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SCAT plans bus route changes in south and north county this fall

The Sarasota County Commission, acting as the Sarasota County Transportation Authority, has approved a major update to the county's 10-year Transit Development Plan, which calls for Sarasota County Area Transit (SCAT) bus route changes to be implemented sometime in late October or November.

The changes include schedule revisions, frequency improvements and major route changes that will significantly improve frequency and connection options for many SCAT riders in the Venice area and in Englewood. SCAT will discontinue several routes and replace most of the current service with planned route improvements. In addition to restructuring south county bus routes, many schedule adjustments are being planned to SCAT's north county routes, including some added trips.

Four public meetings will be held in September about the proposed changes, which include:

Route 16 (Englewood): The most significant change in South Venice and Englewood will occur on Route 16, which will operate every hour throughout the day, instead of the current two-hour frequency. The route will be redesigned to be much more direct between Venice and Englewood. Route 16 will travel through the Venice island, along Business U.S. 41, Rialto, Airport Avenue and U.S. 41 to State Road 776 and then southbound along Old Englewood Road, Dearborn Street, State Road 776 to Hosmer Avenue and then to Pine Street to the Englewood Hospital. Northbound, the bus will return over the same route except by using State Road 776 instead of Old Englewood Road.

Route 21 (Englewood Loop): SCAT will discontinue Route 21, which will remove service from the Englewood Sports Complex. Route 16 will be extended to cover those portions of Route 21 along Dearborn Street east, Pine Street and Medical Boulevard to the Englewood Community Hospital.

Route 26 (Venice Connector): Venice area neighborhoods along Center Road, Shamrock Boulevard and Alligator Drive served by the current Route 16 will get a new bus route, Route 26 (Venice Connector). Route 26 will operate every 90 minutes, instead of Route 16's current two-hour frequency, along the U.S. 41 Venice By-Pass, Venice Gardens and the Seminole-Jamaica area of South Venice. It will include a stop for the Senior Friendship Center.

Route 24 (Scenic-Woodmere) and Route 25 (Bird Bay): SCAT will discontinue Route 24 and Route 25. The Rialto-Airport Avenue area will be part of the new Route 16. Senior Friendship Center will be served by the new Route 26. SCAT will remove bus services from Bird Bay and from the Venice island neighborhood just north of West Venice Avenue., including Santa Maria Street and Tarpon Street, which are about two blocks away from SCAT's current Route 13 (Venice Local). Riders in these neighborhoods are encouraged to use the new SCAT Senior to Shopping Services offered by THE RIDE, with weekly scheduled trips to and from shopping. Passengers who require bus service to medical appointments or information about THE RIDE should contact SCAT at 941-861-5000.

Route 9 (North Port via Jacaranda Boulevard) and Route 19 (North Port via U.S. 41): SCAT also is making changes to its routes operating between North Port and Venice. Route 9 will operate every hour throughout the day, instead of the current two-hour frequency. SCAT also will discontinue Route 19

since the new Route 26 (Venice Connector) will cover the U.S. 41 Venice By-Pass. Riders traveling to U.S. 41 Venice By-Pass from North Port will need to transfer to Route 26.

Route 9S (North Port-South Venice): Among the proposed changes, North Port will get Sunday service for the first time. New Route 9S will connect at the Jacaranda Boulevard Wal-Mart to Route 1713 (Trail -South Venice) every hour from 10:44 a.m. to 6:44 p.m. The bus will travel directly on U.S. 41 to Sumter Boulevard.

Route 1713 (Trail-South Venice) and Route 1411 (Lake Sarasota-Siesta Key): On Sunday, Routes 1713 and 1411 will operate every 60 minutes from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., then every two hours in the evening.

Route 99 (Palmetto Fairgrounds to downtown Sarasota): Route 99 will receive evening service for the first time, as far as the Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, hourly until 10 p.m. Monday-Saturday. The first partial round trip from the airport at 5:30 a.m. will be eliminated. ***Passengers needing to travel at that time may use the Route 2 (Cocoanut Avenue) departing from the airport at 5:30 a.m.*** The first inbound trip on Route 99 from the airport will be at 6:25 a.m. The full outbound trip from downtown Sarasota at 5:15 a.m. will not be affected.

Below is a summary of other anticipated schedule changes:

- **Route 15 (Cattlemen):** Saturday service will be restored to every 60 minutes instead of the current 90 minutes. The last trip will be a full trip to the airport, Monday-Saturday...
- **Route 17 (Trail):** The 6:44 a.m. inbound trip, and the 9:15 p.m. outbound trip, will extend to Venice Monday-Saturday.
- **Routes 1A, 2, 5, 6, 12, 14, 15, 20, 29, 1713 and 8517:** Minor schedule adjustments will be made to improve on-time performance.

For more information, contact the Sarasota County Call Center at 941-861-5000.

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