

# Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot Report

## *Program Evaluation and Next Steps*



*Photo from Session 2 of the 2025 Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot Smart Cycling Class*

# Introduction

Several City-adopted plans direct the City of Evanston to support bicycle transportation.

The [Climate Action and Resilience Plan](#), for example, directs the City to reduce vehicle [car] miles traveled and “increase trips made by walking, bicycling, and transit”. The [Comprehensive Plan](#) guides the City to create a cycling network “to support safe, convenient, everyday local and regional travel by bike for people of all ages and abilities.” Overall, whether to “promote street-level vitality” as per the [Evanston Thrives Retail District Action Plan](#) or to “facilitate active transportation” as per the City’s Health and Human Services [EPLAN](#); increased uptake of bicycle transportation bolsters diverse City of Evanston goals.

Moreover, Evanston’s policy calls for initiatives that support access to bicycle transport. Evanston’s [Environmental Justice Resolution](#) and Environmental Equity Investigation, for example, call on the City to “support the delivery of an equitable share of environmental benefits” and “equal access to the City’s environmental and infrastructure investments that support health, well-being, and a sense of community.” Evanston’s [Comprehensive Plan](#) calls for programs that make cycling “accessible”.

This report outlines the Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot, a bicycle access program run by the City of Evanston between the Fall of 2024 and the summer of 2025. In addition to providing insight into the program’s structure and logistics, this report illustrates key takeaways from the end- of-program participant survey and discusses recommendations for future program iterations.

The Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot, which was largely funded by the Northwestern Good Neighbor Fund, aimed to make bicycle transportation more accessible to Evanston residents. The program provided 65 income-qualified Evanston residents with vouchers to purchase bicycles, helmets, locks, lights, and service at six local bike shops. Additionally, the program provided free cycling and traffic safety education courses and support with bicycle riding and purchasing questions.

As the City, County, State, and Federal governments invest in bicycle transportation, Evanston as a whole benefits when the full Evanston community can participate in this environmentally sustainable, active, and socially *interactive* transportation mode.

# Acknowledgements

**We are grateful for the contribution of many community members and City staff to this program, including:**

Evanston community members and stakeholders who attended the public July 2024 stakeholder meeting and who provided comments via phone, email, and in-person at outreach events. As well as City of Evanston staff from a wide range of departments and divisions, and staff from previous programs from across the region and the United States,

## **Our partner bike shops:**

- Bucephalus Bikes, formerly at 1424 Lake St.
- Mack's Bike & Goods, 2948 Central St.
- Play It Again Sports, 1908 Dempster St.
- The Pony Shop, 1224 Chicago Ave.
- The Recyclery Collective, 7628 N. Paulina St.
- Wheel & Sprocket, 1027 Davis St.



*( Mack's Bike & Goods, Credit: Mack's)*

## **And our primary program and report staff:**

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# Program Description



(Smart Cycling Session #2: Learning left-hand turn signals)

## Introduction

In September 2024, the City of Evanston launched the Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot (BAVP) to expand access to sustainable transportation options.

The program connected 65 Evanston community members with vouchers to purchase bicycles, e-bicycles, or adaptive bicycles and helmets, locks, lights, and service from six Evanston-area partner bike shops.

## Conception and Background

The concept for a City of Evanston bicycle voucher program was formally proposed during a participatory budgeting process facilitated by the City of Evanston between September 2022 and October 2023. The voucher program received 20%, or 1,321, of the votes that determined which projects would be funded. As the project was not one of the top-voted proposals, it did not become a funded program at that time.

The following year, on May 28, 2024, Evanston City Council adopted Resolution [33-R-24](#), allocating \$75,000 of the \$500,000 Northwestern Good Neighbor Fund for Community Electrification Initiatives, to bike and e-bike incentives.

*“Very Grateful. I had challenges commuting to school, so it was really amazing to get the bike, especially at the time that I did.” -Participant*

# Program Development

Transportation and Mobility and Sustainability and Resilience staff began working on the BAVP program shortly after Evanston City Council adopted the Community Electrification resolution. Knowing that a warm-season launch was important for a bicycle program, staff opted to launch the program before the end of Fall 2024 rather than waiting until Spring of 2025. This provided a tight development window of about three months.

## Key Program Development Inputs

Quick development turnaround: three months



Reviews of program precedents



Interviews with City and precedent program practitioners



Public stakeholder meeting, shop meeting, outreach, and online form



Shop-partner meetings and shop pricing survey

To gather community input during the program development period, Transportation and Mobility staff promoted an online feedback form through in-person event tabling, paper flyers at community centers and points of interest around town, outreach to organizational partners, and a public bilingual stakeholder meeting at Robert Crown Community Center. The stakeholder event included dinner catered by a local Evanston restaurant and was attended by 36 community members in addition to relevant staff.

The stakeholder meeting highlighted a number of key considerations. For example, community members emphasized the importance of involving high-school-aged participants in the program in recognition that many youth face transportation barriers in accessing school. In addition, some community members felt it was inequitable to require participation in cycling safety workshops when those able to purchase bicycles independently are not required to do so. Furthermore, participants highlighted the importance of supporting access to bicycle maintenance services and



*Pilot program application flyer in Spanish.*

expressed a need for family-oriented programming in recognition that family members travel together.

Feedback was incorporated into the program structure through a lens of equity and applicability to the small pilot. The pilot was designed to include high school students, support access to bicycle maintenance, and offer, though did not require, cycling education classes. To minimize the complexity of the program, staff designed the pilot to focus on independently-traveling adults and high-school-aged youth. Though the pilot did not offer a family-oriented voucher, participants were encouraged to bring guests over 14 to the cycling education courses, and a few participants applied for, and received, cargo e-bicycles designed for carrying young children.

## Program Launch

### Application and Promotion

The Pilot Program application was opened to the public on September 5th, 2024, and was available in Spanish and English through the City of Evanston website until September 23, 2024. Application promotion included a phone number applicants could call to receive Spanish or English in-person or over-the-phone application support from City staff.

The application was promoted through direct emails to community and agency partners, public channels including a press release, City newsletters, printed posters at City of Evanston community centers and around town, and flyering and word of mouth promotion by community partners.

### Eligibility

Evanston residents over the age of 14 with a household income at or below 80% of the area median income, as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) (see figure below), were invited to apply.



The City is offering income-qualified residents FREE vouchers to purchase bicycles, e-bikes, or adaptive bicycles, as well as essential accessories, safety equipment, and maintenance from participating local bike shops.

**Program Highlights:**

- \$750 voucher for standard bikes, accessories, and maintenance
- Up to \$4,000 voucher for adaptive bikes or e-bikes, accessories, and maintenance
- Traffic safety training, community rides, and bike maintenance classes.

**Eligibility:**

- Must be an Evanston resident at least 14 years old
- Income must be below 80% of the Area Median Income



\*Voucher amounts determined based on individual needs. Vouchers will be distributed to eligible applicants through a lottery system until all funds have been allocated.



*Pilot Program application flyer.*

*“Having a bicycle has had a great impact on my life. It has given me the freedom to move around the city easily and explore different areas that I couldn't visit before. I love being able to go out whenever I want without having to rely on anyone for transportation.” -Participant*

**80% Area Median Income Thresholds as Defined by HUD**

Household Size		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Area Median Income Limits 2024 (Via: Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL HUD Metro FMR Area)	80%	\$62,800	\$71,800	\$80,750	\$89,700	\$96,900	\$104,100	\$111,250	\$118,450

**Note:** Median income thresholds for the program were based on standards from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and are used by other similar income-qualified programs, including Chicago’s Bike Chicago program.

Applicants demonstrated income qualifications through providing tax information or documentation of participation in several other income-qualified programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/Link), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Social Security Disability Income (SSDI), Medicaid, Section 8, Evanston General Assistance Income program, and others.

The application included a supplemental and optional E-Bike and Adaptive Bike Voucher (EABV) Application wherein applicants could provide information on a “*transportation need that could not be met by a standard bicycle,*” such as a mobility-related disability.

## Voucher Valuation

Voucher values were set according to a formal survey of pricing available at partner shops. The voucher amount was expected to fully cover the cost of the needed bicycle, a helmet, a secure lock, front and rear bicycle lights, and a tune-up or other required bicycle maintenance services.

Survey questions included “What is the price, before tax, of the most affordable NEW single-speed bicycle that you carry or plan to carry?” “If you sell refurbished bicycles, what is the price range of your refurbished bicycles?” and “What is the price, before tax, of the most affordable helmet that you sell?”

Voucher values were set based on the prices available to enable participants to feasibly make purchases at a range of participating shops. Below is the itemized sum of costs for a standard bicycle voucher based on the survey results.

Standard Bicycle Voucher Breakdown		
Item	Cost	Comments
Bicycle	\$400.00	Covered a refurbished multi-speed bike or a new single-speed bike at all shops
Helmet	\$70.00	Four of six shops' most affordable helmets were between \$65-\$70
Bike Lock	\$55.00	Mid-high average. Expected to cover a U-lock (not a cable lock)
Bike Lights	\$45.00	Expected to cover front and rear lights
Service	\$100	Expected to cover a variety of services, such as flat fixes, though did not cover a full multi-speed tune-up at 4/6 partner shops
ITEMIZED TOTAL	\$670.00	Sum of previous rows
Sales tax	\$58.43	Sales tax of <a href="#">10.25% in Evanston/Chicago</a> calculated on the itemized total
GRAND TOTAL	\$728.43	Itemized total plus sales tax
<b>VOUCHER VALUE</b>	<b>\$750.00</b>	Rounded up slightly to account for the difference between the allocated amount and higher available price points at some shops. Higher value e-bike and adaptive bike vouchers were not rounded in this manner.

*Voucher valuation for the standard bicycle*

## Program Logistics

### Participant Selection

The 65 program participants were selected through a random electronic draw from 315 individual applicants. The City received over 360 total applications, in English and Spanish, before screening for duplicates. To eliminate the need to review all applications, applications were reviewed for eligibility upon selection and were removed and replaced with the next eligible drawn candidate if they did not meet program criteria.

### Voucher Dissemination and the Bicycle Shopping Period

Vouchers were disseminated on October 8th, 2024, and participants were asked to purchase their bicycles, helmets, locks, and lights during a program “shopping period” that ended on November 10,

2024, to encourage purchase before the winter. The bicycle shopping period was a program deadline, rather than enforced through card expiry, as vouchers were functional for bicycle service until June 10, 2025. Most participants purchased their bicycles during the shopping period, though some requested more time to purchase their bicycles or simply ended up purchasing their bicycles later.

Transportation and Mobility staff disseminated the vouchers via email through a third-party vendor named Yiftee. Through a set-up process via the point of sale at the six participating bike shops, the Yiftee voucher card was only functional at partner shops and not other stores.



*Digital Voucher card*

Applicants were also given the option to pick up a printed version of their voucher at City offices.

Of the **65** participants :

- **55** received **\$750** standard bike vouchers
- **10** received ebike/adaptive bike vouchers ranging from **\$1,950-\$4,000**, including an electric tricycle, recumbent bike, e-cargo bikes, and standard e-bikes.

## Workshops Offerings

Participants were invited to attend free cycling safety and skill workshops and partner-led bike rides via the regular program newsletter. Participants were also encouraged to participate in the 2024 workshops via phone calls.

Participants were welcome to bring a family member or guest to the workshops, and loaner bicycles were available for their use during the classes.

In Fall 2024, the City hosted two Smart Cycling courses that were only open to program participants. In the summer and fall of 2025, the City hosted a six-course Summer Cycling Education Series in partnership with Evanston Public Library, including an introduction to bicycle maintenance, which was promoted and open to voucher participants and the broader community.

The cycling safety courses covered foundational cycling skills, including bike handling, turn signaling, route planning, and lane positioning, and included parking lot and on-road components.

The program team also participated in and promoted free public bicycle rides offered by the Evanston Transit Alliance and Downtown Evanston through the program newsletter.

## Data Collection

Data was collected from participants through an end-of-program survey. The survey was shared via email on several occasions, and outreach via phone from program staff. Survey results are summarized below.

*“[This program] made me an almost daily biker. Going to my workplace, which is ideally situated for bikes, is the best. I also was not active in the past, so it is great now to use the bike for health reasons. I guess you could say it has definitely improved my health. I have no car, so life is now very easy and convenient because I don't have to take public transportation.”*  
-Participant

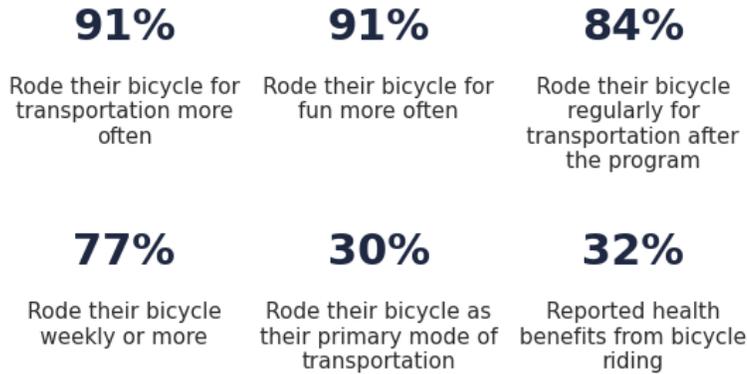
## Findings - Data

The following indicators summarize key outcomes reported by participants in the Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot. These results reflect findings from 44 completed post-program surveys.

Overall, the survey responses indicate increased bicycle use for both transportation and recreation, as well as participant health benefits. Notably, in addition to participants reporting increases in transportation bicycle use, approximately one-third of participants reported using their bicycle as a primary means of transportation after the program.

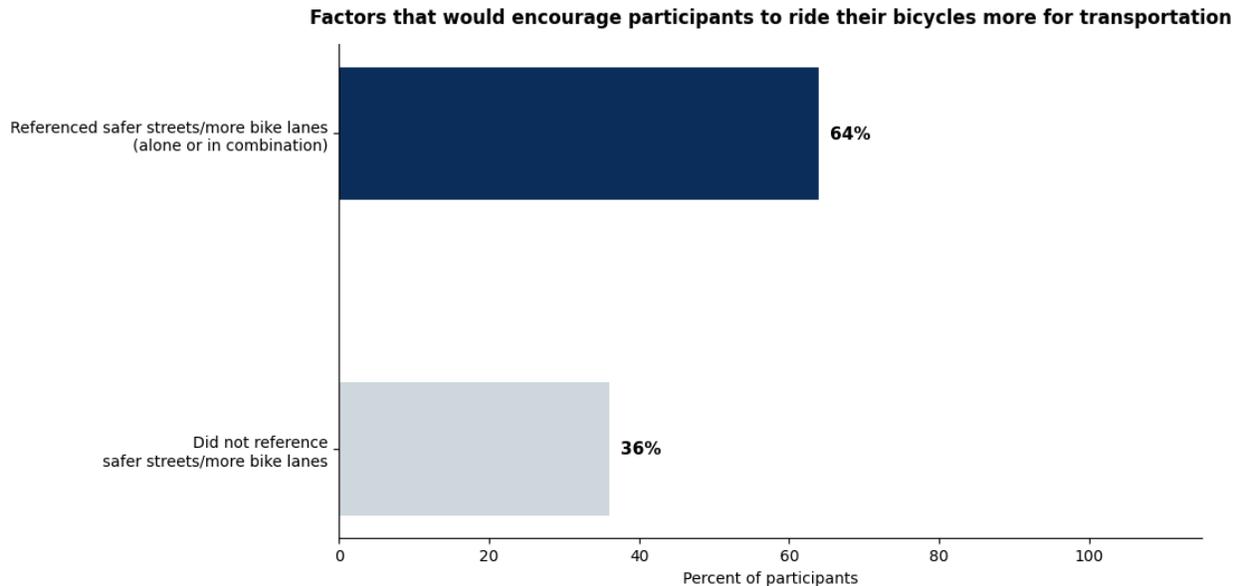
*“I didn't realize how much went into biking, like the safety rules, I at least now feel comfortable on streets.”* -Participant

## Key Outcomes Reported by BAVP Participants at the End of the Program, 2025



## What Would Encourage More Bicycle Transportation?

Participants were asked what factors would further encourage them to use a bicycle “more for transportation”. Participant responses, summarized below, provide insight into improvements that could increase rates of transportation bicycle adoption in Evanston, such as more on-street bicycle facilities.



Note: Safety responses include participants who selected safer streets alone or in combination with other options. Other responses reflect interest in additional classes, bike-carry features, personal input, or no increased interest.

**Factors that would encourage participants to ride their bicycles more for transportation**

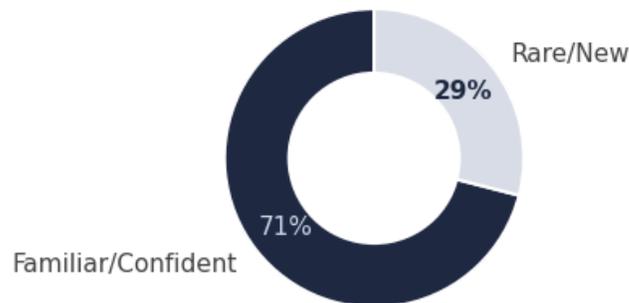
<b>Response summary</b>	<b>Percent of participants</b>
Solely safer streets / more bike lanes	<b>27%</b>
Safer streets / more bike lanes combined with either desire for easier carry options for belongings and/or more classes on riding and bike safety	<b>23%</b>
Safer streets / more bike lanes combined with specified personal factors (weather, equipment, circumstances)	<b>14%</b>
Easy carry options for belongings	<b>7%</b>
Already use bike for transportation	<b>7%</b>
Other specified factors (weather, equipment, circumstances)	<b>16%</b>
Nothing would increase interest	<b>5%</b>
More classes combined with other factors	<b>2%</b>

Overall, 64% referenced safer streets/ more bike lanes, either as a standalone factor or in combination with other needs

## Reaching New Riders

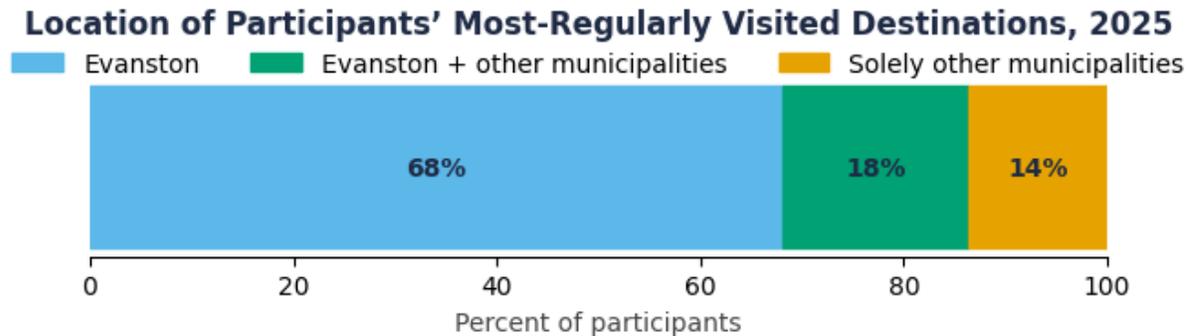
In addition to increased use among existing riders, the program also reached individuals with limited prior transportation cycling experience. The following figure illustrates the share of participants who identified as new or infrequent cyclists before receiving a bicycle.

### Transportation Cycling Experience Level of Participants Prior to BAVP, 2024-2025



## Where Participants Travel Most Often

Finally, participant responses offer insight into destinations of Evanston-based bicycle trips. This illustrates how the program supports local travel within Evanston and the surrounding communities. Moreover, this sample demonstrates that many in the Evanston community stay relatively close to home for many trips. These local trips provide accessible opportunities to use active transportation modes.



Other municipalities mentioned include Chicago, Skokie, Wilmette Lincolnwood, and Oak Brook.

*“The program made it much easier for me to stay active and choose sustainable transportation. It's great to see the City supporting residents who want to reduce their carbon footprint and explore Evanston by bike”.*  
*-Participant*

## Media Summary

The Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot Program received positive local coverage that predominantly emphasized the announcement and logistics of the program.

As a foundation, the City of Evanston disseminated informational flyers, a dedicated website section, a program overview, and various social media posts explaining the program.

Local media outlets played a vital role in promoting the program. For example, the Evanston RoundTable published multiple pieces detailing the program's logistics, funding, and launch, further broadening public awareness and public understanding about the program. One program participant who received in-person support filling out their application specifically mentioned learning about the initiative through an announcer on an AM radio broadcast.

## Article Coverage (Outside sources)

- [City to launch bicycle, e-bike giveaway Thursday - Evanston RoundTable](#)
- [Applications open for city's new Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot Program - Evanston RoundTable](#)
  - [Newsbreak Repost](#)
- [Evanston to launch bicycle voucher pilot by September - Evanston RoundTable](#)
- [Applications Open For \\$75,000 In Vouchers To Buy Bikes In Evanston | Evanston, IL Patch](#)
- [E-Town Sunrise Instagram Post](#)
- [Transportation priorities: bike vouchers, sidewalk improvements - Evanston RoundTable](#)
  - [Evanston to launch bicycle voucher pilot by September - NewsBreak](#)

## City of Evanston

- [Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot Program News City of Evanston Website](#)
- [Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot | City of Evanston Website](#)
- [Press Release: City Launches Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot Program to Promote Sustainable Transportation](#)
- [Bicycle Access Voucher Flyer\\_Final](#)
- [Video Explanation of Program by City on Internet Archive](#)

## Notable External Social Media Posts

- [Central Street Evanston reposted Patch article | Facebook](#)
- [Active Transportation Alliance Facebook Post](#)
- [E-Town Sunrise Instagram Post](#)
- [A Facebook post made by the City of Evanston in late July 2024, inviting residents for input on the program](#)
- [Facebook Post Made by City of Evanston, inviting people to apply for the program](#)

# Next Steps

## Recommendations and considerations for future program iterations

Beyond connecting 65 Evanston residents to bicycle transportation, the BAVP program enabled Transportation and Mobility staff to troubleshoot a variety of inter-departmental and inter-organizational logistics, formalize partnerships with Evanston’s local bike shops, and set a baseline structure and approach for future bicycle access programs.

Below are recommendations for future iterations of a voucher program based on what staff learned from putting together Evanston’s first bicycle voucher program:

### Overall

#### **1. Be realistic about timeframes and enable sufficient time for all program components—don’t force a rushed timeline.**

This program was developed in approximately 3 months, while the responsible staff continued managing additional projects and responsibilities. Spreading future programs out over longer time horizons will reduce stress on staff and enable more time for each program component.

#### **2. Bring participants and City staff together at the outset of the program**

Bringing participants together, in person, from the program’s outset, would cultivate a more cohesive program cohort culture, support deeper relationships between participants and relevant staff, and likely encourage more accountability and responsiveness to survey requests from program participants.

As vouchers were disseminated electronically via email, participants who did not participate in the public program development stakeholder meeting, optional cycling education courses, or partner-led bike rides never interacted in-person with one another or relevant City staff running the program.

Moreover, an in-person orientation would provide an opportunity for staff to explain program logistics, teach foundational bike safety skills, explain bike-buying basics, and provide a printed copy of the voucher and bulk-ordered accessories.

### **3. Consider formalizing program partnerships with direct service providers and/or schools to enable a participant referral process**

Formalizing a direct-referral process could allow partner organizations to connect community members who they know need transportation and are interested in bicycle transportation, directly to the program. This could also build stronger relationships with our organizational partners.

### **4. Screen for interest; focus on participants who are genuinely interested in daily bicycle transportation**

In instances like this program, where interest in participation exceeds program capacity, we recommend structuring the program to prioritize those with a genuine interest in the promoted transportation mode. For example, requiring participation in a cycling safety course as a prerequisite for applying could enable the program to more effectively connect with those who are genuinely interested in transportation cycling. Requiring participation in an education program would also support the dissemination of safe and skillful cycling in the community.

As communicated explicitly by some participants through the program survey and implicitly through the delayed redemption of program vouchers, some program participants may have been excited to receive a free bicycle, though they were not particularly interested in making use of it for transportation in the near-term. One participant, despite numerous reminder calls, never redeemed their voucher.

As mentioned in the program development section, the first iteration of the program strongly encouraged, though did not require, participation in safe cycling classes. This choice was made to honor stakeholder feedback that classes are not required for those with funds to purchase their bicycles independently.

### **5. Cultivate Storytelling component**

With participant consent, we recommend recording and sharing participant journeys as a way of encouraging more riding in the community overall.

## **6. Film or document the applicant drawing process, while maintaining participant privacy**

Publicizing the applicant draw process could build excitement for the program and ensure participants know that the process is fair. Even though this may simply look like filming and sharing a video of a random simulator on a computer screen, community members might appreciate the transparency of the process. At least one community member expressed interest in better understanding how draw numbers and successful participants were selected.

## **7. Streamline the application and remove any need for staff interpretation during the application review process**

This can include clear-cut checkboxes for the type of bicycle needed (i.e., “ a recumbent bicycle”), a check box to denote whether the person applying is a parent applying for themselves or their 14-18 year old child, and more. There should be a clear-cut entry area for every piece of information on the application to reduce the burden of interpretation and phone and email follow-up on staff. Ensure applicants receive an automatic submittal-confirmation email to reduce the likelihood of duplicate applications.

## **8. Consider allowing multiple family members to apply on the same application as one unit**

A family-application can support everyday riding, as many families travel together as a unit. The desire for a family-oriented program was expressed at the 2024 public stakeholder meeting.

## **9. When feasible, consider enabling participants to select phone as their preferred program communication mode rather than defaulting to email communication**

This would better include participation from community members who do not use email.

## **10. Incentivize mandatory data collection; consider disseminating service funds after the first and second rounds of data collection are completed**

Disseminating voucher funds for supplementary service *after* participants have completed an initial or mid-program survey would incentivize data collection early in the program. Budgeting for an end-of-program gift card to support end-of-program data collection, which the program supplied through \$10 [Evanston Gift Cards](#), was effective in encouraging program feedback.

Despite all participants committing to participate in data collection on the program application, gathering end-of-program feedback required numerous emails and telephone call follow-ups from program staff members.

### **11. Consider dispensing with requiring special qualifications for e-bikes or not including e-bikes**

The council resolution creating the program directed staff to incorporate e-bikes and classic bikes. As fully funding e-bikes required a much larger percentage of the program budget per-bike, staff created the optional supplementary application where applicants could specify a specific need for an e-bike “that could not be met by a standard bicycle.”

As e-bikes are available through the Divvy system, program funds are finite, requiring a unique need for an e-bike to be subjective, and there are many valid reasons to use an e-bike for transportation; it may be valuable not to mandate a unique need to apply for e-bikes or to focus on classic pedal bikes only.

### **12. Confirm that the voucher vendor can handle the needed values**

Shortly before the program launched, as the program team geared up to fill digital vouchers, the City’s digital voucher vendor, Yiftee, alerted the City that voucher values exceeded their limits. Staff had incorrectly understood that Yiftee could cover voucher values of any price, and Yiftee had incorrectly assumed lower voucher values.

Yiftee agreed to supply the standard \$750 vouchers, a departure from their usual protocols. The 10 e-bike and adaptive bike purchases required shops to directly invoice the City and wait a number of weeks to receive payment. Neither the shops nor City staff were excited about this extra work and delayed payment.

### **13. Solidify language/ Spanish access processes and standards**

Formally designate a key staff point person to support participants in all relevant program languages and ensure sufficient extra time and budget for program material translations and interpreters.

### **14. Consider setting voucher values according to the thriftiest prices available**

Program voucher values were based on surveys of prices available at Evanston’s 6 local bike shop partners.

Moving forward, we recommend setting voucher values closer to the most affordable options available and conveying this approach directly to all partners.

In alignment with this strategy, we also recommend coordinating directly with the shop with the most affordable pricing to ensure they have the capacity to serve the largest influx of patrons.

This strategy will enable the program to reach a larger number of participants while still enabling participants to supplement voucher values with their own funds.

### **15. Use a lower income threshold for receiving a fully paid bicycle**

We recommend a lower income threshold in order to qualify for a voucher intended to cover 100% of bicycle, accessory, and service costs. This will enable the program to more effectively meet the needs of those who face genuine barriers to bicycle purchase.

Through communications with many program participants, we learned that, though all participants were highly grateful for the support, financial barriers were not truly a barrier to bicycle purchase for numerous participants, some of whom communicated over the course of the program that they already owned bicycles.

### **16. Consider an all-incomes program with different values for different incomes**

The program could consider staggered voucher levels, based on income, and could encourage ridership amongst all groups.

### **17. Consider providing a lower percentage subsidy for e-bikes and e-cargo bikes**

As a standard bicycle can provide a baseline of transportation access in a small community with many resources close at hand, such as Evanston, opting for a more expensive transportation option could require a higher level of investment from the participant. Future programs can balance this with recognition that electric bicycles and e-cargo bicycles, like standard bicycles, can function as useful car-replacements, in alignment with City goals.

### **18. Consider dedicated staff support for programming**

The City team was fortunate to have the support of an extra set of hands for BAVP development in our Sustainability and Resilience Summer Fellow, who conducted precedent-program research and contributed to programmatic foundations, and our Run on Climate policy interns, who supported with data collection and interpretation and the drafting of this report. Their support was invaluable.

## Rolling into the Future

The Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot was a unique instance of a community-originated idea becoming a funded city program.

As outlined below, moving forward, a baseline of bicycle access programming will now be provided by the Divvy for Everyone program on a soon-to-be improved and expanded Evanston Divvy bike share network.

Future access programs can work to supplement the Divvy for Everyone program by providing support to community members who are a) not able to participate in the Divvy system as they are under 16 or are seeking a type of bicycle or transit service not offered by Divvy b)a family member or guardian of someone in the aforementioned group or c)able to commit to a cohort program centered around building more in- depth cycling safety or transit skills and playing a leadership role in the proliferation of cycling or sustainable transportation culture in the Evanston community.

Below, we discuss two City-led bicycle access programs in progress, as of the writing of this report:

### **District 65 Cycling Education Pilot**

In the fall of 2025, a few months after the closing of the BAVP program, the City of Evanston and School District 65 (D65) jointly wrote a \$100,000 grant application to fund an in-school bike safety education pilot program for 200 fifth graders with an associated bicycle access program for students who receive Free and Reduced Lunch benefits.

If the grant is awarded, the pilot will take place in the 2026-2027 school year. The program would put many of the learnings addressed above into action. The program would teach participating students how to safely and confidently interact with the road network and use sustainable, active transportation modes as part of their daily lives. Upon completing the program, eligible families would be able to sign up their participating students for a bicycle voucher program.

### **Divvy for Everyone**

Gearing into the 2026 warm season, the City of Evanston will be working with partners at Lyft, the Divvy system operator, to better promote the Divvy for Everyone program to the Evanston community so that more eligible Evanston residents leverage the system.

The Divvy for Everyone program provides a one-time \$5 Annual Membership to income-qualifying residents. This is a significant discount from the regular \$143 annual membership cost. Residents

qualify for Divvy for Everyone if they are receiving SNAP, WIC, LIHEAP, or public housing assistance and have incomes at or below 300% of the Federal Poverty Level.

In Spring of 2026, Evanston's Divvy bike share system will increase from 14 to up to 31 docking stations, the biggest Divvy expansion in Evanston since Divvy's launch in 2016. The densification of the Divvy system in Evanston is significant, as its increased geographic availability will make it a significantly more useful travel option for more residents.

With approximately 240 Divvy vehicles available in Evanston at any given time, and no cap on the number of potential Divvy for Everyone participants in Evanston, this provides an exciting opportunity to support sustainable transportation access in Evanston.

The discounted membership includes unlimited 45-minute rides on Divvy classic bicycles, \$.05/minute rides on Divvy e-bikes (compared to the regular member price of \$.19/minute and non-member price of \$.44/minute), \$.10 minute rides on scooters (compared to the regular member price of \$.31/minute and non-member price of \$.44/minute), and no unlock fees on any vehicle types (compared to \$1.00 for non-members).

## Summary

The Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot provided a meaningful foundation for future City of Evanston transportation programs and supported transportation access for 65 individuals. Whether through vouchers or other means, or whether promoting bicycle, transit, or other modes of transportation aligned with City goals, future Evanston transportation programs will benefit from the 2024-2025 Bicycle Access Voucher Pilot.

Overall, BAVP was a triple win; while promoting climate goals through encouraging bicycle transportation, the program also supported equity goals by broadening transportation access and local businesses through partnerships with local bike shops. Future transportation programs will aim toward similar success.