

REPORT

DATE: June 16, 2022

TO: Governing Board Members & Alternates

FROM: Marisa Creter, Executive Director

RE: **GOSGV REGIONAL BIKESHARE PROGRAM UPDATE**

RECOMMENDED ACTION

For information only.

BACKGROUND

In August 2017, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) received \$4.554 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund-Active Transportation Program (GGRF-ATP) funds from the California Transportation Commission to launch a regional e-bike share program in the San Gabriel Valley. The program has faced challenges over the years, and SGVCOG worked with local organizations and community stakeholders to reimagine the program. This item is agendaized at this meeting as an informational item to provide the Governing Board with an update on the program status as program roll-out continues. A full presentation is currently scheduled on the Program is currently scheduled for the Governing Board meeting in August 2022.

FUNDING

In August 2017, the San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments (SGVCOG) received \$4.554 million in Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund-Active Transportation Program (GGRF-ATP) funds from the California Transportation Commission to launch a regional e-bike share program in the San Gabriel Valley. The program was to deploy 840 e-bikes in 15 participating jurisdictions, with at least 420 e-bikes serving disadvantaged communities (DACs). The program was to be a dockless program so that users could return the e-bikes to any existing bike rack of identified bike parking location. Eligible expenditures for the funding including infrastructure (e.g. e-bikes; stations) and program start-up costs. Operations could not be covered under the grant funding. The funding was to be expended by December 17, 2021.

COVID-RELATED CHALLENGES

In early 2019, the SGVCOG completed a competitive procurement process. At its February 2019 meeting, the Capital Projects and Construction Committee (CPCC) authorized the Chief Engineer to execute an Agreement with Gotcha Media Holdings, LLC to operate the program. Staff prepared to launch the program in March 2020, but unfortunately, this corresponded with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic upended the shared mobility industry, as people were told to stay-at-home and people were fearful of shared devices. Some programs shut down – either temporarily or permanently – and, while some programs experienced initial upticks in ridership, it did ultimately fall. Despite this, the SGVCOG was able to launch its initial programs

in the summer of 2020. However, like most bike share programs nationwide, ridership remained low, and it was difficult for operators to cover their true operational costs. Many programs halted operations. Gotcha was not immune to these challenges and, unfortunately, as reported to the CPCC, in January 2021, the SGVCOG was notified that Gotcha ended up dissolving its operations for all of its programs across the country – including the program in the San Gabriel Valley.

GOSGV 2.0

In spring 2021, SGVCOG staff convened discussions with regional stakeholders, including local non-profits and participating cities, to discuss how the program could be re-launched. While Gotcha's GoSGV program did end after approximately six months of program operation, SGVCOG staff was able to take this opportunity to re-imagine the program to serve the San Gabriel Valley even more effectively. The work completed – including the station siting and the community engagement done in coordination with ActiveSGV as part of the program roll-out – provided a strong foundation and valuable tools to reconsider the Program.

SGVCOG staff determined that a better approach to e-bike share in the San Gabriel Valley was to focus on longer-term bike “check-outs,” at station locations that were primarily located off of the public right-of-way. The intent was for local businesses and community partners to serve as the station locations where users could check-out e-bikes. The additional program intent was to specifically target those users who would be the most likely to use an e-bike to replace existing drive-alone trips, thus maximizing the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) reduction of the program. These targeted users included students at colleges and universities, employees at large businesses and campus environments (including business parks), and other community members who may be inclined to try an e-bike for active transportation but may not have the money to purchase it. E-bikes typically cost several thousand dollars, and there can be many other additional barriers – including technical expertise – to initial access. For a monthly cost, users would be able to “check-out” an e-bike for an extended period of time and, during that time, have exclusive access to that e-bike as their own. This program design would not only maximize the VMT impact of the program but also minimize the staffing costs associated with operating the program, as bike rebalancing would be a much smaller component of the Program.

GOSGV PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

E-Bikes

In September 2021, staff released a request for quotes (RFQ) for the purchase of 840 e-bikes, including traditional e-bikes and cargo e-bikes. At its October 2021 meeting, the CPCC authorized the Executive Director to execute purchase orders (POs) for the purchase of e-bikes with the selected vendors.

- B-Cycle: purchase of 828 e-bikes;
- Pedal Movement, LLC: purchase of 12 cargo e-bikes.

SGVCOG staff executed these POs in late 2021, and the e-bikes and cargo e-bikes were made available to the SGVCOG. The success in being able to purchase bikes and have them delivered within the grant funding timelines is particularly notable because there continues to be worldwide shortages of e-bikes and massive supply-chain issues.



BCycle: 3-speed Shimano



Pedal Movement:
Urban Arrow Family Cargo
Bike

Program Operator

To support program operations, in October 2021, the SGVCOG released a request for proposals (RFP) to select an operator for this modified program. The RFP established the following general scope of work for the operator:

- Manage/administer program that provides longer-term check-out periods for users, including processes, procedures, practices, and schedules for e-bike deployment, customer usage/check-out, customer service, pricing, marketing, and data management to support program viability;
- Manage receipt and inventory of up to 840 e-bikes;
- Provide ongoing, regular maintenance and repair to ensure the e-bikes are in safe and good working condition;
- Provide intuitive, user-friendly, and accessible reservation and registration processes for users;
- Provide customizable user-fee structure that ensures system sustainability;
- Coordinate with SGVCOG and e-bike vendor to accept and manage customer payments;
- Incorporate strategies to minimize e-bike loss that could occur through the non-return of e-bikes, theft, or other mechanisms;
- Incorporate partnerships with local entities (e.g. nonprofits, colleges/universities, local businesses) to support program roll-out and implementation;
- Deploy at least 50% of e-bikes to serve disadvantaged communities;
- Be financially self-sustaining through rider fees, sponsorships, and/or other private funding mechanisms.

The grant does not fund operations; thus, the operator would not receive any funding from the SGVCOG to operate this program. The program was to be entirely self-sustaining through rider fees and sponsorships, although the SGVCOG would also actively look for other additional funding sources – including grants and sponsorships – that could support the operation of the program in the future.

Upon technical review of the proposals, the TEC recommended ActiveSGV – a local non-profit that supports the expansion of bike ridership and other forms of active transportation in the San Gabriel Valley – as the program operator.

GOSGV LAUNCH

Over the past several months, SGVCOG has been working with ActiveSGV to structure the transformed GoSGV bike share program. As discussed above, San Gabriel Valley residents can check out an e-bike for monthly use. For the duration of their check-out period, the participant will have exclusive use of that e-bike as their own for their daily use. Participants can sign up for the program and pick-up an e-bike from various program partners across the region – rather than on the public right-of-way – or, for an additional cost, have the e-bike delivered to their home. ActiveSGV is working with local bike shops, who will provide maintenance for the e-bikes. The SGVCOG and ActiveSGV are also working with several colleges to implement more locally-based programs on their campuses. The program is also looking to incorporate other program partners – including cities, nonprofit organizations, and businesses – that may benefit from program participation. Governing Board members who have recommendations for potential partners that might be interested in program participation are encouraged to reach-out to SGVCOG staff.

The new GoSGV program is intended to re-launch for a beta roll-out in late June or early July 2022, with a public roll-out later in the summer.

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Prepared by: 
Brianne Logasa
Management Analyst

Approved by: 
Marisa Creter
Executive Director