City Council Meeting
07-13-26
Item 7.A.

Council Agenda Report

To: Mayor Silverstein and the Honorable Members of the City Council

Prepared by: Joseph D. Irvin, City Manager

Date prepared: May 22, 2026 Meeting date: July 13, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support – Pier to Pier (Continued from June 8, 2026)

RECOMMENDED ACTION: It is recommended that the City Council: 1) Consider submittal of a Letter of Support for Pier to Pier LLC's California State Parks concession application at Malibu Pier; or 2) Provide additional direction to city staff.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact associated with the recommended action.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:
Goal 2: Drive Economic Recovery and Restore Lost Revenue.
Objective 2.1: Recover lost sales, hotel, and transaction tax revenue to pre-disaster levels to restore the city's ability to deliver high quality services.
Strategy: Leverage public-private partnerships.
Economic Recovery Outreach Campaign: Utilize the city's brand to attract visitors, investment, and residents through strategic outreach.

Goal 4: Improve Public Safety
Objective 4.2: Increase Wildfire Resiliency
Emergency Evacuation: Increase alert warning, and evacuation capabilities.

Goal 7: Explore New Opportunities for Educational, Cultural, and Recreational Establishments.
Objective 7.1: Deliver high quality public services and spaces for education, recreation, and culture.

DISCUSSION:
Pier to Pier LLC is a U.S. Coast Guard-approved, privately funded, coastal passenger ferry service operating in partnership with Harbor Breeze Cruises, a California-licensed vessel operator and led by Malibu residents including a Retired Rear Admiral of US Coast Guard and former Heal the Bay Board Members. Pier to Pier is proposing to launch a scheduled water transportation service, initially for events, then slowly adding daily routes,

connecting Malibu to already approved stops at Santa Monica, Marina del Rey, Redondo Harbor, San Pedro, and Long Beach, with fares of approximately $50 plus tax round trip on (2) 100 ft, 149 passenger, CARB compliant catamarans once a California State Parks Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) agreement is in place.

Beyond transportation, this service has the potential to help advance five City of Malibu priorities:

(1) it provides economic recovery to local businesses without adding cars to PCH;

(2) it creates a critical coastal evacuation corridor and emergency water-based escape route for residents during wildfire or PCH closure events — pending the State Parks agreement, CalOES can authorize the deployment of all available vessels in any declared emergency;

(3) it offers a practical transit alternative to visit Malibu, particularly vital during ongoing and planned PCH construction;

(4) allows Malibu to participate in LA28, as Pier to Pier can operate as official athlete transportation for Team USA from Pepperdine to their events, and

(5) it creates a new funding pathway for Malibu Pier itself, as the concession structure positions Pier to Pier to contribute to pier maintenance, repair, and infrastructure improvements.

The Council's Letter of Support carries meaningful weight in the State Parks concession review process and costs the City no direct funding commitment while potentially securing Malibu revenue through an embarkment tax and a permanent, Coast Guard-approved maritime safety and transportation asset at its own pier, while not invoking SB79.

Pier to Pier Funding

Approximately $60M in private funding has been pledged. Pier to Pier's funding goal is $120M of private funding (for infrastructure upgrades and operations). This would fund approximately the first 18 months of service (Summer 2026 through December 2027).

In terms of public support, Sen. Ben Allen submitted a formal CA state budget line item in support for passenger ferry funding of $2 million annually. Pier to Pier, LLC is actively seeking and applying for federal and state transportation grants.

Pier to Pier, LLC would eventually move toward a private-public partnership. Their general exit strategy is for the state to take over the Southern California regional passenger ferry system within an estimated five-year timeframe.

Pier to Pier Route

The initial "proposed" routes and 10 landings (or ferry and water taxi stops) are:

(1) Malibu,
(2) Santa Monica,
(3) Marina Del Rey,
(4) Redondo Beach,
(5) San Pedro,
(6) Long Beach – Belmont,
(7) Long Beach – Rainbow Harbor,
(8) Long Beach – Almeida,
(9) Long Beach – Queen Mary, and
(10) Long Beach – Amphitheater.

Public Transit and Parking

Pier to Pier, LLC is coordinating closely with LA Metro and the 134-bus line will be used. They have private parking partners and have identified approximately 75-to-100 parking spaces for initial use.

Harbor Breeze Cruises

Harbor Breeze is identified as the global vessel operator partner. They have CA-licensed boat operators or captains. Their boats are CARB-compliant, carbon-neutral vessels. Harbor Breeze has a 30-year maritime safety record, recently validated by USCG. Pier to Pier, LLC expects between two-and-four boats once daily operations are underway with approximately three stops-per-landing daily.

The safety of the service is a primary focus of Pier to Pier, LLC's work. Moreover, the emergency utility of the boats is a goal, specifically, for evacuation service.

Pier to Pier "Proposed" Timeline

JUNE 2026: Inaugural ride scheduled for June 5 during U.S. Conference of Mayors in Long Beach.

JUNE/JULY 2026: Soft events launch scheduled for June and July during FIFA World Cup.

FALL 2026: Continue weekend or event schedule, can extend based on Santa Monica Pier timing.

WINTER 2026-27: Coordination with City of Santa Monica in preparation for 10-day hosting pre-Super Bowl 2027 and then Pier to Pier Passengers for Ferry Service, thereafter.

For additional information pertaining to the Pier to Pier project, visit https://piertopier.org/.

ATTACHMENTS: Proposed Letter of Support

City of Malibu

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June 8, 2026

California Department of Parks and Recreation
Concession Program
Attn: Concessions Program Staff
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Letter of Support for Pier to Pier LLC Concessions Application at Malibu Pier

Dear Review Committee,

On behalf of the City of Malibu, this letter provides support for Pier to Pier LLC's proposed concession application for passenger ferry operations at Malibu Pier. The proposed coastal passenger ferry service presents an opportunity to advance several priorities important to our community.

The service has the potential to support Malibu's ongoing economic recovery by bringing visitors and customers to local businesses without increasing vehicle traffic on Pacific Coast Highway (PCH). It offers a promising transportation alternative during current and planned corridor improvements and could help reduce congestion along one of the region's most critical transportation corridors. Importantly, the project introduces a maritime component that could strengthen emergency preparedness and evacuation options during wildfire incidents, road closures, and other emergencies affecting PCH access. In addition, the proposal could create long-term support opportunities for maintenance and investment at Malibu Pier itself.

With approximately $60 million in private funding already pledged and State Senator Ben Allen's formal budget support, Pier to Pier LLC has demonstrated the seriousness and resources needed to deliver. We respectfully urge the Department to consider this application and welcome the opportunity to discuss our support further.

Sincerely,

Bruce Silverstein
Mayor, City of Malibu