

# Current Efforts to Make Bike Share More Equitable: A Survey of System Owners and Operators (Paper #17-06508)

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## Overview

### Question

How are bike share owners and operators in the U.S. incorporating equity into their systems?

### Methods

Invited 75 public bike share systems in the U.S. serving broad range of users.

- operational and pre-launch
- emailed to single contact
- 55 systems responded (73%)

Quantitative analysis - ANOVA

Qualitative - Coded open-ended questions

- Over 200 codes (most combined)

### Survey Instrument

System & Organization characteristics

Equity policy/statement

Equity in 5 key areas (consideration and role in outcomes)...

- Station siting
- Fee structure and payment systems
- System operations/employment
- Promotion, outreach, marketing
- Data collection

Equity barriers

- Perceived barriers for users
- Barriers for the organization

### Responding Organization and Bike Share System Characteristics (n=55)

	Percent of Responding Organizations
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#### Responding Organization Role in Bike Share System

Owner	33%
Operator	24%
Owner and Operator	29%
Partner - Not owner or operator	14%

#### Responding Organization Type

Government	44%
Non-profit organization	40%
Private Operator	11%
University	6%

#### Launch Status

Operational	82%
Pre-launch	18%

#### Number of Bikes in System

Up to 100 bikes (small)	26%
101 to 500 bikes (medium)	51%
501 or more bikes (large)	24%

#### U.S. Census Region

Northeast	13%
South	24%
Midwest	29%
West	35%

## Equity Statement/Policy

### NO Equity Statement

33 systems stated they did not have an equity statements

- Typically smaller systems
- Cities tended to be less racially diverse (Median %non-white -21 percentage points)
- Many stated they had equity statements in development

Lack of an equity statement may be due in part due to less political pressure and fewer resources in these smaller, less diverse cities.

### "Other" Responses

7 systems responded "other" to whether they had an equity statement. Almost all had statement or policy under development

### Explicit vs. Inclusive Language

Many equity statements **lacked specificity** in who they were targeting, how, and to what extent.

There was a noticeable difference in how systems approached equity based on language used in their equity statement. Inclusive language often led to lack of specificity in how they wanted to approach equity...

- Statements such as: "for all" "all backgrounds" "all cultures"

- Such statements struggled to address differences between potential equity target groups and how to better include them in the system.

### Having an Equity Statement Affected Consideration and Impact of Equity on Bike Share System Decisions

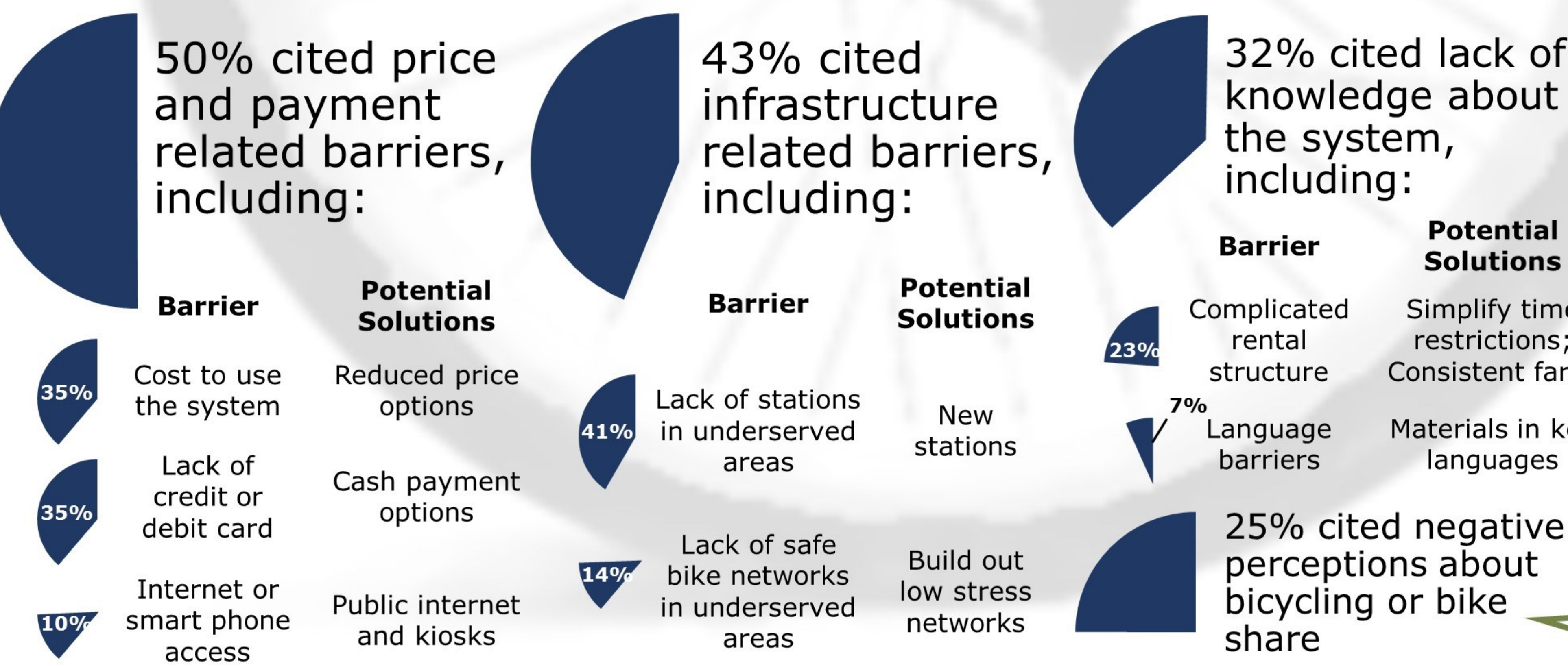
Without Equity Statement      With Equity Statement



Note: Number of key areas where equity had "considerable" or "primary" role. Those responding "Other" to whether they had an equity statement were excluded.

## Barriers

Over 80% of respondents (44 systems) shared what they thought were key barriers to participation for targeted equity populations in their cities. Generally, the barriers fell into the categories of **pricing and payment systems; various aspects of access; perceptions of bike share and bicycling in general; and awareness, education, and understanding of how the system works.**



\*Note: Responses were open-ended and coded into categories. Some respondents provided more than one barrier, and totals are more than 100%

### Equity Statement

13 systems stated they had an equity statement

- More likely to be large systems
- More likely to be in more diverse cities (Median %non-white +21 percentage points)
- Tended to consider equity in more decisions

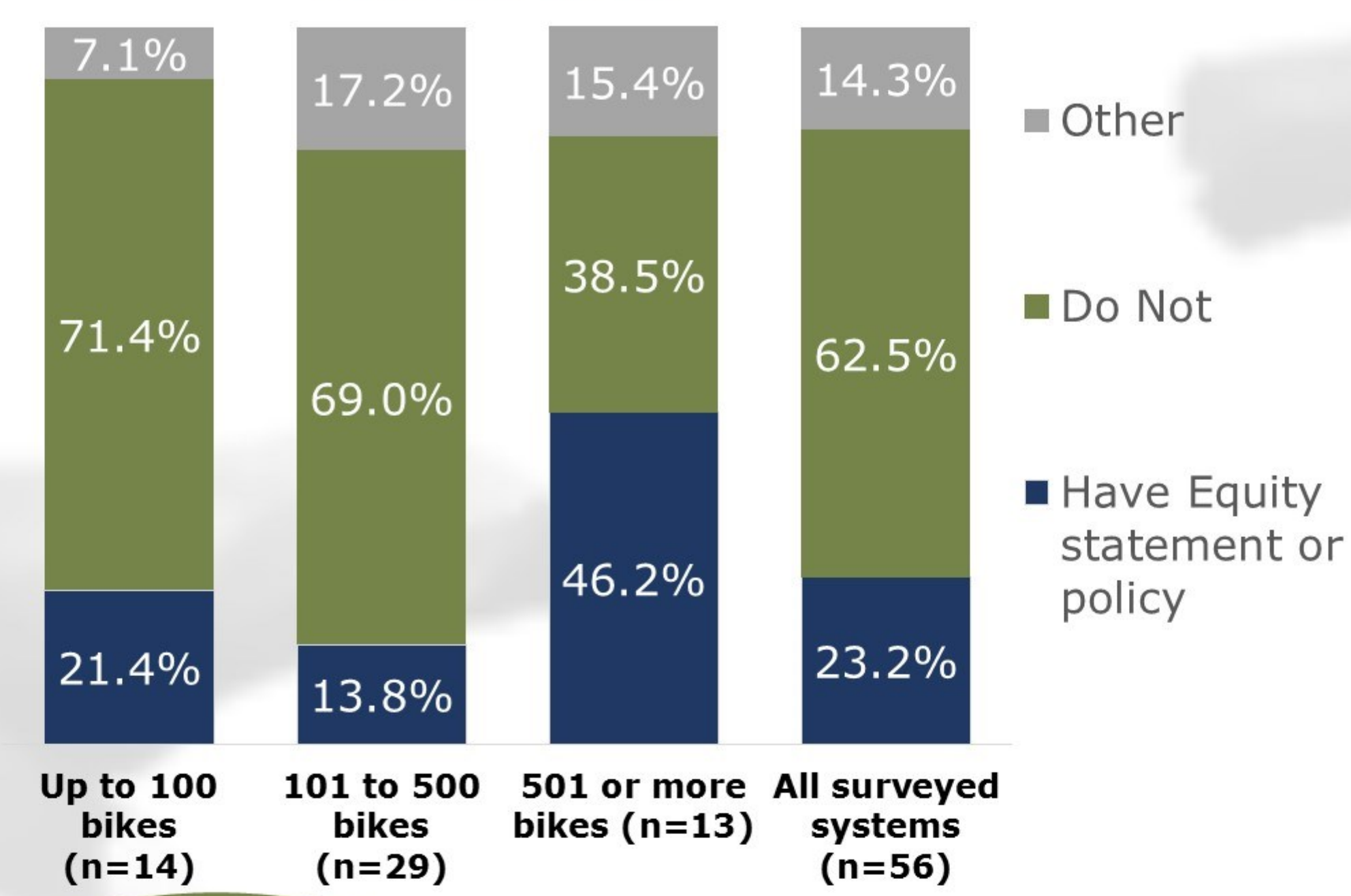
Only 3 systems provided what we considered extensive statements, incorporating...

- Who they were targeting

- How they were targeting them

- Specific goals they hoped to achieve

### Which systems have specific equity statements?



...equity was not a major consideration in the initial roll out of our bike-share system, it has become increasingly important as the system grows and additional stakeholders become involved.

Establish a system that engages and serves users in minority, low income, and limited transit option communities and help improve access to jobs, recreation and healthy nutrition

providing accessible and affordable bicycles for all

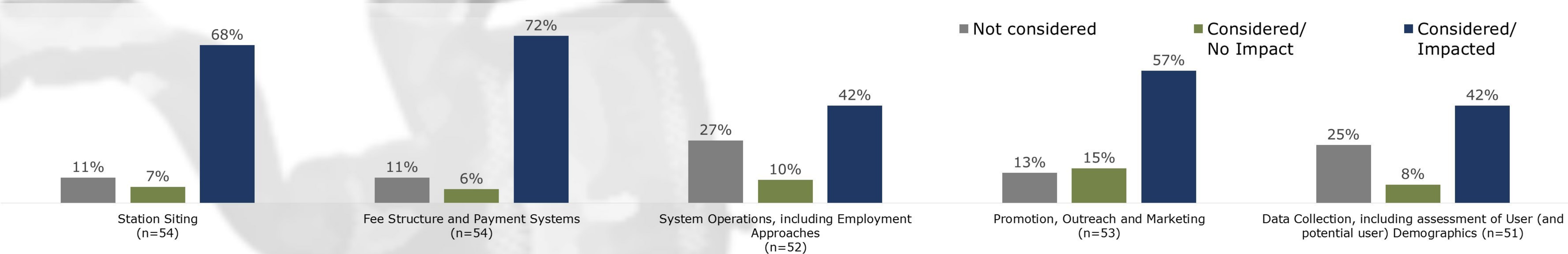
Bike Sharing serves as a catalyst for a fundamental transformation in thinking and behavior by operating a bike sharing system in [City] to enhance mobility while promoting all aspects of sustainability: quality of life, equity, the environment, economic development, and public health.

We've struggled to get people on bikes in some communities. It's been less about cost, credit cards etc. and more an issue of cultural attitudes about biking.

Our largest barrier is station locations. As housing prices have gone up, more and more low income residents are being pushed further from the city core to find affordable housing. These pockets of affordability are too far from our current system to reasonably place stations in the foreseeable future.

perception that biking is for the "epic" outdoor folks, not for average people

## How Equity is Being Considered in Various Parts of the System



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to "Don't Know/NA" responses. Possible survey responses were: Not considered; considered, no impact; considered, minor role; considered, considerable role; considerations primary driver. We combined minor role, considerable role, and primary driver into the Considered/impacted category here.

### Station Siting

#### Accessibility

Promote transit connectivity  
Connection to destinations

- Jobs
- Commercial/retail districts
- Recreation

Station placement at public housing complexes

Large coverage areas  
Walkable distances between stations

Very few had quotas for number or percentage of stations in low-income and minority neighborhoods.

Made sure to have stations all over [the city], even those that may not [yield] a profit

### System Operations

#### Hiring Processes

Typically looked at hiring locally and paying living wage

Five systems said they partnered with local workforce development organizations or public housing to find potential hires

Some hired persons matching the demographic they were trying to reach with their equity programs as advocacy staff

#### Operations

Some stated their ability to incorporate equity in this element was restricted by how their operations were organized

As we site stations, we are examining locations that are proximate to transit stops, high-density housing, which is typically low-income in this area, jobs, and key destinations. While not targeting specific populations, we also conducted an online survey where participants were asked to pick their top 5 station locations.

Nearly 30% of the population in this area is Latino. Overall success of the system is dependent on the engagement of Latino riders--who disproportionately suffer from a lack of other transportation options. In order to provide a new transportation service to these residents, while also boosting ridership, [our bike share system] has committed a significant percentage of stations to the neighborhoods, bus stops, and commercial areas frequented by this Latino community.

Recently redid our price structure to provide cheaper annual memberships and offer monthly or weekly memberships with the price offset by daily users, usually visitors.

We took information from our focus group, conducted in advance of launch, with low income [populations] into account and priced with this in mind.

[P]roviding outreach materials in a variety of languages, identifying community stakeholders that can reach specific populations, etc.

### Fee Structure and Payment Systems

#### Cost

Reevaluated pricing and dropped prices accordingly

Reduced or eliminated bank holds

- Added membership options
- Jobs
  - Monthly and weekly passes
  - Pay-per-ride structures
  - Changed yearly membership to be able to be paid monthly

Simplify fee structure to make it easier to understand

Use of contract bid process to solicit "innovative fee structures"

#### Discounts

14 systems said they had discounted or free memberships

One system obtained a grant to give their target equity population a zero cost program

- Qualifications:
- Receiving public assistance
  - Income thresholds

Discounts ranged considerably

Tied to low income populations and typically not race/ethnicity specific.

#### Payment Systems

13 systems said they were trying to meet the needs of unbanked populations

- Cash payment options
- Use of commercial establishments to facilitate transactions
  - One was using its library system

Allowing for use of pre-paid debit/credit cards

One also looking at ways to incorporate homeless populations specifically in their unbanked user strategy

### Equity Metrics/Data Collection

Only a few specified equity metrics tied to specific equity goals

- Quota percentage of stations near targeted equity populations
- Track usage by low-income pass users to develop better understanding of their patterns: goal to reach specific number of trips per user
- Monitor overages: goal to limit overage to certain \$/month
- Set goal of % of women members
- Set goal of % of low-income users, w/ associated gender goal among low-income users

Data Collection

- Lack of clarity in which members they wanted to survey in most cases
- 5 systems aimed to use the data collected to measure progress toward equity goals



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