

“Oh, The Places You’ll Go!” Transportation Campaign Case Study

Fall 2019 | By Makayla Salas

Project Overview

For UVM Eco-Reps’ first campaign of the 2019-20 academic year, we tackled issues related to how we move around. Whether it’s getting to class, work, or a friend’s house, how we get there can have a large impact on the Earth! Aiming to encourage more sustainable forms of transportation, the Eco-Reps program partnered with companies like Wheeli, CarShare Vermont, Green Mountain Transit, and Greenride bike share to provide information and incentives to students to reconsider their transportation habits.

Background

Carbon emissions are a large driver in climate change, and according to a report from the EPA in 2018, transportation accounts for 28% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Between more countries industrializing and a steady stream of urban sprawl, transportation pollution needs to be taken seriously. Especially in our rural state where transportation accounts for 44.7% of Vermont’s greenhouse gas emissions, according to a 2012 Vermont Agency of Natural Resources figure. Barriers to using more sustainable transportation include factors such as lack of financial resources (electric vehicles are typically more expensive than gas-powered vehicles), social barriers (where stigmas exist around using public transportation), and time constraints (following a bus schedule is more time-intensive and restrictive than using a personal vehicle).

Luckily the transportation infrastructure is growing every year with new bike hubs, electric scooters, and other inventive alternatives arising. Jobs and businesses are promoting sustainable transportation by providing incentives such as closer parking for electric vehicles, discounts for riding your bike to the establishment, and company-sponsored bus passes. Between the joy of skateboarding and the ease of faster HOV lanes, more people are beginning to see the need and practicality of more sustainable transportation.

Goals

Through interactive and informative programming from facilitated bus trips to bike registration tabling, our goal was to educate the student body about their alternative sustainable transportation options. We wanted to increase the number of campus-goers who were informed and responsible about their mode of getting around. Doing this campaign in the beginning of the year when the weather is still mild allowed us to reasonably promote options like biking. This is also the best time of year to target

incoming students who are more likely to be unfamiliar with their local sustainable transportation options. By introducing those options to students earlier, we promote a culture where sustainable transportation has the mark of a norm.

Implementation

The UVM Eco-Reps program consists of 20 students that are divided up into five community teams, with each team assigned to a specified residential area on campus. Efforts included a campus wide intervention as well as smaller programming initiatives held in residential locations.

To equip the Eco-Reps with the relevant knowledge to tackle the concept of sustainable transportation, presentations were given by UVM Transportation and Parking Services, Carshare Vermont, Wheeli, Greenride BikeShare, and UVM Bikes.

1. **Sustainable Transportation Fair:** To give students a taste of what sustainable transportation options are available to them, Eco-Reps put on a Sustainable Transportation Fair, complete with visits from Green Mountain Transit, Old Spokes Home, UVMBikes, CarShare, Wheeli, UVM Transportation and Parking Services, and Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association. Eco-Reps also tabled, providing smoothies that were made by powering a 'smoothie bike' which operated when pedaled, and challenging participants in sustainable transportation trivia.
2. **Chalkboard/Bulletin Board Engagement:** Eco-Reps took advantage of the bulletin boards and chalkboards on display in the res halls by decorating them to provide useful guides about sustainable transportation and conduct polls about use of UVM and Burlington's sustainable transportation options.
3. **North Beach Bus Trip:** To familiarize students with popular bus routes, as well as get them acquainted with the mechanisms involved in using public transportation (such as where bus stops are located, how to indicate you would like to get off at a certain stop, etc.) a facilitated bus trip to North Beach was held. Incentives for this trip included the promise of pizza at the destination.
4. **Bike and Mic:** Eco-Reps held an open mic night, weaving in information about how to register their bikes with UVM Police Services and how to use the local Greenride bike share program.
5. **Bike Registration Tabling:** To better aid UVM Police Services with recovering and returning bikes to their rightful owners, Eco-Reps helped register bikes with their database.
6. **Meme Challenge:** To engage people over social media and inspire them to get creative in thinking about sustainable transportation, Eco-Reps held a meme challenge on a well-trafficked meme page at UVM to see who could design the best sustainable transportation meme.

- 7. CarShare Pod Party:** Eco-Reps held a party at the “pods” where the CarShare vehicles are located on campus to familiarize students with the cars as well as how to use the equipment it comes with (i.e. the remote key fobs). Students were given information about membership and encouraged to make use of those services.

Timeline

9/9/18 - 9/23/18

- Presentations from relevant resources

9/23/18 - 10/14/18

- Sustainable Transportation Fair
- Chalkboard/Bulletin Board Engagement (3)
- North Beach Bus Trip
- Bike and Mic
- Bike Registration
- Meme Challenge
- CarShare Pod Party

Financing

Expenses

- \$51.14 for smoothie bike ingredients
- \$38.00 for Set Up for Sustainable Transportation Fair
- \$61.15 for Food for Community Team Events

In Kind

- \$15.00 for Pod Party Materials (purchased by Carshare VT)

Results

This campaign reached an overall total of 544 participants, and we feel that our messaging was informative and practical for implementation. The Eco-Reps themselves felt significantly more informed and prepared to answer a variety of questions about sustainable transportation after hearing from guest presenters.

The Sustainable Transportation Fair reached the largest audience, with at least 110 total participants. Engagement with the full range of resources provided at the fair could have been higher, however, as only three of these 110 turned in completed punch-cards, which tracked how many tables you approached. We believe that the place we held the fair, while highly-trafficked, is also not a place that many people have time to stop and

engage. In the future, we may consider new places or times that could yield a larger amount of highly-engaged participants. A highlight of this fair included giving out Bike Benefits stickers to 11 people, most of whom were previously unaware of the program, which provides discounts at many local businesses if you provide proof that you biked there by presenting the Bike Benefits sticker on your helmet.

The sustainable transportation chalkboards and bulletin boards were successful in garnering a lot of low-engagement participation due to the very visible, public nature of the boards. High engagement was tracked by participation in polls on the boards and how many guides were taken from the boards. From one board, a total of 13 guides were taken, and 33 people participated in the poll. From the other board, a total of 120 tally marks were placed in the interactive survey section of the board (however, each participant could have made several tally marks).

The CarShare Pod Party gathered a total of 45 participants, 20 of whom were considered highly-engaged on account of having registered for CarShare memberships. Good weather contributed to attendance at this outdoor event.

The Sustainable Transportation Meme Challenge had 27 total participants, all of whom were highly-engaged since they were creating their own original content to compete. Holding this event on a Facebook page utilized by a large portion of the UVM population (Make UV Groovy Again) means that an even larger number of people saw the created content, meaning that the message contained in the memes may have reached several hundred people.

Bike registration with UVM Police Services was pushed at both the Bike and Mic and Bike Registration Tabling. A total of 13 people registered their bikes at the actual event themselves, however many people took photos of the information regarding how to register your bike online in the future. This leads us to believe that more people registered their bikes overall than immediately at the events. Furthermore, a total of 107 people either attended the Bike and Mic or passed the Bike Registration Tabling, meaning that there was a significant amount of exposure to the program even if high-engagement interactions were fewer.

The success of the bus trip to North Beach was a bit stunted by inopportune weather, however those who did come on this trip (4 non-Eco-Reps) reported that this was the first time they had ever used the city bus system, and reported that they were now more likely to use the bus system rather than Uber in the future.

Overall, our partnerships with sustainable transportation programs/businesses and campus groups helped make this campaign successful. The comprehensive compilation of resources from Wheeli to CATMA to Green Ride provided a plethora of opportunities for students to get educated and excited about sustainable transportation. The sheer amount of options given to students incentivized interaction, and helped everyone learn about this topic from multiple points of view.

Lessons Learned

As with the Sustainable Transportation campaign last year, inopportune weather affected attendance of at least one of our events. This pattern of interference means we may take stronger precautions in holding outdoor events in the future during these months, or create better contingency plans that move the event inside.

Some of the programs that we held made it difficult to track actual participation and social changes made; for example, it is difficult to know how many people actually used the bus guides they took and made changes to their personal transportation routines. We will be brainstorming ideas for better ways to keep track of engagement and behavioral change in the future.