

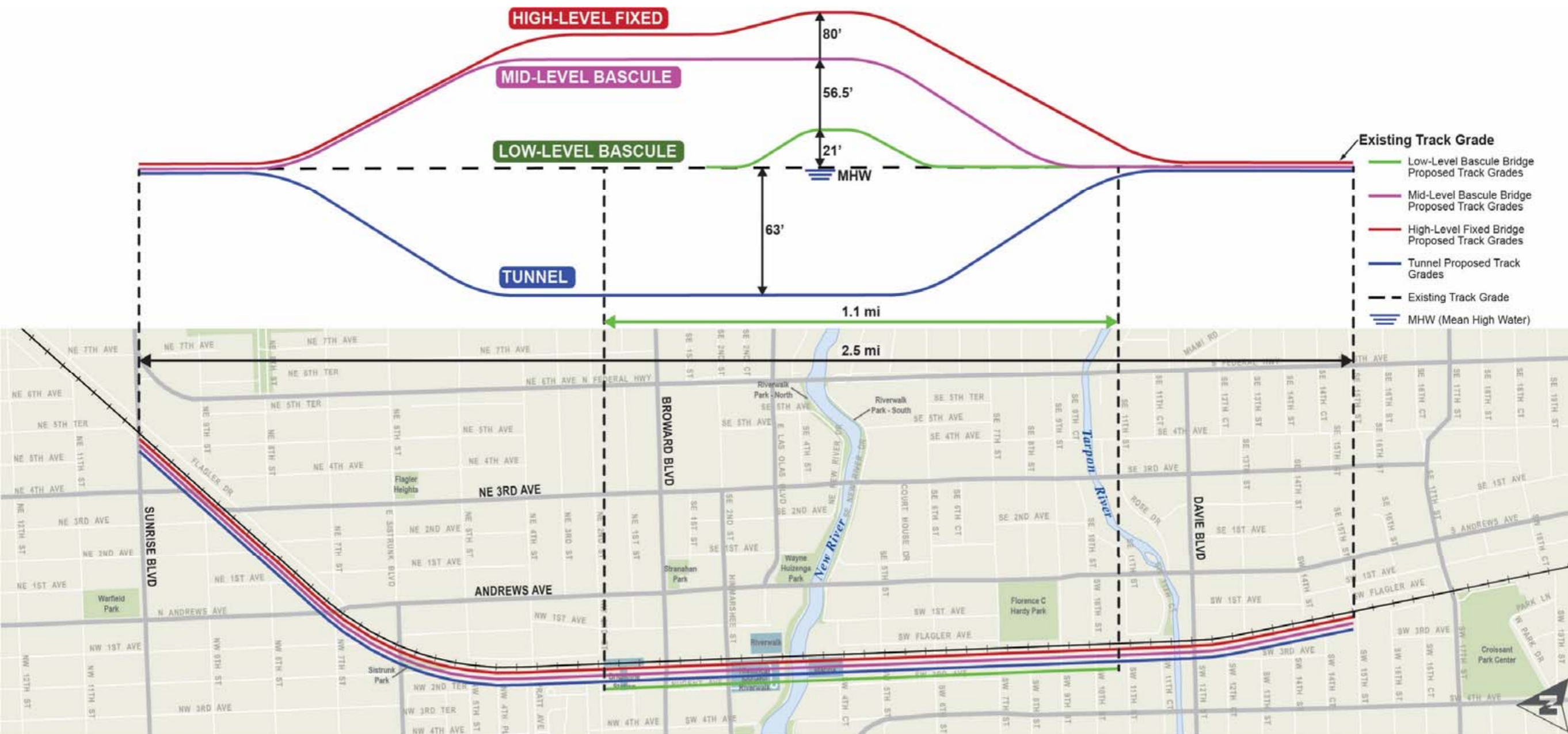
Downtown crossing

Commuter rail service for South Florida:
Why Fort Lauderdale favors a tunnel rather than a bridge



Concerns regarding an elongated, high-rise bridge

Alternatives Overview



The facts:

- A bridge would rise between 56.5 feet and 80 feet in the air — the lesser being about the height of the 17th Street Causeway and the higher being equivalent to the Metromover bridge in downtown Miami.
- A bridge would stretch 2.8 miles through downtown, whereas the 17th Street causeway is about one-third of a mile in length. A bridge would begin its ascent in the south in the Tarpon Bend neighborhood, about two blocks south of Hardy Park, and would begin to rise in the north at Sunrise Boulevard.
- A bridge could be as wide as 53 feet, the equivalent of more than four standard travel lanes on an American interstate highway.
- Massive support columns — think of those holding up the causeway — would dot the route of the bridge throughout.
- Residents and commuters should expect 60 commuter trains in addition an average of 22 freight trains and 36 Brightline trains passing by each day.

Downtown Renaissance

- An elongated, high-rise bridge would have a seriously detrimental effect on the transformation of downtown into a vibrant urban center of offices, residences, commerce and entertainment.
- Many recent development and proposed projects sit hard against the bridge, including the new Society residential high-rise, the proposed Hines' FATVillage project, the Kushners' 300 W. Broward project and the proposed city-county government campus.
- The future features more than 20 new developments in the urban core with 13,000 more residential units, 600,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, 1.1 million square feet of office space and 1,000 new hotel rooms.





Hines' FATVillage site. The bridge would be at about 25 feet high at NE 7 St. and reach its maximum height by NE 5th St.



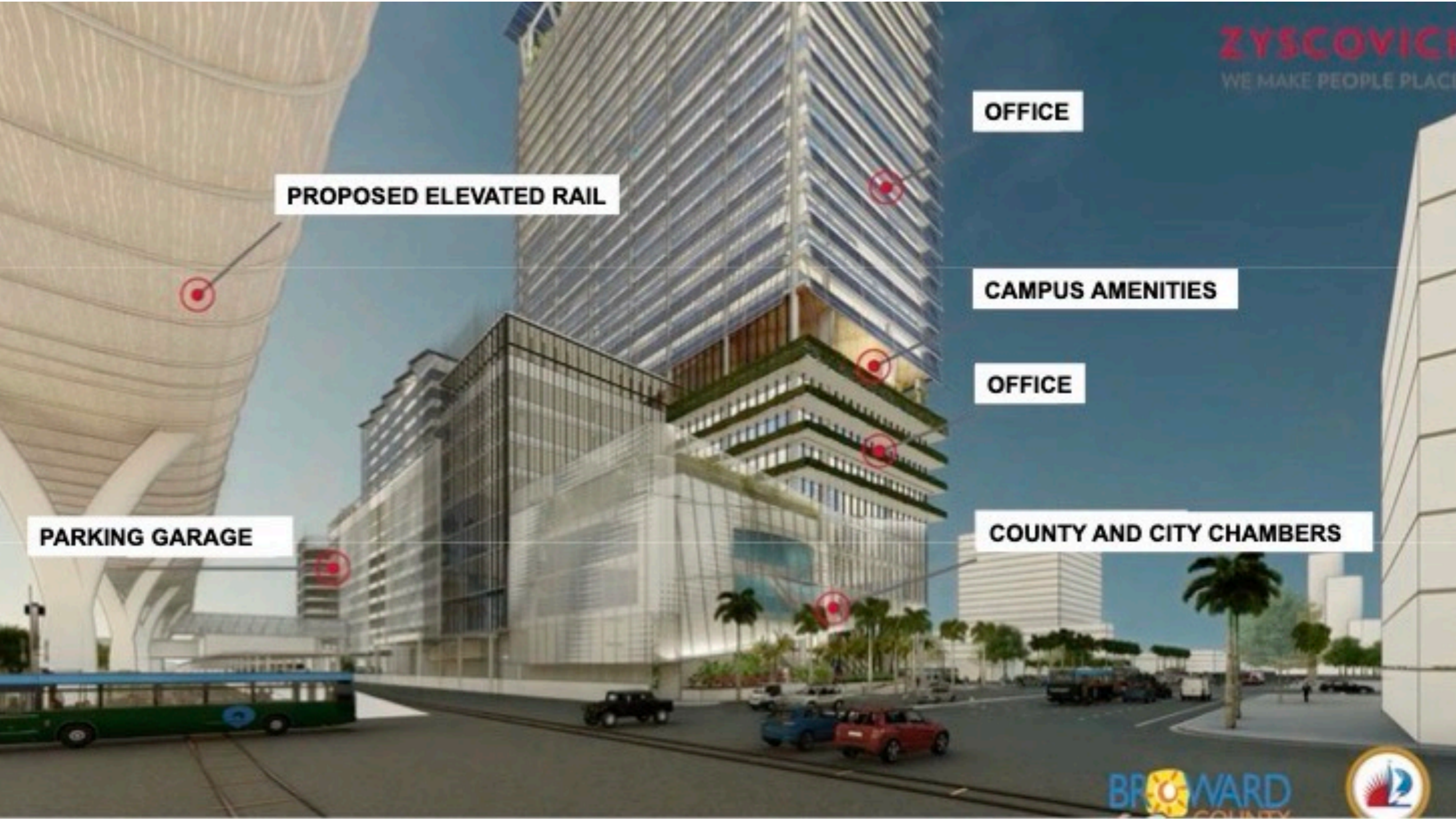
Raintree Riverwalk Residences and 1st Avenue Residences sites. The bridge would be at its maximum height passing by both, beginning a descent to the south around SW 5th St.

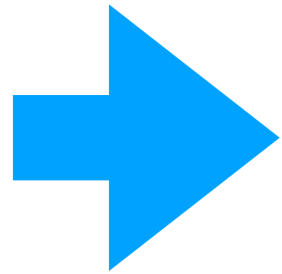


Kushner's 300 W. Broward site. The bridge would be at its maximum height here.

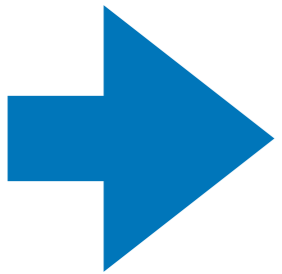


Here is how FDOT envisions a bridge interacting with a new joint county-city government center

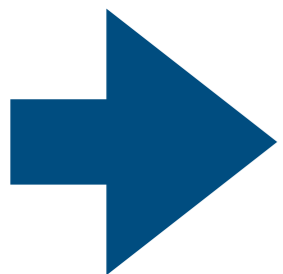




Downtown Fort Lauderdale has nearly a \$30 billion annual economic impact, equivalent to hosting a Super Bowl every weekend.



Downtown Fort Lauderdale has a greater impact citywide and regionally than peer downtowns like Atlanta, Austin, Charlotte and Dallas, according to an International Downtown Association benchmark study.



Downtown Fort Lauderdale's population has grown 41 percent from 2010 to 2020 and is projected to grow an additional 45 percent by 2025.

Downtown Fort Lauderdale 2030



Key Destinations

1. Brightline Station
2. Broward Center for the Performing Arts
3. Boca Panthers Ice Den
4. County Courthouse
5. Las Olas Boulevard
6. Fort Lauderdale Beach

Proposed & Potential Future Developments

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. FAT Village B. Seastown C. Flagler Creative D. Broward Crossing E. Flagler Sixth F. FAT City G. City / County Government Campus H. City Center Venue I. Raintree Riverwalk Residences J. 317 N Federal Highway | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> K. River Lofts on 5th L. New River Yacht Club West M. Next Las Olas N. First Ave Residences O. 488 Residences P. RD Las Olas Q. Riverport Square R. Riverwalk Residences S. New River Central T. 629 Residences |
|--|--|

**Every major downtown developer agrees:
A bridge would be harmful.
A tunnel is the best solution.**

“A bridge adjacent to our site would make us reconsider our planned substantial investment in Fort Lauderdale.”

**Asi Cymbal
Cymbal Development**

“If a transformational life-changing thing is being done, we should not accept a bad result that has bleak impacts on our environment.”

**Doron Broman
Moderno Development Group**

“We are strongly in support of the tunnel option, as the elevated track option can have significant consequences to our future residents and all existing residents near the tracks.”

**Nicholas Gemas
Federal City Property Investors**

“The lives of residents on either side of the tracks will be made worse by the noise, and an elevated track will further separate neighborhoods on the east from the neighborhoods on the west.”

**Patrick Campbell
The Related Group**

Residents and neighborhood associations are speaking out in favor of a tunnel.

“A bridge, based on the designs that we have seen, would be a blight on our neighborhood and create a corridor of urban no man’s land.”

**Leann Barber, president
Flagler Village Civic Association**

“This issue is a no-brainer. Please vote to build a tunnel! This is a much better option for now and the future.”

**Michael Spatz
Croissant Park resident**

“A massive bridge will divide our city at its core and depress property values for those within an eyeshot of the massive bridge and towering support beams.”

**Justin Greenbaum
Coral Ridge resident**

“We find it preposterous and disheartening that FDOT would ardently advocate for a 56- to 80-foot high bridge through our city.”

**Jay Shechtman, president
Tarpon River Civic Association**

Northwest CRA

- A bridge would divide the city's historic black community surrounding Sistrunk Boulevard from downtown and the adjacent Flagler Village.
- For some 20 years, the city has endeavored to have the economic success of downtown and Flagler Village cross over to the Sistrunk area and has spent millions improving the streetscape and investing in business projects.
- Beginning in the 1920s and throughout the Jim Crow era, the train tracks were the boundary for segregation in Fort Lauderdale.
- One of the concepts of New Urbanism is to correct or reshape some of the transportation infrastructure that was used to divide communities.
- One of the key goals of President Biden's transportation secretary is reconnecting communities through the administration's infrastructure program.



What people are saying...

“The legacy we build for our city as we build and prepare for the future should be one of revitalizing and unifying communities and certainly not one of separating and displacing them.”

Sonya Burrows
Burrows Electric

“The FEC railroad tracks were once used as a demarcation for segregation. Selecting the bridge as a solution would reestablish a separation between east and west.”

Milton Jones
Milton Jones Development Corp.

Riverwalk and the Historic District

- The city's historic district would be overwhelmed by the height of the bridge as the New River Inn, the history center and early historic homes are located directly next to the train tracks.
- A bridge would impact the picturesque Riverwalk. The Riverwalk serves as the cornerstone of the city's arts, science, cultural, and historic area that features the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, Museum of Discovery and Science, NSU Art Museum Fort Lauderdale and Fort Lauderdale History Center.



What people are saying...

“Riverwalk is a critical component to the downtown, and its integration into support columns raising six to nine stories on both sides of the river would be problematic.”

Genia Ellis
Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale

“This bridge would be an enormous detriment to our downtown cutting off east-west access to our Arts and Science District and neighborhoods to the west of our Downtown.”

M. Austin Forman,
longtime philanthropist

“An advocate of historic preservation, I cannot imagine a bridge, regardless of decor, in front of the New River Inn.”

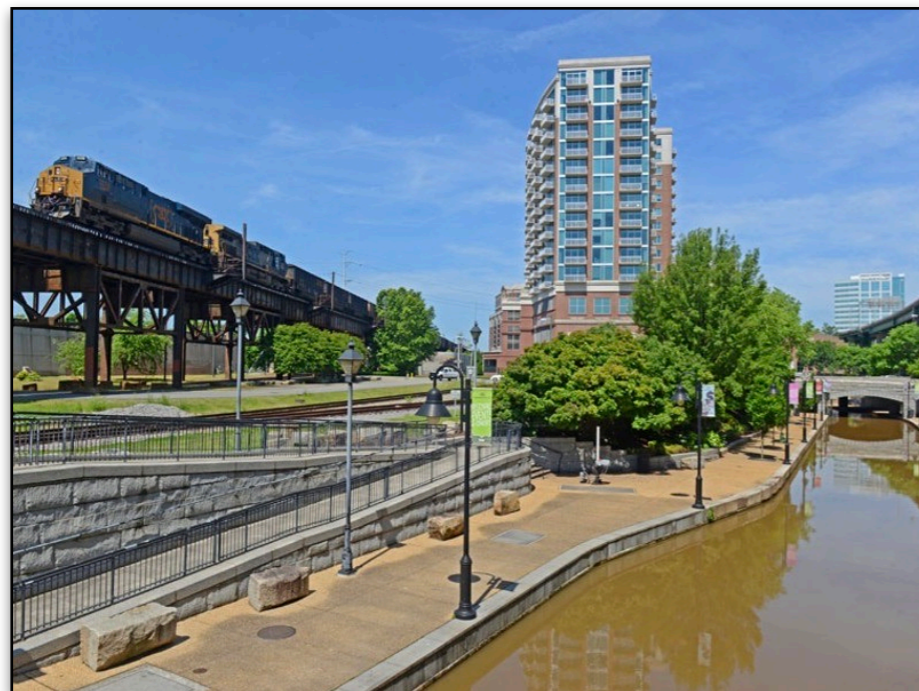
Martha Gutierrez-Steinkamp
Public Art Board

It's true that the world is full of beautiful bridges. But any that readily come to mind are ones that span large waterways.

The Golden Gate Bridge and the Sunshine Skyway Bridge are elegant as they cross San Francisco Bay and Tampa Bay.



The impact of those bridges would be the opposite if they ran through their city centers. The same can be said for building an elongated 17th Street Causeway through downtown. Here are how bridges look when cutting through city centers.



It's questionable whether such a massive bridge can be suitably integrated into the design of a great urban core.

Here are some of FDOT's ideas...



Other cities are reconnecting communities

- **Houston:** The Federal Highway Administration last year launched an investigation of civil rights complaints over a highway project that would cut through low-income neighborhoods.
- **Austin:** State officials are exploring plans to rebuild part of Interstate 35 that separates the east side of the city from the west. A group called Reconnect Austin has proposed a plan that includes demolishing part of I-35, burying part of it and covering the buried lanes with a new tree-lined boulevard.
- **Louisville:** Running along the Ohio River, Interstate 64 cuts the city off from its waterfront. A local group called 8664 has proposed replacing a two-mile stretch of I-64 with a parkway and waterfront park as a way to decrease the number of elevated highways in the city and increase access to the riverfront.
- **Milwaukee.** The city has replaced a 0.8-mile elevated Park East Freeway spur with a restored street grid to enhance access to downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and its Riverwalk.



Austin plan



Louisville plan

- **Dallas.** Klyde Warren Park is the result of a cut-and-cap project on the Woodall Rodgers Freeway, creating new public green space. The park covers 5.2 acres in the heart of downtown and is a mix of active and passive pedestrian-oriented space, including a pavilion, dog park, playground and gardens.
- **Seattle.** The Alaskan Way Viaduct was an elevated freeway along Seattle's downtown waterfront. In 2009, the city state agreed to replace the freeway with an underground tunnel. The project is creating development along the water's edge, reconnecting the waterfront to downtown and opening the area to pedestrians.
- **Madrid:** Between 2006 and 2011, Madrid removed motorways running alongside its river and rerouted traffic into underground tunnels. The cleared river banks were turned into a linear park.



Seattle plan



Madrid today

**A tunnel is viable...
financially and technically**

We've reached out to some of the world's foremost tunneling contractors to discuss the downtown crossing.

All of them say the cost is not nearly as astronomical as FDOT has long claimed — \$3.8 billion. Rather, they say a tunnel could be built for at little as \$750 million. Faced with this pushback, FDOT recently revised its estimate to \$1.8 billion.

These private contractors also say there is nothing technically complex about this project or the area's geology that would make a tunnel difficult to construct or operate.





Mayor and city manager inspect Traylor Bros.' work on Los Angeles subway under the La Brea tarpits.



Ghella tunnels under Sydney harbor for a metro line project.



FCC opens an expansion of the metro system in Romania's capital of Bucharest.



FCC works on a train tunnel in northern Spain.

Further cost savings may be possible

- FDOT's current estimate of \$1.8 billion includes a 25 percent contingency for cost overruns. This is a substantial markup and way beyond what the city budgets for a contingency on its own construction projects.
- FDOT incorporates more than \$300 million in professional services fees. Industry experts have stated that this is a very high figure for such a tunnel project and could be reduced.
- Industry representatives state that FDOT's plan relies on a very expensive design for the new underground station needed to serve Brightline and commuter rail passengers. They believe there are more cost-efficient ways to construct a station.
- The station could incorporate other commercial or residential aspects above ground using the transit-oriented development concept and help defer some cost in doing so.

FDOT has built tunnels before!

- FDOT actually built a tunnel under the very same river. It's called the Kinney Tunnel and thousands of people use it daily without incident.
- FDOT also built the tunnel at the Port of Miami. The interesting fact is the contractors completed the tunnel \$90 million under its approved budget.



Financing options are available outside the traditional federal and state funding methodology

- FDOT could consider a P3 model for the project. State law has a specific section allowing the agency to use P3s on major transportation projects.
- The project's scope could be expanded to be deemed an economic development initiative in that downtown would greatly benefit from both commuter rail service as well as the construction of a tunnel rather than a bridge.
- The city's DC lobbyist team identified many funding sources in the recent infrastructure legislation and says that cost-efficiency is less important in many of these programs. These include the Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient and Cost Savings Transportation Grant Program, the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program and the National Infrastructure Project Assistance Program.

A longer tunnel would increase benefits

Both FDOT's bridge and tunnel options run just south of Sunrise Boulevard and end just north of Davie Boulevard. This misses the opportunity to ease traffic delays on those two primary east-west commuter streets in addition to Broward and Sistrunk boulevards.

A tunnel going underneath Sunrise and Davie as well as Broward boulevards would ease delays in the following traffic patterns:

- Sunrise: 49,000 cars a day
- Broward: 46,000 cars a day
- Davie: 28,500 cars a day



**This is a legacy project impacting
the city for generations to come**

Imagine what would have happened if city leaders made a different decision about Federal Highway and the New River in the late 1950s when they chose to build the Kinney Tunnel.

Las Olas would be much different than the fashionable street of shops and restaurants that exists today. There would be a large bridge servicing Federal Highway right in the center of the street between the Riverside Hotel and the Stranahan House.



Post-war traffic congestion, especially at the New River drawbridges, led to the replacement of the Federal Highway bridge with Florida's first (and still, only) public vehicular tunnel. The proposed tunnel was quite controversial, with many opposing it as "too northern" in character. In 1958, with a wave from the bridge tender, the last car crossed the bridge before it was demolished to make way for the New River Tunnel. (5-37184, Gene Hyde Collection.)



“If additional federal funds from the recent federal infrastructure program could be combined with existing federal, state, county and local funds, a ‘Eurostar’ type tunnel may be able to be affordable and be the economic and social boon to the entire South Florida region the Mayor wishes to see.”

Dr. George Hanbury II
Former city manager of Fort Lauderdale
President of Nova Southeastern University

Support for a tunnel

- The Fort Lauderdale City Commission
- The Downtown Development Authority
- The city Infrastructure Task Force
- Government Affairs Committee of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Michael Albetta, president of the Lake Ridge Civic Association
- Leann Barber, president of the Flagler Village Civic Association
- Melinda Bowker, president of the Downtown Civic Association
- Doron Broman, manager of the Moderno Development Group
- Sonya Burrows, member of the Northwest Community Redevelopment Agency
- Patrick Campbell, executive vice president of The Related Group
- Christina Currie, president of the Rio Vista Civic Association
- Asi Cymbal, president of Cymbal Development
- Nicholas Demas, founder of Federal City Property Investors
- Brian Donaldson, chair of city Budget Advisory Board and president of the Birch Park neighborhood association
- Genia Ellis, CEO of Riverwalk Fort Lauderdale
- Jim Ellis, president of Ellis Diversified Inc.
- Bill Feinberg, president of Allied Kitchen & Bath and former chairman of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Ron Feldman, manager of Putnam Realty and 441 Developers
- Gregory Freedman, co-chief executive officer of BH3 Management
- M. Austin Forman
- Miles Forman
- Martha Gutierrez-Steinkamp, vice chair of city Public Art Board
- Dr. George Hanbury, former Fort Lauderdale city manager and president of Nova Southeastern University

- Alan Hooper, principal of Urban Street Development
- Steve Hudson, CEO of the Hudson Capital Group
- William Huntress, managing member of Acquest Development
- Jeff John, owner of Damn Good Hospitality
- Milton Jones, president of the Milton Jones Development Corp.
- John Joyner, managing partner of Water Capital Partners LLC
- Charlie Ladd, president of Barron Commercial Development
- Robert Lochrie
- Jack Loos
- J. Scott Maclaren, president of Stiles Corp.
- Michael Montante, chief executive officer of Uniland Development Co.
- Jenni Morejon, president and CEO of the Downtown Development Authority on behalf the authority board.
- Marilyn Mammano, chair of the Infrastructure Task Force
- Dev Motwani, managing partner of Merrimac Ventures
- Jeff Ostrow, managing partner of Kopelowitz Ostrow
- Tim Petrillo of The Restaurant People
- Ed Rebholz, president of the Lauderdale Harbors Improvement Association
- Jackie Scott, president of the Collee Hammock Homeowners Association
- Jay Shechtman, president of the Tarpon River Civic Association
- Michael Sommer, executive vice president of Kushner
- Stephen Tilbrook, partner at Akerman and former chairman of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce
- Stephanie Toothaker, attorney
- Andrew Zidar of RK Centers