Fare Policy

For

Community Bus Services

Enacted November 19, 2013

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Fare Policy is to establish guidelines for setting and/or restructuring public transit fares for the City. The City will utilize this policy to monitor fare collection and to make future decisions about adjusting fares. The information outlined in this policy includes:

- Fare Policy Goals: describing the overall intent of this policy;
- Fare Payment: including the types of fare media and passes that will be used;
- Fare Structure: establishing full fares and discounts for various services and ridership groups;
- Public Notice and Solicitation of Comment: outlining the procedures that will be used to ensure adequate public input is provided to support decisions regarding fares.
- All solicitations provided to the City Commission will be used in consideration as part of the decision.

II. Fare Policy Goal

The goal of this Fare Policy is to provide high-quality public transportation services for the benefit of the individuals and communities that it serves.

A. Fare Policy Objectives

The City has established the following Fare Policy Objectives that are considered necessary for achieving the Fare Policy Goal. The objectives are classified as those that focus on consumer issues and those that support business related matters. The nature of these objectives reflects the desire to develop a Fare Structure that balances affordability for our customers with the need to generate sufficient fare revenue to help maintain and expand transit operations.

1. **Customer/Community Related Objectives**
   The following three objectives directly support operating high quality public transportation service. When a fare increase or restructuring is proposed, all fare strategies considered for achieving these three objectives should be carefully weighed in relation to each other, as some possible strategies may achieve one objective at the expense of another. The City must strive to meet all of these objectives.

   a. **Increase Utilization of Public Transportation**
      The City aims to provide transportation solutions that meet the mobility needs of the public. Our success in this regard, is somewhat reflected through increases in ridership. Increased use of public transit also supports the broad social efforts of improving economic competitiveness, ensuring a reasonable quality of life for residents, reducing traffic congestion and decreasing air pollution. It is, therefore, important to adopt fare strategies that will encourage ridership by making public transit more attractive and convenient to use.

   b. **Establish Equitable Support from Local Interests**
      The City realizes the benefits of providing accessible transportation options to its citizens. To ensure a level of equity, fares must take into account the needs of various populations of users. To this extent, a fare structure should be established that supports, encourages and enables travel choices for our most needy citizens. Equity between users and non-users that help support the system must be considered when determining fare policies.

c. **Enhance Mobility & Access**
   The fare payment system should enhance the ability of riders to access the system and move through it with ease. To do so, the fare structure should be easy to understand. It should also provide adequate choices for customers to select the payment option that suits their travel needs.

2. **Financial & Administrative Objectives**
   All fare strategies under consideration must also meet the following three financial and administrative objectives to ensure the continued operation of community bus services.

   a. **Maintain/Increase Fare Revenue Stream**
      Fare revenue is a critical component of the operating budget. Any increase or restructuring of fares should ensure that the total fare revenue stream is maintained at an appropriate level to meet the economic needs of the system.

   b. **Increase the Efficiency of Fare Revenue Collection**
      To improve efficiencies, a fare collection system should reduce opportunities for fare abuse, minimize the costs associated with fare collection and reduce the associated administrative costs. The City can accomplish this by taking advantage of developments in fare collection technologies.

   c. **Streamline Fare Collection Process**
      A process should be established that minimizes the fare categories to eliminate confusion between the customers and community bus staff. In addition, fare collection should allow drivers to track and regulate inequities and expedite the boarding process.

III. Fare Payment

Based on the existing equipment available on the vehicles, the following fare payment options will be available for use on the community bus system:

- Cash fare payment will be accepted on-board;
- Miscellaneous coupons and passes may also be introduced periodically

IV. Fare Structure

A. Time-based Fares

- There will be no peak or off peak fares charged on the community bus. The fare remains the same throughout.

B. Transfers

- Transfers between routes that charge fares will not be issued. Passengers will be required to pay the appropriate bus fare or use their All Day or Monthly pass for each one-way ride to continue travel on each separate fare charging route.

- Free transfers are available between routes that do not charge a fare.

C. Reduced Fare Proof of Eligibility Requirements

- For Senior Reduced Fare (65 years or older) proof of age is required.

- For Disabled Reduced Fare, proof of disability is required:

-Medicare card
-Letter from doctor stating 50 percent or more permanent disability
-Social Security Income (SSI) printout or check

- For Medicare Reduced Fare, a Medicare card and photo identification card are required

Reduced Fare procedures are explained in more detail in Exhibit "A"

V. Fare Change Process and Public Comment Considerations

The City, in compliance with the provisions of 49 USC Section 5307(b)(4), shall hold a public hearing before its City Commission as follows:

(1) Prior to the implementation or change in fares.
(2) Prior to any change in service affecting twenty-five percent (25%) or more to the route miles, when calculated on total route miles or on daily revenue miles.
(3) Prior to establishing a new transit route.
(4) Prior to discontinuing any transit route in its entirety.
(5) Prior to implementing headway adjustments of more than ten (10) minutes during peak service hours or more than twenty (20) minutes during non-peak hours.

At least one Notice of Intent to Hold a Public Hearing must be published in a newspaper of general circulation in Broward County no less than ten (10) days prior to the date of the public hearing. The notice shall contain, at a minimum:

(1) A description of the contemplated service or fare change,

as appropriate.

(2) The date, time, and accessible location of the hearing.

(3) The location and addressee to whom written comments may be sent.

(4) Criteria for requesting available accommodations and alternative formats.

In the event that service changes are necessitated by road closures or road construction/repair, interruptions due to hurricane or other natural disaster, Contract Administrator may authorize service reductions on a temporary basis, without a prior public hearing, for a period not to exceed six (6) months. The temporary change in service shall be given widest possible advance notice through the use of flyers, handouts, or other printed material and shall include a telephone number to inquire further about the change or through which individual patrons may seek alternative format information.

EXHIBIT "A"

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 2013 Triennial Review Section 10

Basic Requirement

- Section 5307 grantees are expected to have a written locally developed process for soliciting and considering public comment before raising a fare or carrying out a major transportation service reduction.

Existence and Application of a Locally Developed Process

- Annually, Section 5307 grantees certify that they have a locally developed process to solicit and consider public comment prior to raising a fare or implementing major reduction in public transportation service. Grantees are expected to have a written policy that describes the public comment process. The grantee is responsible for defining a major service reduction. This can be defined as a standard, such as elimination of a route or reduction of "X" percent of service hours or miles. The policy should provide an opportunity for a public hearing or meeting for any fare increase or major service reduction. It should describe how such meetings will be conducted and how the results will be considered. A public meeting is not mandatory; however, an opportunity for a public meeting in order to solicit comment must be provided. Some grantees offer an opportunity for public comment for all fare and service changes. This meets the requirement.

Information to be provided to Public

- Fare and Service Change policy(ies). Information provided to public on fare increases and service reductions. Transcripts from public hearings. Minutes of board meetings. Staff summaries or other internal memoranda that document the public participation process.

a. The grantee must ensure that Section 5307 subrecipients have a process for obtaining public comment for fare increases and major service reductions. Either the grantee or its subrecipients are expected to have a written policy that describes the public comment process. The grantee must also ensure that subrecipients follow the process and consider public comment when they raise fares or implement major service reductions.

Basic Requirement

- For fixed route service supported with Section 5307 assistance, fares charged elderly persons, persons with disabilities or an individual presenting a Medicare card during off peak hours will not be more than half the peak hour fare.

Half Fare

- Fares charged elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders during off peak hours for Section 5307 funded fixed route transportation must not be more than half the peak hours fare. If there are services such as neighborhood circulator and shuttle services with fares that are different from the grantee's fare for its regular local service, separate half fares are needed for each type of service.

a. The requirement is applicable to:

(1) All fixed route services, including service to sporting events, that operate in both peak and off peak hours and use or involve facilities and equipment financed with Section 5307 funds, whether the services are provided by the grantee directly, by a contractor, by a subrecipient, or by another entity that leases facilities and/or equipment from the grantee

(2) Any express and commuter service that operates beyond peak hours

(3) Fixed route services for which the grantee has not defined peak hours

(4) Fixed routes that operate with reduced fares in both the peak and off-peak.

b. This requirement is not applicable to:

(1) Demand responsive services, including route deviation services
(2) Services that operate only during peak hours, such as express and commuter routes
(3) Services that operate only in the off peak hours (e.g., lunchtime circulators and weekend routes to sporting events)
(4) Services funded with other FTA assistance that do not use Section 5307 funded equipment or are not operated out of Section 5307 funded facilities.

c. "Elderly" by FTA regulations is to "at a minimum, include all persons 65 years of age or over." Grantees are permitted to use a definition that extends this fare to younger (e.g., 62 and over) persons. Persons with disabilities are defined by FTA as persons "who by reason of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including any individual who is a wheelchair user or has semi-ambulatory capabilities), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, mass transportation service or a mass transportation facility."

d. Medicare is available for people age 65 or older, younger people with disabilities, and people with end stage renal disease (permanent kidney failure required dialysis or transplant).

Proof of Eligibility

- The half fare program, as applied, may require passengers to show proof of eligibility when they pay their fare in order to receive the half fare. Examples of proof of eligibility include a driver's license, Medicare card, special identification card, and ADA eligibility card. The grantee may require more than one piece of identification for determining age or disability-related qualifications.

a. A grantee may require passengers to obtain a special identification card as the sole basis for paying the half fare. A valid Medicare card must be considered sufficient proof of eligibility for obtaining the identification card. Obtaining a special identification card must be relatively easy. For example, though not strictly prohibited, requiring individuals to travel to a single office, which may be inconveniently located, is not consistent with the intent of this requirement.

b. In order to ensure that the person presenting a Medicare card is the authorized individual, the grantee may request proof of identity (another card with a photograph). There is no specific prohibition against this, provided the grantee is not asking for further proof of eligibility from the Medicare cardholder but is only checking the validity of the Medicare card.

Internal and Public Information

- A policy is not effective unless it is communicated to those who will carry it out and to those who can take advantage of it. Training documents and communication with operators and others responsible for implementing the fare program should demonstrate that the grantee has notified staff of the program and included the correct information.

a. Public information should include half fare information, including Medicare eligibility, if it contains fare information. For example, if a brochure says the fare to ride the bus is $1.00, it also should say that the fare for elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and Medicare cardholders is $0.50 during off peak hours.

b. Though it is not necessary to have a separate fare category for Medicare cardholders, the grantee's readily available public information must be clear that Medicare cards are accepted as proof of eligibility for the half fare program, including for persons who are not elderly.

Oversight

- The grantee is responsible for ensuring that sub recipients, contractors, and lessees that operate services to which the half fare requirement applies comply. The oversight program should ensure:

    a. That a half fare is offered for applicable services during off peak hours,
    b. That the definition of off peak hours is reasonable,
    c. Identification requirements allow eligible persons to obtain the half fare, and internal and public fare information show the half fare and eligibility, including Medicare cardholder eligibility.