

PALM BEACH COUNTY  
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

WORKSHOP SUMMARY

Meeting Date: AUGUST 26, 2025

Department: COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

**Title:** Discussion on South Florida Regional Transit Authority (SFRTA) History and Funding

**Summary:** The SFRTA is a State of Florida Agency responsible for developing and coordinating a regional transportation system in South Florida. The commuter rail system, known as Tri-Rail, operates along 72 miles of the South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) and eight (8) miles of the Florida East Coast Railway (FECR), connecting Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach Counties. During the 2025 legislative session, the Florida Legislature reduced the annual contribution The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) provides to Tri-Rail from \$42.1 million to potentially as low as \$15 million, representing a possible \$27 million reduction in funding. This cut was a result of a new state budget that redirected documentary stamp tax revenues (previously allocated to the State Transportation Trust Fund) to the General Revenue fund. FDOT and SFRTA are actively seeking support from Broward, Miami-Dade, and Palm Beach Counties to help bridge the funding gap, and county staff has been in active discussions with all of these entities. This presentation will share information regarding the funding history of SFRTA, legislative changes in 2025 and their potential impact to rail service and information from the ongoing discussions between stakeholders.

**Background and Policy Issues:** The SFRTA is administered by a Governing Board of ten (1) members. This includes one (1) county commissioner, one (1) citizen appointee and one (1) governor appointee from each of the three (3) counties, along with one (1) FDOT District Secretary. Florida Statutes, Section 343.58, delineates the minimum amount of funding that each of the three (3) counties must provide to SFRTA. Each county provides not less than \$2.67 million annually for capital, operations, and maintenance. Additionally, each county shall provide no less than \$1.565 million annually to fund operations of the SFRTA.

**Attachments:**

- 1. Presentation from SFRTA
- 2. Presentation from County Staff

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Department Director Date

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
County Administration Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs					
External Revenues					
Program Income(County)					
In-Kind Match(County					
NET FISCAL IMPACT					
#ADDITIONAL FTE					
POSITIONS (CUMULATIVE					

Is Item Included in Current Budget?

Does this item include the use of federal funds?

Does this item include the use of state funds?

Yes

No

Yes

No

Yes

No

Budget Account No:

Fund

Dept

Unit

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

C. Departmental Fiscal Review:

III. REVIEW COMMENTS:

A. OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:

OFMB

Contract Dev. & Control

B. Legal Sufficiency

Assistant County Attorney

C. Other Department Review

Department Director

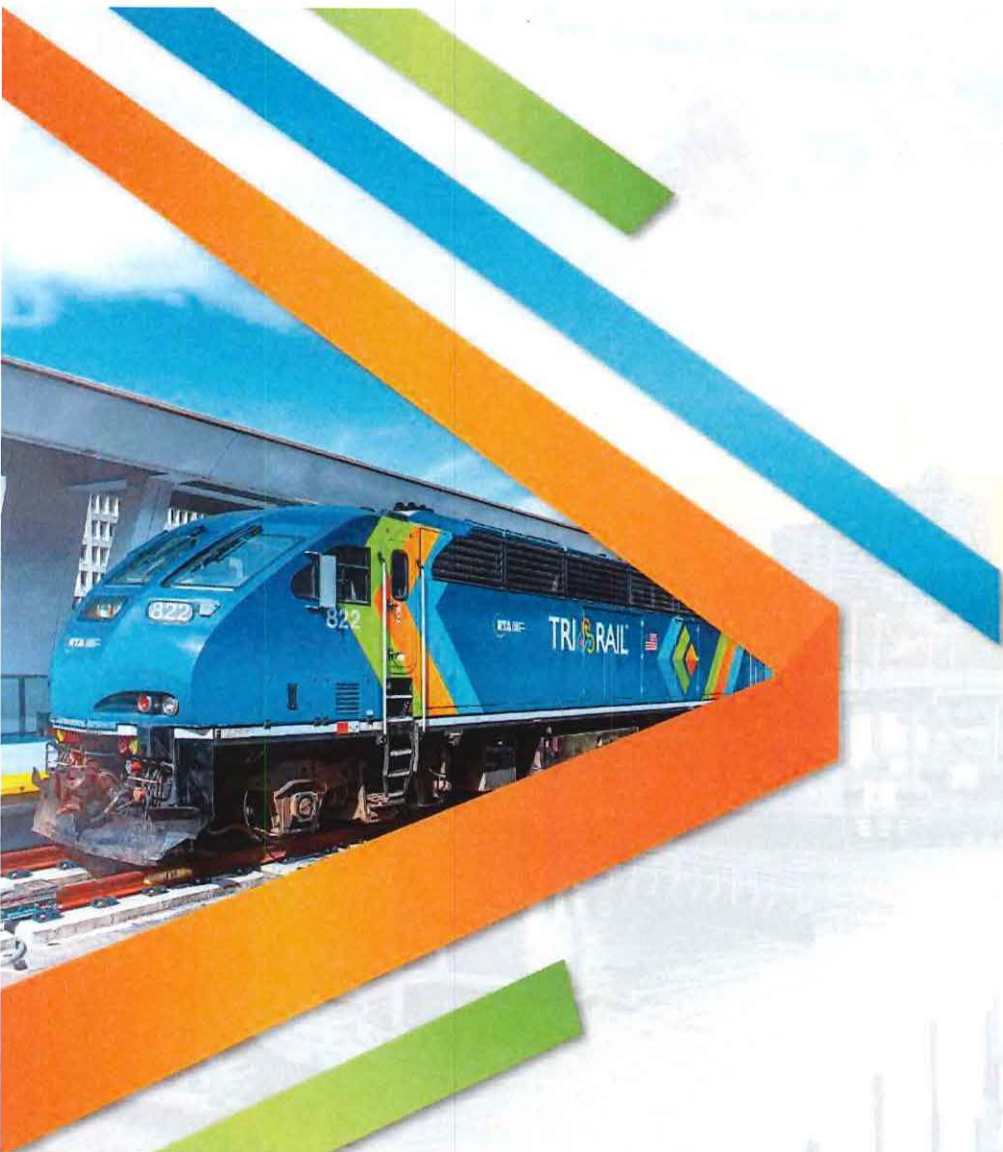
(THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.)



*Part of the South Florida Regional Transportation Authority*

# **Palm Beach County Board of Commissioners Workshop**

David W. Dech, Executive Director  
August 26, 2025





## SFRTA ON TRACK FOR EXCELLENCE

# Tri-Rail History

- In 1986, Tri-County Commuter Rail Organization (TCRO) was formed to develop a new commuter rail system during I-95 widening project. In 1988, FDOT purchased corridor from CSXT, as its plan to keep Tri-County Commuter Rail.
- On January 9, 1989, Tri-Rail commuter rail service is inaugurated. The system reaches its 1 millionth rider in 1990.
- In 2000, Full Funding Grant Agreement with FTA is signed financing Double Track Project, requiring 50 weekday trains.
- In 2003, Florida Legislature created SFRTA to enhance regional cooperation amongst Tri-Rail and counties.







# South Florida Railroads





# South Florida Regional Transportation Authority

- RTA provides track, signal and crossing maintenance on the 73.5-mile South Florida Rail Corridor (SFRC) and an additional 54 miles of freight service spur tracks
- RTA dispatches both passenger trains (Tri-Rail, Amtrak) and freight trains (CSXT) on the South Florida Rail Corridor
- RTA operates Tri-Rail commuter rail passenger service on two railroad corridors (SFRC & FECR) with funding provided by state, county, and federal sources
- SFRTA Governing Board Composition
  - Palm Beach County Commissioner
  - Palm Beach County Representative
  - Palm Beach County Governor's Appointee
  - Broward County Commissioner
  - Broward County Representative
  - Broward County Governor's Appointee
  - Miami-Dade County Commissioner
  - Miami-Dade County Representative
  - Miami-Dade County Governor's Appointee
  - FDOT Secretary





# SFRTA Tri-Rail System

ON TRACK  
FOR EXCELLENCE

- years of service
- 5-mile system on SFRC and 8 miles on FECR
- stations
- connects to 3 major airports
- in Operations
  - Fares
    - I. \$1.25 - \$17.50 (based on zones traveled and discount eligibility)
    - II. \$5 Weekend Fares
  - Weekday
    - I. 52 trains per day between Mangonia Park & Miami Airport stations
    - II. 2 Express trains per day between WPB and MiamiCentral stations
    - III. 24 Miami Central shuttle trains between Metrorail Transfer and MiamiCentral
  - Weekend
    - I. 30 trains per day between Mangonia Park & Miami Airport stations
    - II. 24 Miami Central shuttle trains between Metrorail Transfer and MiamiCentral (one deadhead)







**37%** reported annual household income over \$75,000\*

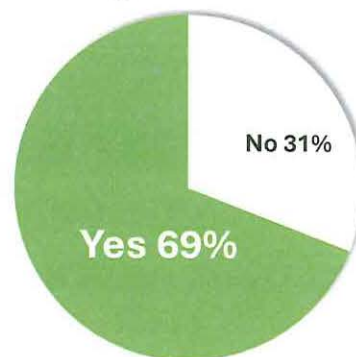


**73%** college grads, and  
**75%** employed full time



**83%**  
own at least one automobile

I could have traveled today by car but chose to ride Tri-Rail instead:



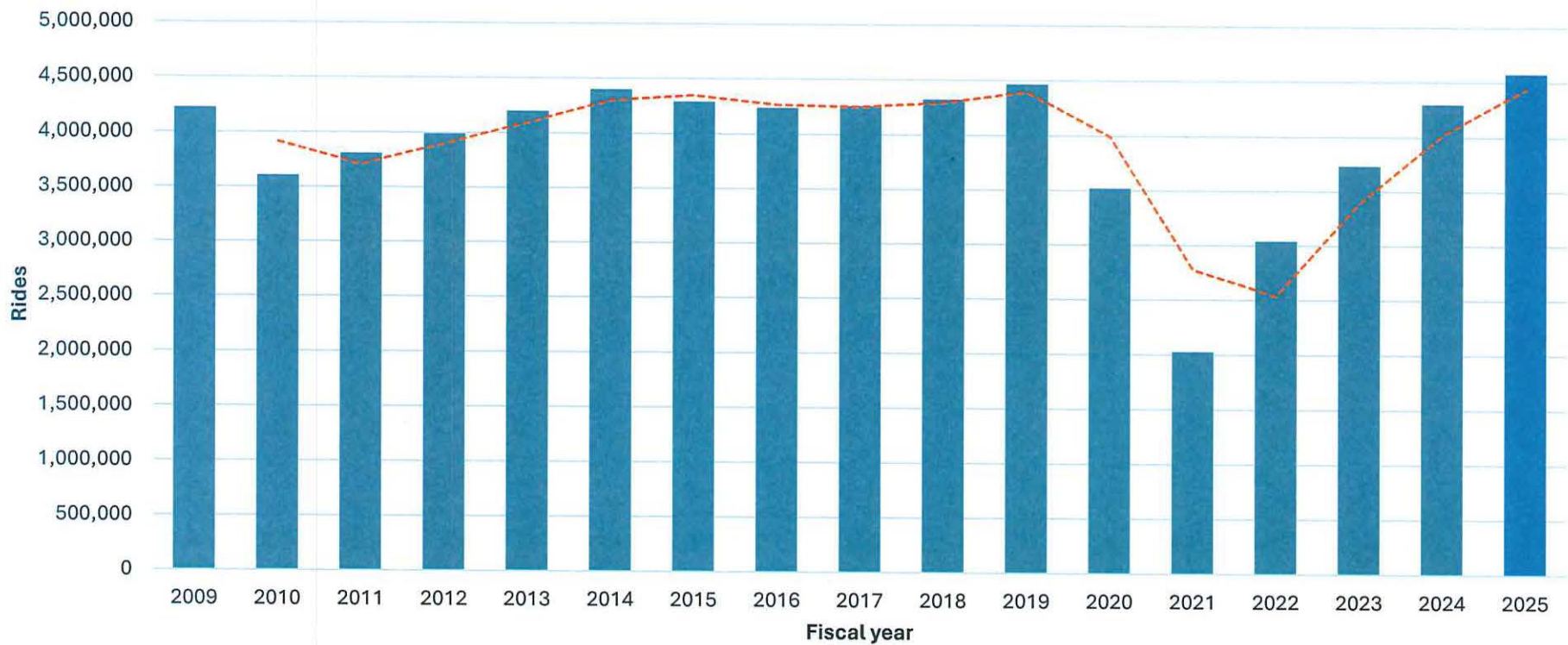
How likely are you to recommend Tri-Rail to others?

**91%**  
Would Recommend

Source: Tri-Rail 2024 On-Board Survey



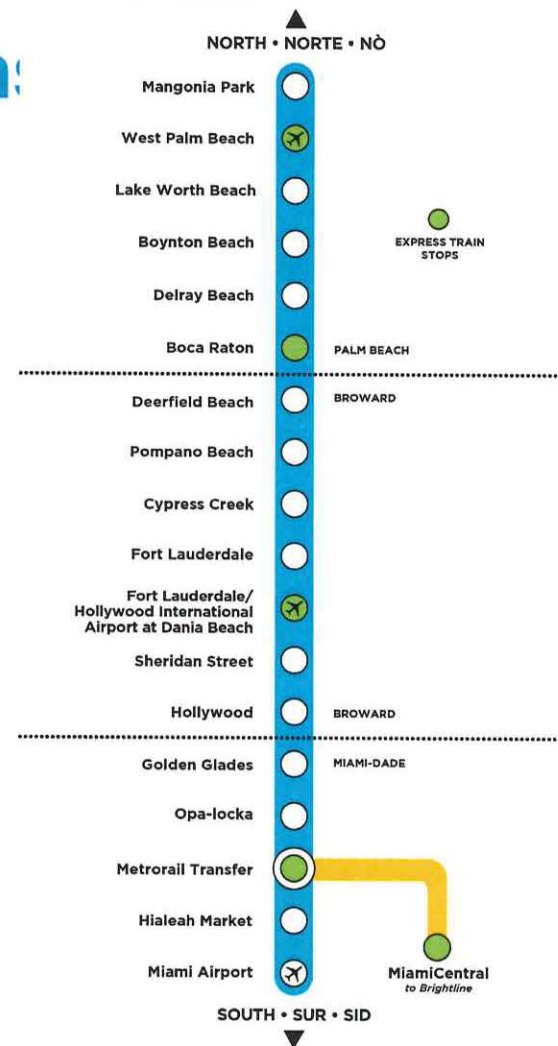
# Ridership By Fiscal Year (July-June)





# Palm Beach County Stations

- Mangonia Park
  - 45<sup>th</sup> Street, Town of Mangonia Park
- West Palm Beach
  - Tamarind Avenue, West Palm Beach
- Lake Worth Beach
  - Lake Worth Road, Lake Worth Beach
- Boynton Beach
  - High Ridge Road, Boynton Beach
- Delray Beach
  - Congress Avenue, Delray Beach
- Boca Raton
  - Yamato Road, Boca Raton



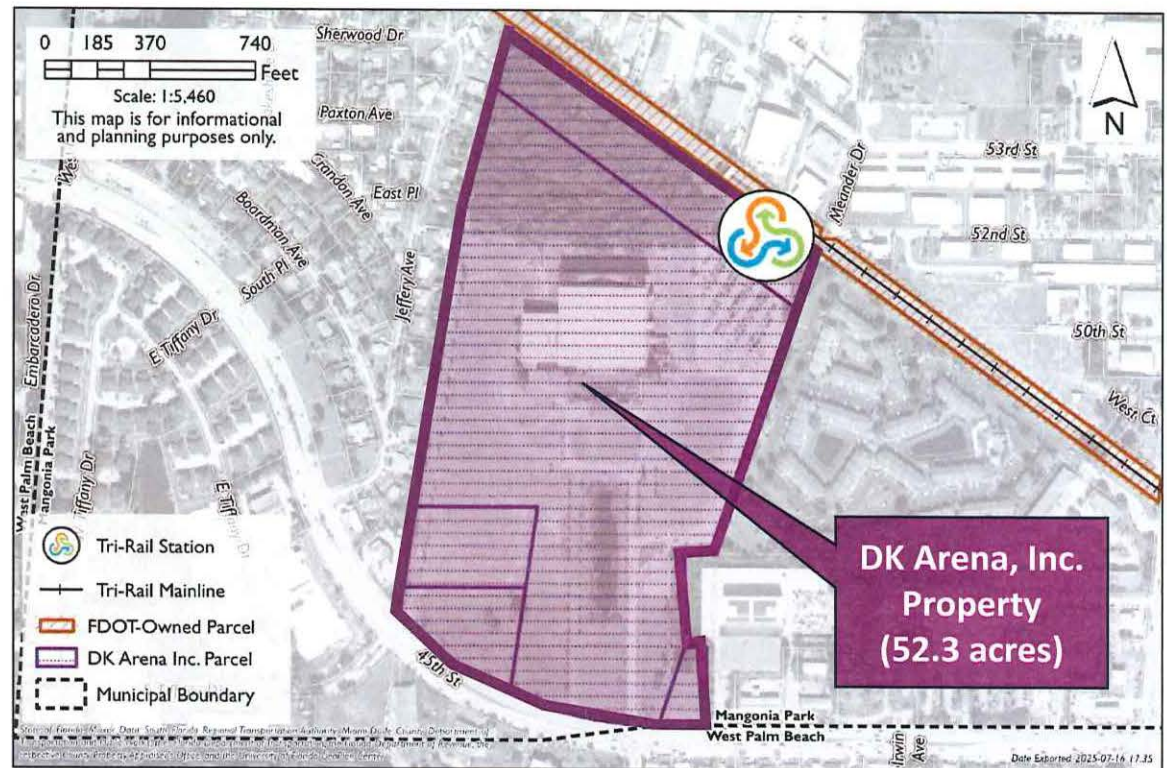




# Mangonia Park Station

## STATION OVERVIEW

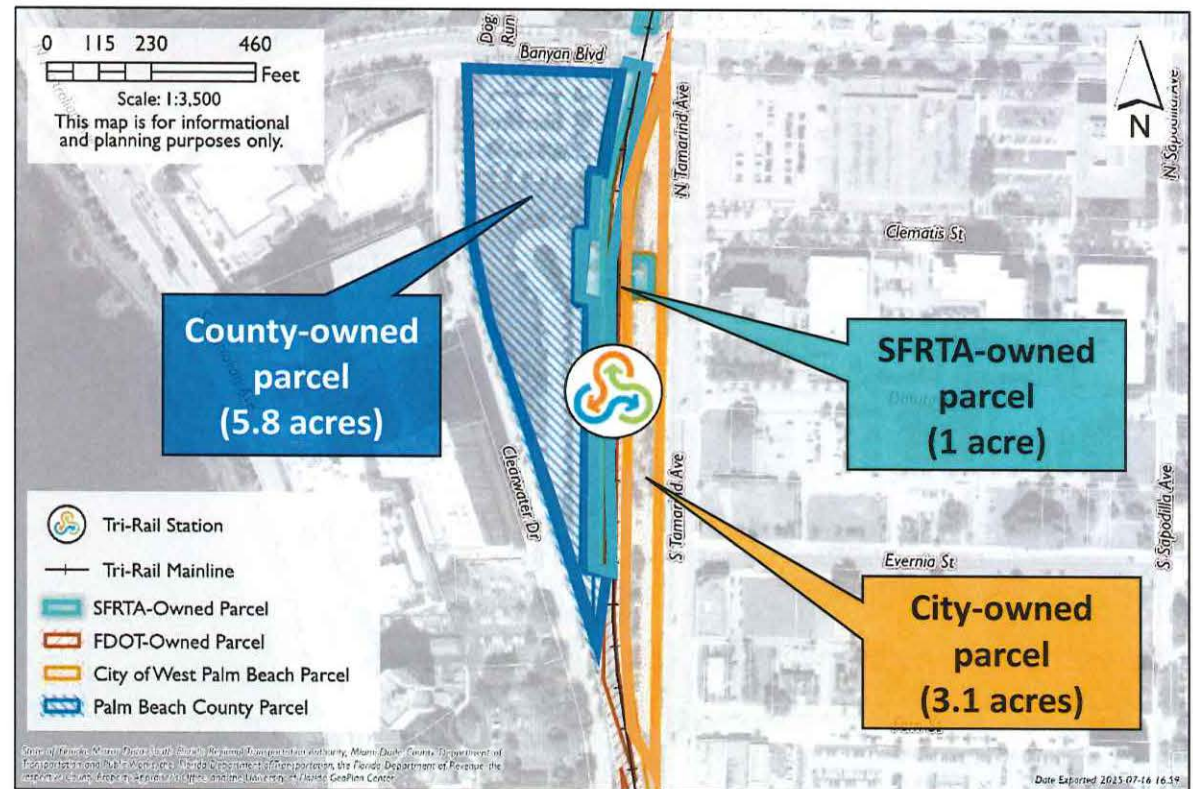
Ownership	DK Arena, Inc.
FY 25 Ridership	223,527
Ridership Rank (of 19)	11th
Multimodal Connections	Palm Tran
Schools	BAK Middle School of the Arts, Suncoast High



# West Palm Beach Station

## STATION OVERVIEW

Ownership	County & City
Y 25 Ridership	328,806
Ridership Rank (of 19)	4th
Multimodal Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Palm Tran</li> <li>Amtrak</li> <li>Greyhound</li> <li>RideWPB(circuit)</li> <li>BrightBike</li> <li>Brightline*</li> </ul> <p>*3 blocks east of Tri-Rail</p>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dreyfoos School of the Arts</li> <li>Palm Beach Atlantic University</li> <li>Vanderbilt University (pending)</li> </ul>



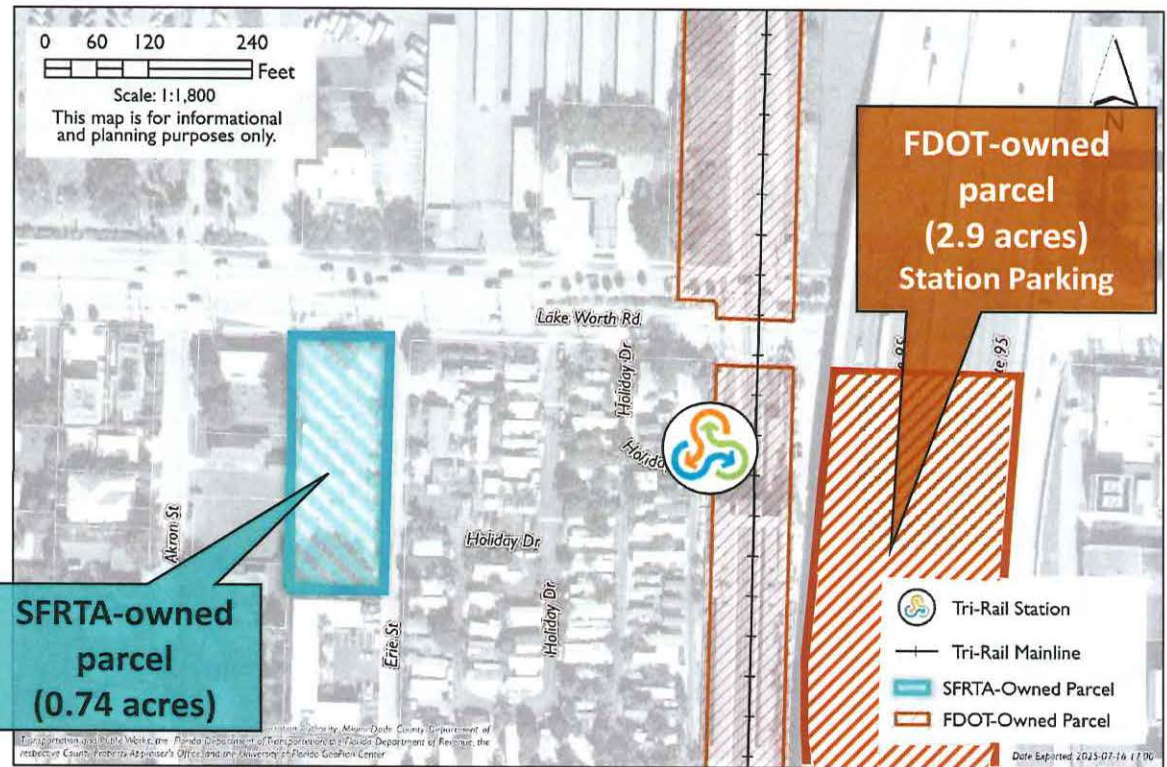




# Lake Worth Beach Station

## STATION OVERVIEW

Ownership	FDOT
FY 25 Ridership	261,417
Rank (of 19)	8 <sup>th</sup>
Multimodal Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palm Tran</li> <li>• Circuit Shuttle</li> </ul>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lake Worth Community High School</li> <li>• Palm Beach State College</li> </ul>



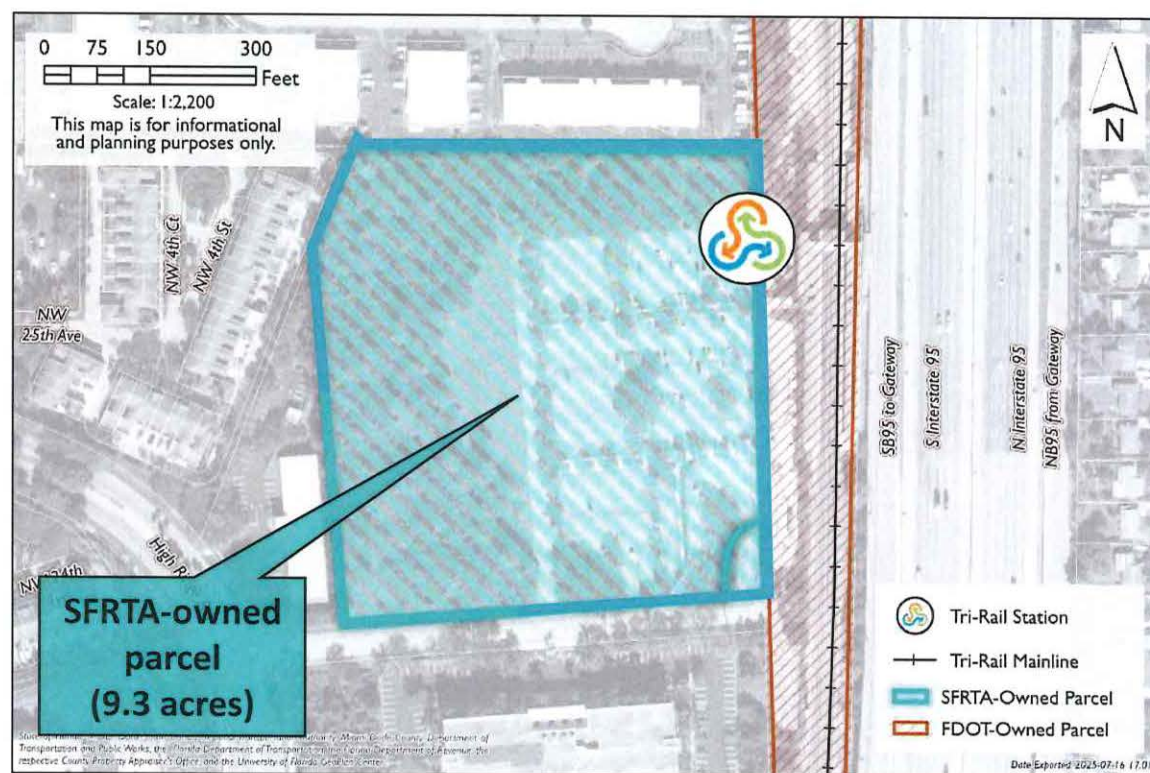




# Boynton Beach Station

## STATION OVERVIEW

Ownership	SFRTA
FY 25 Ridership	198,167
Rank (of 19)	13 <sup>th</sup>
Multimodal Connections	Palm-Tran
Schools	N/A

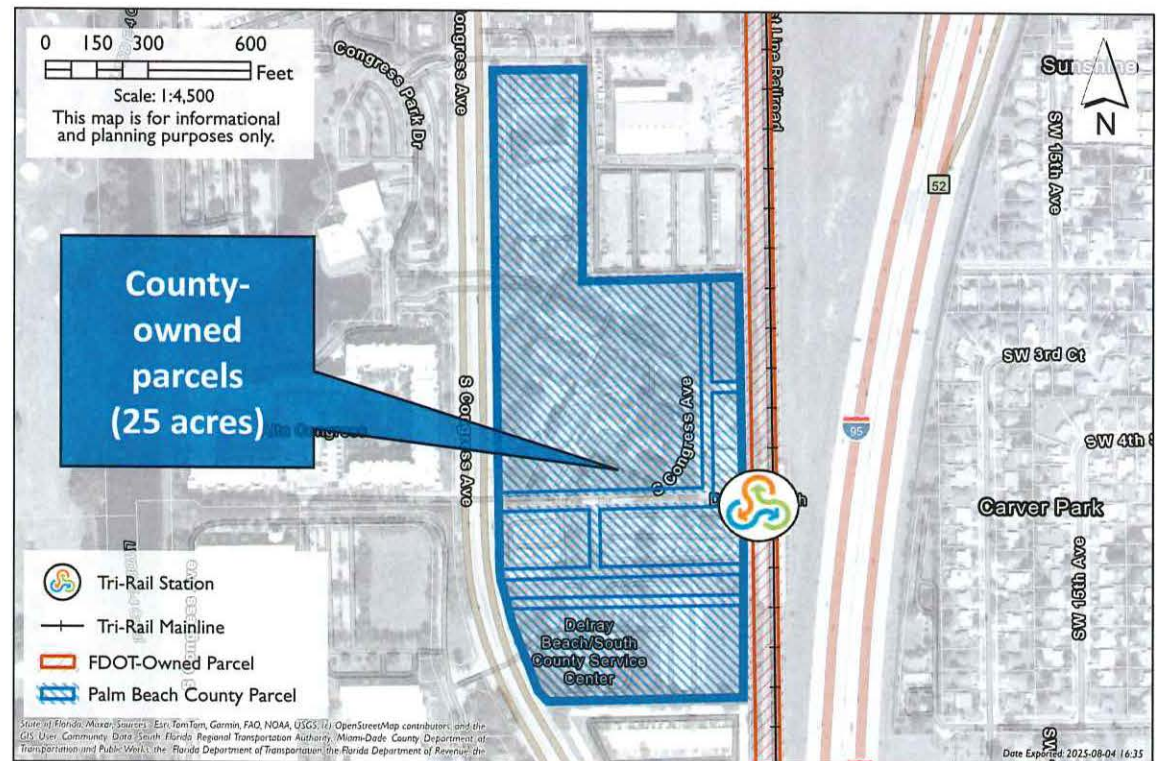




# Delray Beach Station

## STATION OVERVIEW

Ownership	County
FY 25 Ridership	188,620
Rank (of 19)	14 <sup>th</sup>
Multimodal Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amtrak</li> <li>Palm-Tran</li> </ul>
Schools	N/A



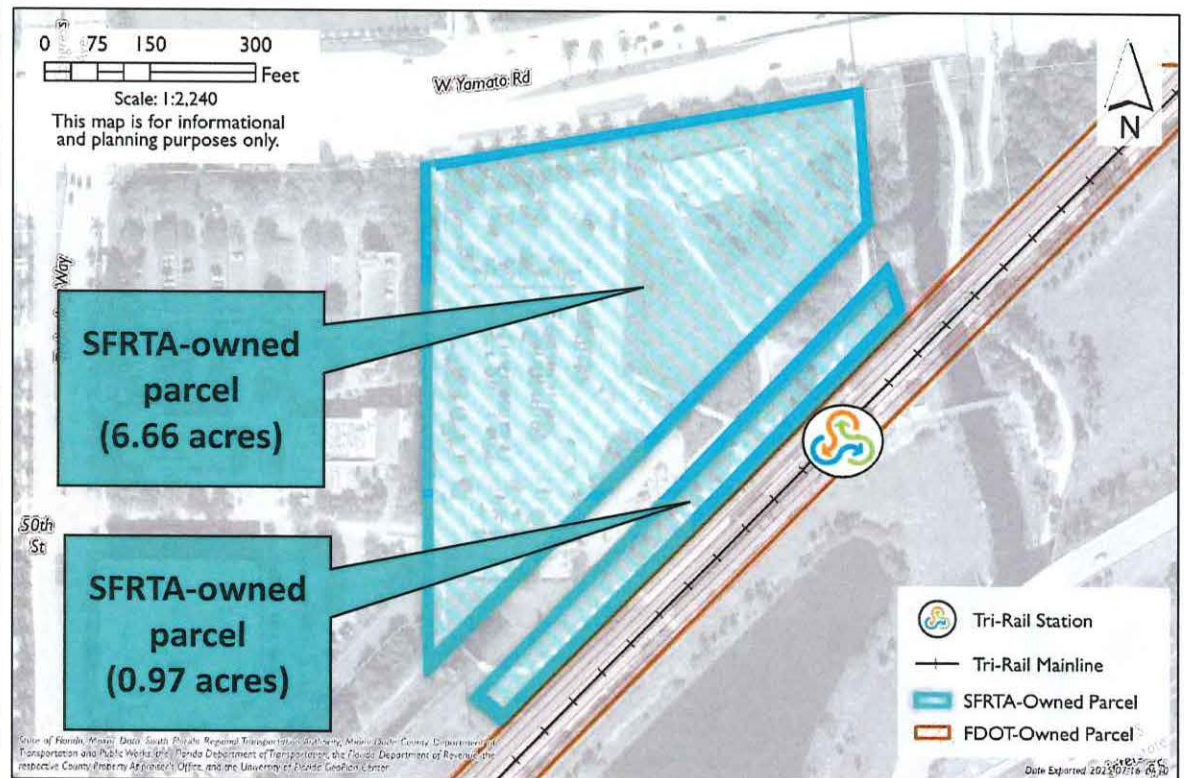




# Boca Raton Station

## STATION OVERVIEW

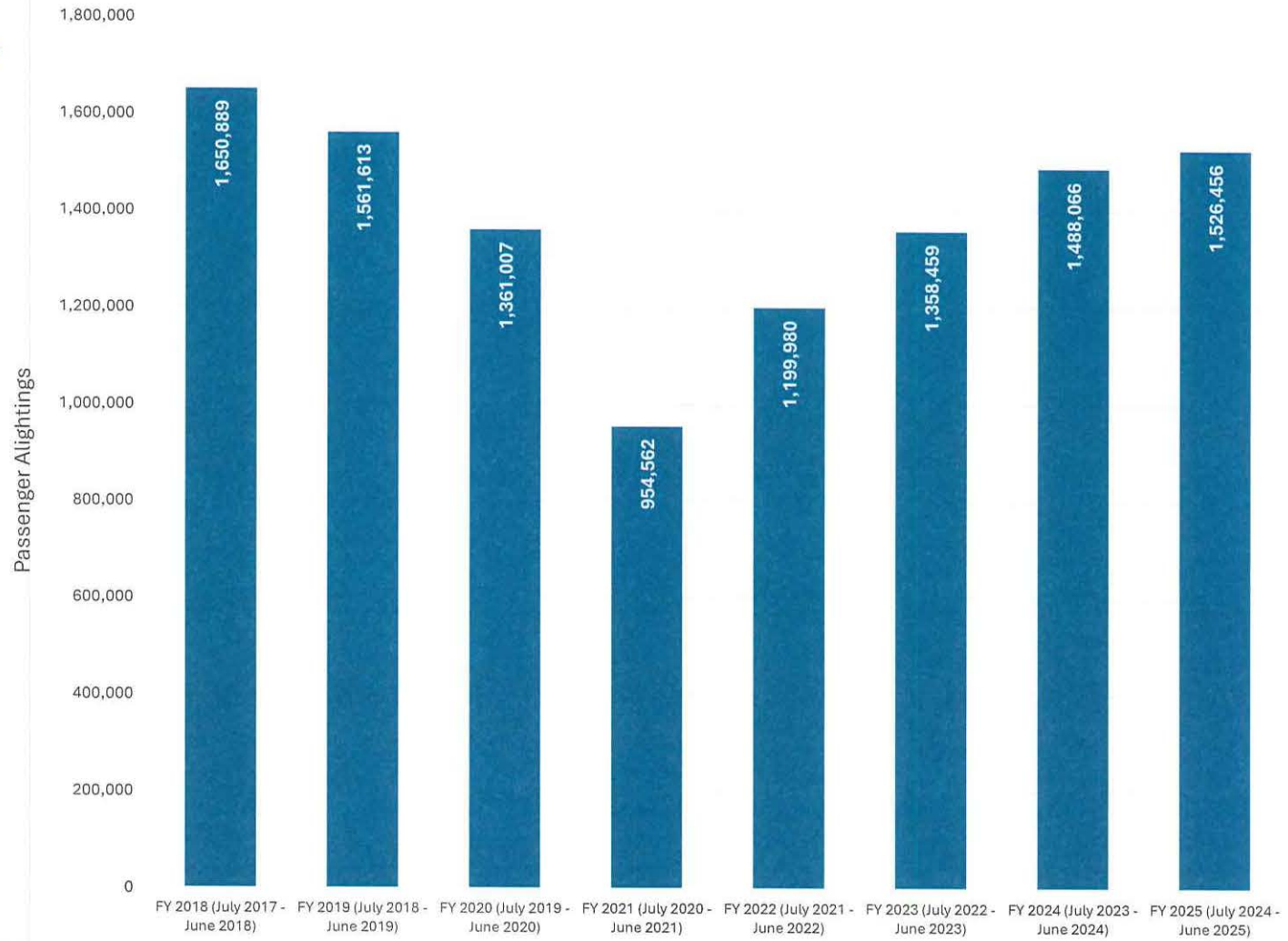
Ownership	SFRTA
2017/25 Ridership	292,209
Rank (of 19)	6 <sup>th</sup>
Multimodal Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Palm-Tran</li> <li>• The Park at Broken Sound Shuttles</li> <li>• Boca Raton Innovation Campus (BRIC) Shuttle/TREX</li> </ul>
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Florida Atlantic University</li> <li>• Palm Beach State College</li> <li>• Lynn University</li> </ul>





## Palm Beach County Ridership

July 2024 - July 2025	Boardings	% of Boardings	Alightings	% of Alightings	Boardings & Alightings	% of Total
Langonia Park	237,580	4.82%	234,499	4.76%	472,079	5%
West Palm Beach	352,289	7.15%	388,723	7.89%	741,012	8%
Lake Worth Beach	280,115	5.69%	280,095	5.69%	560,210	6%
Joynton Beach	212,374	4.31%	215,938	4.38%	428,312	4%
Delray Beach	202,676	4.11%	210,543	4.27%	413,219	4%
Locha Raton	310,790	6.31%	306,162	6.21%	616,952	6%
<b>Palm Beach</b>		<b>32.4%</b>		<b>33.2%</b>		<b>32.8%</b>
Broward		38.6%		38.0%		38.3%
Miami-Dade		29.0%		28.8%		28.9%







## Palm Beach County Magnet Schools



- **Approximately 500 students a day**
- **PBC purchased fares per school year**
  - **24-25 \$196,000**
  - **23-24 \$330,000**
  - **18-19 \$365,500**



## FY 2026 Legislative Update

- The approved Florida budget for FY 2026 was signed off and redirected the doc stamp to general funds and zeroed out Florida Rail Enterprise money.
- FDOT Funding Obligation (Section 343.58(4)(a)(1)a and b, F.S.)
  - \$42M annually (\$15M + \$27.1M) because SFRTA provides MOW and dispatch
  - FDOT has provided \$42M + additional funds per Operating Agreement since 2013 (this year was going to be \$62M)
  - Statute says money is from State Transportation Trust Fund – not dependent on any tax
- FDOT revised interpretation of statutory funding





## Funding Efforts History

- 9-2009: -Counties and FDOT paid for all of SFRTA operating deficit. Counties provided approx. \$7M/year including statutory \$4.2M from 2003 – 2009
- 6: -\$2 Rental Car Surcharge dedicated funding– passed Legislature/vetoed by Governor
- 7: -FDOT District Secretary commits to SFRTA Board portion of I-95 Express Lane toll revenues in exchange for a letter of support for FDOT's grant application
- 9: -Legislature adopts statute that restricts use of funds for public transit only to express traveling on those roads; FDOT claims no additional monies available due to O/M and capital costs
- Special Legislative Session results in adoption of s. 348.58, F.S. that addresses \$42M from FDOT for assumption of MOW and dispatch
- 3: -SFRTA and FDOT enter into Operating Agreement. FDOT agrees to pay additional monies for MOW and Dispatch
- SFRTA granted right to operate Tri-Rail on SFRC until June 2027



## Funding Efforts History (cont'd)

- 4: -SFRTA studied potential dedicated funding sources available to it under Ch. 163, F.S. (regional transportation authorities) in the event it operated both Coastal Link and existing service (use of TIF, etc.)
- 7: -Statutory changes to SFRTA's legislation gave FDOT more fiscal oversight, granted FDOT right to provide 25% advance of annual operating subsidy, added additional Governor appointment to the SFRTA Board (now 10 members), and required that SFRTA and FDOT work cooperatively to identify an alternative funding source to the \$42M before 7/1/19
- 8-2021: -SFRTA addresses operating deficit, reduces workforce by 25%, negotiated cost savings in Operations Contract, outside consultant management study concludes SFRTA's overhead costs are less than peers
- 1: -\$267,783,489 Federal COVID Relief funds – addressed SFRTA operating deficit until now



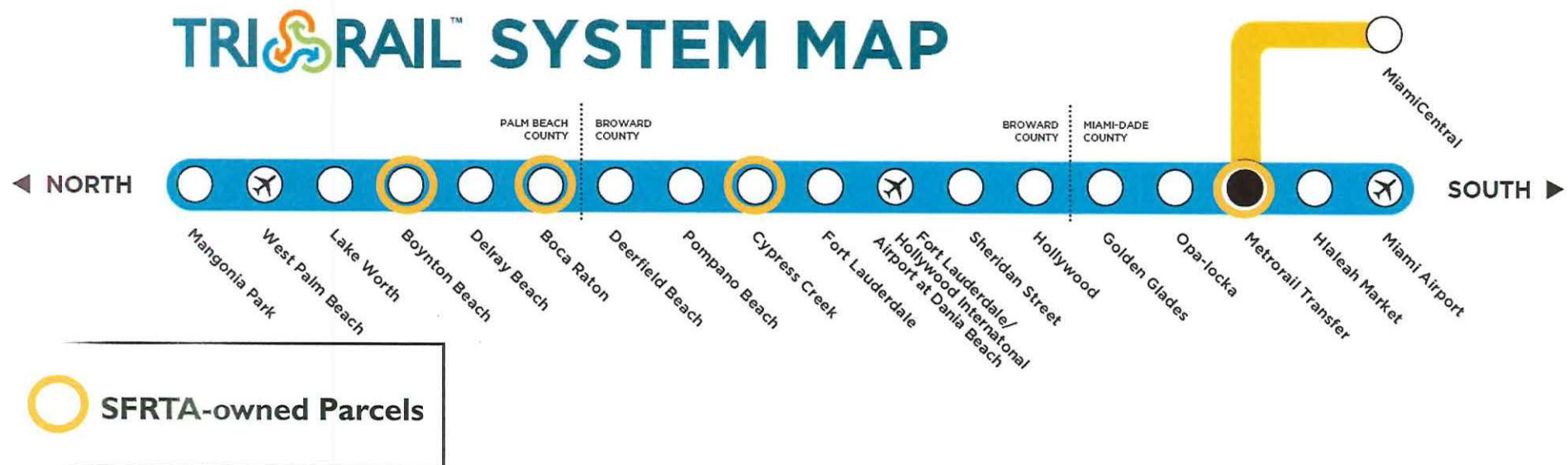


## Revenue Generating Efforts

- Sublease Station Platforms for Retail Services/Air Rights
  - Statutory requirement that FDOT receive Fair Market Value
- Fiber Optic Leases of Corridor
  - FDOT has authority to lease. Has existing leases from when purchased SFRC and retains all revenues
- Advertising
  - FDOT declined SFRTA's request to advertise on pedestrian overpasses. To date has not approved advertising at other parts of stations
- Pedestrian Bridges
  - Constructed 20 years ago. Costly and difficult to maintain, creates passenger overflow issues.
  - FDOT refuses to allow at-grade pedestrian crossings
- TODs
  - SFRTA only owns 4 of its 19 stations with TOD opportunities
  - Restricted by 50-foot setback required by CSXT, not required for SunRail

# Station Revenue Opportunities

- The agency's ability to generate non-operating revenue is severely limited due to lack of ownership structure of the corridor and stations, which belongs to FDOT





# Link at Boca

- Link at Boca (Boca Raton Station)
  - Being developed by 13th Floor Investments
  - 90-Year lease
  - \$567,000 Initial Annual Rent
  - 340 residences (34 affordable/17 workforce)
  - 30,000+ square feet of retail
  - Applicant of the first residential TOD loan under the U.S. Department of Transportation's lending programs (RRIF Loan)
  - Breaking Ground First Qtr. 2026



## Operating Costs

System	Vehicle Revenue Mile	Vehicle Revenue Hour	Passenger Miles Traveled	Unlinked Passenger Trip
SFRTA FY 2024	34.59	977.91	1.12	29.36

### Peer comparison (Commuter Rail NTD 2023)

System	Vehicle Revenue Mile	Vehicle Revenue Hour	Passenger Miles Traveled	Unlinked Passenger Trip
SFRTA	34.78	1,025.26	1.16	32.85
SunRail	68.92	1,907.26	3.93	65.99
Virginia Railway Express	37.89	1,159.34	2.00	62.37
North Shore Line	30.30	976.33	1.23	40.33
Caltrain	25.42	807.34	1.30	24.66
Metrolink	25.11	908.43	1.80	75.16
Utah Transit Authority	15.07	412.65	0.54	15.52

**Vehicle revenue miles (VRM)** refer to the total distance that vehicles travel while in revenue service, meaning they are available for public ridership.

**Vehicle revenue hours.** The total hours that vehicles are scheduled to or actually travel while in revenue service. This includes layover or recovery time.

**Passenger miles traveled** refers to the total distance covered by passengers on various modes of transportation.

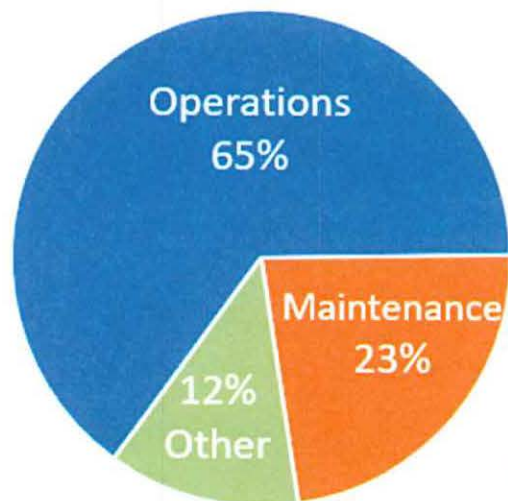
**Unlinked passenger trip.** The number of passengers who board public transportation vehicles. Passengers are counted each time they board vehicles no matter how many vehicles they use to travel from their origin to their destination.



## Operating Costs (cont'd)

South Florida Regional Transportation Authority  
Proposed Expense Operating Budget  
Fiscal Year 2025-2026

### SFRC



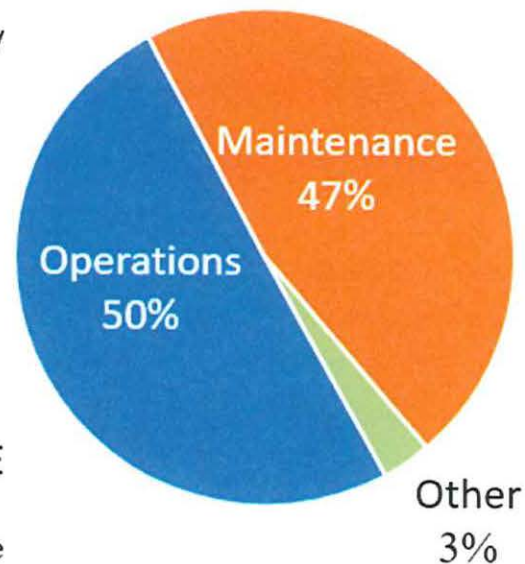
### OPERATIONS

Train Operations  
Maintenance of Way  
Security  
Fuel  
Insurance  
PTC  
Feeder Bus  
Shuttle Bus  
First/Last Mile

### MAINTENANCE

Train Maintenance  
Station Maintenance

### DTMS



# Operating Revenue

## Approved Revenue Operating Budget – SFRC + DTMS Fiscal Year 2025-2026

	FY 2024-2025 App & Amend	FY 2024-2025 Projected	FY 2025-2026 Approved	Increase/Decrease Over PY App Amend Budget	
				Amount	%
<b>Revenue</b>					
Train Revenue	\$ 14,830,830	\$ 15,128,628	\$ 15,451,614	\$ 620,784	4.19%
Total Train Revenue	14,830,830	15,128,628	15,451,614	620,784	4.19%
<b>Operating Assistance</b>					
FDOT	60,690,759	59,309,361	62,254,770	1,564,011	2.58%
FHWA	4,000,000	4,000,000	4,000,000	-	-
FTA Assistance (PM)	-	-	11,141,464	11,141,464	-
CARES Act	20,556,018	20,803,011	4,516,716	(16,039,302)	-78.03%
CRSSA Act	13,841,442	11,378,437	2,443,007	(11,398,435)	-82.35%
ARP Funding	36,701,854	30,489,446	48,978,122	12,276,268	33.45%
FDOT Micro Transit	507,283	377,000	113,185	(394,098)	-77.69%
FDOT - Marketing DTMS	257,360	107,280	-	(257,360)	-100.00%
Other Local Funding	200,000	100,000	200,000	-	-
Total Assistance	136,754,716	126,564,535	133,647,264	(3,107,452)	-2.27%
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>151,585,546</b>	<b>141,693,163</b>	<b>149,098,878</b>	<b>(2,486,668)</b>	<b>-1.64%</b>





## Corridor Improvements



- 38 Crossing and Signal Upgrade Projects
- Total MOW Investments = \$18,912,466









# Operations and Capital Planning Status

- Bundled contract effort
- Most capital projects placed on hold



New Fare Collection System



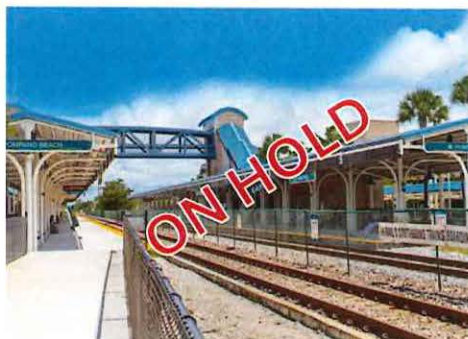
Pedestrian Bridge Rehabilitation



Northern Layover and Light Maintenance



New Rolling Stock



Station Rehabilitation Project



Elevators





# MISSION

*Connect communities, deliver exceptional service, and provide safe, reliable transportation options.*

*In collaboration with partners, deliver a safe, convenient, and effective service that serves as South Florida's multimodal backbone.*



# VISION

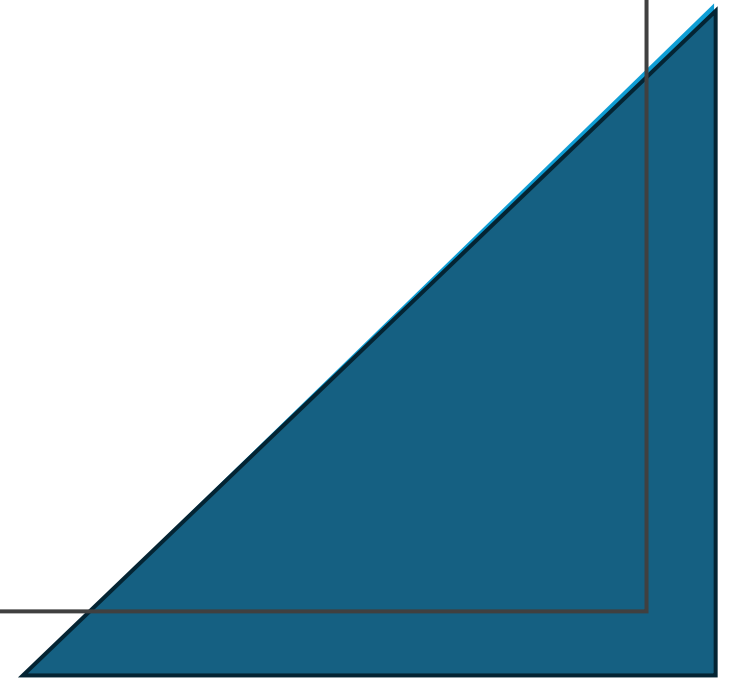
## THANK YOU

David W. Dech, Executive Director



# SFRTA FY2026 Funding Options Draft

**For Discussion Purposes Only.**



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# Agenda

Quick Facts

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Budget Overview

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Process

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Scenarios

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SFRTA Capital Requirements

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Considerations

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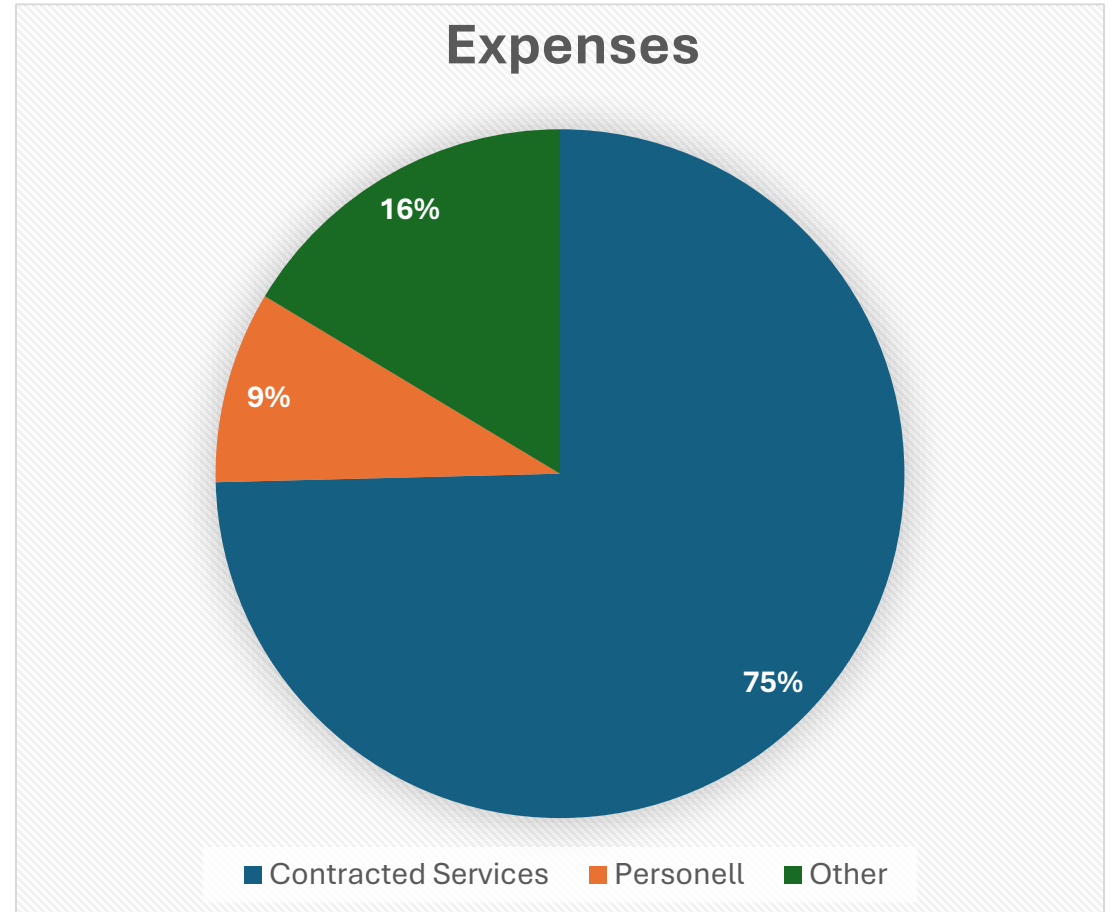
Next Steps

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# SFRTA Quick Facts

- Service began in the 1980's
- Double tracking completed in 2006
- Corridor Characteristics:
  - Eighty-one track miles
  - Nineteen stations
  - Hialeah Yard
- Current daily traffic mix:
  - 52 Tri-Rail
  - 4 Amtrak
  - 9 CSX
- Annual Ridership: 4.6 million (June 2024- June 2025) exceeds highest level set in 2019
- Annual Budget: \$149.1M



## FY 2026 O&M Cost Categories

Expense Items	Costs (in Millions)
Service Operations	\$35.8
Equipment Maintenance	\$25.4
MOW	\$33.6
Dispatch	\$2.7
PTC, Signals and Communication	\$5.6
Stations/Facilities Maintenance	\$17.7
Safety and Security	\$10.2
General Admin	\$18.2
Total O&M Expense	<b>\$149.1</b>



# FY 2026 O&M Funding Categories

Expense Items	Costs \$ (in Millions)
Service Revenue (Fare Revenue)	15.5
FDOT Funding – Statutory and Non-Statutory	62.4
FTA COVID Relief	55.9
FTA Preventive Maintenance	11.1
FHWA	4.0
County Funding - Statutory	1.6
Other Miscellaneous	0.2
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$149.1</b>

# FY 2026 Baseline Costs for Corridor Operations\*



Expense Items	Costs (in Millions)
MOW Contractual	\$30.8
Environmental Services	\$1.6
Dispatch	\$2.3
Utilities	\$1.3
PTC	\$4.5
Station Maintenance	\$2.7
Insurance**	\$6.1
Total cost to keep the line open	\$49.3

\*Source: SFRTA

\*\*Assumes insurance at the same level but likely to change based on new service configuration



# Process

- Reviewed SFRTA FY2026 Budget Documents
- Fact-checked assumptions with SFRTA staff as appropriate
- Reviewed various contracts/agreements/documents
  - Downtown Miami Link Service Agreement
  - Herzog O&M Contract
  - SunRail Agreement with FDOT
  - Funding History
  - Technical Memo on Funding Alternatives
  - Projected FY2026 – FY2036 Budget
  - Other
- Explored daily service requirements adjustment opportunities based on agreements
  - 26 trains/day
  - 50 trains/day i.e. double tracking (FTA)(TBD)
- Assumes FY2026 operating expenses only

# Scenarios

- Applies only to FY2026
- Current Budgeted FDOT funding level -- \$62.37M
- FY2026 Budget adjusted to move County contributions out of reserves
- Six scenarios:
  - Scenario 1 – FDOT pays all corridor expenses at \$49.3M to support all train movements/service including Amtrak and CSX
    - *Assumption: If there is no Tri-Rail, the corridor still needs to be maintained to a state-of-good repair; train movements must be managed, and all safety protocols met*
  - Scenario 2 – FDOT responsible for statutory requirement of \$42.1M/year
  - Scenario 3 – FDOT contribution limited to \$15M/year, which the Counties do not believe a viable option
  - Scenario 4-6 -- \$15M cost reduction with same parameters as in Scenarios 1-3
- Assumes Counties continue meet baseline Statutory requirements
- Additional Local net contributions could range from \$1.2M to \$35.0M\*

Please note that the scenarios presented are for discussion purposes only and do not represent a funding commitment from the Counties.

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\*Excludes additional operational efficiencies and may require new revenue funding sources i.e. TOD, Rental Car Surtax, etc.



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# FY 2026 Funding Scenarios

FY2026 FDOT Budgeted Contribution \$62.37 M  
\$49.3M Baseline Corridor Operating Costs

Total Operating Expense	Scenario 1 \$M	Scenario 2 \$M	Scenario 3 ** \$M
Total Operating Expense	149.1	149.1	149.1
Total FDOT Contribution	49.3	42.1	15
Other Funding Sources*	86.8	86.8	86.8
County Contribution - Statutory	11.7	11.7	11.7
Total Add'l Local Contribution	1.2	8.4	35.5

*\*Other funding sources include Covid funds, Train Revenue, operating grants, and other income.*

*\*\*The Counties do not believe the FDOT contribution is sufficient*

# FY 2026 Funding Scenarios\*

FY2026 FDOT Contribution \$62.37 M  
\$49.3M for FDOT to Keep the Line Open

Total Operating Expense	Scenario 4* \$M	Scenario 5* \$M	Scenario 6**** \$M
Original Total Operating Expense	149.1	149.1	149.1
Efficiency Savings**	(15)	(15)	(15)
New Total Operating Expense	134.1	134.1	134.1
Total FDOT Contribution	49.3	42.1	15
Other Funding Sources***	86.8	86.8	86.8
County Contribution - Statutory	11.7	11.7	11.7
Total Add'l County Contribution	0	0	20.5

\*Any funding surplus could be used for reserves, or other unforeseen expenditures.

\*\*Assumes \$15M reduction in expenses TBD/excludes farebox impacts.

\*\*\*Other funding sources include Covid funds, Train Revenue, operating grants, and other income.

\*\*\*\* The Counties do not believe the FDOT contribution is sufficient.



# SFRTA FY2026 Prioritized Capital Needs\*

1. Rolling Stock Replacement & Expansion \$208M
  - FTA Grant needs to be obligated by September 2026
2. Fare Collection System Replacement \$24M
3. Accounting System Replacement \$3.7M
4. Northern Layover Facility \$82.6M
5. Station Improvements \$60.9M
  - Elevator modernization & upgrades
  - Station Rehabilitation
  - Parking lot rehabilitation
  - Digital Communication LCD Screens
6. Signal Safety Improvements \$10.5M

\* Source: SFRTA



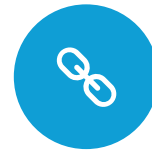
# Considerations



Generate new revenue, i.e. fares, concessionaires, advertisers, etc.



Seek efficiency opportunities



Consider integration with existing transit service providers



Leverage consultant support for efficiencies as/if necessary



FDOT funds capital needs/liabilities



Asset transfer to SFRTA/Counties (TOD/ED)



Optimize cost allocations between all users including CSX and Amtrak



Restructure Board to include more local control



Counties participates in next O&M contracting process



Increase municipality participation

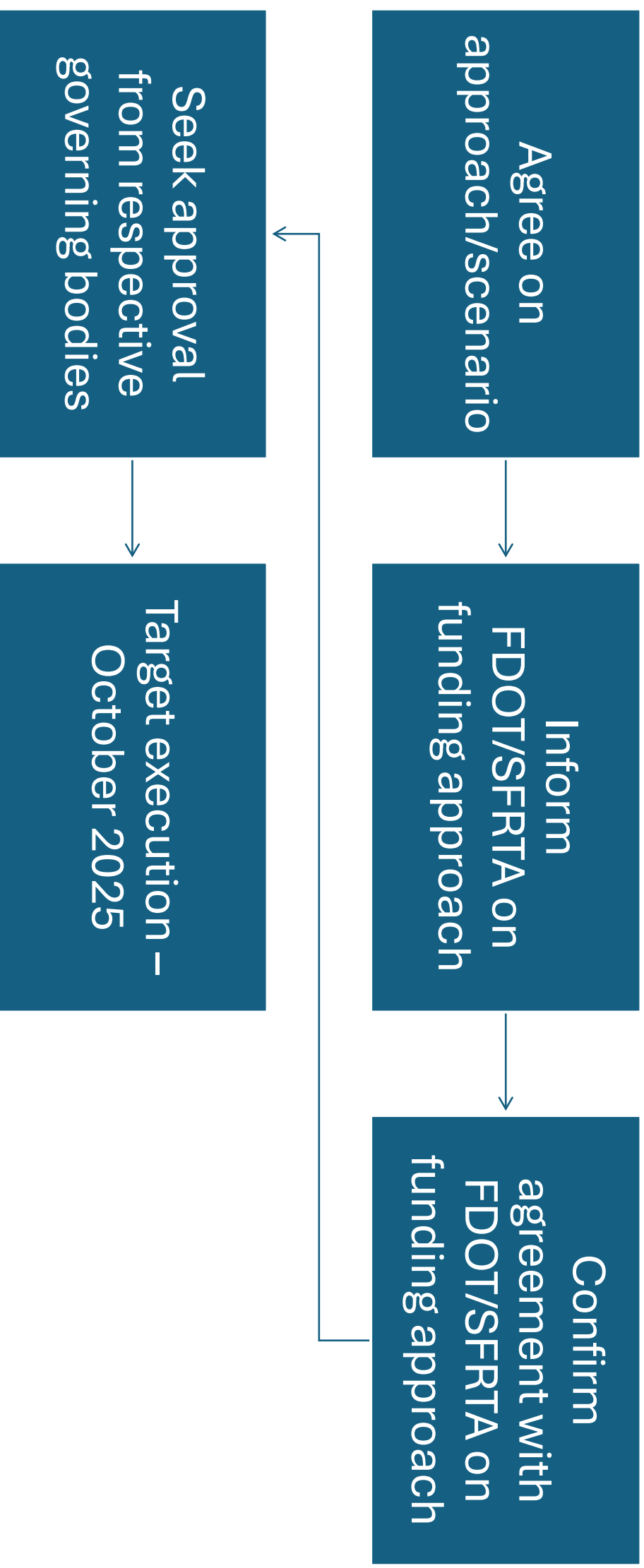


Collectively seek alternative funding sources i.e. rental cars/airport access, etc.



Strategize for the future

# Next Steps





Thank you.