# Manatee County Water Taxi Update



Council of Governments Meeting (COG) Meeting February 1, 2022



# Why a Water Taxi?

- Provides a transportation alternative for visitors, residents, and workers.
- Traffic congestion difficult to overcome with limited roadway, bridge and parking solutions available.
- Major bridge and roadway construction will exacerbate traffic congestion for the next ten years.
- Current Manatee County Bus and Trolley service, while robust and popular, is limited by congested roadways.



## **Existing/Recent Water Taxi Services**

- Water Taxi service in other communities serve visitors, residents, in a variety of waterways (such as canal, river, coastal, bay, open water).
- Some existing Water Taxi programs include:
  - City of Fort Lauderdale Water Taxi
  - St. Johns River Taxi (Jacksonville, FL)
  - Charleston (SC) Water Taxi
  - Chicago Water Taxi
  - Baltimore Water Taxi
  - Tampa Bay Pirate Water Taxi
  - City of Madeira Beach, FL (<u>defunct since</u> <u>2018</u>)

#### Fort Lauderdale, FL

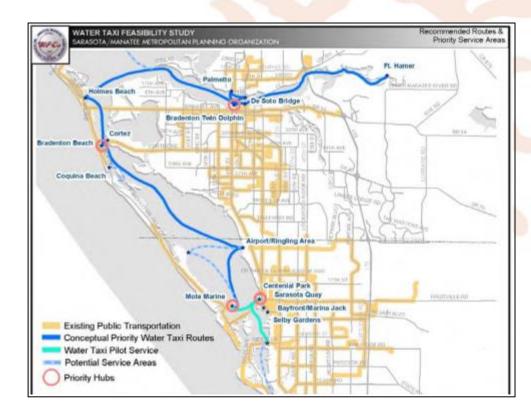


#### Baltimore, MD



### **MPO Water Taxi Study**

- The Sarasota/Manatee Metropolitan
  Planning Organization (MPO) completed the
  Water Taxi Feasibility Study Final Report in
  2005.
- The study concluded that routes, such as Ellenton/Palmetto/Conv. Center to downtown Bradenton, are more "feasible" according to the study's evaluation criteria.
- Stresses that for Water Taxi service to succeed in this region, certain essential milestones must be met:
  - Service must be adequately funded.
  - Route(s) must serve key destinations.
  - Secure adequate partnerships with private sector for operations.
  - Ensure service is adequately marketed and promoted.
  - Ensure terminals are served by adequate public transportation and bike/ped connections.





# **Implementation Considerations for Water Taxi Service**

#### <u>Water Taxi Business and Service</u> <u>Plan:</u>

- Target visitors, residents, and workers.
- Identify meaningful stops/destinations.
- Develop appropriate fare structure.

#### Identify Initial Startup Costs:

- Public/Private Sector costs.
- Vessel size/type/fleet.
- Docking locations/docking fees.

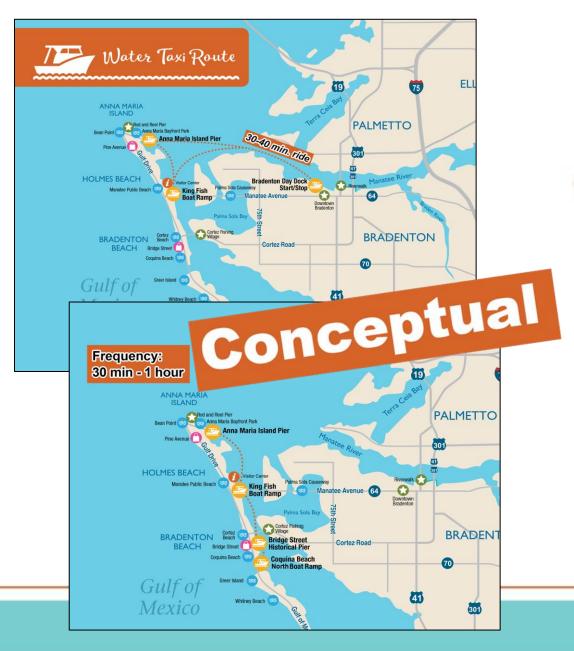
#### Identify Annual Operating Costs:

- Vessel maintenance, insurance,
- docking fees, fuel, labor, advertising/marketing, safety, fare collection.





#### **Pilot Project Concepts**



- What Does Preferred Service Look Like?
- Which Service Concepts are Most Realistic?
- Private Sector (Vendor) Interest in Operating a Preferred Service Concept?
- Is There Dock Space Available for System Connectivity?



### Next Steps

- Advertise an Invitation-to-Negotiate (ITN) procurement to identify qualified/capable Private Sector Operator(s) for Water Taxi services.
- Formalize partnerships with Cities.
- Initiate a Water Tax Pilot Program:
  - Minimum One-Year for Pilot.



