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December 4, 2023

Dear Board of Broward County Commissioners: Mayor Nan Rich, Vice Mayor Beam Furr, Commissioner Mark Bogen, Commissioner Michael Udine, Commissioner Lamar Fisher, Commissioner Steve Geller, Commissioner Tim Ryan, Commissioner Robert McKinzie, Commissioner Hazelle Rogers,

City of Fort Lauderdale Commission: Mayor Dean Trantalis, Vice Mayor Beaseley-Pittman, Commissioner Herbst, Commissioner Glassman, Commissioner Sturman

Cc: Broward County Administrator Monica Cepero, City Manager Greg Chavarria

The Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association represents the Downtown residents of Fort Lauderdale. We are the official neighborhood association and recognized by both the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Association as such. Our boundaries are the FEC rail line north of the river (NW boundary), Andrews Ave south of the river (SW boundary), Broward Blvd (north boundary), Davie Blvd (south boundary), and US 1 (East Boundary). **Our boundaries make us part of both County District 4 (Commissioner Lamar Fisher) and County District 8 (Commissioner Robert McKinzie). We are in City Commission District 4 (Commissioner Sturman).**

With regards to the December 5, 2023 Item on both the City and County Commission agendas titled **"Joint Broward County/City of Fort Lauderdale Workshop on Joint Study of New River Crossing Alternatives,"** the Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association ("DFLCA") Board would like **to reiterate our strong support for the Tunnel option for the New River Crossing.** This vote was taken in front of the Membership at our February 17, 2022 Membership meeting and passed unanimously. **Our position has not changed.**

As referenced by Broward County Commissioner Rogers on October 10, our neighborhood and revitalized downtown is particularly impacted by your decision on the New River Crossing. As much as commuter rail can be justified as being the necessary future for our Tri-County area, this cannot be at the expense of the Downtown Fort Lauderdale residential community which has drastically grown in the past 20 years and will be living literally adjacent to this project. The bridge options that you are considering as evidenced by your statements in the October 10, 2023 County Workshop/Presentation will adversely impact a thriving downtown with their magnification of an additional 60-80 trains rumbling through downtown on an elevated 40 foot bascule bridge next to new downtown high-rises that will forever divide us for at least 2 miles through the heart of our city. The impact on our quality of life, the city's aesthetic, the level of noise, and the character of our historic district on the north side of the river adjacent to the tracks cannot be forgotten in your tally of the costs of the bridge options. We have already seen the remarkable success of the Henry E. Kinney Tunnel, the eastern boundary of our neighborhood, that opened **in 1960** after a much similar discussion to today.

We would like to remind the County Commissioners that we already struggle with negative impacts in the areas under the current much smaller bridges crossing the New River downtown as well as the foreboding monstrosity of the I-95 bridge where it crosses the South Fork of the New River further west. These are all harbingers of things to come if a bridge is selected.

We encourage the County Commissioners, particularly those that represent our Downtown, to consider additional tunnel design alternatives and lengths as you look at the costs. So far there has only been a **single 3.5 mile tunnel style** examined while there have been **3 different bridge options.** In fact, the bridge option most discussed at your October 10, 2023 meeting, a 40 foot bridge, is a 4th bridge option and has never been one of the 3 bridge options in the analysis done by

FDOT or Whitehouse. The bridge vertical clearance over the river of Options 1, 2, and 3 in the studies provided by FDOT and Whitehouse were 25 feet, 56.5 feet, and 80 feet, respectively. What are the specific impacts to our Downtown for this new 40 foot option that your Board favors?

Finally, we have concerns about the methodology used in calculating the operating and maintenance cost of the single Tunnel option. The Whitehouse figure of \$3.3 billion for operating and maintenance was queried by the County Board on October 10, 2023. This is a far cry from the FDOT figure from multiple presentations in 2022 showing tunnel operating and maintenance costs of \$18-\$28 million annually.

We understand the urgency for both the County and City Commissions to reach a consensus on the New River Crossing and fully understand the importance of commuter rail to other cities in Broward County. With that in mind, there should be an expeditious vetting of additional tunnel options before making this historic multi-generational decision that will forever impact the residents of Downtown Fort Lauderdale.

We look forward to further communication on this matter from our elected commissioners at both the County and City level.

On behalf of the Board,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melinda M. Bowker", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Melinda Bowker
President
Downtown Fort Lauderdale Civic Association