

NEAR Protocol | NEAR Token

Layer 1 / NEAR Intents Cross-Chain Settlement / Confidential Intents & Perps / NEAR AI / Bitwise NRR ETF Live

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RATING	12-MO TARGET (PW)	5-YR TARGET	CURRENT PRICE	EST. UPSIDE (12 MO)
BUY	\$11.59 (\$6.75–\$16.42)	\$15.41 (\$8.98–\$21.83)	\$4.52	+156%

Token Price	\$4.52	Intents Vol. LTM	\$32.5B	MC / Eco Fees	98x vs 28.9x peer
MC = FDV	\$5.92B	Intents Protocol Rev.	\$8.85M	52w Low / High	\$0.96 / \$5.89
Supply	1,310.0M (100% circ.)	Holder CF / Issuance	6.6%	WACC / g	12.6% / 4.0%
Max Inflation	2.5%	Staked (active set)	45.4%	Cycle Assumption	BTC trough printed Q3 2026
Agent-Option FV (PW)	\$10.79	Implied P(Agent Base)	28%	Median / Core PW	\$3.38 / \$4.35

Investment Thesis

NEAR has run from \$0.96 on 11 February to a \$5.89 close on 11 October and trades at \$4.52, up 370% from the low and down 10% over thirty days. Three catalysts drove it: the Intents fee switch, confidential perps routed to Hyperliquid and the first US spot ETF (Bitwise NRR). On cash returned to holders it is expensive. Buybacks plus burn were \$9.8M against \$148M of issuance, a DCF on that cash gives \$0.41, and NEAR trades at 3.4x the L1 peer multiple of ecosystem fees. What I am pricing is the agent-payments option.

The option is AI-agent payments. Intents settled \$32.5B over the last twelve months across about 35 chains, and chain-abstracted, programmatic settlement is what an agent needs. I size it top-down (14.0B agents by FY2031E, 12% settling on crypto rails, NEAR taking 7.5% of that, 850 payments of \$5 per agent, 10 bps to holders) and value it with a ten-year DCF and a Bitwise-style multiple. Base adoption is worth \$20.11 on the DCF and \$14.66 at FY2031E on the multiple. Weighted across five adoption states, blended fair value is \$10.79. At \$4.52 the market prices a 28% chance of base adoption; I put 35% on base-or-better.

I rate NEAR a BUY. The 12-month target is \$11.59 and the five-year target is \$15.41. I size it as an option. The median outcome is \$3.38, 65% of the probability sits below spot, and 59% of expected value comes from the two best states. Leverage has come out since early October (aggregate open interest from 13.5% to 7.3% of market cap, Hyperliquid funding from 33% to 8% annualized). The core-only framework marks NEAR at \$4.35 over twelve months, below spot even with 27% of its weight in the two upside cases. I add in its base range of \$2.58–\$3.16.

Framework

Primary: probability-weighted value of the AI-agent payments option. NEAR's base layer captures almost nothing (\$1.23M of gas against a \$5.92B network) and its one real revenue line, Intents, is sub-scale. The value case is the agent economy NEAR is positioning to settle. No cash-flow history can anchor that, so I build it top-down: agents, rail share, NEAR share, payment count, ticket size, take rate. I value the resulting cash flows two ways and blend them 50/50 across a five-state adoption tree. The first is a ten-year DCF at a CAPM rate from NEAR's own 1,516-day beta to BTC. The second is a terminal-year multiple, Bitwise's method, which I replicate to the dollar and bridge to my inputs.

Floor and path: core DCF and live L1 relative value. The same DCF on today's token-holder cash (Intents buybacks, burn, perps fees) gives the no-agent floor (\$0.41). Market cap over ecosystem fees against eight live L1

peers gives the near-term path (\$2.58–\$3.16 base, \$4.35 weighted). They set the entry zone and the value if the agent rail never arrives. They do not set the target.

Looser than house settings. Relative to my house settings, this report runs a ten-year explicit horizon, 4.5% terminal growth blended 50/50 with a 25x exit multiple, a 10% expense haircut on agent revenue, and credit for half the last-disclosed Foundation treasury. Each choice is flagged in the model and tested in Section 4.

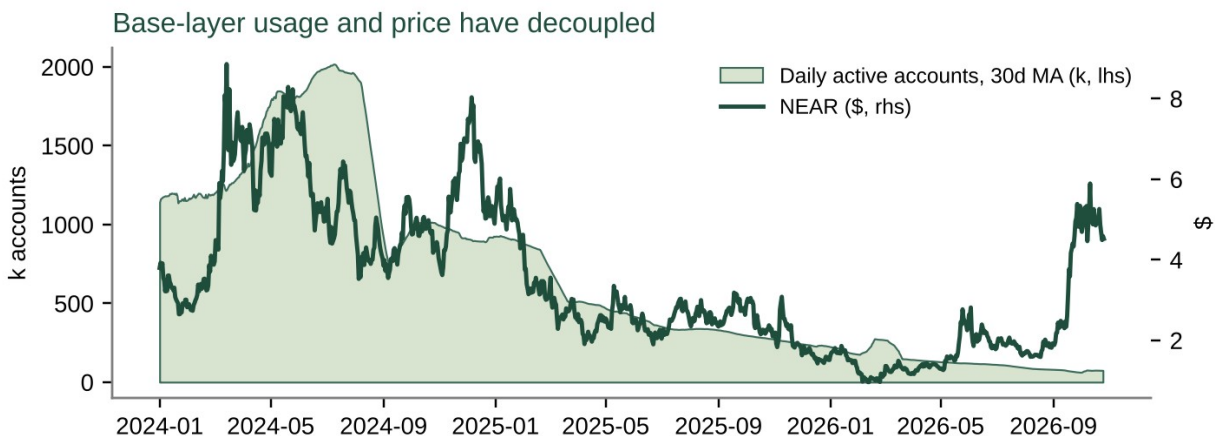
Dependency chain. Cycle timing carries forward from my HYPE report (19 May 2026: BTC trough Q3 2026) and the Sold Out series. Sold Out bought \$59,600 on 1 July; the 22 September update marked \$86,000 with the 50-week MA reclaimed. I treat the trough as printed; BTC is \$80,131 at this pull, 34% above the July entry. The 12-month window is early recovery, and the five-year mark (October 2031) sits after a presumed 2029 peak.

1. Business Overview and Protocol Architecture

What NEAR Is

NEAR is a sharded proof-of-stake L1 live since October 2020. The current architecture (Nightshade 2.0) uses stateless validation: chunk validators check state witnesses without holding full shard state. That keeps hardware requirements flat across an active set of 381 validators. The chain runs 10 shards. NearBlocks reports a 0.58-second average block time and roughly 1.2-second finality. Dynamic resharding shipped in June 2026, so a shard that crosses a state-size threshold now splits deterministically without validator coordination, alongside post-quantum signature support. Stake is reasonably distributed: a Nakamoto coefficient of 10 at the one-third threshold, with the top five pools holding 21.1%.

Throughput has never been NEAR's constraint; demand for its blockspace has. Daily active accounts on the base layer averaged 74k over the last 30 days, against 547k in the prior-year window. Daily transactions fell from 6.0M to 0.8M over the same comparison. The traffic that left was largely low-value app activity (HOT, Kaiching, Sweat). The price now tracks Intents settlement, and base-layer usage no longer explains it.



Source: NearBlocks indexer (active accounts), Coinbase (price). 30-day moving average.

Leadership and Governance

Illia Polosukhin co-founded NEAR with Alexander Skidanov and has run the NEAR Foundation as CEO since late 2023. He co-authored the 2017 Transformer paper, which anchors the AI narrative. The organization spans the Foundation (treasury, grants, ecosystem), core protocol engineering, and NEAR AI (confidential inference and agents), with roughly 100 people across them. The project raised \$607M across six rounds. Three Arrows co-led the \$150M January 2022 round, and Alameda and FTX Ventures were early backers; all three later collapsed. That legacy distribution is fully vested and circulating.

Governance moved to House of Stake in late 2025. veNEAR time-locks stake for voting weight; 483 accounts held veNEAR at last count, so on-chain governance is thin. The two decisions that matter for this report both came out of

that process: the June 2025 vote that halved max inflation from 5% to 2.5% (activated October 2025), and the 3 August 2026 discussion proposal for a 30M NEAR protocol sovereign fund.

The Product Stack That Now Drives the Token

NEAR Intents. A user deposits into the verifier contract (intents.near), which credits an on-chain ledger. Solvers compete through a message bus to fill the intent, and settlement is atomic on NEAR. Withdrawals leave through bridges (Omni, chain-signature MPC) to about 35 chains. To the user it is a no-KYC, cross-chain swap rail with native assets on both sides; BTC, ZEC and stablecoin routes dominate. Intents settled **\$32.5B** over the last twelve months and leads every cross-chain venue on DefiLlama by fees: \$53.7M against THORChain's \$20.0M, Chainflip's \$14.5M, LI.FI's \$12.0M and deBridge's \$6.7M.

Where the money is made. The protocol fee itself is 0.0001%, a hundredth of a basis point. The revenue is distribution margin: the 1Click API charges 20–25 bps on standard pairs and 1 bp on stablecoin and same-asset routes, keeps half of partner app fees, and keeps half of any quote improvement. Over the 30 days to 26 September, users paid 14.9 bps gross and NEAR retained 24.7% of it (Phemex). DefiLlama's adapter for the 30 days to 25 October shows 16.4 bps gross and 32% retained, or 5.3 bps of capture. I cannot separate mix from pricing in one month of data, so the forecast does not move on it. The structure matters for durability: a protocol toll is hard to route around, while a distribution margin competes with every wallet, aggregator and exchange that can bypass the 1Click front end.

Confidential Intents and perps. Confidential Intents (May 2026) hide size, direction and counterparties inside a confidential shard. NEAR's Q3 report (19 October) puts Confidential Intents TVL near \$160M, up 463%. On 21 September NEAR launched confidential perpetuals over more than 50 Hyperliquid markets at up to 40x. Execution and the exchange fee sit on Hyperliquid; NEAR earns a builder or front-end fee, which DefiLlama tracks at about \$0.1M so far. The September catalyst accrues mostly to HYPE holders: NEAR supplies distribution and privacy, and Hyperliquid books the trade and the fee.

NEAR AI. Confidential inference runs in TEEs, alongside IronClaw agents and a private chat product, with around 40 hosted models. Since 30 July users can pay by staking: staked NEAR divided by 100 sets a monthly dollar credit for agent hosting, and inference consumes the staking yield. That locks NEAR and is a genuine demand sink, but inflation pays for the compute and none of it reaches holders as cash.

How NEAR Makes Money

Revenue line	LTM (\$mm)	To holders?	Mechanism
Base-layer gas	1.23	Mostly	70% burned by rule (DefiLlama realized: 70%); remainder to receiving contract
Intents gross fees	53.7	No	User-paid; ~75% to solvers, wallets, distributors
Intents protocol revenue	8.85	Yes	Fee switch 23 Feb 2026; routed to market purchases of NEAR
Confidential perps builder fees	0.10	Assumed	near.com front end on Hyperliquid; launched 21 Sep
NEAR AI staking payments	n/a	No	Staking yield converted to compute credits; demand sink, not revenue
Token-holder cash flow	9.82		Against \$148.0M of issuance at spot: 6.6% coverage

Sources: DefiLlama (fees/revenue), Phemex Academy fee analysis (30d to 26 Sep 2026), revenue.near.org. LTM = twelve months to 25 Oct 2026.

Balance Sheet and Capital Structure

No debt. On-chain supply is 1,310.03M NEAR with all vesting finished in October 2025, so market cap equals FDV. Issuance is 2.5% a year, all of it to validators and delegators (protocol_reward_rate is 0 on-chain). The active set stakes 45.4% of supply; aggregators report about 47% including pools outside the active set. About 113.2M NEAR sits in pools set to 100% commission, the signature of self-delegated or protocol-owned stake (several carry an "svrn" prefix). Excluding those, stake-weighted commission is 5.67%.

The Foundation last disclosed its treasury in January 2024: \$285M cash, 305M NEAR and \$70M of investments. There has been no report in the 33 months since. I credit zero non-NEAR treasury to equity value and treat the cash as funding development over the forecast horizon; adding the full \$355M would add \$0.27 a token. Foundation-held NEAR is already inside total supply. The buyback wallets hold 3.7M NEAR in total, which is 11% of one year's issuance.

1 October: The Intents Exploit, and the AML Surface

On 1 October a bug in how the Omni deposit and withdrawal system interacted with the Intents contract allowed irregular withdrawals of \$3.8M from a BNB Chain hot wallet. Services paused on eleven networks. The attacker returned the funds a day later, NEAR committed to full reimbursement, and the patch is in. The direct loss is immaterial. The incident puts the revenue engine's attack surface in the bridge layer, historically the most-exploited component in crypto, and it forced a pause in revenue.

Compliance exposure gets less attention. Intents has no account opening and no KYC, and it gives one-hop access to shielded ZEC. Indago Labs has documented the NEYRO/Aurum Ponzi proceeds (subject of actions by Poland's KNF, France's AMF and Hong Kong's SFC) moving Ethereum to NEAR to TRON through Intents. NEAR publishes a compliance policy and runs a law-enforcement channel. But the asset now sits in a US ETF, and its revenue engine is the kind of rail that FinCEN and OFAC have pursued before. I carry this as a low-probability, high-severity risk.

2. Framework Build: Supply, Cash Flow, Forecast

Supply: The Halving Is Real and Verified On-Chain

Archival RPC samples of header.total_supply show annualized growth of 4.98–5.05% in every interval through 26 October 2025, and 2.46–2.54% in every interval since. Burn and buybacks are not yet visible in the supply series: realized net growth tracks the 2.5% ceiling almost exactly. The forward path below converts projected burn and buyback dollars to tokens at spot. Retired tokens remain staked or locked by the buyback multisig and are treated as an offset to float.

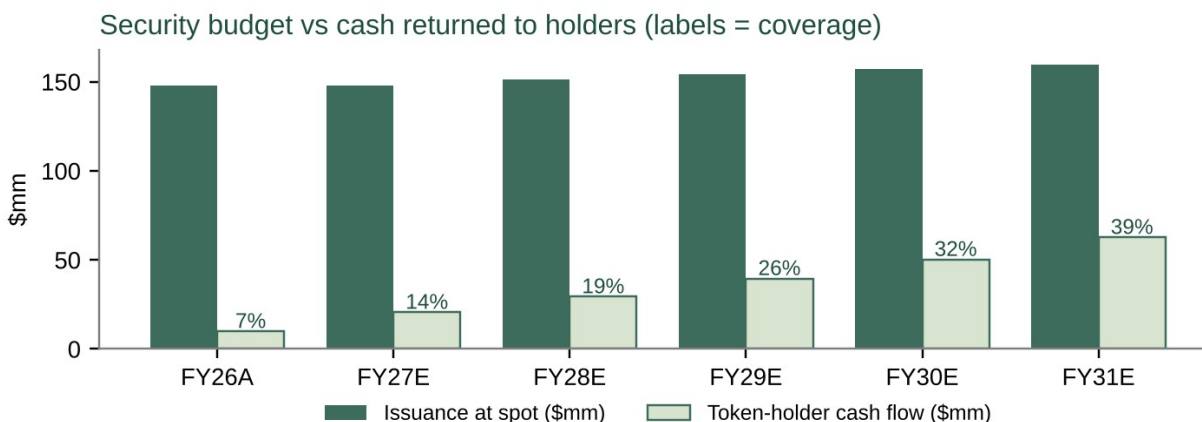
NEAR mm	FY2026A	FY2027E	FY2028E	FY2029E	FY2030E	FY2031E
Beginning supply	1,278.1	1,310.0	1,338.2	1,365.2	1,390.5	1,414.2
Gross issuance (supply x max inflation)	–	32.8	33.5	34.1	34.8	35.4
Tokens burned (burn \$ / price)	–	-0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.3
Tokens bought back (Intents + perps \$ / price)	–	-4.3	-6.3	-8.5	-10.9	-13.6
Net change	31.9	28.2	27.0	25.4	23.6	21.4
Ending supply	1,310.0	1,338.2	1,365.2	1,390.5	1,414.2	1,435.6
Net inflation (on beginning supply)	2.50%	2.15%	2.01%	1.86%	1.70%	1.52%

FY = Oct–Sep. FY2026A is realized supply from archival RPC (26 Oct 2025 to pull date). Buyback and burn tokens at spot; a lower price path retires more tokens.

The Security Budget Problem

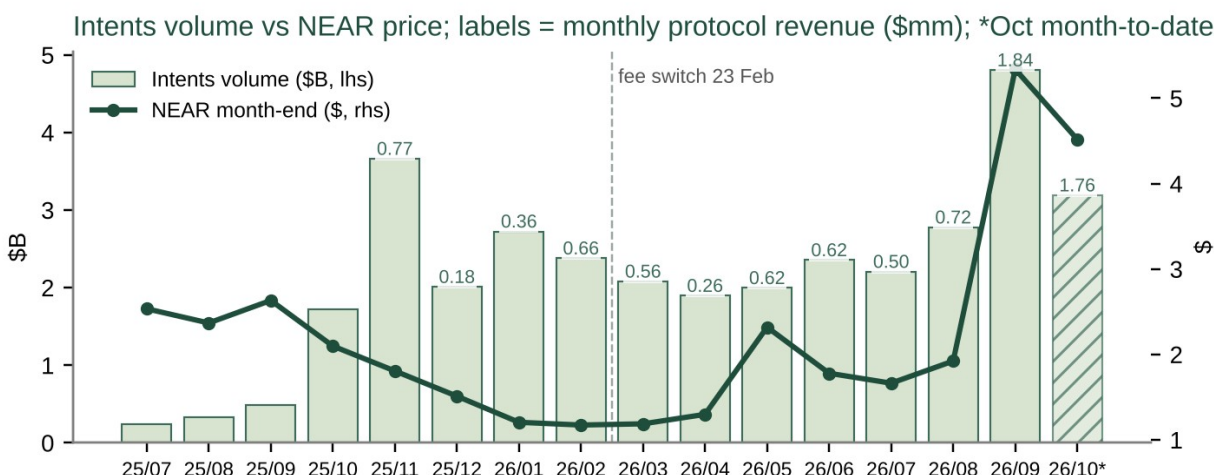
At spot, NEAR pays \$148M a year in dilution for security. Holders received \$9.8M in cash. For net supply to stop growing, Intents would need \$462B of annual volume at FY2027E capture. That is 14.2x the trailing year, 8.0x the September run-rate, and 66% of everything Uniswap settled over the last year. Because issuance is paid in tokens, the dollar breakeven rises one-for-one with price; the rally from \$1.92 at the end of August raised it by roughly 2.4x.

Staking softens this for a staked holder: 5.51% gross, 5.20% after commission, a 2.6% real gain in network share. An unstaked holder loses 2.4% a year. An NRR holder keeps about 67% of rewards and pays 0.75%, which nets out near 0.4% real. The ETF wrapper roughly offsets dilution and adds no yield.



Issuance at the current price; token-holder cash flow from the base forecast. Source: model, Supply & Staking and Intents Build sheets.

Intents: Growth, Capture and the Forecast



Source: DefiLlama (near-intents volume, fees, revenue), Coinbase. Revenue labels in \$mm.

Volume compounded roughly 20x from July 2025 to September 2026, unevenly. Q1 and Q2 2026 ran at \$7.2B and \$6.2B after a November 2025 spike that coincided with the ZEC rally, then September printed \$4.8B. October has slowed: \$3.2B in the first 25 days, a \$47B annualized pace against September's \$58B. Capture moved the other way. Monthly capture since the fee switch ranged from 1.4 to 3.8 bps through September (3.13 bps across July–September), and October month-to-date is 5.5 bps. I set FY2027E volume at \$55B. That is +69% on the trailing year, +40% on the Q3 run-rate, and 14% above the trailing-30-day pace. Growth then decelerates through 45%, 35%, 25% and 20%. Gross fees compress from 14.5 to 13.0 bps as stablecoin mix and competition from Relay, LI.FI, Across and CEX rails bite. Capture drifts from 3.2 to 3.6 bps as near.com takes more first-party flow. October argues for higher capture and lower volume than the forecast. I hold both until a second month confirms.

Two choices in the cash-flow line need flagging. First, I route perps builder revenue to holders, starting at \$2M and growing 75% a year; that is speculative and generous. Second, a growing share of revenue is consumed by network expense, rising from zero to 20% by FY2031E. The sovereign-fund proposal states that revenue should fund validator, MPC and public-goods programs. That turns part of the buyback into an operating cost.

Five-Year Forecast (\$mm unless noted; FY = Oct–Sep)

Line item	FY2026A	FY2027E	FY2028E	FY2029E	FY2030E	FY2031E
Intents volume (\$B)	32.5	55.0	79.8	107.7	134.6	161.5
growth	–	69%	45%	35%	25%	20%

Line item	FY2026A	FY2027E	FY2028E	FY2029E	FY2030E	FY2031E
Gross fee rate (bps)	16.5	14.5	14.1	13.8	13.4	13.0
Intents gross fees (\$mm)	53.7	79.8	112.6	148.0	180.0	209.9
NEAR capture (bps of volume)	2.72	3.20	3.30	3.40	3.50	3.60
Intents protocol revenue to buybacks (\$mm)	8.9	17.6	26.3	36.6	47.1	58.1
Base-layer gas fees (\$mm)	1.23	1.36	1.49	1.64	1.80	1.98
Base-layer burn (\$mm, token-routed)	0.86	0.95	1.04	1.15	1.26	1.39
Other app-layer fees (\$mm, not token-routed)	5.5	5.5	6.0	6.6	7.3	8.0
Confidential perps / builder revenue (\$mm, token-routed)	0.1	2.0	3.5	6.1	10.7	18.8
Ecosystem fees (\$mm) = gross Intents + gas + other + perps	60.5	88.6	123.7	162.4	199.8	238.7
Token-routed revenue (\$mm) = Intents rev + burn + perps	9.8	20.5	30.9	43.9	59.1	78.3
Share consumed by network expense	0%	0%	5%	10%	15%	20%
Token-holder cash flow (\$mm) [FCF analog]	9.8	20.5	29.3	39.5	50.2	62.6

Token-holder cash flow is the free-cash-flow analog: zero capex and no protocol-level tax. FY2026A capture is understated because the fee switch was live for only seven months. Source: model, Intents Build sheet.

3. Valuation I: Core Cash Flows and Relative Value

Discount Rate

The risk-free rate is the 10-year UST at 5.00% (Treasury par curve, 23 October). That is 60 bps above the 4.40% input in my May HYPE model. Beta is 1.378 from OLS on 1,516 daily log-returns against BTC (Coinbase, September 2022 to date). With a 5.5% ERP, the cost of equity, and therefore the WACC, is 12.58%; there is no debt. Beta is not stable across windows. It ranges from 1.15 over 180 days to 1.45 over two years, and the 180-day correlation is 0.37. The low short-window correlation says the September move was idiosyncratic, so I use the full-history estimate.

Input	Value	Basis
Risk-free (10Y UST)	5.00%	US Treasury daily par yield curve, 23 Oct 2026
Equity risk premium	5.50%	Damodaran long-run; same input as the HYPE and CRCL models
Beta vs BTC (full history)	1.378	OLS daily log-returns, n = 1,516; 2y 1.45, 1y 1.27, 180d 1.15
Cost of equity = WACC	12.58%	No debt
Terminal growth	4.0%	Aggregate cash flow; per-token 3.85% after commission leakage
Holder dilution (staked)	0.14%	2.5% issuance x 5.67% commission: only operator take leaves the holder class

Discounted Cash Flow

Issuance is mostly a transfer from non-stakers to stakers, and current holders as a class own the future supply. Only validator commission leaks out of that class. I therefore divide aggregate cash flow by a supply that grows at the leakage rate (0.14% a year), and show the unstaked-holder value as a memo. The result is \$0.41 a token. Terminal value is 75% of it, at an implied 11.9x exit multiple on FY2031E cash flow. An unstaked holder is worth \$0.31.

	FY2027E	FY2028E	FY2029E	FY2030E	FY2031E
Token-holder cash flow (\$mm)	20.5	29.3	39.5	50.2	62.6
Discount factor	0.888	0.789	0.701	0.622	0.553

	FY2027E	FY2028E	FY2029E	FY2030E	FY2031E
Per-token cash flow (\$)	\$0.0157	\$0.0223	\$0.0300	\$0.0381	\$0.0475
PV per token (\$)	\$0.0139	\$0.0176	\$0.0210	\$0.0237	\$0.0262

DCF component	\$ / token	Note
Sum of PV, FY2027E–FY2031E	\$0.103	25% of value
PV of terminal value	\$0.312	Gordon growth; implied 11.9x exit
Net treasury credited	\$0.000	Last disclosure Jan 2024; not credited
DCF value per token	\$0.415	–90.8% vs \$4.52
Memo: unstaked holder	\$0.309	Full 2.5% dilution

Reverse DCF: The Option the Market Is Pricing

Hold capture, path shape and WACC fixed, and solve for the Intents cash flow that justifies \$4.52. The answer is 14.0x the base path: \$2,266B of Intents volume in FY2031E. That is 70x the trailing year and 3.2x Uniswap's last twelve months, with \$669M a year reaching holders. If NEAR somehow kept 10 bps instead of 3.6, the volume requirement falls to \$816B, still 25x today. Human swap flow does not get there. Section 4 sizes agent payments as the alternative source.

Sensitivity

Matrix 1: DCF value per token by WACC and terminal growth

WACC \ g	2.0%	3.0%	4.0% (base)	5.0%	6.0%
8%	\$0.65	\$0.76	\$0.93	\$1.19	\$1.71
10%	\$0.48	\$0.53	\$0.61	\$0.71	\$0.86
11%	\$0.42	\$0.46	\$0.52	\$0.59	\$0.69
12%	\$0.37	\$0.41	\$0.45	\$0.50	\$0.57
12.6% (base)	\$0.35	\$0.38	\$0.41	\$0.46	\$0.52
14%	\$0.31	\$0.33	\$0.35	\$0.38	\$0.42
16%	\$0.26	\$0.27	\$0.29	\$0.31	\$0.33
18%	\$0.22	\$0.23	\$0.24	\$0.25	\$0.27

Shading vs \$4.52: green at or above current, amber 50–100%, red below 50%. No cell reaches the current price. Even an 8% WACC with 6% terminal growth returns \$1.71.

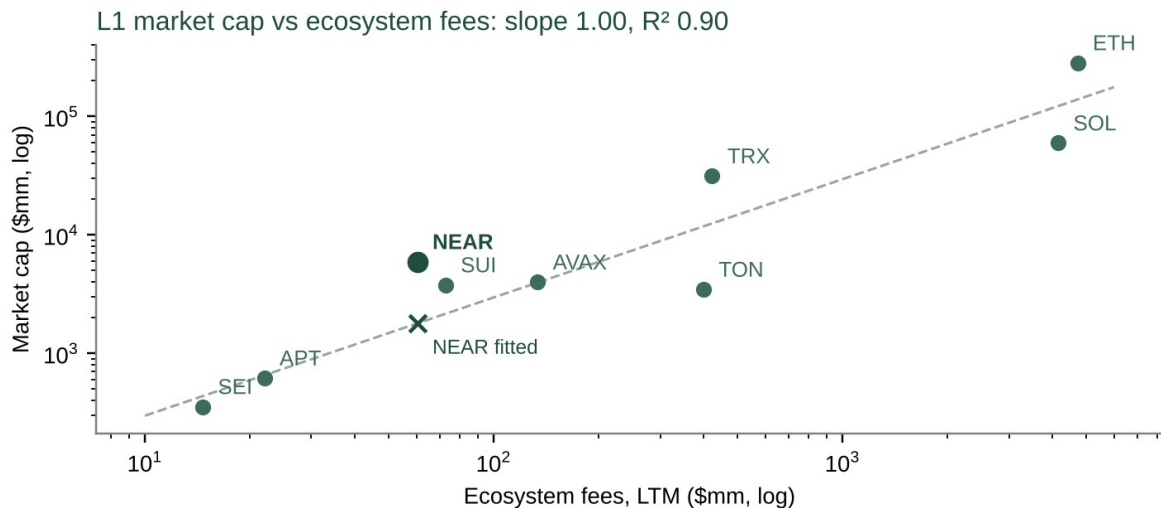
Matrix 2: DCF value per token by FY2031E Intents volume and capture

Volume \ capture	2.0 bps	3.6 bps (base)	5.0 bps	7.5 bps	10.0 bps	15.0 bps
\$80B	\$0.19	\$0.26	\$0.32	\$0.42	\$0.53	\$0.75
\$161B (base)	\$0.27	\$0.41	\$0.54	\$0.76	\$0.97	\$1.41
\$300B	\$0.42	\$0.68	\$0.91	\$1.32	\$1.72	\$2.54
\$500B	\$0.64	\$1.07	\$1.45	\$2.13	\$2.81	\$4.16
\$1,000B	\$1.18	\$2.05	\$2.81	\$4.16	\$5.51	\$8.22
\$1,500B	\$1.72	\$3.02	\$4.16	\$6.19	\$8.22	\$12.28
\$2,000B	\$2.27	\$4.00	\$5.51	\$8.22	\$10.93	\$16.34
\$3,000B	\$3.35	\$5.95	\$8.22	\$12.28	\$16.34	\$24.47

Scales the full FY2027E–FY2031E Intents path to the FY2031E endpoint. The current price clears only in the bottom-right corner: \$1T of annual volume at 10+ bps, \$1.5T at 7.5+, \$2T at 5+, or \$3T at the base capture path.

Comparable Analysis: L1 Peers

No L1 clears a DCF on its fee capture, so relative value sets the near-term price. I use market cap over ecosystem fees (chain gas plus app-layer fees, DefiLlama, LTM), the cleanest cross-chain measure of activity users pay for. Across eight peers the log-log fit has a slope of 1.00 and R^2 of 0.90: the market prices L1s close to proportionally on fees. NEAR sits 3.3x above the line. It trades above SUI and AVAX on a fraction of their fee base. On 31 August, before the rally, it traded at 1.6x today's peer median. I anchor the core-only path at 1.5x. Following the computed figure would let the anchor rise mechanically as peers de-rate. At 1.5x it credits the Intents leadership the market paid for before the rally and nothing for positioning since.



Source: CoinGecko (market caps), DefiLlama (chain and app fees, LTM). HYPE excluded from the fit (exchange economics).

Asset	MC (\$B)	FDV (\$B)	Eco fees (\$mm)	MC / eco fees	MC / eco rev	MC / TVL	MC / stables
NEAR	5.92	5.92	60.4	98.0x	531x	28.1x	45.8x
SOL	59.61	64.32	4,151.7	14.4x	41x	10.4x	3.9x
ETH	283.88	283.88	4,717.3	60.2x	305x	5.9x	2.0x
TRX	31.39	31.39	422.9	74.2x	89x	5.8x	0.3x
SUI	3.77	9.16	72.7	51.9x	148x	8.0x	8.8x
AVAX	3.98	4.22	133.6	29.8x	111x	7.1x	2.9x
TON	3.46	6.43	399.4	8.7x	45x	76.0x	5.5x
APT	0.62	0.84	22.0	28.0x	82x	14.6x	0.7x
SEI	0.35	0.52	14.6	24.1x	134x	12.3x	8.0x
HYPE	17.64	75.77	1,510.6	11.7x	21x	7.4x	2.6x
Peer median				28.9x	100x	9.2x	3.4x
NEAR / median				3.4x	5.3x	3.1x	13.4x

HYPE is a memo row, excluded from medians. Peer FDV multiples run higher for SUI, TON, APT and SEI because of unvested supply; NEAR is fully diluted, so MC is the fair basis. Regime flag: 2021 and Q1 2024 L1 multiples are not used as anchors. That retail-beta, pre-ETF regime has not returned, and the peer set has de-rated 45–85% year on year on similar fee bases.

NEAR implied by	Peer multiple	NEAR metric (\$mm)	Implied \$/token	vs current
MC / eco fees, LTM	28.9x	60.4	\$1.33	–70.5%
MC / eco fees, 30d annualized	28.9x	86.9	\$1.92	–57.6%

NEAR implied by	Peer multiple	NEAR metric (\$mm)	Implied \$/token	vs current
MC / eco fees, FY2027E base	28.9x	88.6	\$1.95	-56.8%
MC / eco revenue, LTM	99.6x	11.2	\$0.85	-81.2%
MC / TVL	9.2x	210.5	\$1.48	-67.3%
MC / stablecoins	3.4x	129.3	\$0.34	-92.5%
Log-log regression fit			\$1.36	-69.8%

Cross-Check: Cross-Chain Venues

Valued only as a swap-settlement venue, NEAR trades at 12.3% of annualized Intents volume, 7.5x RUNE's ratio and roughly 22x the venue median. Even at RUNE's multiple on the trailing-30-day run-rate, Intents alone supports \$0.61. The gap is the L1 monetary premium plus the agent option, which Section 4 values directly.

Venue	MC (\$mm)	Fees (\$mm)	Volume (\$B)	MC / volume	MC / fees	MC / revenue
RUNE	208	20.0	12.6	1.65%	10.4x	67x
FLIP	27	14.5	5.3	0.50%	1.9x	9x
DBR	104	6.7	n/a	n/a	15.4x	15x
JUP	925	33.3	292.7	0.32%	27.8x	28x
UNI	4,435	927.4	701.4	0.63%	4.8x	75x
NEAR (full MC on Intents)	5,919	53.7	32.5	18.19%	110.3x	668x
Venue median				0.57%	10.4x	28x

Source: CoinGecko, DefiLlama (LTM). NEAR row on LTM volume (12.3% on the 30d annualized run-rate). DBR volume not exposed; JUP volume carried from the 4 October pull; JUP fees are aggregator-only and understate its revenue base.

4. Valuation II: The AI-Agent Payments Option

Why Size It Top-Down

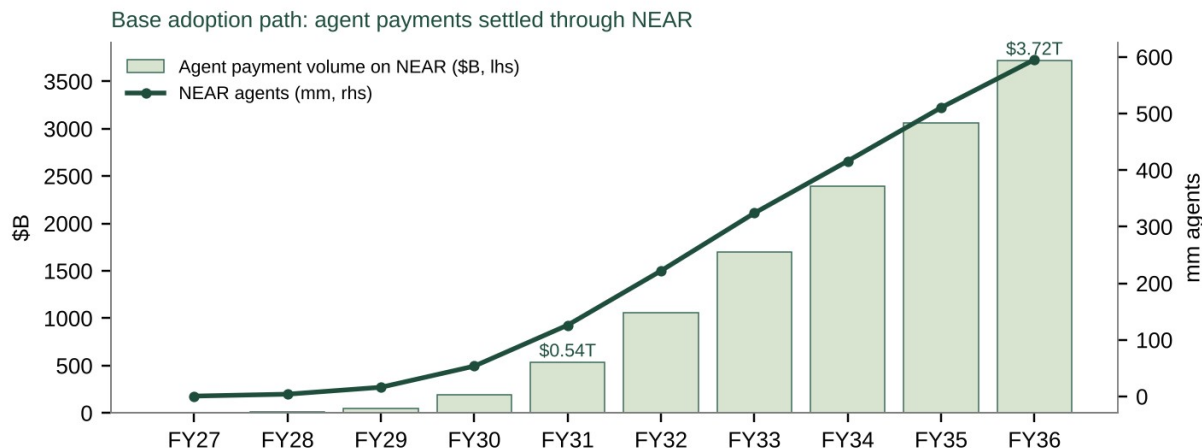
No swap business reaches the volume Section 3 requires. The bull case rests on software agents, transacting for people and firms, needing a settlement rail that is chain-agnostic, programmatic and cheap per transaction. NEAR has more of that stack live than any L1. Intents abstracts the chain, chain signatures let a NEAR account sign transactions natively on other chains, NEAR AI hosts agents in TEEs, and staking-based payments already let an agent's compute be funded from yield. Bitwise's 2030 base case (\$155.94 as I replicate it, against a published \$155.85) sizes this top-down. I adopt its architecture and replace its inputs.

Base adoption path (selected years)

Driver	FY2027E	FY2029E	FY2031E	FY2033E	FY2036E
Global AI agents	0.8B	4.5B	14.0B	22.5B	31.0B
Share settling on crypto rails	2%	6%	12%	18%	24%
NEAR share of on-chain agent settlement	4.0%	6.0%	7.5%	8.0%	8.0%
NEAR agents (mm)	0.6	16.2	126.0	324.0	595.2
Transactions per agent per year	250	550	850	1,050	1,250
Agent payment volume on NEAR (\$B)	1	45	536	1,701	3,720
Holder take rate (bps)	8	9	10	10	10
Agent fee revenue (\$mm)	0.6	40.1	535.5	1,701.0	3,720.0
NEAR AI / infra revenue (\$mm)	0.3	8.1	63.0	162.0	297.6
Agent-layer holder cash flow (\$mm)	0.9	43.4	538.7	1,676.7	3,615.8

Driver	FY2027E	FY2029E	FY2031E	FY2033E	FY2036E
Memo: implied average TPS from agent payments	5	283	3,396	10,788	23,592

Global agents, crypto-rail share and NEAR share multiply to NEAR agents; volume = agents x payments x \$5 ticket. Holder cash flow is agent fees plus \$0.50 of NEAR AI/infra revenue per agent, less a 10% network-expense haircut. Agent payments are modeled as incremental to Intents swaps. Source: model, Agent TAM sheet.



My FY2031E endpoint sits below Bitwise's. It has 126M NEAR agents against their 328M, reached a year later; 850 payments a year against 1,000; and a 10 bps take against 30. Ten bps is roughly 3x NEAR's realized Intents capture today and about \$0.005 on a \$5 payment, cheap against cards and pricey against a raw stablecoin transfer on Solana or Base. The spread has to be earned through abstraction. The path requires 3,396 average TPS of agent payments by FY2031E and 23,592 by FY2036E, against about 10 TPS of total activity today. Dynamic resharding is designed for that load and untested at it.

Ten-Year Blended DCF

Core cash flow (Section 2) runs through FY2031E and then fades linearly to 4.5% terminal growth by FY2036E. Agent-layer cash flow sits on top. Discounting stays at 12.58% and holder dilution at 0.14%. The terminal value blends Gordon growth with a 25x exit multiple, an implied 18.8x on FY2036E cash. On base adoption, NEAR is worth \$20.11, of which \$19.24 is the agent layer. Terminal value is 81% of the total, because cash flow is near zero for three years and \$3.7B by year ten. On the same looser settings with the agent layer at zero, the value is \$0.87; the difference from the \$0.41 core DCF is horizon and terminal treatment only.

\$mm unless noted	FY2027E	FY2029E	FY2031E	FY2033E	FY2036E
Core cash flow (Intents Build; FY32-36 fade)	20.5	39.5	62.6	88.1	112.5
Agent-layer cash flow (Agent TAM)	0.9	43.4	538.7	1,676.7	3,615.8
Total token-holder cash flow	21.4	82.9	601.3	1,764.8	3,728.4
Per-token cash flow (\$)	\$0.016	\$0.063	\$0.456	\$1.334	\$2.806
PV per token (\$)	\$0.014	\$0.044	\$0.252	\$0.582	\$0.858

Top-Down Cross-Check and the Bridge to Bitwise

FY2030E / FY2031E	Bitwise (YE 2030)	This report (FY2031E)
NEAR agents (mm)	328	126
Transactions per agent	1,000	850
Agent payment volume (\$B)	1,640	536
Holder take (bps)	30	10

FY2030E / FY2031E	Bitwise (YE 2030)	This report (FY2031E)
Infra + model execution (\$mm)	101	63
Core Intents/burn/perps cash flow (\$mm)	0	63
Holder revenue (\$mm)	5,021	601
Multiple (x)	50x	35x
Supply (NEAR mm)	1,610	1,436
Year-end price (\$)	\$155.94	\$14.66
PV today at WACC (\$)	\$94.35	\$8.11
Implied CAGR from current price	131%	27%

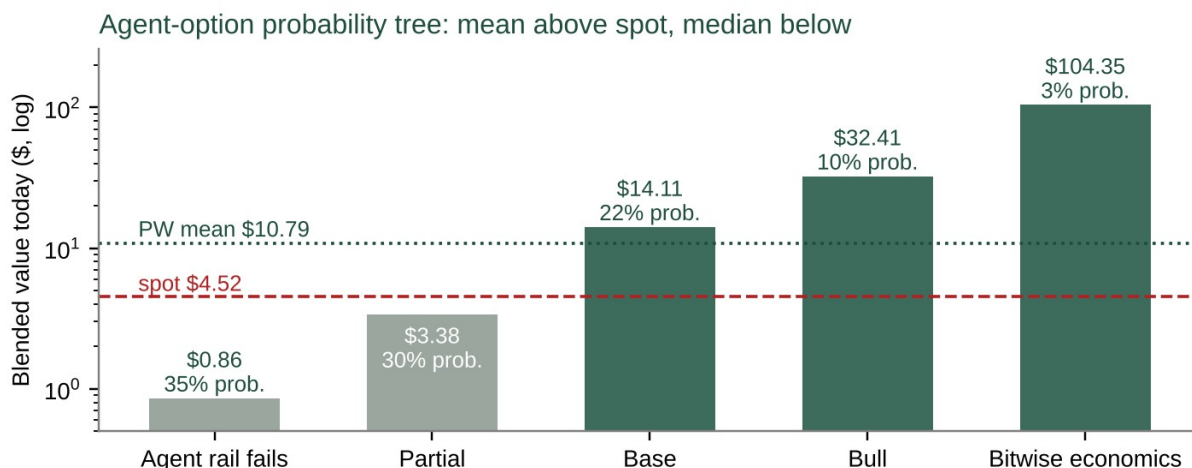
Bitwise inputs per press coverage of the 39-page report (TokenPost, CoinGape); the formula reproduces the published \$155.85 within \$0.10. Bitwise's 1.61B supply implies ~5% a year of issuance; on-chain is 2.5%.

Bridge, one input at a time	Price after step	Change
Bitwise base	\$155.94	
Agents x share to mine	\$59.90	-\$96.04
Transactions per agent to mine	\$51.10	-\$8.80
Ticket size to mine	\$51.10	\$0.00
Take rate to mine	\$17.84	-\$33.26
Infra revenue per agent to mine	\$18.59	\$0.75
Expense share to mine	\$16.73	-\$1.86
Add core Intents cash flow	\$18.67	\$1.94
Multiple to mine	\$13.07	-\$5.60
Supply to on-chain path	\$14.66	\$1.59

Agent count takes \$96 off Bitwise's number and take rate takes \$33; multiple, supply, expense and the core line net to a few dollars. A higher target needs more agents or a higher take, and those are the two inputs to diligence.

The Probability Tree

State	Definition	FY31 agents (mm)	Take (bps)	DCF (\$)	Top-down PV (\$)	Blended (\$)	Prob.
Agent rail fails	Platforms and other chains capture agent payments	0	10	\$0.87	\$0.84	\$0.86	35%
Partial	Secondary rail; ~1/4 of base agents, 8 bps	30	8	\$4.53	\$2.23	\$3.38	30%
Base	Agent TAM base path	126	10	\$20.11	\$8.11	\$14.11	22%
Bull	Primary cross-chain agent rail	250	12	\$46.69	\$18.13	\$32.41	10%
Bitwise economics	Bitwise agent count, 30 bps	328	30	\$151.16	\$57.55	\$104.35	3%



The probability-weighted blended value is \$10.79: \$15.29 on the DCF leg and \$6.29 on the top-down leg, +139% against spot. The median state is Partial at \$3.38, below spot. The probability that value exceeds spot is 35%. The Bull and Bitwise states hold 13% of the weight and 59% of the expected value. Position size has to survive the 65% of outcomes below spot.

Implied probability. Collapse the tree to Fail or Base and solve for the probability that justifies today's price: 28%, against my 35% on Base-or-better. At the \$2.58–\$3.16 entry zone the implied probability falls to 13%–17%, roughly half my weight.

Sensitivity

Blended DCF value (base path scaled) by FY2031E NEAR agents and holder take rate

Agents (mm) \ bps	3.5	5.0	10.0 (base)	15.0	20.0	30.0
0	\$0.87	\$0.87	\$0.87	\$0.87	\$0.87	\$0.87
15	\$1.67	\$2.01	\$3.16	\$4.30	\$5.45	\$7.74
30	\$2.47	\$3.16	\$5.45	\$7.74	\$10.03	\$14.61
60	\$4.07	\$5.45	\$10.03	\$14.61	\$19.19	\$28.36
126 (base)	\$7.60	\$10.49	\$20.11	\$29.73	\$39.36	\$58.60
200	\$11.56	\$16.14	\$31.41	\$46.69	\$61.96	\$92.51
328	\$18.40	\$25.91	\$50.96	\$76.01	\$101.06	\$151.16
500	\$27.59	\$39.05	\$77.23	\$115.42	\$153.60	\$229.97

3.5 bps is near realized Intents capture (3.1 bps in Q3); 30 bps is Bitwise. Shading vs \$4.52: green at or above, amber 50–100%, red below 50%. At base adoption the value clears spot at any take above about 2 bps.

Two-state expected value (blended) by probability of success and success scale vs base (agents x take)

P(success) \ scale	0.25x	0.50x	1x	2x	4x	8x
5%	\$1.02	\$1.19	\$1.52	\$2.18	\$3.51	\$6.16
10%	\$1.19	\$1.52	\$2.18	\$3.51	\$6.16	\$11.46
20%	\$1.52	\$2.18	\$3.51	\$6.16	\$11.46	\$22.06
30%	\$1.85	\$2.84	\$4.83	\$8.81	\$16.76	\$32.66
40%	\$2.18	\$3.51	\$6.16	\$11.46	\$22.06	\$43.26
50%	\$2.51	\$4.17	\$7.48	\$14.11	\$27.36	\$53.87
65%	\$3.01	\$5.16	\$9.47	\$18.08	\$35.31	\$69.77

Reads as: what probability of a given-sized success does \$4.52 require. At base scale (1.0x) the line sits near 28%; at Bitwise-like scale (8x) under 5% is enough.

On base adoption the blended DCF stays above spot across the full WACC and growth grid: \$9.49 at a 20% WACC and 3% growth, \$53.68 at 8% and 6%. Adoption and take rate drive the value, so the tree and the agents-by-take grid matter more than the discount rate.

5. Twelve-Month Price Target

Target Construction

The 12-month target rolls the probability-weighted fair value (\$10.79) forward one year at the required return less net staking yield (12.6% less 5.2%), giving \$11.59. The range runs from the top-down leg alone (\$6.75) to the DCF leg alone (\$16.42). Supply is 100% circulating, so FDV and circulating bases are identical. The target assumes the market converges on expected value within the year. For a right-skewed asset that is generous: markets tend to price the median until evidence moves it, and the first agent-volume evidence arrives in FY2028E on my path.

	Fair value today	12-mo target	vs spot	Basis
Blended (published)	\$10.79	\$11.59	+156%	50/50 DCF and top-down
DCF leg only	\$15.29	\$16.42	+263%	10-yr, terminal blend
Top-down leg only	\$6.29	\$6.75	+49%	35x FY2031E, discounted
Median state (Partial)	\$3.38	\$3.63	-20%	Disclosure, not target
Core only, no agents	\$0.41	\$4.35	-4%	DCF floor; L1 relative value 12-mo

The Near-Term Path: Positioning and Core Relative Value

Near-term positioning has changed since early October. NEAR closed at \$5.89 on 11 October and has given back 23%, and leverage came out with it. Aggregate futures OI (COINOTAG/FXStreet, 20 October) is \$429M at today's price, 7.3% of market cap against BTC's 3.8%, down from 13.5%. Seven-day Hyperliquid funding is 8.3% annualized, 2.7 points under the 11% baseline, after running at 33% in early October. Price sits 4.8% above its 50-day average. NRR has taken \$88.3M of net inflows over four straight weeks; I estimate AUM near \$77M, 1.3% of market cap and about 190 days of issuance. Most of the forced selling has cleared; the premium to peers has not. None of the agent option shows up in twelve months of fees, so near-term price is set by the core relative-value framework below, and that framework defines the entry zone.

Core (Intents-only) 12-month scenarios: FY2027E ecosystem fees x peer median x premium

Scenario	Methodology	FDV range (\$/token)	MC mid	Prob.
DEEP BEAR	Intents back to \$25B; bridge incident or AML action; premium collapses to 0.6x peer median.	\$0.44–\$0.54	\$0.7B	5%
BEAR	Intents holds near the Q3 run-rate (\$35B); NEAR re-rates to the peer median.	\$1.09–\$1.33	\$1.6B	18%
BASE	FY2027E Intents \$55B at 14.5 bps; pre-rally 1.5x premium; positioning premium decays.	\$2.58–\$3.16	\$3.8B	50%
BULL	Intents \$100B; confidential perps scale; a 2.25x forward premium holds (2.31x today).	\$7.14–\$8.72	\$10.6B	20%
TRANSFORMATIVE	Intents \$160B as default cross-chain rail; premium approaches 2.75x peer median.	\$14.00–\$17.12	\$20.8B	7%

Core probability-weighted value \$4.35 (-3.7%); live peer median 28.9x; forward supply 1,338.2M. This is the no-agent path, not the target.

The agent framework says the option is underpriced. The core business supports today's price only through its upside cases: its base is \$2.87, and the probability-weighted \$4.35 leans on the 27% I put on Bull and Transformative. In early October leverage held price above the core base case. Leverage has since cleared and price has held above

\$4.50, so the remaining premium no longer carries a funding cost. If the peer group keeps de-rating or Intents volume stays at October's pace, the core path points to \$2.58–\$3.16, and there the implied odds on base adoption fall to 13%–17%. I would own a starter position at spot and do most of the buying there. Waiting has a cost: a 1.38 beta to a 15% BTC year implies \$5.45, and with funding below baseline there is no positioning catalyst left to force price into the zone.

6. Five-Year Price Target: Cycle Framework

Cycle Assumptions

The October 2025 BTC high near \$126,000 was the cycle peak (HYPE, May 2026). The trough printed in Q3 2026 near \$59,600–64,000 (Sold Out, July; confirmed by the 22 September update). The April 2028 halving sets up a peak in roughly Q4 2029. The five-year mark in October 2031 lands in a post-peak drawdown or early recovery. That is why the top-down leg uses 35x holder revenue, not Bitwise's 50x, and why the DCF leg carries a terminal multiple of about 19x. Agent adoption is a secular curve. The multiple the market pays for it in October 2031 will still be a mid-cycle multiple. If cycle timing slips a year, the mark moves toward a peak, which is upside I leave out.

The five-year target is the blended fair value rolled forward five years at the required price appreciation: \$15.41, a 27.8% price CAGR before staking yield. The range runs from the top-down leg (\$8.98) to the DCF leg (\$21.83). The tree below shows the FY2031E year-end top-down price by state, which shows what each outcome implies for the 2031 price.

Five-Year Scenarios (October 2026 – October 2031)

State	Driver assumptions	FY2031E price (\$)	CAGR from spot	Prob.
Agent rail fails	Centralized platforms and stablecoin rails on other chains win agent payments. Core Intents only, 35x.	\$1.53	–19.5%	35%
Partial	NEAR a secondary agent rail: 30mm agents at 8 bps by FY2031E.	\$4.03	–2.3%	30%
Base	Agent TAM base: 126mm agents, 850 payments, \$5, 10 bps; \$536B agent volume in FY2031E.	\$14.66	+26.5%	22%
Bull	Primary cross-chain agent rail: 250mm agents at 12 bps.	\$32.79	+48.7%	10%
Bitwise economics	Bitwise's agent count a year late with their 30 bps take.	\$104.09	+87.3%	3%

Probability-weighted FY2031E top-down price \$11.37 (20.3% CAGR); median \$4.03. Core-only five-year cross-check (ecosystem-fee tree): \$8.19, 12.6% CAGR.

As at twelve months, the agent-layer expected value clears the 12.6% hurdle while the median outcome sits below today's price. The core tree alone reaches \$8.19 in five years, a 12.6% CAGR that matches the hurdle and no more, and only on the 27% I put on Bull and Transformative. Return above the hurdle comes from the agent layer: \$11.37–\$15.41 depending on method.

7. Key Risks to the Call

Risks are ordered by near-term bearing on the thesis. The top of the list is what kills the agent option or delays it past the holding period.

Risk	Severity	Probability	Assessment and mitigant
Agent payments settle elsewhere	HIGH	MED-HIGH	OpenAI and Stripe-style platform wallets, x402 on Base, Solana, Tron USDT and purpose-built payment chains all want this flow. The Fail state carries 35% and is worth \$0.86. Mitigant: NEAR is the only one of these with chain abstraction, agent hosting and cross-chain signing live today. No competitor has a moat yet. NEAR's lead is time to market, which a competitor with distribution can close.

Risk	Severity	Probability	Assessment and mitigant
Premium compression	HIGH	MEDIUM	Leverage has cleared: aggregate OI is 7.3% of market cap (13.5% in early October) and 7-day funding is below baseline. The exposure left is the 3.4x premium to peer fee multiples while the peer median de-rates (28.9x, from 32.7x in early October). The core framework marks twelve months at \$4.35. Mitigant: stage entry, with most buying in \$2.58–\$3.16.
Take-rate compression	HIGH	MEDIUM	NEAR's revenue is distribution margin. At 3.5 bps (near realized Q3 capture), base adoption is worth \$7.60 against \$20.11 at 10 bps. Watch capture in bps on Intents as the leading indicator.
Bridge and contract security	HIGH	MEDIUM	The 1 October Omni/Intents exploit (\$3.8M, returned) shows the revenue engine runs through bridges and hot wallets on 35 chains. A large loss would hit adoption odds and the multiple at once.
AML / sanctions action	HIGH	LOW-MED	No-KYC cross-chain rail with ZEC access and documented Ponzi-proceeds routing, now inside a US ETF. Enforcement against front ends or solvers would compress volume and push agent builders to permissioned rails.
Scale and execution	MEDIUM	LOW-MED	The base path needs ~3,396 TPS of agent payments by FY2031E and ~23,592 by FY2036E. Dynamic resharding is designed for this load and has no production test at it.
Double counting with Intents	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Agent payments are modeled as incremental to swaps. If agent flow is mostly cross-chain swaps through Intents, part of the core forecast is already this volume and the agent layer overstates.
Timing vs holding period	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	Agent fees stay under \$10M a year through FY2028E on my path. A market that prices the median can leave the stock below target for longer than a 12-month horizon.
Data attribution	LOW	MEDIUM	Intents fees, revenue and volume come from DefiLlama adapters; Bitwise inputs are from press summaries of the full report. NRR AUM is estimated from its reported share of supply; aggregate OI is a press figure.

8. Investment Conclusion

RATING: BUY | 12-Month: \$11.59 (\$6.75–\$16.42) | 5-Year: \$15.41 | Entry Zone: \$2.58–\$3.16 | Current: \$4.52

On today's cash flows NEAR is worth \$0.41. On its own peers' multiples it is worth \$1.33–\$1.95. Everything above that is the probability that NEAR becomes a settlement rail for AI-agent payments. Today's price implies 28%, and I put it at 35%. NEAR has the most complete agent stack of any L1, the leading cross-chain settlement venue by fees, a halved inflation schedule, a fee switch and a founder who co-wrote the Transformer paper. I think the market underprices that edge.

The median outcome is \$3.38. Sixty-five percent of the probability sits below spot, and most of the expected value lives in two states I weight at 13%. Leverage has cleared, but the core framework still points lower before it points higher. Bitwise's \$155.85 needs 30 bps on 328M agents. I do not underwrite that, and the bridge in Section 4 shows which inputs a reader would have to change to get there.

What would change my mind. I expect evidence in the order agents, take rate, volume. Thesis checkpoints are measurable agent-originated Intents and near.com payment flow by FY2027E, NEAR AI staked balances growing, and Intents capture holding at or above 3 bps while volume grows. If FY2028E agent fees are tracking below a third of my \$6.4M path, the Partial state becomes the base, value converges toward \$3.38, and I move to SELL. I rate NEAR a BUY, sized for the downside, with the bulk of the position built in the \$2.58–\$3.16 zone.

Sources

Primary: NEAR JSON-RPC (rpc.mainnet.near.org, archival-rpc, FastNEAR): block headers, EXPERIMENTAL_protocol_config, validators, staking-pool get_reward_fee_fraction. Coinbase Exchange public candles (NEAR, BTC, ETH). US Treasury daily par yield curve.

Hyperliquid info API (metaAndAssetCtxs, fundingHistory). NearBlocks API. revenue.near.org (buyback wallets). Secondary: DefiLlama (Intents volume, fees, revenue; chain and app fees; TVL; stablecoins); CoinGecko (comp market caps); Phemex Academy (Intents fee structure, 30d to 26 Sep 2026); CoinDesk (Intents exploit 1 Oct 2026; dynamic resharding 22 May 2026); COINOTAG / FXStreet (aggregate futures OI, 20 Oct 2026); KuCoin News and SoSoValue via COINOTAG (NRR share of supply and net inflows, 26 Oct 2026); NEAR Q3 2026 report (19 Oct 2026); Bitwise NEAR report coverage (TokenPost, CoinGape, BeInCrypto, ChainCatcher: 2030 base \$155.85, max \$562.81, bear \$1.63; agent, share, payment, fee and multiple inputs); Bitwise NRR launch coverage (U.Today, FXStreet); crypto.news (sovereign fund proposal; NEAR AI staking payments); NEAR AI blog (30 Jul 2026); The Block (Foundation treasury, Jan 2024); Indago Labs (Intents illicit-flow analysis); OwnYourMind NEAR review. Prior Ryan Mahaffy Research: HYPE (19 May 2026), Sold Out (1 Jul 2026), Sold Out: Update (22 Sep 2026). Data as of 26 October 2026; pipelines: near_data.py (build) and near_refresh.py (refresh); model: NEAR_Equity_Research_Model_v3.xlsx.

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