

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
Reports/Presentations
Item 6a
Report on the Beach Bus

Objective:

To provide Beach Bus service to Collier County residents and visitors.

Considerations:

Over the last three years, Collier Area Transit (CAT) partnered with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Collier County Tourist Development Council to offer Beach Bus service for those who wanted to get to the beach without the hassle of finding parking during the busy tourist season. During that final year of the grant, the Beach Bus operated from November 23rd, 2018 through April 29, 2019, from 8:00a.m. until 2:30p.m., then from 4:30p.m. until 7:10p.m., Friday through Monday. The Beach Bus Route utilized two buses, 1 started at Creekside Boulevard, headed west on 111th Ave to Connor Park, then to Delnor-Wiggins State Park, back to Connor Park, then finally arriving back at Creekside. The second bus also started at Creekside Boulevard but headed south on US 41 to Vanderbilt Beach Road (VBR), then west on VBR to Gulf Shore Drive traveling north to Delnor-Wiggins State Park, reversing the route back to Creekside. The second route was modified from the route service provided during the previous year. This change very positively exhibited a great increase ridership. The creation of the new route aided in increasing the total number of passengers from 1,903 from the previous year to 6,737. This is a 254.02% increase in passengers compared to last year's service and a 2018.6% increase from the first year of the Beach Bus Service.

The ridership on the northern route was much higher than the southern route. We believe that was primarily due to the fact that Connor Park parking lot provided some relief for Delnor-Wiggins State Park. Because there was no parking facility available near the southern route to provide relief to the parking garage that serves Vanderbilt Beach, the ridership was less than desired although an improvement over the previous year.

Improvements to the service from the first year included changing the service to flag down service, waiving the fares and reducing the frequency from 60-minutes to 30-minutes. Passengers could board the bus at no cost and waive the Beach Bus down anywhere along the route to get to the beach. The only charge to passengers was a \$2 fee per person for those that wanted to enter the Delnor-Wiggins State Park. CAT collected \$5,296.00 in fees for Delnor-Wiggins State Park, an increase over the \$1,092.00 collected the previous year.

The success can be attributed to the improvements made to the service but also the contribution to market the service made by the Tourist Development Council (TDC). The continued marketing of the service in the future will be necessary for the continued success. Staff will request the TDC's continued support towards marketing this beach route.

CAT has requested budget for FY 2020 to continue the service for the northern route. Budgetary constraints will prohibit running the southern route along VBR. The cost for providing the full service would be \$157,933.33 however only \$75,688.00 will be budgeted.

Recommendation:

To continue TDC support for the Beach Route.

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Date: 5-15-19