

MIAMI BEACH

OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

NO. LTC # **445-2016**

LETTER TO COMMISSION

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: October 20, 2016

SUBJECT: **SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUTER SERVICES**

The purpose of this Letter to Commission is to provide information on a City initiative to assist Miami Beach employees with transportation and parking issues. In October of 2015 the City of Miami Beach increased, except in the North Beach area, parking rates for on-street and lot parking. Employers and employees in Miami Beach raised concerns about the impact these increases placed on employees, particularly hotel employees, who traditionally are not high wage earners. To assist employees, the Parking Department expanded the monthly parking program for garages and lots. However, the need to improve parking availability for residents and visitors as well as improve traffic conditions in the City remained. Consequently, the Parking Department reached out to South Florida Commuter Services (SFCS), which is the Florida Department of Transportation's (FDOT) regional commuter assistance program, seeking guidance on alternative transportation options for employees.

A team comprised of the Parking and Transportation Departments, the Miami Beach Hotel Association and the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce collaborated with SFCS in developing a survey to determine current modes of transportation used by employees, parking trends and cost, and the feasibility of establishing programs that would motivate employees to use transportation alternatives such as public transit and carpooling. SFCS distributed surveys during a two week period. In total 1,792 employees working at 36 Miami Beach hotels responded to the survey. Of these, 827 employees worked at the Fontainebleau Hotel.

The survey revealed that 343 of the respondents live in the City of Miami Beach in addition to many employees living in the northeast Miami area. Over 60% of respondents indicated they drive alone to work and 25% stated they spend more than 15 minutes looking for a parking space on a daily basis. These factors have a negative impact on Miami Beach traffic.

Following are additional findings (see attached presentation for more detailed information):

- Traffic congestion and parking are the top two challenges facing commuters
- 21% of commuters would be motivated to carpool if financial incentives were provided
- 37% of commuters would be motivated to use transit if service frequency was improved

- 26% of commuters would consider vanpooling

SFCS will be holding "Try Transit" and "Try Carpool" campaigns at the Fontainebleau hotel in November and December. During a prior event, SFCS, assisted Miami-Dade Transit in offering free 7-day passes to employees willing to try transit for a week. 60 passes were claimed in 26 minutes. Additional passes will be issued in the upcoming campaign. Employees who provide feedback on their experience will be entered into a raffle for various incentives. The "Try Carpool" will promote a try carpool day. Participating employees will download a mobile app designed to assist with carpool matches. SFCS and Fontainebleau will be able to track and confirm carpooling. SFCS has asked the City to assist by assigning desirable parking spaces at a reduced rate for employees participating in the carpool day. SFCS will verify participation and will hold a raffle for various incentives.

The SFCS plans to hold similar campaigns at other hotels. SFCS will also share survey information with Miami-Dade Transit, with the purpose of studying better bus schedules and frequencies. For example, Fontainebleau data reveals that over 63% of the 827 employees responding to the survey work the morning shift. Thus, improving frequency coinciding with beginning and end of shifts for the majority of employees can create a positive impact on ridership. From the City's prospective, the expanded trolley service is certain to be a great asset as we work toward connecting city and transit services.

We look forward to a continued collaborative effort with SFCS as we seek to improve traffic conditions and parking availability in the City.

If you should have any questions, please contact Saul Frances, Parking Department Director at 305.673.7000, extension 6483.

c: Kathie Brooks, Assistant City Manager
Mark Taxis, Assistant City Manager
Susanne Torriente, Assistant City Manager
Eric Carpenter, Assistant City Manager/Public Works Director
Marcia Monserrat, Chief of Staff
Saul Frances, Parking Department Director

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