

SARASOTA COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Planning and Development Services

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Sarasota County Commission

THROUGH: Randall H. Reid, County Administrator
Mark Cunningham, Assistant County Administrator

FROM: Robert R. Lewis, Director, Planning and Development Services

SUBJECT: Item 3C: Update on the Longboat Key Bus Route

DATE: October 1, 2012

SUMMARY:

As requested by the Town of Longboat Key, Sarasota County staff will present an update on the Longboat Key bus route.

BACKGROUND:

Manatee County Area Transit (MCAT) and Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) offer a coordinated transit service on Longboat Key between Coquina Beach on Anna Maria Island and Downtown Sarasota. Transit vehicles along the Longboat Key route run Monday through Sunday, with MCAT and SCAT each operating one vehicle. A vehicle is available to a rider every 60 minutes. MCAT operates a trolley vehicle on the Longboat route. SCAT operated trolley vehicles on the route until the SCAT trolleys exceeded their life cycle. SCAT now operates a standard bus on the Longboat route.

In July 2012, the Sarasota County Commission approved the purchase of five trolley vehicles with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 funds. The five trolleys will replace standard SCAT buses currently operating on routes serving Longboat Key, Lido Key and Siesta Key. FTA authorized these funds in August 2012. The vehicles are expected to be delivered by the end of 2013 and placed into service in early 2014.

SCAT operates its portion of the Longboat Key route through general fund and farebox revenues. Farebox revenues account for approximately seven percent of the route's annual operating costs. Based on FY 2011 National Transit Data (NTD), FY 2012 cost per vehicle hour for Sarasota County's portion of the expense is expected to be approximately \$372,000. The funds were budgeted in FY 2012 and continue as part of the proposed FY 2013 budget.

The following table shows the distribution of August 2012 ridership on SCAT vehicles and on MCAT vehicles and the percent change from the prior year. For August 2012, total MCAT and SCAT ridership on the Longboat route was 160 trips. This total represents a 5.3% decrease from the prior year.

**LONGBOAT KEY ROUTE
AVERAGE DAILY RIDERSHIP COMPARISON**

	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>SCAT</u>	<u>MCAT</u>
Aug 2011	169	89	80
Aug 2012	160	77	83
% change	-5.3%	-13%	3.2%

Lower ridership in August is a seasonal pattern for this route, culminating in September, and increasing in October through February. The SCAT portion of the Longboat route has an average of 7.0 trips per revenue hour and 7% farebox recovery. Compared to a similar route, such as SCAT Route 13 (Venice) operating on the island of Venice and in South Venice, this route is considered one of SCAT's route lower performers in terms of ridership and revenue.

Staff will continue providing updates on the performance of the Longboat Key route to the Town of Longboat Key and coordinating with Manatee County on monitoring performance and cost.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Longboat Key Transit Services presentation

Longboat Key Transit Services Sarasota County Area Transit

**Town of Longboat Key and Sarasota
County Commission Joint Meeting
October 1, 2012**

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