







City of Long Beach
Working Together to Serve

R-12


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Date: March 20, 2018

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilwoman Suzie Price, Third District 
Councilman Daryl Supernaw, Fourth District 
Councilman Dee Andrews, Sixth District 
Councilmember Roberto Uranga, Seventh District 

Subject: Long Beach Free Voluntary Bike Registration Program

INTRODUCTION:

On June 20, 2017 the City Council gave staff direction to produce a report on the feasibility of developing a voluntary, online application-based bicycle registry program. This came about as a result of pressing and continuous concerns from residents about the problem of bicycle thefts. Long Beach is a leading city in providing bike infrastructure and encouraging the use of bicycles in daily transportation for commuting and recreation. However, persistent issues of bike theft undermine residents' faith and support for our mobility and recreation related goals. Reported bike thefts in Long Beach averaged over 700 instances a year between 2011 and 2016,¹ and statistics show the numbers of actual thefts is likely much higher. This reality is echoed by our residents on a regular basis. Without registration, it is difficult for law enforcement to (1) confirm suspected theft in a certain situation, (2) seize property that has been acquired unlawfully, (3) arrest suspects for theft, (4) successfully submit a case to the City Prosecutor for a criminal filing, or (5) return bicycles to their rightful owners.

On March 8, 2018 staff provided a report back to City Council with recommended next steps on how best Long Beach could adopt a bike registration program. The recommendation from staff was to participate in a national bicycle registry operated by Project 529, a bike registration organization. Participating in this program would give the City and Long Beach Police Department access to data from many jurisdictions nationwide as well as allowing law enforcement from other agencies to have access to Long beach data.

Currently Project 529's database has over 400,000 bicycles in their registry making it the largest such service in the country. Project 529 offers a free online bike

¹ <http://www.longbeach.gov/police/media-library/documents/crime-info/statistics/2011-2016-year-end-crimestats/>



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registration, reporting, and recovery service that allows cyclists to capture detailed information on their bicycles and quickly secure the information on-line. The program can also provide real time notifications to law enforcement agencies when a bicycle goes missing.

Currently the Long Beach Police Department is not able to track bicycles in this way because there is no system in place for Long Beach. However, if the Long Beach Police Department had access to bike serial numbers, descriptions, photographs, and owner contact information they would be able to proactively identify bikes as stolen and return them to their owners. With the establishment of a free bike registry the residents of Long Beach would be better served and equipped to confront the issue of bike thefts.

With the addition of a bicycle registration program we could better confirm suspected theft, seize illegally obtained property, arrest theft suspects, successfully prosecute criminals, or return bicycles to their rightful owners. This is an important issue to better address and is something the City Council has taken further action on by recently directing the City Attorney to draft an ordinance to limit bike chop shops in our public spaces. A bike registration program would work in conjunction with this forthcoming new ordinance to ensure these issues are being addressed.

RECOMMENDATION:

The City Council requests the City Manager develop a free, voluntary bike registration program for Long Beach residents by partnering with Project 529, and develop an education campaign to inform residents of this service and the benefits of registering their bicycles.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Staff estimates annual program cost to be between \$1,000 to \$5,000.