



DATE: January 29, 2025
TO: Council Infrastructure and Airport Committee
FROM: Director of Public Works
SUBJECT: Update on the City Bike Voucher Program

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council Infrastructure and Airport Committee reviews and provides feedback on the proposed Bike Voucher Program.

SUMMARY

The City has been awarded funding from the California Air Resource Board's (CARB) Clean Mobility in Schools (CMIS) and Sustainable Transportation Equity Project (STEP) Grant Programs to implement Safe Routes and Active Transportation for Schools and Underserved Communities in Hayward (Project). Staff is using unique and progressive strategies to address the bicycling culture in Hayward.

BACKGROUND

The City was awarded funding from the CARB's CMIS and STEP Grant Programs to implement Safe Routes and Active Transportation for Schools and Underserved Communities in Hayward. On April 23, 2024, Council accepted the grant award and appropriated \$6.2 million in funding to Project Nos. 06937, Active Transportation Incentive and Promotion Program, and 06941, Safe Routes to School Implementation Project .¹ This project has two primary purposes:

1. Designing and constructing Safe Route to School infrastructure improvements around twelve (12) Hayward schools based on school safety assessments conducted in recent years.
2. Creating a voucher program to provide bicycles to residents that aims to promote safe, affordable active transportation and reduce emissions, particularly for residents in disadvantaged and low-income communities.

¹ <https://hayward.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6642374&GUID=011AC041-028D-4871-BBEC-5F6C655F83C6&Options=&Search=>

As part of the grant, the City partnered with several organizations to help deliver these programs, including Hayward Unified School District (HUSD), TransForm, Teach Earth Action (TEA), Bike East Bay, and Bike Hayward. These organizations are supporting community outreach, engagement with students and families, design of the bike voucher program, and review of program implementation.

DISCUSSION

CARB and other agencies have recently funded a number of bicycle voucher programs in California. A statewide bike voucher program launched in December² and Ava Community Energy is launching a similar program is launching for Alameda County and some surrounding areas later this year.

The City's program, which includes over \$2.5 million in funding for bicycle vouchers, will be among the largest municipal bike voucher programs in the U.S, aiming to distribute thousands of bicycles to Hayward residents. Most other examples of other city-run programs that staff is aware of distributed between a few dozen and a couple hundred bicycles. Deploying a program at this scale requires extensive outreach and engagement.

Outreach and engagement included three methods:

1. TEA worked with Chabot College students to conduct fieldwork in the community in the Summer and Fall of 2024, interviewing over 1,000 residents and gathering detailed feedback to inform the design of the program.
2. TransForm is currently working with HUSD and individual schools to receive similar feedback from school students and families.
3. City staff and other partners have reviewed existing bike voucher programs and talked to potential partners to identify opportunities and constraints for the program.

Several findings have emerged from all of the work conducted to date, including:

- To succeed, this program needs to help build a bicycling culture in Hayward. The community interviews conducted by TEA and staff research into other programs clearly indicate that it will require effort to have broad-based acceptance of the bikes supplied by this program. Working with existing community institutions will help maximize the effectiveness of the program and the benefit for residents.
- Successful similar programs include complementary services to help integrate bicycling into their daily lives. The City of Berkeley's E-bike Equity Project (BEEP) included hands-on assistance for applicants, community events, and training of youth bike mechanics to help build and maintain the bikes.
- Long term sustainability will require community organizations that can help maintain these bicycles over time. The closure of Cycle Path, Hayward's only bike

² <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/california-e-bike-incentive-project>

shop, limits the currently available resources to support both distribution of bicycles and ongoing maintenance.

- The community has diverse needs for bicycling that range from residents who lack access to vehicles to students seeking independence to families looking for more sustainable transportation options. The scale of the City’s program creates the opportunity to serve diverse needs through multiple targeted programs.
- The City has significant gaps in the bicycle network that will need to be addressed for a successful program. Many residents say they feel safe bicycling in their neighborhood, but not in connecting to other parts of the City.
- Voucher programs can be costly to operate, potentially limit the reach and effectiveness of the City’s program. Similar programs often require substantial income verification from applicants and rely on access to multiple bike shops, creating barriers to entry for many Hayward residents.

Based on these findings, staff have identified several potential program components.

Market Segment	Characteristics	Potential program design
Students – middle to high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult sized bikes can support long term use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring partnership with HUSD and community organizations to distribute free bikes to students
Students – elementary to middle school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical time of life for learning independence through biking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring partnership with HUSD summer programs on bike training and loaner bikes that are reused as students age out of smaller bikes • Exploring partnership with HUSD and HARD on bike lending at Tennyson Park pump track
Students – college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong interest from colleges to participate • Opportunity for independent mobility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring partnership with CSU East Bay and Chabot College • Market available e-bike voucher programs (City, Ava, State)
Seniors/disabled residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique mobility needs • Significant opportunity for independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating on potential adaptive³ bike ownership or sharing program with Community Resources for Independent Living
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents taking children to school or learning to ride with their children • Likely prefer e-bikes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring partnership with Ava Community Energy’s e-bike voucher program

³ Adaptive bicycles include a variety of recumbent bicycles, handcycles, tandem bikes, and other adaptations of bicycles that enabled individuals with various disabilities to bicycle. In the Bay Area, BORP provides a variety of adaptive cycling programs: <https://www.borp.org/programs/cycling/>

Residents of apartments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlikely to have access to space for bicycle storage in most apartments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating a targeted e-scooter program
Interested but concerned cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals who are uncomfortable or learning to ride a bicycle • People who want to explore recreational opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring partners with HARD for small-scale bike share along the San Lorenzo Creekway • Partner with the Library, with a potential base of operations at Weekes Library

To ensure that Hayward’s program is effective, the recommendations for the program design include considering how the City administers the program, who is eligible, what types of bikes are included, how the City can complete delivery of the bicycles, how to make the process user friendly for residents, and how to ensure long term sustainability including providing local maintenance services.

Program eligibility will be focused on lower income residents. The City plans to work with community organizations that serve lower income and equity populations to help ensure that these individuals are aware of and ready to participate in the program and to potentially reduce the administrative burden of income verification. For any voucher program, the City would use existing utility programs that provide discounts to low income individuals. The California Public Utility Commission’s California Alternate Rates for Energy (CARE) and Family Electrical Rate Assistance (FERA) programs include verification of income status. Ava is using these verification to manage their proposed voucher program. The City may also be able to use similar income verification programs for City operated utilities.

To help keep the programs simple, select bike options would be provided. One to two options would be provided for students. Ava’s program works with bike shops outside of Hayward where residents would be able to choose from shop’s available e-bikes, if the City pursues this part of the program. Adaptive bike for seniors and adults with mobility challenges would have more options as recommended by CRIL. All recipients will have safety equipment included, such as helmet, lights, and lock.

For all programs, the City is exploring methods to address the lack of a local bike shop. Potential ideas include a bike fair where approved vendors could come to Hayward and provide test rides and residents could take advantage of the voucher program. This might look be similar to a street fair or farmers market and could potentially partner with existing events.

Program management will include selecting bikes, delivering the bikes, building the bikes, and ensuring the availability of maintenance for the bikes. Staff is working toward having a nonprofit or collaboration of organizations establish a nonprofit bike shop and run the program after the grant ends. Staff is working on a developing an RFP to select a

community organization that may provide community building around bicycling and bike shop services focused on building bike culture.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

City residents, including students and their families, will benefit from bike subsidies that provide an affordable, alternative transportation option. Transportation costs are a significant portion of expenses for many households and reducing these costs can free up resources for other, more productive expenditures.

STRATEGIC ROADMAP

This agenda item supports the Strategic Priority of Confront Climate Crisis & Champion Environmental Justice and Invest in Infrastructure. Specifically, this project relates to the implementation of the following projects:

Confront Climate Crisis & Champion Environmental Justice

Project C6: Improve e-bike adoption through the creation of an e-bike rebate program and ensuring that electric transit infrastructure such as EV chargers also serve e-bike and not just electric cars

FISCAL IMPACT

This item has no impact on the General Fund. The Active Transportation Incentive and Promotion Program Project 06937 and Safe Routes to School Implementation Project 06941 are both budgeted in Fund 460, Transportation System Improvement. The project was previously approved and allocated funding by Council, with \$3,500 in City funding included in the project to cover survey incentives that are not allowable under the CARB grant.

SUSTAINABILITY FEATURES

The implementation of the project would encourage and incentivize walking and biking for the residents thereby contributing to the residents health and reducing automobile dependency and greenhouse gas emissions over time.

PUBLIC CONTACT

This project has included significant community outreach, being led by TEA and TransForm. TEA and Chabot College students have conducted over 1,000 interviews and surveys over the summer fall semester. TransForm is in the process of conducting outreach with students and families through HUSD.

The City is also conducting direct outreach to community organizations to help inform the design of the program, including the grant sub-recipients and other organizations that may be able to help implement the program.

Robust public outreach and engagement will continue as the project moves forward. All necessary stakeholders and affected neighborhoods, agencies, community-based organizations and businesses will have opportunities for input and be done in a way that is equitable.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will use Committee feedback to finalize the design of the Bike Voucher Program. The proposed schedule for the Project includes:

Winter 2025	Finalize program options
Spring-Summer 2025	Pilot program roll out
Fall 2025-Spring 2026	Full program roll out

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Approved by:



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