

COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT PLAN

PART FOUR: THE REDEVELOPMENT PROGRAM II. COMMUNITY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS GROUP 3: COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS

3.4: Downtown Transit System – The “Downtown Roundabout”

Background

In 1985, the Atlantic Avenue Task Force presented a report to the City Commission which outlined a list of proposed physical improvements along the Atlantic Avenue Corridor. One of the improvements discussed was the use of a tram system to connect the downtown area to A1A. The notion of a downtown shuttle was further emphasized in the City's Comprehensive Plan, which stated that the City and CRA would work together to establish a plan for an in-town shuttle system to serve the downtown, Tri-Rail, and the beach. In 1992 the CRA commissioned FAU/FIU Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems to give its recommendations on the development and operation of a trolley system in Delray. The report, entitled, "A Downtown Trolley: An Alternative Transportation Mode in the City of Delray Beach", recommended a free, three-trolley system, however funding was not available at the time to implement it. In 1995 the City worked with the Florida Department of Transportation to create a Transportation Concurrency Exception Area ("TCEA") for the downtown. The TCEA designation was necessary in order to stimulate redevelopment of the downtown without triggering a requirement for road improvements that would be impossible to implement due to right-of-way constraints. In order to provide alternative measures to mitigate traffic impacts, the City committed as part of the TCEA to a plan for inner-city transit.

The City began offering a free shuttle service named the Downtown Roundabout in January of 2007, using a combination of City and CRA funds. The original vehicles were shuttle buses that were owned and operated by a private company under contract with the City. In 2013 the City purchased four trolley style vehicles using a combination of CRA and FDOT funds, and contracted with a private firm to operate the service. The City is responsible for ongoing maintenance and fuel.

By providing a direct link along the Atlantic Avenue corridor between the rail station and the beach, the shuttle system increases the accessibility of the downtown to the residential neighborhoods east of I-95 and visitors who wish to utilize the Tri-Rail system for a day at the beach, to visit the Delray Beach Center for the Arts or to shop in downtown Delray. Out of area commuters can also use the trolley to get to their jobs in the downtown. This type of local transportation system can decrease automobile trips throughout the area by enabling people to park in centralized parking facilities downtown and travel to other sections without having to use a car.

Program Objectives

- Provide an alternative means of transportation between the Tri-rail station and the beach along Atlantic Avenue.
- Increase market appeal of the downtown, both to visitors and to new businesses.
- Limit automobile traffic trips within the downtown to increase mobility.

- Provide additional transportation system for low and moderate income riders in order to facilitate employment opportunities.
- Provide an alternative means of transportation in and around the downtown for the elderly.

Program Description

- Phase One shall be the implementation of the shuttle system for a three-year period
- Phase Two shall be an assessment of ridership and determination of future system needs and funding sources.

Program Participants and Administration

- Participants in the project may include, but are not limited to, the City, CRA, South Florida Regional Transportation Authority (SFRTA), and the MPO.
- Other participants may include the DDA and the Chamber of Commerce, Delray Beach Marketing Cooperative, Palm Tran, and other State and Federal agencies.

Funding Sources

- Funding for the initial operation during the grant period was by the City, the CRA, and the MPO.
- Ongoing funding sources shall be comprised of CRA, City, SFRTA, FDOT and other sources as available.
- Additional revenue opportunities shall be explored such as ridership fares, advertising and sponsorships.

Program Schedule

- Phase One began in 2007 and is ongoing.
- Phase Two began in 2007 and is ongoing.