

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-2
August 26, 2014
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Pat Keon

Commissioner Vince Lago

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

Interim City Manager, Carmen Olazabal

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Parking Director, Kevin Kinney

Assistant Public Works Director, Jessica Keller

Public Speaker(s)

Alan Brick-Turin, Consultant, Senior Project Manager, Gannett Fleming

Leona Cooper, Coral Gables Resident

Edwina Prime, Coral Gables Resident and President LBW Homeowners Assoc.

Agenda Item H-2 [Start: 10:38:22 a.m.]

A Resolution authorizing staff to implement an extension of trolley services to MacFarlane Homestead Historic District as evaluated in the study conducted by Gannett Fleming dated July 4, 2014. (Deferred from the July 22, 2014 Meeting)

Mayor Cason: This would be your item H-2.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: H-2 is a Resolution authorizing staff to implement an extension of trolley services to MacFarlane Homestead Historic District as evaluated in the study conducted by Gannett Fleming dated July 4, 2014 – and Jessica Keller if you can introduce the item.

Ms. Jessica Keller: Good morning. I'm Jessica Keller Assistant Public Works Director for Transportation Sustainability and Sanitation.

Commissioner Quesada: Jessica point the microphone at your mouth.

Ms. Keller: Today we have Alan Brick-Turin of Gannett Fleming with us to present two alternatives that were considered to extend local trolley service to MacFarlane Homestead Historic District. We are also presenting the five-year master plan that was previously developed by Gannett Fleming prior to specific direction to extend service to MacFarlane Homestead. We thought it was important that the work done in the previous effort be presented alongside the specific study as we had not previously discussed it. Alan.

Mr. Brick-Turin: Thank you Jessica. Thank you Mayor and Commission for having me here today to discuss two separate studies that we conducted for the City of Coral Gables, very related studies, different levels of detail in those and ultimately the results come together and give us information that you can use to make some decisions. My specialty in transit does not extend to PowerPoint presentations (laughter). The master plan study, the first of the two studies that we conducted took place in 2013 and relied on some significant outreach, surveys, both of transit riders and others who might be using transit since the data collection; and then we tested a series of possibilities and expansions to the existing system. The second study, the MacFarlane Homestead Study looks specifically at that section of the City and adjacent City of Miami. These studies were intended to first take a five-year look at how the system might be improved and expanded and then second, to focus on MacFarlane Homestead area. The second study went into a little bit more detail than the first and as I lay out the two of them you'll see the differences. The Coral Gables Master Plan was formulated to take a look at those to best serve those living and working in downtown Coral Gables. The idea was to reduce the need for a car. Once you got to downtown Coral Gables you could put your car away and you could conduct your business throughout the day. Obviously, many people are also using the trolley to get to downtown Coral Gables and don't bother to take the car at all. We were looking for an attractive means of circulating around the downtown that would also have economic benefits. Of course any expansion would ideally be cost effective, as cost effective or better than the existing system. The current system operates along Ponce de Leon Boulevard every 12 to 15 minutes, if over a 13 ½ hour day, little bit later on Gallery Nights, first Fridays. The fare is free and the system is carrying 5,000 riders a day. We conducted an onboard survey of nearly 300 riders to get their reaction to the service, ways we could improve that service, expand that service, and possible expansions in terms of not only geography, but also times of day; and it was interesting to note that of those 300 surveys there were only two people who we didn't survey who declined the survey, so trolley riders were more than willing to share their thoughts with us, share their

opinions with us. What we learned and some of it is not surprising, most of the riders live in or near Coral Gables, most of them ride daily, most of them are travelling to and from work. Most were willing to pay a fare; this is a free system, but most willing to pay a fare of up to a dollar. The offered some limitations – there ought to be free transfers with Miami-Dade Transit, it ought to be free for Coral Gables residents, but there were very few people who said, no you shouldn't be charging to ride the Coral Gables trolley, although they all were very appreciative of the idea that they didn't have to pay today. Most of the riders on the system today were not interested in any expansion at all. They were completely satisfied with where it went and when it travelled. If we take a look at where people board and alight, where they get on and off the trolleys, we found most people are getting on and off at the ends, in the south of the Douglas Road Metrorail station, the north the vicinity of the Publix, and they are travelling to and from the heart of the City at Miracle Mile. That's where most of the travel is occurring, that's where most of the boarding and the alighting's occurring. We then began to assemble from that and other surveys any thoughts anyone had had previous studies of where we might consider expanding transit service. We talked to City agencies, we talked to a number of representatives in the business community, the Chamber of Commerce, the BID, we talked to the BID in Coconut Grove to get their impressions, their thoughts, where might we expand our service and we identified five routes, first of all in the downtown area. They are labeled here, the labels are relatively arbitrary, but essentially circulating a very short distance from the intersection of Ponce and Miracle Mile. We also identified four routes that extend beyond the downtown; one of them was the MacFarlane Homestead area. We looked at the University of Miami and in fact, we spent some time with the University of Miami discussing their students, their service and how this might work with them. We looked at the Biltmore, which was one of the common places people identified and the Riviera Business District; and then we considered three much longer extensions that would generally serve very selective markets, including the airport, Fairchild Tropical Gardens, and then out toward Coconut Grove. We developed a series of measures to evaluate these alternatives partially quantitatively and partially qualitatively. We were looking for some measurable factors; let's get some specific numbers, costs, ridership, but what we think that ultimately the expansion of transit service involves both quantifiable and qualification based measures. When we looked at the quantifiable measures, we were looking at the qualifying measures, we wanted to make sure that the routes would be understandable, would be comprehensible, that a person didn't need a map, didn't need a lot of information to be able to get on the trolley and know where they were going. We wanted to also be sure that the travel would be balanced. When I say balanced I mean, there were a number of thoughts about a loop, a one-way loop. The problem with the one-way loop is the trip one-way could be very short, but the trip back means you are going all the way around. So making the trip one-way versus the other way balanced is generally a preferred way of operating transit; and then finally a flexible operation so that we could expand the existing Ponce service to new areas or expand that service only during parts of the day or operate independently during parts of the day. Certain

configurations work better in that way than others. The table that's probably easier to read if it's in front of you gives you an indication of how we evaluated these various alternatives. The green indicates those that performed in the top third, the darker pink denotes those that didn't perform as well. The existing route which is highlighted in red clearly is head and shoulders above every other alternative and that's a logical conclusion. You've identified the area that is the greatest need, the greatest ridership, and therefore is going to tend to be the most cost effective and all-around the best performing, but there are others that begin to come close to that and expanding off of that...

Commissioner Quesada: So you are saying the downtown loop that you had identified earlier that's the ideal loop based on that data.

Mr. Brick-Turin: No. The one that I've circled is the existing Ponce route.

Commissioner Quesada: But the bottom that you have circled is a downtown loop as well?

Mr. Brick-Turin: Yes. Yes. Comes out very high when we compare it.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mr. Brick-Turin: The existing route, as I said, clearly performed better. We were also concerned with cost, we were concerned with the ability to avoid the trolleys getting tied up in traffic, and we also wanted to be sure not to duplicate Miami-Dade Transit service. This is an important consideration because Miami-Dade Transit, as you well know, is looking for any opportunity to cut back on service. If you want to run a trolley they'd be happy to go away and let you pay the cost of running the trolley with whatever support that they give you through the county's funds. So every place that a jurisdiction looks at adding service, Miami-Dade Transit looks at leaving. We didn't want to compete with their service or didn't necessarily want to compete with their service at least for that reason, but obviously there are other places that could be served. I would say that all of the alternatives have strong and weak points, none of them emerges as head and shoulders stronger than the other, none of the comments we got back from any of the surveys we conducted gave a clear consensus this is what you need to do. So there are merits to every one of these alternatives, some more than others, but I would not say that we've got a clear winner. What we did deduce from this was that the place to focus was the downtown and we came up with this loop which is really a composite of several of the downtown circulators that we've proposed an office out, etc. to come up with an alternative that would essentially serve, I would describe it as more of a horizontal elevator that you could – it would extend you walk so that you could go from your place of business, from shopping to a restaurant, get back in relatively short matter of time, easy to get around. We thought as a starting point rather than a 13 ½ days

focusing on mid-day, 11:30 (a.m.) to 2 p.m., would probably make the most sense. We identified an operating cost because we thought that we should have a trolley operating better every six minutes, if we operated 12 to 15 minutes in the mid-day, you'd be waiting so much of the time that you'd no longer have time during your lunch hour to take advantage of this. So we needed frequent service and we need the vehicles to be traveling both clockwise and counter-clockwise, otherwise again, the trip to the restaurant could be quick, the trip back would be the long way back. We also recommended a connection with the University of Miami. They have their own service, they have service into Coconut Grove on Friday nights, Thursday and Friday nights, I believe it is, unique to their students. It's been something that the students have asked for and the university has responded. Our recommendation was that they should carry their student body to the vicinity of Merrick Park where they could then transfer to the Ponce route and continue from there, so it extends their range, it extends your market, it allows students to be able to come into the City more easily. There are obviously questions about the hours of operations of students going to Coconut Grove and not coming back till 2 in the morning, they are not going to be able to do that on the Ponce route, but this is a direction that we would recommend moving.

Commissioner Quesada: Where does the, I think it's called the Hurricane, where does the Hurricane end?- does it get anywhere near Merrick Park?

Mr. Brick-Turin: Stanford Circle is far...

Commissioner Quesada: That's as far as it goes?- OK.

Mr. Brick-Turin: And we recommend going from there and extending eastward.

Commissioner Quesada: And connecting into Merrick Park.

Mr. Brick-Turin: To Merrick Park – yes. And that's a convenient place to get on the trolley both directions, it's a good interface. Now I'll turn your attention the MacFarlane Homestead study area. This is the second of the two studies we conducted and the one that we conducted starting earlier this year. As you know, this is primarily a residential area with relatively limited commercial activity, that's important considering the ridership and where people would be coming from and going to. We looked at a series of three concepts initially and then from those three developed the fourth. The first of the two on this slide would run from Douglas Metrorail to Grand Avenue and US-1 in a linear fashion and the second one would operate as a one-way loop going down Douglas and around Grand and then coming back on Ponce. The third alternative was also a linear route focusing on Douglas and Grand and I think really intent of serving this area most directly and then the fourth was a variation of that, that would travel a little bit further north and cross through Granello Avenue. We evaluated these options as well with the same

criteria and most of them seem pretty strong, most of them falling in the top tier of the alternatives that we considered. We then went one step further on this study and estimated the ridership and developed more detailed cost based on the current operations and the current ridership of your existing system.

Commissioner Quesada: OM stands for operating...

Mr. Brick-Turin: Operating and maintenance cost. There are two parts of course for trolley operations; one is the basic capital cost, the vehicle in this case. If you had bought lots of vehicles you might be talking about a maintenance facility, but that was not the case; and then the operation and maintenance. Traditionally, operations and maintenance costs are the more significant costs, they are ongoing, they are always high, and there are generally no outside sources for those revenues. Federal government is happy to give municipalities of the jurisdiction vehicles, but they are not willing to pay for them to operate day-to-day. On their own each of these vehicles, each of these routes would cost more than the current service when we look at the cost per passenger. It's not surprising we've looked at the core market, you are going to have your greatest efficiencies as you begin to extend beyond the core, you are going to have diminishing return, but if we look at this as an expansion of the existing system, the differential is only marginally higher if you expand here, if you go from \$1.35 per passenger to \$1.45-\$1.50 per passenger, so not a substantial difference, looking at it as a system as a whole.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Let me just ask you a question. So if you build it as an individual ride you go from \$1.35 to \$5.85, \$4.45, \$5.94, and \$4.89, you are just saying together, if you put everything together then it comes out to \$1.45, correct?

Mr. Brick-Turin: If you include the cost of the existing trolley...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Right.

Mr. Brick-Turin:...And the cost of this expansion and divide it by the new ridership, its \$1.50 or so. If you just look at this alone its \$5.00.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Is \$1.35 a good cost as far as – as I understand we started that. If would have known that we had to get to \$1.35, we would be happy with \$1.35 as a ridership cost. That's seems like a very efficient number, is that how you see that \$1.35?

Mr. Brick-Turin: I do. As comparison – if you pay \$2 on Metrorail, on Metro bus they recover that 28 cents or 56 cents on the \$2 cost, so I think that this is a good, an efficient operation.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: And the reason it's efficient is because we are running it up and down an area which is heavily populated.

Mr. Brick-Turin: You are running through a prime market and your costs are relatively low, your driver cost, maintenance cost, etc. is relatively low.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: And the reason for that is it's always been a connector and it has not been a bus service. We the City try to run it up and down Miracle Mile to Biltmore Way and to the Biltmore Hotel and unfortunately we were not successful there and we ended up stopping the service based on the productivity of that line. So the concept has always been to bring this up and down the major intersections of Coral Gables and commute people round the downtown thus saving of course as we very well know parking spaces and people coming into the City in their vehicles, I should say, so it's been successful.

Mr. Brick-Turin: Yes. I would agree with that. One of the measures, just to take a step back, one of the measures we looked at for all of these operations was, do we serve a market like Ponce where there are people getting on and off all along the way? - or are we serving some specialty market? Lot of interest in serving the airport – so you pick up people in downtown Coral Gables and then they drive for several miles with no passengers and they drop-off and pick-up at the other end. If you drive to Fairchild Tropical Gardens and they were very strong advocates, the service should be expanded there, you have no service, you've got no passengers getting on and off between the southern limits of the current service and Fairchild Tropical Gardens. So yes, you are serving a prime area that is filled with potential passengers all the time.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: And as we get more populated in that area it seems to me that we are going to have to run those vehicles more frequently so that we can pick-up the additional people that may be working in that area there and thus stop, not stop but somewhat remediate the traffic that is accumulating on Ponce de Leon, and the only way I see to do that is to run these on a quicker circle, instead of 10 to 15 minutes, maybe 8 to 10 minute cycles.

Mr. Brick-Turin: There are benefits there.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Thank you.

Mr. Brick-Turin: When we look at alternative three, we scaled back from the 13 ½ hours again, to proposing two hours in the morning, two hours in the evening, at least as an initial effort and that's because again, we are looking at a primarily commercial area, if more than half of your ridership today is probably to and from work, those are the common hours people are working, they would be travelling to and from either downtown Coral Gables or frankly the Douglas Road

Metrorail station, but those are the hours when you are going to see the greatest travel. So we said starting point would be two hours in the morning, two hours in the evening. That would reduce your annual operating cost, which were essentially proportional to the number of hours that you operate. We did analyze the ridership. Based on the ridership for the current service, which is really the best method we have for projecting ridership. We are looking at only 40 or 50 riders a day over those four or five hours, but that's the ridership that we could anticipate.

Commissioner Quesada: How do you determine ridership?

Mr. Brick-Turin: There are a variety of ways that ridership can be projected, but when you are looking at a very small area, the big regional models and forecasting methods don't work very well, and essentially what we did is we looked at the boarding's and alighting's at each of your 52 stations and the population and employment within a quarter of a mile, that's basically the market; and by doing a linear regression, if you've got twice as many people here than here, you'll get twice as many riders, based on the ridership that you were getting along your current stations this is what you get here, and I would point out we did not include Douglas Road Metrorail in that analysis because that's an anomaly, I think, 1,500 riders for there alone.

Commissioner Quesada: But isn't that also the closest station to this location?

Mr. Brick-Turin: But because it's a connection to the entire transit system, it's not representative – many of your stations are carrying 5-10-15 riders a day, that's more representative. When we compared the forecast ridership with what Metro bus is doing in the area, it was very comparable. Recognizing again that most Metro bus operations are extending much further beyond Coral Gables. So the numbers were reasonable if there were 42 riders on opening day, I guess you could be presently surprised; this is the order of magnitude we anticipate.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask you – these riders, are these riders from Coral Gables or riders from Coral Gables and Coconut Grove?

Mr. Brick-Turin: They could be from either. They are not necessarily...

Mayor Cason: Depending which route. One route goes right down Douglas, which would be obviously people from Coconut Grove would come over and use the trolley, but have you done a survey of, any kind of survey on residents of MacFarlane because this is being was discussed as something new to support a residential area, not a commute, bringing more commuters in, in which case it wouldn't matter where they come from. Have you done any survey of the potential usage of Coral Gables residents from MacFarlane area in any of these four alternatives?

Mr. Brick-Turin: Our surveys contacted primarily Coral Gables residents, not specifically MacFarlane Homes area. The survey was posted on the City's News Letter, I think on two consecutive issues, so that people could online answer the survey. I don't think we recorded their specific address, I simply know their zip code, so I can't tell you how much MacFarlane Homestead residents responded to that survey.

Mayor Cason: It's your best guess 40ish – 40-50, but you really don't know where they are coming from.

Mr. Brick-Turin: No. And we also don't know – when we do surveys in the transit world a lot of people like to say that they would ride the bus, it's the popular thing to say, and a lot of people who might ride the bus may not see the survey. So that's not necessarily the best way to forecast ridership as an indication of who's interested, but it doesn't predict riders.

Mayor Cason: Is it fair to say that Miami is not interested in extending their trolley into Coconut Grove and connecting with our stations?

Mr. Brick-Turin: Miami has extended their trolley to Miracle Mile.

Mayor Cason: Right – but through Coconut Grove area through MacFarlane.

Mr. Brick-Turin: No. The only discussion we had was with the BID and with the Chief of Staff for Commissioner Sarnoff, who was interested in the connection to Coconut Grove...

Mayor Cason: But in the end they are not doing it, is that right?- is that because concerns about ridership or something – funding...I'm wondering, why Miami? – there was a connector before and I think one of the studies couple of years ago said there were only 12 or 13 riders. I'm just wondering, do they know something we don't?- or is it budgetary or we don't know?

Mr. Brick-Turin: It would be conjecture on my part. They expanded their service over time, which certainly means they've had to establish their priorities. I don't know why they chose which expansion to do next. Based on our analysis for the MacFarlane Homestead area, we would recommend considering alternative 3 as an extension of the existing route to start as 4-hour day operation. In order to advance that recommendation we would first recommend testing the route with an actual vehicle. We traveled the route by automobile, we recognized some traffic issues, we think it would be useful to actually run a trolley vehicle through the area to get a sense of what we might be up against, what physical improvements might need to be made? We didn't identify any, but we still think that's prudent to run a trolley to be sure. We want to consider very carefully where the stops need to be?- what's the prime locations? There are many

places that like stops and there are many people that don't like stops, and we want to consider that very carefully, and also consider ADA accessibility, make sure that the handicap can get to the stop and can get from the stop to the vehicle. We certainly don't want any barriers in place. If these things check out we would recommend advancing to implementation starting with 4 hours a day and then continuing to expand that service based on the performance.

Commissioner Quesada: Well can you pull that back up? Alternative 3, was that what you had on the previous slide?- can you go to the previous slide?- is that alternative 3?

Mr. Brick-Turin: Yes, that's alternative 3. This one logically extends the current Ponce route goes to Douglas Road and then 4 hours a day would extend further south.

Mayor Cason: And the 4 hours a day is because your study of the current route shows that the vast majority of people get on during those hours.

Mr. Brick-Turin: We see that we can get most....

Mayor Cason: And very few get on at an intermediate stop and go to another intermediate stop, other than downtown or at the two ends, connector ends.

Mr. Brick-Turin: This would appear to be the prime time. Again, we did that linear regression, that analysis station-by-station and we are getting 40 out of 141 riders, so we are getting more than 30 percent of the ridership in those 4 hours, the other hours simply aren't as productive.

Mayor Cason: Did those people that you surveyed said they were going to get on in that area and go to work?- go downtown and shop?- or they are going to get on the Metro or get on the busses on Flagler and go somewhere else?

Mr. Brick-Turin: We didn't survey specifically these, but in the survey we did of the ridership we asked them where they were coming from and going to, and more than half were going to or coming from work, the rest were distributed into the typical the medical, shopping, etc.

Commissioner Quesada: That's good though, that's great. It keeps vehicles off the road, that's the point, that's great daily.

Commissioner Lago: Another good thing about the extension of the – and I agree with the 4-hour timeframe in regards to the extension of the trolley services because I know we are going to be hearing Items E-8 and E-9, which are in regards to Gables Pointe Plaza. When that project comes forth, it's an empty parcel of land that's across the street from Carver Elementary, that's going to

have a, depending on what the mixed-use development that goes there, it's going to be an attraction for not only the neighborhood, but also for the residents that live on the other side of US-1. In reference to what the Mayor stated before, I think he made a very good point and you sparked some interest in me. I'm going to make it a point and request that Danette reach out to Commissioner Sarnoff and maybe schedule time with him. I think it would be a great connector just in a sustainability aspect to be able to have the City of Miami see that we are taking the lead in extending our trolley services, hopefully they will extend their trolley services and we can meet, not in the middle, but we can hopefully have ridership from the City of Miami coming into the City of Coral Gables to enjoy our restaurants, our museum, our medical facilities, that are forthcoming at the University of Miami, at Doctor's Hospital, so I think that I'm going to ask Danette to hopefully, if my colleagues don't mind, I can take the lead on that or someone else...you have a very good relationship with Commissioner Sarnoff, don't you?

Commissioner Keon: Yes.

Mayor Cason: Let me mention. I went over to see Mayor Regalado back a couple of months ago, and I asked him about could they extend it. They brought some people in, but basically said they don't want to. They didn't say exactly why. It's worth continuing because particularly if we are going – and I support these hours and I will listen to the residents about which of the routes they would prefer, but I want to make sure that in the end, since this is not an extension of a connector, this is a residential focus, that maybe after six months we look and see at the ridership, do a survey of where they are coming from, because that might help us make the argument to Miami that they – if we are picking up Coconut Grove residents with Coral Gables money, that they ought to come in and do something.

Commissioner Quesada: Good point.

Mayor Cason: And also UM. I don't understand why UM wants to send all that money to Coconut Grove and not to Coral Gables to spend it as we make our City more fun, so I'd like to encourage them to do a little loop to get UM students a chance to link up as well. I support this in terms of six months, 4 hours a day, let's see what happens and if the ridership is great and we see that there is a demand to expand it then so be it.

Commissioner Lago: I have a feeling they'll be pleasantly surprised.

Mayor Cason: I hope so.

Commissioner Quesada: Yes, that would be great. Vice Mayor, question for you -- the trolley Commissioner. I know we discussed this briefly one time before and I apologize for forgetting,

but the extension on Miracle Mile to the Biltmore Way area. I thought for sure that, that would do very well considering we had so many residents living in buildings there. Was there just no ridership? I think we at one point we had discussed – and I don't know if you've looked at this. In 2002-2003 when we began the trolley program they had an extension westbound on Miracle Mile to the Biltmore Way section and it failed. Was that failure due to the, I mean the limited service? I believe the turnaround time there, the headways were 20 minutes.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes. I think that was the problem, the headways.

Commissioner Quesada: In your experience, if you didn't analyze this, would a 20-minute headway, is that sufficient to...

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: It might have been longer, it might have been 30 minutes.

Commissioner Quesada: Was it 30 minutes maybe?

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: It was long. It was a long time.

Commissioner Quesada: If it was 20 or 30 minutes in your experience on all the trolley facilities you've seen around the country, is that sufficient to essentially kill a route?

Mr. Brick-Turin: It doesn't kill a route. Most of the service in the Homestead MacFarlane area right now is 30 minutes or greater, it doesn't kill a route, it provides a service. Let me turn it around for you. If the vehicle is there every 10 minutes, my average wait is 5 minutes, I don't need to schedule, I don't need to think about it, I walk to the bus stop within 5 minutes the bus will show up, I'll get on. Yeah, I could there just as one was leaving, but it makes it easy to ride the bus, the trolley, whatever transit vehicles around. Once you start extending it beyond 10 minutes in the heat, in the rain, I don't want to be standing there waiting, I don't want to have to look at a schedule, I don't want to have to think about it as much, maybe I'll take my car, maybe I'll take the town cars that I understand the Biltmore offers its customers so that they can travel a different way; and also as we discussed previously, you've got a vehicle that's essentially travelling through an area with very low density, very few riders, so you are going from the Biltmore to downtown, from downtown to Biltmore. The ridership is not going to be the same as if you travel through a more densely populated area with a higher commercial activity where there are people coming and going all day long.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mayor Cason: Let me ask the City Manager, would we be in a position to do a survey on the demographics of the riders “X” number of months, so that people are aware of the stops and so on, to get the data that we might need to work with Miami and UM and others.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Let me refer the question to our consultant. Is that something you will be able to do Alan?

Mr. Brick-Turin: That would be very readily doable. The surveys that we did on-board were conducted using electronic devices. We used iPads; we were able to process the data almost instantaneously. In fact, we were monitoring it in real time to make sure that we were getting a reasonable sample. We can process it in a very short order; it’s a relatively inexpensive survey. Same thing if we wanted to do a survey through the City’s E-NEWS Letter, it’s similarly inexpensive. If we wanted to do a mail-back survey that becomes a little bit more expensive, a little bit more time consuming, but to get a snapshot you can contact a lot of people very quickly for very little money.

Commissioner Quesada: OK. Another thought for me is the downtown loop, you know. I love the idea of a downtown loop. My office in the Gables, I live in the Gables and parking in the afternoon time to go to lunch is tough. You have to circle around, you’ve got to get into a garage, sometimes you can’t. That downtown loop is something. I think is going to benefit everyone – business owners, residents, you know we swell to just about 100,000 business/residents 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, and obviously parking is always a concern. If we can always make it easier, obviously that’s a great thing to do. The concern that I have, if we are spending this money for the MacFarlane area, and I saw the number you had up there was \$60,000, and maybe this is a question for staff, maybe this is a City Manager question with Diana Gomez question with the rest of this body is, are we shooting ourselves in the foot to not free up sufficient funds to be able to provide a downtown loop in the future?- and that question is for everyone.

Mayor Cason: I agree. I think that for me the downtown loop is going to be extremely important in terms of lots of other things we are going to be discussing, the streetscape, when we build the garages, all kinds of reasons to do that. I guess the question is, do we have enough trolleys to do it?- and without having to...

Commissioner Quesada: I think what he had in his report was I believe \$970,000, and I believe the number for the 4-hour MacFarlane program is about \$60,000, correct me if I’m wrong?

Mr. Brick-Turin: There again, there are two parts to that. The downtown loop requires vehicles.

Mayor Cason: Two, right?

Mr. Brick-Turin: I believe it's four.

Mayor Cason: Four.

Commissioner Quesada: Is that included in your \$970,000 capital portion?

Mr. Brick-Turin: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: Got it. So that's only the capital portion, that's not including the actual operations.

Mr. Brick-Turin: No. There are two parts to that, to those numbers.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Mr. Brick-Turin: I'll have to replace the report.

Commissioner Quesada: So really the question isn't for you, the question is internally for us is looking at the analysis, the numbers, do we have sufficient funds available to be able to provide that service in the future?- and I guess that's a question for you the Manager.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: Yes. The main hurdle is providing the downtown loop, has to do with the capital investment that has to be made for trolleys. We need four trolley vehicles to be able to make the headways to make it an efficient downtown loop. The operating cost is \$175, that's easier to absorb. But we have a fund and we are looking at creating a transportation fund for future developments, we are developing the strategies, we still don't have it, but with future developers we'd have to put money into the fund and that perhaps will help fund this in the future.

Commissioner Quesada: So currently right now we could not do it.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: We don't have the four trolleys available and we haven't budgeted the \$920,000 for the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Quesada: OK.

Commissioner Lago: Just a quick question. Just going off what the Mayor whispered to me a moment ago. I think that there may be an option that we need to focus on that's something that

maybe you can help us with and staff is going after some grants on a state level, on a federal level. What are we looking at; I'm not holding you to it. I'm saying in regards are you aware of any transportation grants forthcoming in the 2015-2016 cycle?

Ms. Jessica Keller: Yes – actually Kevin's staff actively pursues grants. Do you want to talk about any of them?

Commissioner Lago: Again, I'm not going to hold you to it. Just like the City Manager mentioned, we are talking about different alternatives to get this downtown loop achieved. Again, I hate to use the word "taxing" but it's going to be some sort of mechanism to either have developers come in and help us fund this project or we are going to have to go to the federal government and hopefully reach out and get some grants.

Mr. Kevin Kinney: As Alan mentioned, usually the capital expenditures are the easier ones to get grants for and typically what we would try and find is a 50/50 match from FDOT. We've been successful at that in the past to acquire trolleys, and we definitely are in the process of not only acquiring additional vehicles, but starting to replace some of our older ones. So we are actively pursuing any opportunity for any kind of a match for grants. We don't have one right now and there is not one out that FDOT has out right now, but they are sending those notices to us on a regular basis.

Commissioner Lago: Are those grants, you said you are obviously in the process of replacing our existing fleet, which is very outdated. Are we looking at maybe replacing them with natural gas and electric vehicles and stuff like that?

Mr. Kinney: We are open to – yes, alternatives. In fact, there is one company that is doing electric trolleys now that we are in conversations with, we would like not to get as far ahead of the curve as we did with the hybrids because we stepped out on hybrids before they were ready, but we are definitely natural gas and electric.

Commissioner Lago: You give me some comfort that you are already reaching out to these companies and at least getting the information. We may not make a commitment, but at least we are getting that information which is important.

Commissioner Quesada: Can I cut right to it? Ms. Manager, can you have, can you work with Kevin and his department to give us an analysis of what's out there?- what are we doing?- electric vehicles, hybrid, the standard type of vehicles that we see, any kinds of grants out there at the municipal, county, state, federal level. Give us a whole summary of what we are doing to try to make this downtown trolley loop a reality, at the same time we have the MacFarlane Loop

running, because we see the ridership; the ridership did very, very well when Vice Mayor Kerdyk brought it on in 2002, and then people are thirsting for it. Obviously, with the build-out of the streetscape we want to make it easier for people to get around, considering we are going to have some construction woes that hopefully we can minimize as much as possible.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I would like to add. We've talked about this before. We've secured a lot of funding from FDOT, MPO, Dade County, State of Florida, I mean we've gone through the pipelines and we need to go back through. I think it's a very good point. But I will also encourage that we really work hard on this ordinance where we can go to the new developments and have them pay part of this, because ultimately they are the ones that benefit from this. I mean Old Spanish Village is going to benefit from having trolleys run up and down Ponce de Leon and then doing this loop and so are the other developments. So I think that has to be both. You have to secure funding made for the capital portion of it, but maybe from the operating portion to help augment that.

Commissioner Lago: If I could just make a quick statement in regards to the Vice Mayor. I think we need to work on that. I know that our plate is full, staff's plate is full, but I think that we need to try to work on that as quickly as possible because there is a host of projects that are forthcoming, that are currently in the development phase or in the design phase, and some are even coming to permitting probably in the next few months, so we need to make sure that we partner up with these developers and we make them aware because they are going to come to the table and they are going to agree that this just makes sense. For example, we have Robert Behar here who just completed – was the architect on a project where the Epicure; the Epicure is a major player in that area of the City which 10 years ago was a blighted part of our community. You want to push people into that establishment so they can enjoy it, instead of having to use their car or park on the street, they can just use a trolley. I imagine that many people probably from the downtown area are not making it all the way to Epicure.

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: That's true, but what you make is a very good point. One of the funding mechanisms I did not use was the benefits that the developers have given us in the past. They bought us trolleys before, so we have done this like what we are trying to do, an ordinance, we just haven't done it in a specific form. Now we just need to make it something that we crystalize for the developers, but they have purchased trolleys for us before and I think that's a good thing, actually very, very good thing.

Mayor Cason: Why don't staff work on this, come back to us in a future meeting, so we can have a discussion and perhaps an approval of a downtown loop when you think you have enough information and we think we have the funds for it. I think this particular discussion now is on MacFarlane. I would like to ask a question in terms of the stops in alternative 3, is that something

you've discussed for the residents? If we approve this today, say six months, 4 hours, do the survey, but move forward on it, can you then subsequently meet with the residents and find the best stops, so we don't need to decide that today?

Ms. Keller: Well actually the next slide talks about what our implementation would be.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Ms. Keller: And if we move this forward we would expect service to be in, in the second half of Fiscal 2016, upon the completion of construction of a new trolley facility. First step is to get approval from Miami-Dade Transit and amend the Interlocal agreement. Next, we need to engage the community.

Commissioner Quesada: Let me stop you for a second. I apologize.

Ms. Keller: Sure.

Mayor Cason: Can we speed that up?

Commissioner Quesada: For the 4-hour route do we need an additional trolley?

Ms. Keller: Yes.

Commissioner Quesada: Do we have an additional trolley in our fleet currently?

Ms. Keller: Well the reason we need an additional trolley is, first of all we are behind in retiring our existing fleet, so we do need to move forward with procuring an additional trolley. I know right now we have 11 trolleys, but at any given time....

Commissioner Quesada: We don't have a quorum at this moment.

Ms. Keller: Oh OK. I'm sorry.

Mayor Cason: Can we get one of our bodies back so we can – we are running way behind. One of the things I want to ask the three people who want to speak, do you really want to speak?- can we in essence of time because I want to move on to other items about E-8 and E-9 before we break and get into discussions that go onto 7 or 8 o'clock at night. So I want to know whether or not those that have the cards either can be very quick or you want to....

Speaker: I will be very brief....

Mayor Cason: Go ahead you can continue, we've got a body.

Ms. Keller: OK.

Commissioner Quesada: You were talking about implementation.

Ms. Keller: OK. Implementation – We have to get approval from MDT (Miami-Dade Transit) to amend the agreement.

Mayor Cason: How long would that take?

Ms. Keller: That would probably take around three months. We talked to them preliminarily and they are supportive of this expansion. Next, is engage the community and we need to explain the service and we also have to get consensus on the stop locations.

Mayor Cason: So that's when you would get the resident buy-in where the stops would be. OK.

Ms. Keller: Correct.

Commissioner Quesada: So we are not voting on the actual stops today?

Ms. Keller: No. No. No. No.

Commissioner Quesada: It would move by a few feet or....

Ms. Keller: This proposal – the stops that you see on the routes were basically just put into...

Mayor Cason: Got you. Got you.

Ms. Keller: The next is, we designed the right-of-way improvements and coordinate with the County and State and that is to make sure that any of the stops that we identify are ADA compliant and then of course we construct.

Mayor Cason: And stage two and one move concurrently, in other words, meeting with the residents as you try to get the Interlocal Agreement.

Ms. Keller: Absolutely.

Mayor Cason: So we can speed this up.

Ms. Keller: Absolutely. To design the right-of-way improvements and coordinate with the County we would expect about six months, and that of course would not begin until we get consensus from the community.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Ms. Keller: And of course we have construction.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Commissioner Keon: It's scheduled for 2016 to start.

Mayor Cason: Or sooner.

Commissioner Quesada: That seems like so far off.

Commissioner Keon: Yes, it did. It seems like a long time.

Commissioner Quesada: That's what I was just speaking to Manager about.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: I guess I have a question Jessica. Is that the implementation phase or is that also because the temporary facility situation that we have?

Ms. Keller: Yes. We wouldn't necessarily recommend that we expand service during a time when we are not really certain about how and where we are maintaining our trolleys today.

Interim City Manager Olazabal: So let me ask this question. If we had to expand, if we were looking at trying to expand service while we don't have a permanent location, would it be feasible?

Ms. Keller: If we had to we could.

Mayor Cason: So we could do it even though the permanent stuff is not in place?

Interim City Manager Olazabal: But that wasn't a concern. How quickly would we be able to implement?

Ms. Keller: It would be the second half of Fiscal 2015, about a year.

Mayor Cason: After December – after April.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Mayor Cason: I think probably the consensus here is the faster we can do it the better.

Commissioner Quesada: I'm going to make a motion.

Mayor Cason: OK. We have three people who want to speak. Let me ask Leona Cooper, if you'd come up please and then followed by Cherry Smart and Edwina Prime. Please be short as you can. Thank you.

Mrs. Leona Cooper: Good morning, my name is Leona Cooper; I live at 200 Washington Drive. I'm the widower of a lifetime member of this community and what I would like to do is to ask you when I get everybody's ears listening, I would like to ask you to approve any possible way to get that trolley to come into our neighborhood. I think our neighborhood is deserving of it and no matter what the cost is and I know cost is important because I know how it is to handle a budget, to have it done because we feel like outsiders by not having this service, and we are hoping to expand our business area and that would bring more people into our neighborhood. Our neighborhood is very beautiful, they should come anyway to visit just to see how it looks and so I would recommend that you approve this today for that to operate and I would like to make sure that you know that even though you are doing a six month trial period that it should go on for much longer. You had some use with the Biltmore area, but remember the people that live in the Biltmore area are more affluent than the ones that live in the MacFarlane area, and we are more accessible to using public transportation than those people were. So I want you to consider that when you are making your recommendations as to how the trolley should be run. I heard you saying something about 4 hours. I don't know what those hours are. It would be important for us to know that, so as soon as you can get that information to us, I'd appreciate it and I appreciate you trying to consider this, it's been going on for a very long time, much longer than I think the Mayor has been in our City. So if you just put a move on, let's get it going, we'd appreciate it. Thank you very much.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Mrs. Cooper, I think the hours were 7 to 9 (a.m.) and 4 to 6 (p.m.). I think that's the hours that are proposed in the 4 hours.

Mrs. Cooper: 7 a.m.

Commissioner Keon: 7 in the morning to 9:a.m., 7 to 9 a.m., 4 to 6 p.m.

Mrs. Cooper: So in the middle of the day there will be nothing coming there.

Mayor Cason: That's right.

Commissioner Keon: At this moment under that proposal – yes.

Mrs. Cooper: Now there is another thing that I'd like to ask you then, since that is the point. If we are developing our area for business, as you know, the Gables Pointe area, I don't know how that would affect our business, not having riders to come over there.

Commissioner Keon: I think that that's always an issue we can take up once the area has been developed and it is an active area that would – and then the hours of people would be coming there, I think we can then look at that. I think for right now because you are still in the planning stages, we can start to build the ridership and the familiarity with it and whatever, and it can always be adjusted, it can always be adjusted.

Mrs. Cooper: Let's say it can always be adjusted not considering it, you will do it.

Commissioner Keon: Well, we'll look at it, we'll see – absolutely.

Mrs. Cooper: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Mrs. Cooper, first of all thank you for being here. Hopefully today we get the trolleys extended from 7 to 9, 4 to 6, like Commissioner Keon said, and what the Mayor said, which I think was very poignant was that in six months we will drill down and look at the numbers and I'm pretty sure that we are going to have good ridership, especially as that area, the commercial component of our City continues to develop on the Grand area. So I ask you to have some faith, tell the residents in the area to ride the trolley, enjoy the trolley, and in six month we'll readdress the issue, let's cross this hurdle and then we'll get to the next finish line. So our

next goal would be hopefully to have trolley services throughout the day, but I think today if we are able with my colleagues help to get a trolley, I think we've won a major battle today.

Mayor Cason: Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: One name, is that Prime, I can't read it.

Commissioner Lago: Prime.

Mayor Cason: Prime.

Commissioner Keon: Mrs. Prime.

Mrs. Edwina Prime: Honorable Mayor, Commissioners, my name is Edwina Prime and I live at 141 Florida Avenue. I am presently President of the Lola B. Walker Homeowners Association, which includes the MacFarlane and Golden Gate communities. My comments today are summaries of many discussions from the active members of the Association and others in the area. Our concerns are always focused on the fact that there was none or limited public transportation in the area. The communities support the expansion of the trolley, this is a benefit for adults and students who would not have to run across US-1 to reach the rail or go into other parts of the City of Coral Gables. Many of our young homeowners are not able to be here today, but submitted their names and addresses indicating that they are pleased with the trolley route. Special thanks to our Honorable Mayor and Commissioners who are taking an interest in our community and needs.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Commissioner Quesada: Mrs. Prime could you submit that list to the City Clerk?- so it's in the record. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Cherry Smart.

Ms. Cherry Smart: I won't speak at this time, but I look forward...

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much. Thank you. Do we have a motion?

Commissioner Quesada: I want to make a motion to extend the trolley service from 7 (a.m.) to 9 a.m. and from 4 (p.m.) to 6 p.m. into the MacFarlane District and to follow alternative number 3 route that was suggested by our outside consultant, and then in six months for the consultant to come back to give us some data on what we saw during that period.

Mayor Cason: Do we have a second?

Commissioner Lago: I will second that.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago seconds that.

City Clerk

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Commissioner Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 11:31:53 a.m.]