

B-Cycle expands northward and beyond

By Sarah L. TresslerStaff Writer

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This location near the Witte Museum is one of the five new sites where B-Cycles can be rented. The city is looking to expand the program even more. Photo: Sarah Tressler / San Antonio Express-News

Would-be cyclists around the city now can pick up bikes from five new locations.

B-Cycle stations are up and running at the [San Antonio Zoo](#), the [Witte Museum](#), the TriPoint YMCA, the [Amtrak Sunset Station](#) near the [Alamodome](#), and Ace Mart Restaurant Supply on South St. Mary's Street.

Since the program started in March 2011, B-Cycle estimates 270,000 miles have been ridden on its bikes, which translates to about 12.4 million calories burned and tens of thousands of dollars in saved gasoline expenses.

"We've been real fortunate that the city has procured grant dollars and funneled it to the B-Cycle stations," [J.D. Simpson](#), the site selection analyst for the city's B-Cycle program, said Wednesday.

It takes about \$50,000 to set up a station, from the kiosks to the bikes themselves to the RFID, or radio-frequency identification, chips in each bike.

"That's what enables us to track all the information to show the positive impact on the community," Cindi Snell, the chief share director, said of the chips. "That's what tracks those miles, and we convert those miles to calories burned, carbon offset and the gas saved."

Simpson said she's still working to improve signage that would direct B-Cycle users from one station to another, including scouting existing signs to which they can add the B-Cycle's blue "B" insignia. But she admits getting proper signage will be more complicated than that.

Plans are in the works to add at least seven more stations before the end of the year. Simpson said safely getting from one station to the next is key when choosing new locations.

"We have to ask, do they have enough time to get from one station to the other? Can they dock along the way? And is it safe?" Simpson said.

Once a bike is checked out, riders have 30 minutes to check the bike back into a station to avoid incurring additional charges.

A free B-Cycle smart phone app is available to help riders navigate to the nearest station and to help them determine which station to dock at.

If the preferred station is full, which is visible through the app, riders can dock at the nearest available station. The app can also be used to vote for the next B-Cycle location.

“The next batch is still in the works,” [Gus Sullivan](#), a spokesman for the B-Cycle program, said of the new locations.

Possible sites that are being considered include near the Walgreens downtown, at [San Antonio College](#), near Woodlawn Lake, and at a hotel near Cesar Chavez Boulevard and South Flores Street.

“They're all just going in strategically to fill some of the gaps in the system,” Sullivan said.

stressler@express-news.net

