



CITY OF CARSON

Legislation Text

File #: 2019-900, Version: 1

Report to Mayor and City Council

Tuesday, October 01, 2019

Consent

SUBJECT:

**CONSIDER ENTERING INTO DISCUSSIONS WITH LONG BEACH TRANSIT FOR
FIXED-ROUTE BUS SERVICES (CITY COUNCIL)**

I. SUMMARY

The recommendation stated in this report is from the City Council Transportation Ad Hoc Committee comprised of Mayor Robles and Councilmember Dear, and is supported by Staff.

The City's fixed-route bus service, the Carson Circuit (Circuit), was first implemented on June 4, 1984, to provide public transportation to both residents and visitors of the City. Since then, there has not been an assessment of how well this service meets the needs of Circuit passengers, especially as ridership has steadily declined over the years and program costs have increased. Several suggestions have been brought forth to improve this service, including entering into an interagency agreement with another transit operator to provide this service. Long Beach Transit (LBT) has expressed an active interest in presenting the City with a proposal to assess the Circuit's operations and administer this program. Staff met with the City Council Transportation Ad Hoc Committee for its input and direction. The Ad Hoc Committee recommended that Staff commence discussions and work toward developing an interagency agreement with LBT to provide fixed-route bus services to the City of Carson.

II. RECOMMENDATION

AUTHORIZE Staff to enter into discussions and work toward developing an interagency agreement with Long Beach Transit to provide fixed-route bus services to the City of Carson.

III. ALTERNATIVES

TAKE another action the City Council deems appropriate.

IV. BACKGROUND

Since its inception in 1984, the Carson Circuit has provided reliable fixed-route bus services for both the residents and visitors of the City. Buses run 40-minute loops, beginning at 5:20 AM and ending at 6:35 PM, through designated areas of the City. In addition to providing local services to the Carson community, the Circuit acts as a feeder/connector to other regional providers such as the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) for both bus and rail, Torrance Transit, and Long Beach Transit. All routes begin and end at the South Bay Pavilion Mall.

Over the years, new routes were added to the Circuit to supplement what was originally provided in an effort to better meet the needs of the City and its ever-changing landscape of new businesses and residential units. However, with the advent of on-demand transportation options, fewer people are using fixed-route bus services. Instead, they are choosing to utilize services from Transportation Network Companies (TNCs) such as Lyft and Uber. These new options have quickly gained wide-spread popularity for their convenience and swift response times.

Although ridership has been declining, there is still a significant population of residents and visitors who rely on the City's bus services as their preferred mode of transportation within City limits (Exhibit No. 1). This circumstance is especially true for the passengers over the age of 60. Also, as the use of on-demand ride services from Lyft and Uber are prohibited for minors under the age of 18, a large number of school-aged youth regularly use the Circuit to travel to and from school.

The City currently has an agreement with MV Transportation to operate seven out of the eight fixed-routes. The eighth route is provided by City staff (Exhibit No. 2). As the agreement with this firm expires on December 31, 2020, a succession plan is needed to continue providing fixed-route bus services. At the same time, an assessment of the current program is needed to determine what service design will best meet the current and future needs of the riders. Staff contacted local transit agencies to determine if there may be an active interest in operating fixed-route bus services within the City. Of the three agencies that service the Southbay region - GTransit (Gardena Transit), Torrance Transit and Long Beach Transit - only LBT showed an active interest in providing this service to the City. Should the City elect to move forward with this option, a preliminary assessment of our current routes, a mutually-agreed upon proposal of new routes, and an interagency agreement between both agencies would be required. Not only will reliable service be provided to our end users, but the City will see a reduction in operating costs as a result of consolidating our lower performing routes into fewer major routes across the busiest sections of Carson.

Staff has met with the City Council Transportation Ad Hoc Committee for input and

direction. It recommended that the City, via the City Manager, enter into discussions with LBT to provide the City with a proposal to assess and operate fixed-route bus services. Should both agencies reach mutually beneficial terms, an interagency agreement will be developed. This agreement will likely be similar to what was approved in the City of Paramount, wherein LBT is paid a fixed percentage of Carson's annual Proposition A local return for providing this service.

The City's Transportation Division currently employs one (1) full-time Senior Bus Driver and one (1) part-time Bus Driver to operate Carson Circuit's G route and various recreational bus permit trips. The City also owns seven (7) buses, of which four (4) are used for the Circuit. If the action is approved by the City Council, Staff will determine the impact on internal resources, provide alternative options for further assessment and ensure compliance under the Meyers-Milias-Brown Act (MMBA) for the required Meet & Confer. As there are many decision points and public engagement sessions required in the drafting of this agreement, Staff recommends that the City Council authorize Staff to enter into discussions with LBT, develop an interagency agreement, and return to the City Council for its approval.

V. FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact at this time. Staff anticipates an overall reduction in operating costs upon entering into an agreement with LBT.

VI. EXHIBITS

1. Carson Circuit Ridership (page 4).
2. Carson Circuit Routes (page 5).

Prepared by: Jason J. Jo, Transportation Supervisor