

## Bike Share Programs

Bike share programs provide convenient access to bicycles for short trips, transit-linked trips, and/or tourist trips. Bikes are “rented” from any number of stations set up around a City and can be returned to the same or any other station. The program encourages short trips with a pricing structure that is generally free for trips less than 30 minutes and increasing for longer trips. Access to the program can be purchased through a short-term (typically around \$5/day) or annual (typically around \$60/year) membership.

The international community has experimented with bike share programs for nearly 40 years and until recently had low to moderate success because of theft and vandalism. In the last five years, innovations in technology have resulted in greater accountability and given rise to a new generation of technology-driven bike share programs that are currently operated in Montreal, Minneapolis, Denver, and Washington DC. Lower technology examples have also been successfully implemented in smaller cities and at university and employment campuses. Some examples of smaller-scale bike share systems include:

- Cornell University: 40 bikes at 4 stations funded by allocating \$1 of the student activity fee to the program (annual budget of \$14,000).
- Northern Arizona University: low-technology 45 bike system.
- Washington State University: higher-technology system (similar to BIXI in Montreal and Nice Ride in Minneapolis) that allows bikes to be rented for 24-hours from 3 stations around campus. The 32-bicycle program is funded entirely by students and is an update of the lower technology Wellbeing Green Bike Program.
- Tulsa Townies: operated since 2007 by the Saint Francis Health System, bikes are provided at four stations. Rentals are processed at a terminal at the station using a credit card (for identification and theft deterrence). In addition, Tulsa Transit offers a “bike library” where users can “borrow” a bicycle for up to 24 hours.
- Buffalo Blue Bicycles (see below).

An initial bike share system in Ashland might consist of 5 – 7 stations (approximately 35 bikes). Clientele could come from a variety of sources, but would be well supported by tourists and students. As such stations should be located in close proximity to hotels and education campuses such as SOU as well as near high activity centers along OR 99 and Main Street - connected with safe bike routes.

Typical costs include capital of approximately \$3,000 - \$4,000 per bike and an annual operating cost in the order of \$1,500 per bike. Current operations in Washington DC and Minneapolis show usage rates of approximately 1.0 – 2.0 trips / bike / day, of which approximately 20% replace a previous driving trip (this could be more in a smaller town setting). The immediacy and accessibility of a bike share system makes it an effective form of personalized public transit. Further, recent North American systems have recorded very low rates of theft and vandalism.



*Nice Ride, Minneapolis*

### **Bike Share Case Study – Buffalo Blue Bicycles**

**Operator:** Green Options Buffalo.

**Fleet:** 75 recycled bikes.

**Stations:** 9 stations (bike racks) located at the City's local university and medical campuses (some campuses have multiple hubs to enable internal trips).

**Cost:** members join the program for an annual fee of \$25 or six hours of volunteer service and “check-out” bicycles on-line for no additional cost.

**How it works:** Bicycles are locked to racks at the stations. Users “check-out” bicycles on-line where they are provided a unique PIN code to unlock the bike. The database updates to show current bicycle availability. Bicycles may be checked out for up to two days and returned to any station.

**Expansion:** Stations are added by request – a business wanting a station needs only to provide a bike rack outside their building.

**Problems:** Stations located off the major campuses have generally failed from lack of ridership, theft, and vandalism.

**Statistics:** 171 registered members; nearly 1,000 trips (2008).