Westside Transportation Alliance
Bike Share Program Summary
Piloting Bike Share in Washington County, Oregon

Westside Transportation Alliance (WTA), in partnership with Kaiser Permanente and Columbia Sportswear, launched a pilot bike share program in Summer 2017. The objective of the pilot was to study the viability of a bike share system as a last mile solution for employees in Washington County. Through this program, WTA aimed to encourage the use of public transit by providing a convenient and accessible way for employees to travel between their work site and a mass transit stop.

The Westside Bike Share Program offered a cost-effective, equitable, and scalable mode of transportation for employees at Kaiser Permanente’s Westside Medical Center and Columbia Sportswear’s Amberglen Call Center. The transit hub of the system was the Quatama MAX light rail station. When the pilot concluded, WTA evaluated the results to determine whether employees changed their commuting behavior once presented with a new benefit that linked their work site to public transit.
76% of employees in Washington County drive alone to work, resulting in increased traffic congestion and strain on the transportation system.

Nicknamed “Silicon Forest,” Washington County is a major high-tech employment hub in the Pacific Northwest. Its predominantly suburban setting, however, lacks the density of an urban business district, creating unique transportation challenges for commuters.

Although the region supports a variety of alternative transportation options, many job centers are situated farther than a reasonable walking distance from mass transit, creating a “last mile” problem. As a result, driving alone is the most efficient option for most commuters.

**Challenge**

Offer a new opportunity to connect public transit to the workplace: Study the feasibility of bike share as a last mile solution for employees.

As an active transportation option, bike share offers improved flexibility and accessibility to a variety of amenities. For commuters, bike share creates additional connections to mass transit, thus encouraging increased use of the public transit system.

By piloting a bike share program in Washington County, WTA could data on rider usage and measure how commute trips shift from driving alone to transit/bike trips. As the program was employer-sponsored, WTA could also assess how bike share functions as a workplace benefit.

**Objective**

The pilot program utilized a bike share model developed by the Open Bike Initiative, an ad hoc project launched by a group of Intel employees in 2013.

The Open Bike Initiative (OBI) designed, tested, and shared an open source model for bike share systems. By rethinking the technology around bike share, OBI developed the foundation for the adaptable and cost-effective system used for the Westside Bike Share.

The OBI system is tied to a combination lock, so the program is scalable to any type and number of bicycles. The checkout interface relies on text-messaging, making it easily accessible to users. Setting up the system does not require expertise in software development or transportation.

**Model**

The Westside Bike Share Pilot ran from May to September 2017 with 30 bicycles and 3 checkout sites. The pilot was open to employees of Kasier Permanente and Columbia Sportswear.

Collaborating with TriMet, WTA identified the Quatama MAX light rail station in Hillsboro as the central transit hub of the program. Bikes were available at the station and at a designated location at each work site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Distance from MAX Station</th>
<th>No. of Employees</th>
<th>No. of Users</th>
<th>No. of Checkouts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kasier Permanente</td>
<td>2.0 miles</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Sportswear</td>
<td>1.0 miles</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WESTSIDE BIKE SHARE RESULTS

Program Use / Destination

User Satisfaction

Where did participants most frequently record bike checkouts?

Columbia Sportswear 32%
Kaiser Permanente 9%
Quatama MAX Station 9%

What prevented participants from using the program more often (primary reasons)?

Work schedule 44%
Safety concerns 18%
Weather conditions 15%
Transit not convenient 24%

RECOMMENDATIONS

WTA has observed that employer-sponsored bike share offers significant potential for changing commuter behavior and improving employee morale. Based on the pilot outcomes, WTA recommends that employers consider sponsoring a bike share program for the following purposes:

As a last mile solution to connect transit and the workplace. 42% of participants affirmed that having access to the bike share shifted their commutes to include transit, demonstrating that the program can significantly impact commuting behavior.

As an employee benefit that supports retention and attraction. Regardless of participants’ level of participation or satisfaction with the program, they overwhelmingly felt more positive about their employer due to the availability of bike share.

The Westside Bike Share offers an accessible and cost-effective transportation option that can be implemented in a variety of workplaces. To drive its success, employers who choose to use this model should plan to support ongoing program management and employee engagement. WTA can advise employers on best practices to ensure their employees get the most out of the program.
Before the pilot, Matt commuted by driving to work every day. Discouraged by the lack of direct access via transit, he found driving to be the best available option.

After the pilot launched, Matt started to commute once a week on the MAX and used the bike share to cover the last two miles to get to work. Once he learned how easy and efficient it was, Matt started to bring his own bike on the MAX.

“The program makes you feel appreciated as an employee; it shows that your employer is working to give you options.”
- Matt, Kaiser Permanente

Employees at the Columbia Sportswear site truly appreciated having the Westside Bike Share Program. The group used the bikes frequently to hold off-site meetings, where they would discuss work-related issues and then return to the call center re-energized and with a clear mind.

Users confirmed that the program changed their perspective on transportation in the area. One said that it made him more aware of what was accessible on foot, and another started using her personal bike more for transportation.

“It was really cool having the bikes here for our meetings and breaks. We were much more productive when we could talk through a problem while on a quick bike ride.”
- Alex, Columbia Sportswear

The Westside Bike Share Pilot Program was made possible with support from Metro and the Federal Transit Administration.

WTA thanks the following partners for their participation:

Kaiser Permanente Westside Medical Center
Columbia Sportswear
Open Bike Initiative
Washington County Bicycle Transportation Coalition
Community Cycling Center
Go By Bike
TriMet
Transportation Research and Education Center - Portland State University
Tualatin Hills Park & Recreation District

Mission: To work directly with Washington County employers and employees to enhance economic opportunity, improve health, and foster a livable community via transportation options.

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