



Newcomer Bike Host Program Final Report 2018

Prepared in partnership between HUB Cycling and the ISSofBC (Immigrant Services Society of BC)

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Newcomer Bike Host Program is a collaborative program between HUB Cycling and the Immigrant Services Society of BC (ISSo/BC). The first of its kind in Western Canada, the program matches recently arrived immigrants and refugees with local “host” volunteers for companionship and cultural orientation to Vancouver’s cycling transportation lifestyle. Newcomers receive city cycling instruction and orientation from HUB Cycling. They then meet weekly for get-togethers with their host volunteers to become familiar with Vancouver’s cycling routes, rules, and culture, while practicing English and getting to know the city by bike.

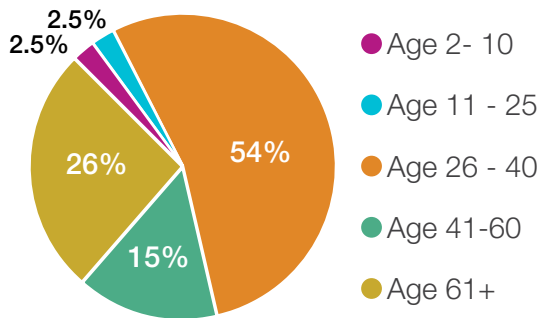
2018 marked the second year of the program in Metro Vancouver. Two groups of participants took part in the 3-month program sessions: round 1 (June to August), and round 2 (July to September). Funding for 2018 was generously provided by TransLink, Westbank and QuadReal Property Group, Vancity, ISSo/BC, and the Hamber Foundation, with in-kind contributions from Mobi By Shaw Go, Cycle City Tours and Bayshore Bike Rental.

Program highlights

- 36 individual and family matches took part in the program consisting of:
 - » 38 newcomer participants, 32 volunteer hosts
- Collectively, matches spent 1100+ hours cycling together from June to September
- 31 newcomers activated a free Mobi by Shaw Go membership during the program to use for their weekly meet-ups
- 3 cycle-themed group events were run to keep matches engaged
- 21 newcomers were gifted an annual Mobi by Shaw Go Vancity Community Pass at graduation, enabling them to continue cycling in the city after the program

Newcomer participant demographics

Age



Gender



Country of origin

- 33% Iran
- 15% China
- 10% Syria
- 8% Iraq
- 33% Other countries including: Russia, Eritrea, Japan, India, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Ukraine, Armenia, Somalia

Primary language spoken

31% Farsi	5% Japanese
18% Arabic	5% Tigrinya
15% Mandarin	5% Hindi
13% Russian	9% Other



Name: Bibigul

Country of Origin: Kazakhstan

Length of time in Canada: 2 years

Program highlight: Bibigul joined the Bike Host Program as a novice cyclist. With her host Dave's help and encouragement she made progress with every ride this summer. She now has the confidence to cycle around the city solo and uses her bike as part of her commute. Cycling has given her the mobility and freedom to explore her new home and she feels like she is a true local. 'I had a goal of joining the 'tribe of bikers' I always see riding round the city. Now I feel like I can more readily identify myself as part of that group', she says.



Bike Host program at a glance

- **Recruitment and orientation:** Newcomers and volunteers are interviewed, join the program and receive orientations to their respective roles
- **Newcomer cycling course:** Newcomer participants receive specialized training from HUB Cycling instructors to build urban cycling skills and knowledge
- **Matching day:** Volunteers and newcomers meet for the first time
- **Weekly cycling rides:** Matches meet for 2 hours to explore different areas and activities in Vancouver
- **Group events:** Organized activities all matches can take part in such as group rides and visiting community events
- **Graduation:** Participants share stories and we celebrate newcomers' achievements. Participants are gifted an annual Mobi by Shaw Go Vancity Community Pass.



PROGRAM IMPACT

The impact and outcomes of the Bike Host program were measured in numerous ways including regular informal participant check-ins, volunteer surveys (n=25), newcomer baseline surveys at the start of the program (n=36) and newcomer exit surveys upon graduation (n=29).

Participant highlights

Matches choose what activities and bike rides they wanted to do during their weekly meet-ups, depending on newcomers' riding skills, interests, and goals for the program.

Some of the activities participants took part in include:

- Visiting parks and beaches including Trout Lake, Vanier Park and Queen Elizabeth Park
- Learning to take their bike on busses, skytrains and the seabus
- Biking to art installations along the False Creek seawall
- Learning to use Mobi Public Bike Share bikes
- Visiting a community centre and finding out what recreation programs they have
- Riding all the way around Stanley Park
- Venturing outside Vancouver to destinations such as Burnaby Lake, Stevenston, Iona Beach, and Ambleside Park
- Visiting MEC and learning about all their cycling gear
- Spending time getting to know each other over coffee, ice cream or while sitting on a park bench people watching
- Visiting bike friendly community events and festivals including Car Free Day and Bike to Shop Days





Name: Petro

Country of Origin: Ukraine

Length of time in Canada: 5 years

Program highlight: Petro was one of the oldest participants in the program this year and brand new to cycling! In the beginning, he and his host Patrick focused on stopping and controlling the bike and Petro practiced this everyday between their rides. By the end of the summer they rode the Stanley Park seawall from start to finish and Petro was excited to be the one passing other cyclists! As an avid walker, Petro makes his way around downtown on foot. For him, cycling is a new way of exploring the city and staying active.

Volunteers highlight memorable experiences:

“Seeing the light go off in the ‘hostee’s’ eyes that the city actually gets smaller and more accessible by bike. To see them get excited about exploring the city in a whole different way.” — Steven

“Seeing [mentee’s] reaction after we finished a ride. She was often in disbelief over what she’d been able to achieve. It was great to see!!” — Dan

“Hearing that my match had cycled around Stanley Park by herself!” — Donna

“Meeting my newcomer, learning about her culture, learning about her life in Canada.” — Jill

Volunteers share the benefits they believed their newcomer match received through the program:

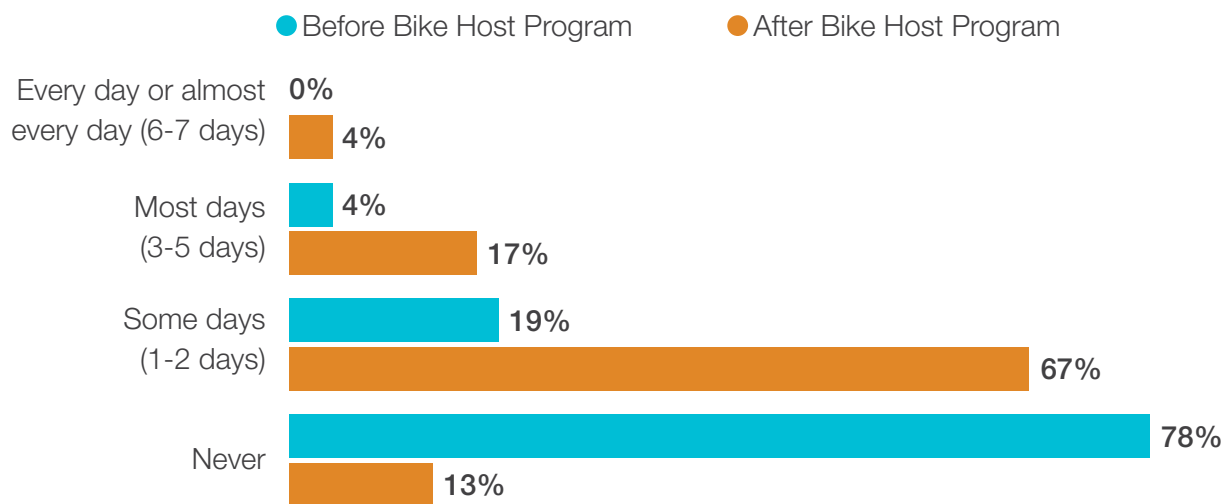
- 96%** Practiced english
- 92%** Had fun
- 92%** Explored a new place in the city
- 80%** Learned new bike routes
- 80%** Learned how to put a bike onto transit
- 60%** Made new social connections
- 60%** Learned more about Canadian culture and society
- 60%** Learned to use Mobi bikes
- 52%** Improved their health
- 44%** Learned to ride a bike

Cycling skills, knowledge and behaviour change

Participants reported confidence in the following areas of cycling safety and knowledge after completing their 3-month Bike Host match:

- **86%** I can ride a bicycle safely on a path away from traffic
- **69%** I can ride a bicycle safely on a street with cars
- **93%** I feel confident that I know the rules of the road when I bicycle in Canada
- **76%** I feel confident that I can find a good bicycle route for me to cycle in Vancouver
- **72%** I know where to go to get my bicycle repaired
- **97%** I believe that cycling is a fast and convenient way to get around my neighbourhood

Q: “In a typical week how many days per week do you cycle?”



% of participants that, in the last month, have ridden at least once a week for...





Other participant benefits

The top 3 benefits participants reported receiving in the program were:



1 Meeting new people



2 Fun



3 Safe Cycling Skills

- **97%** agree the program has improved their **knowledge of Vancouver**
- **93%** agreed that the program **improved their health and wellbeing**
- **88%** said as a result of the Bike Host program they are more likely to **encourage their children to bike to school** (for those that had children)
- **86%** of participants responded positively to the statement “**I feel welcome in Vancouver and feel like I belong here**”
- On average, participants reported making **3.3 new friends** or social connections while participating in the Bike Host program, and an additional **2.8 new friends** outside of the program because of their bicycle.

In addition, participants noted the following financial benefits they have received as a result of cycling more often:



57%
saved money on transit fare



35%
saved money on gasoline costs



22%
were able to access a wider variety of shops to get lower prices on goods



PROGRAM EXPOSURE

The Newcomer Bike Host Program staff team were invited to present at several conferences this year to share information about the program including:

- Walk, Bike, Places - New Orleans, LA - September 2018
- City of Richmond Diversity Symposium - Richmond, BC - November 2, 2018
- Canadian Evaluation Conference, BC Chapter - Vancouver, BC - November 30, 2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

HUB Cycling and the ISSofBC thank all of the bike host volunteers for the time and energy they dedicated to the program this year. Without them, the program would not have been such a huge success! Their commitment to help newcomers become more confident on a bike, improve their cycling skills, and feel welcome in our city has been extraordinary.

We also thank all ISSofBC volunteers who supported ongoing programming needs and Bike Host events as well as Louise Campbell for helping us capture participant stories through her writing and blog posts.

We thank our friends at CultureLink, for sharing their knowledge and expertise from running several years of the Bike Host program in the Greater Toronto area, and for supporting us in bringing this program to Metro Vancouver.

Importantly, HUB Cycling and the ISSofBC extend big thanks to our funding and in-kind contributors. The capacities they provided to the Vancouver Newcomer Bike Host Program were indispensable to the all the positive outcomes described in this report.

Photos in this report were taken by Joming Lau, Ermin Badzak, and program participants.



Project Funders:



In-Kind Contributors:

