

Micromobility: Bublr Bikes

Location	Service
Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and West Allis, WI	Station-based bikeshare
Model	Partners
City-owned equipment; nonprofit-operated service	City of Milwaukee and Midwest BikeShare

Introduction

Bublr Bikes is a station-based bikeshare system serving Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and West Allis, Wisconsin. The system launched in downtown Milwaukee in 2014 and has expanded through several federally funded capital projects. The

City of Milwaukee owns most system equipment, while nonprofit Midwest BikeShare, Inc., operating as Bublr Bikes, manages operations and memberships. Bublr demonstrates how public ownership, nonprofit operations, and phased investment can support long-term bikeshare growth.



What are the Details?

- Bublr allows riders to check out a bicycle at one station and return it to another station within the service area.
- The system launched with 10 stations and 100 bicycles and now includes more than 150 stations across Milwaukee, Wauwatosa, and West Allis.
- The City of Milwaukee owns most equipment, while nonprofit Midwest BikeShare operates the service.
- A \$1.6 million Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)-funded expansion added approximately 30 stations and related infrastructure.
- A later \$1.9 million CMAQ project added 26 stations and approximately 250 bicycles.
- Bublr 2.0 is adding 800 e-bikes, 965 docks, and 107 new stations while replacing or reusing older equipment.
- The Bublr Access Pass provides free annual memberships to qualifying Greater Milwaukee residents receiving specified forms of public assistance.



How was the Project Funded?

Bublr has grown through several phases rather than a single capital project. A \$1.6 million CMAQ-funded expansion added approximately 30 stations, followed by a \$1.9 million CMAQ project that added 26 stations and approximately 250 bicycles. Bublr 2.0 combines federal Transportation Alternatives Program and CMAQ funding with City matching funds to support approximately \$6.3 million in system improvements. The City owns most capital assets and pursues grants for capital purchases, while annual operations are supported through government and nongovernment grants, sponsorships, donations, memberships, and usage fees.

What are the Key Results?

Bublr has grown from a small downtown system into a regional network serving three municipalities. Successive capital projects have added stations and bicycles while modernizing aging equipment. Separately, programs such as the Bublr Access Pass have broadened access for qualifying residents. Bublr 2.0 is expected to create a denser network, reduce operating overhead, improve reliability, and make the system more useful for daily trips.

What are the Lessons Learned?

Bublr demonstrates how a community can grow and modernize a bikeshare system through phased capital investments and a clear division of responsibilities. Specific strategies reflected in the Bublr example include:

- Combining public ownership of equipment with nonprofit operation of the service.
- Using federal transportation funding for bicycles, stations, docks, software, installation, and related infrastructure.
- Pursuing separate funding phases as system needs and opportunities change.
- Pairing federal capital grants with local matching funds.
- Supporting annual operations through grants, sponsorships, donations, memberships, and usage fees.
- Using community input and micromobility trip data to guide station placement.
- Reusing viable equipment and replacing end-of-life assets during system modernization.
- Offering a free access program alongside broader system investment.

Want to Learn More?

- [Bublr Bike Share Program](#)
- [Bublr 2.0 | Engage MKE](#)
- [Bublr Bikes | Greater Milwaukee's Non-Profit Bikeshare](#)
- [Densifying docked bike share in Milwaukee - NACTO](#)