

April 1, 2025

Honorable Mayor and City Council
City of Long Beach
California

RECOMMENDATION:

Recommendation to receive and file an update on a 12-month Electric Scooters on Beach Path Pilot Program (Program); and,

Direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending certain sections of the Long Beach Municipal Code necessary to allow electric scooters to use the beach path and establish speed limits on the beach path. (Districts 1, 2, and 3)

DISCUSSION

On June 18, 2024, the City Council requested the Public Works Department conduct a 12-month pilot study of electric scooters on the Beach Bike Path (Path) to determine the long-term viability of the safe use and management of these vehicles on the Path. In that meeting, Public Works Department staff were also requested to establish a speed limit on the Path, governing the speeds of bicycles and scooters alike.

Later that summer, as part of the fiscal year 2025 Adopted Budget process, the City Council also approved the establishment of a new Bikeshare Management Division responsible for oversight of micromobility programs such as BikeShare and Electric Scooter Operational Permits, under the Public Works Department. Over the past few months, the Engineering Bureau (EB) has been developing speed limits, signage programs, and legislative recommendations. The new BikeShare Management Division will coordinate updates to electric scooter permit agreements with the City's current permittees, redraw operational zones, and monitor compliance with electric scooter deployment practices. Staff recently met with the current micromobility vendors to prepare for the pilot, and the vendors have committed to being active partners with Public Works for a successful pilot.

The Public Works Department is prepared and ready to implement the Beach Path Pilot Program and has identified two modifications to the Municipal Code necessary for the Program to begin.

Repeal Beach Path Restriction

The Long Beach Municipal Code currently prohibits the operation of electric scooters on the Path. To allow the Program to begin, section 10.38.020B must be repealed. Section 10.38.020B currently reads as follows:

10.38.020 - Driving on sidewalks.

B. No operator of any motorized scooter shall drive the same upon any bike path on the beach or any bike path adjacent to a City marina.

Speed Limits

All electric scooters are subject to California Vehicle Code section 22411, limiting speeds to 15 miles per hour (mph). Electric scooters operated under the City's Micromobility permits have governed speeds, with a general 15 mph limit overall and 5 mph limits in designated "slow zones," as well as a deactivation of electric propulsion outside of approved permit areas.

With more frequent use of 15 mph electric scooters within the bike lanes on the Path, a speed limit applicable to all other users including electric bicycles and conventional bicycles is recommended to avoid significant disparities in speed. The Engineering Bureau recommends a speed limit of 20 mph in accordance with California Vehicle Code section 22358.3, which governs the speed of vehicles in public parks and on narrow roadways.

Long Beach Municipal Code Section 10.12.020 establishes a 20 mph speed limit on all "Roadways on City Property". Since the Path does not constitute a "road" for purposes of the Code, staff recommends that the Code include an additional clarification specifying a path speed limit of 20 mph, to read as follows:

Section 10.12.020 Speed Limits Decreased

"98. Beach Bicycle Path: Alamitos Avenue to 54th Place, twenty (20) miles per hour"

This 20 mph speed limit will apply to the entire path, but further reductions are recommended in areas of higher pedestrian activity. Additional codes are applicable in areas where pedestrians frequently cross the bike path like the Junipero and Alamitos Beach concession areas, parking lots, the Shoreline Marina, Belmont Pier, and Rosie's Dog Beach. In those areas, path users will be required to slow to 5 mph when pedestrians are present. The Public Works Department is prepared to begin posting 20 mph, 15 mph, and 5 mph speed limit signs as well as "Warning" signs in these areas following City Council approval and related amendments to the Municipal Code. Areas surrounding bathrooms, concessions, and the pier can be geofenced to limit electric scooter speeds to 5 mph at all times. Geofencing is digital technology which uses Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to remotely track and control vehicle movements and collect data, and such internal mapping systems within the scooters will govern the motors to prevent speeding through pedestrian areas. Electric scooter permits require vehicles to operate with a maximum speed of 15 mph. The 20 mph limit is expected to apply to electric bikes and conventional bicycles.

Coordination with the Police and Fire Departments will be key to the success of the pilot and periodic, effective enforcement. The cost of enforcement during the pilot has not yet been determined; however, the recommended frequency of enforcement will be studied during the pilot. Any costs associated with enforcement that cannot be absorbed by existing budgets will be brought back to City Council for consideration. The plan, especially during the first few months of the pilot, is to take an education-first approach where existing staff and permitted e-scooter operators will help inform the public of the new rules and requirements, especially related to the new speed limits. Public Works staff has begun discussions with the Fire Department on

working together to help with the education campaign. Violations of speed limits on the Path will initially be focused on warnings and educational materials on the need for them to ensure overall safe operation on the Path. Public Works staff also anticipate periodic enforcement activities in partnership with the police department, and other partners.

Pilot Operations

Baseline counts of pedestrian and bike path activity and speeds have already been collected and will be monitored regularly throughout the pilot period including counts during peak summer conditions. Drop zones will be proposed by operators and approved by the Traffic Engineering Division at locations with appropriate paved surfaces within the Path area, possibly parking lots and/or near bathrooms. Operators are required to maintain parking incentive programs to encourage user compliance with drop zones. Scooters left in beach areas outside of drop zones or in need of maintenance will be collected by vehicles in compliance with current Path regulations. Approved collection vehicles include cargo electric bicycles and electric bicycles with trailers. The Shared Micromobility Program already requires operators to have customer service staff available 24 hours a day to respond to deployment issues and, between the hours of 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m., parking violations within two hours of receiving a complaint. In case of violations, established fines are levied on operators based on Geofence violations, impounding, and data interruptions. Any new fines would require 30 days written notice to Operators and would allow Operators to terminate their permit if they are unable or unwilling to pay the new or changed fines.

Privately-owned scooters must comply with state speed limits but are not subject to the parking requirements of the Shared Micromobility Program.

Public notification of the pilot has taken the form of these agendaized council items and subsequent media coverage of council action. Micromobility vendors have offered to provide education campaigns during summer use in coordination with Public Works and Fire Department staff.

This matter was reviewed by Principal Deputy City Attorney Erin Weesner-McKinley on March 21, 2025, and Budget Operations Manager Nader Kaamouch on March 14, 2025.

TIMING CONSIDERATIONS

City Council action is requested on April 1, 2025, to allow the Public Works Department to amend the Municipal Code, initiate the Pilot, post appropriate signage, and begin allowing the use of electric scooters on the beach path by Memorial Day Weekend.

FISCAL IMPACT

The cost of materials and installation of the proposed "Speed Limit" and "Warning" signs is estimated at \$10,000. These costs will be absorbed in the General Fund Group in the Public Works Department. Should additional material and installation funding be required, the Public Works Department will return to the City Council to request additional funding for any cost that could not be absorbed within its current appropriations. This recommendation has no staffing

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impact beyond the normal budgeted scope of duties and is consistent with existing City Council priorities. There is no local job impact associated with this recommendation.

SUGGESTED ACTION:

Approve recommendation.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric Lopez
Director
Public Works

APPROVED:



THOMAS B. MODICA
CITY MANAGER