

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To: Bogdan Vitas, City Manager
cc: Jim Fitton, Director / Port & Transit
From: Myra Wittenberg, Manager / Transportation
Date: November 9, 2012
Subject: Resolution to Approve FREE HOLIDAY Transportation - 2012



Action Statement:

This is a request for approval of a resolution to provide FREE HOLIDAY public transportation service in the City of Key West and the Lower Keys, beginning Friday, December 21, through Monday, December 24, 2012. The FREE HOLIDAY transportation service promotes use of public transportation in our community and encourages shopping for holiday goods at local businesses and merchants in Key West and Marathon, Florida; providing for an effective date.

Project History:

The City of Key West has offered FREE HOLIDAY transportation service since December of 1998. In the past this experience has proven to assist with promoting use of public transit services as well as providing for additional passengers, while also reducing traffic during a high volume traffic time of the year.

The FREE HOLIDAY annual event provides incentive for individuals who ordinarily would not use public transit do so, because it is FREE; because parking is difficult in the downtown areas of Key West; and, because our limited roadways are very congested with added shopping activity this time of the year. When a new passenger has a positive experience – we often times gain a new customer.

Additionally, the City of Key West Transportation Department acknowledges all local businesses for their demonstrated commitment to the community through perseverance of good, bad and ugly economic times by continuing to provide goods and services to our citizens, residents and visitor populations in the City of Key West. The City of Key West supports local businesses by providing the FREE HOLIDAY transportation service from Key West to Marathon; and, thereby encourages shoppers to buy from local businesses.

Last but not least, use of public transit helps everyone by reducing emissions in the environment and reducing our carbon footprint for improved air quality. The American Public Transit Association is quoted here by stating that “one full bus eliminates up to 29 vehicles on our roadways”. That’s a pretty good investment for riding a city bus once per week, agree?

Option #1:

Option #1 would be to approve the resolution which provides for FREE HOLIDAY transportation services in the City and Lower Keys service areas, from December 21 through December 24, 2012. Also please note that as a reminder to the public, that there is NO bus service on Christmas Day, December 25, 2012.

Advantages:

The City offers a FREE period to allow residents and visitors to use public transportation services - thus providing opportunities to those who ordinarily would not use public transit and possibility increasing passenger throughout the year.

The opportunity promotes clean and green living options by reducing vehicle emissions as well as the number of vehicles on our highways during this busy time of year. Public transportation is a very important part of the preservation of resources and protection of our delicate environment. By reducing automobile use and increasing public transit use - we can achieve one of our many goals identified by the City's commitment to GREEN living and sustainability.

Disadvantages:

There is a loss of revenue to be considered for the FREE HOLIDAY service. That cost is based on prior December 2011 activities at \$1,626 / day / all routes. This is shown on the attached fare box report with a total value of \$6,503.

Fiscal Impact:

The obvious fiscal impact of Option 1 is stated above, in addition to our normal daily operating expenses.

Option #2:

Option #2 would be to not approve the resolution and continue business as normal, with no recognition of the FREE HOLIDAY season intended to assist the public as well as the business communities of Key West and the Lower Keys.

Advantages:

The advantage is that there would be no loss revenue, as noted above, and there would be no change to operational standards for this period of time.

Disadvantages:

The disadvantage is that the City will not play an active part in the holiday season as noted above under Option #2.

Fiscal Impact:

City of Key West DoT will not experience any direct fiscal impact as a result of Option #2.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that the City Commission approve Option #1 above, for FREE HOLIDAY Public Transportation service beginning December 21 through 24, 2012.