

Brief History of Bikeshare in the City of Little Rock

Bikeshare is a 2016 LAB Key Step to Silver. The City of Little Rock has been actively seeking to launch bikeshare since 2016. What follows is a brief history of our efforts to launch bikeshare.

2016 – Conceptualization and Partnerships

Because our walkable downtowns abut one another, the ideal bikeshare system would serve both the Cities of Little Rock and North Little Rock. To facilitate procurement, the City of Little Rock wrote the RFP but partnered with North Little Rock through [Metroplan](#) (MPO) to advertise it (Appendix 1).

2017 – Bantam / BCycle Selected

In May 2017, the joint proposal of Bantam and BCycle was selected through Metroplan’s RFP process (Appendix 2). Bantam immediately got to work in our community securing sponsorships and making the necessary arrangements for a rapid and successful launch. BikePed Little Rock promoted the system on its webpage (Appendixes 3-5).

2018 –Partnerships fall through, CLR Launches Its Own RFP

Contract negotiations between North Little Rock, Little Rock, Metroplan, BCycle, and Bantam Strategy Group continued through the early part of 2018 but fell through in August 2018. As a result, the City of Little Rock wrote and advertised its own RFP in November 2018 ([Main](#), [Technical](#), and [Financial](#)).

2019 – Gotcha Selected by the Cities of Little Rock and North Little Rock

Through two independent RFP processes, Gotcha was chosen by the cities of Little Rock and North Little Rock.

2020 – Gotcha Bikeshare Will Launch in Little Rock and North Little Rock

Gotcha is making arrangements to launch in both municipalities in the Summer of 2020.

Appendix 1: Metroplan RFP

This is the RFP advertised by Metroplan but written by City of Little Rock Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator John Landosky.

STATEMENT OF SERVICES

Scope of Services

Metroplan (<http://www.metroplan.org/>) is requesting proposals from Bike Share Service Providers (BSSPs) to establish a bike share program spanning the Cities of Little Rock and North Little Rock (hereafter CLR and NLR).

Initial Size and Funding

The initial phase of the program (Phase One) will be launched as a three year pilot and provide approximately 15 to 30 stations with between 50 to 150 bikes. The initial size of the program launched in Phase One will depend on the efficacy of Metroplan, CLR, NLR, and the selected BSSP to negotiate sponsorships to primarily fund the program. While bike share in major metropolitan cities throughout the country have oftentimes launched needing millions of capital dollars with the use of grants and other sources, Metroplan intends to launch a smaller program to match the current politics and transportation demands of the region. Depending on the level of private support generated, Metroplan, CLR, and NLR intend to have little to no financial obligation in the Phase One launch. Municipalities and Metropolitan Planning Organizations throughout the country have found success in soliciting sponsorship dollars from sectors and industries that are present and important in their specific communities. Metroplan expects local business and organizational support to be significant, allowing Metroplan to launch bike share with a combination of funding sources.

Purpose

The primary purpose of the bike share program will be to provide a transportation alternative to CLR and NLR residents within the focal area of the project. By facilitating active transportation, this program will promote public health by increasing physical activity and decreasing air pollution. By keeping usage fees low and offering a reduced rate for low income residents, this program will be accessible to all residents. This program will contribute to the independence of those who cannot or choose not to drive due to age, income, or health condition. The program will work in concert with Rock Region Metro to help address the “last mile” problem within the focal area. By increasing the utility of Rock Region Metro and keeping cars parked throughout the business day within the focal area, the program will reduce traffic counts and congestion, making the focal area more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. The program will create a more attractive and “livable” environment within its focal area, attracting employees and businesses to locate in CLR and NLR. Key targets for bike share stations in Phase One will therefore be River Cities Center, high density parking, high density employment centers, and concentrations of restaurants/attractions. The program will create a park and ride opportunity in NLR and allow car-free movement throughout the focal area. Other locations may be considered to increase the visibility of the system, but this program is primarily meant to create a transportation option for

residents and workers of CLR and NLR within the focal area. The BSSP should propose a system that reflects and addresses these goals.

Phase One Focal Area

The Phase One focal area will depend on the number of bikes sponsored at the time of launch, but will not be farther north than the Argenta District (NLR), farther east than Heifer Village (CLR), farther south than the South Main District (CLR), and farther west than the Capital Mall (CLR) unless we are able to exceed 150 bikes at the time of launch. The Phase One focal area may be significantly smaller than this to approximate the 1,000 ft. station spacing recommended by NACTO.¹ The Phase One focal area may target bike-friendly linear corridors within the focal area (such as Main St. from 3rd St. to the South Main District) rather than the entire focal area in order to maintain the recommended spacing. We intend for the program to expand to include more bikes and cover a wider focal area after first launch.

System Description

Metroplan is seeking a turnkey service offering through an experienced, established bike share company. Provided services shall include:

1. The BSSP shall provide complete design, manufacture and installation of all bike share stations including racks, signage and advertising. The bike share company shall obtain all necessary permits and governmental/utility approvals, where applicable, with the full cooperation of Metroplan, CLR, and NLR.
2. The BSSP shall maintain full operational administration, financial management, provision of software and monitoring, program marketing and maintenance of the program and equipment. Bicycles must be able accessible to patrons through the use of text prompts, not exclusively through a specific smart phone application in order to allow more complete public access. The BSSP must carry all necessary and acceptable accident and liability insurance to service the program in amounts acceptable to Metroplan.
3. The BSSP, with the assistance of Metroplan, CLR, and NLR when necessary, shall cultivate and secure program sponsorship in order that the cost of the bike share system may be subsidized and the program expanded in the future.
4. The BSSP will be responsible for all equipment and signage loss or damage, caused by age, manufacturing defect, act of nature, theft or vandalism.

If the BSSP offers a System congruent with our Purpose but incongruent with our proposed approach, please articulate in the RFP how the BSSP's System can be launched with minimal initial or lifetime cost to our municipalities.

¹ <http://nacto.org/2015/04/28/walkable-station-spacing-is-key-to-successful-equitable-bike-share/>

Proposal Structure and Content

Section 1 - Proposal Summary

Please compose a cover letter summarizing the proposal. The letter must be signed by an officer of the proposer or a designated agent empowered to bind the firm in the contract offer.

Section 2 - References

Provide up to three references from past and/or present municipal clients for contracts similar in scope to this contract and in communities similar to CLR and NLR (in population, demographics, and number of bicycle facilities in within the initial launch focal area) including the agency's name and complete mailing address, the name of the contact person, title, email address and phone number of each reference.

Provide up to three references from bike rental companies within past and/or present BSSP systems that existed in their market before bike share system launch including their business name and complete mailing address, the name of the contact person, title, email address, and phone number of each reference (see also Section 4).

Section 3 - Infrastructure and Technology of the System

- What is the BSSP's proposed scope of initial implementation including number of bicycles and recommended placement and number of stations?
- Bicycles:
 - Provide a detailed description of the bicycles used in the system. Description should include all relevant mechanical specifications, including information regarding the gearing, suspension, seat, branding, onboard technology, and all other amenities (i.e. basket, bell, locks).
 - Preference will be given to BSSPs with bicycles that have at least three gears, have seats that are intuitively adjustable, have ample cargo space, have a lock(s) that allow the bicycle to be secured in locations other than a bike share station, have a kickstand, have bright front and back lights, and can be tracked via GPS.
 - Preference will be given to BSSPs with bicycles that are pleasant and manageable to ride. What is the weight of the standard adult bike to be widely used in the system?
 - What is the expected lifetime of the standard bicycle used in the system?
 - What is the standard protocol for replacing the bicycle hardware once the lifetime of the bicycle has elapsed?
 - What occurs to the outdated hardware? Preference will be given to those BSSPs who are willing to donate retired bikes to Recycle Bikes for Kids.²

² www.recyclebikesforkids.org

- Bike Share Stations:
 - Metroplan seeks a System with high modularity and expansion capability. Describe the extent to which stations can be relocated and additional stations and bikes can be added to the system.
 - Metroplan seeks a System that does not require power. Describe any power requirements.
 - Describe the requirements for a station location. How much space is required per bike? Is an awning or other special protection/accommodation needed?
- Provide a detailed description of any additional equipment to be implemented as part of the bike share system.
- Provide information on related hardware needed to operate and/or maintain the bicycles. Is Metroplan responsible for providing said hardware or does the BSSP possess the necessary equipment?
- Describe any information (i.e. safety, way finding) to be placed on bicycle and equipment (if applicable).
- Metroplan, CLR, and NLR prefers a System primarily or exclusively supported by private sponsorships and has little to no direct cost or risk to Metroplan initially or over the lifetime of the program. One way to achieve this would be for the BSSP to own and maintain all equipment and hardware and for Metroplan to lease the System from the BSSP for over the lifetime of the System. Provide an explanation of how the service offered minimizes total cost and risk to Metroplan, CLR, and NLR.
- Describe how the system will be compliant with the American Disabilities Act. Should Metroplan wish to offer alternative bicycles, allowing handicapped persons to make full use of the System or riders to carry large cargo, what other hardware does the BSSP offer?
 - Preference will be given to Systems that allow users to track the locations of these specialty bikes in real time throughout the system.
- Describe all reporting features available to Metroplan (i.e. system utilization, bike distribution, customer feedback, membership levels.)
 - Describe the format and frequency at which Metroplan, participating municipalities would be supplied with reporting and statistics about the System.
 - What types of demographic data are collected by the BSSP? Will Metroplan be able to assess usage by gender, race, level of income, or other demographics?
- Provide information on the warranty associated with the product the firm is proposing and any extended warranty (include the price) that might be available.

Section 4 – User Experience and Memberships

- Provide a detailed description (including photos/illustrations) of how the System will function from a user’s perspective. This should include both annual and short term memberships as well as one-time users.

- What steps are required for a non-member to check out a bike? How much time does it take to complete these steps (i.e. is this an onerous process for a one-time user)? What steps are required for a member to check out a bike?
- Metroplan wishes to launch a System that is equity-oriented. How will potential users engage with the system without a mobile smartphone? How will the BSSP accommodate cash-only users?
- How can the BSSP assist in marketing bike share and its lower cost option to low income communities and avoid Citi Bike’s “underperformance” for this community?³
- Does the BSSP’s System have a mobile application? If so, describe the mobile application:
 - On what platforms is the mobile application available?
 - Who is responsible for the maintenance and upgrades to the mobile platform?
 - Does the mobile application include an interactive map showing user location and bike share station locations?
 - Does the mobile application indicate the number of bikes currently available at bike share locations (i.e. updated in real time)?
 - What other functionality does the mobile application have? Please provide any other details of the mobile application you feel will be helpful in our deliberations. If the applicant is able to provide a demonstration of the application, that would be ideal.
- Does the BSSP’s System have a website? If so, describe the website that will be provided:
 - What services and information will be provided on the website (i.e. membership sign-ups, safety recommendations, system map, etc.)?
 - Please provide any other details of the website you feel will be helpful in our deliberations. If the applicant is able to provide a demonstration of the website (which could simply be access to BSSP websites in other comparable communities), that would be ideal.
- Provide a description of membership categories and payment options. Include recommended membership pricing based on the size of the system and the population of Central Arkansas.
 - Has the BSSP offered discounts for membership/use to low-income users in other markets? If so, through what system does the BSSP verify income?
 - Will the BSSP allow Metroplan the option of coupling user payment method with Rock Region Metro⁴ at the Phase One launch? If not, will this functionality be possible in the near future?
- Will the BSSP allow Metroplan the option of allowing users to return bikes to secure locations other than a designated bike share station, as is possible in Portland for a \$2 charge?⁵
- How are directions for System use communicated to the user? Are directions located within the mobile application, website, on signage, and/or other locations?

³ <https://www.outsideonline.com/2136406/do-bike-share-systems-actually-work>

⁴ <https://rrmetro.org/>

⁵ <http://money.cnn.com/2016/09/08/technology/bikeshare-network-future/>

- Describe the type of customer service support that will be provided to users as well as to Metroplan.
 - A system that provides 24/7 customer service is preferred.
 - How will customer service feedback be handled? We would prefer a BSSP who interacts directly with customers to promptly address their questions and concerns. Metroplan, CLR, and NLR would prefer to have access to all communications between BSSP and customers in real-time and quarterly summaries of these interactions, but the BSSP should be directly responsible for all customer service.

Section 5 - Operations and Maintenance

- Provide recommendations on what equipment and level of staffing would be required to sustain the System. Preference will be given to Systems that require minimal equipment and staffing by Metroplan or participating municipalities.
- Provide maintenance protocol for the bicycles and any other needed infrastructure or equipment including but not limited to any batteries used by bicycles or stations:
 - Are bikes within the System serviced periodically? If so, what is the period between scheduled services?
 - In addition to periodic service, does the BSSP take any additional proactive approaches to keeping bikes in good repair? If so, describe these approaches.
 - Who is responsible for System bicycle maintenance?
- Describe the process after which a customer reports a broken bicycle within the System.
 - How are the customer's immediate transportation needs met? Does the BSSP meet the customer with vehicular transport or a working bike?
 - What is the typical timeline for retrieving a broken bicycle, repairing it, and getting it back into the System? Does the BSSP provide bikes in reserve to immediately replace bikes removed from the System for repair? What assurances does Metroplan have for a minimum number of bicycles working within the System at any one time?
 - What is Metroplan's recourse if it continues to receive an unacceptable number of complaints regarding stranded customers, bikes in the system in disrepair, or other complaints regarding the condition of bicycles in the System?
- Describe software maintenance protocols and procedures for implementing software upgrades.
- Describe any bicycle redistribution protocols.
 - Who is responsible for redistribution?
 - What is the method of redistribution?
 - How often are bicycles redistributed?
 - How do the people responsible for redistribution know to redistribute bikes? Is an on-the-ground survey required or can the distribution of bicycles within the system be checked remotely?
 - What are the thresholds for when redistribution is considered necessary? Must a station be empty or are there metrics for overall system imbalance that triggers redistribution?

- What is Metroplan’s recourse if it continues to receive an unacceptable number of complaints regarding empty bike share stations or is otherwise unsatisfied with the redistribution provided by the BSSP?
- Describe the costs should bicycle hardware be stolen or lost. It is highly preferred that Metroplan not incur additional costs due to missing bicycles throughout the duration of the term of contract.
- Describe how the System can be adjusted to minimize competition with existing bike rental companies.
 - How often has the BSSP launched in areas with a pre-existing bike rental company? How has the BSSP’s entrance into past markets affected pre-existing bike rental companies in those communities? Has the BSSP purposefully avoided competition with bike rental companies in other communities? What specific measures has the BSSP taken to avoid competition? How have the BSSP and bike rental companies worked together to minimize competition and maximize synergy?
 - Please provide up to three references of pre-existing bike rental companies that have transitioned into a market that includes your System (see Section 2).
 - How have pre-existing bike rental companies altered their services/business model to better co-exist with a bike rental company?

Section 6 - Marketing and Customer Service

- Metroplan requires upfront marketing service and on-going in order to ensure success of the System. Please describe all marketing services.
- As stated, Metroplan and participating municipalities will rely on sponsorships in order to launch and support the on-going success of a bike share system. Describe the advertising opportunities, including a list of locations on bicycles and equipment that can accommodate customized messaging by Metroplan, participating municipalities, or additional sponsors to the system.

Section 7 - Sponsorships

- A bike share program in Central Arkansas is predicated on the financial support of the business community and local organizations. Please provide a detailed summary of the BSSP’s experience working with potential stakeholders to sponsor bike share systems.
- Describe when proposer is available to join calls or in-person meetings to support local efforts to secure sponsors of the System.
- Provide detailed examples of sponsorships acquired in the past by BSSP/customers for municipalities intending to launch with sponsorship from the following sectors:
 - Healthcare Organizations/Hospitals
 - University Systems
 - Major Corporations
 - Food and Beverage Industries
 - Non Profit Organizations

- Tourism Organizations
- Corporate Headquarters
- Commercial/Residential Properties
- Provide a detailed assessment of the local sponsorship opportunities in Central Arkansas and the BSSP's strategic initiative to acquire sponsorships.
- What would be asked of Metroplan, CLR, or NLR in order to secure sponsorships for the System? We would prefer a BSSP who takes primary responsibility for securing sponsorships for the System.

Section 8 - Proposer Information

- Provide a brief history of experience, qualifications and success in providing the type of product requested.
- Please list employees that will work directly with Metroplan.
- Provide small and/or DBE businesses status.
- Describe the firm's approach to station permitting and installation on public right-of-way and private property. Minimal Metroplan involvement and responsibility is preferred.

Section 9 – Price and Revenue Proposal

- The price proposal shall include all costs. There shall not be unexpected costs to Metroplan outside of the annual service cost.
- Pricing for future potential expansion of the System. This pricing should be made available to either Metroplan and/or identified partners willing to invest into future expansion of the System.
- It is preferred that Metroplan is not required to pay for replacement parts and additional bicycles beyond the annual service cost. Total service pricing should forecast, according to the BSSP's experience in similar markets, the predicted costs for maintenance/replacement parts/additional bicycles. Should usage exceed expectations and ongoing maintenance be more costly than expected, Metroplan, participating municipalities, and private sponsors will not be expected to pay for additional costs. Such costs will be the responsibility of the BSSP.
- Pricing for any other products/services needed for seamless continued operation of the System.
- Cost after system launch, including initial turnover logistics, maintenance, technical support, marketing (if applicable) and new features. No cost beyond system launch and the annual service cost is highly preferred.
- Describe how revenue from the bike share system in the form of user fees and membership fees is handled. Metroplan would prefer that most or all membership and user fees be returned to Metroplan for the expressed purpose of making our community a safer and more welcoming environment for bicycles. Please describe to whom user and membership revenue flows (and the amount, if any, retained by the BSSP) and a schedule for disbursement.

Metroplan is not responsible for your firm's failure to provide information and pricing on required items. The submitted pricing must include all of the costs required to perform the tasks to complete the project in full. Any costs not included in the submitted proposal that are required to complete the project, will be the responsibility of the awarded firm.

Section 10 – Achieving Success in Central Arkansas

- Metroplan is launching a bike share system to meet specific goals defined on page 1 "Purpose".
 - How can the proposer's BSSP be customized to meet those specific goals?
 - What performance measures is the proposer willing to collect to demonstrate the efficacy of the BSSP in meeting these goals?
 - Are there any other ways in which the proposer is willing to work with Metroplan to achieve these goals?
- CLR and NLR currently have few on-street or off-street bicycle facilities in the Phase One focal area.
 - In bike share launches in other communities with few bicycle facilities, what measures did the BSSP take to facilitate bike share success in this environment?
 - In communities with few bicycle facilities at first launch, did bike share provide a catalyst for more bicycle facilities? How so?
- How many bike share programs has the BSSP launched and how many of those communities still have a bike share program today?
 - What lessons has the BSSP learned in both its successes and failures that apply to CLR and NLR (based on our population, demographics, and number of bicycle facilities with our Phase One focal area)?
 - Based on that experience and the BSSP's overall knowledge of bike share, please indicate the most important steps that the BSSP, Metroplan, CLR, and NLR should take (and should avoid) to maximize the program's chances of success.
- How else can the BSSP leverage its experience to maximize program success in Central Arkansas?

Section 11 - Implementation Schedule

Provide an estimated implementation schedule from date of contract award, including date of product shipment, system launch date and any other relevant milestones. Also, provide typical delivery time for new and replacement materials. Provide documentation affirming compliance with all Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards ("PCI-DSS").

Metroplan intends to launch in 2017. The proposing firm should therefore be capable of implementing and launching a system within 45 days of a signed agreement.

EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

Metroplan shall be the sole judge of its own best interests, the proposal, and the resulting negotiated agreement. Metroplan reserves the right to investigate the financial capability, reputation, integrity, skill, business experience and quality of performance under similar operations of each Proposer, including stockholders and principals before making an award. Awards, if any, will be based on both an objective and subjective comparison of Proposals and Proposers. Metroplan's decisions will be final.

Metroplan's evaluation criteria will include, but shall not be limited to, the following:

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Financially Sustainable Bike Share	35
Experience in Similar Communities	30
Price	5
Operational Approach and Capacity	30
TOTAL	100

HOW TO APPLY

Proposals can be sent by email or postal mail. If sent by postal mail, they must be postmarked by Thursday May 18th. If sent by email, they must be sent by Thursday May 18th at 5pm Central Time.

Email submissions should be in .doc, .docx, or .pdf format. Please send to: TTownsell@Metroplan.org and carbon copy jlandosky@littlerock.gov, IHenry@nlr.ar.gov, and JHoneywell@littlerock.gov

For postal mail submission, please send to:

Bike Share RFP, ATTN: Tab Townsell

501 West Markham Street, Suite B
Little Rock, AR 72201

For any inquiries regarding the RFP or submission process, please contact: John Landosky, jlandosky@littlerock.gov, 501-371-4430

Appendix 2: CLR Press Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Tab Townsell, ttownsell@metroplan.org (501)372-3300

Lindsey West, lindsey@bantamstrategygroup.com, (205) 222-4137

METROPLAN ANNOUNCES BIKE SHARE OPERATOR AND EQUIPMENT

Service to begin in Little Rock and North Little Rock by early 2018

LITTLE ROCK, MAY 31, 2017 — The Metroplan Board today ratified the decision to hire Bantam Strategy Group in partnership with BCycle, two experienced bike share providers. This selection was made through the competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process and is based on the recommendation from the Metroplan Bike Share Consultant Selection Committee.

Bikeshare systems are advancing in large and mid-size cities, offering another transportation option which reduces the amount of automobile traffic as some people opt to pedal. Metroplan will launch bike share in Little Rock and North Little Rock with BCycle's latest product line, BCycle Dash. The BCycle Dash bicycle uses 'smart bike' technology, decreasing the overall capital expense of the bike share system and increasing system design versatility. With this system, the operating technology is located on the bike and used in conjunction with the brand new BCycle app.

"Bike share is among the many transportation options that Metroplan and local municipalities are exploring to make it easier to move around in the region," said Tab Townsell, executive director of Metroplan. "Bike share programs are known for adding to the attractiveness and vibrancy in a community, and by selecting an experienced operator with quality equipment, we expect the same will be experienced here."

Slated to launch in early 2018, the initial phase will focus on the downtown areas of Little Rock and North Little Rock, where density is greatest, address Rock Region Metro's "last mile problem" within the focal area, and provide a park-n-ride opportunity in North Little Rock.

"I am incredibly excited for what this bike share program will bring to our community. Among its myriad benefits, it will decrease the number of cars and increase the number of bikes on our downtown streets during the business day," said John Landosky, Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for the City of Little Rock. "This will make our downtowns safer environments for people on bike or on foot and help create a more walkable and livable community."

200 bikes will be deployed in the initial service area with designated drop zones still to be determined. With this system, the likelihood of expansion is high and will be actively evaluated moving forward.

"Connecting people regardless of socio-economic status to places and communities in Little Rock and North Little Rock with a high-performing, accessible, and sustainable transportation option is the mission," said Lindsey West, president and CEO of Bantam Strategy Group. "We are excited to partner with BCycle, Metroplan, both Cities, and many other local stakeholders to accomplish this community-driven initiative."

Securing corporate sponsorship is an essential next step and will be the focus of Bantam Strategy Group in the coming weeks and months. To learn more visit <https://www.littlerock.gov/for-residents/bikeped-little-rock/bike-share/> or contact Lindsey West at lindsey@bantamstrategygroup.com.

-more-

About Metroplan:

Metroplan is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the four-county region of Faulkner, Lonoke, Pulaski and Saline counties. It is a voluntary association of local governments that has operated since 1955.

About Bantam Strategy Group:

Bantam Strategy Group is the leading turn-key bike share management and operations company for small-medium size cities. Bantam currently serves for 12+ communities in making the bike share vision a reality. Bantam actively represents bike share on various national platforms and showcases cycle-friendly communities. Bantam is a 100% women-owned business.

About BCycle:

Each day, BCycle supports the operation of over 10,000 bike share bikes and 1,000 stations spread across over 45 cities in North and South America. This includes the ongoing operation, maintenance and development of the proprietary enterprise and best in class bike share equipment. BCycle is a wholly owned subsidiary of Trek Bicycle Corporation, a global leader in bicycle design and manufacturing.

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Appendix 3: 2017 CLR Bikeshare Landing Page

The following is content generated and posted in 2017 to discuss and promote our community's direction for bikeshare at that time. BikePed Little Rock has unpublished these pages and copied and pasted their content in this admittedly more clunky .pdf format to provide context to our journey to a bikeshare system while not confusing residents as to what is our current direction/

Little Rock / North Little Rock Bike Share *

Bike share is coming to our area! Metroplan is proud to partner with Bantam Strategy Group and BCycle to bring a top-tier bike share program to Little Rock and North Little Rock.



Figure 1. This is our new steed, the BCycle Dash. Image provided by BCycle.

What's Bike Share?

"Bike sharing is an innovative transportation program, ideal for short distance point-to-point trips providing users the ability to pick up a bicycle at any self-serve bike-station and return it to any other bike station located within the system's service area." [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#)

Why Bike Share?

Bike share is a means to address the concerns of citizens articulated in Metroplan's [Imagine Central Arkansas](#), Little Rock's [2020 Sustainability Roadmap](#), and other feedback mechanisms. In 2016, the League of American Bicyclists [identified launching a bike share program](#) as a key step in making Little Rock more bike-friendly. Among other benefits, bike share will help make our community [healthier, safer, and more independent](#).

Are We Ready?

Bike share benefits from a quality network of bicycle trails and on-street bicycle facilities, but bike share can also [facilitate these improvements](#). Bike share has the potential to create a culture shift in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock, making the bicycle a more recognized and safer means of transportation within the focal area.

Bantam Strategy Group

[Bantam Strategy Group](#) is a leading turn-key bike share management and operations company for small-medium size cities and, in our search committee's experience, is enthusiastically recommended by everyone with whom they do business. Bantam will employ a local team of full-time employees whose sole job is to provide a quality bike share system to our community. Bantam is a 100% women-owned business.

BCycle

In a volatile market, [BCycle](#) is the bike share company that has stood the test of time. A subsidiary of Trek, BCycle bikes are well-known as some of the highest quality bikes in the bike share market. Each day, BCycle supports the operation of over 10,000 bike share bikes and 1,000 stations spread across over 45 cities in North and South America. Most importantly, this includes the ongoing operation, maintenance, and development of the software that makes all of these interconnected systems work.

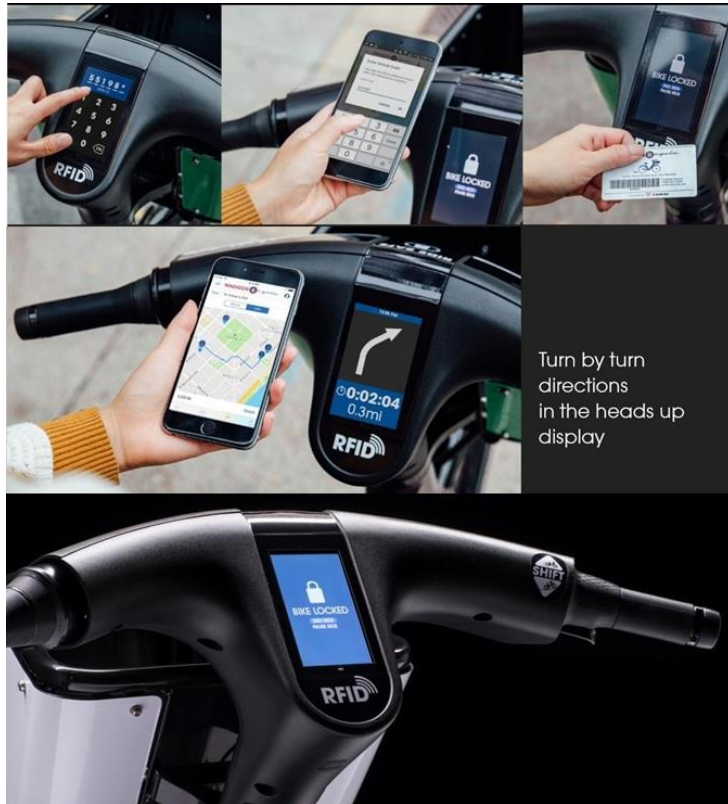
The Bike

The [BCycle Dash](#) features full-time active GPS and a state-of-the-art heads up display and touchscreen, which can help guide the user to her destination on bike-friendly streets (Figs. 1 & 2). Some of the more notable features of the Dash bike system include:

- Turn-by-turn directions with audio support on the heads-up display when paired to a rider's smartphone using the BCycle app;
- Active GPS and accelerometer on all bicycles;
- 8 speed, internally geared bike designed and engineered by Trek specifically for bike share;

- The ability to reserve a bike

The BCycle Dash was designed by Trek specifically for bike sharing. It is fun to ride, low maintenance, easy to adjust, and comfortably fits riders from 4'10" to 6' 5". The bicycle features an onboard self-charging GPS computer that runs off the power generation of the built-in solar panel (Fig. 3).



Turn by turn directions in the heads up display

Figure 2. The Dash's touchscreen, the BCycle app, and the optional RFID card allow several options to interface with the system when checking out and returning a bike. Turn-by-turn navigation with audio prompts can help get the user where she wants to go. Images provided by BCycle.



Figure 3. The Dash's solar charging panel on the back rack still provides plenty of space for rear lights

and user-supplied cargo bags. The basket on the front of the bike provides cargo space as well. Image provided by BCycle.

The System/Station Placement

The initial launch will have 200 bikes and 20-25 stations. Station locations have been considered for over a year. Usage data from other communities shows that [high station density is critical for program success](#). For that reason, our initial launch focal area will only be in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock, likely not farther north than Argenta in North Little Rock, not farther south than SOMA, not farther east than Heifer International, and not farther west than the Capital Mall (and perhaps more spatially limited than this). Consistent with our goal of making this program an accessible transportation option, key targets for bike share stations will include the Little Rock Rock Region Metro hub, high density parking, high density employment centers, and concentrations of restaurants/attractions. The program will create a park and ride opportunity in North Little Rock. Sponsorship may inform station placement as well.

We still have much to consider regarding station locations. We know our community and its needs very well and Bantam is well-versed in bike share best practices. In the upcoming months, our community and Bantam will apply all of this experience to create a network that meets our needs but is also informed by the lessons learned in other communities to facilitate program success. New stations will be added to the system with system expansion. Stations will be light and modular bike racks, allowing us to easily shift station location based on usage data in our community to optimize our network.

User Interface / Check Out Process

Riders can engage the system in multiple ways. The mobile app and website will be the primary means for users to sign-up and register an account. Once registered, the user can engage the system in the following three ways (Fig. 2):

- Touchscreen on-bike technology with a unique user ID and pin
- Mobile app checkout
- Bike share specific RFID card

Online registration:

- Subscriber goes to the website
- Under "Join Now", the subscriber creates a username and password and completes their profile information and accepts a liability waiver
- Subscriber chooses a membership type and enters their credit card information to create an account
- The user chooses the membership type that they would like to purchase. The user may choose to purchase an RFID card or may choose to access their membership through the use of their

smartphone. The RFID card will allow the user to check-out a bike using the smart bike technology directly on the bike.

- Once signed up, each member enjoys his or her own personal profile and account pages.

Casual (walk-up) user:

- User downloads the BCycle mobile app and purchases a pass using the sign-up process in the application.
- The user now has access and can take a bike out from the system using their smartphone.

The App

In 2016, BCycle released major upgrades to its mobile app. As part of its dedication to providing many points of access for riders, [the BCycle app](#) now offers mobile checkout and extensive map-based routing functionality. This mobile app makes bike share accessible and appealing to more users, as it eliminates a key barrier to entry: “How do I get where I’m going using bike share?” The new BCycle app makes it easy for new users to join and navigate a system, and will become a favorite tool for existing members to quickly get a bike from a station or interact with their BCycle operator.

When Will It Launch?

The program will launch in Spring 2019.

For more information, please contact City of Little Rock Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator John Landosky jlandosky@littlerock.gov.

* Portions of this page are the modified content of Bantam Strategy Group's Metroplan Bike Share Proposal and from Bantam's Press Release.

Appendix 4: Will It Be Used

The following is content generated and posted in 2017 to discuss and promote our community's direction for bikeshare at that time. BikePed Little Rock has unpublished these pages and copied and pasted their content in this admittedly more clunky .pdf format to provide context to our journey to a bikeshare system while not confusing residents as to what is our current direction/

Will Bike Share be Used?

In the discussions within the bike community and the City, concerns have been raised about whether or not a bike share system will be used in our community (Fig. 1). Some have said that we do not have enough ridership in our community to support the program. Other have suggested that there are not enough on-street bicycle facilities to support use of a bike share system. These are legitimate concerns deserving attention.



Figure 1. Bike share users in Los Angeles. Image from <http://www.bicycletransit.com/los-angeles/>.

Ridership

It is true that we would like to increase Little Rock's ridership. According to the League of American Bicyclists, [only 0.1%](#) of Little Rock's residents bike to work. However, our own count data over the last three years suggests that ridership, and in particular bike [commuting, is](#)

[increasing in Little Rock](#). [AHTD's recent survey](#) suggests that [20% of Arkansans bike to work and 1/3 bike almost daily](#), though that may be optimistic.

On-Street Facilities

It is also true that we have few installed bike facilities in the focal area and almost no protected bike lanes (highlighted as particularly important in [NACTO's Equitable Bike Share study](#)).

However, it is worth noting that many of the proposed bike facilities on the Master Bike Plan within the focal area are sharrows (Fig. 2, Bikeway III). [Sharrows](#) do not offer a separate space for bicycles on the roadway, but identify routes that are relatively safe for people on bicycles and alert drivers that the road is a preferred bicycle route.

Therefore, what the Master Bike Plan suggests is that streets with dotted blue lines are relatively safe places to ride regardless of whether or not on-street bike facilities have yet been installed. It is still important to accelerate the implementation of the Master Bike Plan within the bike share focal area to ensure the success of the bike share program (more on that below). However, the downtown area of Little Rock is more bike-friendly than most of our neighborhoods not because of the number of installed bike facilities on roads, but the nature of its street system (many walkable, low traffic, low speed streets that offer connectivity throughout the area). At first, the success of our bike share program will depend on our downtown streets being bike-friendly enough to facilitate bike share use.

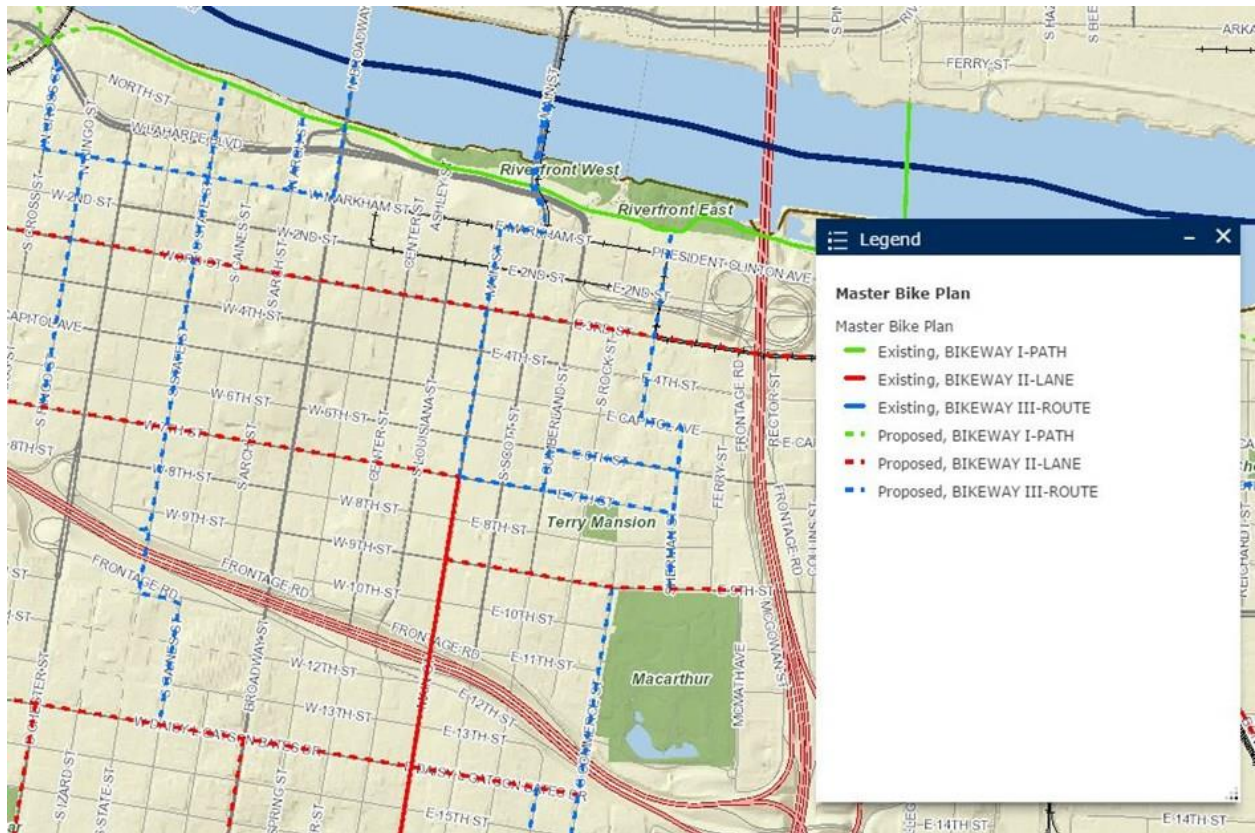


Figure 2. The City of Little Rock's [Master Bike Plan](#) in the focal area of the bike share system.

The Chicken or the Egg?

Bike advocates have often struggled with the idea of which comes first, increasing bike facilities to promote ridership or increasing ridership to increase demand to build better/more bike facilities. The practical reality is one can never completely precede the other. There will never be sufficient political will to build a complete, quality on-street bicycle network without people who actually ride demanding it. But it is also true that ridership increases as on-street bicycle facilities help people feel safer riding on the street.

The [NACTO bike share study](#) confirms and expands on this premise. It considers the success of a bike share program, ridership, on-street bike facilities, and rider safety. It concludes that all of these variables are correlated with one another but that it is unclear which drives the other. This lack of a clear cause and effect suggests that the order of which of these issues to address first is less important than making progress on any one of them.

Relating to our concerns, it may be less effective to lock ourselves into a strategy of increasing ridership and increasing on-street bike facilities to pave the way for a bike share program than to snatch the low-hanging fruit. The City is prepared to establish a bike share program now. The program can encourage increased ridership through increased opportunity and increased visibility of the bicycle as a form of transportation and recreation in the downtown

area. Increased ridership has been shown to increase rider safety due to a "[virtuous cycle](#)" and also has the potential to increase rider safety and decrease traffic congestion by keeping more cars parked downtown during business hours. Of course *rider safety* refers to all bicycle riders, regardless of whether they are using the bike share system.

A bike share program can also accelerate installation of on-street bicycle facilities within the focal area. After establishing a bike share program, the City is now invested in its success. This can help generate the will to install on-street facilities with City staff and elected officials. Increased ridership in the downtown area will increase the demand for on-street bike facilities. Finally, establishing a bike share program with [private sponsors](#) has the potential to make those sponsors advocates for on-street bike facilities to increase the return on their investment.

In Summary

Establishing a bike share program is a big step for our community and we should not take it lightly. After an exhaustive review of the current state of Little Rock, the [League of American Bicyclists](#) concluded that a key step to making our community more bike friendly is to establish a bike share program now. [NACTO's bike share study](#) suggests that, rather than waiting until we increase ridership and install more on-street bike facilities, bike share can help promote these changes in our community.

Of course there is no guarantee that the bike share program will be used and ultimately be successful. The success of the program will depend on the experience and capabilities of [our bike share provider](#) to guide us through this unfamiliar process. Fortunately, all indications suggest that [Metroplan has chosen a highly capable provider](#). Also, even though establishing a bike share program can help promote rider safety, increase on-street facilities, and increase ridership, these changes will not automatically occur following bike share establishment. It is up to the Little Rock community to embrace the bike share program and advocate for these changes to promote the success of Little Rock's bike share program.

Appendix 5: Why Bikeshare?

The following is content generated and posted in 2017 to discuss and promote our community's direction for bikeshare at that time. BikePed Little Rock has unpublished these pages and copied and pasted their content in this admittedly more clunky .pdf format to provide context to our journey to a bikeshare system while not confusing residents as to what is our current direction with [Gotcha](#).

Why Bike Share?

Bike share has been something our community has been asking for as reported in Metroplan's [Imagine Central Arkansas](#), Little Rock's [2020 Sustainability Roadmap](#), and other feedback mechanisms. Why are residents so excited to bring bike share to Little Rock? While you might order the importance of these benefits differently based on your perspective, it's hard to argue that bike share won't do good things for our community.



Figure 1. Promoting transportation by bike will promote community health and connectivity. Image provided by BCycle.

The Top Ten Benefits of Bike Share for Little Rock/North Little Rock

1) *Equity and Independence*: Bike share will promote independence for all residents. Citizens who no longer drive due to age or have a health condition that does not allow them to drive will have a

transportation option readily available. Residents who [cannot afford to own a car](#) will be able to move throughout the focal area without assistance (reduced rate memberships for low-income residents will be available and convenient to use).

2) *Safety - Increased Ridership:* [Bike share increases ridership](#) and [increased ridership benefits rider safety, likely because](#) drivers better recognize people riding bicycles as part of the typical traffic pattern.

3) *Safety - Decreased Car Traffic:* Allowing people to move within our downtown areas without driving will increase public transportation use (#8 below) and/or keep commuter cars parked during the business day(#9 below). This will decrease the number of cars on the street and thereby make our downtown areas safer for people [riding a bike](#) or [walking](#).

4) *Equity and Safety:* Biking and walking is more dangerous for African-Americans and other demographic groups both [nationally](#) and [locally](#). When bike share increases safety for people on foot and on bike, it also increases safety equity in our community.

5) *Health:* Bike share will provide an active transportation option in downtown Little Rock and North Little Rock, promote public health by [increasing physical activity](#) and decreasing air pollution (Fig. 1).

6) [Increase "Livability"/Attract Talent:](#) People want to move to and stay in places that are pleasant. A bike share program can be a part of what attracts and retains talented, mobile people to our community.

7) *Increase/Retain Business Investment:* Businesses want to relocate to and stay in places with a highly educated and qualified workforce as well as locations that facilitate an active lifestyle (and thereby decrease healthcare costs). Amenities like bike share can help attract and retain the talented, healthy workforce businesses seek.

8) *Enhance Rock Region Metro:* Rock Region Metro will become an even more attractive transportation option when a rider can end their trip at the Rock Region Metro hub in downtown Little Rock and then immediately hop on a bike share bike to complete their trip (a.k.a. the ["last mile problem"](#) of public transit). While this is already possible with the [bike racks mounted to all buses](#), a bike share option will only increase the partnership of bus and bike for transportation in our community.

9) *Parking Convenience:* People who drive into downtown Little Rock or North Little Rock will be better able to leave their car parked and get around our downtown areas via bike share during the day. Only one parking spot hunt per day! We also intend to establish a park-n-ride opportunity in North Little Rock that will be cheaper and easier than any option currently available to commuters.

10) *Decreased Traffic Congestion:* Fewer cars on the road in our downtown areas during the business day will make travel more convenient for all road users, whether they are walking, driving, biking, or riding the bus and will decrease air pollution as well.

