

April 23, 2021

Dear Congresswoman Salazar:

We are pleased to compose this letter in support of the City of Coral Gables' funding request for four replacement trolleys. The existing Coral Gables Strategic Plan seeks to improve mobility, transportation safety, and the pedestrian experience throughout the city. Specifically, the city seeks to increase utilization of non-privately-owned vehicle modes of transportation, decrease total vehicle trips within the city, and increase satisfaction with city transit services. Enhancing and expanding the Coral Gables Trolley service is essential to achieving the goals outlined in the Strategic Plan. The City cannot initiate new transit services to reach more riders without updating and adding to the existing Trolley fleet.

The Coral Gables Trolley runs a fixed route circulator from the Douglas Metro-Rail station on the south to a Miami Dade Transit Express Route at Flagler Street and Douglas Road on the North. The Trolley connects these two locations North Bound and South Bound to downtown Coral Gables by travelling along Ponce de Leon Boulevard. The service is provided Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a ridership of more than One million passengers annually. Trolleys generally run with approximately 10-minute headways and provide transportation to many commuters to and from Coral Gables as well as residents along the Trolley route. Funding for operation of this service is provided by a ½ penny sales tax managed by Miami-Dade County and distributed by the Citizens Independent Transportation Trust (CITT).

The current Trolley Master Plan identifies several opportunities for expansion or adjustment of the service. In our view, the best option for service enhancement is to increase operational hours on the existing service corridor to cover weekends and late evenings. In addition, there is support for a downtown circulator that would service twenty blocks in the Central Business District during peak occupancy on weekdays, helping to drive customers to the heart of our downtown and providing critical foot traffic to businesses that sorely need it. Finally, the city would expand into the unserved area of Coral Gables on the south end of the existing route that would serve a portion of Coral Gables along Grand Avenue south of U.S. 1, in a historically African American neighborhood.

The Trolley Division currently maintains a fleet of thirteen trolleys, six of these are new and were purchased with City fleet services funds. The remaining fleet vehicles are at or near the end of their standard life cycle. To maintain current service and be prepared for the aforementioned expansions of service, it will be necessary purchase new and replacement Trolleys over the next few years.

The typical low-floor classic trolleys operated by the City of Coral Gables are \$350,000 each. To modernize our existing fleet and prepare for expanding transit service in the city, we propose purchasing five new trolleys for a total amount of \$1,750,000. Budgeted city funds will be used to purchase one trolley (\$350,000) and we are requesting \$1,400,000 to purchase the additional four trolleys. This is an important transit project that will provide access to free, reliable and enjoyable transit service to hundreds of riders per day. Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact the city with any questions.

Kevin J. Kinney
Parking Director

Diana Gomez
Finance Director