



2021 Adaptive Bikeshare Pilot

Summary Evaluation - Golden Gate Park

Program Background

The San Francisco Adaptive Bikeshare Pilot program, a collaboration between BORP, SFMTA, Recreation & Parks, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and Bay Wheels/Lyft, expanded cycling options for riders with disabilities and started to explore how best to integrate adaptive bicycling into the traditional one-way bike-share model.

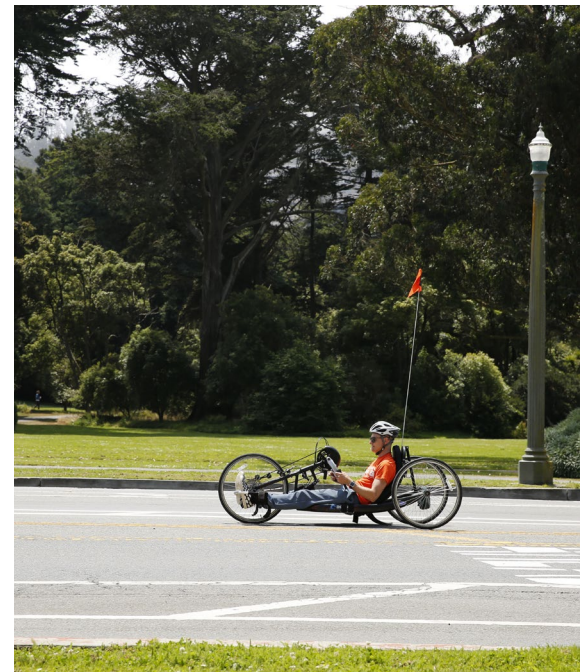
The pilot initially launched in July 2019 and went on hiatus in November 2019 with plans to resume and complete in 2020. However, due to disruptions and safety concerns caused by COVID-19, the program did not resume until June of 2021. This is an evaluation of the pilot from June – November 2021.

During this period, the program was offered in Golden Gate Park at the intersection of JFK and Kezar Drive on Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Over the course of 26 Sundays in 2021, 34 riders took a total of 90 rides. Five adaptive bikes were available during the pilot: an upright handcycle, a recumbent handcycle, a recumbent leg trike, a recumbent trike tandem, and a side-by-side tandem. BORP staff were available to fit participants to adaptive bikes and help participants transfer from their mobility devices when necessary. The program accepted participants both with and without prior reservations.

Before and during launch, SFMTA worked with BORP and Lyft to spread the word about the program, sharing information with various advisory councils, disability organizations and by hosting an Adaptive Transportation Event in Golden Gate Park. Information was distributed via email blasts, social media marketing, physical postcards, personalized outreach to individuals, and in presentations to existing committees/councils.

Participant Feedback

Participants were asked to fill out an optional survey before and after every ride. In post-ride surveys, participants were enthusiastic, rating the program 4.76 out of 5 stars and encouraging the City to continue the program, and the vast majority said the program equipment met their needs. Participants shared that the program was a good family outing,



with one person noting that the program provided a fun and useful way to complete their physical therapy exercises. Seventy-eight percent of participants were first-time adaptive bikeshare riders, and nearly all participants surveyed (94%) said they would like to use adaptive bikeshare more frequently in the future. This suggests that demand will grow once awareness of the program increases. A follow up survey for people with disabilities in the Bay Area will attempt to gauge demand more thoroughly.

Of the participants surveyed, 75% said they would use bikeshare for recreation and 25% said they would use bikeshare for both recreation and daily trips. 47% said they would use the program weekly, 33% said monthly, and 13% said they would come every other week. No participant indicated that they would use the program more than once a week, though roughly half of the participants indicated that they would participate in the adaptive bikeshare program on a weekly basis, with the most desired days for the program being Sunday and Saturday. Based on the survey results and anecdotal data, word of mouth is key for marketing the program, and BORP should take a lead role in outreach and marketing.

In May 2022, SFMTA staff conducted a virtual focus group with pilot participants to explore themes from the survey responses in more detail. Participants confirmed several general themes from the rider survey, including the impact of weather on participation and the importance of BORP staff providing physical assistance and adaptive equipment to assist riders with fit and comfort. One participant mentioned that they “have made friends with the staff so in addition to them making it super easy for us to ride, it’s a nice social occasion.” Participants also reiterated that the cost, maintenance and storage of adaptive bikes and equipment is generally not feasible on an individual level, which is why a “rental” program with free or low-cost bike and equipment is ideal for their needs. Participants also urged that a successful program will be as “low-barrier” as possible. Per one participant, “I think there are a lot of disabled people who just counted themselves out of a lot of these opportunities, because they just didn’t know what resources were available.” Some suggested accommodations were to increase bike availability to allow for more riders and more same-day participants who do not make a reservation; provide opportunity for riders who ride at the same speed to ride together; host the program at locations on flat roads and paths to make it as accessible as possible; send information and promotional materials to physical and occupational therapists; and to market the program in venues not specifically directed at people with disabilities, such as the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition and FunCheapSF.



Rider Demographics

Demographic data gleaned from the initial survey indicated that the program was popular across age groups: participants had an average age of 38, ranging from 14 to 82 years old. A range of disabilities were represented among participants with a plurality having either a spinal cord injury or cerebral palsy. Of the participants surveyed, 24% said they required assistance to transfer to the adaptive bikes and 76% said they did not. When asked how participants travel on a regular basis, 60% indicated that they drive or ride in a personal vehicle, 40% said that they take public transit, 40% said walk/roll, 20% said paratransit, 15% said ride hail, 10% said personal bike or bikeshare, and 5% said taxi (respondents could select multiple modes). To reach the adaptive bikeshare pilot, 75% either drove or rode in a

personal vehicle, 15% took public transit, 10% walked or rolled, and 5% took a taxi (again, respondents could select multiple options). Of the participants who shared their race, 60% were white, 20% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 10% were Black/African American, and 10% were multiracial.

Components of a Successful Program

According to the survey participants, key elements of a successful adaptive bikeshare program include nearby parking, bathrooms, and safe car-free spaces to ride. Participants also indicated that having a range of adaptive bikes and equipment available was crucial, as was having staff to assist with bike fitting and transferring. Additionally, participants shared where else they would like to use the adaptive bikeshare program, including the Great Highway, the Presidio, the Embarcadero, and other locations in San Francisco. When asked what they learned from the program, participants spoke about trying new types of bikes, having more options for recreation, and realizing that cycling could be enjoyable for them. One participant simply said they learned “that I can bike again.”

Potential Barriers

Potential barriers participants identified in the program included bad weather, not having the right adaptive bike available, and parking access. Location was also mentioned as a potential barrier, as some participants found the location to be too far from where they lived or not close enough to flatter roads and paths, while others loved the location. While the pilot program was free, the unknown potential cost of a future program was also identified as a barrier, though 60% of respondents indicated willingness to pay, 33% responded neutrally, and only 7% indicating unwillingness to pay.

Key Findings and Additional Evaluation

Early results indicate that adaptive bikeshare users consider it a fun and exhilarating option for exercise and recreation. Participant feedback indicates that there is high satisfaction with the current model but room to improve on the location, bike availability, and marketing/outreach methods. Based on these findings, SFMTA supports BORP and the SF Recreation and Park Department’s intentions to continue the program at two suitable locations, with a wider variety of bikes, and with an electric lift for transferring to better serve participants. BORP will conduct targeted outreach to specific groups and take reservations in advance of every event. This expanded pilot will resume in Summer 2022, with two locations on alternating weekends: in Golden Gate Park next to the Bandshell Accessible Parking Lot (alongside standard bicycle and Segway rentals) and on the Great Highway at the end of Judah.

In the meantime, further study is needed to identify whether additional models are desired or feasible. To better understand needs, SFMTA will continue to collect public feedback through an adaptive bikeshare survey for older adults and people with disabilities. Based on survey responses and additional learnings from the expanded pilot, SFMTA staff will conduct a more comprehensive evaluation to further evaluate potential program models that meet the needs identified by pilot participants and the general public. This evaluation should include the feasibility and costs associated with all models explored.

Contact Information

SFMTA: Erin McAuliff, Principal Planner, Access and Emerging Mobility, erin.mcauliff@sfmta.com

BORP: Leo Sicienski, Program Manager, Adaptive Cycling, leo@borp.org

SFRPD: Lucas Tobin, Supervisor for Therapeutic Recreation & Inclusion Services, lucas.tobin@sfgov.org