

# MIAMI BEACH

## COMMITTEE MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: November 6, 2024

TITLE: **DISCUSS ENHANCING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY AT SENIOR CENTERS WITH A DEDICATED MID-SIZE BUS SERVICE.**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The City Administration ("Administration") recommends that the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC" or "Committee") discuss this item and provide additional input and desired parameters regarding an enhanced public transportation service for senior residents (i.e. service area, origins and destinations, and frequency of service) in order to plan an efficient and cost-effective service tailored to the needs of our senior residents.

### **BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

At the June 26, 2024 City Commission meeting, at the request of Mayor Steven Meiner ("Mayor Meiner"), the Mayor and City Commission ("City Commission") referred an item (C4 AR) to the PSNQLC to discuss enhancing public transportation accessibility and efficiency at senior centers with a dedicated mid-size bus service.

On November 16, 2020, the City of Miami Beach ("City") launched the Freebee On-Demand Transit Service for Seniors ("Freebee Senior Service"). The Freebee Senior Service provides a free shuttle service for senior residents (65 and older) living in affordable housing facilities throughout the City and/or participating in any of the senior programs provided by UNIDAD, Jewish Community Services or Little Havana Activities and Nutrition Center. The Freebee Senior Service is currently provided to/from approximately 40 senior facilities located in South Beach, Middle Beach, and North Beach and the closest Publix supermarket or pharmacy. The Freebee Senior Service operates seven (7) days a week, from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., with two (2) Gem e6 golf-type electric vehicles (Attachment A). Senior residents are required to register with Freebee in advance to enroll in the service.

Since the inception of the Freebee Senior Service, the ridership data has consistently indicated that the majority (approximately 65%) of all requests citywide originate from Rebecca Towers residents. This statistic highlights the high demand for transportation services to/from this facility. To address this high demand effectively, Mayor Meiner's proposal includes exploring the implementation of a dedicated mid-size bus service, equipped with the latest platforms to accommodate the mobility aids and necessities of senior residents.

It is worth noting that the Administration is commencing concurrent negotiations with the selected vendors for the implementation of a Citywide Municipal Transit Circulator Service to replace the current Miami Beach Trolley service which has been in operation since 2014. While all our current trolley vehicles in service (low-floor and high-floor) meet the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") requirements, including being equipped with electric wheelchair lifts, kneeling capabilities, and ADA ramps, the high-floor vehicles used for the Mid-Beach and North Beach loops are particularly inconvenient for senior passengers with mobility challenges and/or small carts due to the various steps required to board and disembark the vehicles. The forthcoming Citywide Municipal Transit Circulator Service is intended to provide a world-class, reliable, eco-

friendly, and customer-friendly service utilizing “next generation” low-floor transit vehicles that are more convenient for passengers, particularly our senior residents, to board and disembark.

### **ANALYSIS**

The Administration recognizes the demand for transportation services tailored for our senior residents. To properly assess and implement Mayor Meiner's proposal for a dedicated mid-size bus service, the Administration would benefit from the Committee's discussion on additional parameters and details regarding the desired service, including, but not limited to, the desired service area (i.e. origins and destinations), schedule, and frequency of service. This information is essential in assisting Transportation and Mobility Department staff in evaluating options in order to craft an efficient service that effectively meets the needs of senior residents.

As a reference, the City's "Mount Sinai Link", which launched on October 1, 2024, to connect North Beach and Mid Beach with the Mount Sinai Medical Center, can provide a basis for comparison. The Mount Sinai Link operates on a fixed route/fixed schedule utilizing one (1) Starcraft van (Attachment B) that is ADA accessible, with a 22-passenger capacity, operating 13 hours a day at approximately one (1) hour frequency of service, seven (7) days a week, from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and at an annual cost of \$245,000 (funded by Miami-Dade County). This model can help inform the operational logistics and cost estimate(s) for a potential mid-size senior bus service, which would be designed to accommodate mobility aids and other specific needs of senior residents.

### **FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

TBD

### **Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?**

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

### **FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

TBD

### **CONCLUSION**

This item is being presented to the PSNQLC for discussion and input. By obtaining additional details regarding the desired service plan and utilizing the current Mount Sinai Link service as a model, the Administration can better assess the feasibility and requirements of the proposal to ensure it is both cost-effective and tailored to the needs of our senior community.

### **Applicable Area**

Citywide

### **Is this a “Residents Right to Know” item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?**

No

### **Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?**

No

### **Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying?** No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s): N/A

### **Department**

Transportation and Mobility

**Sponsor(s)**

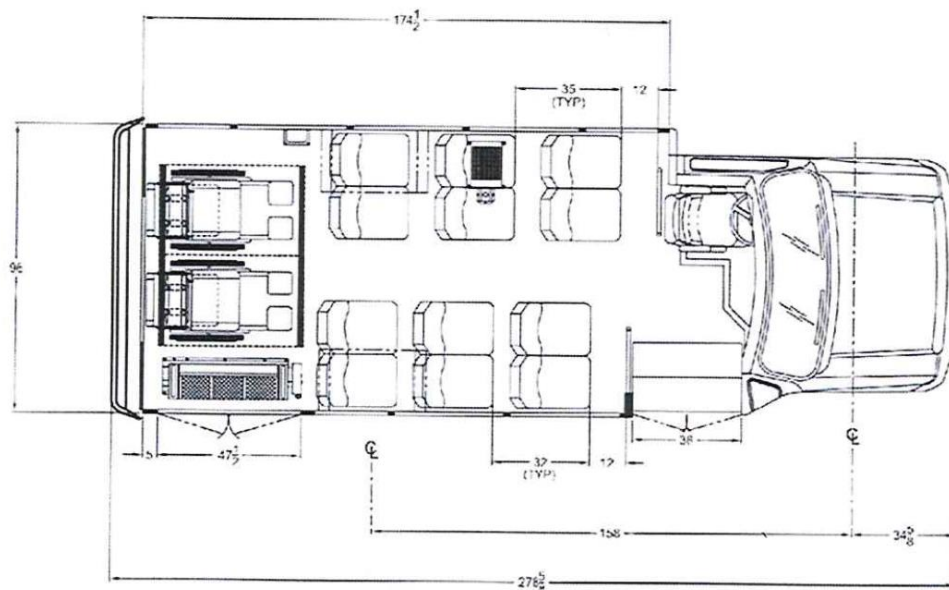
Mayor Steven Meiner

**Co-sponsor(s)**

**Condensed Title**

Discuss Enhancing Public Transp. Accessibility & Efficiency at Sr Centers Mid-Size Bus Svc.

Attachment B – Starcraft Van (22-passenger capacity)





**COMMISSION MEMORANDUM**

TO: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Mayor Steven Meiner

DATE: June 26, 2024

TITLE: REFERRAL TO THE PUBLIC SAFETY AND NEIGHBORHOOD QUALITY OF LIFE COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS ENHANCING PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ACCESSIBILITY AND EFFICIENCY AT SENIOR CENTERS WITH A DEDICATED MID-SIZE BUS SERVICE.

**RECOMMENDATION**

N/A

**BACKGROUND/HISTORY**

Please place on the June 26, 2024 agenda a referral to the Public Safety and Neighborhood Quality of Life Committee ("PSNQLC") to discuss enhancing public transportation accessibility and efficiency at Senior Centers.

Recent data reflects that a significant portion of all Freebee requests City-wide originate from Senior Centers such as Rebecca Towers, highlighting the need for more tailored transportation options at our Senior Centers.

To address this demand effectively, I would like for the Committee to explore the implementation of a dedicated mid-size bus service equipped with the latest platforms to accommodate senior residents' mobility aids and necessities.

The bus route would ideally connect key locations within Miami Beach focusing on areas of high demand and operate on a fixed schedule, providing senior residents with reliable transportation options for their daily needs. The utilization of eco-friendly vehicles would be desirable and should be explored.

The bus should have ample space within for the secure storage of shopping carts and other personal belongings, ensuring a comfortable and hassle-free travel experience. Moreover, the bus should be equipped with ramps and lifts to facilitate easy boarding and disembarking for residents with mobility aids such as walkers, canes, and wheelchairs.

The Administration should be prepared to explore various funding opportunities and grants for this service and investigate the possibility of obtaining refurbished buses from Miami-Dade County, which could provide a cost-effective solution.

This bus service specifically tailored to service Senior Centers would allow our seniors access essential services and run errands within the town, reduce dependency on individual vehicle usage, and enhance inclusivity by ensuring the transportation system caters to the diverse mobility needs of senior residents, including those utilizing walkers, canes, and personal shopping carts.

The Director of the Transportation Department should be prepared to address the Committee regarding this subject.

**ANALYSIS**

N/A

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

N/A

**Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?**  
(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on . See BIE at:  
<https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

**FINANCIAL INFORMATION**

N/A

**CONCLUSION**

N/A

**Applicable Area**

Citywide

**Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item,  
pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?**

No

**Is this item related to a G.O. Bond  
Project?**

No

**Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481,  
includes a principal engaged in lobbying?** No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

**Department**

Office of Mayor Steven Meiner

**Sponsor(s)**

Mayor Steven Meiner

**Co-sponsor(s)****Condensed Title**

Ref: PSNQLC - Enhance Public Transportation at Senior Centers w/ Dedicated Bus Service.  
(Meiner)

## Attachment A – Freebee Gem e6 Vehicle

