Current Efforts to Make Bike Share More Equitable: A Survey of System Owners and Operators

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Recommended Citation
Current Efforts to Make Bike Share More Equitable

A Survey of System Owners and Operators

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Equity

What is it?

- Recognizing that some groups have a disadvantage compared to others
- Efforts to correct disadvantage need to take into account level of disadvantage
Equity

How did we apply it?

• **League of American Bicyclists:**
  • “the guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some group”

• **Advocacy Advance:**
  • “recognizing and reacting to the under-representation of youth, women, and people of color in advocacy efforts and local transportation decisions.”

• **Additional:**
  • Low-income
  • Older Adults
  • Recognize ramifications of past and ongoing inequity

• **Equity in terms of not just focusing on raising disadvantaged groups above barriers, but removing barriers all together**
Identify Bike Share Organizations

- Pedestrian and Bicycling Information Center
- Web searches
- National Association of City Transportation Officials

- Developed a list of 75 bike share systems and persons for contact
  - Excluded systems with fewer than 40 bikes

- Emailed contact persons March 2016
  - 3 reminders sent

Survey

- Structure
  - Typology of systems (# bikes, owner/operator, public/private, system operational)
  - Equity statement (yes/no)
    - If yes, provide the statement
  - Metrics to measure
  - Role of Equity in:
    - Station siting
    - Fee structure and payment systems
    - System operations
    - Promotion, outreach, and marketing
    - Data Collection

- Perceived barriers for users
- Barriers for the organization
ANOVA
• Comparing Role of Equity with size and type of system

Content Analysis
• Equity statements and open ended responses
  • Over 200 codes were identified across all pieces of the survey
  • Combined codes were used for final analysis
# Respondents

## Responding Organization and Bike Share System Characteristics (n=55)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Organization Role in Bike Share System</th>
<th>Percent of Responding Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operator</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner and Operator</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner - Not owner or operator</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Number of Bikes in System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Bikes</th>
<th>Percent of Responding Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 100 bikes (small)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 to 500 bikes (medium)</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501 or more bikes (large)</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Responding Organization Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responding Organization Type</th>
<th>Percent of Responding Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit organization</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Operator</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Launch Status</th>
<th>Percent of Responding Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operational</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-launch</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## U.S. Census Region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Census Region</th>
<th>Percent of Responding Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
13 systems stated they had an equity statement

- More likely to be large systems
- More likely to be in more diverse cities (Median % non-white +21 percentage points)
- Tended to consider equity in more decisions

Only 3 systems provided what we considered extensive statements, incorporating...

- Who they were targeting
- How they were targeting them
- Specific goals they hoped to achieve

...equity was not a major consideration in the initial roll out of our bike-share system, it has become increasingly important as the system grows and additional stakeholders become involved.

Establish a system that engages and serves users in minority, low income, and limited transit option communities and help improve access to jobs, recreation and healthy nutrition.
Equity Statements

**NO Equity Statement**
33 systems stated they did not have an equity statements

- Typically smaller systems
- Cities tended to be less racially diverse (Median %non-white -21 percentage points)
- Many stated they had equity statements in development

Lack of an equity statement may be due in part due to less political pressure and fewer resources in these smaller, less diverse cities.

**“Other” Responses**
7 systems responded “other” to whether they had an equity statement. Almost all had statement or policy under development

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**Equity Statement Presence and Incorporation of Equity in Bike Share**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Without Equity Statement</th>
<th>With Equity Statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Pie chart 1" /></td>
<td><img src="chart2.png" alt="Pie chart 2" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Number of key areas where equity had “considerable” or “primary” role. Those responding “Other” to whether they had an equity statement were excluded.
Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to “Don’t Know/NA” responses. Possible survey responses were: Not considered; considered, no impact; considered, minor role; considered, considerable role; considerations primary driver. We combined minor role, considerable role, and primary driver into the Considered/impacted category here.
Equity in Station Siting

Promote transit connectivity
Connection to destinations
  - Jobs
  - Commercial/retail districts
  - Recreation

Station placement at public housing complexes

Large coverage areas
Walkable distances between stations

Very few had quotas for number or percentage of stations in low-income and minority neighborhoods.

As we site stations, we are examining locations that are proximate to transit stops, high-density housing, which is typically low-income in this area, jobs, and key destinations. While not targeting specific populations, we also conducted an online survey where participants were asked to pick their top 5 station locations.

Nearly 30% of the population in this area is Latino. Overall success of the system is dependent on the engagement of Latino riders—who disproportionately suffer from a lack of other transportation options. In order to provide a new transportation service to these residents, while also boosting ridership, [our bike share system] has committed a significant percentage of stations to the neighborhoods, bus stops, and commercial areas frequented by this Latino community.

Made sure to have stations all over [the city], even those that may not [yield] a profit.
Equity in Fee Structure/Payments

**Cost**
- Reevaluated pricing and dropped prices accordingly
- Reduced or eliminated bank holds
- Added membership options
  - Employer discounts
  - Monthly and weekly passes
  - Pay-per-ride structures
  - Changed yearly membership to be able to be paid monthly
- Simplify fee structure to make it easier to understand
- Use of contract bid process to solicit “innovative fee structures”

**Discounts**
- 14 systems said they had discounted or free memberships
  - One system obtained a grant to give their target equity population a zero cost program
  - Qualifications:
    - Receiving public assistance
    - Income thresholds
  - Discounts ranged considerably
  - Tied to low income populations and typically not race/ethnicity specific.

**Payment Systems**
- 13 systems said they were trying to meet the needs of unbanked populations
  - Cash payment options
    - Use of commercial establishments to facilitate transactions
    - One was using its library system
  - Allowing for use of pre-paid debit/credit cards
  - One also looking at ways to incorporate homeless populations

Adding membership and payment options: monthly installments for annual members, smaller "hold" charges on credit/debit cards, non-web-based payment interfaces, and exploring how to accept cash payment and/or combined bike share/transit passes.

We took information from our focus group, conducted in advance of launch, with low income [populations] into account and priced with this in mind.
Hiring Processes

Typically looked at hiring locally and paying living wage

Five systems said they partnered with local workforce development organizations or public housing to find potential hires

Some hired persons matching the demographic they were trying to reach with their equity programs as advocacy staff

Operations

Some stated their ability to incorporate equity in this element was restricted by how their operations were organized
Spanish translation of marketing materials was the most common method.  

Incorporated people of color (specifically their target demographics) in advertising material.  

Forming partnerships with organizations active in their target neighborhoods to help with outreach.  

Utilizing community events to further exposure to the system.  

Providing outreach materials in a variety of languages, identifying community stakeholders that can reach specific populations, etc.  

[W]e would do significant personal outreach to people who lived in low income housing near stations to educate them about all aspects of bike share, including pricing and including signing them up onsite since most do not have reliable internet access.
Only a few specified equity metrics tied to specific equity goals

- Quota percentage of stations near targeted equity populations
- Track usage by low-income pass users to develop better understanding of their patterns: goal to reach specific number of trips per user
- Monitor overages: goal to limit overage to certain $/month
- Set goal of % of women members
- Set goal of % of low-income users, w/ associated gender goal among low-income users

Data Collection

- Lack of clarity in which members they wanted to survey in most cases
- 5 systems aimed to use the data collected to measure progress toward equity goals
Over 80% of respondents (44 systems) shared what they thought were key barriers to participation for targeted equity populations in their cities. Generally, the barriers fell into the categories of **pricing and payment systems; various aspects of access; perceptions of bike share and bicycling in general; and awareness, education, and understanding of how the system works.**

### Barriers and Potential Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost to use the system</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of credit or debit card</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet or smart phone access</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet or smart phone access</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced price options</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash payment options</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public internet and kiosks</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barrier</th>
<th>Potential Solutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced price options</td>
<td>New stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash payment options</td>
<td>Build out low stress networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public internet and kiosks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Responses were open-ended and coded into categories. Some respondents provided more than one barrier, and totals are more than 100%*
Conclusions

Equity is something most bike share systems are thinking about if not incorporating.

Equity statements are important to incorporating equity throughout the system.

Equity statements should be specific:
  • Who are you wanting to target?
  • How are you planning to target them?
  • How are you going to track your progress?

The biggest barriers cited by bike share organizations are being worked on through equity strategies:
  • 68% are incorporating it in station siting
  • 72% are incorporating it in fee structure and pricing
  • 57% are incorporating it in promotion, marketing, and outreach

Equity is a fairly new concept in most bike share organizations. As such, best practices on what works and what does not is yet to be known.
Questions?

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Twitter: @showland886