

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 (defunct since 2018)

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

- **Water Taxi Business and Service Plan:**

- 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.

