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Living Lab Program: Grantee Case Studies

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Better Bike Share Partnership Living Lab Program: Grantee Case Studies

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Living Lab Overview

Overview

In 2021, the Better Bike Share Partnership (BBSP) selected five cities to be “Living Labs” - testing grounds for innovative, equitable solutions in bike share. The Living Lab program is designed to support, showcase, and learn lessons from partnerships that are addressing a key barrier to access and use of bike share for communities of color and those living with limited incomes.

- Chicago: The Northwest Center, a nonprofit based in the Belmont Cragin neighborhood, created an outreach campaign to empower youth to design and roll out programs that will focus on bikes to connect the neighborhood to other transit options, jobs, schools, and one another.
- Cincinnati: Red Bike looked to expand its youth programming and to support expansion through community partnerships, low-income GO Pass program and managing the weekly youth bike rides.
- Detroit: MoGo focused on building a bike-to-bus connection, seamlessly integrating transit and bike share. Their efforts entailed realignment and expansion on bike stations near bus stops, community education and outreach, and partnering with a local kiosk-based company to allow cash payments for memberships.
- Philadelphia: Indego focused on neighborhood expansion of bike share and enhanced community outreach and engagement through ambassadors, discounted Indego bike share passes, and bicycle skills courses and trainings.
- Portland: Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT) rolled out its Prescribe-a-Bike program, which allows local health clinics to prescribe BIKETOWN electric bikes as medicine. PBOT also focused on increasing ridership for high school students and low-income users through outreach, education, and membership in its low-income discount program.

Outcomes of each Living Lab are described in the individual case studies. The case studies provide an overview of the activities undertaken in each city, results of the programs and specific lessons learned. Below are the broader takeaways and lessons learned from the grantees from participating in the BBSP Living Lab program.

Main takeaways

Networking

A theme heard from each of the Living Lab grantees was the value of the opportunities related to connecting with professional peers around issues of bike share equity. Through participation in cohort monthly calls and in person meetups with cohort peers doing similar equity-focused bike share work at other agencies in other cities, participants developed new connections. These relationships cultivated by the cohort offered unique insights into effective interactions. In-person opportunities to interact with, share experiences and learn from peers was viewed even more positively. For example, funding to travel to other cities to learn and see what others are doing was

very beneficial while funding to travel to NABSA conference was a great opportunity to share grantee's work on a national level and also network with other organizations from around the country. Grantees did hope there would be opportunities to continue the networking and sharing, either in person or virtually. One organization mentioned a BBSP message board or Slack channel could be a great place to exchange information and ideas.

Learning from others

Related to the prior takeaway, we also heard from many grantees that their programs and ambitions benefited from learning about the experiences of other cities in the cohort. Examples include both learning about what works, such as new and innovative ways to market and conduct outreach and engagement activities, and just as importantly, what didn't work well or what was very challenging. One grantee discussed how learning about how e-bikes are integrated in a system and different types of subsidized memberships was useful in thinking about future plans for their system.

More broadly, the lessons from fellow cohort members, and particularly hearing from Philadelphia, helped illuminate how prioritizing equity in bike share makes the overall system better. Philadelphia has been a showcase and a proof of concept to show how a program founded with equity as a bedrock principle can work and encourage people to ride bikes if you address barriers.

BBSP has not only funded successful implementations of specific programs but also created an environment conducive to knowledge transfer. These programs and grants have created a network and blueprint with evidence of the implementation and benefits of equitable bike share, which can help to encourage local communities and leaders to invest in these programs.

Operationalizing programs

Sustained and long-term funding allows needed stability for launching a program. The BBSP Living Lab grant gave the cohort organizations the capacity to implement and deploy and accelerate programs, pilot projects, test ideas, and invest in people and operations in ways that would not have been otherwise possible.

Often grant programs or other funding sources restrict organizations on how they can use their funding, especially for operational costs. BBSP allowed for buying equipment, such as helmets, lights and other gear, or paying incentives which are difficult to get funding for to support. As highlighted by Northwest Center in Chicago, paying ambassadors or having incentives for community members to participate in events and courses was critical in the success of their outreach.

The Living Lab program also was structured in a way that gave these organizations a chance to act, assess, review, and pivot if necessary. The flexibility of the Living Lab program allowed the grantees to learn from their successes, failures and challenges. Circumstances can change, agency objectives can evolve, and the COVID-19 pandemic especially tested many of the organizations. Most of the grantees had to pivot from parts of their initial proposed projects. When programming wasn't working quite as intended, they kept their labs alive by trying something different. For example, Detroit realized the barriers to integrate into the local transit pass system would be significant. They were able to successfully shift to address the barrier of accessing bike share with cash. In some cases,

this resulted in new and unexpected community partnerships. Most programs adapted during COVID-19 and still produced successes and useful resources. For example, Philadelphia adapted the “Digital Skills and Bicycle Thrills” training program, which had to meet in person, to a new course that could better sustain online learning, “Wheels to Work,” and developed materials to help people experience the system on their own, including a ride guide and video.

Finally, the Living Lab provided the organizations an opportunity to develop new programs, which created new partnerships. The funding allowed organizations to have staff to work on partnership development or help bring the community’s voice to the table. Since some of the projects were creating new programs, the grantee needed to reach out to other organizations and city agencies. The funding legitimized the project and brought needed resources to help the partnerships to grow.

Other highlights

Outside of the benefits outlined above, there were some additional highlights that grantees shared.

1. Organizations felt the BBSP helped the organizations promote their own successes and getting people to know about their work. This helped the organization locally and nationally to build connections and possible funding.
2. The Living Lab program and other BBSP events help building leadership skills. Individuals have professional development opportunities to gain skills and experiences that allow them to grow in their organizations.
3. BBSP’s unique, partnership-based approach to grant-making results in positive outcomes and lasting relationships. The relationship with grantees resembles a mentor-mentee relationship but sometimes BBSP is the mentor, and sometimes they are the mentee -- creating truly a community of practice.
4. Purposeful and intentional community involvement and engagement is vital to the success in building a bike share program. Affirming the value of listening to people in the community is critical. We do not know what people need unless we truly listen to their situations, feelings, and feedback. When organizations listen and carefully synthesize this information with data, they can help empower the community. This component of the meaning of the programs was highlighted as a knowledge gained through working in the cohort.
5. Overall, organizations thought community engagement efforts successfully influenced residents to adopt biking as a viable and accessible transportation option, fostering a community that values biking through group rides, workshops, and educational events.
6. It’s important to remain nimble, especially when it comes to serving the needs of BIPOC, youth, and lower-income communities.

Project: Bikes for Belmont Cragin

Key Details

Lead: Northwest Center

City: Chicago, IL

Bike share system: Divvy

Belmont Cragin is a neighborhood on Chicago’s northwest side with about 78,000 residents. One of Chicago’s 77 community areas, Belmont Cragin is a heavily Hispanic neighborhood. Northwest Center, originally Northwest Side Housing Center, was founded in 2003 to provide Belmont Cragin residents access to counseling and resources in response to an increase in foreclosures and predatory lending practices. Over time, Northwest Center expanded its focus beyond housing to more broadly improve the economic well-being and quality of life of the Belmont Cragin community through community development, organizing, planning, and education. One of Northwest Center’s main focuses is youth empowerment, including hosting a Youth Leadership Council to help young Belmont Cragin residents receive support as organizers, activists, and community leaders. The Northwest Center’s transportation work has been largely driven by the Youth Leadership Council, and it is through this group that the Bikes for Belmont Cragin campaign originated. Divvy is the bicycle sharing system in the Chicago metropolitan area. The system is owned by the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT), operated by Lyft, and includes over 15,000 bicycles and over 650 stations.

Project Overview

The Northwest Center was unique among the 2020-2023 cohort of Living Labs as it was the only location where the grantee does not operate the city’s bike share system. The three-year BBSP Living Lab grant allowed Northwest Center to develop the “Bikes for Belmont Cragin” campaign and to enhance bike-focused outreach, including hosting workshops, group bike rides, launching the “Pump The Brakes” series, and other educational events. Additionally, the Northwest Center was able to purchase and distribute over 2,500 “Divvy 4 Everyone” memberships—reduced-fare, annual bike share memberships generally reserved for users who qualify for public assistance. The organization, through its Youth Leadership Council, collaborated with city officials and community leaders to install bike lanes, introduce Divvy bikeshare, and organize various bike-related engagement and educational programs.

Project Goals

Recognizing that a lack of reliable transportation was one of the most pressing issues facing the Belmont Cragin community, the Northwest Center project focused on:

- 1) Empowering youth to design and roll out an educational campaign that focused on bikes as a way to connect neighborhood residents to other transit options, jobs, schools, and other community members.
- 2) Broadening its outreach and engagement efforts to ensure residents are aware of and able to access Divvy bike share stations and newly installed bike lanes.
- 3) Changing residents' mindsets around bicycling through group rides, engaging elected officials, and facilitating conversations with local residents.

The overarching objective was to improve the transportation landscape and foster a sense of community through biking initiatives.

What did the project do?

Northwest Center was focused on bringing Divvy bike share and bike lanes to the neighborhood. Their Living Lab focused on making sure community members understood bike share and could use Divvy, helped give voice to community members around the topic of mobility equity, and their Living Lab helped build community around bicycling as a means of social interaction, physical activity, and transportation. The “Bikes for Belmont Cragin” campaign consisted of a full range of bike-focused outreach, including hosting workshops, group bike rides, community outreach and other educational events.

Youth Transit Ambassadors

Among the key components of the “Bikes for Belmont Cragin” campaign were the Youth Transit Ambassadors (YTA), who played important roles in engaging local residents, peers, and elected officials through hosting transportation equity pop-up events, leading community bike rides, and working to get community members to sign up for Divvy 4 Everyone (D4E) and other transit equity programs. Over the course of the grant, the YTAs signed up approximately 2,900 community members for the D4E membership. The Living Lab program funded transit ambassadors (18 in 2021, 10 in 2022, 12 in 2023), who were paid a stipend of \$1,000 per year to lead and support bike-related programming and engagement efforts. These stipends were crucial to the success of the program and to retain ambassadors. The ambassadors led community bike rides, which aimed to equip residents with safety knowledge, navigation skills, and bike maintenance resources, promoting a sense of comfort and familiarity with active transportation. In 2022, the ambassadors tested and facilitated their own mobile bike maintenance shop with the purchase of bike racks and bike tools. They provide bike maintenance and training for free for residents during the weekly bike rides and events.

Outreach and Education Campaign

The outreach and education campaign implemented by the Northwest Center was a multifaceted effort aimed at fostering community awareness, providing educational resources, and engaging residents in biking activities. Outreach to the community was a vital component of the Northwest Center's approach. As mentioned above the transit ambassadors were the key implementers of the outreach. Overall, the outreach and education campaign not only focused on the physical aspects of

biking infrastructure but also played a crucial role in nurturing a biking culture, building community connections, and promoting active and sustainable transportation choices.

Community Workshops

The "Pump the Brakes" classes were an integral component of the Bikes for Belmont Cragin campaign. Working with West Town Bikes and Bikes N' Roses, Northwest Center conducted an eight-part facilitated conversation and education series during winter months in 2022. These classes took the form of an eight-part facilitated conversation and education series designed to address and enhance dialogue and safety between cyclists and drivers in the Belmont Cragin community. The conversations focused on the community's transportation infrastructure on topics such as vision zero, bike safety virtual demos, and restorative justice-framed peace circle. The event also brought representatives from CDOT and Divvy to hear from community members about their questions and concerns, further promoting biking as a viable and accessible option for travel within Belmont Cragin. People attending 4 or more classes received incentives of cash cards or bike equipment. These incentives helped to encourage around 100 residents to attend.

Bike Rides

The Belmont Cragin Bike Club community bike rides, established in June 2022, became a sustained initiative, offering weekly community rides through the cycling season (March/April through October). Starting at familiar and frequented community destinations like Blackhawk Park, these rides provided opportunities for residents to explore the neighborhood, try out Divvy bikes, and engage in discussions about transportation issues. The rides aimed to equip residents with safety knowledge, navigation skills, and bike maintenance resources, promoting a sense of comfort and familiarity with active transportation. The campaign's success extended to business bike rides that highlighted local art and minority-owned businesses along the new bike lanes, contributing not only to community ties but also supporting the growth and sustainability of Belmont Cragin's local economy.

Pop-Up Events

Northwest Center also organized pop-up events as a dynamic and interactive strategy to engage with the community. These events were designed to be flexible, temporary, and situated in locations frequented by residents. The primary goal was to create a presence at local block parties and popular community events, where the organization could actively promote biking opportunities, educate residents, and recruit individuals and new leaders to join their bike organizing efforts. The outreach campaign also strategically integrated bike rides with existing community events like Hoops in the Hood and Playstreets, boosting participation and creating a broader impact. Northwest Center hosted events at more than 25 block parties on 25 different blocks in Belmont Cragin and also took part in 33 Hoops in the Hood events. Northwest Center dispersed a total of 600 helmets, and 300 bike lights at these events.

What were the results?

The results of the NWC's community-focused initiatives have been transformative, demonstrating the positive impact on both residents and the broader transportation landscape in Belmont Cragin. Notably, Youth Transit Ambassadors (YTAs) have been recognized for their pivotal role, with an invitation to join the Community Mobility Collaborative (CMC) leadership team. This collaboration involves working alongside the Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) and seven other organizations to host citywide CMC meetings, focusing on elevating residents' concerns, particularly in Black and Brown communities. This project has elevated the voice and expertise of the Northwest Center with the City of Chicago and created a strong working relationship to guide CDOT's engagement and activities. Additionally, YTAs have been approached by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) to participate in the inaugural Community Alliance for Regional Equity (CARE) cohort, providing residents with an important opportunity to contribute to long-term decision-making processes.

The community outlook on biking has significantly improved, as evidenced by survey results showcasing a positive shift in residents' attitudes and an increased sense of connection to the community. Group bike rides have played a crucial role in building a strong community, fostering connections among diverse residents, and promoting a peaceful environment. The long-term impact on the neighborhood transportation landscape has been substantial, surpassing initial goals with the implementation of over 17.5 miles of bike lanes and 13 Divvy stations.

Divvy bike usage in Belmont Cragin grew throughout the project, with ridership highest during the summer months. In 2022, Belmont Cragin saw more than 16,000 trips, with an average of 105 daily trips, resulting in the highest uptick in Divvy ridership from the system's Phase II expansion areas, 50% more trips per capita than other neighborhoods. Engagement efforts, including workshops and community rides, have led to increased comfort and confidence among residents in biking, contributing to a positive neighborhood perception of biking.

Lessons Learned

Reflecting on best practices and lessons learned, crucial components of the NWC's education campaign included the importance of early engagement with local elected officials, creating spaces for diverse input, collaborating with similar organizations, long-term program planning, context-sensitive community engagement, meeting people on their own terms, and maintaining consistent and diverse outreach.

By incentivizing action, you can get the most out of outreach efforts.

The Northwest Center's education campaign underwent dynamic transformations throughout the project, thanks to the approaches devised by the Youth Transit Ambassadors aimed at better engaging residents. One noteworthy strategy involved incentivizing participation by offering tangible rewards. Attendees who participated in four or more workshops were eligible to receive a \$50 gift card or complimentary bike gear, including lights, helmets, and a free tune-up courtesy of Bikes and Roses. This not only boosted workshop attendance but also fostered a sense of community and commitment

among participants. Because the transit ambassadors are a crucial element of the Northwest Center efforts, it was also vital to pay them a stipend for their involvement in the campaign.

Outreach efforts need to adapt with the changing needs of the community.

The Northwest Center's education campaign looked different year-to-year due to changing needs of the community and feedback from activities. The YTA, being on the frontline of the engagement, were instrumental in creating better ways to engage residents. Recognizing that the best way to engage people in the community is to meet them where they are, the NWC team created a diverse group of events, workshops, and trainings to talk about Divvy and transportation issues. Strategically integrating bike rides with existing community events, like Hoops in the Hood and Playstreets, helped engage more people. In addition, focusing on more than just bike share helped build community consensus about the need for safe and accessible transportation options.

Future Plans

The Northwest Center has funding from Center for Neighborhood Technology, National Safety Council, Chicago Community Trust, Woods Fund, Chicago Department of Transportation, and Chicago Metropolitan Planning Agency. They plan to continue all of their current work. They will continue to fund the Youth Transit Ambassador program and pay a stipend with funding from the city of Chicago and the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP).

Project: Red Bike Go

Key Details

Lead: Red Bike

City: Cincinnati, OH

Bike share system: Red Bike

Project Overview

Red Bike's Living Lab project tried out a variety of approaches to connect people to the Red Bike Go program, a discounted bike share membership program. While expanding the offering of Red Bike to two new neighborhoods, the grant would support implementing and assessing strategies to build partnerships and community, educate people about bicycling and Red Bike, connect residents to resources, sign them up for the discounted Red Bike Go program, and encourage use of the bike share system by these riders. Youth programs and artistic activities were specific areas of focus.

Project Goals

Underpinning the Red Bike efforts through the Living Lab program was the key goal of growing the number of people who are aware of and using the Red Bike Go discount program. Based in the belief that bikes can make a positive impact on people's lives, and that Red Bike Go can connect underserved communities and residents to opportunities, many of the grant activities, ranging from service expansions to outreach and engagement, ultimately sought to get more people signed up for Red Bike Go and riding Red Bikes.

One principal area of activity under the Living Lab grant was to specifically expand the geographic offering of Red Bike into two new neighborhoods. Efforts in this expansion included preliminary engagement, station planning and launching, along with outreach such as holding opening events to increase awareness, and community rides to give residents a chance to try the bikes, learn about bike share, and get comfortable riding on the streets.

A third goal concerned making sure the system would be embraced and valued by the community, and not subject to vandalism or other bike misuse. Red Bike would seek to give people in the community more of a sense of ownership over the system and the bikes, including through recruiting community ambassadors and engaging the community to design art-themed bikes and stations.

What did the project do?

The project paired youth engagement, community-based partnerships, community ambassadors, art, and system expansion to achieve increased awareness, access to, and use of bike share in Cincinnati. It involved a mix of activities including community engagement and ambassador programs, and

physical station placement, and activities more broadly serving Red Bike and greater Cincinnati community (such as creating informational resources, repairing bikes, distributing helmets and lights, incorporating art into the system, and engaging youth in bicycling and bike share).

As a key to carrying out the Living Lab activities discussed below, Red Bike hired additional staff to focus on outreach and engagement. The staff members were able to connect with the community, for example around the expansions, Go Pass program, and on youth bike rides.

Expansion of service area

Prior to applying for the Living Lab program, Red Bike had been planning to expand. Living Lab funding enabled them to take a more thoughtful and engaged approach to community building in the neighborhoods where new stations were installed. RedBike's expansion goal for their Living Lab included two neighborhoods, Walnut Hills and Lower Price Hill, though they ended up exceeding this goal. The Lower Price Hill expansion came in August 2022 with a station at Hatmaker Street and State Avenue. This station is near Meiser's Market, a market and community gathering location that wanted to work with Red Bike to promote the system to local residents. In May 2023, market staff were trained by Red Bike staff to sign people up for Red Bike Go discount memberships. The Walnut Hills expansion occurred in June 2023 with four stations, primarily along East McMillan Street.

In addition to Lower Price Hill and Walnut Hills, RedBike was able to expand into the West End; a traditionally underserved neighborhood and at Shelterhouse, a local men's shelter, both in 2022. Avondale, to the northeast of downtown, had been identified for future expansion, which also took place with the addition of station in 2023. Though not initially outlined in their project goals, expansion to these sites was made successful in part because of increased capacity as a result of Living Lab funding.

Throughout the expansions, whether or not Living Lab funds were initially targeted to pay for outreach and engagement around new stations, Red Bike had outreach staff, marketing materials, and a tried and tested event and engagement approach that they could draw on.

Community Ambassadors Program

To expand upon the community outreach that Red Bike was able to do in house, they launched a Community Ambassador Program in Year 3 with a focus on building partnerships and supporting nonprofits in the neighborhoods of Walnut Hills, Avondale, and Evanston. Along with a cash grant of \$3,000 to selected community organizations in each target neighborhood, the program provided education and support to the organizations on how to connect their communities to the benefits of bike share. The Community Ambassador program includes monthly check-ins, guidance on how to lead a bike ride, and information on the "ABCs of Red Bike." Each organization agreed to lead five bike rides over the course of the program. While Red Bike staff trained the ambassadors and organizations on topics such as biking and bike share, they in turn learned from the organizations about the communities they are serving, found out about outreach opportunities and built community and trust across the organizations.

Building resources for rides

Over the course of the Living Lab, Red Bike developed resources to make it easier for community members (and rider leaders) to have fun using Red Bike and navigating the streets of the Cincinnati area. For example, “Community Routes” are a set of 44 different safe and urban bike routes. For each route, Red Bike, in partnership with a local bicycle advocacy organization, Queen City Bike, developed a map and list of directions for the ride, along with difficulty ratings for overall difficulty, navigation, traffic, and climbing.

General support for bikes and youth.

A focus for Red Bike in their community engagement has been to engage teenagers around the value and benefits of bicycling and Red Bike. In Years 1 and 2 of the Living Lab Red Bike worked with Groundwork Ohio River Valley and other partners to host 27 rides for youth aged 14 to 18. In 2023, Groundwork leaned into the partnership and began leading their own rides to perform air quality measurements throughout the Lower Price Hill neighborhood, and hosting their own weekly group rides.

Also in Year 1, Red Bike initiated a partnership with the MoBo Bicycle Cooperative to fund a youth programs coordinator to support recurring group rides and MoBo youth programming. Working with MoBo and other local bike shops and groups of bicycle organizations, Red Bike has hosted pop up bike shops at which they bring together volunteer mechanics and apprentices to fix bikes for youth and distribute lights, locks and other accessories. As of fall 2023, 394 bikes have been fixed at 16 events in Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky. The events build community while getting working bikes into the hands of kids. They also provide a forum to share information about Red Bike, including Red Bike Go, and upcoming events, and rides.

Bringing Art to Red Bike

Red Bike has sought to connect the Cincinnati community with Red Bike through art. They have brought community led art to bikes and stations, and incorporated music into events and rides. The effort to incorporate art and music into Red Bike and its interactions with the Cincinnati area include partnering with a community art nonprofit, artworks, and local youth artists to design and apply a mural art wrap around the Red Bike office, and bringing 5 “Art Bikes,” each with designs from local artists, to the Red Bike fleet (<https://www.cincyredbike.org/art-bikes/>). They are also seeking to incorporate music in multiple ways, including bringing local DJs to provide music for Red Bike events such as a station launches, and working with Cincinnati Music Accelerator, a music career accelerator organization, to develop Spotify playlists for people to listen to while biking in Cincinnati, particularly to one of the “community routes.”

Using data to inform operations

As part of their Living Lab, Red Bike partnered with Data Bloom, a consultant that helps nonprofits better understand, visualize and use data. Through this partnership, Red Bike is able to track, for example, which stations are most utilized by all riders compared to Red Bike Go riders, understand the demographics, reported trip purposes, frequency of use and much more. Red Bike has

implemented a “Data Dashboard” on the main page of their website providing extensive detail from rider surveys, providing a public lens into who is using Red Bike and how.

What were the results?

Red Bike has seen a very high adoption rate for Red Bike Go, its low-income discount membership program. In fact, they have seen a 149% increase in Red Bike Go members’ trips over the three-year Living Lab grant period. 35.5% of all Red Bike trips in 2023 were taken by Red Bike Go members.

As noted above, Red Bike has also expanded the system to new neighborhoods, including proactively engaging with the community before, during and after the addition of new stations. Through the Living Lab program, Red Bike developed a tried and tested process and method to follow for future expansions. When they expand elsewhere, they have knowledge and systems in place for how to do it.

Aside from the initial outcomes, the impacts of the Living Lab program for Red Bike have left an imprint that will be long lasting. Red Bike was able to bring on a staff member whose role was centered on equity, which Red Bike now considers to be a baseline need for the system in thinking about future activity.

The Living Lab program also jump-started Red Bike in envisioning what else could they achieve if they have more people, funding, evaluation, and data to support it. Finally, over the final year of the Living Lab grant, Red Bike has, in a way, sought to mimic the idea of the living lab on a neighborhood level. Throughout the grant period, Red Bike has supported and empowered community partners with grants, and key knowledge and training about Red Bike, with the hope that some of the seeds that their partners plant will continue to grow. They hope their support of their community partners will spark new innovations in utilizing Red Bike.

Lessons Learned

The vital role of dedicated staff focused on equity programming within bike share agencies.

Without allocated budgets for staff focused on equity work, community engagement and equity initiatives can be challenging to implement effectively. Specific funding for staff working in this area enables the agency to not only support discount programs and expansions but also to maintain a long-term perspective, allowing for continuous assessment, review, and adaptability. Some equity-focused activities are resource intensive, and having dedicated staff allows the agency to think beyond day-to-day bike share operations, and address the ongoing energy and resource demands required to initiate and sustain equity initiatives.

Partnerships are key for building collective capacity and expanding reach and impact.

Partnerships with community organizations are essential for bike share agencies to enhance their collective capacity, reach, and impact. Collaborating with organizations, such as bike advocacy groups and social service organizations, allows for the sharing of resources, information, and opportunities. This collaborative approach allows bike share organizations to achieve more, and connects and engages a broader and more diverse audience. In particular, social service organizations can leverage their existing clientele and assets to collectively serve the community more effectively, making it possible to achieve much more together than any single organization could on its own. For example, when Red Bike added a station at Shelterhouse, the shelter staff started helping with outreach to their clients, including distributing flyers and education materials. This ended up being a top station in the system for Red Bike activity. Aptly, it is another partnership, that between Red Bike and their data management partner Data Bloom, that helps Red Bike to document and act on ridership trends and station activity, such as the popularity of the Shelterhouse station.

The value of partnerships helps bike share organizations to overcome some of the challenges of staff capacity – namely that through partnerships, Red Bike was able to build a community of organizations and people that can and do educate and connect people to the benefits of bike share across their own diverse communities.

Future Plans

Red Bike find themselves at a place of both opportunity and challenge in 2024. As noted above, staffing and supporting equity is now considered to be central to the mission of Red Bike.

However, at the same time they are seeking a new presenting sponsor. Their experience with the Living Lab program provides them with stories and accomplishments that they can share about the benefit of centering bike share in equity, which they intend to take advantage of to secure ongoing equity funding.

Project: Building the Bike-to-Bus Connection

Key Details

Lead: MoGo

City: Detroit, MI

Bike share system: MoGo

Project Overview: MoGo is a non-profit organization that operates Detroit's bike share system. Together with its partners, MoGo worked to identify and address the technical, behavioral and structural barriers associated with linking bus and bike share trips in order to create better-connected transportation options for Detroiters. MoGo's Living Lab focused on enhancing users' access to the two transit systems in Metro Detroit: the Detroit Department of Transportation (DDOT), which mostly serves the City of Detroit, and the Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART), which mostly serves the suburbs. Feedback and data collected from local residents informed strategies that MoGo piloted and tested over the course of the grant.

Project Goals

Through research-supported evidence, MoGo looked to gain an understanding of the barriers or obstacles that contribute to the decision of whether or not to use bike share and bus service in Detroit. Barriers of use ranged from cost, safety, user experience, lack of knowledge about MoGo, trip distances, payment of services and travel times.

Based on information gathered through a community survey, MoGo envisioned addressing the needs users and enhance the user experience of transit users who are non-adopters of bike share; transit users who are also adopters of bike share; and those who live or work near a MoGo station or bus stop but don't use either system.

Based on the first phase of the Living Lab grant, MoGo looked to implement approaches to enhance transit integration. First, MoGo looked to integrate the DART regional pass with MoGo's station-based technology to make it easier for people to connect transit and bike share. MoGo aimed for more than 12 percent of the target users to use their DART pass to connect to MoGo. Secondly, MoGo set out to align and improve station locations with the bus routes and stops.

What did the project do?

In 2021, as part of its BBSP Living Lab work, MoGo conducted a survey in partnership with Wayne State University to gauge transit riders' travel habits and determine the reasons they were (or weren't) using bike share and connecting with the bus system. Based on the survey findings, there were several potential avenues for consideration for encouraging stronger connections between bikeshare and transit and for improving MoGo's system. The top categories of recommendations from the Community Survey report were as follows: Better payment systems integration; Improve cash-

based payment methods for MoGo; Expand accessible bike share options for those with disabilities; Improve general wayfinding information; Better placement of MoGo stations; and Broader network service improvements.

The Community Survey report highlighted the clear interest from transit users in using MoGo and integrating with or contributing to the DART Pass system. One original goal of the Living Lab grant was to integrate MoGo with the DART Pass system app. However, through their living laboratory, they tested this and discovered that the integration would not be possible in the grant timeframe as the new DART Pass system app was limited to bus ticket purchases and was unable to integrate bikeshare into their app architecture. Many respondents frequently pay for the bus in cash, making it clear that bike share integration could be difficult for those users. MoGo wanted to improve their cash payment accessibility. After exploring this idea with DDOT, MoGo chose to pursue a different approach to make it easier to pay with cash or with a budget smartphone.

Create a Cash-based payment system option

For users that wanted to pay in cash, MoGo was already using CashApp. However, MoGo thought the addition of DivDat's payment network, which includes both kiosks and a smartphone app, would enhance options and coverage. DivDat is a local cash-payment terminal operator that facilitates payment for things like City of Detroit water bills, Wayne County property taxes, and the 36th District Court fees and fines. MoGo worked with PBSC (MoGo's manufacturer and asset provider, now a subsidiary of Lyft) and DivDat to connect the backend systems. Now, MoGo riders can go to any of the 70 plus DivDat 24/7 kiosks in Detroit to pay for their MoGo membership with cash, along with other payment needs. DDOT and SMART have also started to use DivDat to dispense paper DART passes. MoGo, DivDat, DDOT, and SMART co-sponsored an outreach push over the spring and summer of 2023 to cross promote the programs and educate people about MoGo's low-income access program.

Streamline the payment system

Based on feedback, MoGo looked to make it easier to rent a MoGo bike without requiring users to download an app. MoGo's website developers made an upgrade to their website so that users can purchase any pass, including short-term and long-term, without having to download the MoGo app, which is important for users who do not have smartphones or have limited data plans.

Improve access to station locations

MoGo contracted with Alta Planning to conduct a review of the system and stations and to provide recommendations for realigning MoGo stations to work better with the existing fixed-route bus system. This realignment included relocating of existing stations, purchasing equipment and kiosks, launching new stations, and adjusting station sizing. Some "pop-up" stations were set up at locations for proposed new stations or potential relocation sites. They consisted of a staffed branded-tent with at least 5 bikes available that allow interested people to ask questions about MoGo and to check in and out bikes valet-style. A full realignment, including the permitting of stations and purchasing new stations is planned as part of a multi-phase plan for MoGo.

Enhance wayfinding

MoGo worked with DDOT and SMART to explore different approaches to wayfinding and supplying information about bike share at bus stops. MoGo piloted signage mounted on poles and shelters at four stations and were able to see how people engaged with the information through QR codes. Many of these stations were already near a transit stop but out of direct line of sight. Through engagement with bus riders, MoGo realized that riders wanted to know more information about the bike share service, station locations and that the service was going to be reliable. MoGo decided to shift future wayfinding efforts to making it easier and faster to get on a bike, which hopefully were accomplished by upgrades to the website and app.

What were the results?

Through the effort of the Living Lab grant, MoGo focused on increasing access to the transit system for all users and for transit users who are non-adopters of bike share to increase ridership, especially for those who live or work in close proximity to a MoGo station or bus stop. One of the major barriers to using the MoGo system was the inability to use cash, especially for unbanked individuals. In 2022, MoGo had 22 cash paying users who were using MoGo's existing CashApp option. Through the Fall of 2023, MoGo had 105 cash paying users, who were utilizing the DivDat kiosks.

Though the station realignment work took longer than anticipated because of permitting, construction and supply issues, MoGo was able to move or add 14 stations. Of the moved stations, the average ridership increased by 16%. The majority of new stations are now in MoGo's top 25 best performing stations.

All stations that have been relocated and added so far have seen an increase in ridership, which is a strong testament to the new locations pairing well with bus transit riders getting on and off at nearby bus stops.

Lessons Learned

Transit integration is important but complicated.

Aligning MoGo services with transit is not only a high priority of users and potential users but a key component of MoGo's strategic deployment plan. The original goal for the Living Lab grant was to integrate MoGo in the DART App, but that turned out to be not technically feasible at this time. MoGo chose to partner with DivDat to reduce some barriers for users, such as cash payments. MoGo, along with DDOT and SMART, recognize the long-term benefits of integrating the platforms and will continue to work together in promoting bike share. Asking users to download more apps can be challenging for those with smart phones with limited storage or data plans. Having alternatives is important to be inclusive and to break down barriers for people wanting to use the system. In addition, there are a lot of strong transit advocates, who often consider bike share part of their transit advocacy and are very interested in volunteering to advance integration and promote MoGo.

Bike share systems can evolve and change to meet the needs of their communities.

MoGo spent time and resources to understand community needs and have a consultant review the current service area and station use. This effort, which wouldn't have been done without the Living Lab grant funds, was invaluable to revisioning how to build out a system that supported users and the integration with the transit system. Technical implementation of a deployment plan can have a very wide range of timelines, from 6 months to more than 6 years, due to permitting, construction and supply constraints, but it is important to think in phases and communicate it to users and partners.

Seeing is believing

Through its pilots, MoGo tested temporary “pop-up” stations and temporary wayfinding signage. However, these did not see as much utilization as anticipated. Through individual interviews and paper surveys, when bus riders were faced with a bike share rental, their first questions were typically how long and how often would the bikes be available. Some other research studies have shown that transit riders value consistent travel times even more than shorter travel times. This was also borne out in Detroit where the transit riders expressed needed to know that a service was going to be reliable before they invested the time and effort into learning how to use a new service.

Future Plans

In 2023, the Michigan Department of Transportation (DOT) launched a statewide grant pilot program to create a “mobility wallet” that would provide discounted or even free transit use to participants. The Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan was awarded \$1 million to build and run a program in 2024 and 2025. The mobility wallet will have the capability to access multiple transportation services, including DDOT, SMART, QLine, People Mover, MoGo, and at least one scooter company. Because of the existing relationships and work from the Living Lab program, MoGo is looking forward to the pilot to help address barriers to bike and bus trip chaining by making pass utilization simpler and cheaper for all riders.

MoGo will continue to build out and refine its service area, including realigning existing stations and purchasing new stations to meet demand and to provide better connections to transit, employment and people's needs. Though initial efforts to improve wayfinding did not have an impact on ridership, MoGo still feels it is important to inform potential transit riders where bike share stations are located. MoGo will continue to work on increasing visibility of bike share stations and exploring the use of QR codes to unlock vehicles in order to speed up the process of checking out a bike.

Project: Prescribe a Bike PDX

Key Details

Lead: Portland Bureau of Transportation

City: Portland, OR

Bike share system: BIKETOWN

Project Overview: Bicycling provides a valuable source of physical activity. The Living Lab program for the Portland Bureau of Transportation (PBOT), called Prescribe a Bike PDX, sought to harness the powers of physical activity to combat some of the leading causes of death and health inequity, including heart disease, hypertension, and diabetes. Prescribe a Bike PDX was envisioned as a partnership between PBOT and the Multnomah County Health Department's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program. Multnomah County administers several health clinics in the BIKETOWN service area. PBOT worked with trusted, local health clinics to prescribe BIKETOWN memberships to patients to increase physical activity. Though clinic workers' priorities and capacity had to shift in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, PBOT was able to connect directly with patients at these clinics, and added to their project by engaging high school students. PBOT worked with REACH and participating high school program partners to provide free BIKETOWN memberships, education and support around biking and bike share, and sought to assess participation and physical activity.

Project Goals

Guiding the Prescribe a Bike PDX project was the understanding that transportation and health are very closely related, and that oftentimes transportation agencies and programs fail to adequately acknowledge and consider that connection. With that basis, project goals fell primarily into two main categories.

First, Prescribe a Bike PDX sought to get BIKETOWN memberships to community members and promote bike riding as a means of increasing physical activity, and therefore hopefully improving health outcomes. PBOT and Multnomah County Health would provide support to local community health workers to engage community members around BIKETOWN, including providing education and support in learning about and using bike share.

Second, through clinic staff, participants would provide information about their physical activity and health status to understand the actual impact on health outcomes of participation in the program.

Overall, the partnership between PBOT and REACH sought to reach members of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) communities, who disproportionately experience diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke, all of which can be lowered with increased physical activity.

As the program progressed, PBOT connected to high schools at first through Multnomah County Student Health Centers and then continued through other program partners with PBOT's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programming. Prescribe a Bike PDX engaged high school aged Portlanders around the issues of health and biking to address diseases related to lack of physical activity, as well as other health and safety issues, such as traffic safety (and e-bike safety). Students have been engaged through PBOT's Safe Routes to School "Transportation Academy" program, a new high school program designed to educate students around multimodal transportation options in Portland and how to use them safely and effectively. Combining BIKETOWN engagement with the Transportation Academy offerings made sense as the BIKETOWN age limit was lowered to 16 in 2021 at the time that e-bikes were introduced to the system.

What did the project do?

Building off of the experience of the Brooklyn Prescribe-a-Bike program, on which PBOT's lead for Prescribe a Bike PDX had previously worked, the program sought to prescribe low-income Portlanders with diabetes, pre-diabetes, and hypertension with BIKETOWN memberships. Eligible participants were either referred by a Multnomah County Health Clinic worker to the REACH program or they signed up with PBOT program staff at outreach events for enrollment. Enrollment included an orientation with a pre-survey and signup for a free annual BIKETOWN for All membership (Portland's discounted bike share program), information about BIKETOWN including e-bike safety education, and a helmet. Aware of the challenges for unbanked or underbanked Portlanders, the program also provided participants with a prepaid debit card loaded with \$20 to load onto their BIKETOWN account to cover any charges incurred. As part of the prescription, participants were asked to bike 30 to 60 minutes per day, five days per week. Follow up and ongoing support included a texting service to get account information and opportunities for group rides.

Year 1 of the Prescribe-a-Bike PDX launched at two Multnomah County Health Centers: NE Health Center PDX and La Clinica de Buena Salud, expanding to the North Portland Health Center in year 2, and the SE Health Center and Mid-County Health Center locations in year 3. A total of 100 people were signed up through outreach at these clinics.

Of note is that during much of the time of the project operation, Multnomah County Health centers were among the many services over-burdened with COVID-19 pandemic related needs. The clinics struggled to maintain staffing, and the staff that were present were often over-burdened. As a result, recruitment of participants into the Prescribe-a-Bike PDX program was difficult. In order to reach more people, PBOT identified an opportunity to work with high schools. Working through a new program designed to educate high school students on traffic safety, Prescribe-a-Bike PDX team members participated in the "Transportation Academy" programs at Parkrose High School and McDaniel High School in East Portland. Through the Transportation Academy program, Prescribe-a-Bike PDX signed up 157 students over three years. Throughout the program, a series of group rides were led or supported by Prescribe-a-Bike PDX. Initially Prescribe-A-Bike planned and led their own rides. They also directed program participants to existing rides in the community.

What were the results?

Through a mixture of Prescribe-a-Bike sign ups at Multnomah County Health clinics and sign ups through the Transportation Academy, the Prescribe-a-Bike PDX program exceeded their three-year target of 150 Portlanders signing up to get physical activity through BIKETOWN. Prescribe-a-Bike PDX enrolled around 100 patient participants through health clinics, and 157 high school students through the Transportation Academy program.

Prescribe-a-Bike PDX included numerous engagement opportunities for participants. A key engagement activity including hosting, sponsoring, or promoting organized rides to introduce participants to biking in Portland and on BIKETOWN e-bikes, as well as to build community and provide opportunities to engage in physical activity. PBOT hosted or invited Prescribe-a-Bike participants for 36 different events promoting BIKETOWN, with 13 rides or events being specifically programmed to reach qualified Prescribe-a-Bike PDX participants.

The Living Lab project brought together various government agencies and partners to engage the community around the healthy aspects of biking and BIKETOWN. PBOT Prescribe-a-Bike staff coordinated with PBOT Safe Routes to School staff and the organizers of the Transportation Academy to attend Prescribe-A-Bike events. The mutual engagement of these programs in each other's activities planted seeds for cross-promotion of Prescribe-a-Bike and SRTS, including observing one another's program delivery and messaging. SRTS staff have subsequently brought messaging about Prescribe-a-Bike to other SRTS activities, and partner organizations, and are working with partners at Metro Regional government and others to promote youth engagement, including participation and safety, in micromobility around the country.

The project partners are exploring ways to leverage the synergy of bike share and health promotion to include a broader set of public and private health plan partners. PBOT is initiating conversations about utilizing health care program subsidies or reimbursements for BIKETOWN for All memberships.

There is high interest from numerous cities and agencies for information about Prescribe-a-Bike programs and experiences. PBOT has been asked about their experiences and lessons learned, starting with fellow Living Lab cohort members, and extending to cities looking to start or build on prescribe-a bike program, ranging from New York City, Houston, and Nashville, all the way through to Guadalajara, Mexico.

Lessons Learned

As a pilot program, the Prescribe-a-Bike program yielded valuable lessons on the opportunities, and just as important, the challenges of connecting transportation generally, and bike share specifically, to health benefits.

Bike share can catalyze partnerships between transportation and health.

As a pilot program, Prescribe-a-Bike PDX was a first step for PBOT in establishing the relationship between biking, BIKETOWN, and physical activity for Portlanders suffering from threatening health conditions like diabetes, pre-diabetes, and hypertension. For PBOT, BIKETOWN and community partners, the program started the conversation about the connections between health and transportation, providing invaluable experience on the logistics, partnerships, dialogue, and challenges that come with Prescribe-a-Bike. In this case, they learned some of the challenges of working with health clinics (see below), as well as the potential of engagements with younger Portlanders and developed methods and partnerships to connect with Portland high schools on biking, health and safety connections, which can be replicated going forward.

Growing pains: Building a new program during COVID-19.

Undertaking a new initiative with public health clinics, Prescribe-a-Bike PDX relied upon partnerships with Multnomah County health clinicians and administrators already experiencing significant work demands. Finding time and ways to build a new program - while also navigating the demands and stress of the pandemic - required experimentation and flexibility. In addition, health data is very sensitive, and health workers, especially at overstressed health clinics, have many clients and client health needs to address daily. PBOT and the clinics struggled to collect and manage accessible and reliable health related data from Prescribe-a-Bike PDX participants; a challenge made more difficult by COVID, which shifted the clinics' focus away from the Prescribe-a-Bike program. The project adapted by customizing program delivery to the specific needs of each clinic, and adding high school partnerships to provide additional opportunities for at-risk members populations to access BIKETOWN and physical activity. This highlights the importance for project teams to be aware of the capacity of partners (whether public health clinicians or high school teachers) to take on additional work, and for agility to adjust programs mid-stream to better serve both project partners and clients.\

Future Plans

PBOT plans to continue to build off the lessons and successes of the Prescribe-a-Bike PDX Living Lab. They want to ensure that Prescribe-a-Bike remains a component in the Transportation Academy curriculum, and that health clinic workers remain equipped to sign people up for Prescribe-a-Bike.

PBOT plans to continue to reach out to participants, both to collect further information about BIKETOWN participation, changes in physical activity, and health indicators through surveys, but also to offer extended BIKETOWN memberships for those who want them.

Project: Indego's Living Lab

Key Details

Lead: City of Philadelphia

Partners: Bicycle Transit Systems; Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia

City: Philadelphia, PA

Bike share system: Indego

Project Overview: The City of Philadelphia is a founding partner of the Better Bike Share Partnership (BBSP) and launched the Indego bike share systems with a focus on equitable access and engagement. Bicycle Transit Systems (BTS), the operator of Indego, and the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (BCGP) are long standing partners on the effort. As a member of the BBSP Living Lab cohort, Philadelphia sought to refine and expand community engagement around bike share, through its ambassador program and local mini grants, with a focus on neighborhoods targeted for Indego expansion. A major pillar of the BBSP work in Philadelphia under the Living Labs program involved extending and deepening community education and engagement around bike share through the shared partnership and collaboration of people at the City, BCGP, and BTS. A bicycle advocacy and education organization, BCGP hired additional staff to bolster their education and bike ride programming in priority equity zones in the Philadelphia area. One key program that combines workforce training and learning about bicycling and bike share, *Wheels to Work*, was launched during this period.

Project Goals

Building on its foundation of combining bike share and equity, the City of Philadelphia sought to continue and innovate its programs, by expanding community ambassador work and focusing on outreach related to neighborhoods targeted for Indego expansion and underperforming stations in the current service area. In doing so, they sought to continue their work of “deep engagement,” building engagement into the system and process from the beginning, through relationships, research, listening and learning, providing resources to community members and organizations helping us carry out our mission, and setting the stage for future work.

What did the project do?

The City of Philadelphia Living Lab program activities principally revolved around a combination of bike safety education and encouragement classes and rides, community mini-grants, updated and new neighborhood ride guides and the *Wheels to Work* program. Indego partners also sought to maintain flexibility in programs and be responsive to changing community needs over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. They pivoted their engagement strategies to better respond to the needs and limitations of residents and partner organizations by offering virtual meetings, care packages and

flexible mini grants. They initiated monthly online meetings (“Changing Gears”) to provide an education and social opportunity for the Indego community, and a hiring “Indego Expansion Liaisons” to serve as on the ground champions helping Indego incorporate community input for system expansion, outreach plans, and biking in Philadelphia. In the latter years of the Living Lab period, including 2022 and 2023, Indego was able to resume more in-person activities.

The Living Lab program helped Indego to support education classes, principally through a partnership with the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia (BCGP). BCGP hosts bicycle education classes, including “learn to ride” and urban riding basics classes that introduce people to the bike share system and important bike riding skills and information. With Living Lab support, BCGP hired an additional full time staff member to focus on outreach and education, along with four part time members to support rides. As a part of classes and other outreach activity, Indego and BCGP provided resources such as helmets, water bottles, free rides and ride route information to people in communities. BCGP and Indego have also worked to engage Spanish speaking Philadelphians through bilingual offerings and hosting events such as an annual “Day of the Dead” ride.

Through the Indego Community Ambassadors, Indego seeks to connect with community members and stakeholders in neighborhoods around current and planned stations. They seek to learn how the community feels about and uses current stations in the area, where the community would like additional stations added for system expansion, and if there are any potential issues with a new station in the area. They then work with the community members to help activate new stations and boost ridership at underperforming stations once installed, through hosting rides and classes and attending and supporting events through tabling and mini-grants.

Wheels to Work

As noted above, Indego and partners made various attempts to be responsive to changing pandemic conditions while maintaining community engagement. One such effort was the “Wheels to Work” program, which was launched in 2021 and combined workforce training with education about Indego and bicycling. This program built off a successful Indego program that combined learning about using computers and the internet with learning about bikes and bike share - the “Digital Skills Bicycle Thrills” program, which had 10 cohorts from 2016–2020. Among participants of the *Digital Skills Bicycle Thrills* program, job training frequently came up as a desired option.

Focusing on building job skills, the *Wheels to Work* program looked to combine getting job skills and learning about bikes and bike share. The program builds nicely out of the fact that bike share provides a valuable means of transport to work and other opportunities for some people. The program was initiated over Zoom in September 2021, and included lessons on job seeking skills including developing successful cover letters, resumes, conducting job searches, networking through LinkedIn, acing interviews, and exploring possible career paths based on passions and strengths led by partners at the Free Library of Philadelphia. The BCGP led bicycle related lessons on bike safety and riding Indego, and led several group rides. The program was capped at 10 participants to encourage dialogue and be more personal. A second cohort went through the program in Spring 2022, and the class added material on dressing professionally with a nonprofit partner, The Wardrobe, that helps people get outfitted for work. Living Lab funds covered the fees of the course instructor and some course

associated costs. The innovative (yet, in retrospect, obvious) combination of job training and bike share serves as a reminder of the important role bike share can play in connecting people to opportunity.

Developing resources for community rides

Indego and BCGP have resumed community rides with the goal of showing how Indego works, how to bike around Philadelphia, and highlighting access to green spaces and Indego bike share. In addition to carrying out bike rides, Indego and partners sought to create resources for the community to learn about Indego and bicycling around Philadelphia, even when in person activities were limited by the pandemic. When it was not safe to organize in person gatherings, BCGP instead worked to expand and disseminate a set of neighborhood ride guides, available in both online and PDF formats, that shared information about places to ride, route highlights, and information about Indego. The guides are now available for five different Philadelphia neighborhoods, and BTS has created a page to host them the Indego website: <https://www.rideindeg.com/neighborhood-ride-guides/>. There are plans to cover additional neighborhoods as the system grows.

Relatedly, BCGP staff wrote, designed and co-produced a learn to ride video to help people take their first ride on Indego: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCiZjEZ42F8>.

What were the results?

Most directly, Indego had record levels of ridership in 2023, including Indego's highest ridership month ever in June 2023 with 15,965 trips taken. These numbers are in no small part due to efforts to make the system known to and available to, BIPOC and lower income communities. Currently, 16% of all Indego passholders are Access passholders; the Access program is Indego's low-cost equity membership plan. Similarly, an equal share of trips, including e-bike trips, are taken by Access passholders. The percent of Indego members who are Access pass holders increased from 2020 to 2023, climbing from 13% up to 16%.

Participation in Indego classes and rides rebounded from COVID-19 related low levels in 2020 and 2021, seeing record levels in 2022, when BCGP was able to maintain 2 full-time education team staff members, before settling back somewhat in 2023 when they scaled back to 1 full-time staff member and 4 part-time staff. BCGP bicycle class participation more than tripled to 491 participants in 2022, and settled down to 258 in 2023; while ride participation more than quadrupled to 301 in 2022, before settling down to 205 in 2023. 28 participants total completed the Wheels to Work program over three offerings, and have become very active Indego users - in the three months after completing the course, the 8 participants of the year 3 offering took 308 Indego trips.

The Indego Living Lab program also produced a number of materials that can be used on an ongoing basis, including the neighborhood ride guides, the learn to ride video, and the Wheels to Work curriculum.

The program also produced a number of more intangible impacts. Through programming and outreach, Indego and partners forged new relationships with various community organizations in the neighborhoods where ambassadors and liaisons were working. Relationship building is a key

component in prioritizing equity. Functional relationships and collaboration between public, private, and community-based entities lead to better, more equitable outcomes.

The impacts also extended beyond Philadelphia. The success of the Indego story around infusing equity into bike share has received a lot of interest from other cities, showing that there is a hunger for models of how to do this type of work. The work that the Indego team is doing is serving as a showcase for other cities, and the team works to share information about their effort. For example, representatives of the Indego team have presented at numerous conferences such as the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) Designing Cities Conference, the North American Bikeshare & Scootershare Association (NABSA) Annual Conference, and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting. Further, they regularly provide informal advice to other bike share cities on equity programming, both within the Living Labs cohort and beyond.

Lessons Learned

Adequate staffing is a prerequisite for sustainable and impactful equity work

The partnership of the City of Philadelphia, Indego, and BCGP, with the support of BBSP related funding, have enabled an increased staffing capacity working on making sure bicycling and bike share are available options for low-income and BIPOC Philadelphians. It takes staffing to work on planning, coordinating and implementing community outreach, education, discount programs, and system maintenance. Without the ability to pay for that staffing, it would not be feasible to continue some of these efforts. Even this relatively well supported program has had to make hard choices about programs to focus on. This included stopping offering monthly virtual “Urban riding basics” due to low attendance in order to refocus on in person offerings.

Focus on delivering top quality programming

Sometimes the need to make priorities about which programs and activities to fund and which to cut can help refocus on quality programming. Indego noted that before the start of the biking season, they took a good look at existing programming to identify which programs had the most attendance and number of requests and then scaled back on programming that wasn’t well attended or requested. Indego is strategic about limiting the number of events, rides and classes that they support each season to make sure it balances effectually with their staff capacity. Having a scaled back schedule of events helped them to focus more on perfecting those program offerings that the community really gravitated to and allowed more time for outreach and planning.

Future Plans

Building off their foundation of equitable bike share infused with community engagement, Indego plans to continue to expand, and to reach out to other ethnic communities and groups to plan future engagement that is effective and targeted. In fact, in the months immediately following the completion of the Living Lab program, the BCGP team teamed with Spanish language partners

including Juntos, the Mexican Cultural Center, and the Mexican Consulate to deliver bilingual rides and classes. Indego also noted that they are working to identify opportunities to engage Philadelphia's Asian community around bicycling and Indego.

To set a framework for their continued equity work, Indego released a [5 Year Equity Plan](#) in 2023, outlining how equity is an integral part of their systems plans going forward. The plan places a requirement on the bike share operator to pay for implementing expansion efforts in an equity way, and relies on sponsorships for most operating and capital costs, with additional philanthropic funding for equity goals.