

How Has Travel Behavior Changed among North American Bikesharing Users? What Makes a Successful Program?

Mineta Transportation Institute's free research report provides insight

San Jose, Calif., October 21, 2014 –The Mineta Transportation Institute has released its latest peer-reviewed study that evaluates public bikesharing in North America as a follow-up to a 2012 study. *[Public Bikesharing in North America During a Period of Rapid Expansion: Understanding Business Models, Industry Trends & User Impacts](#)* reviews the change in travel behavior shown by members of different programs in the context of their business models and operational environments, and it offers insights and recommendations for successful programs. Principal investigator was Susan A. Shaheen, PhD, working with Elliot W. Martin, PhD, Nelson D. Chan, Adam P. Cohen, and Joseph Michael Pogodzinski, PhD. The free report can be downloaded from <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1131.html>

“For this Phase II study, interviews were conducted with IT-based bikesharing organizations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico in spring 2013,” said Dr. Shaheen. “In addition to expert interviews, the research team conducted two kinds of surveys with bikesharing users. One was the online member survey sent to all individuals for whom the operator had an email address. The second survey was an on-street survey for anyone, including casual users – those who are not members of the system and use it on a short-term basis. These surveys were conducted on the street by way of a smartphone.”

Among the report's findings:

- Among members, bikesharing reduces automobile dependency and may reduce public transit ridership in situations where bikesharing provides a faster, more direct, and lower-cost alternative.
- Vandalism and theft are reduced significantly now that smart-card technologies maintain accountability.
- Bicycle redistribution or “rebalancing” remains a challenge because of the “real-time” information and the physical effort required to keep stations properly supplied.
- Most riders infrequently wear helmets while using shared bicycles. Helmet use was highly correlated with helmet ownership.
- Bikesharing riders have fewer accidents, likely because of the bikes' safety features and supportive infrastructure.
- Establishing partnerships within local government and with community stakeholders is necessary for successful bikesharing operations.
- To be successful, public bikesharing programs must address specific user and market-segment needs before and after deployment.

The authors also identified several improvements and useful lessons that could be applied in marketing and outreach, operations and equipment, and system planning and scale.

Chapters include Public Bikesharing by the Numbers; The Business of Bikesharing; Public Bikesharing Operations; Equity Considerations; and more. Copies of the member surveys are provided in English, Spanish, and Canadian French.

The member survey was deployed in five cities with 6,373 individuals: Mexico City, Minneapolis-Saint Paul, Montreal, Salt Lake City, and Toronto. The on-street survey of 205 users was implemented in three cities: Boston, Salt Lake City, and San Antonio.

Download the full report

The full report, including 25 figures and 31 tables, is available for free, no-registration; download at <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1131.html>. For a free copy of the Phase I study, *Public Bikesharing in North America: Early Operator and User Understanding*, go to <http://transweb.sjsu.edu/project/1029.html>

Tweet this: #Mineta research on North America #bikesharing has lessons for success. Free. Was your city surveyed? <http://ow.ly/BVNQa>

ABOUT THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Susan Shaheen, PhD, is an adjunct professor in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department and a research engineer at the Institute of Transportation Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a co-director of the Transportation Sustainability Research Center. She was the Policy and Behavioral Research Program leader at California Partners for Advanced Transit and Highways from 2003-2007 and a special assistant to the Director's Office of the California Department of Transportation from 2001-2004. She has a PhD in ecology, focusing on technology management and the environmental aspects of transportation, from the University of California, Davis and a Master's degree in public policy analysis from the University of Rochester. She completed her post-doctoral studies on advanced public transportation systems at the University of California, Berkeley in July 2001.

Bios of all other research team members are included in the report.

ABOUT THE MINETA TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE

The Mineta Transportation Institute (MTI) conducts research, education, and information transfer programs regarding surface transportation policy and management issues, especially related to transit. Congress established MTI in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. MTI won national re-designation competitions in 2002, 2006 and 2012. The Institute is funded through the US Secretary of Transportation's Research and Technology Office, US Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Administration, the California Department of Transportation's Division of Research, Innovation and Systems Development, and public and private grants. In 2006 the US Department of Homeland Security selected MTI as a National Transportation Security Center of Excellence. The internationally respected members of the MTI Board of Trustees represent all major surface transportation modes. MTI, the lead institute for the nine-university Mineta National Transit Research Consortium, is affiliated with San Jose (CA) State University's College of Business. Visit transweb.sjsu.edu

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