

# CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



**MEETING DATE:** December 14, 2021

**ITEM NUMBER:** 9.E

**SECOND READING:**

{{customfields.ResoOrdNumber}}

**TYPE OF ITEM:** Consent

**PRESENTED BY:**

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**SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE:**

A Resolution Of The Longmont City Council Approving The Intergovernmental Agreement Between The City And Regional Transportation District For Fare Reimbursement On The Longmont Local Routes And Access-A-Ride Services

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

Over the last 7 years, users of the local RTD bus system have not had to pay fares for local transit travel in Longmont. In 2014, the City of Longmont and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) established the Ride Free Longmont (RFL) program where the City essentially “buys up” the farebox amount of the local bus services. The farebox is typically 15-20 percent of the total operations cost of the service. The RFL IGA being proposed would expire at the end of fiscal year 2022 and would cost the City of Longmont \$224,668, which is included in the 2022 City budget. These costs do not include Access-a-Ride costs that are billed back to the City based on usage during the year at \$5 per trip originating in Longmont—also included in the recently approved 2022 City budget within the Transportation (Street) Fund.

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

- 1) Approve the proposed IGA with RTD to continue the Ride Free program for local bus service in 2022.
- 2) Not approve the proposed IGA with RTD ending the Ride Free program for local bus service after December 31, 2021.

**RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:**

Staff’s recommendation is to approve the proposed IGA with RTD to continue the Ride Free program through 2022. This recommendation directly relates to the Council Workplan item B1.2 of increasing transit ridership and transit service hours in Longmont

**FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

The fixed fiscal impact with an approved action would be \$224,668 from the Transportation (Street) Fund, which has been approved in the 2022 City budget. The Access-a-Ride component of the IGA, charged at the end of the 2022 may require an additional \$35,000 to



meet the City’s commitment. These dollars have also been anticipated and included in the 2022 budget.

**BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:**

The “Ride Free Longmont” (RFL) program has been operating since July 2014 and provides a free one-way bus ride to any patron of the local Regional Transportation District (RTD) bus system. This system includes the 323, 324, 326, and 327 bus routes in Longmont. Riders may also request transfers from the local bus routes to regional bus routes serving Boulder and Denver, worth the amount of the current local RTD fare.

Ridership on the local buses has increased by almost 300-percent on weekdays since the Ride Free program began in Summer 2014 (and measured to pre-COVID 2019). The table below represents annual boardings per year on the 300-series buses in Longmont and the percent increase/decrease from the previous year.

Year	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2013-19</u>
<b>Boardings</b>	156,863	237,254	313,692	554,207	616,141	613,280	625,354	+468,491
<b>% +/-</b>		+51%	+32%	+76%	+11%	-<1%	+4%	+299%

Prior to the RFL program, the Denver-based fare costs would prohibit Longmont-based riders from using the local Longmont bus service. The decreasing ridership, due to the cost of service, would lead to RTD cutting bus service in Longmont, which would reduce the ridership even more in the next year. This “downward spiral” of service cuts and loss of ridership was stopped by the fare buy up in 2014.

In 2020 RTD offered the City deep discounts to this Ride Free Longmont program all bus service was suspended for a number of months due to the COVID pandemic, and came back in a limited capacity once transit was allowed to resume. The City of Longmont and RTD staff have agreed on the costs for the Ride Free Longmont service in 2022 to be \$224,668. This cost does not include Access-a-Ride (required ADA-accessible, door-through-door transit service) costs that are billed back to the City based on usage during the year at \$5 per trip originating in Longmont. The highest cost for this service was in 2019 when the City paid approximately \$32,000 for trips on the Access-a-Ride. These costs were \$18,240 in 2020.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Ride Free Longmont IGA
- Ride Free Longmont Resolution