

Response to 2011 NYC DOT RFP for a Citywide Bike-Share System

Plan B

Our bid will consist of two elements. The first, which we refer to as Plan B, will provide or exceed all of the stated requirements of the current New York City Department of Transportation Request for Proposals:

- 10,000 identical, durable, bikes equipped with GPS and other electronics
- 10,000 “docks” capable of securing them throughout Midtown and Lower Manhattan
- 600 kiosks to enable users to access the system
- Suitable locations to place the equipment
- Relevant experience
- The ability to mount a test

Our improvements over the requirements of Plan B

Bikes: Don't have to be the standard design because locating device can be put on different vehicles

Kiosks: All there but not needed everywhere. Re-configured by local artists to fit into the community.

Docking stations: 25,000 stanchions can go anywhere. No congestion created.

Ads: Primarily for suppliers is optimal. Minimized at least. Local where possible.

Scope: Citywide used by commuters overnight and visitors and residents by day.

Coverage: As many vehicles as needed, 50,000 or more as indicated in the City Planning Comm. study

Diversity: Of design, with common identifiers, and user groups, like kids and the transport-challenged

Participants: Local businesses, community groups, enthusiasts, artists, entrepreneurs, families

Plan A

We feel that this program has the potential to provide an important new tool for improving this community's physical health and economic welfare. This enterprise intends to work with local businesses and community groups throughout the city, and in nearby suburbs, to maximize bike availability for everyone and minimize the time it takes to accomplish this. We will also support the designer/maker community's efforts to creatively explore the potential of slow-moving, human-scale and muscle-powered transportation, to rapidly evolve.

NYC Bike Stores

We have already gained the support of the two largest bike store chains and a number of independents in the NYC area, in establishing a program which would enable stores to cooperate in the development of this program. They derive significant income from rentals and it is possible that this encouragement of cycling may actually do some harm to their survival. Competition from the internet and mass market retailers, as well as current economic conditions has put great pressure on this business already.

Group Riding

The participation in this program of one of the major providers of social networking tools will enable us to organize programs to offer the additional safety as well as other benefits of using this activity as a new and very powerful form of live and in-person, direct social-networking.

Bike Manufacturers

Trade show aspect: As a supplement to the 10,000 Plan B bikes, we intend to deploy a large number of others, of the greatest possible variety of cost and type, for the use of travelers. We will invite a good many

manufacturers, whose products are known to be of good quality, to provide from 10 to 100 of their bikes for this program. We will make sure that they are provided with adequate and appropriate security in a variety of forms. Some will have GPS devices, some electronic locks, others less expensive but adequate security devices. Each manufacturer will be required to make an arrangement with one or more local bike shops to maintain their equipment while it is in use in this program.

Manufacturers will be paid an agreed upon amount over the course of the three years of their equipment's use in the program. If there are any significant equipment problems, any product will immediately be removed from the system. Surviving this environment intact will be a badge of honor and sign of quality. Potential purchasers of the bikes will be able, through the GPS system, to track the location at any time of every bike. This becomes the ultimate bike durability testing ground and year-round bike show.

Local Entrepreneurs

Designer builders: We are missing many features on the current design of bikes, which goes back to the 19th century. Back then they had many features not available today, like the famous side-by-side sociables and we have never had weather-protected or aerodynamic models in popular use. If the work of making these newly evolved vehicles takes place in this city and they are able to be put quickly in wide use, we will see the rapid birth of several new industries. They can provide well-paying jobs to skilled makers, both creators and fabricators of green transportation devices that can be exported throughout the world.

Connections to Transit

We have had conversations with a number of people from the transportation agencies, the MTA, the Port Authority, NJ Transit etc. We have been encouraged on all sides and promised cooperation in the siting of facilities and other matters concerning these efforts. The Director of real estate for the MTA, Jeffrey Rosen, felt that there were numerous ways in which the agency stood ready to be as helpful as possible.

Input from the Community

We have contacted every Community Board in the city and asked them for lists of locations in which they thought would benefit most from a program such as this. The density outside Manhattan is only a third as great in some areas and the usefulness of this program is most evident in the areas with the greatest population and pedestrian traffic. Regardless, this equipment will be welcome all over the city, especially in those neighborhoods with sufficient activity to justify its placement.

Our intention is to make fleets of vehicles available to social service centers on a fixed schedule, so that they may arrange mass bike rides of their members, for excursions, as recreation and for healthy exercise. We will do this on a non-profit basis. This will expand on the social networking potential which bikes encourage.

Connections to Local Businesses

Aside from bike stores, who are to be included in this program to the greatest degree possible, we will also seek the cooperation of other businesses, especially those in the vicinity of sizable emplacements which are open very long hours. While the central system is totally automated, many locations around the city support business that keep long hours, add to the security of the system by their very presence, and who could sell memberships, or provide other key services to the system

Kids

Education: There are bike groups in the city, like the 5Boro Bike Club, who have developed programs for helping young people develop safe and sensible behavior while involved with bikes. Plan B, a totally-

automated system, ordinarily does not permit the participation of children under 18 years of age. As long as proper conditions are provided, insurance is available for this type of activity and our system intends to maintain a fleet of at least several hundred kid-friendly bikes, that would be provided to registered legal organizations that have collected proper waivers from parents and made other needed arrangements, so that children may spend time on a bike getting some healthy exercise.

Work

There are a number of programs in the city to help young people gain competence in the repair and maintenance of bicycles. Recycle-a-bicycle is the best known but Time's Up and other organizations all provide opportunities to learn how to take care of bicycles, their own and, ultimately, others'. Some would like to be employed by this program to earn some income and advance their knowledge in this field. Others could be on trikes, ferrying bikes around to needed locations from those that are overloaded.

The Creative Element

Decoration: Some find the uniformity of equipment in a program such as this to be reassuring and comforting. Others find the bland uniformity and repetitive commercial messages boring at best. We would like to encourage creative design in the way bikes look. While some common design elements are helpful for those trying to find or identify the equipment, it is otherwise unlike the existing bike culture, where the individuality of bikes is a source of pleasure to many. Giving artists a chance to put their mark on this art-aware city benefits everyone.

Design: The standard "Safety" bike was perfected in the 19th century and has been getting only marginally better for 120 years. It is time to move ahead on a number of important functional, experiential and aesthetic matters. Among them are:

Weather protection. There is a type of human powered vehicles called Velomobiles. Strong but light coverings provide riders with a comfortable journey even in poor weather.

Utility. There are already bicycles made for deliveries, three-wheelers, some with freight-carrying boxes, etc.

Transformation. Through the use of advanced design techniques, bikes can be collapsed and folded, fitted with trailers and otherwise made more suitable in dense urban environments.

The Transportation-Challenged

Access: The ADA appears to require that accommodation must be made for a variety of communities within this program. How to do that exactly is yet to be determined but discussions are taking place with informed and caring members of this community.

Innovative design: There need to be many more vehicles that permit those of varying abilities to ride together in a social environment. Trikes aid those needing added stability, who comprise a very large group.

"TAB" (Temporarily able-bodied) co-usage: Many vehicles made primarily for the transportation-challenged can well be used by everybody. It would be a good idea for those who are still totally mobile to experience the kinds of vehicles made for those who are not.