

Discussion/Direction of budget requests
not included in the FY18 budget:
1) the RIDE, and 2) Others

Assembly action may be taken



February 17, 2017

Matt Hunter, Mayor
and Assembly Members
City and Borough of City

Dear Mayor Hunter:

Re: FY18 Budget Request

The RIDE public transit system provides a vital service to Sitkan residents, visitors, and transient work forces. Most other local governments in Alaska invest in local public transit.

We are asking that the Assembly try to find at least \$25,000 in the FY18 budget to assist with public transit.

Just to recap history of City support of public transit:

In 2003, the City gave \$15,000 from the Economic Development account, for startup costs.

In 2004, the City gave \$10,000 for the required 20% cash match to buy just one of the RIDE's buses.

No contributions from 2004 until 2014.

FY 15 (July 1, 2014), the City made a contribution of \$25,000 toward the RIDE.

FY16 (July 1, 2014), the City contributed \$25,000.

No contribution in FY17. Present request for FY18.

We do want to give the City credit for assistance to the paratransit part of our RIDE system, by which the City contributes fuel and maintenance for the Swan Lake Care-A-Vans. These amounts vary each year, but actual figures from City Finance show, in the last two years:

	FY16	FY15
Fuel	\$20,277.00	\$23,440.00
Maintenance	\$7,553.00	\$9,138.00

The RIDE public transit system, operated in a three way partnership of Center for Community, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, and Catholic Community Services, brings over \$900,000 every year into Sitka from outside revenue sources. These are funds spent locally, mostly on local jobs.


In FY16, the RIDE provided nearly 53,000 rides. Care-A-Van provided 13,795 assisted rides to seniors and persons with disabilities.

We all acknowledge that the City is facing tough budgetary times. However, if the City stops contributing even a token amount each year to public transit, this sends a wrong message to State and Federal funding sources—that our local community does not value public transit.

Let's say the City contributes \$25,000 for FY18—if the blue buses, the RIDE fixed routes, provide 54,000 rides, then then City would have chipped in \$0.46 per ride. There's a great economic return here for the City: for 46 cents, Sitkans and visitors get 54,000 rides to work, social affairs, shopping, tourism sites, church, etc.

Please consider once again at least making public transit a small part of the City's operating budget.

Sincerely,



Connie J. Sipe
Executive Director and Transit System Administrator
Center for Community

cc: Mark Gorman, City Administrator
Jay Sweeney, Finance Director

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