

Better Bike Share Partnership Mini Grant

Final Report

**BETTER
BIKE
SHARE
PARTNERSHIP**



**Baltimore Department of Transportation
Dockless Vehicle Program
November 2023**



BALTIMORE'S DOCKLESS VEHICLE PROGRAM

Dockless vehicles (e-scooters and e-bikes) were legalized by the Baltimore City Council in 2019. Since 2019, the Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT) has managed annual permits for the companies that operate the dockless vehicles. On an annual basis, BCDOT adjusts the rules and regulations based on program evaluation and permits dockless companies that will best meet the needs of Baltimore City residents and visitors. BCDOT reinvests the permit fees into program support including safety education and bicycle infrastructure maintenance.

BCDOT is tasked with balancing the competing goals, priorities, and transportation needs of Baltimore City's residents and visitors. From the initial launch of the Dockless Vehicle pilot program to the current permit program, BCDOT continuously aims to evaluate emerging transportation technology and services that can improve transportation access in Baltimore City. **The primary goals of the Dockless Vehicle Program are to: (1) directly increase equity of access for underserved communities and (2) to promote efficient and sustainable transportation modes.**

BBSP MINI GRANT OVERVIEW

The Better Bike Share Partnership (BBSP) Mini Grant funded aspects of BCDOT's Dockless Vehicle Program equity initiatives, including support for equity plans, free micromobility rides, and educational activities to inform communities about available equity plans. BCDOT partnered with the [Baltimore Civic Fund](#) and [Bikemore](#) to reach communities that could benefit from increased e-scooter and e-bike access and to serve the city's existing Equity Zones. Equity Zones are identified communities throughout the city where BCDOT requires dockless vehicles be available every morning (Figure 1). These zones were identified by evaluating equity-related demographic measures during the pilot program.

One of the intended purposes of the BBSP Mini Grant was to

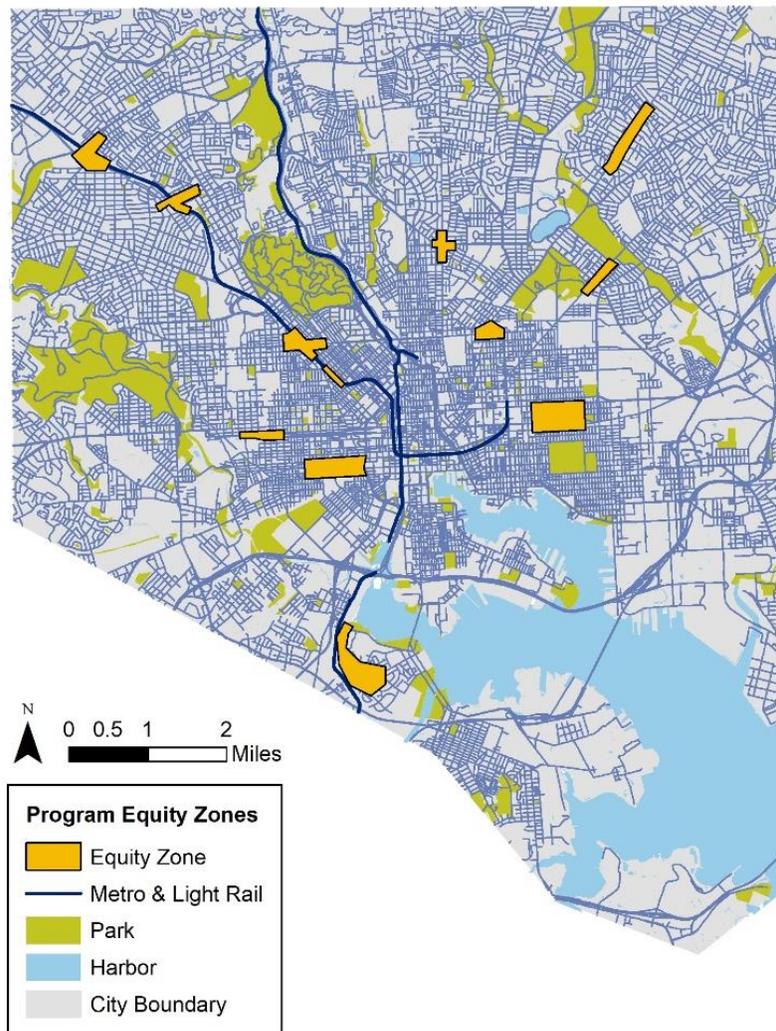


Figure 1. Dockless Vehicle Program Equity Zones

support equity plans in Baltimore. Baltimore City has hundreds of equity plan users who qualify for low-income, cash payment, and non-smartphone plans. Spin and Superpedestrian, the micromobility providers in Baltimore, are required to offer equity plans. [Spin Access](#) offers a discounted rate of \$0 to unlock and \$0.10/minute for trips, while Superpedestrian’s [LINK-Up](#) offers 70% off the trip’s total cost.

Riders with an equity plan take about 50% more trips using dockless vehicles each month than non-equity plan riders (Figure 2). Equity plan users averaged over 6 micromobility trips per month whereas non-equity plan users took an average of 4 micromobility trips per month.

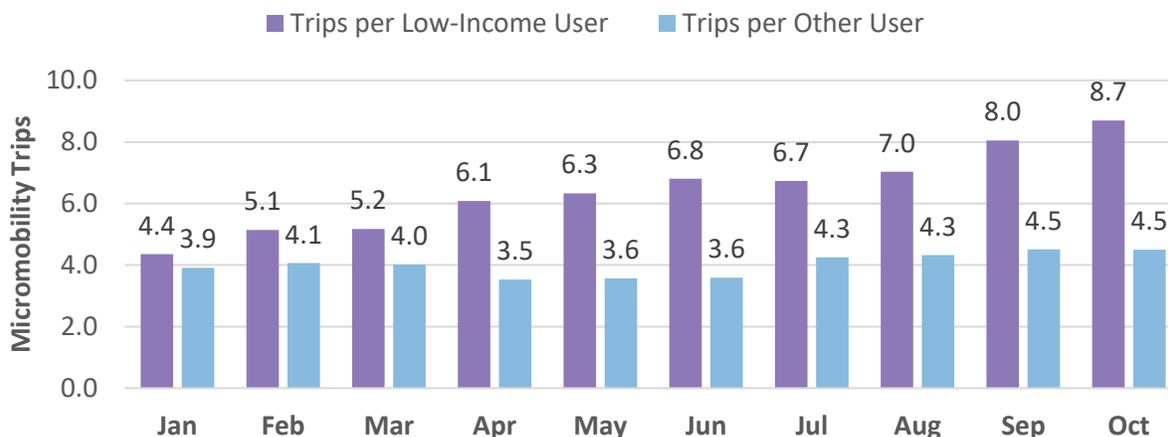


Figure 2. Monthly Micromobility Trips by User

Baltimore relies on the equity plans to increase transportation access for underserved communities. Though the equity plans have proven to be well-used by riders and to increase access to educational and employment opportunities, there are still barriers to reaching new riders. Riders may not be familiar with the equity plan options or may not know how to register for the plans. **Registration remains one of the primary barriers for many individuals, because the equity plans—specifically the low-income plan—require proof of income and other personal documentation.**

Funding from the BBSP Mini Grant was used to support BCDOT’s Dockless Vehicle Program equity initiatives using the following strategies:

- Creating and printing educational materials about available equity plans and how to register for the equity plans.
- Hosting registration events near Equity Zones with DOT staff, dockless vehicle providers, and Bikemore to help individuals register for equity plans.
- Providing free rides from Equity Zones.
- Sponsoring bike lane clean-up activities to clear bike lanes of trash and to encourage micromobility riders to use the bike lanes.

EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

BCDOT created, printed, and distributed more than 2,000 flyers advertising the available equity plans (Figure 3). Print materials like flyers remain an effective method of communication specifically for audiences that are not as familiar with or do not have consistent access to online platforms. BCDOT Communications created a flyer that explains what information riders need to register for the equity plans (Figure 4).

The flyer was shared on BCDOT social media, and the printed flyers were distributed to all branches of the Enoch Pratt Free Library and several community centers. Through BCDOT's partnership with Bikemore, BCDOT was able to connect with [Moveable Feast](#) and other food distribution organizations to distribute the flyers. Moveable Feast included the flyers with their home delivered meals and food distributions. The organization estimated that they distributed 800 flyers in addition to the 2,000 flyers distributed by BCDOT. BCDOT also provided an additional 1,000 flyers to the [Baltimore Beat](#), a Black-led, Black-controlled nonprofit newspaper and media outlet, to share with their readers.



Figure 3. Spin and BCDOT team members engage with a community member about available equity plans. [Photo: Dorret Oosterhoff, Kittelson & Associates]

LOW-INCOME MICROMOBILITY PLANS

**DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE DISCOUNTED PLANS
(UP TO 70% OFF)
FOR RIDING E-SCOOTERS, AND E-BIKES
FOR LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS?**



LINK SEATED E-SCOOTERS & E-SCOOTERS

YOU NEED:

- A PHOTO ID
- A SNAP CARD, UTILITY BILL, MEDICAID INSURANCE CARD, OR REDUCED FARE CARD



SIGN UP:

airtable.com/shrg5qDUlbNla2Fco

NEED HELP?

1.844.701.8163
SUPPORT@LINK.CITY

SPIN E-SCOOTERS & E-BIKES

YOU NEED:

- PROOF OF ADDRESS (BILL)
- A SNAP CARD, UTILITY BILL, MEDICAID INSURANCE CARD, OR REDUCED FARE CARD



SIGN UP:

web.spin.pm/spin_access/usa

NEED HELP?

1.888.262.5189
SUPPORT@SPIN.PM

Figure 4. Equity plan flyer created by BCDOT Communications team.

REGISTRATION EVENTS

BCDOT sponsored ten [Mobile Bike Shops](#) throughout the fall. Bikemore's Mobile Bike Shop provides free access to bike repair services and brings inclusive repair experiences to neighborhoods that do not have access to a bike repair shop. The Mobile Bike Shop also engages communities in conversations about bike advocacy.



Figure 5. Mobile Bike Shop in Druid Hill Park with Spin. [Photo: Dorret Oosterhoff, Kittelson & Associates]

The Mobile Bike Shops were held at Lake Montebello and Druid Hill Park near program Equity Zones. BCDOT's intention for participating in the Mobile Bike Shops was to engage community members that may benefit from the available equity plans. At each Mobile Bike Shop, team members from Spin or Superpedestrian were present with e-scooters, e-bikes, and [adaptive vehicles](#) for people to ride. The vehicles were available free of charge to those attending the events.

BCDOT staff were also available to answer questions about the equity plans and to help attendees register for the equity plans. At the Mobile Bike Shops, BCDOT engaged approximately 5-10 people at each event that had not previously known about the equity plans or that had not tried micromobility before.

"Bikemore deeply values our partnership with Baltimore City Department of Transportation and the Department's commitment to expanding equitable access to micromobility. Through our Mobile Bike Shop, we constantly hear desires for more active transportation, micromobility, and traffic calming from community members. Often, these individuals are enrolled in assistance programs that make them eligible for equity programs from our city's micromobility options. Pairing these individuals with this opportunity has been incredibly rewarding, and our partnership in this grant brought us new enrollment and advocacy ideas that we are currently fundraising to implement." - Jed Weeks, Bikemore



Figure 6. Bikemore and Spin team members engage with community members during bike repairs. [Photo: Dorret Oosterhoff, Kittelson & Associates]

" Spin is proud to be an integral part of Baltimore's efforts to enhance mobility and promote inclusivity through the Better Bike Share program. Our collaboration with BCDOT and Bikemore reflects our commitment to making dockless mobility accessible to all residents, particularly those in need of our transportation services. Through the Bikemore pop-up events alongside BCDOT and Superpedestrian, we have successfully educated and empowered residents to sign up for our Spin Access program, providing them with affordable and sustainable transportation options. Most notably, this includes thousands of free trips within the City's defined equity areas. We look forward to continuing our strong partnership with the City and community organizations to improve equity and connectivity." - Tim Wilcox, Spin



Figure 7. Community members take e-bikes for a spin! [Photo: Dorret Oosterhoff, Kittelson & Associates]

The micromobility providers track the number of equity plan users in Baltimore and report the number of users to BCDOT monthly. The graph in Figure 8 shows the number of active equity plan users and the total trips taken by equity plan users each month. In 2023, the number of equity plan users and the number of trips by equity plan users has continued to increase in Baltimore. The largest monthly increase in equity plan users was in July when BCDOT started circulating educational materials and the largest monthly increase in rides from equity plan users was in September when BCDOT held several registration events.

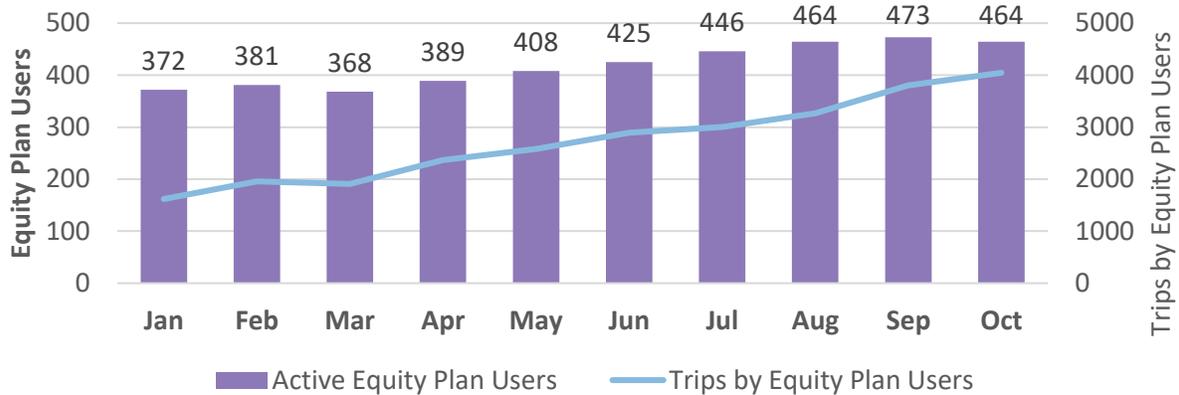


Figure 8. Equity Plan Users & Trips Taken by Equity Plan Users in 2023



Figure 9. Community members try Superpedestrian's adaptive vehicles. [Photos: Michael Kebede, BCDOT]

FREE RIDES FROM EQUITY ZONES

With this grant, BCDOT was able to pay for over 2,000 trips originating from Equity Zones. Riders who started their trip from an Equity Zone were able to take their e-scooter or e-bike trip free of charge up to \$8.¹ BCDOT distributed \$4,000 to Spin and Superpedestrian to implement the promotion. Figure 10 shows the consistent daily ridership from the program’s Equity Zones with the trips during the promotion highlighted. A higher percentage of trips from Equity Zones were taken by equity plan users (3%) compared to the percentage of citywide trips (1%) taken by equity plan users, and many of the rides were taken by first time micromobility users.

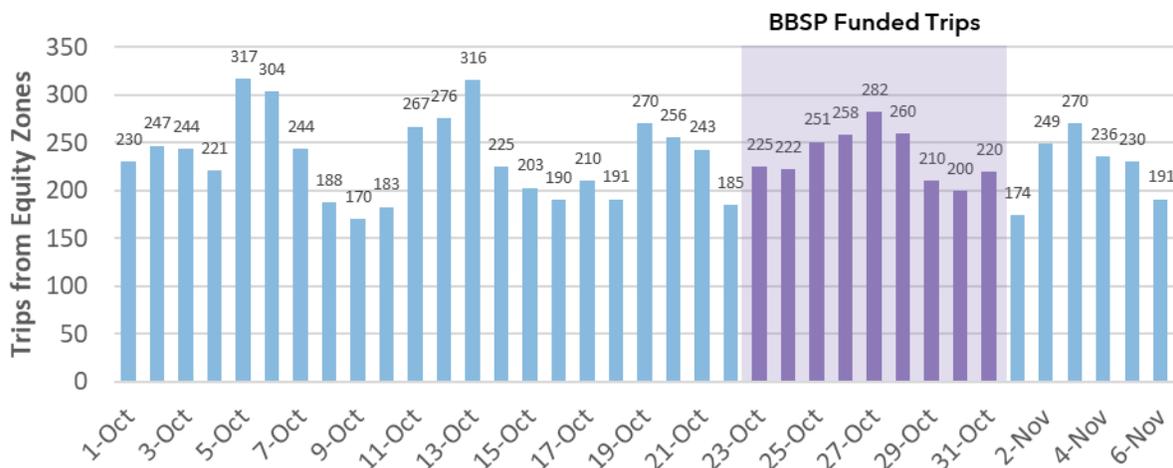


Figure 10. Trips from Equity Zones in October & November 2023

Both Superpedestrian and Spin included in-app messages to inform users about the promotion. Superpedestrian also included a [link](#) in their message so users could learn more about BCDOT’s equity initiatives and the webpage directed users to LINK-Up, Superpedestrian’s equity plan (Figure 11).

“Superpedestrian is enormously proud of the program we’ve built in Baltimore, and we’re grateful for the support from the Better Bike Share Partnership and the City of Baltimore in supporting ongoing efforts to expand access to micromobility to as many people as possible. Through their support, Superpedestrian was able to provide nearly 1,000 free trips to riders in equity neighborhoods - many of whom had not ridden previously. We’re excited to continue this work in 2024.” - Zach Williams, Superpedestrian

¹ \$8 is more than the average cost of an e-scooter trip in Baltimore. [NACTO](#) reports that e-scooter trips cost approximately \$6.50 and trips with income-eligible plans cost approximately \$3.40 during peak periods.

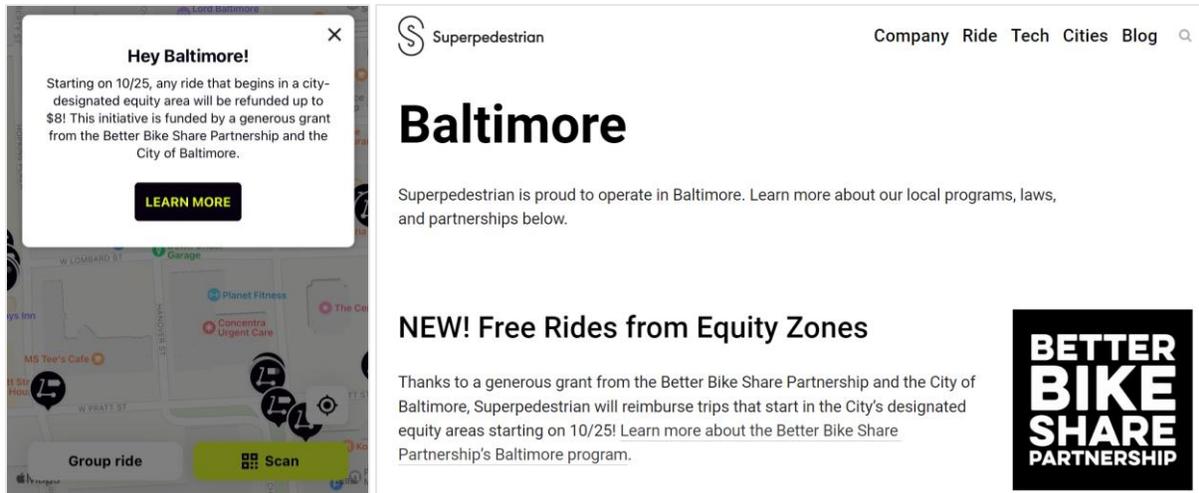


Figure 11. In-app message (left) and excerpt from Superpedestrian's webpage (right) promoting the free rides.

BIKE LANE CLEAN-UP EVENTS

BCDOT sponsored a bike lane clean-up event as part of the BBSP Mini Grant. The bike lane clean-up event served as an initial pilot for a series of additional bike lane cleaning projects BCDOT hopes to complete in the future. The purpose of the bike lane clean-up event was to clear bike lanes of trash and to encourage micromobility riders to use the bike lanes. E-scooter and e-bike riders must ride in-street if the speed limit is less than 35 miles per hour and are encouraged to ride in bike lanes when available.

The event was in partnership with Bikemore, the Reservoir Hill Improvement Council (RHIC), the Reservoir Hill Association (RHA), Friends of German Park, and the Greater Remington Improvement Association (GRIA) to clean The Big Jump. The [Big Jump](#) was initiated by community partners to create safe and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle connections between and within Reservoir Hill and Remington, two historic neighborhoods that are geographically separated by I-83.

In 2020, BCDOT released a [study](#) that showed impacts of The Big Jump on mobility on Druid Park Lake Drive. The impacts included:

- Fewer crashes,
- 10-15 times more usage compared to parallel routes for e-scooters,
- Delay of 36 seconds at worst for motor vehicles, and
- 87% of survey respondents wanted the Big Jump to be permanent.

The Big Jump clean-up event on November 18, 2023, was successful thanks to the 35 community members that participated. BCDOT gave participants a free micromobility ride pass for volunteering at the event. The ride passes were also funded by the grant and provided an additional \$500 in free micromobility rides to community members. Ride passes that were not distributed at the event will be distributed at future community events including Bike to Work Week and will continue to promote micromobility ridership throughout Baltimore into 2024.



Figure 12. Community members of all ages lend a helping hand. [Photo: Dorret Oosterhoff, Kittelson & Associates]



Figure 13. BCDOT team members (left) and community partners collected an entire dumpster of trash (right).
[Photo: Patrick Patterson, BCDOT (left); Michael Kebede, BCDOT (right)]

NEXT STEPS

Baltimore’s Dockless Vehicle Program is committed to increasing equitable transportation access for underserved communities and promoting efficient and sustainable transportation modes. The program will continue to use many of the strategies piloted during the BBSP Mini Grant including hosting registration events, distributing ride passes, and working with community partners to achieve the program goals.

BCDOT will continue to monitor the increase of equity plan users and rides by equity plan users to evaluate the effectiveness of the piloted strategies. The increase in equity plan users was small but consistent during this short-term grant. The increase in registrants is expected to continue as BCDOT continues to promote the equity plans and works to formalize an equity plan enrollment program.

MEDIA COVERAGE

BCDOT’s work with BBSP was featured by local outlets:

- [Maryland Daily Record](#) – Baltimore DOT receives \$21.5K grant for bicycle initiatives.
- [The Baltimore Banner](#) – Scooters are changing the way people get around Baltimore.
- [Superpedestrian](#) – Free Rides from Equity Zones!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Better Bike Share Partnership and PeopleforBikes for working with Baltimore’s Dockless Vehicle Program! BCDOT would also like to thank Bikemore, Spin, Superpedestrian, RHIC, RHA, Friends of German Park, and GRIA for making this work possible.

