

CITY OF SEBASTOPOL
CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM

Meeting: July 16, 2019
To: Honorable Mayor and Councilmembers
From: Councilmember Gurney
Cittaslow Sebastopol
Subject: Renewed Sponsorship of Bus Buddy Program to Promote Ridership on Local Shuttle #24 during September and October 2019, and Invitation to Council Members to Volunteer
Recommendation: That the City Council Approve Renewed Sponsorship
Funding: Currently Budgeted: _____ Yes _____ No N/A N/A
Net General Fund Cost: \$N/A
Amount: \$N/A

INTRODUCTION:

This item is to request that the City Council Approve the Request for City of Sebastopol Renewed Sponsorship of Bus Buddy Program to Promote Ridership on Local Shuttle #24 during September and October 2019, and Invitation to Council Members to Volunteer.

BACKGROUND:

The Bus Buddy Program sponsored by the City from March 13 through May 2019 was a great success, according to the planning team, SCT Staff, the volunteers, the participants, the on-paper evaluations, and the in-person debriefing. The Program even inspired two self-appointed “on-call” Buddies, one from BH&O, the other a resident.

All Program goals were achieved:

- To create a fun campaign about the Shuttle
- To enlist the participation of local influencers and their followers
- To prompt curiosity in the Shuttle and a desire to try it
- To reach a wide range of citizens who could become potential riders/advocates
- To expand awareness of the Shuttle as a viable means of transportation
- To provide a buddy, someone specifically on the bus to answer questions
- To help reduce anxieties and remove barriers to riding

The Program started right after the Laguna flooding on Morris and McKinley Streets, causing a program delay then temporary route adjustments around the Transit Hub — The Barlow area. Also, many of the Wednesday morning ride times experienced rainy weather. Hopefully, the statistics specific to these months will be available for the Council meeting.

DISCUSSION:

This item asks the Council to sponsor a second two-month volunteer program during September and October 2019. It also asks if Council Members would like to volunteer again. The last volunteers offered to go out again. I also received offers to help out as a Buddy from several new people.

The program seeks at least 9 volunteers who will ride the 24 for one run, on a certain day of the week, at a certain time [TBD].

In addition to one ride, volunteer Buddies are asked to promote their ride in advance of their date, by email, on Facebook, and whatever other means they can use to invite people and attract a new constituency of rider. The City is asked to promote the continued FARE FREE status of the route, the Bus Buddy Program, the schedule for the various Buddies, and their profiles. In addition, the Buddy's affiliated organization and others can advertise the calendar and their individual's event.

Bus Buddies are not expected to know everything about this bus. I will offer another training ride for anyone who'd like practice ahead of time. Last Spring, several Buddies were having so much fun riding around town talking with their friends or meeting new friends that they forgot to notice all the stops and/or learn all the techniques of bus riding.

Cittaslow has extended an invitation to local non-profit organizations to volunteer a Buddy, as the Senior Center and SCCC did earlier. This second Program will afford participants the opportunity to share information important to them as they tour our town. They'd have a conversational opener, other than talking about the bus, a focus or theme to set everyone at ease.

I ask if any Council Member would like to support public transit and serve as a Buddy again for [less than] an hour.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

None

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the City Council Approve the Request for City of Sebastopol Renewed Sponsorship of Bus Buddy Program to Promote Ridership on Local Shuttle #24 during September and October 2019, and Invitation to Council Members to Volunteer. Cittaslow Sebastopol will contact Councilmembers for scheduling of preferred dates.

Attachments:

None