



# MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Ald. Robert J. Bauman, Chair  
Public Works Committee  
Public Transportation Review Board

**From:** Richard L. Withers, Legislative Fiscal Analyst ext. 8532

**Date:** July 10, 2012

**Subject:** Background Information: File Number 120428 – A Bike-Sharing Resolution

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This memorandum has been prepared to provide background information and answer questions that about bike-sharing systems and potential implementation of a bike-sharing program in Milwaukee.

### **Background**

Bike-sharing programs in the United States have expanded significantly in the last several years from initial programs a decade ago involving refurbished and painted bikes left unlocked for free use (Madison Red Bikes, Portland Yellow Bikes, Tucson Orange Bikes) to “third generation” programs with kiosk-based return and delivery to solar-powered installations operated with credit or membership cards and linked by cell phone or WiFi service.

Early programs, initiated in the 1990s, generated news stories about theft and vandalism of bicycles. In fact, the first 30 bicycles placed into service in the Tucson Orange Bike program were all reported lost or stolen within several weeks, and all 80 bicycles eventually used in the program were either lost, stolen or vandalized.

Programs implemented in the last several years have generally experienced less than a 1% loss over time. In June 2010, Minneapolis, initiated “Nice Ride” which is one of the first examples of a large scale municipal bike sharing program. The first phase included 700 bikes and 65 stations throughout Minneapolis. Due to popularity, the system was aggressively expanded into neighboring Saint Paul in 2011. As of April 29, 2012, Nice Ride has recorded a total of 330,000 trips in a system now totaling 1,330 bikes at 146 stations.

Boston launched a 60-station, 600-bike “Hubway” system in 2011. The Boston program was funded in part by a \$3 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration. A contract was entered with Alta Bicycle Share of Seattle to operate the system with installations manufactured by Public Bike of Montreal (Bixi). Hubway recorded 100,000 station-to-station rides in its first 2½ months of operation.

This month (July 2012) New York City is initiating a bicycle-sharing system with over 600 kiosks and 10,000 bicycles, also operated by Alta Bicycle Share.

## **Key Points about the Bike-Sharing Experience of Other Cities**

### ***Bike sharing works best in dense places.***

Bike share is designed for short trips under three miles and 30 minutes. Cities report getting the most “bang for the buck” by locating stations at popular origins and destinations, such as workplaces, schools, and shopping districts. As systems grow, additional stations can be added.

### ***Bike share stations need to be located close together.***

If a bike share station is full, nearby stations provide a convenient and important back-up option to return bicycles.

### ***People bike more after joining bike share, even if they own a bike.***

Bicycle-sharing convenience highlighted by experience in cities such as Minneapolis. Where two thirds bicycle sharing members reported biking more after joining even though 77% owned a personal bike.

### ***Larger systems work, small systems struggle.***

Common sense dictates that the more stations available, the more likely it is that a bicycle-sharing station is near a desired destination. Too few stations and the system isn't a practical choice as reflected by the attached table of US Bike-Sharing Cities. The District of Columbia's first system had only 10 stations and very little use. DC metro's new system has more than 1500 bicycles, 165 stations and experienced 1 million trips in its first year.

### ***Theft and vandalism aren't major concerns.***

Theft and vandalism were initially concerns with programs begun in Europe and in the first generation of United States installations. Minneapolis had one bike reported stolen in 2011. The Capital Bike Share program in the District of Columbia and Arlington metropolitan area reports a theft rate less than 1%.

## **Links to Bike-sharing Cities**

The New York Bike Share program, which rolls out later this month, is known as "Citi Bike" due to the \$41 million sponsorship of Citi Bank. One of the interesting features of the Citi Bike web site is an interactive map of approximately 600 stations installed throughout Manhattan and Brooklyn:

<http://a841-tfpweb.nyc.gov/bikeshare/>

Capital Bikeshare is the program now serving the metro Washington D.C. area with more than 1500 bicycles and 165 stations. The Capital Bikeshare web site features a video on how to use the system:

<http://www.capitalbikeshare.com/>

The Madison Bike Share Program was installed and is operated by Bcycle:

<http://madison.bcycle.com/>

### **Links to Bike-sharing Manufacturers and Suppliers**

There are four or five prominent providers of bike-sharing including:

The Sandvault Company of British Columbia which has been involved in installations in mid-size cities including Tulsa:

<http://sandvault.com/bikeshare/bike-share-experience/>

The "Bixi" System by Public Bikes of Montreal which partners with Alta Bike Share in the United States:

<http://www.bixisystem.com/>

The Bcycle system, manufactured by Wisconsin's Trek, which has partnered with the City of Madison to install the Madison Bcycle system:

<http://madison.bcycle.com/>

Bike Nation, which is planning installations in Los Angeles and Anaheim:

<http://www.bikenationusa.com/>

### **Links to Bicycle-sharing Feasibility Studies**

Cleveland:

<http://www.qcbl.org/sites/qcbl.org/files/Cleveland%20Bike%20Share%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf>

Providence:

<ftp://providenceplanning.org/BikeShare/DraftBikeShareReport.pdf>

Austin:

<http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/edims/pio/document.cfm?id=152747meet>

Seattle:

<http://seattlebikeshare.org/>

Philadelphia:

<http://www.bikesharephiladelphia.org/PhilaStudy/PhiladelphiaBikeshareConceptStudyfeb2010.pdf>

Washington DC:

<http://www.arch.virginia.edu/~dlp/Courses/P5120F09/Files512F09/HutchinsonBikewdc.pdf>

New York City:

[http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/transportation/bike\\_share\\_part1.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/pdf/transportation/bike_share_part1.pdf)

[http://a841-tfpweb.nyc.gov/bikeshare/files/2011/08/bike\\_share\\_part1.pdf](http://a841-tfpweb.nyc.gov/bikeshare/files/2011/08/bike_share_part1.pdf)

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