



OVERVIEW

For people with disabilities and older adults, limited mobility can mean limited independence and fewer opportunities to engage in physical and social activities. Older adults and people with disabilities often make fewer trips than they would like to because they lack adequate transportation ¹. Adaptive bike share has the potential to make cycling a real option for them. Bike share systems are exploring the right way to include accessible options but are challenged by cost, resources, bicycle types, program implementation and infrastructure.

CURRENT APPROACHES

Adaptive cycles (e.g. trikes, hand cycles and recumbents) provide options for people who are not physically able or comfortable riding a standard bicycle or need assistance in the form of riding with another person (e.g. tandem). Adaptive bike share programs generally function in two forms:

Bike/trike “library,” where the user would pick-up and return their adaptive cycles at a specific location, such as a recreation center or rental store. The benefit of this model is that staff can be available to assist the user in selecting and fitting the right cycle option, as well as providing storage for the user’s belongings, such as mobility devices. Portland’s BIKETOWN and Detroit’s MoGo program both provide adaptive bike rental services for people with varying levels of ability, offering a mix of adaptive options. Both programs are based around the model of providing a fleet of adaptive bikes for rent on an hourly basis, with rentals occurring at a single location next to popular trails. These programs work with local organizations to run and manage the program.

One system noted that the goal of the program was “to provide a range of options that were suitable for seniors as they made their way from not having bicycled in years and having balance issues to bicycling again on a regular two-wheeler bike.” Another noted “we’ll have trikes on hand for those that are not yet comfortable with balance.”

Integrate the bikes into the existing point-to-point docked or dockless system. The benefit of this form is that it more closely resembles the transportation benefits of existing bike share. In 2019, Bublr Bikes in Milwaukee, WI integrated 22 adaptive bicycles, mostly trikes, into their system that can be locked at standard Bublr stations. This integrated system allows users to use the standard system and pricing to check out bikes.



(Photo Credit: MoGo Detroit) MoGo provides a range of adaptive bike share options in Detroit.

