



Earl Yoshii

winter 2016

42

wellbeinghi.com

## **Bike-sharing programs build communities and improve health.**

**By Danielle Douglass and Alia Pan**

With near-perfect weather year-round and the emergence of more bike lanes throughout the state, bicycle commuting has become a common sight on Hawai'i's roads. Hawaii B-cycle, a pilot project that brought the state's first two bike-sharing stations to Kailua in 2011, ended in 2014 with enthusiasm from stakeholders. The project's goals of introducing the concept of bike sharing and learning to create a larger bike share were met.



Ten of the bicycles from the pilot project were donated to Better Tomorrows at Kuhio Park Towers for the residents of The Towers of Kuhio Park to use. The organization is currently working to secure maintenance and repair support for the bicycles and provide bicycle education classes to the residents.

In December 2014, the King Street protected bike lane opened for one-way traffic and in May 2015, it expanded for bicyclists to ride both ways. The two-mile lane runs from Alapa'i Street to Isenberg Street. The City and County of Honolulu plans to start constructing Honolulu's second protected bike lane, which will run along South Street, in early 2016.

### A first for Honolulu

Bikeshare Hawaii plans to launch Honolulu's first bike-sharing program in the summer with up to 200 docking stations and 2,000 bikes. Bike-share programs provide bikes to rent for short-distance trips, which can be combined with other modes of transportation. The plan includes bike-rental kiosks at Diamond Head, in Waikiki, at Ala Moana Beach Park, Kaka'ako, Chinatown, and the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

After the initial phase, the organization hopes to bring bike-sharing to other communities across the state, including Kailua. As with similar programs in cities across the globe, the goal is to give people more ways to get around.

Bikeshare Hawaii Chief Executive Officer Lori McCarney explains that people in Hawai'i are car-dependent not because they refuse to stop using them, but because there aren't many other options. "Hawai'i has great climate and great terrain. If residents here had other options that were convenient, affordable, and easy, they'd use them," she says.

McCarney and President and Chief Operations Officer Ben Trevino have been raising funds, signing up sponsors, testing bikes, and promoting cycling as an alternative form of transportation. The organization got a big boost in June 2014 when the City and County of Honolulu and the state of Hawai'i each awarded the organization \$1 million toward its efforts. Other contributors include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and locally based Ulupono Initiative.



Bikeshare Hawaii Chief Executive Officer Lori McCarney and President and Chief Operations Officer Ben Trevino.

Bike-sharing is ideal for trips less than two miles and in areas that are difficult to get to by bus or are inconvenient because of traffic or limited parking. These quick trips don't require sporty clothing, making it convenient to ride during the work or school day.

"People tend to think that if you're on a bike, you need to wear bike shorts and a racing bib," says McCarney. She's currently testing pedals with special grips that allow men and women to bike in dress shoes to ensure that riders can wear work clothes as they cycle.

McCarney doesn't expect people to give up their



cars. “I’ll still use my car where it makes sense and use a bike when it makes sense,” she says. She believes the convenience factor and ease of use are the keys to Bikeshare Hawaii’s success.

### Budding excitement from commuters

Honolulu commuter John Hagihara, 28, has done bike-sharing in other cities and sees it as a convenient way to get around town. “Honolulu’s year-round warm weather and dense urban core make it a great city to bike in, and the City and County is working hard to improve bike infrastructure,” he says.

Hagihara is an urban planner and is helping Bikeshare Hawaii identify locations for the bike stations and engage community members and stakeholders in the planning process.

Hagihara predicts bike-sharing will become popular in Hawai‘i. “Other than being fun and a good way to get exercise, bike sharing just makes sense. So many of the trips we take in town are really short distances,” he says. “When you factor in walking to your car, fighting traffic, and then finding a parking space, it really is a lot more convenient to just grab a bike and go.”

Although he owns a car, he rides his bike when he can. He’s been riding bikes since he was a child; riding to school evolved to riding to work. For him, having fun, getting some exercise, and becoming engaged with his surroundings makes it his preferred way to get around. “Try it. It’s a blast!” he says.

### Blues invest in city bike shares

In 2014, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois (BCBSIL) announced its sponsorship of Chicago’s popular Divvy bike-share program. BCBSIL members and employees receive special discounted rates for annual membership to the program.

“It’s a five-year exclusive sponsorship that enables the system to expand by 50 percent — from 3,000 bikes to 4,500, and 300 stations to 450 across the city. It also funds bicycle safety education programs



Bicycles of Chicago’s Divvy bike-share program.




and the development of additional separated bikes lanes for safety,” says Mary Ann Schultz, BCBSIL senior media relations manager. “It fits perfectly with our focus on fostering healthy, active lifestyles.”

Independence Blue Cross in Philadelphia recently announced its sponsorship of the city’s Indego bike-share program. As an incentive to join the program, the company offered a 30-day membership for \$5. It also offers 12 Independence Dollar Days throughout the year, when anyone can try Indego for \$1.

### HCDA rolls out employee bike sharing

Here in Hawai‘i, the Hawaii Community Development Authority (HCDA) recently started a bike-sharing program for its 23 employees. Communications Manager Lindsey Doi says that the program, which offers three bicycles that employees can use for free, has been met with enthusiasm. “It allows employees to ‘go green’ and get Downtown faster,” she says. “It also promotes healthier lifestyles.”

Doi says that bike-sharing complements HCDA’s mission to redevelop communities, including development related to transportation. “Bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways are major elements of these concepts and we saw an employee bike-sharing program as a great way to really live out our mission,” she says.

As more commuters reach for the handlebars instead of the car keys, a bike culture is accelerating and motorists are becoming more accustomed to sharing the roads with cyclists. When people choose to ride instead of drive, they save money and reduce their carbon footprint while improving their physical and emotional health. It’s a win-win. 



HCDA employees Lindsey Doi and Tony Ching.

Courtesy of the Hawaii Community Development Authority

Have you checked out HMSA’s blog, [Well-Being Hawaii](http://wellbeinghi.com)? You’ll find personal, inspirational stories on everything well-being.

If there’s something you’d like to see on the blog, we encourage you to submit your story ideas to [wellbeinghi@hmsa.com](mailto:wellbeinghi@hmsa.com).

