

## Livelihood benefit of Public Bicycle Sharing scheme in New Town Kolkata

In the afternoon of 28<sup>th</sup> July 2021, the social media related to New Town was jubilant. It was celebration of the declaration of New Town as one of the topmost cycling cities of India. This was acknowledgement of a fact that becomes quite apparent as one just takes a stroll along any street of New Town. Dedicated and protected cycle tracks, cycling signages and cycle docking stations show the commitment of the city authorities and the passion of the citizens towards cycling.

One of the major cycling interventions is the App Based Public Bicycle Sharing system with 100 bicycles and 400 electric scooters. It's a technology driven public facility. It was launched by the Hon'ble Minister In Charge, Janab Firhad Hakim on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 just before the pujas.

People can take a cycle or e-scooter from any of the 21 docking stations by unlocking with the help of



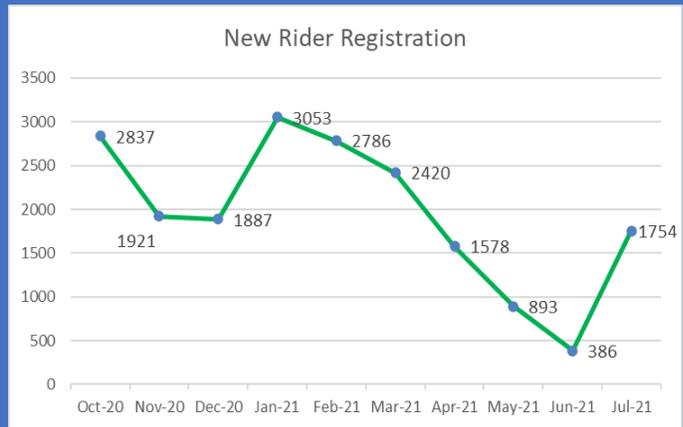
Demonstration of the app at the time of launch

their smart phones with the Public Bike Sharing app. Depending upon the usage, the amount of charge is deducted online from the wallet of the app. The user is uniquely identified with the mobile phone number.

This is a Public Private Partnership project under Smart City Mission under New Town Kolkata Green Smart City Corporation Limited.

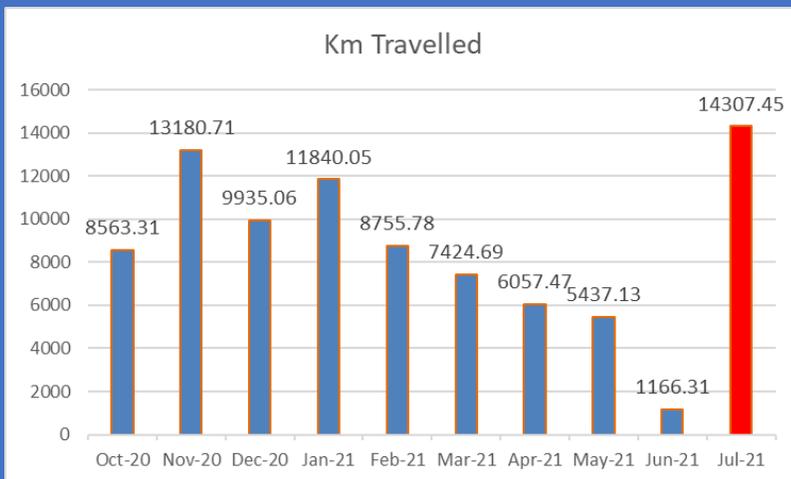
The project was launched to encourage non-motorized transport in the city. Intra city last mile connectivity is a crucial issue in any greenfield city like New Town. This project was targeted to offer solution to that end also.

The popularity of the system can be gauged from the fact that during last nearly one year 19515 subscribers have registered as users of the system and daily average distance travelled by users is about 300 Kms. The new subscriptions took hit during the peak months of second wave of Covid 19 infections but has again picked up from the month of July 2021. Monthly distance travelled in Kilometers have also followed a similar trend.



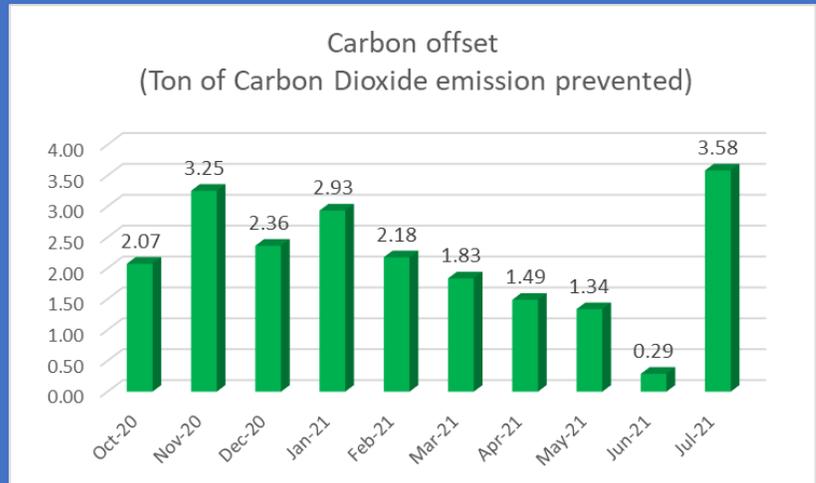
In aggregate, the system has contributed to environment by generating average monthly carbon offset of 2.13 Kg of carbon dioxide equivalent. During the last nearly one year of operation, the system has saved the environment from emission equivalent to nearly 21 tons of Carbon dioxide. The system is serving both of its targeted objectives of popular last mile transport system as well as green environment friendly mode of transport.

In any vibrant city like New Town, there always lies a hidden layer of utility not apparent to the eyes of even the ardent city planner. That is the beauty of an urban cauldron.



The Public Bicycle Sharing system was introduced to ease out intra city travel as well as to reduce non-motorized transport to cut emissions. Little could be understood how it will become a boon for the livelihood of the small service providers in the city. Now the e scooters are being used by small traders who

deliver grocery items and drinking water to households. It is saving them cost as otherwise they would have to hire a e rickshaw were the charge won't be less than 50 rupees for a half an hour trip which is just 15 rupees for an e scooter from the sharing scheme.



One trader supplying packaged drinking water to households tells that most of his customers call for one jar of water to replace the empty ones. Taking a toto for that is expensive as the totos charge extra for travelling till the doorstep. He often had to carry the jars for a considerable distance on his shoulders which caused wastage of time and energy. Now he avails the e scooters and delivers the water jars just



Launching of the e-scooters

at the doorstep with lower cost and time. He generally makes three to four trips in the same hour reducing the cost even further. Even if he must go for a single customer, the customers do not object to a carriage cost of 15 Rupees, which otherwise would have been at least 50 rupees inviting objection from the customer.

Due to better communication facilitated by the shared bikes he can cover more customers in the same time. This way his livelihood is augmented by the Public Bicycle Sharing System.

There are other instances also, where pharmacies and grocers are using the e scooters to deliver medicines and grocery items at doorstep.

Like a true transport facilitator service which affects the lives of people in many dimensions augmenting the overall quality of life, the Public Bicycle Sharing System of New Town is influencing the life of citizens supporting their livelihood needs.



Water jar being delivered on e scooter