



### INFORMATION ITEM

Calendar Year 2021 Legislative Program

### STAFF REPRESENTATIVE

Tracy Beidleman, Manager, Government Relations, Capital Planning and Grant Programs

### BACKGROUND

Long Beach Transit's (LBT) staff works at the local, state and federal levels to protect and enhance funding and advance goals that are important to LBT's provision of daily service for its customers. In addition to its own advocacy efforts, LBT works closely with both the California Transit Association (CTA) and the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) – LBT's industry trade associations – to help advance common goals at the state and federal levels.

Annually, staff develops a legislative work program to help guide advocacy efforts for the calendar year. The program is meant to serve as a strategic document, providing general direction for staff activities and allowing the flexibility to pursue unanticipated legislative and administrative opportunities that may present themselves during the course of the year.

### Recap of 2020 Legislative Activities:

#### Local

Measure M, the half-cent sales tax increase approved by Los Angeles (LA) County voters in November 2016 through the LA County Traffic Improvement Plan continued to be planned to support some of LBT's program goals and strategic priorities. Projects implemented with Measure M funding, which became effective in July 2017, are intended to ease traffic congestion, expand rail systems, repave streets and roads, make public transportation more accessible and enhance local and regional bus service to improve system connectivity.

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, LBT developed its annual Improvement Plan, outlining the use of program funds and how these funds will contribute to meeting LBT's program goals and strategic priorities including:

1. **Transit Service Delivery Frequency Increase** – along high-density transit corridors within LBT's service area to expand access to job opportunities and reduce greenhouse gases.
2. **LBT Service Expansion** – LBT continued its expanded bus service to connect to the Metro C Line (Green) Lakewood Station, increasing customer access to downtown Los Angeles and job opportunities. Additional service expansion includes the cities of Paramount and Downey to provide increased and enhanced mobility options to customers in the more northern portions of the service area.



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3. **Water Taxi Service Expansion** – Extend water taxi service from April through October to year-round service (LBT's water taxi service was suspended in March due to COVID-19)
4. **UCLA/Westwood Commuter Express** – Implement regional bus service by piloting an express commuter service between Long Beach and Westwood Village and three stops in the UCLA and Westwood Business Improvement District to enhance access to educational and employment opportunities, as well as to reduce greenhouse gases.
5. **Operating Assistance** – For FY 2021, city, state and federal funding remains stagnant and is further affected by the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. LBT faces numerous challenges, including its increasing labor, pension and health care costs. Due to these conditions, LBT will use a portion of its Measure M FY 2021 allocation to fund its transit services.

#### State

LBT continued to seek opportunities through various Senate Bill (SB) 1 programs including State of Good Repair (SGR) and State Transit Assistance (STA) to support LBT's capital and operating strategic priorities and initiatives which includes the replacement of its aging bus fleet with zero-emission buses.

SB 1, the Road Repair and Accountability Act of 2017, which was signed into law by Governor Edmund G. Brown in April 2017, is intended to improve transportation and create jobs in communities across California. SB 1 provides for major investments in repairing local streets and roads, as well as providing historic levels of public transportation funding.

LBT continued to support efforts to increase the flexibility of Cap and Trade Programs available for public transit through legislation amending the Low-Carbon Transit Operations Program (LCTOP). LBT staff also continued to advocate for new and sustained funding for transit agencies.

#### Federal

LBT continued to support the implementation of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, the long-term surface transportation bill that established funding levels and federal policy for the nation's highways and public transit systems for FY 2016 through FY 2020.

The FAST Act was set to expire September 30, 2020, but was extended for one additional year through September 30, 2021.

Due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff was unable to meet with congressional members, federal legislative staff and regulatory officials in person but communicated through virtual meetings with advocacy associations or by offering position letters to offer recommendations on programmatic and regulatory reforms that may positively impact transit.



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The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020, providing needed operating assistance to transit agencies across the country to prevent, prepare for and respond to COVID-19.

LBT received an allocation of CARES Act funding to support its continued transit operations during this time. Additionally, on December 27, 2020, the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CRRSAA) was signed into law, continuing to support transit agencies' efforts to provide needed transit services amid an increase in operating expenses related to COVID-19 response.

LBT anticipates receiving funding through this supplemental program. The agency will continue to work with CTA and APTA in support of additional federal funding as it responds to the immediate transit needs of its customers and looks toward service recovery efforts in 2021.

#### **2021 Legislative Program Highlights:**

The Calendar Year 2021 Legislative Program was created in conjunction with the CTA and APTA's Legislative Programs. The Program was also designed in support of LBT's Strategic Priorities:

- Improve Safety and Service Quality
- Exercise Financial Accountability
- Foster Employee Engagement
- Enhance Customer Experience
- Promote Community and Industry Focus

#### **Local**

LBT continues to serve as a regional partner and stakeholder in its overall effort to support stabilizing and increasing ridership as the agency advances transit services for LBT's customers and those who travel throughout LBT's service area, as well as, the greater region. LBT will continue to work collaboratively with its partners at Metro and the Los Angeles County Municipal Operators Association (LACMOA) to analyze and implement recommendations from the Ridership Growth Action Plan (RGAP) that focuses on transit ridership in LA County by better understanding changes in the region's demographics, travel options and patterns.

LBT will also continue to implement the recommendations of LBT's Systemwide Transit Analysis and Reassessment (STAR) Initiative within the City of Long Beach and surrounding communities in a systematic and phased approach.

#### **State**

LBT will work with CTA to ensure the adopted California Air Resources Board's (CARB) Innovative Clean Transit (ICT) Regulation is fully implemented. The regulation requires transit agencies to begin purchasing only zero-emission buses (ZEBs), as soon as 2023, with the goal of transitioning all transit buses in California to zero-emission technology by 2040.



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LBT will also seek opportunities to leverage its partnerships and resources to support local and regional efforts that maximize its capital improvements and operating programs.

Additionally, LBT will maintain a focus on the availability of Cap and Trade revenues, along with ensuring these funding programs allow maximum flexibility when determining eligible projects. LBT will work to encourage and support regulations that provide for alternative technologies and funding options to achieve California's greenhouse gas emission goals and that provide for increased sustainability by balancing economic, social and environmental needs in its service planning and delivery.

At both the State and Federal level, LBT will work with CTA and APTA to engage the State Legislature, Congress and the Administration to secure new emergency and stimulus funding to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on LBT's budget and operational capacity, including authority to remedy budget shortfalls and fund any additional pandemic-related federal mandates imposed on transit systems.

### **Federal**

During FY 2021, LBT will, through its Legislative Program, work with CTA and APTA to seek a long-term (six-year) authorization at funding levels of no less than the FAST Act baseline at year five, plus inflation. With the enactment of HR 8337, the Continuing Appropriations Act of 2021 signed by Congress in September 2020, the FAST Act was provided a one-year extension through September 30, 2021. This will provide transit agencies and state and local governments with the stability needed to plan and implement multi-year transportation projects, including transit capital projects.

Additionally, LBT will support the return of Legislative Branch authority in local spending decisions and the inclusion of Congressional community-directed spending in appropriation and authorization legislation to support significant capital and infrastructure improvement programs.

Throughout calendar year 2021, staff will work closely with CTA, APTA and other transit industry associations to continue to monitor, support and initiate local, state and federal legislation that will positively impact LBT's operations and service delivery. Staff will coordinate with legislative representatives through virtual and socially distanced manners to ensure continued communication of LBT's vision, mission and strategic priorities and their alignment with that of local, state and federal legislative policies and funding programs that will support LBT's services as well as its current and future programs and initiatives.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION – N/A**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K. McDonald".

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Kenneth A. McDonald  
President and Chief Executive Officer

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