



Board Report

File #: 2020-0050, **File Type:** Policy

Agenda Number: 36.

**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
AUGUST 20, 2020**

SUBJECT: METRO ADOPT-A-BIKE PILOT PROGRAM

ACTION: APPROVE RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION

CONSIDER:

- A. AUTHORIZING a policy revision for unclaimed bicycles left on Metro property that establishes a Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program.
- B. APPROVING the administration of a mini-grant program for community-based organizations to perform tasks that support the distribution of unclaimed bicycles through the Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program with a focus on equity.

ISSUE

Metro collects 400-500 bicycles per month left on the Metro system and on Metro property which are subsequently transported to Metro’s lost and found facilities. Seventy-five percent (75%) of these bicycles are never claimed by their owner. After the bicycles are stored for 90 days as required by state law, the current Metro procedure dictates that unclaimed bicycles are to be sold at auction. This process limits Metro’s opportunity to provide a benefit to Los Angeles County residents; does not provide increased mobility opportunities for those wishing to practice social distancing without the use of a personal automobile; does not provide economic relief to car-free residents looking for employment opportunities; and is not aligned with the Metro Vision 2028 Strategic Plan goal to reduce single occupancy vehicles in the next 10 years.

Board approval will authorize the establishment of the two-year Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program (Program) allowing unclaimed bicycles to be offered to Los Angeles County residents and the unhoused community in need of a bicycle free of charge. Secondly, it will approve the administration of a two-year pilot mini-grant program for community-based organizations (CBOs) to support the distribution of these bicycles.

BACKGROUND

The Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program will provide the agency with the opportunity to offer a

transportation resource to Los Angeles County residents. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the distribution of unclaimed bicycles to members of the public who cannot afford a bicycle is more important than ever. Donated bicycles will provide an additional mobility option available to Los Angeles County residents who wish to maintain social distancing without the use of a personal automobile, and the cost-free resource will provide economic relief to individuals who need to access employment and other opportunities. In addition, administering the program through a mini-grant program will allow the implementation to be in partnership with community-based organizations and other entities that work directly with disadvantaged communities.

In order to establish this program, Metro must adhere to current legislature that governs the distribution and donation of public assets. California Civil Code 2080.6. (https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=CIV§ionNum=2080.6) requires that Metro follow a set of policies on managing bicycles and personal property left behind on the Metro system and on Metro property. Specifically, this state law mandates that all objects left behind, including bicycles, must be held by Metro for a minimum of 90 days. In addition, Chapter 497 of the California Public Utilities Code (PUC) § 30600 (http://media.metro.net/images/Introduction_to_LACMTA_Metro.pdf) indicates that Metro may donate or dispose of any real or personal property when it is in the best interest of Los Angeles County. The donation of any personal property that has value is permitted if it is determined that the assets will be used for a public transit related purpose within Metro's jurisdiction.

To ensure compliance, Metro's established procedure requires that a centralized lost and found location be maintained to provide patrons the opportunity to retrieve lost bicycles and other personal property found on Metro fleet vehicles or Metro properties. After the state-mandated 90-day storage period is completed, the current procedure directs Metro to dispose of unclaimed bicycles remaining in lost and found facilities by selling them through auction (see Attachment A). Metro expends all reasonable efforts in reuniting any lost bicycle with its rightful owner during the 90-day holding period and in ensuring compliance with state requirements for final disposition of any unclaimed property.

DISCUSSION

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH

During the development process of the Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program, staff met and coordinated with several internal departments.

To better understand the current procedure for handling lost and found bicycles, staff met with the Metro Lost and Found Office of the Customer Service Department. In accordance with California Civil Code 2080.6, the department maintains centralized lost and found locations so that patrons can retrieve lost articles found on Metro buses, rail, or other Metro properties. Lost bicycles found on Metro vehicles or property are surrendered to their respective division or management, tagged and coded, and then transported by the Mail Services Department to Union Station. Bicycles are stored for 90 days from the date they are received by the Metro Lost and Found Office and during this time individual bikes are available for retrieval by their rightful owners.

After the 90-day period, all unclaimed property is transferred to Vendor/Contract Management (VCM).

VCM is responsible for the disposition of all unclaimed articles, such as personal items, electronic devices, and bicycles. Under the current procedure all unclaimed bicycles are picked up from the Metro Lost and Found Office and transferred to an auction house in Riverside, California, where they are auctioned off in lots to the highest bidder. VCM staff indicates that bicycles are some of the most cumbersome items for the auctioneers to transport and do not generate sufficient revenue to offset the cost of the auction and transport process.

Staff also consulted with County Counsel and Risk Management to determine if unclaimed bicycles were eligible for donation to the public. It was determined that California Civil Code 2080.6 requires only that lost and found bicycles be stored and available for the rightful owner to claim for a period of 90 days. Since the law does not specify the disposal process of the bicycles after the 90 days, Metro can make this determination. In addition, once the Program is established, eligible recipients will be required to sign a waiver and release Metro from all liabilities related to the donated bicycle.

Research examining other similar programs was also conducted. For example, staff found that the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) currently administers a program for lost and found bicycles on their property and redistributes them to students after the state-mandated 90-day storage period ends. In addition, the University of Georgia, Athens (UGA) operates UGA (RE)CYCLE, a need-based bicycle recycling and redistribution program for the UGA campus community.

Both programs demonstrate that the concept of Adopt-A-Bike is a viable option for distributing resources in a way that addresses unmet transportation needs. To ensure that distribution of the bicycles will be focused on disadvantaged communities, staff will be working closely with CBOs in utilizing the CalEnviroScreen to make this determination. According to the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), the CalEnviroScreen is a tool that ranks census tracts in California based on exposure to pollutants, environmental conditions, socioeconomic factors, and the presence of certain health conditions. The CalEnviroScreen is widely used to identify communities that face a variety of challenges. Working with CBOs that have a presence and an understanding of these communities will be key in ensuring that bicycles are distributed to those who have limited resources and are in need of mobility options. CBOs will have the opportunity to leverage their experience and utilize their networks to distribute bicycles at established events and other programming.

The Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program is focused on equity and providing an active transportation mobility option to disadvantaged residents of Los Angeles County. By distributing unclaimed bicycles using the CalEnviroScreen, the program provides opportunities for Metro and CBOs to increase mobility options directly to residents and unhoused folks in the communities where they live. In addition, the pilot program will provide a cost-free mobility alternative as well as a first and last mile option to connect with the Metro transit system, employment opportunities, and to the various communities throughout the region.

OUTREACH

Staff worked collaboratively with countywide stakeholders, active transportation advocacy groups and CBOs to determine the potential paths and needs of administering a program in Los Angeles County. On December 12, 2019, staff held a workshop where forty-two (42) CBOs and other various

stakeholders and agencies were invited. Sixteen (16) stakeholders and CBO representatives attended the Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program Workshop and provided staff with valuable feedback which helped determine the resources and logistical needs of administering the program. Following the workshop, all stakeholders, including those who did not attend the workshop, were contacted via email to provide additional feedback to Metro.

In addition, in June 2020 staff contacted sixty-six (66) CBOs with experience working with the unhoused community in Los Angeles County. These CBOs have strong connections with this community and will assist in identifying a process for distributing bicycles to persons who are experiencing homelessness and in need of a transportation option. CBOs originally contacted in December 2019 were reached out to again reiterating the concept of the program. Upon review of all correspondence and feedback received, it was determined that administration of the Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program by CBOs would be feasible with minimal financial and logistical assistance from Metro. Multiple CBOs from different areas of the region have responded with interest and intend to participate.

PILOT PROGRAM VISION

Staff is proposing a two-year Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program that will allow Metro to distribute unclaimed bicycles left on Metro property to residents in Los Angeles County communities in lieu of selling unclaimed bicycles at auction.

Staff is proposing the distribution of bicycles to be administered by non-profits and CBOs from different areas of the region. An amount of up to \$120,000 annually will be available to assist the selected organizations in the administration and logistic coordination of distributing bicycles. Staff will administer a competitive proposal-based mini-grant process for organizations disbursed throughout the regions of Los Angeles County interested in participating in the program. Additional Metro support will be available to selected organizations including storage, utilization of Metro facilities as venues, and space at Metro-sponsored events. Non-profits and CBOs will be selected based on, but not limited to, geographical criteria to ensure bicycles are distributed equitably throughout Los Angeles County, and their experience working with disadvantaged and unhoused communities. Staff anticipates inviting a variety of CBOs to participate in the program, including those that work with unhoused individuals. Additional scoring criteria will include capacity and number of bicycles that an organization is able to distribute over an allotted time period, safety training program approach and their proposal for outreach and program awareness. The program will be branded as a joint venture between Metro and CBOs selected to participate.

Under the pilot program, Metro Customer Services, General Services and Facilities Maintenance will maintain current duties and continue to be responsible for collecting lost bicycles found on Metro property and storing them in accordance with California Civil Code 2080.6. After the 90-day storage period, unclaimed bicycles will be made available to CBOs for safety inspection and distribution. They will be responsible for coordinating the transport of the bicycles from a Metro facility to perform their work. CBOs will also be responsible for performing comprehensive safety checks and certifications of the bicycles and providing safety training to recipients prior to the donation of the bicycles.

Organizations selected to administer the Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program will conduct bicycle distribution events at locations of their choosing and through their established community networks. Metro will also make available internal facilities and events to assist in this process, including: (1) existing and future Metro Bike Hubs; (2) Metro-funded Open Streets events; (3) Metro Bicycle Education and Safety Training (BEST) classes and rides; (4) Safe Routes to School events throughout Los Angeles County; and (5) other applicable events. Distributing bicycles through these locations and events will enable staff to further ensure that the program is regional and equitable.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program advances the Equity Platform Framework and addresses the needs of historically disadvantaged communities as defined by the CalEnviroScreen. Pillar II. Listen and Learn defines a community-driven conversation as essential. It encourages the engagement of CBOs in community outreach and problem solving. The Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program has made a commitment to working in a collaborative manner with CBOs that will assist in reaching communities that will benefit from this program. Pillar III. Focus and Deliver recognizes that Metro has the responsibility to be a leader and avoid outcomes that aggravate disparities in opportunity. This program allows Metro to redirect its resources and provide free bicycles to a segment of the population in need of a transportation option.

DETERMINATION OF SAFETY IMPACT

Approving the recommendation will not have any adverse safety impacts on our employees and patrons. Prior to taking possession of a donated bicycle, recipients will be required to sign a waiver and release Metro and participating CBOs from all liabilities related to the donated bicycle. Metro will retain a copy of the signed waiver for its records.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The approval of this recommendation will not impact the proposed FY21 budget. Staff will utilize existing resources and budget from current Active Transportation programs in Cost Center 4320 to administrate the mini-grant program and assist in the distribution of unclaimed bicycles. No immediate budget amendment or funding appropriation request is required. Due to administrative time and logistic coordination, staff anticipates the billable amount will not occur until FY21 Q3. The Cost Center manager and the Chief Planning Officer will be responsible for budgeting necessary funds in future years through the fiscal year budget process.

IMPACT TO BUDGET

The funding source for this action is Proposition C 25% Streets & Highway. These funds are not eligible for bus and rail operating and capital expenditures.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

The Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program aligns with Strategic Plan Goal 3. By providing unclaimed bicycles to Los Angeles County residents, Metro is maximizing equitable access to a multi-modal

transit network, providing increased access to employment opportunities, and introducing local residents throughout Los Angeles County to the value of car-free and car-light mobility. The distribution of unclaimed bicycles increases Metro's ability to support the Strategic Plan outlined in Vision 2028 goal of doubling non-drive-alone mode-share trips (including bicycling) in the next 10 years.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Board has the option to not approve the recommendation. However, this alternative is not recommended as it is not consistent with the Board's goals to increase multi-mobility opportunities throughout Los Angeles County. If unclaimed bicycles continue to be auctioned, they will not contribute any value to the equity platform or to the present social distancing needs of Los Angeles County residents.

NEXT STEPS

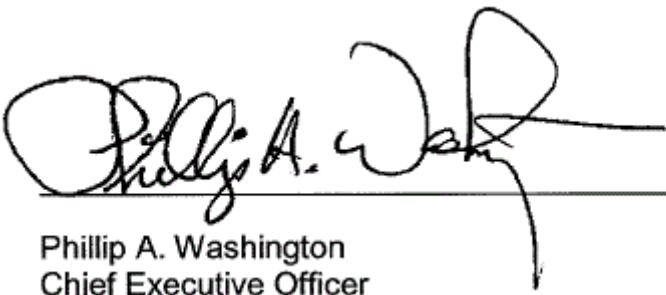
Upon Board approval, staff will coordinate internally to administer the Metro Adopt-A-Bike Pilot Program and conduct a proposal process to select organizations to assist in the distribution of bicycles to Los Angeles County residents. Staff will report back to the Board with an update in fall 2021.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Metro Lost and Found Policy & Procedures

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