SD enters bike sharing world
New mode of transportation could change commuting, tourist habits

by David Garrick (/staff/david-garrick/) 6 A.M. NOV. 2, 2014

DecoBike station in Miami Beach, Florida. Photo courtesy DecoBike Horizontal Cam 1

SAN DIEGO — A new form of transportation that’s gaining worldwide momentum will soon arrive in San Diego as crews begin installing dozens of bike-sharing stations in urban neighborhoods and beach communities.

Commuters, tourists and residents can pay a fee to rent bicycles and drop them off anywhere along a network of 180 stations planned for the city.

The bikes will reduce congestion and pollution by filling in small gaps in the transportation network, encouraging more people to choose cycling and mass transit over cars, city officials say.

“A perfect example is people from North County who take the Coaster to Santa Fe Station but work on 10th Avenue,” said Linda Marabian, a city transportation official. “Instead of walking 10 blocks, they can now take a bike. That’s what we mean when we say the bikes solve ‘the last mile’ problem.”

Tourists staying at hotels in downtown, where many of the stations will be located, are also expected to frequently choose bike sharing over cab rides or long walks. And residents of urban areas can use the bikes for errands.
After a slow start in the 1990s, bike sharing has exploded in popularity since about 2010, according to the Transportation Sustainability Research Center at UC Berkeley.

It’s now available in 780 cities worldwide, including 60 in the United States, said Susan Shaheen, co-director of the research center.

"There are people that are using this as a form of public transportation," Shaheen said. "This is a new transportation mode, and how many times do we see that in our lifetime?"

Bike sharing has some drawbacks, such as the difficulty of making multiple stops without carrying a personal bike lock with you.

San Diego’s plan to join the trend has also been criticized as premature, and for not serving many of the city’s poorest neighborhoods, where it could arguably do the most good.

"Having more access to bikes definitely plays a role in reducing pollution and production of greenhouse gases, but there's a lack of adequate infrastructure in the city to accommodate biking," said Monique Lopez, a transportation policy advocate at the Environmental Health Coalition in National City.

Lopez is referring to San Diego’s relative lack of protected bike paths and safe cycling routes, something the city’s bicycle master plan hopes to remedy in coming years.

In December, the City Council approved an update to the plan that calls for adding 595 miles of bikeways across the city by filling gaps in the existing 510-mile network and creating new paths.

Lopez also criticized the city’s plan for not including low-income neighborhoods, such as City Heights, Barrio Logan and Sherman Heights.

The initial 180 stations also exclude suburban neighborhoods, such as Rancho Peñasquitos and Tierrasanta, communities near the border and everywhere east of 50th Street.

"It works best in urban areas with a lot of activity," said city spokesman Bill Harris, explaining that the private vendor operating the stations needs revenue to exceed expenses. "You're not going to see bike-sharing stations in the outlying communities for a while. They don't provide the same kind of possibilities that downtown and the beach areas do."
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John Thurston  Top Commenter · San Diego High School
With San Diego's year round mild climate it's amazing that it has taken this long for bikesharing to arrive.
In at times frigid Chicago, that have bike share stations everywhere and are extremely well received by locals and visitors alike. If they can do it, so can we.
Reply · Like ·  November 4 at 5:58am

Gernot Trolf  Top Commenter · Merchant Academy Salzburg, Austria
Good idea but not on the beach where there are enough bike rental businesses already and you are taking away their bread and butter.
Reply · Like ·  November 3 at 8:51am

Ted James  Top Commenter
I am glad the city didn't subsidize this business, that would be the city competing against private businesses on the beach. As long as this is just another privately owned company competing for business, I have no problems with them going into this market. It will ultimately be better for consumers.
Reply · Like ·  November 3 at 9:04am

Ted James  Top Commenter
A look to the future, November 2015, the bike share experiment is over mainly due to the high cost of replacing stolen bikes. GPS chips indicate 95% of all bikes were sent to Mexico.
Reply · Like ·  November 3 at 8:26am
though the MAJORITY of it's residents don't live around there. The majority of the traffic during
Once again, the City is only thinking of downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods even

Ken Platt

Reply

Is there a map of where the bike pick up/drop offs will be located?

Jon Steele

Reply

How about fixing your website first, it will not show your stations. Period!

You didn't even get started yet and you already killed your chances of success. Way over

Peter F. Desser

Reply

on the train.

their work, they would figure out its much less money to use your own bike, they are easy to take

Derek Marlowe

Reply

Anyone who rides a bike in downtown is putting their life on the line. Walk it is safer.

Alex Clarke

Reply

Maybe exposing some more citizens to the dangers of bicycling will create a bit more

Bill Davidson

Reply

It's very clear you have no idea what you are talking about. Have you even used

Znarf Sino

Reply

compared to the other systems though and I like the month to month idea.

do not even have hourly rates like the SD one. The yearly pricing isn't too bad

Znarf Sino

Reply

prices will discourage rentals.

subsidize their programs so their prices are lower.

The price is due to the lack of government subsidies. Other cities in the country subsidize their programs so their prices are lower. It remains to be seen if these prices will discourage rentals.

Znarf Sino

Reply

The pricing structure they have is actually quite unique. The other bikeshare systems do not even have hourly rates like the SD one. The yearly pricing isn't too bad compared to the other systems though and I like the month to month idea.

Jon Steele

Reply

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Znarf Sino

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http://www.decobike.com/sandiego/map-location then download the whole thing if
the map isn't working (at the bottom of the map)

Ken Platt

Top Commenter - Works at Dept of The Navy

Once again, the City is only thinking of downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods even
above the 405 FWY at the residents don't live around there. The reality of the traffic density.
These bikes are meant for short trips; not long ones. Certainly, the majority of traffic on the freeways is the long trip type. So? What does that have to do with anything?

This will serve people in downtown and uptown mesa and PB and some of Point Loma and Mission Valley. If you live out in the boonies, then it’s not really for you. Take heart in the fact that you’re not paying for it.

Znarf Sino · Top Commenter · West Hollywood, California

They are specifically aiming at the tourist markets as a revenue generator to subsidize the locals. It’s a smart move because of limited funds, as we have seen in other cities. It will eventually expand to the other parts of the city.

Bill Davidson · Top Commenter · San Diego, California

Actually, lots of citizens live in the areas where these are and it covers a lot of areas with plenty of tall multi-unit buildings (especially downtown) where the city is most densely populated.

These bikes do nothing for the citizens of San Diego. They are not efficient public transportation. Those folks will still have to drive and sit in the normal traffic rush hour comes from places like PB, Scripps Ranch, Posey, or Eastlake, all places without any efficient public transportation. Those folks will still have to drive and sit in the normal traffic.

November 2 at 9:41pm

If you live out in the boonies, then it’s not really for you.

West Hollywood, California

November 2 at 5:05pm

Take heart in the fact that you’re not paying for it.

San Diego, California

November 2 at 11:01pm

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...better yet, if you live out in the boonies, then it’s not really for you.

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