

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-5
February 26, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Parking Director, Kevin Kinney

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item I-5 [2:39:10 p.m.]

Update on the service expansion of the Coral Gables Freebie.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next is Coral Gables Freebie.

Parking Director Kinney: Just a quick update on our expanded Freebie. We are now in the fourth week of the new program. It appears that ridership is up about 40 percent.

Vice Mayor Lago: Wow.

Parking Director Kinney: For purposes of scope that means monthly, we are probably going to get close to 10,000 in the first month; and for further scope, monthly members for the trolley are about 100,000. So it's about one to ten. We have seen a few things that we're going to be talking about. Thursday is the end of the month. We will get the final statistics for February with all the heat maps to see where people are calling to and from, and we'll sit down with the vendor and staff and have conversations to make sure everything is happening the way we would like them to happen.

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Vice Mayor Lago: That's great news.

Parking Director Kinney: I can answer any questions.

Vice Mayor Lago: So that grant is paying dividends.

Parking Director Kinney: Yes. Now our goal is really, in fact, we'll even be talking next week about promoting a program for the Freebies that essentially will be something, I'm not a marketing person, ride me to the trolley or take me to the trolley, because we are hoping that it will benefit the trolley system also. But we have noticed that its getting – one of the things to get the grant we have to do was allow it to go to Douglas, if the person said I want to go to Douglas Station. It has gone down there a little more often than we like. What we are telling people right now is, let's take you to the trolley then you get an air conditioned ride to Douglas Station. Some people just want to take the Freebie.

Vice Mayor Lago: Can I ask you a quick question since you mentioned the trolley, I know it's off topic. I've gotten several residents who have called me saying, we've considered expanding the trolley down Ponce and University of Miami, maybe connecting with South Miami and allowing that corridor, giving us a bridge to that corridor, kind of like what we did when we connected on Grand and in other areas in the City with City of Miami.

Parking Director Kinney: You bring that up at a very appropriate time. We are starting strategic planning tomorrow. We did a study with the trolley system five years ago now and it is time to revisit that. One of the ones that was looked at, at that time was going down to UM or connecting with UM somehow. We also would be getting money from Gables Station that is essentially for the same purpose to figure out how we connect with UM. So that is a conversation that needs to have.

Vice Mayor Lago: And I'll tell you why I bring it up, because as your representative on the Executive Policy Board for the TPO, Commissioner Sosa has been really pushing to connect the cities, as a result of the lack of transportation initiatives being offered by the county, like I mentioned to you before, we failed miserably in regards to the implementation of the SMART Plan. They are really leaning heavily on having the trolleys connect from city to city. So if we could find a way somehow to connect to that corridor in my neck of the woods by UM, it's something that you could potentially connect from the City of Miami to Coral Gables to South Miami.

Parking Director Kinney: But with City of Miami now we have three points of contact. But you're right, you can't get on our trolley and go to UM.

Vice Mayor Lago: Or South Miami or that corridor which runs on 57th Avenue.

Parking Director Kinney: But that was one of the top ones that was in the master plan before. The issue was funding and there wasn't enough.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'm going to get you a map of what we are working on which are other municipalities and their trolley routes from the Executive Policy Board, just so you can have it and take a look at it, the way that cities are trying to connect, so you don't have so many islands. For example, West Miami, South Miami.

Parking Director Kinney: The connection with City of Miami has benefits, yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: It has. Thank you Kevin.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright. I think that's it.

[End: 2:43:53 p.m.]