

BARRIERS TO BIKING IN EAST PORTLAND

RESEARCH SUMMARY



Project Name

Understanding Barriers to Biking in
East Portland

Research conducted:

Project Owner

The Community Cycling Center

March 2022 - June 2023

Prepared by

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STUDY OVERVIEW

In 2022, the Community Cycling Center conducted research to understand the barriers to biking faced by East Portland community members, particularly those from historically and currently marginalized communities. The project team collaborated with community members to gather valuable information and examine ways to bring the Community Cycling Center's effective and culturally-relevant bicycle programming to East Portland in partnership with existing organizations and groups within the community.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

To better understand people's biking experience and needs, we initiated a public outreach and engagement campaign in the spring of 2022. We designed this campaign to connect with the communities in East Portland and encompassed multiple methods: an online survey, focus groups, and interviews with Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), agencies, and staff members. The research prioritized engagement with underserved communities such as Black, Native American, Spanish-speaking, Vietnamese-speaking, Chinese-speaking, and Russian-speaking communities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Staff Interviews

Based on the series of staff interviews, we identified the following themes and values:

- **Funding constraints-** The Community Cycling Center faces a significant barrier when it comes to funding, which limits our ability to provide support to the community. We have many resources, including highly educated staff and raw materials, but are unable to fully utilize them due to financial limitations.
- **Collaboration-** The Community Cycling Center has a history of working well with partners, and by understanding community needs and creating relevant programming, we can create a lasting impact. This can also help with our limited resources.
- **Youth engagement-** The Community Cycling Center values working with children and families to grow bike access and skills. A shared goal is to increase participation in after-school bike programming and expand to schools in East Portland.
- **Multi-lingual offerings-** The Community Cycling Center wants to continue to diversify its staff and reach more non-English-speaking community members. Partnership, like with *Andando en Bicicletas y Caminando (ABC)*, is key to creating programming and services reflective of a community's language and culture

Focus Groups

From the focus groups, we discovered participants want to see the following offerings:

- **Bike resources-** Suggestions included discounts or vouchers to buy a bike, free rental bikes for leisure, affordable bikes and accessories, adaptive bikes for those with disabilities, partnerships with stores and workplaces to provide bicycling incentives, bike storage, and bike signage and infrastructure.
- **Specific services-** Community members want cycling skills training, safety training, maintenance education, and electric bike education.
- **Community programming-** Participants mentioned events like Sunday Parkways, sightseeing, bike tours, bike fairs, and community events.

Survey

Major findings from the survey include:

- **Barriers-** The top five reasons respondents in East Portland do not bike are, respectively: it is not easy or convenient for them to use, they do not need or want to use this transportation mode, it feels unsafe to use, they do not have access to biking, and/or they cannot afford to bike.
- **Opportunities-** Respondents ranked the primary motivators to begin biking, respectively as: receiving a free or affordable bike, access to bike safety and riding skills classes, access to free or affordable bike safety gear, information about safe and fun bike routes, and safe and secure bike parking at home and/or destinations.
- **Equity issues-** Marginalized demographic groups (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, lower income, and limited English proficiency community members) more frequently reported safety, access to a bicycle, ease, and convenience as primary barriers to using a bike over their white, higher income, and primarily English-speaking peers.

Partner Interviews

The partner interviews revealed the following barriers and opportunities for collaboration:

- **Barriers-** Safety and lack of bike infrastructure, cost of bikes and maintenance, access to bike storage, and negative experiences of Portland bike culture.
- **Opportunities-** Sharing resources, expanding the scope of programming, engaging with partner's community networks, promoting programs, and building a community around biking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research, we established comprehensive recommendations for goals and strategies for the Community Cycling Center to reduce barriers and build community in East Portland and beyond. These goals and strategies are not in order of importance or priorities, but rather a flexible roadmap for the Community Cycling Center's vision.

Goal 1: Establish partnerships with different organizations and community members in East Portland.

Strategy Identify Common Values	Strengthen partnerships in East Portland by facilitating planning sessions with potential partners to identify common values, goals, and opportunities.
Strategy Manage Staff Transitions	Develop and implement contingency plans for staff transitions to ensure the longevity and continuity of partnerships.
Strategy Coalition-Building	Cultivate a coalition between 3 to 4 partner organizations to expand services and programs for East Portland youth, with a focus on serving BIPOC, low-income, and limited English proficiency communities.
Strategy Bike Storage	Provide education and resources for securely storing bikes in East Portland.
Strategy Bike Partnership	Foster partnerships with other bike shops and organizations in the area to increase access to free and affordable bikes, accessories, and repair services.
Strategy Share Labor	Explore job and volunteer sharing opportunities with other CBOs and non-profits.

Goal 2: Expand effective and culturally-relevant bicycle programming and services in East Portland.

Strategy Safety Education	Develop and expand safety education and skill-building programming and resources.
Strategy School Programming	Increase involvement at Title I schools in East Portland.
Strategy Secure Funding	Expand revenue and funding sources to meet underserved East Portland community members' needs.
Strategy Community Bike Rides	Increase attendance at events and host additional community bike rides in East Portland.
Strategy Training and Employment	Increase training and employment opportunities for the community in East Portland.
Strategy Affordable Bikes	Provide free and affordable bikes, accessories, and repairs directly to the East Portland community.
Strategy Menu of Services	Collaborate with other CBOs to develop a shared resource and program menu detailing available services and resources across the coalition.