



Date: June 4, 2024

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Beach Bike Path E-Scooter Pilot and Data Analysis**

On April 9, 2024, the City Council approved a motion requesting the Public Works Department to evaluate the feasibility of conducting a 12-month pilot study of electric scooters on the Beach Bike Path (path). The purpose of the study would be to determine the feasibility of safe and responsible use and management of this eco-friendly shared mode of transportation on the path. This memorandum provides an update on the City Council request.

Micromobility Program Overview

In July 2018, the City of Long Beach (City) launched its first E-Scooter Pilot Program. During the pilot period, City Council requested the City Attorney to amend Long Beach Municipal Code 10.38.020 (B) to expressly ban electric or motorized scooters from the path due to a lack of rebalancing and management by e-scooter operators along the path, numerous complaints from residents about unsafe riding practices, and a significant number of e-scooter users abandoning their vehicles in non-authorized docking areas along the path and on the beach. The E-Scooter Pilot Program concluded in December 2019, leading to the amendment in January 2020 by the City Attorney's Office. The ban was implemented at the start of the City's new Shared Micromobility Program, a program that encompasses the e-scooter fleet and operation of scooter companies. The ban was put in place to prevent the abandonment of e-scooters along the path, which had been a frequently reported concern during the pilot period. The current program is in its third year of operation with a vehicle cap of 4,000 e-scooters, three operational zones, and an equity pilot for disadvantaged communities.

After leaving the City's Operational Zone, scooters' electric propulsion is deactivated. After deactivation, the devices can still be used without electrical assistance by the user's own leverage and momentum like a non-motorized scooter. Departure from an Operational Zone does not lock the wheels of the device.

Under the current program, scooters may only be operated on streets with a speed limit of 25 mph or less, or within bike lanes on a street with a higher speed limit. For residents or visitors planning a scooter trip along the City's coastline, First Street is the southernmost available route eastbound and Second Street is the southernmost available route westbound. Riding on Ocean Boulevard is not allowed, with a posted speed of 30 mph and no marked bike lanes west of Termino Avenue.

Reporting Violations

In 2021, City departments partnered to add an e-scooter violation feature to the Go Long Beach app. Since October 2021, there have been 14,371 e-scooter service requests, with a 69 percent resolution rate. In 2023, amended micro-mobility regulations focused on compliance, resulting in an 88 percent resolution rate for 8,675 service requests. Compliance is measured by the number of instances that vendors respond to within two hours. The program management has improved, leading to better partnerships with operators. As a result of these improved partnerships, compliance, efficiency, and overall effectiveness of the program have increased. Consequently, initial vendor restrictions may be loosened to facilitate the organic expansion and development of the program.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Count Data

The City conducts annual bicycle and pedestrian counts citywide, which includes scooters as one of the modes counted. The metrics below are from the bicycle and pedestrian counts for scooters at two popular points of entry to the beach bicycle and pedestrian path:

Belmont Pier:

- 2021 – 118 Bikes per hour, 810 Pedestrians per hour, 5 scooters per hour
- 2022 – 67 Bikes per hour, 166 Pedestrians per hour, 1 scooter per hour
- 2023 – 152 Bikes per hour, 185 Pedestrians per hour, 4 scooters per hour

Ocean Blvd and 54th Place:

- 2021 – 83 Bikes per hour, 94 Pedestrians per hour, 0 scooters per hour
- 2022 – 92 Bikes per hour, 99 Pedestrians per hour, 1 scooter per hour
- 2023 – no count information

The total number of scooters counted at both locations from 2021 to 2023 was 49.

E-Scooter Crash Data

The Public Works Department began tracking scooter-related crashes in 2018. Since then, staff processed 113 crash reports involving scooters. None of these crashes were on the path. Most crashes involve motor vehicles, with three involving pedestrians, two involving emergency vehicles, and one involving a school bus. In 2021, there were 6,029 total crash reports processed, involving pedestrians, cyclists, scooters, cars, buses, and trains. On average, there are 22 reported crashes involving scooters each year. There have been two fatal crashes reported involving e-scooters, one in May 2024 at the intersection of Ximeno Avenue and Shaw Street, and another in September 2022 at the intersection of 7th Street and Chestnut Avenue.

Revenue

The City's Shared Micromobility Program is a revenue-generating program contributing to the City's General Fund. Currently, the City collects revenue for the program through following fees:

- Permit Fees
 - \$25,000.00 for Share Micromobility permit
- Vehicle Fees
 - \$75 per vehicle fee (1,000 minimum per operator, with 3 operators)
- Per Trip Fee
 - \$0.25 per trip (\$154,382.00 was collected from operators in calendar year 2023)
- Geofence Violation Fees
 - \$0.50 parking violations

Operational Considerations for a Pilot

Other cities with shared micromobility programs have also banned e-scooters from their beach paths due to concerns the City shared during its initial Pilot program regarding fleet balancing and responsiveness. However, with the advancement of technology in the industry, many of these same cities have created Special Operational Zones (SOZ) to allow e-scooter companies to operate their vehicles within a SOZ under specific regulations and policies. The City of Los Angeles Venice Beach Pilot has been running for approximately 12 months in such a SOZ. The recommendation below is based on the framework shared by the City of Los Angeles and is applicable to the City's SOZ on the beach path.

Should the City Council wish to pursue this, staff recommend a 12-month pilot period. The pilot would look at the following key areas to assess the viability of allowing permitted vendors in the City's Shared Micromobility Program continued use of e-scooters on the path:

- Vendor management of parking and rebalancing
- Vendor compliance with City regulations
- Provision of car-free method for rebalancing e-scooters on the path
- Quantify scooter behaviors related to pedestrian conflicts

Pilot Impacts on Operators

Operators on the path would be required to rebalance deployment and parking locations using car-free methods such as; cargo e-bikes, electric golf carts, or other electric vehicles. Additionally, operators would be responsible for monitoring parking and rebalancing of the SOZ seven days a week.

Next Steps

E-scooter riders would be required to ride on the bike lanes of the beach path instead of the pedestrian path. The program currently allows for governed “slow zones” within the City. To avoid disparate speeds between scooters and cyclists within the bike lanes, “slow zones” are recommended for areas of high-pedestrian volumes only. New signage directing scooters to the bike lanes would be installed on existing poles along the path where bike signage exists to clearly denote where e-scooters are allowed to ride. The signs would be installed by City staff at 30 conflict-zone locations and intermittently along the length of the path.

While there is currently no speed limit on the beach path, this could be established as part of the pilot program with City Council direction to move forward. Since the vehicle code classifies bicycles as “vehicles”, staff could add a speed limit under the same rules as our other speed limits, where the prevailing (85th percentile) speed of all vehicles is the basis for the limit. Staff could also look at testing speed feedback signs to determine whether they are effective. Further research would be necessary to determine how other California agencies have set and enforced speed limits on bicycle paths.

Transportation staff would need to dedicate two to three hours per week to manage the pilot. This would require daily monitoring of the operations platform for vehicle counts and parking violations, field inspections at beach parking lots and facilities for abandoned vehicles, and bi-monthly compliance meetings with Operators. Beach maintenance staff would not be responsible for managing scooter parking; staff recommend expanding the current Scope of Work for the Program’s sidewalk management vendor to cover the entire SOZ to help mitigate issues related to parking, broken vehicles, and over-saturation at parking locations. This management vendor is already funded through program revenues. Staff would also be required to redraw SOZ boundaries and create new parking zones and slow zones at high-volume pedestrian areas.

Operational zones may be drawn with specific boundaries along the beach path. A zone which terminates at a point along the path rather than a continuous zone between Shoreline Drive and 54th Place would likely result in user confusion, higher rates of vehicle abandonment, and congestion at the operational boundary.

The data gathered during the 2024 Beach Path Pilot project would be collected monthly over a 12-month period and submitted to the Director of Public Works. The Director would have the authority to terminate the pilot before 12 months, if there are any public safety or vendor compliance concerns.

Staff is prepared to launch this pilot program with existing resources, should there be interest from the City Council. As there are varying opinions on this concept, staff would request direction at a future City Council meeting based on the pilot and data outlined in this memo.

If you have any questions or comments on the feasibility analysis, please contact Eric Lopez, Director of Public Works, at (562) 570-5690 or eric.lopez@longbeach.gov.

Beach Bike Path E-Scooter Pilot and Data Analysis

June 4, 2024

Page 5

CC: DAWN MCINTOSH, CITY ATTORNEY
DOUGLAS P. HAUBERT, CITY PROSECUTOR
LAURA L. DOUD, CITY AUDITOR
APRIL WALKER, ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER
TERESA CHANDLER, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
MEREDITH REYNOLDS, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
GRACE YOON, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
TYLER BONANNO-CURLEY, DEPUTY CITY MANAGER
KEVIN LEE, CHIEF PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
MONIQUE DE LA GARZA, CITY CLERK (REF #: [24-52927](#))
DEPARTMENT HEADS