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Bicycle Commuter Support Services in Eastern Boulder County

A project of: Community Cycles, Boulder County
Transportation Department, Boulder County Housing
and Human Services Department

Project Impact and Evaluation

I. Key Findings

- According to the survey respondents, there were many obstacles to biking on a regular basis at the beginning of the program. *This program removed the barriers to biking for low-income participants.*
- Boulder County Housing residents need bicycles. Fourteen out of sixteen participants in the program indicated in the pre-program survey that their primary need, in order to bicycle more, was a bicycle.
- With greater access to bicycles, people ride their bikes more. In the post-program survey, 70% of respondents indicated that they now use their bicycle to get to work or school.
- In the post-survey, 20% of respondents needed a repair on their bicycle. This speaks to the importance of a local, neighborhood Community Bike Expert who can help Boulder County Housing residents keep their bicycle in safe, road-worthy, functional condition, and assist residents with any bicycle-related needs residents they may have.
- All survey and class participants spoke English, but the workshop and surveys were available in Spanish.
- In the pre-survey, residents indicated a high interest in using bicycles, or bicycles plus public transit (Question 7). This interest was realized, with 70% of post-program survey respondents indicating that they now ride their bicycle to school or work.

II. Program Implementation

Boulder County and Community Cycles developed the Boulder County Bike Days project in order to increase transportation options available to low-income residents. Providing bicycles extends resident's ability to commute via transit as well as by bicycle. Our goal was increase low-income residents' ability to commute to employment in a manner that is affordable and sustainable, supporting Boulder County's vision for equitable access to sustainable, multimodal transportation.

Bicycles are a cost effective means of personal transportation; this can be especially important and effective for low-income people who reside in Boulder County. The average annual cost of owning, using, and maintaining an automobile is estimated by the American Automobile Associate to be \$8,500 or more per year: this amount is simply not an option for the 40,000 County residents living at or below the poverty line. Providing a low-income person with a bicycle, skills and support for bike care and

repair, and education on safe commuting to employment or transit – this creates a reliable and environmentally sustainable means of transportation.

In cooperation with Boulder County Transportation Department and Boulder County Housing and Human Services Department, Community Cycles implemented the Boulder County Bike Days program in the fall of 2015. We provided bicycles to 15 adult residents and 3 children, and provided a full-day Saturday class at Alpinwall Conference Center in the Josephine Commons facility in Lafayette. One of the class attendees brought her own bike for repair. The class focused on bicycle care and repair, in order to increase working adults' ability to commute to work by bike. All participants were income-qualified as low-income residents through Boulder County Housing and Human Services (HHS) programs. A few residents were not able to attend the full-day class, and came to a similar 3-hour class at Community Cycles' bicycle workshop in Boulder.

Community Cycles evaluated the program's impact with pre-and post-surveys. Pre-surveys were conducted at the workshop and classes, and post-surveys were conducted through email and phone interviews. Community Cycles guaranteed that a minimum of 30% of participants respond to the post-survey. Community Cycles received 10 post-surveys, over 62% of total participants in the program. We feel confident in the number of post-survey responses we received in using the data to determine whether the program was effective.

As detailed in our scope of work, at the completion of this phase of the project, Community Cycles is providing Boulder County with the following programmatic information:

- Total participants: 16
- Total number of primary Spanish-speakers served: 0
- Total number of adult commuters served: 16
- Estimated total number of work-related trips supported (per week or month): 7.9/month per respondent
- Total number of children served: 3
- Total number of bikes provided: 15
- Total number of pre-owned bikes repaired: 1
- Total number of workshops held: 4 (one full-day program at Boulder County Housing Facilities; 4 participants completed bike care and repair classes at Community Cycles' shop because they were not able to attend the full day program.

III. Survey Questions

Pre- and post-surveys included the following information:

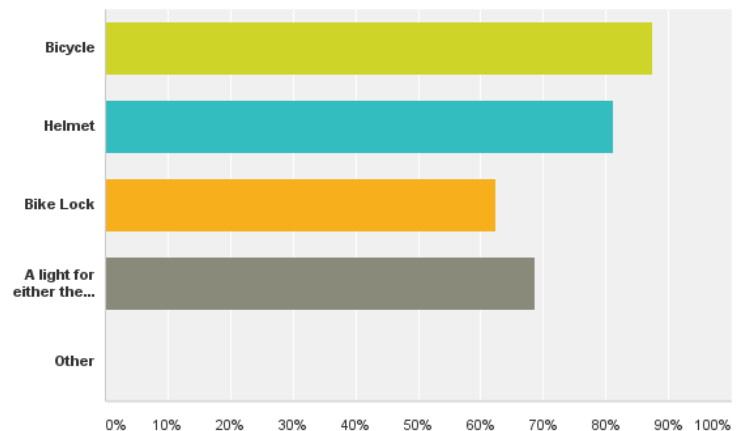
- Name
- Primary Language – Spanish, English or both
- Current bike-related needs (bike, helmets, lights, lock)
- Additional or future bike-related needs (bike parking at work, secure bike storage at transit locations, secure bike parking near their home)
- How they currently get to work or to a job training program & how often they use each mode
 - Bike
 - Public Transit (including route and stop information)
 - A combination of biking and transit
 - Walk
 - Drive alone
 - Carpool or Vanpool
 - Telework
- How far the participant currently travels to get to work or a job training program
- Once they have a working bike, how do they expect they will get to work or to a job training program? How often will they use these modes?
 - Bike
 - Public Transit
 - A combination of biking and transit
 - Walk
 - Drive alone
 - Carpool or Vanpool
 - Telework
- Other possible obstacles they have for getting to work, such as a bus schedule that doesn't run late enough, a bus stop that isn't close enough to their job location, etc.
- Post surveys also requested for the program.

IV. Pre-Survey Results

- Residents indicated that need bicycles (14/16) and other equipment (helmets, locks, and lights) for safe and consistent bicycle riding.
- Although outreach materials were available in Spanish and English,

Q3 What do you need in order to bike more safely and/or use your bike more? Please check all that apply.

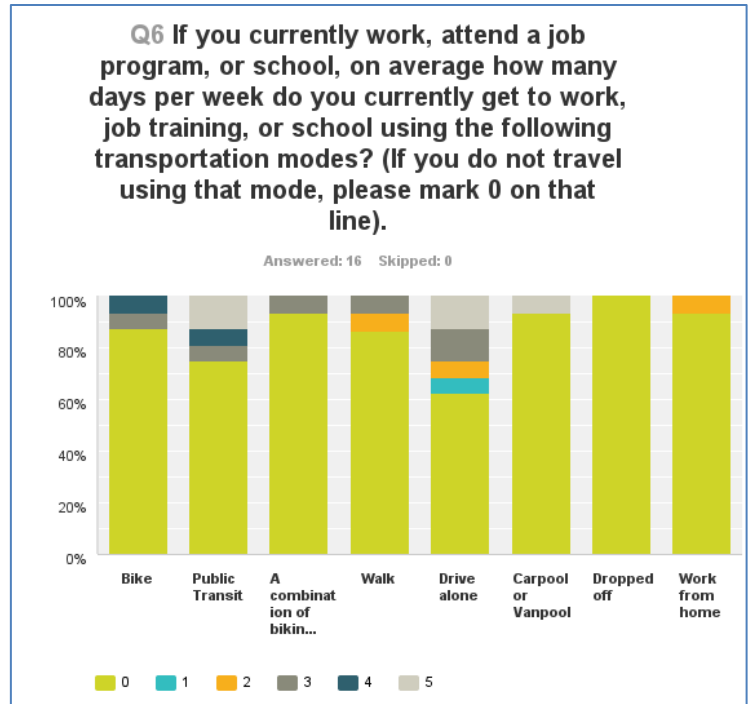
Answered: 16 Skipped: 0



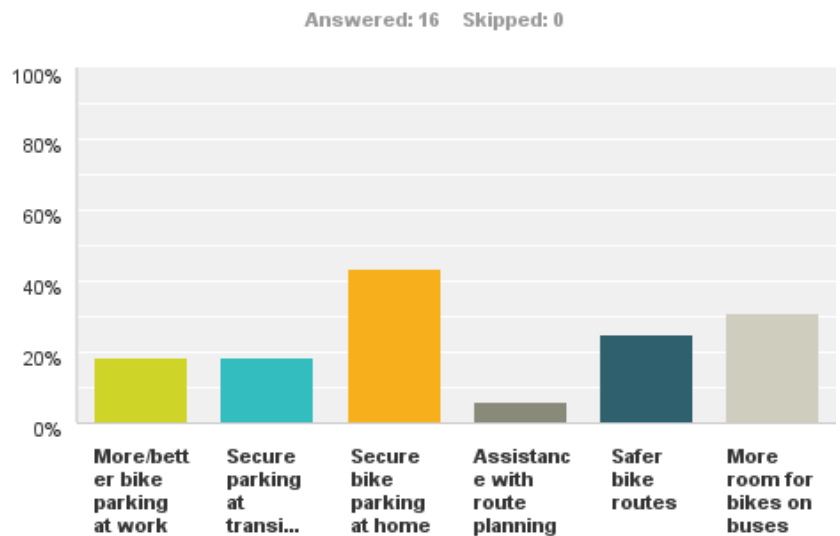
residents who participated in the program were English-speaking.

- Residents have experienced bicycle theft.
- In order to bicycle more often, residents need secure parking for their bicycles (13 responses indicated this would help them bicycle more.)
- Seven respondents indicate that they commute to work, school, or job training, with commutes from 0.75 – 21 miles (0.75, 2, 3, 8, 12, 17, 20). Commutes of ten miles or less are considered possible on a routine basis for people riding bicycles; commutes of 5 miles or less are even more achievable.
- In the pre-program survey, important facts are revealed including:
 - very few County Housing residents commute by bicycle (2 people, 3-4 times week).
 - Residents also commute by bus (4 people, 3-5 times week),
 - bus and bicycle (1 person, 3 times/week),
 - walking (2 people, 2-3 times/week),
 - driving alone (6 people, 1 – 5 times/week),
 - carpool/vanpool (1 person, 5 times/week), and
 - working from home (1 person, 2 times/week).

Course participants anticipated using their bicycles to commute, or bus and bicycle, much more, with 60% expecting to use their bicycle at least two days/week (question 7, not shown). County Housing residents indication that they are interested in, and anticipate, using bicycles and public transit much more, if given the opportunity, is a positive sign for our program.



Q4 What else would help you bike more often? Please check all that apply.



V. Post-Survey Results

Question 3 (not shown) asked program participants what they need in order to bicycle more safely and/or use your bike more. One person still needed a bicycle, and one person still needed a light for their bicycle. These residents, who had missed the original class, were given the bicycle and the light that they needed. No one needed a helmet or a lock; these needs were met through the program. “Other” comments including the need for more room for bicycles on buses.

Question 4 explored what would lead to Boulder Housing residents using their bicycles even more. “Other” comments included:

Bigger lanes for bikers or wider sidewalks if no lanes; Clearer road conditions for bicycles; A place to lock my bike that isn't in the middle of my living room.

One respondent noted: *I have everything I need as a retired person in Boulder County.*

One respondent mentioned a specific safety concern: *Some streets seem unsafe for biking, for me E. Baseline in some spots. Very narrowly escaped being hit at E. Baseline and Public couple weeks ago, left me quite shaky.* The post-survey indicates that 30% of respondents use their bicycle to get to work or school, and 80% use it for errands.

Question 7 highlights the dramatic change the survey shows in additional bicycle use, with 70% of respondents reported using their bicycle at least once a week, and 50% using it 3 or more times per week.

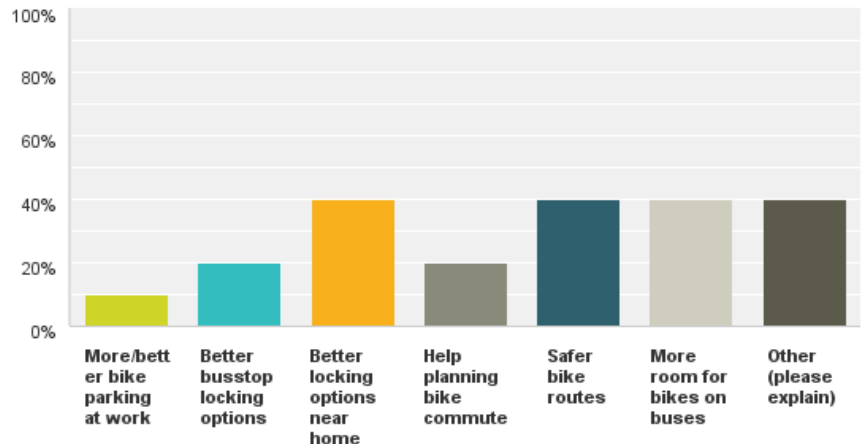
In further questions, 80% of respondents indicated their bicycle was still in good shape.

A majority of respondents offered suggestions for future bicycle workshops:

- *This was a great workshop and program. I don't have any suggestions to offer.*
- *I learned a lot and am just so grateful to have the opportunity to resume bike riding.*

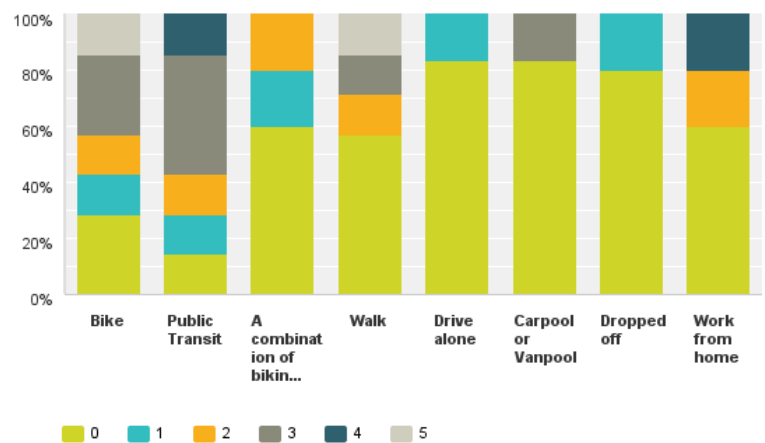
Q4 What else would help you bike more often? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



Q7 Since you received or repaired your bike, on average, how many days per week have you gotten to work, job training, or school using the following transportation modes? (If you do not travel using that mode, please mark 0 on that line).

Answered: 10 Skipped: 0

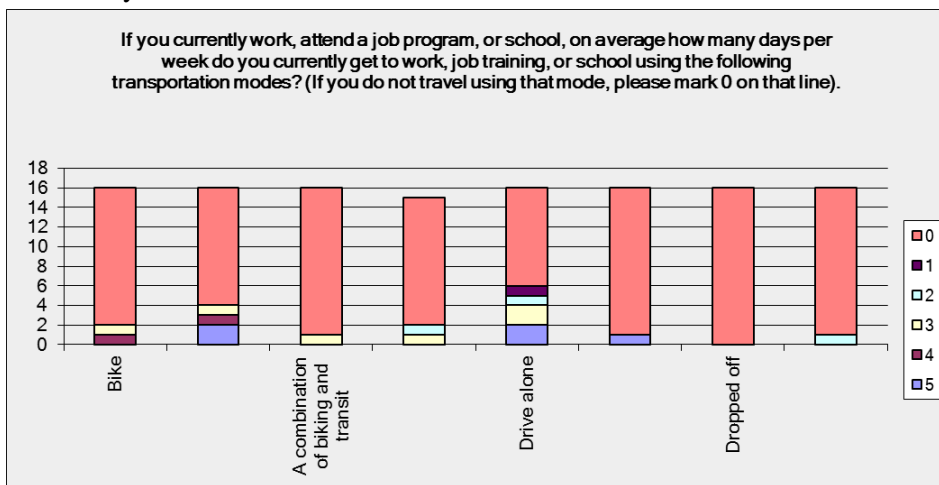


- Better sizing and help figuring out the right height for the bike. there were a lot of bikes for smaller people but not as many for tall people.
- More hands-on teaching.
- Only some of the bikes had missing parts- mine doesn't have a kickstand, couple other neighbors mentioned some issues as well.
- No, you are awesome!

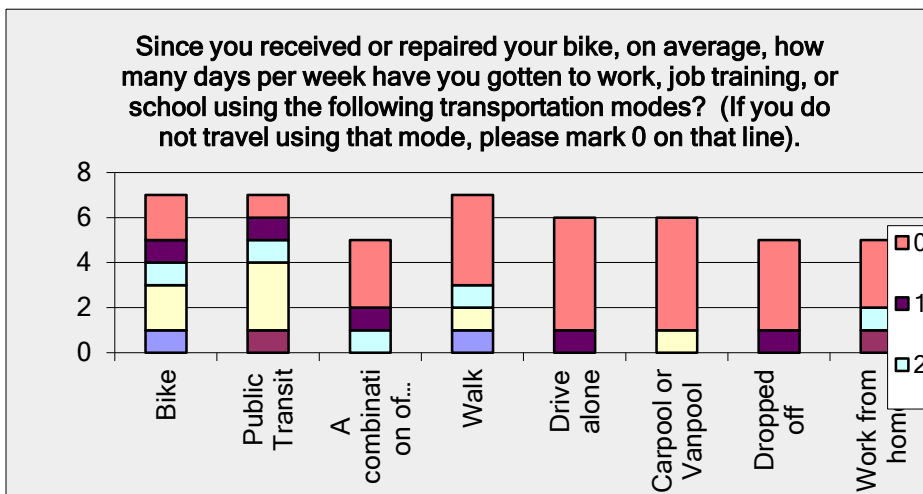
VI. Conclusions

Comparing the pre- and post-survey, *the number of respondents commuting to work and school increased significantly.*

Pre-Survey



Post-Survey



In conclusion, based on survey analysis and cost analysis of this program, Community Cycles feels that this program is a necessary and viable option for creating more daily bike commuters. For each person that takes one less car trip in Boulder the reduction in greenhouse gases is 1 pound of CO₂ emissions per gallon of gas.¹

¹ United States Environmental Protection Agency. Greenhouse Gas Emissions from a Typical Passenger Vehicle. Ann Arbor, May 2014.