

# Reducing Driving and CWU's Carbon Footprint by Piloting a Central Washington University Campus Bike Share Program

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## Introduction

Excessive and unnecessary driving is a sustainability problem as it releases harmful emissions that contribute to climate change. Choosing biking instead of driving for short trips can reduce personal travel emissions by up to 75%, having a large impact on an individual's carbon footprint and its environmental consequences. Many students lack accessibility to personal bicycles, due to their high price points and the barriers of storage, maintenance, and repairs. On the CWU-Ellensburg campus, the infrastructure exists to pilot a bike share program and demonstrate the demand for free shared bikes available to all students, staff, and faculty.

## Project Design

- 8 single-speed bicycles and 2 8-speed bicycles (10 total) will be rented through Outdoor Pursuits and Rentals, the outdoor gear rental shop on campus.
- Rentals will be free for students, staff, and faculty members, and bikes will be available to rent for up to 7 days.
- Bikes will include a helmet, as well as accessories such as a bell, lock, and front and rear lights attached to the bike.
- Intended as a pilot program, to understand students' needs and wants out of a bike share and iron out potential issues on a small scale.

## Collaboration with Outdoor Pursuits and Rentals

- The program has been designed in close collaboration with Logan Scully, the Senior Coordinator of Adventure Programs, as well as OPR student staff.
- OPR sees a large demand for bike rentals, for both commuting and recreation.
- The shop (Figure 1) has access to tools for bike maintenance and repair, as well as an existing gear rental program, Fusion, which students, staff and faculty are pre-registered in.
- OPR student staff will be trained on bike maintenance and repair to maintain the quality and longevity of the bicycles.



Figure 1. The Outdoor Pursuits and Rentals (OPR) shop, attached to the SURC on the CWU-Ellensburg campus

## The Bikes & Accessories

- When selecting the bikes, the focus remained on affordable, high-quality, versatile, and low-maintenance models.
- The bikes chosen were the single-speed Priority Sauce (Figure 2) and the 8-speed Priority Hot Sauce (Figure 3), notable for their grease-free Gates Carbon Drive belts that reduce maintenance, and their ability to handle both sidewalk commutes and light trail riding.



Figure 2. The single-speed Priority Sauce bicycle.



Figure 3. The 8-speed Hot Sauce bicycle.

- The single-speed bike will be ideal for students to commute to classes and around town, while the 8-speed offers accessibility.
- Accessories were chosen as anti-theft measures and to enhance student safety:
  - Helmets (Figure 4) will be available in sizes S/M, M/L, and XL.
  - Locks will allow students to dock bikes at the many bike racks around campus.
  - Bells (Figure 5) will enhance safety when commuting.
  - Head and taillights will ensure visibility on evening rides.



Figure 4. Specialized Align II MIPS certified bike helmet.



Figure 5. Priority AirTag Anti-Theft Security Bell.

## Exit Survey

- An optional survey will be provided after rentals to gain insight into the users' experience and get feedback to improve on the program.
- Some questions will pertain to commuting habits, such as if students biked to class more often than driving when renting the bikes.
- Information can be used to inspire future sustainability projects and provide a framework for expanding the bike share program.

## Next Steps

- Work with Contracting to approve risk and rental waivers.
- Work with Marketing to develop a logo/branding to be displayed on bikes.
- Purchase bikes from Priority and assemble upon shipping.
- Train OPR Staff on bike maintenance, including weekly and monthly check-ups, long-term care, and basic repairs.
- Set up rentals in the Fusion rental system at OPR.
- Work with Adventure Programs and Sustainability to market and promote the program
- Launch in Fall of 2025!

## Summary

After implementation in Fall 2025, this bike share program will provide free bicycle rentals to students for use in commuting and recreation. Providing students access to a low-carbon form of transportation without the boundary of maintenance, repairs, or payment will result in lowering students' personal carbon emissions and thus furthering CWU's mission of sustainability. In the future, this pilot program can be expanded based on the information collected in the first year of implementation. The insight gained into how available, accessible bikes affect student's personal commuting choices will prove useful in justifying the expansion of this program in the future.

## This Project Supports UN Sustainable Development Goals:



## Acknowledgements

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