



City of Arts & Innovation

# News Release

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## **City of Riverside's Bikes4Vets Program Will Help Veterans With Free Bicycles**

*Project Hero group will work with Riverside Police Department to rehab abandoned bicycles*

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – Military veterans in the City of Riverside will be able to receive free bicycles as part of the new Bikes4Vets program originated by Mayor Rusty Bailey and Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Conder.

The Bikes4Vets program promises to connect veterans with bikes they can use for exercise or for more practical purposes, such as getting to a job interview, a work site or to a medical appointment. The Riverside Police Department will donate bicycles and bicycle parts they obtain during the year to the non-profit Ride 2 Recovery, which will do business in Riverside under the name Project Hero.

Project Hero will take the bicycles and parts and assemble working bicycles for distribution to veterans. Ride 2 Recovery, the umbrella organization for Project Hero, is a decade-old, nationwide, non-profit organization that is committed to helping veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury.

“Ride 2 Recovery has a great track record of providing bicycles to veterans to use when going to work or medical appointments,” said Mayor Bailey, himself an Army veteran. “We have made tremendous progress in ensuring homeless veterans have housing, so it makes sense to take the next step and address their transportation needs.”

The City Council approved a memorandum of understanding with the organization Tuesday (11/13) evening. The agreement spells out how the bicycles will be obtained and a protocol for distributing them.

Priority for placement of the bikes is: formerly homeless veterans living in subsidized housing; veterans with a service-related disability rating from the Department of Veterans Affairs; all other military personnel, veterans and members of the National Guard; family members of the people already listed.

For all bikes donated by the City of Riverside, priority will go to Riverside residents and agencies serving Riverside residents. Children's bikes that cannot be distributed through the program will go to Riverside youth via the Riverside Police Foundation.

"Our veterans are one of great treasures in American society," said Mayor Pro Tem Chuck Conder, an Air Force veteran. "I'm proud our city is partnering with Project Hero to provide this service to them."

Riverside Police take possession of bicycles during the year for variety of reasons: when an owner is arrested and police cannot locate anyone to come claim the property; bikes that reported as found property and nobody comes forward within 90 days to prove ownership; when a bicycle is booked into evidence as part of a crime investigation and eventually is no longer needed as evidence.

Unclaimed bicycles typically have been grouped together and sent to an auctioneer for sale, with proceeds being split evenly with the auctioneer. During the past year, however, the auctioneer has become more selective about which bicycles they will accept; during the first six months of 2018, Riverside Police received only about \$150 through the program.

To avoid the appearance of a conflict, Project Hero will not be permitted to identify a specific need or request for either a bicycle or bicycle parts. The group will be permitted, as necessary, to adapt bicycles for use by disabled veterans.