

Denver, Colo.

PROFILE:

POPULATION: 589,715

MEDIAN INCOME: \$45,526

MEDIAN HOME VALUE: \$245,500

% W/ BACHELORS DEGREE: 24.9%

WALK SCORE: 60/100

FACTS AND FIGURES:

- Achieved a 57% increase in bicycle commuting between 2006 and 2011. ([Governing](#))
- Built in 1981, the 16th Street pedestrian and transit mall receives over 10 million visits a year ([Downtown Denver BID](#)).
- [B-Cycle 2011 Statistics](#):
 - Avg. 750 Checkouts per day (up 65% over 2010)
 - 730,000 lbs. carbon emissions avoided
 - \$507,000 saved on car parking
 - 3,701 pounds lost

QUOTES:

"It's really just like an outdoor gym and so many people who have a physical fitness passion chose to live here because there are so many like minded individuals."

—[SENATOR JOHN BARRASSO, M.D.](#)

"Our expressed goal is to be the healthiest fittest population in the country. We're very competitive."

—[GOVERNOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER](#)

"We not only care about the economic vitality of our community, but also the physical vitality of our community, because we understand that the two are very much linked."

—[DR. JANDEL ALLEN-DAVIS M.D. IP Government & External Relations Kaiser](#)



Denver: A Healthy Place for Healthy People

The capital of the state with the lowest obesity rates in the nation is likely to be a good place to look for innovation in active transportation. Bill Vidal, former Mayor of Denver and Highway Designer, "went through a phase of my life where we basically paved anything that didn't move, and what I realize now is that we cannot continue to just accommodate the car." Denver is, indeed, a leader in providing residents and visitors with options beyond the car, and since 2010, these options have included a robust bicycle sharing system.

In 2008, Denver became one of the first cities to make a large-scale attempt at bringing bike sharing, already successful in Europe and Canada, to the U.S. as part of the Democratic National Convention (the Republican National Convention was undertaking a similar attempt in Minneapolis). The short-term experiment was overwhelmingly successful, with 5,500 trips and 24,000 miles traveled during the four day convention. Coordination between convention leaders, city officials, and local advocates, in combination with Denver's long-standing commitment to biking infrastructure provided the framework necessary for a safe and enticing first run.

The Convention left the city with \$1,000,000 from a budget surplus to build a permanent system. Denver Bike Share was established to operate a modern web-based, credit card-operated bike share system for short-term rentals. The new non-profit organization was able to acquire federal funding for the project, and establish a long-term partnership with Kaiser Permanente.

On Earth Day 2010, Denver officially launched Denver B-cycle. Because of an icy winter climate, the system runs from March to November. Users were able to check out one of 360 bikes from 50 stations located throughout downtown Denver, and to track their usage online over time, including mileage, calories burned, and environmental impacts. Two years in, the bike sharing system has grown to 530 bikes, and thanks to additional state and federal funding, is on track to reach 1500 bikes at 150 stations by 2015.

"Smart growth becomes part of your identity, and that healthy life style becomes an attraction not just to people but to businesses. By getting more people walking and biking you cut down on your health costs — that's a lower cost to business. It makes you more competitive with other businesses and other cities. That's the new way we have to think as we design our lifestyles."

—[GOVERNOR JOHN HICKENLOOPER](#)

"I built a lot of highways in my life. I went through a phase of my life where we basically paved anything that didn't move, and what I realize now is that we cannot continue to just accommodate the car."

"If we continue to widen our streets and continue to rely on the car the way we do we're not going to have the same quality of communities and residential areas and business areas that we hope to have for the future."

—[BILL VIDAL, Former Mayor of Denver and Highway Design Engineer, Colorado Bike Summit 2011](#)

FOR MORE INFORMATION
CONTACT:
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
National Office
Tracy@railstotrails.org
202.974.5110



The popularity and of [B-Cycle](#) in Denver can be seen in its adoption and fast growth. The 2011 season saw an average of 750 checkouts a day — a 65 percent increase over the previous year, and halfway through the 2012 season, usage is up to an average of 850 checkouts a day. According to user surveys, 30–40 percent of B-Cycle trips replace car trips. Parry Burnap, president of Denver Bike Share, reports that since opening, B-Cycle users have saved \$1.2 million in fuel and parking by replacing car trips — B-Cycles very own economic stimulus for the City of Denver.

While it's too early to understand the long-term health impact of bike sharing in Denver, B-Cycle maintains an estimate of calories burned by users based on miles traveled, and the numbers are huge. In the 2010 and 2011 seasons, users burned a collective 19 million calories. If those numbers were translated into weight loss, Denver shed more than 5,500 pounds. Knowing the physical impact of bike sharing would be significant, Kaiser Permanente was eager to partner with B-Cycle. According to Dr. Jandel Allen-David MD, V.P. of Government and External Relations, Kaiser "not only cares about the economic vitality of our community, but also the physical vitality of our community, because we understand that the two are very much linked." Indeed, bike share is proving to be an easy and healthy way to get around.

B-Cycle integrates into Denver's long-term vision of healthy, sustainable city. The current bicycle network plan will have every resident within a half mile of a high ease of use bicycle facility by 2020. With 170 miles of lanes and trails already in place, the downtown core boasts six percent of its workforce commuting to work by bicycle. The continued success of B-cycle is likely to encourage these numbers to grow even higher.