

## What is the future for commuter rail in South Florida?

*CEOs were asked: Miami-Dade has agreed to build Brightline two new stations. Meanwhile, the future of Tri-Rail is uncertain. What should, or shouldn't, be done to support rail in South Florida?*

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The success of Brightline and Tri-Rail is factored on overcoming the perception that driving provides us with greater independence. Additional options for commuter and leisure travel, combined with lower fares, will disrupt the notion that driving is the logical choice.

**Michael Balaban**, *president, CEO, Jewish Federation of Broward County*

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Rail in South Florida is essential to an optimal 21st century transportation ecosystem; one that moves us away from inefficient, single-occupancy, combustion-engine vehicles. At Lime, our scooters perfectly complement transit and rail services, providing convenient, sustainable, first-mile, last-mile options that relieve the stresses of traffic and the hunt for parking. Rail serves a critical role for commuters and tourists. Add major-impact projects like the Underline and it is clear that through a collaboration of the various players in the ecosystem, we will change the landscape to meet the needs of everyone in our community.

**Uhriel Bedoya**, *Florida general manager, Lime*

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I'm all for trains and public transportation that take the cars off the street and help Miami-Dade become more sustainable and efficient. This legacy issue requires communication, education and commitment from all parties involved, including the private sector, the community and the government.

**Claudia Busch**, *founding principal, Berenblum Busch Architects*

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Rail will have to be part of South Florida's future in order to ensure our economic survival. Our

roadways, today, are treacherous, congested and limit movement. While I cannot detail the level of service needed, routes required, or economic outlay, no one has any doubt that Florida is far behind other states on an effective mass transit system. It will take significant social change to get our population to accept mass transit as a reliable and convenient commuting alternative, so we will need to have a well-articulated regional plan to build awareness and garner the support of the public. I also see self-driving passenger vans as a solution for transporting individuals from their front doors to their rail of choice.

**Anita Byer**, *CEO, Setnor Byer Insurance & Risk*

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Railroads are long-term investments, as they require a culture change of habits by the population. Continuing to add local stops encourages Florida residents to use alternative types of transportation within their everyday life and as a commuting substitute. Additionally, by offering resident rates and commuting packages, this will assist in making this shift happen more rapidly. Not only does it cut down on traffic, it reduces the city's overall carbon footprint and should be supported.

**Ricardo Dunin**, *founding partner, Lionheart Capital*

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South Florida needs to develop a robust and comprehensive transportation plan for the tri-county area and rail is certainly a critical element, but rail is one of many modes of transportation that need to be considered. While rail is a solution for the east corridor running parallel to I-95, building rail to resolve the east/west and western north/south transportation issues is simply not economically feasible. So yes, we should support rail, but not at the expense of leveraging and improving other equally important modes of transportation.

**Carlos R. Fernandez-Guzman**, *president, CEO, Pacific National Bank (PNB)*

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All forms of transit should be welcomed and embraced — whether it's rail, bus, trolley, bicycle, etc. — and are equally beneficial for our city. I think business owners and companies should be more open-minded about encouraging employees to use the transit options we have. For example, at 13th Floor, we subsidize our staff's transportation costs if they choose to forego a parking space at our office

building.

**Arnaud Karsenti**, *managing principal, 13th Floor Investments*

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Anyone who has visited any major city in the U.S. outside of Florida, especially in the Northeast, or in Europe and Asia, knows these communities have many public transit options but especially seamless and integrated rail systems. South Florida's traffic is not going away. Building more highways in a metropolitan area sandwiched between Biscayne Bay and the Everglades is not feasible nor realistic. We must get drivers out of cars and into transit options. We must get vehicles off the road since traffic stagnation leads to economic stagnation. I think all rail options should be considered in Miami-Dade County. However, more than only addressing the eastern Miami-Dade County corridor, we need an east-west rail option in either light or heavy rail modes and an extension of Metrorail southward from Dadeland and northward along Northwest 27th avenue to the county line, as was promised many years ago yet not delivered by our elected leaders. If we don't do this, traffic congestion will soon become business growth congestion. We can't afford that.

**Bernie Navarro**, *founder and president, Benworth Capital Partners*

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No one form of transport will work by itself. Instead, the entire transportation landscape needs to be viewed as a whole, including last mile inter-connectivity. Offering choices to the commuter is critical.

**Sanket Parekh**, *founder and managing partner, Secocha Ventures*

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By 2025, Miami-Dade County will have a population of over 3 million people, with Broward and Palm Beach also growing tremendously. The success of Tri-Rail is critical to provide alternatives to our horrible traffic congestion on our federal, state and local roads. Creative lane usage, like express lanes and reversible traffic lanes can help, but we have to learn from Northeast U.S. cities in using Tri-Rail systems to move large amounts of people to their workplace, school and entertainment destinations.

**Julio Ramirez**, *president, CEO, JEM Global Consulting*

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Miami-Dade's support for Brightline recognizes the importance of a mass transit rail option in our increasingly congested South Florida corridor. More stations and some subsidization of travel is needed to make this a reality.

**Stuart Singer**, *administrative partner, Fort Lauderdale office, Boies Schiller & Flexner*

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Anyone who doesn't support spending more on rail should get on the Palmetto Expressway or I-95 at 5:30 p.m. to experience gridlock on any given weekday. As a community, we need to support expanding rail and other forms of public transportation.

**Evelio C. Torres**, *president, CEO, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade and Monroe*