Bike Share System & User Responses to COVID-19

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Research Aim

• Determine the current and future impacts of COVID-19 on bike share systems by reviewing bike share system responses in major cities and the results of a survey disseminated by San Antonio Bike Share to its local users.

Methods

1. System analysis conducted regarding COVID-19 responses implemented by bike share entities in 11 major U.S. cities.

2. Survey distributed to San Antonio Bike Share members in May 2020 to quantify local system users’ understanding of the use and preferences during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, receiving 125 responses.

System-level Results

• 5 out of the 11 cities examined directly posted their response to COVID-19

• 3 cities included CDC guidelines for using bike shares and 2 had simply mentioned following CDC guidelines to improve user safety.

• Cities with high bicycling rates normally tended to decrease bicycle miles traveled during the pandemic.

• Analysts with Streetlight Data show that bicycling decreased less than car travel in these locations (Grogan & Hise https://www.streetlightdata.com/corona-bike-metrics).

User Survey Results

Change in Bike Share Usage from COVID-19 Restrictions:

- All categories received an increase in usage except “Never” or “Occasionally”

- 26.1% of respondents reported that their usage of San Antonio Bike Share had actually increased during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Lower-income respondents (<$30k annually) suggested practical issues such as “Make prices more accessible and provide longer rent time”.

- Higher-income respondents ($100k annually) tended to mention system-level improvements addressing bicycle maintenance and “increase bike lanes”.

Contributions for Micromobility

1. Public communication is key for safe use in a pandemic.

2. People unemployed by the pandemic may increase ridership the most.

3. Survey results suggest post-pandemic bike sharing increases will be significant.

4. More research on transportation policy and equity are needed.

New paper in Transportation Interdisciplinary Perspectives with Greg Griffin

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