

INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

DATE: May 5, 2016
TO: Anthony Lyons, City Manager
FROM: Fred Murry, Assistant City Manager *FM*
SUBJECT: Restructuring the Bus Pass Program for the Homeless

The City is in the process of restructuring the Bus Pass Program for the Homeless living at GRACE Marketplace and Dignity Village. Regional Transit System (RTS) notified us that the current bus pass program is no longer a viable option and that they were seeking alternative solutions. The current program expires May 18th and was patterned after the Employee Bus Program which has an average goal of \$0.75 per trip. The City purchased a quantity of bus passes at a discounted rate, and the Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless and Hungry (ACCHH) is responsible for administering and distributing the passes. The City provided \$15,000 annually for the program and agreement. Unfortunately, the program was so popular that it has been over-utilized (with over 260,000 trips in FY15). RTS would have to charge approximately \$197,700 annually in order to meet the \$.075 per trip goal to be in alignment with other programs such as the Employee Bus Pass Program.

City staff notified ACCHH about a month ago that the program had to be restructured, and offered them the opportunity to manage the entire process, including budgeting and fundraising, with the City providing the budgeted \$15,000 in annual program funding. RTS has identified a grant that may provide additional funding for a new program. This grant is designed to provide assistance for transportation disadvantaged (including homeless individuals) and would allow for the purchase of monthly passes through the local Community Transportation Coordinator (CTC), which is MV Transportation. As the CTC, MV is willing to apply for the grant and work with City staff and ACCHH to develop a viable program. The City's \$15,000 "donation" could be used as the 10% matching funds required to apply for the grant. If the grant is awarded, it would not go into effect until July 1st, resulting in a gap of services between May 18th and June 30th.

In the event that the grant funds are not awarded to the local CTC, ACCHH and City staff will have to explore ways to best utilize the available funding the City has budgeted for this service, and seek alternative funding sources in order to continue a bus pass program with ACCHH.

Staff has asked GRACE Marketplace to notify its clients that the Bus Pass Program will be restructured for the upcoming year and that there may be a gap in free service for approximately six weeks; Steven Belk, Project Manager for Dignity Village, has been asked to share this information with his residents as well. In the meantime, staff is looking at discretionary funds for the homeless to determine whether any funding is available to bridge the gap between the end of the current program and the start of the new funding source.

MV, Uber, and RTS regular services continue to be available during this restructuring of the ACCHH Bus Pas Program. Some residents living at GRACE Marketplace or Dignity Village may have monthly resources that would allow the purchase of a regular bus pass for services.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

cc: Claudia Tuck, Director, Alachua County Community Support Services
Theresa Lowe, Executive Director, Alachua County Coalition for the Homeless
and Hungry
Steven Belk, Dignity Village Project Manager
Jesus Gomez, Regional Transit System Director
Ed Griffin, Community Transportation Coordinator/MV Transportation GM
Millie Crawford, Transit Services Coordinator
Kimberly Sweigard, Transit Program Coordinator