

Bringing Bike Share to a Low-Income Community

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Melissa Wilson] Hello. I'm Melissa Wilson for CDC's journal, *Preventing Chronic Disease*. Joining me by phone today is Sarah Kretman Stewart, Healthy Living Minneapolis Project Specialist at the Minneapolis Health Department. Sarah is the author of an article published in the August 15, 2013 online issue of *Preventing Chronic Disease*. Today, we'll be discussing her study entitled *Bringing Bike Share to a Low-Income Community: Lessons Learned Through Community Engagement, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 2011*. Thank you for joining us, Sarah.

[Sarah Kretman Stewart] Thanks for having me.

[Melissa Wilson] Sarah, tell us about the bike share program in Minnesota.

[Sarah Kretman Stewart] In 2011, Minneapolis Health Department partnered with Nice Ride Minnesota, which is what the bike share program in the Twin Cities is called. And we were partnering with them really to promote biking and use of active transportation, which we know has all sorts of health benefits for folks. And what we did was we helped Nice Ride expand its bike share network into Near North, Minneapolis, which is a lower income area of the city. There had been three kiosks in that area and we helped them expand it to 11 kiosks.

[Melissa Wilson] What kind of impact did the program have on the Near North community?

[Sarah Kretman Stewart] Well, I think what we could say is that the program was moderately successful. We were able to get some people to use it and certainly be active while using it. Almost 5,000 bike trips in 2011 were taken to or from the kiosks that were installed through this project, and there more than 300 North Minneapolis residents that were using the system. So I think some people got out there and got to use them, but these kiosks were also some of the lowest used kiosks of any in the system, so I think there's still a lot of room for growth. And anecdotally, we heard from some folks that they really liked seeing these kiosks out there. They're these bright green bikes and they're hard to miss, and some people said that the presence of them just helped improved norms around biking in the community, too. So, we didn't really measure that as part of our evaluation, but, you know, that was potentially a benefit too.

[Melissa Wilson] What were some of the barriers you faced during this program?

[Sarah Kretman Stewart] Well, I think there were several things. You know, Near North, Minneapolis is a place where there's not as high of a concentration of destinations, of places, to go as there are in other parts of the city where the bike share program has been more successful. So, I think that's part of it, is people didn't see how they could use it as well. But I think also there were some other issues, like the bike share system requires the use of a credit card which is prohibitive for some people, although they do take prepaid credit cards now. And some people also thought, there's a 30-minute time limit on trips and if you go beyond that you have to pay additional money to keep using the bike, and so some people thought that was too short of a period of time, either because they had to go further, or because they just don't have a lot of

experience riding a bike, or know how long or how far you can get in 30 minutes. I think some people really wanted to see Nice Ride better integrated, or the bike share system better integrated with transit and the transit passes. You know, transit is something people in that community have a lot of experience using and will continue to use. Some people said, if this is better integrated, then I could see how I could use it but otherwise it doesn't make as much sense for me. And I think another thing is that the system is for people who are age 16 or older, so it's hard for people with kids to use it. In that part of the city there are a lot of kids in the area, so a lot of people who have kids to get around, too. So, those are some of the barriers.

[Melissa Wilson] What are the best ways to combat barriers in low-income communities like Near North?

[Sarah Kretman Stewart] Well, in the article we make some suggestions. Some of the lower cost strategies that we suggest are targeting promotions to low-income populations; offering lower cost options, or free options, for people to be able to use the system; partnering with organizations that serve low-income communities so that you can reach some of those folks who might be really interested in using the system. And there are some other barriers that would be more costly to address, like addressing the credit card issue so people can use the system without a credit card, or finding ways to address the integration of transit with bike share. Those are some potential ways of addressing the barriers.

[Melissa Wilson] What are the plans for the bike share program going forward?

[Sarah Kretman Stewart] Well, I know that we're not working very closely with Nice Ride right now. That project has ended. But I do know that they're working to develop partnerships with some community-based organizations to help connect people to bike share and providing those low-or no-cost options for using the system. They've also placed some kiosks so that they can be used more recreationally. They've heard that people are really interested in recreational riding and not just riding for transportation. And they're also considering extending the trip time beyond the original 30 minutes to 45 minutes instead.

[Melissa Wilson] Thank you for joining us today, Sarah. You can read Sarah's article online at www.cdc.gov/pcd.

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