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# TARC, Louisville CVB rebrand ZeroBus to LouLift to help tourists, locals

By [LISA HORNING](#) | June 25, 2018 9:00 am



TARC has rebranded the ZeroBus as [LouLift](#) and extended its routes to help tourists and others get to destinations in Old Louisville and the South End.

The all-electric bus fleet now takes people to Old Louisville, University of Louisville and Churchill Downs offering an

alternative to driving there or paying for a ride. The routes are simple, and the ride is free.

“With one of the largest all-electric fleets in the country, we’re proud to announce LouLift as an environmentally friendly way for passengers to move about Downtown Louisville for work or play,” said Transit Authority of River City Executive Director J. Barry Barker in the announcement.

Since 2015, the fleet of all-electric buses has been quietly taking over the downtown area. The Zero Bus program was created before some of the recent infrastructure changes, such as the Omni Hotel and the Bourbon District downtown, Williams said. Now tourists have many reasons to move around downtown and hop on and off the buses as they enjoy Louisville’s attractions.

New stops will be added at Churchill Downs, the Speed Art Museum, St. James Court and other attractions south of Breckinridge Street, and bus stop signage will be redesigned. The design change to LouLift will be phased in on buses, shelters and stops over the next few weeks. The new design is scheduled to be on all the buses by July 1.

“The new LouLift brand helps communicate the free all-electric bus service that is available to residents and visitors alike in a simple and iconic way. As our destination continues to grow, one of our primary initiatives has been to make sure our visitors have a user-friendly transportation alternative,” said Karen Williams, president and CEO of the Louisville Convention & Visitors Bureau.

The rebranding costs were divided between the two agencies, Williams said. TARC is assuming the costs of adding extra travel on the route, and the Louisville CVB paid for the branding, which was done by [Bandy Carroll Hellige](#) at a cost of about \$60,000. That pays



New branding adorns all the downtown bus stops where LouLift stops. | Photo by Lisa Hornung

for the bus wraps, the new signage at the bus stops and the fees paid to BCH.

“That’s what you want — it’s something that’s very recognizable and very easy,” Williams said. “It’s not like bus with a bunch of pictures, it’s just a fleur-de-lis on the LouLift. Again they see our brand. We’ll be working with the concierges at the hotels and the concierges at all the attractions to let them know that, so they can share this route with all the visitors that come in and out of their hotel or in and out of their attractions.”

Russell Goodwin, marketing director for TARC, said that all bus drivers are now trained to be Certified Tourism Ambassadors through the CVB so they can answer questions about local attractions on the route.

There is a brochure for tourists in the local hotels and at attractions to help visitors understand how to take the bus. And eventually, there will be a phone app that will not only show how to use the bus, but it will give information about local attractions, Goodwin said.

The CVB is also working with the [Kentucky Distillers’ Association](#) to identify bourbon-themed stops on the routes, making it easier for tourists to access our bourbon heritage. Eventually, an insert will be put into the brochure.

“When folks want to check out the whole bourbonism culture here in Louisville, they can do that with ease,” Goodwin said.

KDA’s initiative to prevent impaired driving aligns with LouLift so well, said Ali Edelstein, director of Social Responsibility. Not only does LouLift offer an alternative to driving, it also can prevent impaired walking between the distilleries, Edelstein said. According to a [2016 report](#) from Kentucky State Police, 22 percent of traffic-related pedestrian fatalities older than 15 were drinking at the time of death.

Edelstein said the ability to insert into the brochure is important because KDA is careful not to promote alcohol to minors, who may also be riding LouLift. The insert could be handed out at distilleries but not be a permanent part of the LouLift brochure.

KDA works closely with the ride-sharing company Lyft to provide free safe rides during some holidays, Edelstein said. LouLift could partner with Lyft in the future, similarly to other cities where they brand with Lyft to promote “last mile” transportation, in which a rider goes as far as possible on

public transportation then pays for the rest of the ride home, saving costs to the rider. It's not on the agenda in Louisville yet, though.

Williams also noted that as new attractions open up in the city, such as the new Louisville City soccer stadium, the collaboration between agencies means the possibility exists of extending the routes down the road.

It's also beneficial to people who want to live downtown, Williams said. "Millennials don't want to have cars. They want to be able to go places. So it really is a mode of user-friendly transportation," she said.

Mayor Greg Fischer said in a news release: "The new name and the new stops are great additions to our city, and so timely, as they make it easier for so many of our families armed with Cultural Passes to get to participating sites. Overall, it's another great boost to the renaissance of downtown."

The Kentucky Derby Museum is a little bit easier to get to now. "We are excited to see this service come to fruition, providing a convenient way to access more of Louisville's top attractions, including the Kentucky Derby Museum and Churchill Downs," Kentucky Derby Museum President and CEO Patrick Armstrong said in a release. "LouLift creates a new level of connectivity for Louisville, allowing us an opportunity to immerse more guests into the history of the Kentucky Derby."

## **LISA HORNUNG**

Lisa Hornung a native of Louisville and has worked in local media for more than 15 years as a writer and editor. Before that she worked as a writer, editor and photographer for community newspapers in Kansas, Ohio and Kentucky. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Georgia, and after a 20-year career in journalism, she obtained a master's degree in history from Eastern Kentucky University in 2016.



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