



City of Arts & Innovation

City Council Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL DATE: NOVEMBER 19, 2024

FROM: PARKS, RECREATION AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT WARDS: ALL

SUBJECT: REPEAL RESOLUTION # 24120 AND ADOPT A NEW RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE CERTIFICATIONS AND ASSURANCES AND AUTHORIZED AGENT FORM AND AUTHORIZING THE SUBMITTAL OF A REVISED ALLOCATION REQUEST FOR THE LOW CARBON TRANSIT OPERATIONS PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$40,000 FOR A THREE-YEAR FREE FARE PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION DIVISION

ISSUES:

Repeal Resolution # 24120 and approve a new Resolution authorizing the submittal of a revised allocation request for the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) in the amount of \$40,000 for the Free Fare Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the City Council:

1. Repeal Resolution #24120;
2. Adopt revised Resolution 2024-XX, authorizing the City Manager or his designee, to execute the FY2023-2024 LCTOP;
3. Approve the submittal of a revised allocation request to the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program for the Free Fare Program in the amount of \$40,000; and
4. Upon award, approve the acceptance of Low Carbon Transit Operations Program funds totaling \$40,000.

BACKGROUND:

The Low Carbon Transit Operations Program is one of several programs that are part of the Transit, Affordable Housing, and Sustainable Communities Program established by the California Legislature in 2014, by Senate Bill 862.

LCTOP was created to provide operating and capital assistance for transit agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve mobility, with a priority on serving disadvantaged communities. Approved projects in LCTOP are intended to support new or expanded bus or rail services, expand intermodal transit facilities, and may include equipment acquisition, fueling, maintenance and other costs to operate those services or facilities, with each project reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The Free Fare Program is intended to support transit operations and promote the use of public transportation. The Free Fare Program meets the LCTOP's goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving mobility within many disadvantaged communities and low-income populations within Riverside.

DISCUSSION:

Prior to the pandemic, Riverside Connect was averaging 650 rides per day. As with most transit agencies across the state and country since COVID-19, Riverside Connect ridership has drastically declined and now averages 350 rides per day. Despite outreach efforts, any increase in ridership over the past three years has been minimal. While there are several reasons for this decline, such as virtual doctor visits, telecommuting, and the availability of grocery and home goods delivery services, it is still important to encourage the use of public transportation and inform the senior and disabled residents of how Riverside Connect can improve their mobility.

Using the LCTOP allocation for a three-year Free Fare Program, Riverside Connects goal is to increase ridership by providing free ride vouchers to qualified new riders and offering free ride days over a 36-month period. Ten percent of the yearly allocation will also be used for promotional and marketing purposes to spread awareness and communicate the benefits of using Riverside Connect.

Originally, the Special Transportation was advised that \$48,938 from the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP) was going to be allocated to support the Free Fare Program proposal by the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC). Council approved Resolution #24120 and submitted an allocation request to the Low Carbon Transit Operations Program in the amount of \$48,938 on May 21, 2024. Upon review of the allocation request submitted by Special Transportation to the California Department of Transportation (DOT), it was determined that the funding allocation submitted was incorrect. \$40,000 was the correct amount of LCTOP funds that had been allocated to support the Free Fare Program proposal. As such, Resolution #24120 is not valid and a new resolution reflecting the correct amount of LCTOP funds must be approved and submitted to the DOT.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

The Free Fare Program contributes to **Strategic Priority 6 – Infrastructure, Mobility and Connectivity** and **Goal 6.1** in addressing the transportation needs of the senior and disabled residents.

This action aligns with the following Cross-Cutting Threads:

1. **Community Trust** – Special Transportation benefits the City's diverse populations, and results in greater public good.

2. **Equity** – Special Transportation’s Free Fare Program will ensure that equitable transportation is available to all seniors and disabled residents within the city limits of Riverside.
3. **Fiscal Responsibility** – Special Transportation is a prudent steward of public funds and ensures responsible management of the City’s financial resources while providing quality public services to its riders.
4. **Innovation** – Special Transportation looks at a variety of funding resources to assist its operations and benefit its riders. Funding to provide the Free Fare Program is new way to increase ridership and enhance mobility across Riverside for seniors and disabled riders living in priority populations.
5. **Sustainability and Resiliency** – Special Transportation is committed to helping the environment by reducing greenhouse gases through encouraging ridership on public transportation and reducing vehicle miles traveled by automobiles.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The total fiscal impact of this action is a reduction in revenue and expenditures of \$8,938. The original allocation was reduced to a total amount of the grant award of \$40,000. Upon Council approval of the revised grant award, a budget adjustment to reduce the revenue and expenditures in this project by \$8,938 will recorded in the Special Transit Fund, Low Carbon Transit Ops Program revenue account number 9351400-334100 and expenditure account number 9351400-440210.

LCTOP funds in the amount of \$40,000 are allocated through the California Department of Transportation directly to the City of Riverside. The Riverside County Transportation Commission is a contributing sponsor to the Free Fare program and is providing \$40,000 from their LCTOP allocation.

Prepared by: Ron Profeta, Transit Manager
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Certified as to
availability of funds: Kristie Thomas, Finance Director/Assistant Chief Financial Officer
Approved by: Kris Martinez, Assistant City Manager
Approved as to form: Jack Liu, Interim City Attorney

Attachments:

1. Proposed Resolution 2024-XX
2. Resolution #24120