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Budget Cutbacks To Impact Trolley Riders In Southern Portion Of Boynton Beach CRA's District

Northern Route Continues Service Throughout Summer Months

Boynton Beach, FL – The Boynton Beach Community Redevelopment Agency's (CRA) board voted Tuesday, June 9, to eliminate the two southern trolley routes, effective July 3, 2009. Their decision was based on a preliminary estimate of a \$2 million revenue shortfall next year. The Northern trolley route, or Yellow Line, will remain in operation, while CRA staff evaluates its cost-effectiveness.

Factors that influenced the board's vote to cancel the southern routes were the annual operational cost of \$235,800, a similar funding issue currently facing Tri-Rail officials, and lack of riders. Mayor and CRA Chair Jerry Taylor lead discussions on the trolley agenda item at Tuesday night's meeting, noting, "When we launched the new southern routes back in 2008, it was understood this program would be temporary, based on its performance over a 19 month trial period. Projected growth of ridership has not occurred, so it makes sense to cut back now and save as many public dollars as possible." The CRA will end its contract for the southern routes with trolley operator Molly Stahlman, of *Molly's Trolleys*, in July, 2009, versus September, saving the agency an additional \$40,000.

As of July 3, service to the following Boynton Beach trolley routes, which include 16 stops, will be cancelled:

- **Green Line-** South Eastern district
Providing service to riders along the eastern portion of Federal Highway with transfer stops at Bethesda Hospital. Monday – Friday routes only, with daily service beginning at 9:30 a.m. and ending at 4:15 p.m. No weekend operations.
- **Red Line-** South Western district
Providing service to riders primarily west of I-95, through Leisureville and on to Congress Avenue and the Boynton Beach Mall. New stop scheduled for High Point Blvd. and transfer at Bethesda Hospital. Monday – Friday routes only, with daily service beginning at 9:30 a.m. and ending at 4:15 p.m. No weekend operations.

Evaluation of available funding sources for remaining Northern Route (Yellow Line) and determination of the "value-added" aspect for residents living in the CRA District will take place at the CRA's Budget workshop in August. Since its inception in July 2005, research show this original trolley route has proved to be the most popular, serving

more than 95,500 riders last year, comprised mainly of people taking the trolley to work and students.

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“Unfortunately we no longer have the luxury of customizing the trolley routes to the occasional rider’s needs, but rather want to offer this free program to those residents looking for a practical, affordable means of everyday transportation,” stated Lisa Bright, the CRA’s executive director. “This effort is part of the CRA’s ongoing commitment to improve the quality of life for residents and businesses within our 1,650-acre district.”

The Boynton Beach CRA is committed to serving the community by guiding redevelopment activities and stimulating economic growth within its 1,650 acre district. The agency focuses on creating a vibrant downtown core, providing affordable housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods. For more information on the CRA, its events and activities, call (561) 737-3256, or visit www.boyntonbeachcra.com.

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