

Memo

To: Ed Lavalley, City Manager
From: Ron Fazzalaro, Chairman, Traffic Advisory Task Force
CC: Len Bramble, Assistant City Manager;
Members, Traffic Advisory Task Force
Date: October 13, 2016
Subject: Recommendations for Trolley Program

Background

The city of Venice conducted a Trolley Pilot Program in 2016, using \$60,000 from the BP settlement to fund the program. From late January to early April, a single trolley ran a specified route on a 30-minute schedule Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The trolley averaged 118 riders per day. Detailed summary statistics, route information, observations, comments and other data may be found in a report dated July 11 2016 compiled by the Venice Public Information Office¹.

The Trolley Pilot Program was deemed a success and city officials plan to go forward with the program in 2017. Accordingly, \$75,000 is identified in the 2017 budget to conduct the program.

The Traffic Advisory Task Force was asked to provide input and recommendations for the successful implementation of the 2017 Trolley program. The Task Force reviewed the 2016 pilot program in detail with staff, and studied the referenced summary report data. Several Task Force members actively participated as riders and observers during the pilot program and shared their observations and opinions with the Task Force and staff. At the September 1, 2016 Task Force meeting the group discussed numerous issues related to implementing a successful trolley program. At the October 6 meeting the Task Force reviewed this report and further refined its recommendations and comments.

Recommendations

The Task Force makes the following observations and recommendations.

1. **Purpose:** The Task Force believes the primary purpose of the program is to move people throughout selected parts of the city, and maximize use of available parking during the peak season. The program can have a positive effect on the perceived parking problem in downtown areas, lower vehicle circulation in congested areas, encourage participation in city events and promote area businesses. As an ancillary benefit, the trolley program should promote the charm, uniqueness and ambiance of Venice.
2. **Timing:** The Task Force recommends the trolley program run three to four months in the January-April timeframe. The city should consider including Sunday service, perhaps at the compromise of running one week less or eliminating a weekday if monetary constraints prevent seven-day service. Service should commence at 10:30 am and end at 5:30 pm. The circuit time should take no more than 30 minutes.

3. Scope: We recommend the trolley route be changed from the pilot route. At a minimum, the route should include stops at Centennial Park, Venice Beach, South Jetty, Community Center and Library. We recognize the difficulty in providing turnaround capability at the South Jetty, but we believe the city should strongly consider configuring the route to include this stop due to numerous comments by riders expressing a desire to visit this area.

Also, consideration should be given to potential stops off the island (Example: Publix on East Venice Ave and Capri Isles Blvd.) to help minimize island traffic and offer an alternative to visitors and citizens visiting the island. This may not be possible with single trolley service, but may be something to consider as a future expansion of the program. This idea is consistent with area growth.

4. Narrative: The city should provide a recorded audio narrative or historical story of Venice, including descriptions consistent with the sights along the trolley route.
5. Financial Impact:
 - a. Cost: We believe the city should offer \$30,000-\$40,000 for operational cost of the trolley to potential bidders, to defray the cost to operate.
 - b. Revenue - Fare: We recommend a daily fee charge of one dollar per rider, to include multiple boarding throughout the day. Children under five years old should ride free. This revenue should be retained by the contractor, to help defray the operational cost.
 - c. Revenue – Advertising: We recommend the selected provider be allowed to sell advertising for the interior and exterior of the trolley, and that profits derived from advertising should be retained by the contractor. The city should review all advertising prior to installation on or in the trolley to assure appropriate content. The contractor should be encouraged to give strong consideration to local businesses for advertising.
6. Monitoring: The city should designate an employee to monitor trolley operation and contractor performance, through the use of check rides, observation, and feedback from riders. Also, the city should develop parameters and metrics to determine the success or failure of the program, and to recommend future enhancements, expansion, and improvements. The contractor should provide daily passenger statistics similar to the data collected during the 2016 pilot program. The city and contractor should consider the use of comment cards on the trolley, and the use of the “SeeClickFix” program to provide rider feedback.
7. Promotion: The city should actively promote the trolley program through the use of pamphlets, web sites, newspapers and other means of communication.

Respectfully submitted,



Ron Fazzalaro, Chairman
Traffic Advisory Task Force

ⁱ “Summary Report Trolley Pilot Program 2016”, City of Venice, Florida, July 11, 2016