



## Frequently Asked Questions

Below are 17 frequently asked questions about the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) South PD&E Study. To view the answers, either scroll through each of the subsequent pages, or click on the question below that interests you most, and you will be taken directly to the answer. Creole and Spanish translations are available upon request for all public documents.

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### 1. What is the Broward Commuter Rail (BCR) South Study?

On August 25, 2022, the Broward County Commission adopted a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) to move forward with the Broward Commuter Rail South (BCR South) Study. The study is evaluating adding commuter rail to the FEC Corridor in addition to the freight and Brightline intracity passenger rail service that exist in the corridor. The study is being coordinated with an adjacent project to the south, which is planning commuter rail from downtown Miami to Aventura. Both studies stemmed from an earlier planning study known as the 'Coastal Link' that studied commuter rail along eighty-five miles of the FEC Corridor that included Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties.

The BCR South Project Study includes:

- 11.5 miles of commuter service from Aventura to South Fort Lauderdale
- Three stations are proposed:
  - Hollywood (just north of Hollywood Blvd)
  - Fort Lauderdale Hollywood Airport
  - South Fort Lauderdale (just north of 17th Street)

On December 2, 2022, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced that the BCR South project was accepted into the Project Development (PD) phase. Entry into Project Development makes the project eligible for federal funding through the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program of FTA.

### 2. What are the benefits of adding commuter rail to the FEC Corridor?

Expanded and enhanced transit options will increase mobility, improve travel times, and provide congestion relief to our existing roadways. Additional transit options provide residents with improved multi-modal access to employment, healthcare, recreation and other services. Improving the transportation system helps sustain and support economic development and can stimulate smart growth, particularly at or near passenger station locations. Employers will have access to a wider pool of talent as employees have a more reliable travel time to and from work. The environment also benefits from fewer vehicles on the roadway which will reduce emissions and provide for a more sustainable transportation network.

### 3. What is the difference between BCR South, Tri-Rail, and Brightline and what is the expected service frequency?

Tri-Rail is a commuter rail service on the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) on shared tracks with CSX freight trains and Amtrak. SFRC is owned by the State of Florida and located west of I-95. BCR South will provide commuter rail service on the FEC Corridor and will share tracks with Brightline and freight trains. The FEC owns the rail corridor and Brightline holds an easement for all passenger rail activity along the corridor. Therefore, various agreements will be needed between Broward County, Brightline, and most likely FEC to advance the project.

BCR South will have similar train frequencies or headways, costs, and passenger station spacing (2 to 5 miles) as Tri-Rail. Brightline is an intercity passenger service between Miami and Orlando, with fewer stops in the southeast Florida region, including Downtown Miami, Aventura, Downtown Fort Lauderdale, Boca Raton, Downtown West Palm Beach and Orlando International Airport.

The BCR South anticipated service:

Service Span 5:00 AM - 11:30 PM weekdays  
6:00 AM - 11:30 PM weekends and holidays

Anticipated Service Plan Hours of Operation	Headway (minutes)
5 – 9 a.m. & 4 – 8 p.m.	30
9 a.m. – 4 p.m. & 8 – 11:30 p.m.	60
<b>Weekends &amp; Holidays</b>	
6 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.	60

### 4. What will be the project cost?

The Capital Base Year 2023 Cost is \$291 Million. Capital Cost includes track construction, basic stations, purchasing of vehicles, potential right-of-way acquisitions, a portion of the Hialeah Vehicle Maintenance Facility (VMF), and parking costs.

The Operations & Maintenance Cost is estimated at \$15 Million per year.

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## 5. Who funds/pays for the project?

Broward County is developing a financial plan and identifying the funding sources that will be used for the project. Local funding can be a combination of funding from the county and the municipalities. It is expected that the County will request federal funding to match the local and state contributions to the project. It should be noted that the operations and maintenance costs for the project are expected to be funded locally from sources including farebox revenue, as federal and state funding opportunities for operations and maintenance costs are very limited.

## 6. How much will it cost to ride the BCR South commuter rail?

BCR South has not determined the rail operator or a fare structure yet. However, the cost for a BCR commuter rail ticket is anticipated to be similar to commuter rail services, such as Tri-Rail.

## 7. How many trains will be added to the tracks and how will that impact east-west traffic?

The BCR South service will add 54 to 58 trains per day, in Broward County, this includes an average of 4 commuter trains during peak hours.

The project team has completed a traffic analysis of future traffic volumes on the east-west roadways crossing the FEC Corridor. The BCR South commuter trains will traverse through railroad grade crossings at speeds durations similar to the Brightline trains. The traffic analysis indicates that the queues generated by a commuter train crossing will generally clear prior to the next train crossing.

## 8. What noise and/or vibration evaluations have been done as part of BCR South?

The project team has completed an assessment of the potential noise and vibration impacts associated with the BCR South project as part of the Project Development / National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) phase of the project. The assessment was performed in accordance with FTA's and FDOT's guidelines for transit studies. The main factors influencing noise and vibration levels and impacts to noise sensitive areas such as residences, include the total number of trains per day and night, speeds of the trains, the elevation of the tracks, the type and lengths of the trains, the distance from the railroad tracks, and the nearest crossings. Based on the assessment of noise and vibration levels from the BCR South project including the additional train operations along the FEC Corridor, the BCR South project does not result in the exceedance of the FTA's impact criteria and does not require consideration of abatement options. The noise and vibration levels generated by BCR South trains were determined to be similar to those of the Brightline trains which produce less noise and have shorter duration than the existing freight trains. In addition, the BCR South project does not propose to eliminate any of the existing Quiet Zones along the project corridor.

## 9. How will safety be addressed, particularly with the recent incidents occurring along the tracks?

Safety is the top priority along railroad corridors. Recently, FDOT, Brightline, and FEC received a federal Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant to improve safety along the FEC Corridor. The additional features will include signage, fence placement, median delineators, and reflective pavement markers to bring heightened awareness to some of the railroad crossings and help prevent trespassing. In addition to the RAISE grant improvements, the Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has also received a safety grant from Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) for this corridor. This Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) program is in the early stages.

FDOT has an ongoing rail safety campaign called Operation STRIDE (Statewide Traffic and Railroad Initiative using Dynamic Envelopes). STRIDE includes engineering countermeasures, education, and enforcement efforts to provide a comprehensive strategy to prevent fatalities near railroad crossings. A Dynamic Envelope is an area near railroad crossings designed to keep motorists out of the danger zone. To increase safety for the public, white connecting "X's" are painted on the ground used to visually highlight the zone at railroad crossings where drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians should not stop.

For more information on Operation STRIDE, visit: <https://www.fdot.gov/rail/programs/operation-stride>.

As part of the project, additional safety analyses will be conducted and as a result, additional safety improvements may be made as part of the project, particularly around the stations. Any existing safety measures that may be impacted by this project will be replaced in kind.

[See next page for additional frequently asked questions...](#)

### 10. What impact will the project have on property values and affordable housing?

Property values could increase, particularly around station locations. Some areas may have already increased with the speculation of commuter rail and potential stations. As for affordable housing, many municipalities include incentives for developers to provide affordable housing as part of their developments.

### 11. What are the ridership projections for the Broward Commuter Rail South?

Current BCR South ridership estimates are approximately 3,725 average weekday trips for current year and 5460 average weekday trips for 2045 (horizon year). BCR South ridership is expected to have minimal impact on Tri-Rail or Brightline ridership.

### 12. How did the southern Fort Lauderdale (Broward Health Medical Center) station stop come about?

The planned station location is between SW 15th and SW 17th Streets, two blocks west of the Broward Health Medical Center. The station location was evaluated as part of the prior planning study work for the project and recent meetings with Broward Health Medical Center and the City of Fort Lauderdale. Local stakeholders confirmed strong support for the station. This station lies within the BCR South project limits and creates a logical terminus which will provide a gateway to Downtown Fort Lauderdale, Broward County Convention Center, Port Everglades, local beaches, and other local destinations.

### 13. Will Brightline stop at any of the BCR South Station locations?

In meetings with Broward County, Brightline advised that their intercity passenger service is no longer planned to stop at the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport or any other BCR South locations. Brightline has recently opened intercity train stations in Aventura and Boca Raton. Their passengers will be able to connect to commuter rail service and access Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport via Aventura in Miami-Dade and via Boca Raton in Palm Beach County at a future date.

### 14. What is the schedule and next steps for the project?

The next steps are to complete the NEPA/Project Development process and obtain a Small Starts Grant from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). The anticipated schedule is to complete the NEPA Study by the summer of 2024. The Small Starts Grant is anticipated to be obtained in early 2025, followed by design and construction.

### 15. Will there be available parking at the commuter train stations?

Parking options are being evaluated at the South Fort Lauderdale station. The Hollywood station will have an agreement to utilize city parking, that is currently under construction by a separate project, and the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport station does not require parking.

## 16. Will Broward Commuter Rail South connect to existing transit?

The addition of commuter rail connecting the major population and activity centers of South Florida is vital to the future livability at the region. For example, the proposed BCR South Hollywood station is a critical part of the city's future vision for Downtown Hollywood and would provide a convenient access to true transportation options for the community as existing and future bus transit stations get coordinated. Broward County will be working closely with all municipalities to maximize the connectivity between all modes of transportation, including bus, shuttle, and micromobility.

## 17. Are there any environmental impacts associated with the BCR South project?

The BCR South PD&E Study completed an environmental assessment regarding the potential impacts and benefits to the social, cultural, natural, and physical environments. The project would provide substantial benefits and is anticipated to only have minor impacts that are not considered significant.

- **Social Environment:** The project would improve connectivity, mobility and access to residential, employment, business and travel centers. The project would not result in any residential relocations, but two business relocations are anticipated at the South Fort Lauderdale Station to accommodate the parking needs of the station. The enhancements and benefits of the project will be available to minority and low-income populations, many of which may not own vehicles and may be more reliant on public transportation.
- **Cultural Environment:** A Cultural Resources Assessment Survey (CRAS) was conducted to identify National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) -eligible or potentially eligible resources as well as archaeological sites. The CRAS concluded that no significant impacts to cultural resources are anticipated and is currently under review by the State Historic Preservation Office.
- **Natural Environment:** A Natural Resources Evaluation Report was prepared and because no wetlands or natural wildlife habitats occur in the project area, no impacts are anticipated. The area of proposed construction is entirely outside any special flood hazard areas and no floodplain impacts are anticipated. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred that no significant impacts are anticipated on any federally listed species from the proposed project, nor essential fish habitats occur within the project area.
- **Physical Environment:**
  - A Noise and Vibration Study Report was prepared that summarizes the analysis performed to evaluate the potential increases in levels from the proposed project. Since the project levels are predicted to be below FTA's Impact Criteria, no significant impacts from noise or vibration are anticipated.
  - The Air Quality Technical Memorandum prepared for this project as part of the NEPA process indicates Broward County is currently in attainment for all criteria air pollutants. The project proposes to implement new commuter rail services and the increase of transit ridership is anticipated to benefit air quality by reducing vehicles on the roads and their emissions.
  - A Contamination Screening Evaluation Report was developed and no substantial impacts from contamination are anticipated.
  - Construction-phase impacts will be minimized through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs); specifically, those found in the FDOT Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, which identifies devices such as silt fences and silt socks to reduce downstream impacts.