**PALM BEACH COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

<u>**AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY**</u>

Meeting Date: October 20, 2020   [ ] Consent   [ ] Regular
                                            [ ] Ordinance [X] Public Hearing
Department: Palm Tran

I. EXECUTIVE BRIEF

Motion and Title: Staff recommends motion to approve: Changes to the Palm Tran Connection Efficiencies Project (CEP) which modifies the Eligibility and Reservation Process.

Summary: Palm Tran has undertaken a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the Palm Tran Connection (PTC) Paratransit Service. Palm Tran Connection is growing at an unsustainable rate when compared to its peers, accounting for one-third of Palm Tran's current annual operations budget. Palm Tran management has endeavored in the Palm Tran Connection Efficiencies Project (CEP) over the last year to evaluate some of the key components of Palm Tran Connections service affecting cost and operational performance; capacity, eligibility and on-time performance. The evaluation analyzed key metrics in these areas and utilized service data to make recommendations to modify the eligibility process, the utilization of non-dedicated transportation providers such as taxis or Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) during high-peak demand and alternative service options for non-ADA trips. The proposal will provide options to better serve Palm Beach County's disabled, senior and transportation disadvantaged communities. At the November 26, 2019 Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Workshop, staff presented the CEP and provided information that compared Palm Tran Connection service to its peers and federal ADA minimum guidelines for paratransit service. The need for public input is a Federal Transit Administration requirement.

The following are recommended for approval:
1. Develop an Enhanced Eligibility Assessment process.
2. Modify the reservation window to reduce cancellations.
3. Study an "Overflow" Service Option (Uber/Lyft/Taxi) to allow paratransit customers to have alternative transit options.
4. Develop Non-ADA Service Delivery Options for trips that do not fall within the ADA service area.

The Board directive at the November 26, 2019 BCC Workshop was to move forward with the Enhanced Eligibility Assessment process, modify the reservation window to reduce cancellations from 7 days to 3 days, further assess the "Overflow" Service option and develop Non-ADA Service Delivery Options for potential future implementation.

As a result of COVID-19, staff is recommending pivoting from implementing in-person eligibility interviews as presented at the November 26, 2019, BCC Workshop, to phone interviews to minimize person to person contact during the pandemic.

Additionally, Palm Tran staff will develop the "Overflow" Service option and Non-ADA Service Delivery Options and bring these items back to the Board for consideration in Spring 2021.

Background and Policy Issues:
Palm Tran Connection is a shared ride, door-to-door service operated by Palm Tran for eligible passengers with disabilities, senior citizens and the transportation disadvantaged. There have not been any significant changes in PTC's overall service approach in two decades. In 2019 PTC utilized 290 vehicles and provided close to one million passenger trips, demonstrating the need to begin to manage the growth of the service through enhanced policies and procedures that are better aligned with industry best practices and ADA minimum guidelines.

At the November 26, 2019 BCC Workshop the following was covered during the presentation:
- The CEP generally found that the rapid growth on Palm Tran Connection service is affecting performance.
- Significant growth in demand for paratransit service, which in 2019 averaged 360 new ADA eligible customers per month, which is nearly three times more than Palm Tran's peer agencies.
- Poor on-time performance due to increased demand of the service.
- Unusually large proportion of paratransit service compared to fixed-route bus service based on peer comparisons.

Attachments:
1. Presentation

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Recommended by: _____   10/7/2020
                     Executive Director   Date

Approved By: _____   10/8/2020
                   County Administration   Date

II. FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS

A. Five Year Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Fiscal Years	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Capital Expenditures					
Operating Costs					
External Revenues					
Program Income(County)					
In-Kind Match(County					
NET FISCAL IMPACT					
#ADDITIONAL FTE					
POSITIONS (CUMULATIVE					

Is Item Included in Current Budget?   Yes **No**

Does this item include the use of federal funds? **Yes** No

Budget Account No:

Fund Agency Organization Object

B. Recommended Sources of Funds/Summary of Fiscal Impact:

This item has no Fiscal Impact

C. Departmental Fiscal Review:

(signature)

III. REVIEW COMMENTS:

A. **OFMB Fiscal and/or Contract Dev. and Control Comments:**

(signature) 9/23/2020

OFMB   Contract Dev. & Control

B. **Legal Sufficiency**

(signature) 10/2/2020

Assistant County Attorney

C. **Other Department Review**

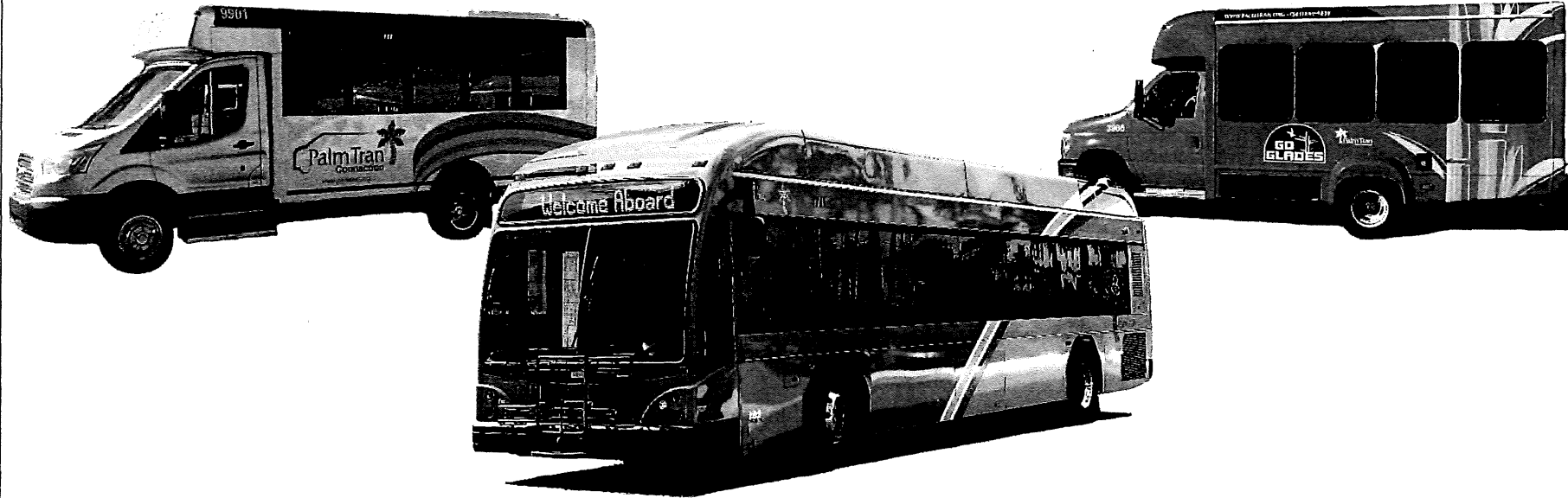_____

Department Director

(THIS SUMMARY IS NOT TO BE USED AS A BASIS FOR PAYMENT.)

Connection Efficiencies Project ("CEP")
Public Hearing
October 20, 2020

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Clinton B. Forbes
Executive Director

CEP presented to BCC November 26, 2019

BCC directed staff to proceed with the following:

Proposed Plan	Proposed Timeframe
Enhanced eligibility assessment	Spring 2020
New overflow option (TNC - Uber/Lyft/UZERV)	Complete study spring 2020
Develop non-ADA service delivery options	Spring 2020

CEP Project Changes as a Result of COVID-19

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November 26, 2019 BCC Workshop	Goals for CEP	COVID-19
Unsustainable growth	Manage growth	Less ridership
Poor OTP	Increase OTP	Good OTP
Registration vs. Certification	In-person Assessment/Certification	Phone Assessment/Certification
No non-dedicated overflow options	Study TNC options (Uber/Lyft/UZERV) Spring 2020	Study TNC options (Uber/Lyft/UZERV) Spring 2021
Exceed ADA guidelines	Develop non-ADA service delivery options Spring 2020	Report on options for non-ADA trip delivery Spring 2021
High rider no-show/cancel rate	Decrease rider no show/cancel rate	Reduce reservations from 7-days to 3-days out

OTP = On-Time Performance

Recommendations

Implement enhanced eligibility process:

- Phone interviews for all new applicants
  - Starting in November 2020
  - Medical verifications of applicants
  - Screen applicants for need based on mobility limitations
  - Educate customers about all available transportation options in the county
  - Assign conditional eligibility where feasible and provide travel-training options
  - Eligibility appeals process for riders that are denied
  - Existing customers will not be impacted at this time

Modify the reservation window to reduce cancellations:

- Reduce scheduling of reservations from 7-days in advance to 3-days in advance

Future considerations:

- Study TNC Options (Uber/Lyft/UZERV) - Spring 2021
- Report on options for Non-ADA trip delivery - Spring 2021

Questions from BCC Public Hearing