



**AGENDA**  
**ENERGY & GREEN ISSUES STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Goleta City Hall  
130 Cremona Drive, Suite B  
Goleta, California**

**Thursday, September 26, 2024  
1:00 – 2:30 PM  
Conference Room # 1**

Luz Reyes-Martín, Mayor Pro Tempore  
Kyle Richards, Councilmember  
Robert Nisbet, City Manager  
Peter Imhof, Planning and Environmental Review Director  
Dana Murray, Sustainability Manager  
Angeline Foshay, Management Analyst

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**OPTIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION WILL BE IN PERSON OR ONLINE VIA  
ZOOM**

If you wish to make a general public comment or to comment on a specific agenda item, the following methods are available:

**Distribution to the Energy & Green Issues Standing Committee** - Submit your comment via email up to Thursday, September 26 at 12:00 PM prior to the Energy / Green Issues Standing Committee meeting. Please submit your comment to Dana Murray at: [dmurray@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:dmurray@cityofgoleta.org). Your comment will be placed into the record and distributed appropriately.

Please register for the Energy / Green Issues Standing Committee Meeting on September 26, 2024, 1:00 PM PT at:

**ELECTRONIC PARTICIPATION:**

**Zoom Registration Link:**

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**AGENDA**

- I. Public Comment
- II. Bikeshare
  - a. Recommendation Request
- III. Program Updates

***Note: In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need assistance to participate in this meeting, (including assisted listening devices), please contact Deborah Lopez, City Clerk, at (805) 961-7505 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting. Notification helps to ensure that reasonable arrangements can be made to provide accessibility to the meeting.***



**DATE:** September 23, 2024

**TO:** Energy & Green Issues Standing Committee

**FROM:** Peter Imhof, Planning and Environmental Review

Director

**CONTACT:** Dana Murray, Sustainability Manager  
Angeline Foshay, Management Analyst

**SUBJECT:** Background Information for the September 26, 2024 Energy & Green Issues Standing Committee (“Green Committee”) Meeting (please see attached agenda)

## **ITEM I: PUBLIC COMMENT**

## **ITEM II: BIKESHARE**

The purpose of this item is to update the Green Committee on the evaluation of bikeshare programs and the process steps required to potentially launch one in the City of Goleta. In light of the expected program and maintenance costs, additional staff time required to implement the program, and lessons learned from other jurisdictions, staff does not recommend proceeding with a bikeshare program within City limits at this time and is seeking the Committee’s feedback and recommendation.

### **Background:**

Since 2019, City staff has explored options to provide bikeshare in Goleta and promote other alternative transportation options through regional collaboration. In 2020, based on direction provided by City Council in the 2020-2021 Planning & Environmental Review Work Plan, staff added a Shared Micro-Mobility Plan to the list of potential projects and in 2021 the City led an assessment into the feasibility of launching a bikeshare program. At the Green Committee meeting in March 2021, the Committee received an update on status and approaches taken by neighboring jurisdictions to implement bikeshare and staff provided information on issues related to bikeshare operation generally. The Committee supported the creation of a survey to gauge community interest on a potential bikeshare pilot program and, at the meeting in June 2021, the Committee reviewed and discussed a draft survey prior to release.

At the September 2021 Green Committee meeting, staff presented the results of the bikeshare survey. The community bikeshare survey was released on June 28 and closed on July 20, 2021 and yielded 411 responses, 400 from the English survey and 11 from the Spanish survey. On average, respondents were supportive of bringing a bikeshare program to Goleta, with 66% of people rating their support as either a 4 or a 5 on a scale of 0-5. The most liked benefits of bikeshare were positive environmental impact, convenience, reduced traffic congestion, fun, and improved health. The most common concerns were street safety, access to bicycles, and cost to use a bicycle. Most people

preferred a bikeshare program that operated regionally with a docked system. The most common places people said they would start and end their bike rides were shopping centers, Old Town, parks and open space, City of Santa Barbara, and Isla Vista.

Electrification of the transportation system has expanded in various ways with the development of electric bicycles (e-bikes) and e-scooters. The widespread use of internet-connected mobile phones has also allowed shared mobility to take off with bike, e-bike, and e-scooter sharing systems being implemented in cities around the world. The U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration defines micro-mobility as “any small, low-speed, human- or electric powered transportation device, including bicycles, scooters, electric-assist bicycles, electric scooters (e-scooters), and other small, lightweight, wheeled conveyances.” Generally, micro-mobility vehicles (or devices) are expected to operate in the same road space as bicycles, using bike lanes and paths, if available, otherwise sharing the roadway with motorists. While there is no California statewide law specifically permitting or prohibiting riding a bicycle on a sidewalk, the State DMV does not allow motorized scooters to be used on sidewalks and does not allow them to exceed 15 mph. E-scooter users under the age of 18 must wear a helmet and users must have a valid driver’s license. For e-bikes, no license is required at this time in California, but a helmet is required for users under the age of 18.

Over the past decade, a variety of shared micro-mobility systems have emerged with the most common being shared e-scooters and e-bike systems. While e-bikes and e-scooters are the most common form of micro-mobility, some niche forms are emerging, including e-cargo bikes, mopeds, and neighborhood electric vehicles (NEVs), although these forms of mobility are not as widespread. Advancements in technology have allowed many systems to now use a hybrid docked and dockless system based on geofencing. Municipalities and operators can now designate specific zones for parking shared micro-mobility vehicles, reducing the need for docking infrastructure while still allowing the municipality control over where vehicles can park.

Equipment used by bikeshare operators has evolved as the standard design for fleet-appropriate, durable, electric pedal-assist bicycles has gotten lighter, less bulky, and more accessible. Additionally, the pedal-assist batteries have increased in capacity while other components have gotten more efficient, resulting in longer range in pedal assist mode. Additionally, some bikeshare operators have switched from charging bike docks that are connected to the electric grid and require trenching and electrical infrastructure to a low-impact model with simple metal docks that are bolted to the ground. To charge the bikes, operator staff service the docks by swapping out bike batteries that are low with fully charged batteries from their warehouse.

With e-bikes allowing people to travel further by bicycle, e-bikes can contribute to mode shifts and decongestion, if they are replacing trips that would otherwise be made by personal automobiles. Although research has found decongestion benefits to be marginal compared to the health benefits, these benefits are still relevant in the grand scheme of the transportation landscape. Studies have shown that e-bike riders travel farther and cycle more often, with one study from 2020 finding that, after purchasing an e-bike, riders increased their total bicycle usage from 1.3 miles to 5.7 miles per day and that their share of all trips made by bike increased from 17% to 49%.

The bikeshare market has evolved from the unregulated and uncoordinated deployment of scooters by start-up micro-mobility companies to City and/or grant-funded deployment and public-private partnerships. Dozens of cities across the U.S. have launched community-serving bikeshare programs through partnerships with a third-party bikeshare operator. More locally, the cities of Santa Cruz and Santa Barbara have active bikeshare programs. In January 2021, the City of Santa Barbara launched the first phase of a three-year bikeshare pilot through partnership with a privately-owned bikeshare operator. As the first bikeshare partner in Santa Barbara County, the zero-cost-to-the-City pilot included the installation of 500 bicycle docks that served a fleet of 250 e-bikes that reach a maximum pedal-assist speed of 17 mph and have constantly illuminated front and rear lights. After three years of operation, Santa Barbara City staff determined that the partnership was a good fit for Santa Barbara and returned to City Council in 2024 to extend the agreement and pilot phase.

Following the presentation of bikeshare results, staff has participated in regional discussions focused on a regional bikeshare systems led by the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) and evaluated the steps necessary to implement a program within the City of Goleta.

### **Discussion:**

A bikeshare system would complement the City of Goleta's investment in and support for pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure and would further support bicycling as a convenient and effective mode of low-carbon transportation. Bikeshare programs can increase community connectedness, increase pedestrian foot traffic, positively impact commercial areas, provide visitors with a novel and enjoyable way to explore new areas, and have a beneficial impact on users' health. Bikeshare has the potential to impact commuters and can provide first-last mile solutions that connect commuters to regional transit services. Additionally, bikeshare can replace vehicles for short daytime trips for both transit and car commuters.

Although the benefits of e-bikes appear to outweigh the downsides in communities, there are some challenges that must be addressed. E-bikes can allow users to travel at relatively high speeds, which may present a safety risk to e-bike users and other active users (pedestrians, traditional cyclists) around them when there is a great speed differential, though the kinetic energy involved in a crash between an e-bike and pedestrian is significantly less than that involved in an automobile crash. While e-bikes are not drastically different than traditional bicycles, safely and effectively accommodating them in the transportation system requires careful thought of some specific considerations.

Launching a bikeshare program in Goleta has proven a challenge due to a number of factors, primarily cost considerations and the investment in the infrastructure of both bikes and stations, as well as staff time to administer a program. Free public-private partnership pilot deals like the one between the City of Santa Barbara and their bikeshare vendor, BCycle, are unique and unlikely to be offered to communities with less centralized infrastructure, such as Goleta.

There is additionally a lack of regional bikeshare leadership, with SBCAG now taking a backseat role on regional bikeshare planning at this time, and both grant and sponsorship funding for bikeshare is limited in Santa Barbara County. More directly, the City has explored forming regional partnerships, such as through the SBCAG or the County, or joining and expanding existing bikeshare programs into Goleta (City of Santa Barbara's program). Unfortunately, the City of Santa Barbara's bikeshare vendor is not willing to offer the City of Goleta to expand the Santa Barbara bikeshare program into Goleta on the same terms (at zero cost to the City), and leadership in forming a regional bikeshare program has not coalesced at this time. The challenges of organizing and funding an effort as a smaller city would be significant.

Regional bikeshare programs, such as seen in other jurisdictions, appear to be most successful and financially viable when coordinated and funded by a regional entity, such as a COG/Council of Government (e.g., San Gabriel Valley COG, Sacramento Area COG) or Transportation Authority (e.g., L.A. County Metro, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, CapMetro) or when offered to jurisdictions at zero cost (e.g., City of Santa Barbara, County of Santa Cruz/UCSC/City of Santa Cruz). Staff explored a zero-cost model with BCycle, the vendor operating in Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz; however, the cost to the City has been estimated to be \$300,000-500,000. Potential bikeshare vendors have suggested that the cost could be offset by procuring competitive grants and private partnership agreements for advertising on e-bikes. Although the ideal program for the City of Goleta would be a zero-cost bikeshare program, thus far, a program like Santa Barbara's has not been accessible to Goleta. The City of San Luis Obispo recently issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a zero-cost to City model akin to Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. However, all three vendors that responded to San Luis Obispo's RFP anticipated third party external funding (sponsorships/grants) as essential to their revenue stack and sustainable operations. In short, potential vendors are likely to expect a significant financial contribution and/or staff time contribution to acquire grants to support the program.

In order to proceed with searching for zero-cost opportunities, Goleta would need to move forward with an RFP process to see if a zero-cost bikeshare program would be possible. In addition, the City would need to update transportation and mobility policies to move forward with potential competitive grant opportunities. Regional partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions (County, UCSB, Santa Barbara) are still possible, but would require additional staff resources and Council commitment, as it appears that the City of Goleta would need to take the lead.

Internally, concerns over devices being left in the public right-of-way and the process of allowing vendors to use public right of way for docking stations have been raised.

Should the Green Committee recommend moving forward with the next steps in creating an E-bikeshare program in Goleta, staff has identified multiple steps and actions needed. The initial steps would be to update City mobility policies, issue an RFP to get a clearer picture of infrastructure costs, and conduct spatial planning for potential station locations.

A shared mobility ordinance would regulate shared mobility devices in the City and establish the administrative procedures of a potential shared mobility program. Other aspects of an ordinance would need to include establishing definitions, unlawful activities,

permitting process, any appeals or revocation process, and removal and impoundment guidelines. Internal collaboration would be necessary between Planning, Public Works, Public Safety, and the City Attorney's Office to establish the framework of the ordinance as well as the roles and responsibilities of staff that would partake in the implementation of the program.

For the City of Santa Barbara's program, two full-time transportation planners support the ongoing implementation of the program and pursue grant opportunities to expand bikeshare and bike path infrastructure. The Public Works Department oversees a Transportation and Planning Group as well as a Downtown Parking Group, which handle permit application forms, issue and enforce permits, maintain permit data, collect fees, assess penalties, monitor permitted shared mobility operations and manage general administration of the program. Additionally, the Risk Manager for Santa Barbara evaluates permit applications and coordination with the Police Department is utilized for enforcement of traffic and parking laws.

Goleta has examples of RFPs from neighboring jurisdictions that it could emulate after adoption of a shared mobility ordinance. Issuing an RFP to solicit bikeshare operators could help the City get a better idea of the true cost of a pilot program, including both the infrastructure and staff time required to launch and maintain such a program. However, based on informal estimates received from BCycle, this cost would be significant, between at least \$300,000 to \$500,000 or more. With bikeshare operators often requiring matching finds or grant and/or sponsorship funds in order to offer to implement a bikeshare program to the City, the anticipated costs would be significant.

Should the City nevertheless choose to proceed with a bikeshare program and select an operator, the spatial planning process would then follow. This process would include identification of priority and secondary locations for bike docks, evaluating the typical sizes and electric requirements for docks, gathering docking site information (zoning, land use, ownership, electricity access and infrastructure, curb/street/spacing, ADA considerations, parking, etc.), public outreach and potential regional coordination with surrounding jurisdictions.

Following vendor and site selection, then the City would also need to consider the long-term administration of the bikeshare program, which would require dedicated staff to manage and maintain on an ongoing basis. Managing the partnership with the bikeshare operator would be an ongoing task for the duration of the program. Additionally, grant writing and management may be required by staff to establish, maintain and/or expand such a program.

In sum, the capital outlay for undertaking a program at this time is unknown, but significant, given that current estimations are size- and operator-dependent, and the staff time required to pursue, implement and maintain a bikeshare program over time would also be significant.

*Questions for Green Committee Discussion:*

- Does Goleta want to pursue a Shared Mobility (Bikeshare) program further?
  - If so, is the City of Goleta willing to fund (partially, if successful with grants, or fully)?

- If so, up to how much funding?
  - If not, is a zero-cost option for the City the only way Green Committee would recommend moving forward with an e-bikeshare program?
- Does Goleta want to expend staff time to go beyond “exploring a regional bikeshare?”
  - Would require more staff capacity- by possibly increasing staff (Transportation Planner/Manager, Traffic Engineer, etc.) or redirecting existing staff time to program development and administration.
  - Would require multi-department coordination and collaboration for planning, RFP development, and ongoing implementation and monitoring

**Options & Alternatives:**

1. Do not further pursue an e-bikeshare program at this time; or
2. Take first steps to start an e-bikeshare program in Goleta.

Should Alternative #2 be recommended, City staff recommend pursuing the following initial actions:

- A. Update City Micro-Mobility Policies – develop a shared micro-mobility ordinance that sets the parameters and the administrative procedures for micro-mobility vendors to operate within the City.
- B. Issue a Request for Proposals for Bikeshare - The City could issue an RFP for a system operator that will run a bikeshare program in the City of Goleta at no cost to the City. This model is operating successfully in Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz, but would be reliant on vendor interest in this operational model. The RFP could emulate the recent RFP issued by the City of San Luis Obispo, which calls for a 3-year pilot program for a docked-based electric pedal-assist bikeshare system. Proposals would be required to describe strategies to make bikeshare accessible to all community members, including those from disadvantaged communities and persons that have typically experienced barriers to active transportation. The RFP would also make clear that any future bikeshare operator will be responsible for all maintenance and repair to keep the system in continuous compliance with contractual service standards, will be required to promote safe and lawful operation of safe bicycles and proactively avoid any City staff involvement in remedying issues, including bicycles left on sidewalks or elsewhere in the public right of way.
- C. Bring results of RFP to Green Committee.

**Recommendations & Next Steps:**

In light of the expected program and maintenance costs, additional staff time required to implement the program, and lessons learned from other jurisdictions, staff does not



recommend proceeding with a bikeshare program within City limits at this time and is seeking the Committee's feedback and recommendation.

Staff requests the Committee's feedback and recommendation on the following:

- Should staff further pursue a Shared Mobility (Bikeshare) program?
- If recommended to pursue a bikeshare program, does Green Committee recommend that Council commit to funding a program?
- Is a zero-cost option for the City the only way Green Committee would recommend moving forward with an e-bikeshare program?
- What would be the maximum cost the Green Committee would recommend funding?
- Does Goleta want to expend staff time to go beyond "exploring a regional bikeshare?"

### **ITEM III: PROGRAM UPDATES**