

Date: February 9, 2021

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager *T.M.*

From: Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works *EL*

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Electric Shuttle Service in Long Beach**

In April 2018, the Department of Public Works launched a free shuttle service in Downtown Long Beach through a partnership with The Free Ride, now rebranded as The Circuit. This service offered free transport anywhere within a designated travel zone, seven days per week, 12 hours per day. The designated travel zone included the boundaries of 5th Street to the north, Alamitos Avenue to the east, Shoreline Drive to the south, and I-710 to the west. Users requested rides through a mobile application, or by hailing a vehicle on-street.

The two-month pilot program from mid-April through mid-June 2018, was funded using \$100,000 from Metro Prop A transportation funding. The Free Ride chose to extend the operation through July 2018 using revenue received for advertisements their team sourced and placed on vehicles. At the peak of service operation, the shuttles averaged 175 rides per day.

On October 9, 2018, the City Council directed the City Manager to explore the feasibility of implementing The Free Ride model in Downtown and Belmont Shore, and identify options for Special Events to utilize this model throughout the City. Staff engaged with The Circuit about expanding the service area into Belmont Shore and Bixby Knolls. The proposed cost of operation ranged from \$750,000 to \$1,500,000 per year. Staff also met with Long Beach Transit (LBT) leadership to discuss implementation of a similar service. LBT expressed concern about not utilizing union drivers and paying union wages, as well as the safety of the shuttles, which are limited to a speed limit of 35 miles per hour.

On [July 2, 2019](#), the City Council directed the City Manager to assess the feasibility of developing a public-private partnership to fund an electric shuttle service or free ride program to transport people from 2nd Street (Belmont Shore) to 2nd Street and Pacific Coast Highway (2nd and PCH) and to Alamitos Bay Landing. Staff worked with the Belmont Shore Parking and Business Improvement Area Advisory Commission to understand financial feasibility and interest in providing funds toward a free ride program. The Commission expressed interest in moving forward with an electric shuttle program and worked with staff to obtain and finalize a proposal. While studying the feasibility of utilizing parking meter revenue to fund the project, revenue levels became impacted by COVID-19 and additional loss of parking revenue due to occupancy of 70 parking stalls by parklets. Through the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2021, parking revenue is down 51 percent on a year-over-year basis. Therefore, current revenue conditions do not allow for a free ride program implementation.

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Staff believe that any long-term electric shuttle service will require LBT's participation. Moving forward, staff will ask LBT for their leadership in working with the community to explore micro-mobility options, and gauge interest for an electric shuttle service, how it can help meet the City's Climate Action Plan and transportation goals, and if transportation funding is available to fund this effort.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please contact April Walker, Project Management Officer, at (562) 570-6561.

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