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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO AGENDA ITEM NO.
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE SHEET
OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Melissa Byrne Vossmer, Assistant City Manager

COPIES: Terry Brechtel, City Manager; J.Rolando Bono, Deputy City Manager; Tom Wendorf, Director of Public Works; Legal; File

SUBJECT: A Resolution Reinstating VIA Routes 54/70 and Implementation of a New Tourism Route Utilizing \$435,918 of the VIA Local Assistance Program Funds

DATE: August 7, 2003

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposed resolution authorizes VIA to utilize \$435,918 of the VIA Local Assistance Program Funds for reinstatement of VIA Routes 54/70 and Implementation of a New Tourism Route connecting four City Owned tourist destinations: The San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park, the Witte Museum and the Botanical Gardens.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

VIA has recently completed a Comprehensive Service Plan (CSP) for its' transit system. This was the most significant review and overhaul of the bus system in over 25 years and a number of changes have been recommended in the CSP based on the two-year study along with extensive community input. Two of the route changes, the proposed elimination of Routes 54 and 70, would have a tremendous impact on the West Side. Given this negative impact, Councilwoman Radle initiated discussions with VIA to determine how the routes might be reinstated.

In addition, the CSP recommended the implementation of a new route that would connect four City owned tourist destinations: The San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park, the Witte Museum and the Botanical Gardens. This would provide much needed bus service for employees as well as provide a direct connection for visitors to our community as an added benefit.

In a letter dated July 23, 2003 from VIA Chairperson Shelton Padgett, he suggested that since VIA did not have the funds for these routes, that the City might consider utilizing a portion of the VIA Local Assistance Program funds for this purpose. In response to the suggestion, Councilwoman Radle initiated a Council Consideration Request to support the expenditure of these funds in the amount of \$435,918, copy attached. This will provide funding for the routes through December 2004. Since not all projects have been reimbursed by VIA from this fund for street improvements in prior years, there are funds available.

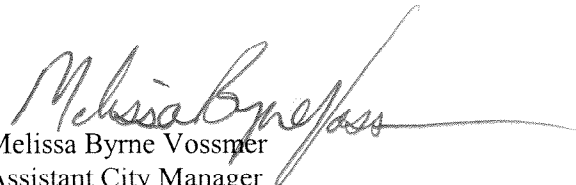
And finally, since the proposed expenditure only funds the routes through December 2004, Councilwoman Radle asks that VIA incorporate funding for these routes in their operational budget at that time in order to provide uninterrupted service.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The VIA Local Assistance Program was initiated in FY1998. The purpose of this program is to pay for street improvements, made by the City or its' contractor, to streets along bus routes including bus lanes, bus pads and intersections as part of the continuing investment in City streets. This Program was developed in recognition of the constant wear and tear on City streets along the routes by buses. Due to budget constraints, the Program was discontinued for FY2002 by VIA. The end result of the loss of this funding source is added pressure to the City funded Street Maintenance Program.

FISCAL IMPACT

Currently there is a balance of \$2.1 million in this Program. Last fall, a request for reimbursement for work completed in 2002 was submitted to VIA in the amount of \$1.4 million, which has not yet been received by the City. The remaining balance, after reimbursement to the City, is sufficient to provide the \$435, 918 needed to maintain these routes through December 2004.


Melissa Byrne Vossmer
Assistant City Manager

Approved:


Terry M. Brechtel
City Manager

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CITY OF SAN ANTONIO
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL
INTERDEPARTMENTAL CORRESPONDENCE SHEET

2003 AUG -1 PM 4:07

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Patti Radle, Councilmember District 5

COPIES: Terry M. Brechtel, City Manager; Melissa Byrne Vossmer, Assistant City Manager, Yolanda Ledesma, Acting City Clerk; Andrew Martin, City Attorney; Gayle McDaniel, Assistant to City Council; Tom Wendorf, Director of Public Works, Nellie Shannon, Assistant Director of Public Works; File

SUBJECT: Consideration of an August 7, 2003 Council Agenda Item regarding the Reinstitution of VIA Routes 54/70 and Implementation of New Tourism Route

DATE: July 31, 2003

Your concurrence is requested in directing staff to place on the August 7, 2003 council agenda an item concerning the reinstitution of VIA routes 54/70 and the implementation of a new tourism route, as described herein.

The City of San Antonio and VIA have maintained a close working relationship over the years in the provision of transit services. This relationship was highlighted when in 1998 the VIA Board of Trustees adopted a resolution whereby VIA would provide funding to the City of San Antonio to help defray expenses in maintaining streets included along bus routes. As was acknowledged at that time, VIA buses were a significant contributing factor to the deterioration of streets and they continue to be. It was, and still is, fiscally difficult, if not impossible, for the City of San Antonio to keep up with the maintenance of these streets throughout the City.

This relationship has again been recently highlighted with the significant concern expressed about the elimination of two VIA Routes, 54 and 70, as recommended in the Comprehensive Service Plan (CSP). In the most significant overhaul of the bus system in over 25 years a number of changes have been recommended in the CSP based on a two-year study and with extensive community input. Included in these changes is the elimination of routes 54 and 70, which has a tremendous impact on the West side. In addition, the CSP recommended the implementation of a new route that would connect four city-owned tourist destinations: The San Antonio Zoo, Brackenridge Park, the Witte Museum, and the Botanical Gardens, providing much needed bus service for employees as well as tourists.

In response, this memo has been generated to ask for your support in committing a portion of the remaining City of San Antonio allocation in the amount of \$435,918 (per VIA's July 23rd letter to Mayor Garza), to be applied for the continuation of these routes, 54 and 70, as well as the implementation of the tourism route through December 2004. It is understood that this would be a one-time commitment to utilize allocated street maintenance funds in this manner. It is also understood that the City Council would look to VIA to incorporate these routes into their operational budget with the new fiscal year.

Mayor and Council
Reinstitution of VIA Routes 54/70 and
Implementation of New Tourism Route
July 31, 2003

To provide a history of these maintenance funds it should be noted that through 1999 to 2002, VIA allocated a total of \$4.675 million for street maintenance and improvements. As of 2001, an amount of \$2.5 million had been reimbursed to the City after projects were completed. Projects eligible for inclusion must be along bus routes and directly related to improving the condition of streets in bus lanes, bus pads and intersections. The improvements were made all over the city on different routes depending on the need. It should be noted that VIA made the decision in 2001 to discontinue the set aside allocation for the City to utilize for the maintenance needed along VIA bus route streets. This was due to budget constraints.

In the July 23, 2003 letter from VIA Transit, VIA states that there is a balance of \$2.1 million dollars of funds previously allocated for street maintenance and improvements that could be used for this purpose. I would ask your consideration to utilize \$435,918 of these funds for the continuation of routes 54/70 as well as the implementation of the tourism route through December 2004 as a one-time commitment.

Furthermore, I would ask your support of City staff's efforts in finalizing the reimbursement of \$1.4 million dollars due to the City of San Antonio from the 2001 Street Maintenance Project in order to continue to invest in the City of San Antonio street infrastructure program in the coming months.

Your consideration of this request will help restore much needed bus transportation availability on the West side and can be accomplished with the remaining maintenance funds as outlined above. This is a one-time request for consideration.

Your consideration of placing this item on the August 7, 2003 City Council agenda is greatly appreciated.


PATTI RADLE
Councilwoman, District 5

Mayor Ed Garza


Councilman Roger O. Flores, District 1


Councilman Joel Williams, District 2


Councilman Ron H. Segovia, District 3

Councilman Richard Perez, District 4

Councilman Enrique M. Barrera, District 6


Councilman Julian Castro, District 7

Councilman Art A. Hall, District 8

Councilman Carroll W. Schubert, District 9


Councilman Chip Haass, District 10