



Community of the Future

Innova EV, ComEd and the Bronzeville Community — Ride Sharing Mobility Pilot for Seniors

Chicago's Bronzeville neighborhood is renowned as an early-20th-century African American business and cultural hub, as it was the center of African American life and historically known as the city's "Black Metropolis."

But with all the cultural capital Bronzeville had accumulated, it still lacked accessible mobility for all.

To solve this problem, Innova EV partnered with utility company ComEd and the Bronzeville community to offer affordable, zero-emission transportation for seniors. **The successful 24-month pilot offered a zero-emission, door-to-door ride share option that:**

- Transported 225 seniors
- Completed 1,431 rides
- Offset 1,464 pounds of CO₂
- Created 16 jobs
- Brought in \$32,000 in economic benefits to Bronzeville

Not only was the Bronzeville ride sharing pilot a resounding success, but it is also a service that is easily replicated in transit deserts across the U.S. By working with the city, the community, sponsors and Innova EV, affordable transportation options are readily available at zero cost to city partners. Innova EV's micromobility solutions are a private-sector solution to a public-sector problem.



Bronzeville Community Development Partnership

About the Program

The Problem

Bronzeville Lacked Transit

Millions of people in the U.S. are cut off from quality food, jobs, healthcare, and education due to a lack of access to transportation, and this problem affects people of color at higher proportions. In Cook County, one out of every 10 people (i.e., 438,500 residents) live in “transit deserts,” or areas cut off from fast, frequent train and bus service (Brasuell, 2014).

Car ownership is not a viable option, according to AAA: owning a car costs an average of \$10,000 annually (Edmonds, 2021). The median income for Bronzeville residents is \$37,353 (Point2Homes, 2021). That would be 1/3 of a household’s annual salary! This problem is exasperated for communities of color, seniors, veterans, and those who no longer drive, making it more difficult for them to access trains, health care and grocery stores.

For example, in Bronzeville a 1.3-mile trip to the doctor via two buses took 1 hour.

The Solution

Innova EV’s Ride Sharing Pilot

The pilot, sponsored by ComEd, was part of the utility company’s “Community of the Future” initiative. The pilot was tested at three senior buildings with 16 employees, and was the result of an ongoing dialogue with area residents focused on identifying needs and opportunities to test emerging energy technology that serves the interests of the community.

“Through our collaboration with residents and area leaders we’ve learned that helping meet the transportation needs of seniors is an area where we can help make a difference. We’re excited to partner with Innova EV, a pioneer in the electric vehicle services and a rising star in our state’s growing energy technology industry.”

MELISSA WASHINGTON
VP of External Relations, ComEd



About the Program

Details

Partners

Innova EV partnered with utility company ComEd, the Bronzeville Community Development Partnership, and Eluminocity GmbH to launch the landmark pilot. Innova EV was in charge of the EV mobility service, while ComEd was a sponsor of the Community of the Future microgrid project, and Eluminocity GmbH, a Germany-based EV infrastructure company, provided charging services.

Vehicle

The pilot program utilized one Dash EV to provide transportation for senior residents in Bronzeville. The Dash is a 100% electric vehicle. The car has a range of 150 miles per charge of the lithium-ion battery and a maximum speed of 35 mph. The Dash is an IoT (Internet of Things) 4G & Wifi connected vehicle with more than 50 built-in sensors that collect data about the car's performance and ridership statistics. A second vehicle was also available to provide continued service in the event of required maintenance on the first. The Dash vehicle was supported by a Level 2 EV Charging Unit (240V, 40A) installed at a nearby bed-and-breakfast where the vehicle was stored and charged when not in use.

Locations

The pilot program launched on December 15, 2017, at TRC Senior Village (346 E. 53rd Street). On October 9, 2018, the program expanded to two additional senior apartment buildings, Maudelle Brown (4949 S. Cottage Grove Ave.) and Mary Jane Richardson Apartments (4930 S. Langley Ave.), to boost ridership by serving a wider population.

Pilot Length

The pilot launched December 15, 2017, and was paused in March of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pilot plans to relaunch in early 2022.

"It's been great getting to know the residents of TRC Senior Village in Bronzeville. We look forward to expanding our fleet to serve Bronzeville residents while creating jobs in the community."

ROMAN KUROPAS
President and CEO, Innova EV



About the Program

Results

Equity, Sustainability, Safety, Data and More

The ride sharing pilot was a resounding success as it solved Bronzeville's transit desert issues by focusing on four areas: Equity, Sustainability, Safety, and Data Insights. It was also a hit with Bronzeville seniors due to its affordability, ease of use, convenience, and job creation factors.

Goals Exceeded

Equity: Innova's pilot was able to serve an underserved community by providing 225 seniors in the Bronzeville neighborhood with accessible and affordable transportation. The average trip length was 10 minutes and the average trip distance was 0.7 miles.

Sustainability: The pilot, which utilized Innova EV's zero-emission Dash electric vehicle, offset a total of 1,464 pounds of CO₂.

Safety: Instead of walking to the bus stop in Chicago's frigid winters and sweltering summers, seniors were able to stay safe from the elements. No longer would they have to worry about slipping on icy sidewalks or suffering from heat exhaustion.

Data Insights: The program shared trip destination, ridership, EV charging patterns, energy consumption and carbon emission savings data with the City of Chicago and key stakeholders.

A Community Success

Economic Benefit: During 2018, the community realized over \$20,000 in economic benefit through resident transportation savings, wages earned by locally hired staff, and rent for storing the vehicle at the garage of a local business. Between January and June 2019, the program's economic benefit to the community came to more than \$12,000 in transportation savings, local staff wages (16 employees), and rent receipts for vehicle storage.

Time Saver / Convenience: The previous 1-hour trip to the doctor, via two buses, was reduced to only a 10-minute ride with Dash.

"In Bronzeville, we want to seize every possible opportunity to be a smart and sustainable community and drive economic growth. The Dash electric vehicle pilot is very well aligned with our interests in building a sustainable future."

PAULA ROBINSON
President, Bronzeville Community Development Partnership

References

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