

TOWN OF LAUDERDALE-BY-THE-SEA
PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING
MINUTES
Jarvis Hall
4505 Ocean Drive
Tuesday, March 26, 2019
1:00 PM

Special Projects Coordinator Debbie Hime called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Also present were Project Manager Kathie Margoles, Karen Bates, and Public Information Officer Steve d'Oliveira from Town Staff, Jacque-Ann Isaacs and Ryan Hatch from Broward County Transit, and David Fernandez from Limousine Services of South Florida.

Special Projects Coordinator Debbie Hime introduced all present, recalling that the first public meeting to discuss the Pelican Hopper was held on May 9, 2018. This discussion included the bus route, the website, the Town's boundaries, and proposed service changes. Broward County Transit (BCT), which operates throughout all of Broward County, includes fixed route service, Transportation Options (TOPS), and the community bus system. The Pelican Hopper is part of this community shuttle service.

Special Projects Coordinator Hime continued that a new Pelican Hopper vehicle has been proposed for 2019, along with a proposed route plan and schedule developed by both the Town and BCT. This schedule will go before the Town Commission for approval at their April 9, 2019 meeting.

The timeline for the new route includes today's overview with public input, after which time the route will go before the Commission. Once the Commission has approved the route, BCT will follow the updated route throughout the Town to determine adjusted stop times. In addition to the new schedule, there will be a mobile app for the shuttle service, which will include all stops and the time frame in which the bus is expected to be at each stop. Automated phone service will be available for residents who do not have access to the app. Signage and brochures will be made available throughout the Town, and stickers will be used to identify Pelican Hopper bus stops.

The new shuttle vehicles will be propane-powered and will be wrapped to reflect new branding so it is identifiable outside the boundaries of Lauderdale-By-The-Sea. Service on the Pelican Hopper will be free.

The new bus is expected to become available in summer 2019. Adjusted route hours will be as follows:

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- Weekdays: 9 a.m. to approximately 5:25 p.m.
- Friday and Saturday nights: service until 9 p.m.
- Sunday: 9 a.m. to 5:25 p.m.

Special Projects Coordinator Hime explained that due to lack of demand, there will no longer be Sunday night bus service, and the bus will no longer go over the bridge on Saturday afternoons.

Updated service will extend the length of El Mar Drive to Pine Avenue, ending at Publix. After leaving Publix, the bus will go south on Washingtonia Avenue. This will provide additional access for hotels. The route will be truncated into the Terra Mar and Bel Air neighborhoods, as there was little ridership in these areas. A stop has been added at the Galt Library.

The new interlocal agreement (ILA) with BCT will no longer include the day after Thanksgiving as a holiday so the bus will run on that day. Routes will also be adjusted to provide service for Town events such as Christmas-By-The-Sea, New Year's Eve, and other celebrations on a case-by-case basis.

Another proposed change is to have the bus move west on Commercial Boulevard and turn left onto Basin Drive, where there may be riders who want to take the bus into town. The Pelican Hopper will meet up with Pompano Beach's community shuttle, known as the Green Route. Because BCT no longer has a "wave and ride" policy, community shuttles are asked to use BCT stops and follow their guidelines.

Signage is still in development, with in-town signs intended to show the bus's complete route. BCT bus stop signs will also use signage identifying them as Pelican Hopper stops. Pompano Beach's Green Route community shuttle will operate from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and will connect with several other BCT buses as well, providing access to Pompano's City Center, Lighthouse Point, and Hillsboro Beach's community bus.

A stop has been added to bring passengers into town for Friday night music events. At 3 p.m., when the street is closed for setup, the Pelican Hopper will come up El Mar Drive, turn west on Commercial Boulevard and north on A1A, and will cut through the El Prado parking lot to return to El Mar Drive. From 5:25 p.m. to 9 p.m., the Friday evening route will be in effect, accessing A1A before returning to El Mar Drive. Weekend day service has not been fully determined, as headways have not yet been worked through.

Community shuttle service is being funded through revenue from the Broward County penny surtax, which was approved on referendum in November 2018.

Safety adjustments are mandated by BCT and will no longer allow for “wave and ride” service. All stops will be reflected on the GPS tracking system. Signage and wraps on the bus itself are expected to state this policy so there is no confusion. Drivers may not open doors outside official stops for liability reasons.

Special Projects Coordinator Hime encouraged residents with questions or other input to reach out to her, the Town Commissioners, or BCT. She reiterated that the new route will be presented for Commission approval at the April 9, 2019 meeting, where public comment can be provided as well.

Eva Marissa, President of the Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Chamber of Commerce, commented that several of her hotel guests use the Pelican Hopper, and hoped the new route and schedule would be easier for individuals to read.

Dennis Royes, driver of the Pelican Hopper, asked if the updated route will offer new stops as well as the regular stops. Special Projects Coordinator Hime confirmed this, adding that funds are budgeted toward an educational program to help riders understand the updates.

There was discussion of where hotel guests and others would access the Pelican Hopper. Special Projects Coordinator Hime explained that there are different regular stops where guests and residents could catch the bus, noting that stops could be added at the Town’s portals for hotel guests. Buses may not leave stops early even if they reach them earlier than expected.

It was noted that the Pelican Hopper does not operate on A1A at this time, and this is not planned as part of the updated route, although there was discussion of adding a stop on A1A or multiple stops on Bougainvillea Drive. Some residents felt since the wave-and-ride policy will no longer be in effect, A1A may be a more appropriate stop.

Special Projects Coordinator Hime advised that once the route update is complete, it is not likely to change again for quite some time, as the update process is very time-consuming and must meet multiple federal guidelines. Any changes from the route’s currently proposed configuration would require another public meeting to advertise and further discuss these changes.

Ellen Zavell, President of the Lauderdale-By-The-Sea Lodging Association, pointed out that the bus often operates on back roads at present and is not highly visible. Special Projects Coordinator Hime noted that the bus is intended to use more of an in-town route than to go through the Town's neighborhoods.

Special Projects Coordinator Hime emphasized that while the Pelican Hopper is free, there may be alternative BCT routes that provide direct access to some destinations, including stops on A1A.

Proposed modifications to the route included:

- More stops at each of the portals along El Mar Drive
- Adjusting the southbound route to take Pine Avenue to A1A and turn right on Commercial Boulevard instead of coming down Bougainvillea Drive
- Replacing one or more stops on Bougainvillea Drive with a stop on A1A
- Extending the regular route to Pompano Beach to meet the Green Route
- Adding a stop at or near the Winn-Dixie grocery store

Special Projects Coordinator Hime concluded that due to the time necessary to review and possibly incorporate the proposed changes, it is not likely the updated route would go before the Town Commission at their April 9, 2019 meeting. More information will be available as the process continues.

With no further business at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.