

CITY OF BURLINGTON EMPLOYEE BIKE SHARE PROGRAM

BACKGROUND

At present, the City owns five bikes that are available for use by any employee. These have been obtained on a once off, ad-hoc basis over the last five years using Wellness funds to purchase the bikes. The bikes are in three separate locations (City Hall, 645 Pine St and Leddy Arena) and are used on a regular basis by those that are aware of them. At present there is no funding for maintenance or repairs and this falls on the department in which they are located or comes out of DPW maintenance funds. This is not ideal. There is no formal program for these bikes nor any overall vision or oversight.

The Wellness Committee on June 9th, 2014 approved the purchase of 10 new bikes (with accessories), three years guaranteed maintenance and repair, and to initiate a full program with a mission and promotion. The bikes chosen for the additional bikes are the Jamis Commuter 3 bikes. The existing 5 bikes are similar, Trek Allant and a Jamis Commuter 3.



MISSION

The program mission is to:

“Promote the use of healthy alternative transport options while at work by:

- *encouraging employees to bike instead of drive for short range trips,*
- *providing ‘lunchtime’ recreation opportunities,*
- *reducing the cities reliance on motorized fleet vehicles,*
- *reducing employee need to drive to work, and*
- *freeing up downtown parking that can be utilized at a higher rate of return for retail shoppers, tourists, etc.”*

The specific benefits are:

- Numerous health benefits of encouraging employees to choose an active, healthy transportation option during work hours to attend any meetings or perform site visits,
- Encourages employees to bike recreationally lunchtime or during the day. Studies show that workers that exercise during the work day are more productive and happier,
- Provides flexibility for employees who may bus or walk to work to be able to travel to meetings, conduct site visits or other City business by bike instead of bring their personal vehicles to work,
- For short range trips, particularly into or out of downtown, are often quicker than equivalent trips by car when the time taken to search for parking and walk to the building is factored in,

- The City will save money and wear and tear on vehicles by providing a viable alternative for getting around the city without using a car,
- Reducing the number of parked employee automobiles frees up valuable garage spaces and metered street parking and increases the revenue DPW can generate from these spaces,
- Through a combination of mobility options (carshare, transit, bicycles), the City can reduce the number of vehicles in their fleet,
- Reducing vehicle miles traveled by City employees helps the City achieve the ambitious carbon reduction goals of its Climate Action Plan.

LOCATIONS

The additional 10 bicycles will be dispersed between different City locations primarily based on employee demand at those locations and to departments that voice a desire and apply to have a city bike at their location. There have already been requests for bikes in 4 locations. The bikes will only go to locations where they are wanted and the criteria for a bike location will be based on:

- number of on-site employees,
- secure yet 'open' location that can accommodate a bike without impacting fire escape etc,
- accessibility to all employees at that location during office hours, and
- a dedicated employee(s) who can act as a point person/champion for that location to answer any questions, report any problems and call for the bike to be to be repaired.

Employees/departments requesting a bike to be at their location will be asked to show that this criteria is met. Each bike will have a name, given in the first week by the department/location it will be, so that employees feel some sort of ownership, to add some personalization and also help with booking and tracking.

MAINTENANCE/REPAIR

The proper maintenance and quick repair is a key component to the program. Every bike will obtain a yearly service during fall or spring to ensure that they operate effectively and efficiently, year after year. An account has been set up at Skirack where a bike can be dropped off (they do pickup and drop off for free by simply calling them) to be repaired, with the cost drawn down from the account balance, with no up-front cost or hassle to any employee or department. This ensures that the little issues will more than likely be dealt with frequently and easily, as the procedure is easy. Each bike is allocated funds for replacement parts each year so that should the bike need new brakes, tires, etc, it will be covered and easy to replace. The maintenance will be re-assessed before the 3 years funding ends, with the overall intent of possibly folding the City bike fleet into the city's general vehicle fleet maintenance budget or possible new TDM setup.

BOOKING SYSTEM

At present there is no booking of bikes, and it is on a first come first served basis. This is unpredictable, creates uncertainty and discourages use, as it cannot be guaranteed that the bike will be there at the time you need it. The goal of the program is to set up a booking system accessible to all employees, so that a bike can be booked in advance and you can guarantee that it will be there, when it is needed. It also allows someone to see if another bike is available at a nearby location so that they can simply go there to pick up a bike still get to their meeting by bike. The booking system would also help in reporting to see the number of distinct trips that each bike is used. Each bike will also be equipped with a basic computer, which will also allow for 6 monthly or yearly reporting on its use (on a miles basis) so that it can be determined how effective the program is, calculate average trip length based on the booking calendar and importantly determine if a bike at a certain location is being under-utilized and should be moved to another location.

IMPLEMENTATION

The key to a successful program will be in its implementation and promotion, initially and in the future. This will be done through:

EVENT

A launch event for the program is planned (tentatively around the end of July) to be held to promote to all employees the program, show people the bikes and provide hands on instruction to those who may want to know the ins and outs of the bikes and their accessories, a hands on demonstration of the booking system and dissemination of promotional materials. This will be combined with other organizations such as CATMA, Local Motion, Carshare Vermont and involve a press conference/ announcement by the mayor to help further promote the program and show the community that Burlington is leading by example.

POSTERS and CARDS

Promotional materials such as how-to posters at each bike location and posters advertising the program to be hung in locker rooms/break rooms etc to remind employees of the program will be key. A small professional looking postcard will be produced with all the required information for an employee to understand the process and a link to go to the web for more information. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont have offered their services in production of these items.

WEBSITE

The City Wellness website www.burlingtonvt.gov/HR/Wellness will be the main location for all information on the bike share program. How to instructions for use, map of all bike locations, posters for point persons/champions to print anytime if needed and all other information can be accessed by any employee (or the public), from any computer. Information can be easily added or removed by any number of employees with permissions to edit the page.

HR NEW HIRE OREINTATION

A key to the program is in making ALL newly hired employees very aware of the program and its benefits, bike locations and ease. New employees will be given a promotional card in their new hire packet, providing them with the tools to use and about how to find the website for more information

So, the initial question to all department heads is: Do you want a bike at your location?

If yes, we will need your help to *“Promote the use of healthy alternative transport options while at work...”*. Discuss with your employees to come up with the best location and the person(s) to help manage the bike and submit a request ([email](#) to Nic Anderson is fine). We may not be able to put a bike in every location (at least for now!) but will try to spread the fleet around the city so that if there is not a bike in your building, there will be one close.

If no, that’s fine too, but we still need you help us to *“Promote the use of healthy alternative transport options while at work...”!*

The more input, buy-in and follow up we have from all Department Heads, the more this program will succeed and flourish. We are still coming up with ideas, improvements and plans on a daily basis. **Please, if you have any questions, comments or concerns, email Nic Anderson (nanderson@burlingtonvt.gov)** so we can incorporate any ideas or address any concerns. Thank you.