **LOW-INCOME:** Disadvantaged communities are often in low, part-time, or unstable jobs. These jobs may not offer benefits such as health insurance, retirement savings plans, or paid leave, further exacerbating financial instability. Broward County falls into the 73<sup>rd</sup> percentile.

Based on the initial estimates for the Project costs, approximately 65% - 75% of the capital expenditure will be incurred within the APP and HDC Areas.

## Transportation Challenges

Challenges with the existing conditions and infrastructure are as follows:

- **INCREASE IN FATALITIES:** The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has expressed concerns about the significant rise in fatalities along the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR) corridor. The 300% increase in fatalities raises serious safety issues that need to be addressed promptly.
- **POTENTIAL REMOVAL OF QUIET ZONE STATUS:** The FRA is reviewing the train operations conditions and considering the removal of the Quiet Zone status that the community currently enjoys. This will have an impact on the quality of life for residents and require additional safety measures. In a memo dated June 23, 2022, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and FRA discussed removing the Quiet Zone status due to number of deaths along the corridor.

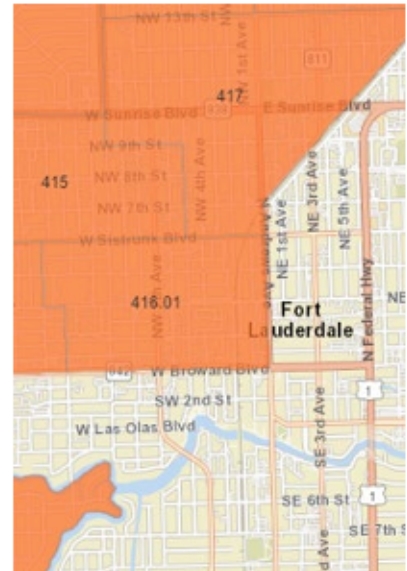


Figure 5: APPs in the Project Area

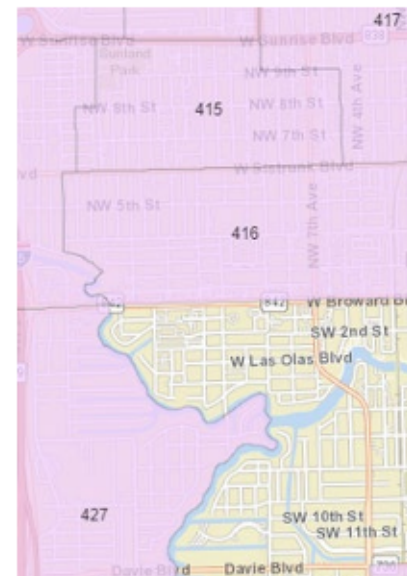


Figure 6: HDCs in the Project Area

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

- **NEED FOR SAFETY CAMPAIGNS AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS:** The MPO and municipalities along the FEC Corridor collaborate on safety campaigns and capital improvements to mitigate dangers and promote train safety tips. However, implementing these campaigns and improvements requires significant resources and coordination.
- **NEED FOR MODERNIZATION:** The NRC emerged as an area in need of modernization as raising the bridge frequently to accommodate boats creates safety concerns and congestion issues, especially with vessels over 100+ feet.
- **IMPACT ON THE MARINE INDUSTRY:** The low clearance of the NRC adversely affects the Marine Industry, which has a significant economic impact on the region. Increasing rail crossing capacity and addressing the low clearance issue are necessary for efficient train operations and to avoid adverse effects on the Marine Industry, which contributes towards an annual economic output of \$9.9 billion in Broward County and \$18.5 billion regionally<sup>1</sup>.

## Addressing Transportation Challenges

- **IDENTIFY A LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA):** In 2013, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration identified Fort Lauderdale as having the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of pedestrian deaths per capita and the 5<sup>th</sup> overall most traffic deaths per capita in the nation. The City is determined to get to zero fatality and is considering options that will help remedy this issue including a safer crossing at New River.
- **AWARDED FEDERAL FUNDING:** The City was recently awarded a grant for Railroad Safety and Congestion Analysis to improve safety and mobility. The City was also awarded the Regional Infrastructure Accelerators (RIA) program in 2023 that accelerates project delivery and clears barriers for credit-worthy projects. Partner agencies including MPO and Brightline have also received funds to improve safety around the rail corridors. The City is improving current conditions, but a long-term practical solution is needed such as a commuter rail.
- **DEVELOP A LONG-TERM SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION THAT ADDRESSES EXISTING CONDITIONS AND ALIGNS ALL STAKEHOLDERS:** The City is Broward County's transportation core with 3 million daily trips representing 17% of the region's travel. Highways are at capacity and the only way to grow sustainably is to increase modes of transportation.

## Project History

The PREMO plan includes a proposed commuter rail service along the congested FECR corridor. For a potential extension in the north and to remain in the FECR corridor's right-of-way (ROW), it must cross the New River in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) studies suggest that crossing the New River requires a new bridge or tunnel for additional passenger rail service. In January 2020, the preliminary feasibility study for the NRC was mandated by the Florida Legislature and contracted out by the FDOT District 4 (D4), marking the beginning of a comprehensive evaluation process. A year later, in January 2021, the Project

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.miasf.org/>

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

Development & Environment (PD&E) Study for the Broward County Rail (BCR) was initiated. In March 2023, Broward County and the City undertook a Joint Study of the NRC. The joint study was completed by August 2023.

## Current Design Status

Presently, both tunnel and bridge alternative designs are in development, with expectations to finalize the conceptual designs by end of 2024, after which the RAISE funds will be used for further planning and impact studies. These studies will be aimed at understanding the broader implications of the proposed infrastructure on the urban environment and aligning with the City's strategic priorities. The RAISE grant funds will provide funding for these pivotal studies as laid out below:

## Project Statement of Work

The Project aims to advance the planning phase and prepare for the subsequent design development stage. Below is the Project's statement of work required during planning phase:

- 1. NEW RIVER CROSSING & MOBILITY HUB PLANNING** entails the Environmental Assessment to identify potential impacts on the surroundings including air quality, water, flooding and noise pollution; Right-of-Way (ROW), property impacts, and land acquisition study are fundamental in mapping out the spatial requirements of the Project, addressing property-related concerns, and assessing necessary land acquisitions, permitting and minimizing disruptions to the community and business operations; Traffic & Congestion and Safety & Resiliency studies will provide insights into current transportation challenges and the Project's effectiveness in alleviating traffic bottlenecks; Geotechnical, Topography, and Utility Surveys lay the groundwork for understanding the physical landscape and subsurface conditions, which are critical for informed design decisions and the prevention of future structural issues; Construction, planning and design to minimize disruptions to existing rail operations and stakeholder engagement to ensure no disruption to existing operations.
- 2. IMPACT STUDIES & OPTION ANALYSIS:** The Impact Analysis for the Project encompasses a holistic approach to understanding its broad implications, identifying the risks and mitigating them in advance of the design stage, focusing on four key activities: Economic Impact Analysis, Equity/Public Benefit, Quality of Life Assessment, and Benefit-Cost Analysis. This will result in a well-rounded Option Analysis of each alternative that includes impact of Mobility Hub in terms of economic benefit, job creation, business generation and tourism growth with the potential of TODs, and housing within APP/HDC zones.
- 3. VALUE CREATION:** Develop revenue assessment from alternative sources to support the Project and the Mobility Hub initiatives and assess innovative delivery mechanisms for the Project with regards to funding and project delivery.

The City is committed to realizing its vision without delay, aiming to serve as a model by seamlessly transitioning to a community-focused mobility system. This shift intends to decrease dependence on personal vehicles, foster stronger community ties, and bolster economic prospects, especially for marginalized communities.



# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

impact on properties arterial roads along the corridor and connectivity with the larger PREMO plan initiatives of development of Mobility Hub in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

- Impact Studies & Option Analysis:** These studies will focus on conducting an Economic Impact Analysis, Equity/Public Benefit, Quality of Life, and the impacts on property, business, and economic development, along with a Benefit-Cost Analysis to evaluate the alternates viability. This also includes the potential for Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) and housing within APP & HDC zones to supplement development in those areas as a result of the Mobility Hub development.
- Value Creation:** This will include evaluating broader benefits of creating a Mobility Hub. It also involves assessing revenue from alternative sources that could be reinvested into the City to support key goals of the City and/or support the Project and exploring innovative delivery mechanisms to optimize project execution.

While these activities and phases have been broken down, there is typically overlap and workstreams will be streamlined to ensure productivity. The table below shows various activities required at this planning phase of the Project:

Task Description	Total
<b>New River Crossing &amp; Mobility Hub</b>	<b>\$2,454,000</b>
Environmental Assessment	\$450,000
Property Impacts, ROW, Land Acquisition Studies	\$325,000
Traffic & Congestion, Safety & Resiliency Studies	\$575,000
Geotech, Surveys & Reports	\$500,000
Construction Planning, Design & Stakeholder Engagement	\$604,000
<b>Impact Studies &amp; Option Analysis</b>	<b>\$1,345,000</b>
Impact Studies	\$650,000
Option Analysis including Benefit Cost Analysis	\$695,000
<b>Value Creation</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>
<b>Total Planning Studies Budget</b>	<b>\$3,974,000</b>

*Table 1: Total Project Cost*



## SUSTAINABILITY AT THE FOREFRONT OF DESIGN

During **April 12-13, 2023** Broward County witnessed **nearly 26 inches** of rain in a **24-hour** period, resulting in more than **\$100 million** of damage, “major damage” to almost **1,100** homes and hundreds of temporary and permanent layoffs by affected businesses.

The flooding closed the airport for two days, destroyed homes and damaged many businesses, and disrupted gasoline deliveries.

City Hall was closed due to flooding and the event called for Federal visits to assess the damage.

Designing infrastructure to protect vulnerable communities and plan for the future is essential to the City’s goals.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

## Cost Estimates

The costs estimated for each activity shown above are based on coordination with several industry experts and local knowledge of the communities. These were obtained in February 2024.

## Cost Share or Non-Federal Funding Match

Approximately

**70%**

of the Project Cost will be allocated towards APP and HDC



Given that the NRC is situated within APP and HDC and the majority of the capital costs will be incurred within APP and HDC zones, the City confirmed from the RAISE Grants team the requirement for the cost share.

The Project site is surrounded by various poverty rates within the area ranging from 30-40% within the Census identified as APP and HDC. The Project envisages bringing many job opportunities to this area and wider connectivity to South Florida and incurring approximately (65%-75%) of the cost in APP and HDC areas. This important Project will redefine the socio demographic landscape for the City's residents within these areas. Constructing the station (marked with a red star in Figure 4) will allocate majority of the Project costs within this area, reduce transportation insecurity, and protect vulnerable communities. The impact studies as part of this planning phase will support identifying opportunities for uplifting the areas around the downtown Mobility Hub. The City and County jointly continue to invest on the Project's conceptual design and evaluation.

Till date with the City has approved \$400,000 and the County additional \$2 Million for conceptual designs. Both continue to work jointly in identifying the most suitable option that benefits the community and support the economic growth of the City.

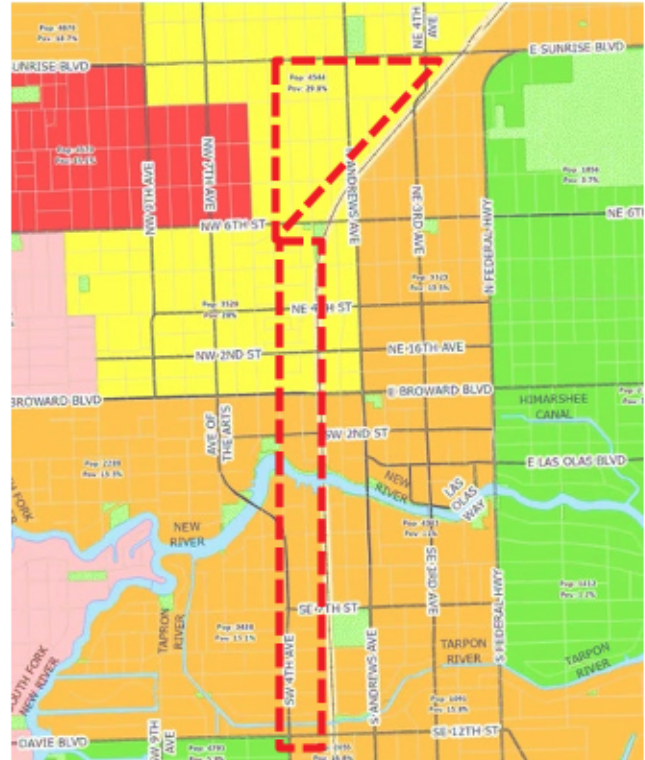


Figure 8: City Poverty (%) around the Project Area

**57 – 59%**



of the population in the APP and HDC tracts are at 200% or less of the federal poverty level.

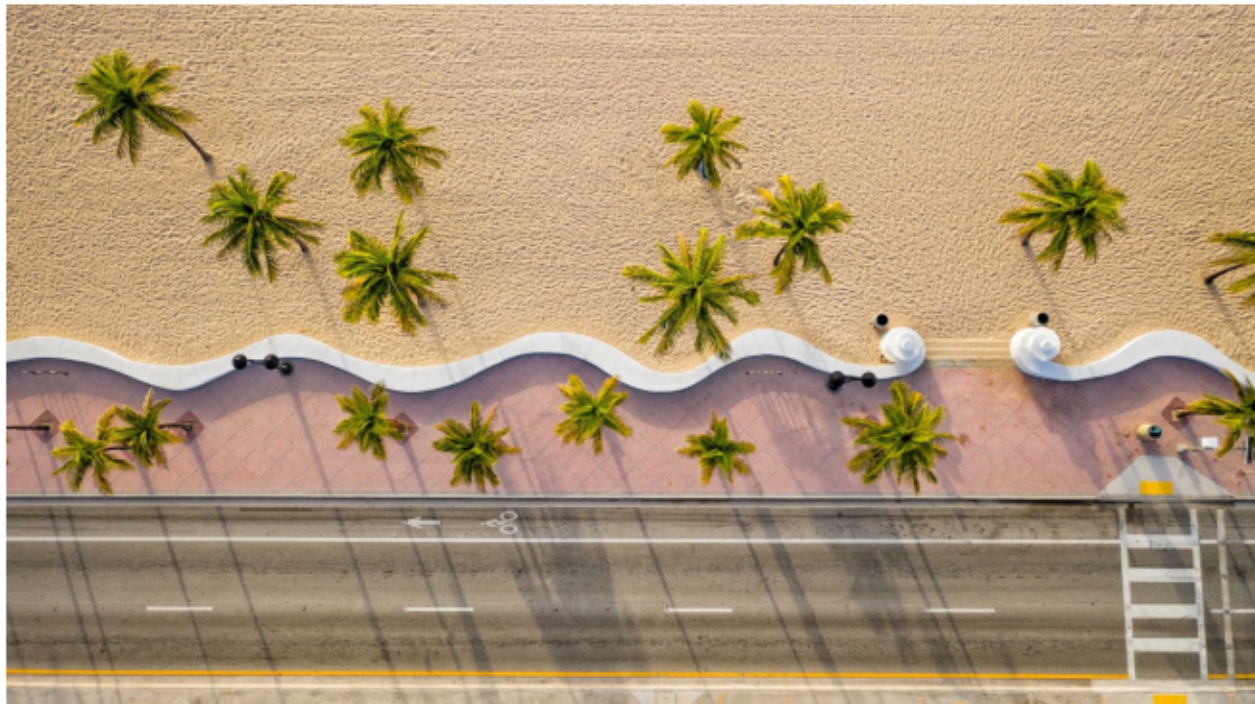
# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

The breakdown of the cost by source for the planning studies under the RAISE application is as follows:

Task Description	RIA Contribution	RAISE Request	City's Contribution	Total
New River Crossing & Mobility Hub	\$624,000	\$1,525,000	\$305,000	\$2,454,000
Impact Studies & Option Analysis	\$350,000	\$830,000	\$165,000	\$1,345,000
Value Creation		\$145,000	\$30,000	\$175,000
<b>Total Planning Studies Budget</b>	<b>\$974,000</b>	<b>\$2,500,000</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>	<b>\$3,974,000</b>

*Table 2 Total Project Cost*

Given the paramount importance of the Project on the future of the Fort Lauderdale community, the City has invested over \$650,000 and will invest an additional \$500,000 (as shown above) in the planning phase. This investment is to demonstrate the City's commitment and resolve for this very important Project, despite qualifying for the 100% waiver criteria established by USDOT. The City views the Project as an important partnership with between the City and its stakeholders, and USDOT. Thank you for your consideration.



## Merit Criteria

### Safety

The City of Fort Lauderdale (the City) is committed to fostering a safe transportation system for the movement of goods and people, with a goal of eradicating transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries across the transportation system. To that end, in 2015, the City Commission Adopted “Vision Zero: Fort Lauderdale” which is a multi-year comprehensive strategic program outlining action strategies intended to improve safety for all transportation users.

To achieve a zero-fatality transportation network, this plan recommends 40 objectives and 90 action strategies focusing on the Five “Es”: Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, and Evaluation. The plan aligns with the United States Department of Transportation’s (USDOT) Safe Public objective of incorporating research and support initiatives to improve occupant protection and implementing measures that mitigate or eliminate incidents among rail, transit, aviation, trucking operations, and the public. The plans call for the implementation of the Vision Zero program through the following actions:

- Multi-year implementation prioritized through input from community wide leadership and technical advisory groups.
- Requesting a Vision Zero Pledge be signed by partners. This pledge calls for a commitment to work together towards this common goal, to integrate strategies within the organization, to collaborate on state and federal priorities, and to convene once a year to share and mark progress.
- Development of educational materials to include an array of approaches to teach neighbors of all age’s strategies for the safe use of streets including the importance of using crosswalks, safe bicycling, and safe routes to schools as well as the implementation of the University of Miami Walk Safe/Bike Safe program.
- Partnership with law enforcement on strategies including high emphasis enforcement in targeted corridors, enforcement campaigns in school zones, and implementing educational components with violations.
- Encouragement of safe behaviors through events such as Open Streets and Family Fun Bike Rides, as well as distribution of free safety gear.
- Prioritization of engineering strategies and project investment into the highest crash corridors and intersections.



Figure 9 Address Safety In line with USDOT's Objectives & Strategies

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

- Evaluation strategies which include establishing data collection and performance indicators for quantifying the successes of the action strategies. This will address USDOT’s Safe Public objective of performing demographic analysis to identify actions and opportunities.

In alignment with Vision Zero’s goal to achieve a zero-fatality transportation network, the establishment of the commuter rail will help to reduce risks associated with personal motor vehicle related accidents. With a commuter alternative, there will be fewer cars on the road, thus reducing risky operator behaviors, such as speeding, distraction, fatigue, and operating a vehicle under the influence. The commuter rail will also improve travel safety for vulnerable road users and can also reduce racial and gender disparities in transportation-related health and safety outcomes. Vulnerable communities tend to be at a higher risk of car accidents and fatalities.

Safe System practices will be built into contractual obligations such that incident management and response across all modes is addressed. The City is working closely with its local and state partners including Broward County Traffic Engineering, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and Broward County Metropolitan Transportation Organization (MPO) in efforts related to reducing transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries across the City. This will be further supplemented by incorporating Safe Design objectives into the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) so that designs anticipate and reduce human error. The current design options under evaluation will optimize safety across the entire system. The LPA will be constructed in a manner that the crossings do not interact with oncoming rail traffic. The design will aim to harness technological innovations to reduce and mitigate safety incidents. Any design under consideration seeks to incorporate safety by studying existing structural designs from around the world. Contingent on the LPA, Critical Infrastructure Cybersecurity objectives will also be incorporated to improve and increasing information sharing as well as establish a cybersecurity element in the evaluation of emerging transportation technologies.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has relayed concerns to the MPO regarding the number of incidents on the railways in Broward County (the County) as the FEC corridor experienced a 300% increase in fatalities. The FRA is reviewing the conditions of the train operations and considering the removal of the Quiet Zone status that the community currently experiences.

While the MPO and the municipalities along the FEC Corridor are collaborating safety campaigns and capital improvements to mitigate the dangers and promote train safety tips, a long-term solution is needed. The “Don’t Risk It” campaign launched in June 2023, “aims to raise awareness about the dangers of reckless behavior around trains and railroad crossings and reduce the rising accident rates in the region”. Further, FDOT ran the “Be Rail Smart Campaign” in 2023 throughout District 4 (D4) that promotes rail crossing safety awareness in all D4 counties. The campaign aims to promote awareness of rail crossing safety and reduce the number of incidents on or around the tracks. The City has considered various solutions in the interim, such as raised medians, four quadrant gates, closed crossings, however these are temporary solutions and do not account for human error. The viable path forward must be relieving congestion and giving commuters back time so they can easily, safely and reliably move. By providing a network of transport infrastructure (bus, commuter, intercity and light rails), the City is not only addressing the most dangerous crossings in the City, but also planning for future generations.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

Brightline, the high-speed passenger rail operator, was awarded a \$25,000,000 RAISE Grant in 2022 to enhance safety between Miami-Dade and Broward counties. The grant funds will be used to construct at least 33 miles of pedestrian protection features and supplemental safety measures at 328 grade crossings. The scope of work will include rail dynamic envelopes, delineators, raised pavement markers, edge striping, fencing and additional safety signage.

The designs for the proposed commuter rail stations also incorporate safety features including new siding tracks to avoid interference with freight and intercity service and pedestrian bridges are under evaluation for future implementation. Potential station features, which will be evaluated include:

- Bus Bays with Canopy
- Drop-off/Pick-Up Areas
- Customer Restrooms
- Security Cameras
- Protection Railings
- Benches, Bike Racks, & Garbage Cans
- Stairs and ADA Ramps
- Real Time Passenger Information Signs
- Wayfinding Signs & Audio
- Ticket Vending Machines (TVM)
- Parking (Site-Specific) and nearby garages upfitted with EV chargers and micro transit enhancements



## COMPLETE STREETS POLICY

The City has adopted a Complete Streets Policy to shift the focus from prioritizing motorists to addressing the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

This policy aims to encourage alternative and safe modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and public transit, to alleviate traffic congestion by providing residents with various travel options for their daily commutes.

Complete Streets are designed to be inclusive and safe for all users, regardless of their age or abilities.

One such design has been developed with the support of the City, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and local developers for safety and community connectivity to provide access to residents of Mobility Hub around the planned Commuter Rail Station (for further details, please visit [Project Website](#)).

In 2022, the City of Fort Lauderdale applied, and was awarded funds, for the planning stage of the Railroad Crossing Elimination grant. The City identified technology that could assist with data collection and is seeking to conduct a “Railroad Safety and Congestion Analysis” at a cost of \$350,000 (\$280,000 grant / \$70,000 City). This grant will be coupled with the additional \$15.4M grant received by the Broward MPO in partnership with the six cities along the FEC Corridor of Hallandale Beach, Hollywood, Dania Beach, Fort Lauderdale, Wilton Manors, and Pompano Beach for construction improvement projects that focus on safety along the FEC railway.

The City acknowledges serious need for safety and all design work underway is considering safety as the key priority. There is a serious need for railway safety in South Florida. In the City of Fort Lauderdale, between 01/01/2020 – 09/29/2022, the Police Department has responded to a total of

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

33 accidents on or near the railroad tracks.

- 17 of the incidents involved accidents between 2 vehicles within proximity of the railroad tracks. These incidents did not involve a train; in these cases, an impatient driver tried to go around another vehicle while the crossing arm was down.
- 11 of the incidents were accidents where an individual was struck by a train. 7 of these incidents resulted in death and an investigation; 4 of these incidents involved a non-fatal injury to the individual.
- 5 of the incidents involved a vehicle being struck by the train. In one of these incidents, the victim in the vehicle sustained a fatal injury.

In June of 2022, the FRA held a Town Hall meeting hosted by the Broward MPO to discuss safety concerns along the Florida East coast (FEC) corridor and the Broward County Quiet Zone. Staff from the Transportation and Mobility Department and the Fort Lauderdale Police Department attended the meeting to share efforts that the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Federal Highway Administration (FHA), and the FRA have made in Florida to reduce the number of Grade Crossing and Trespass fatalities. FRA shared that due to the high South Florida fatality rates, it would be recommended that the Broward County Quiet Zone be placed under administrative review. While the Broward Quiet Zones were under review by the FRA, the MPO continued to facilitate the countywide response, working with the City, other municipalities, and Brightline to create an action plan to mitigate FRA concerns and improve at-grade rail crossings. Each municipality was asked to review their at-grade crossings to identify potential improvements such as installing medians, quadrant gates, creating grade separation, or closing existing crossings. An evaluation process has already initiated in early September 2022 to discuss short and long-term strategies for increasing safety at these crossings.

Safety is also a major concern for the New River Crossing. The current existing conditions of the New River Crossing is a single narrow railroad bridge providing train connectivity across the New River in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Given the very low water clearance of the current bridge when lowered to allow for rail traffic, less than 5', the bridge must be raised numerous times a day to allow personal and commercial watercrafts to pass under it. This creates a crowded and unsafe situation as sea vessels of all sizes, including personal and commercial tour boats, must wait in the narrow river for the bridge to be raised. This waterway is also a major throughfare for large vessels that are regularly moves through the area to be serviced and stored upriver. The large watercraft service industry is a major economic driver for Fort Lauderdale, and Broward County, and employes over hundreds of residents.

The Mayor of Fort Lauderdale, Dean Trantalis, has remained very vocal on the issue of safety. In October, 2023 after confirmation of receipt of RIA Grant, the Mayor stated safety as a key concern for this project. "What does this mean? It's all about improving safety, keeping our communities connected, easing traffic flow and improving navigability not just in our downtown core, but for the entire region." Safety is paramount, and the New River Crossing Project is taking all the necessary steps to implement safeguards.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

## Environmental Sustainability

Over 2 million residents live along the corridor from the City of Miami to Jupiter with the expected density to exceed 13,000 people per square mile by 2040. There are over 1,000,000 jobs in the corridor with three Central Business Districts, three international airports, and three seaports. The corridor is the region's transportation core with 3 million daily automobile trips comprising 20% of the region's travel. The roadway network experiences significant congestion daily, particularly during peak business hours. As growth continues, and threats from climate change increase,

the City is focused on expanding capacity and increasing the reliability of its infrastructure systems. Development of commuter rail infrastructure across three counties stands out for its environmental sustainability, offering significant advantages such as lower vehicle emissions, improved air quality, and a reduction in noise pollution. Notably, the preferred alternative includes less noise as a Project goal. Additional sustainable features of the Project encompass enhanced energy efficiency, a decreased reliance on oil, and a reduction in emissions related to congestion by addressing and mitigating severe traffic bottlenecks, thereby minimizing vehicle (car, truck, and boat) idle times in the downtown City.

The City will also consider maintenance efforts and processes are in place to sustain newly built infrastructure for the future. The City will also emphasize resilience and adaptation to sea levels so that the City will continue to be a dynamic and thriving metropolitan area well into the future. In December 2021, the Fort Lauderdale City Commission established net-zero greenhouse gas emissions goals for government operations by 2040 and for the community by 2050. This builds on the City's previous goals in the Sustainability Action Plan and in the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan. Fort Lauderdale joined Florida's Race to Zero to demonstrate the commitment to this effort. The Sustainability Division implements the Citywide Sustainability Action Plan and works to enhance City operations by optimizing conservation efforts. This division ensures that the City's sustainability practices maintain an ecological balance in ways that benefit the entire community.

City's nearly **700**  
single- and multi-space solar-powered parking  
meters generate approximately

**12,000**  
kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year



## LAUDERTRAILS

The City passed a resolution to develop a seven-mile pedestrian and bicycle trail known as Laudertrail as a multimodal connectivity initiative.



The trail connects **17** neighborhoods, **26** parks, **11 K-12** schools, **7** entertainment districts, **14** government services, **3** higher education centers, over **30** cultural centers, **30%** of City jobs, and **30%** of City residents.

This kind of urban pathway serves the entire community, particularly benefiting individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds by providing them with bicycle/hoverboard/electric bike/scooter access to major employment hubs and key regional sites. Moreover, the environmental benefits of reducing car usage through these trails are significant.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

The Project aims to foster walkable and bikeable communities seamlessly integrated with a regional public Mobility Hub, a network of multi-transit options. This approach not only brings housing and workplaces closer together but also enhances the safety, air quality and efficiency of public transit, promoting alternative modes of transportation. To combat traffic congestion and provide greater public awareness of real-time conditions, the City plans to develop and release a mobile application that fully integrates various transportation and parking aspects through existing software services and on-site data collectors. The initial deployment of the smart ecosystem would allow users to understand real-time traffic conditions, real-time parking occupancy, planned road closures, transit offerings, events calendar, general parking information, and payment options for hourly parking, and parking citations. This initial release is scheduled to be deployed in the next 12 months. Utilizing traffic management in this way reduce congestion and results in cleaner air quality as well as lower noise levels, both of which benefit the communities and their residents by improving the environment.

The City has an established advisory board that works with City staff on advancing the five sustainability programs: Sustainability & Climate Resilience, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs, Solid Waste and Recycling, Fleet Services, Stormwater Operations. There are several outreach activities, but a more coordinated effort will help implement Fort Lauderdale's sustainability vision.

The City has implemented a Sustainability Action Plan which governs each aspect of its operations. The Transportation goals included in the plan are:

- Reduce Fossil Fuels Use in Vehicles by 20%
- Reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled
- Plan for Alternatives to Driving Opportunities

Transportation is known as one of the biggest polluters, per the FRA data, the rail network, for both passengers and freight, produces lower GHG emissions than roadway and air transportation, which means that shifting trips or reducing trips where it makes sense can reduce overall transportation emissions. Scientists call Fort Lauderdale “exceptionally vulnerable” to risks from man-made climate change. Fort Lauderdale's climate is changing as has been seen with extreme weather events such as the 2023 floods where the city saw 26

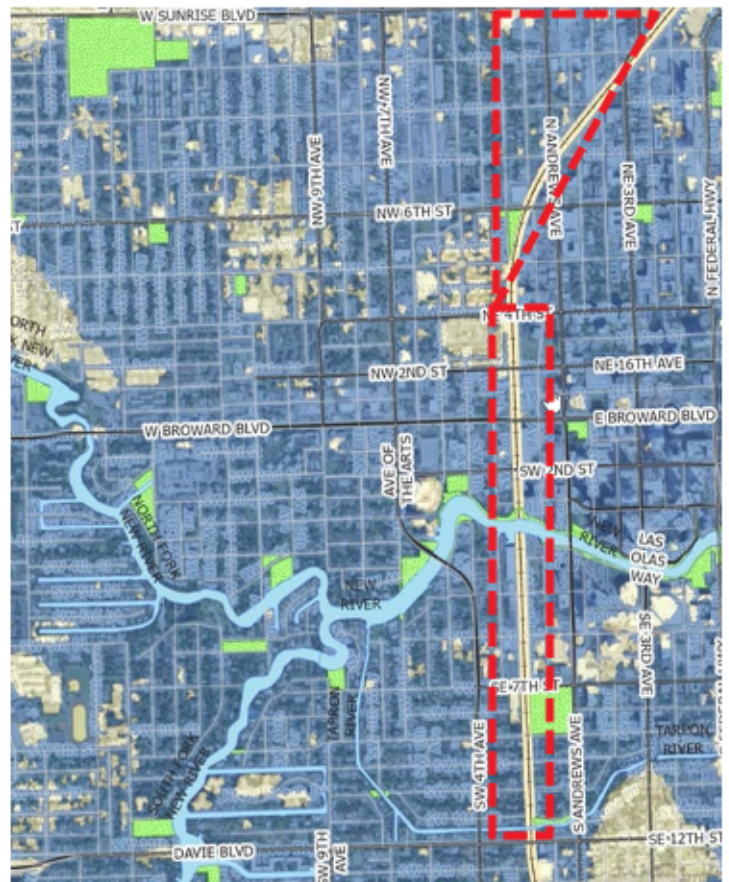


Figure 10: FEMA Flood Zones  
Areas marked in blue represent higher annual chance of flood hazard

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

inches of rain within 24 hours. The City must always be prepared for rare extreme weather events, and the long-term climate trends and risks must be factored into strategic decision making and planning. The study will include considerations for the effects of the climate on the community and mitigate as such in the design.

## Mobility and Community Connectivity

The New River Crossing Project represents a transformative step in enhancing system-wide connectivity for the City of Fort Lauderdale and the broader South Florida region. This initiative is strategically designed to address and fill gaps in the existing transportation network such as stretches along the area lack public access, incomplete sidewalks and physical barriers negatively affect pedestrian activity, and elevated bridges with long ramps and inconvenient landing locations discourage pedestrians from crossing the river.



The Mobility Hub's ecosystem will forge immediate connections, facilitating a larger, regionally integrated network that offers diverse transit options, including parking spaces where vehicles can be charged, and micro mobility options can be offered as well as mobility-on-demand services. By optimizing lane widths and maximizing sidewalk dimensions, the Mobility Hub prioritizes pedestrian and non-motorized traveler accessibility. The preservation and enhancement of adjacent parks will ensure that green spaces are not only maintained but also improved post-construction, aligning with the City's commitment to sustainable development. The overall vision is to ensure the Project maintains the harmony and community-oriented feeling so that it not only promotes health and wellness but also advances equity by providing equal access to transportation network.

As part of the Broward County PREMO plan, which is primarily funded by the adoption of a 2018 one-cent transportation surtax, the region is planning for a commuter rail service to connect Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. This north/south service will operate on existing rail infrastructure and portions have already entered Federal Transit Administration (FTA) project development. The current rail system, which runs through Fort Lauderdale, creates substantial

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

barriers to connectivity, mobility, and accessibility, and contributes to traffic congestion. The congestion caused by these 19 at-grade crossings is further intensified by the presence of several drawbridges in the downtown area. The anticipated increase in rail service is expected to further strain these issues, with significant consequences for accessibility, safety, and the fluid movement of both people and vehicles.

Both, Brightline station and Commuter rail stations will collectively support community connectivity. The light rail is also beneficial to community, providing a mode of transportation to and from the airport, downtown Fort Lauderdale, and the port. In addition, there are bus stops adjacent to the light rail stations. The City intends to support this new infrastructure by increasing parking facilities in the area. Adequate parking space is crucial to accommodate an expanding population in the City, as well as to support a continual growth in tourism.

New River Crossing and the Mobility Hub is planned to develop the facilities that best support Universal Design principles, building and environment that is “accessible, usable, convenient, and a pleasure to use”. One of the key goals of the Project will be to improve multimodal access to downtown Fort Lauderdale and the surrounding destinations.

Equitable development and shared prosperity are at the forefront of the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Comprehensive Vision Plan and supporting community strategies. The City ensures that transportation access is affordable and reliable transportation to everyone. The City’s strategic plan is a 2024 top commission priority, advancing the resiliency initiative. It advances the following policies:

- The Infrastructure Focus Area
- Build a multi-modal and pedestrian-friendly community
- Improve transportation options and reduce congestion by working with partners

The City’s community engagement approach is built upon the core value that trust and credibility are strengthened when those affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process. The City maintains a Title VI plan, compliant policy, and limited English proficiency policy, which the City’s Title VI Coordinator oversees. The City’s planning project aims to “foster community engagement and promote partnerships that address critical societal issues and contribute to the public good.” At a minimum, objectives consist of the following:

- Each working group or committee includes at least one representative from the affected community.
- Craft an outreach message surrounding the project that communicates the project goals, values, and mission in a manner that is relatable to the community.
- Identify and track key performance indicators to measure the impact of the City’s outreach efforts.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

Input and community feedback are gathered by coordinating with multiple City departments, stakeholders, community partners, residents, and property owners. Multiple access points such as social media, online surveys, hybrid (in-person/virtual) community meetings, invitations to serve on work groups, and tabling at community events or public sites (schools, libraries, post offices) help boost community participation. Attempts are made at all areas to ensure that the entire City has access to the same amenities. The City Commission is open for anyone to sign up and express their concerns, they can reach their respective Commissioner or even customer service to have their voice heard.

The City completed a **\$3.465** million revitalization to spur multiple connections via a Mobility Hub in Downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Key highlights of this Project include: New pedestrian lighting, new wider sidewalk, new parallel parking spots, ADA improvements, new bus stops, improved aesthetics, and incorporating bike lanes.



BEFORE



AFTER



The City continues to improve American Disability Act accommodations, and it is standard in any new improvements or construction. The City provides free transit services branded as LauderGO!, which includes community shuttle service that has wheel-chair accessible seating, and a water trolley service.

Outreach and public discussions have been ongoing and will continue to happen to ensure that all stakeholders are involved along the way. The City has made extensive efforts to garner the support and input of different entities. The residents are ready for us to improve connectivity and reduce traffic congestion. This study has been a very important agenda item for the City Commission and their support as endorsed by the neighborhoods will assist in moving this Project along in a timely manner.

## Economic Competitiveness and Opportunity

The City is in an advantageous position to attract both regional and international businesses due to its coastal assets, tropical climate, and national and international transportation hubs. As such, the City has recognized its unique role in drawing new businesses and expanding and retaining

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

existing businesses in the community. One area where the City is focused over the next five years is to diversify the economy to attract industries beyond tourism and marine industries. Additionally, the City will work to establish partnerships to build a strong workforce pipeline. This eye to the future also envisions the Project in terms of meeting the goals of the Justice40 initiatives. The Project will run through areas of the downtown City of Fort Lauderdale classified as a disadvantage community, with the hope of stimulating economic development, creating job opportunities, and a higher quality of life. The Project will support broader South Florida connectivity plans and facilitate the transformation of the entire New River Masterplan. The New River Master Plan aims to revitalize the downtown river area with the end goal of producing a walkable, vibrant community for locals and tourists. The Project will facilitate the overall vision to create a mixed-use downtown, integrating maritime, mixed income housing, commercial & cultural uses. BCR aims to connect Palm Beach, Miami and Broward counties by reducing congestion and providing access to alternate modes of transport.

In line with the Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035 Comprehensive Vision Plan, the City is committed to fostering an environment that supports the sustainable growth of local businesses and encourages entrepreneurship. This commitment is manifested in the City's strategic emphasis on the utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (DBE) and 8(a) firms in the procurement process. Initiatives such as the "30% for 30 Years" campaign further underscore the City's dedication to ensuring that local businesses, especially those certified as Broward County Certified Small Businesses (CBEs), have ample opportunities to thrive and contribute to the local economy.

Supporting more efficient intermodal connections by providing an environment conducive to commuters will create resilient supply chains. This investment will result in improved freight and supply chains for not only businesses but also workers who will have a reliable form of alternate

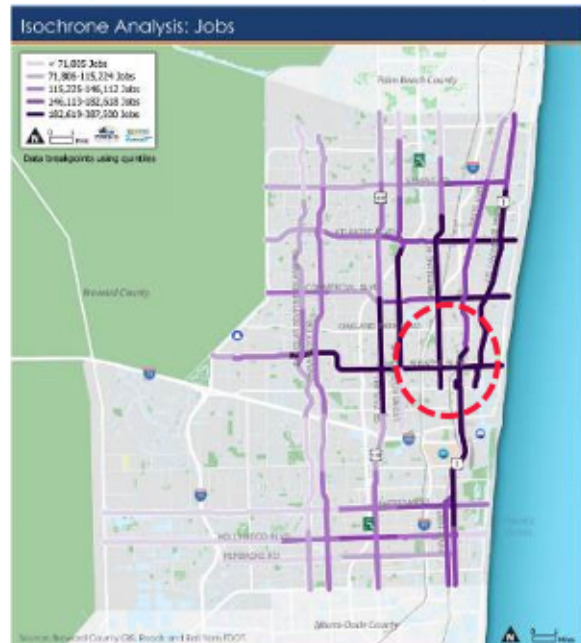


Figure 11: Number of Jobs Accessible within a 30-minute Transit Travel Distance as a Result of an Investment in Premium Transit

According to the American Public Transportation Association, investing in public transportation can create

**49,700**

jobs for one billion dollars invested; for every one dollar spent yields a

**5:1** economic return\*

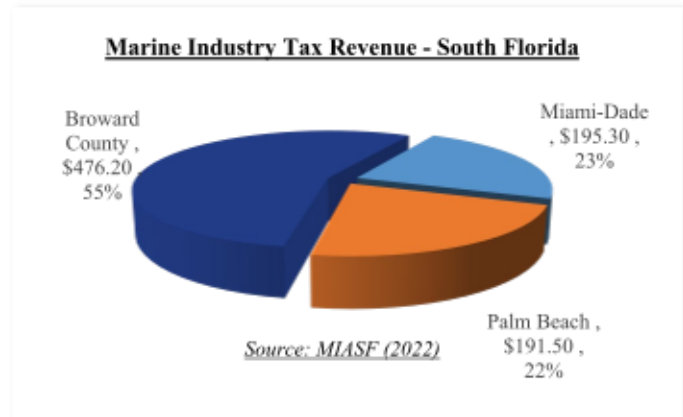


# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

commute. The Project is in a densely populated area in Downtown Fort Lauderdale making it ripe for opportunities.

For the commuter trains to become a reality and run efficiently given an increase in the number of train/trips, additional rail crossing capacity is needed. Furthermore, the current bridge with its low clearance adversely affects the Marine Industry which has a significant impact on the regional economy.

The Tri-County's marine industry had an estimated economic impact of \$18.524 billion in gross output – an increase of \$ 6.497 billion from \$12.027 billion in 2018. Included in the region's economic impacts were an estimated \$6.942 billion in wages and earnings, \$9.868 billion in value-added, and an associated 141,860 jobs. By virtue of the business activity, \$863.0 million in taxes are paid at the local and State level. Broward County contributed \$3.889 billion in sales for this sector, generating an overall economic impact of \$9.957 billion<sup>2</sup>.



Funds from the planning grant will be used to calculate the economic impact on the tourism and marine industry as well as consider local jobs generated. The Project will support American workers and businesses to create good jobs and build a resilient economy. The impact studies will address job creation benefits of funding programs. Infrastructure design of the assets will address climate change and equitable communities. The impact study will further be used to gain a better understanding of all direct, indirect and induced impacts to the City.

## State of Good Repair

As mentioned the current infrastructure across New River does not take into account accommodating more trains, causing physical constraints in connectivity. Given the very low water clearance of the current bridge when lowered to allow for rial traffic, less than 5', the bridge must be raised numerous times a day to allow personal and commercial watercrafts to pass under it. This creates a crowded and unsafe situation as sea vessels of all sizes, including personal and commercial tour boats, must wait in the narrow river for the bridge to be raised. This waterway is also a major throughfare for large vessels that are regularly moves through the area to be serviced and stored upriver. The large watercraft service industry is a major economic driver for Fort Lauderdale, and Broward County, employee hundreds of residents.

Currently, the existing bridge and accompanying infrastructure supports 36 Brightline trains, and between 15-20 freight trains per day. This is the maximum capacity for this infrastructure; to facilitate commuter rail traffic, as well as the Brightline Intercity rail, additional rail crossing capacity and supporting infrastructure is needed.

<sup>2</sup> file:///C:/Users/DADABHSY/Downloads/TJM2022Tri-CountyMIASF22823.pdf

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

The tunnel alternative supports the City’s vision of the development of a residential, commercial and oceanfront destination community. The tunnel would provide improved/protected corridor context, particularly with important features and facilities to the community such as the Riverwalk and Historic District of Fort Lauderdale. The City seeks federal support to deliver a more encompassing understanding of the associated impacts on the surrounding community including noise pollution and downtown environment.

Fort Lauderdale is a fast-growing City and must stay ahead to provide transportation efficiencies that will improve the quality of life. Planning, design, and construction of this project will include the latest technology such as sensors that track traffic and provide real-time information so that people can plan their routes accordingly in the event of a road closure. The City wants to provide transportation efficiencies that will improve the quality of life as explained through existing technological deployments including real-time data collection to monitor and address incident response. The bridge and tunnel design, which are both under discussions include cost efficiencies and will entail partnerships such as cost sharing with Brightline so that the City’s fiscal burden is reduced. Alternate lengths of the tunnel and bridge height will be assessed to reduce the construction and O&M expense.

The task of designing an O&M program that will ensure the performance, safety, resiliency, and financial burden is an important one. While tunnel structures are known for their long service life compared to bridges, the Project will consider various time horizons and replacement schedules to develop a realistic estimate of the O&M cost. Other factors such as changing climate conditions, extreme temperatures, flooding can also affect the long-term maintenance of these assets. The sustainability of the asset, both from a financial and operational perspective will be imperative to maintaining the asset. The BCR is included in the PREMO Plan, which is predominantly funded by the one (1%) percent surtax approved by voters in November 2018 for 30-year period to fund transportation improvements.

## Partnership & Collaboration

Partnerships and collaboration with the community are extremely important to the City of Fort Lauderdale. The City has conducted outreach with the community, neighboring cities, and all who visit the regional area. The initial studies have already established strong partnerships with all relevant stakeholders. These stakeholders include, but are not limited to DDA, MPO, the County, FDOT, Brightline, FECR and other private businesses alongside the Riverwalk.

In 2021, the FDOT and Broward County executed a memorandum of understanding to implement a passenger transportation system along the FEC corridor. Additional collaboration from other



## BROWARD CENTER'S COMMUNITY TICKETING INITIATIVE

Part of the Tri-party Agreement with Broward Centre, Broward County and the City of Fort Lauderdale, exemplifies a commitment to making the arts accessible and fostering a vibrant cultural community. This initiative aims to provide free tickets, particularly aimed at underserved, disadvantaged, and under-resourced populations within Broward County.

The initiative collaborates with **75+** organizations in the county, enriching the community with diverse cultural experiences.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

entities such as Florida Power and Light, The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Marine Industries, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation and the Army Corp of Engineers will help to ensure a robust study will lead to a compete and resilient design.

The City has received several letters of support from the business community and residential leadership regarding the New River Crossing project. One of the letters of support is from the DDA, an independent taxing district, established by the Florida State Legislature in 1965. Led by a seven-member appointed board of directors, the Fort Lauderdale DDA has spearheaded legacy projects over the past fifty years to ensure Downtown Fort Lauderdale is and remains the urban center of Broward County. Collaborating with public and private stakeholders the DDA continues to serve as the agency responsible for coordinating and facilitating continued investment, community engagement and consistent improvement in Downtown Fort Lauderdale.

The Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, a coalition of Civic and Homeowner Associations representing over forty neighborhood associations throughout Fort Lauderdale, provided a letter of support for the Project. The association focuses on issues relating to preserving the present and future welfare of the City, its neighborhoods, and its citizens. The Council supports the idea of a tunnel, and that it would not hinder new development or divide the city's historic communities. To further demonstrate the community's interest in driving this planning project forward, the Civic Association reached out to tunneling contractors to better understand the project's cost and feasibility. The Civic Associations and Homeowner's Associations in the Sistrunk neighborhood serve as a valuable source for recruiting members to participate in workgroups, focus groups, and steering committees.

The City staff works closely with MPO staff to advance the regional transportation initiatives by serving on Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), the Complete Streets Advisory Committee, and the Freight Technical Advisory Committee (FTAC). The City has two elected officials appointed to the 25-member BMPO Board of Directors. If this grant is awarded, the City will work with the MPO as this is a priority for the region and is included in the Transportation Improvement Plans. The City has conducted studies with FDOT, the Broward County and MPO and continue to hold joint sessions to discuss alternatives and next steps regarding the Project.

As discussed, the City, Broward County, and the State of Florida have been working together toward the end goal for years. They have regular interactions, share concerns, work through issues, and strive to implement the best long-term solution. An example of this collaboration is the City,



Figure 12 : Some of the largest Stakeholders that City works with Regularly

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

and the County partnered to conduct a \$500,000 peer review of the FDOT PD&E study on the Project last year. Currently, both are also working on evaluation of alternatives with the County providing significant inputs on the City's initiatives.

## Innovation

Immediate, innovative, and focused investment is crucial to achieve sustainable development for both, current and future generations. Continuing with the status quo is not viable, as it incurs significant costs for communities, the economy, and the planet. Governments play a key role in influencing all aspects of health and wellbeing, affecting how people live, work and interact with their surroundings. This also calls for novel strategies and funding methods that emphasize convergence of technologies and how these technologies can be supported by the government so that citizen's lives are improved.

Transportation systems remain critical to keeping people and the economy moving forward. Cities are tasked to make a positive overall improved ridership experience in all aspects of convenience, speed, health, and safety. The designs considered for the tunnel and bridge include innovative technology such as ITS and providing real-time traffic data so that congestion can be avoided. The City applied for and received a SMART grant from USDOT in 2023 with the goal of combatting traffic congestion and provide greater public awareness of real-time conditions.

Deployment of the smart ecosystem allows users to understand real-time traffic conditions in real time, parking occupancy, planned road closures, transit offerings, events calendar, general parking, information, payment options for hourly parking, and parking citations. These benefit everyone equally, allow people to plan and reduce accident rates. Further, the City also has been working toward installing its Advanced Transportation Management System (ATMS) in busy corridors, which will include technologies like fiber optic communications networks, closed-circuit TV cameras, digital dynamic message signs, microwave vehicle detection systems and Bluetooth sensors to change traffic signals based on real-time conditions.

With transportation emissions still being the largest contributor to climate change and the cost of gas, residents are quickly exploring alternatives such electric vehicles (EV). The City is in the process of identifying parking garages for commuters to enable a seamless transport experience for commuters. These parking garages will include EV chargers so that people do not view buying EVs as a hurdle. The City has made great attempts to provide public transport for all residents

Last year, the City's Prospect Lake Clean Water Center was named the

## Best P3 Utility Project of the Year Award

by P3 Bulletin. This prestigious award exemplifies how this project will lead to the delivery of resilient and innovative critical infrastructure through collaboration between public and private industry partners.

The new plant would not only deliver clear, clean water to City residents, but it would also be designed to withstand the winds of a Category 5 hurricane.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

## PROJECT READINESS

The development of conceptual designs for the New River Crossing (NRC or the Project) are currently underway, with the completion anticipated by the end of 2024. The City of Fort Lauderdale (the City) has been awarded a Regional Infrastructure Acceleration (RIA) Grant of \$974,000. The planning activities encompass the commencement of economic development studies, preliminary environmental reviews, construction planning and designs, surveys and reports, assessments of property impacts, evaluations of equity and public benefits, and analyses of traffic and congestion. The RIA grant will cover a portion of these planning costs. The additional funding being sought under this Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary program for 2024 application will support the completion of the planning activities, as detailed in the Project Schedule.

The Project envisions a solution that will meet all the needs of mobility, community, economic development, and environmental sustainability to deliver the new crossing that the City needs and deserves. While a great deal of data has been collected thus far, the City seeks additional support to make sure that all the required planning activities are performed, evaluating all aspects of the New River crossing, its impacts to the City's downtown and supplement the efforts of all stakeholders to support the next design phase of the Project. It is the City's hope that with this additional Federal support the Project will truly be one that is not only ready to be delivered but one that will represent the future of mobility and connectivity in South Florida and the United States at large.

### Project Schedule

The City intends to move forward immediately upon receipt of the RAISE Award notice and execution of the agreement. All necessary activities targeted for completion at least six months in advance of the obligation deadline under the RAISE agreement to allow sufficient time for any unexpected delays, and to avoid putting the funds at risk. Any gaps in funding will be overcome by the City's resources.

The timelines presented in the project schedule below take into account procurement and contracting efforts to advance these activities listed below. The tentative Project schedule is as

The City has administered **274+**  
Federal grants over the last **10** years, including  
**16** Federal Transportation Grants with the  
largest grant valued at  
**\$3,500,000**

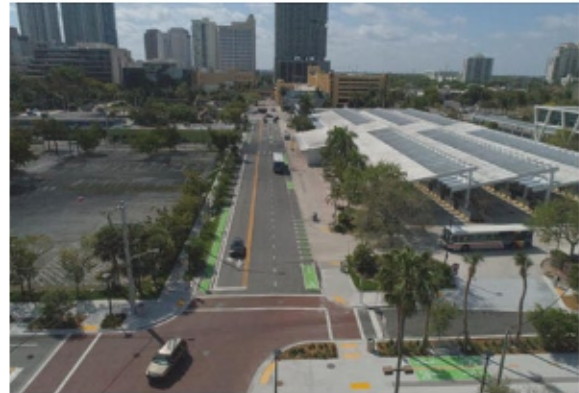


Figure 13: Downtown Ft. Lauderdale Mobility Hub  
Source: Broward MPO

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

shown below:

Task Name	2024			2025				2026				2027	
	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
RIA-related studies													
Notice to Proceed for RAISE				◆									
New River Crossing & Mobility Hub Planning													
Impact Studies & Option Analysis													
Value Creation													

*Table 1: Tentative Project Schedule*

The City will be ready to move forward immediately with the NRC planning studies if the funds are awarded and begin commencement within 6 - 8 months, or sooner if the Notice to Proceed is issued. Transit planning and implementation is complex and can take several years to complete. Therefore, “early wins” or opportunities to accelerate investments are important to meet the objectives.

## Technical Capacity Assessment

### Team Experience

At the heart of every project’s success is a dedicated and knowledgeable team with resources who bring their experience to navigate and keep the Project team aligned on the end goal. The Project Lead for this grant is **Ben Rogers, Director of Transportation and Mobility**. Mr. Rogers oversees Transportation Planning, Transit, Traffic Operations, Parking Services, and Special Projects. He holds a Master’s Degree in Public Administration and has led various infrastructure projects since 2012. Other team members include:

**Greg Chavarria, City Manager**, brings over 24 years of public service experience in various roles and agencies. With experience in Capital Improvement Projects, Infrastructure Programs, Public Safety Initiatives, and Information Technology. Greg’s intimate knowledge and execution of public projects will be an invaluable resource.

**Milos Majstorovic P.E.**, Transportation & Mobility Deputy Director, who has over 11 years of experience. Milos earned a Master’s degree in Civil Engineering and retains a Professional Engineer License. He will be involved in the technical aspects of the Project such as structural planning and design review, as well as general leadership and support to Ben Rogers.

**Laura Reece** has over twenty years of experience dealing with fiscal oversight in the public sector. She earned a Master’s degree in Public Administration and is a Certified Government Finance

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

Officer. She is currently responsible for the planning and monitoring of over \$2B in public funds each year for the annual operating budget and capital plan.

**Gail Jagessar** is the Transportation & Mobility Department Grants and Special Projects Coordinator; she brings over 9 years of experience to the team in grant management and administration, as well as grant oversight in the public sector. Gail holds an MBA degree and is currently responsible for the administration of all grants and surtax funded projects within the Transportation and Mobility department.

As part of the Local Agency Program (LAP) certification, the City complies with all associated activities of the Federal Aid Highway Program including but not limited to Title VI compliance, ADA compliance, grant management and fiscal accountability, procurement of professional service and construction administration in adherence with all Federal & State requirements. The Department of Transportation and Mobility's employee, **Andre Eugent**, has the following certifications: ADA design 3/31/23, ERC 3/9/23, Cons/Checklist 3/10/23, LAPFWA 3/25/23, and he will be dedicated to this endeavour.

## City Resources

The City is qualified for this Project based on its size, structure, and best practices. The City is fiscally responsible as illustrated by receiving a Triple Crown designation award. Fort Lauderdale is one of 317 municipalities across the country that received the Triple Crown award from the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA). The FY2023 budget for the City of Fort Lauderdale is \$985,000,000.

## Project Delivery

The City has a website dedicated to large projects ([www.fortlauderdale.gov/majorprojects.com](http://www.fortlauderdale.gov/majorprojects.com)), which illustrates the City's ability to deliver large scale complex projects. Below are a few examples of the larger projects the City has undertaken through the last decade:

**Downtown Mobility Hub** – The City was a sub-recipient of an FTA grant to make multi-modal and streetscape improvements to connect transit services with the downtown core. This \$3,500,000 grant was completed, under budget by \$225,000, in 2022. The Mobility Hub introduces a range of new features. These enhancements include expanded sidewalks, crosswalks that meet ADA standards, attractive landscaping, lighting designed for pedestrians, specialized bike facilities, various seating options, and clear directional signage. Together, these improvements contribute to a safer and more pleasant experience for those walking in the area.

**Las Olas Marina** – The City issued a solicitation to a private party for the lease a small existing marina to be transformed into a state-of-the-art marina with accommodations for super yachts. The improvements will include a public promenade, marina building, restaurant, and extensive dock space. The \$130,000,000 project is scheduled to open in Spring 2024.

**Water Treatment Plant** – Planning for the future, the City Commission authorized an agreement with a private party to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain a new water treatment plant. The water treatment plant will cost over \$660,000,000 to construct and is currently in the design and permitting phase.

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

## Project Planning

The Project is part of the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) which was defined as critical infrastructure in the Broward County Premium Mobility Plan (PREMO). BCR split into multiple phases, the Broward Commuter Rail – South (BCR – South) was accepted in December 2022 by the U. S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) into the Project Development (PD) phase. On February 9, 2023, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) voted to amend the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to include BCR-South as a Priority I project within the fiscally constrained portion of the plan. The Project is the key to provide the connectivity within the County for both the Brightline, intercity rail and commuter rail with the rest of the municipalities within the Broward County and the Palm Beach County. Therefore, both the City and the Broward County continue to jointly work and support the efforts of developing a viable solution for the Project with conceptual designs of the alternative under development.

## Public Involvement

PREMO and the development of BCR have actively engaged the public through Alternatives Public Workshops, offered both virtually and in-person, with the latest BCR meeting held on December 06, 2023. These meetings aim to inform the public about the project's status, showcasing maps, drawings, and other relevant information, while also collecting public input to be included in the project's public record and considered during the concept development process. Additionally, Broward, a private, non-profit business organization established in 1981, plays a significant role in facilitating solutions, with the City Commission and County focusing on the NRC through numerous meetings. Since November 2023, six meetings have occurred, with another scheduled for March 5, 2024, as part of the ongoing process to select, construct, and implement the preferred alternative.

## Required Approvals

The Project does not require any Federal legislative approvals. PREMO Plan and BCR is broadly supported by legislators including federal, state, and local, transportation agencies, environmental groups, local businesses, the railway companies, and community groups. With regards to Project, there is broad consensus regarding modernizing the crossing, development of Mobility Hub in downtown Fort Lauderdale, however studies mentioned in this application are important for planning and developing the best possible solution for the City's residents, business communities and other stakeholders. Copies of the letters of support have been included as an attachment.

## NEPA Status

NEPA will be performed during the next phase of Project Development after completion of the planning activities. However, part of the NEPA studies such as Environment Assessment will be completed as part of the planning.

## Information on Reviews, Approvals, and Permits by Other Federal and State Agencies

We anticipate the following permissions and permits will be required for the next stage:

Right-of-Way (ROW) use agreements, which are essential for the developing new infrastructure

# 2024 RAISE GRANT APPLICATION

and operational needs, railroad and o agreements, approvals from the US Coast Guard, access rights from private developers on specific properties, acquisition or temporary leasing of staging areas for construction purposes. Some properties will play a role in the Project's overall framework, necessitating agreements that respect the interests of all parties involved. Other permits include: 404 Permit, Building Permit, Environmental Approvals , NEPA, NPDES Permit, Local floodplain permit, Local rezonings, and Local site plan approvals.

## Right-of-way and Land Acquisition Plans

Presently, the entire Project is planned to be developed within the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR) existing ROW. For all passenger transit systems, FECR has granted Brightline exclusive access. However, in certain access areas, some properties are expected to be impacted, therefore, either part of the impacted properties' land will need to be acquired or leased on a permanent basis. In addition, during construction phase, it may be required to acquire private land or secure access rights on a temporary basis. Lastly, for staging areas, a permanent property is expected to be acquired. To determine the exact requirements, studies related to land acquisition and ROW are required to be conducted.

## Federal Transportation Requirements Affecting State and Local Planning

The New River Crossing and connectivity of various transit services in the downtown Fort Lauderdale have been included as part of the PREMO plan. Since the current rail is old and has capacity on the number of passes per day, it presently only caters the freight rails, and limited number of intercity Brightline trains. The Project will not only create additional capacity for commuter rails as part of the PREMO but also for the intercity Brightline trains.

## Project Risks

The risks of the Project revolve around addressing the concerns of all stakeholders. These risks are minimized through detailed planning, coordination, and experience of the Project team. As such, only minimal risks are expected to arise from this planning study. To manage these risks effectively, a risk assessment and a corresponding risk register will be maintained and updated throughout the different stages of the project, as illustrated in the table below.

Risk	Mitigant
Coordination with Project Partners and Stakeholders	Continued partner coordination will be prioritized as the project moves forward to represent all business and community needs. City prioritizes partnership and coordination with other stakeholders, rather it is stated as part of the City Commission approval for RAISE application and shared for record on the webpage.
Schedule	The current schedule provides flexibility for unforeseen delays or potential issues to obligate funds and complete the activities in compliance with the grant requirements.
Unforeseen Risks	Strong management team with experience to implement similar planning grants in the past

# PLEASE CONTACT

## **Ben Rogers**

### **Director**

City of Fort Lauderdale  
Transportation and Mobility  
290 N.E. 3rd Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
954-828-3781  
brogers@fortlauderdale.gov

## **Milos Majstorovic, MSCE, PE**

### **Deputy Director**

City of Fort Lauderdale  
Transportation and Mobility  
290 N.E. 3rd Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
954-828-5216  
mmajstorovic@fortlauderdale.gov

## **Gail Jagessar**

### **Grants and Special Projects Coordinator**

City of Fort Lauderdale  
Transportation and Mobility  
290 N.E. 3rd Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301  
954-828-6814  
gjagessar@fortlauderdale.gov



**CITY OF  
FORT LAUDERDALE**