Massive online engagement in bikeshare system planning

Many cities are planning or offering bike share systems of different scales. Using online crowdsourced mapping, city agencies and planning firms can easily collect extensive public input for suggested locations.

OpenPlans created several bike share maps, using Shareabouts, an open source crowdsourcing mapping tool. These maps were used in public input processes by NYCDOT in New York City, Alta Planning + Design in Cincinnati, and Sam Schwartz Engineering and CDOT in Chicago.

Thousands of people used these maps to suggest locations for bike share stations, explain their choice, and support suggestions made by others. Across all three cities, over 13,000 suggestions and comments were made, and 74,000 clicks of support. The maps complement public outreach efforts by providing the public with an additional way to give their input.

Why crowdsourcing?

Gather valuable data for system design: nobody knows the neighborhood better than the locals

Promote the project: online tools reach a new audience, and are popular with old and new media.

For the public

Web-based map, viewable on desktop or mobile.

Easy to suggest a location for a bike share dock.

Share your submission on social networks.

View ideas submitted by other people.

Click to show your support for others' suggestions.

Comment and engage in discussion.

For project managers

Solicit suggestions within a defined geographic area.

Collect optional information about submitters, for followup.

See an overview of activity via the management interface.

About the crowdsourcing platform

All three maps were created with Shareabouts, an open source mapping platform - developers, find it on github.

The original version of Shareabouts was integrated with Wordpress, a widely-used Content Management System. Later versions use Django, a Python-based web framework.

Read more about Shareabouts at openplans.org.

About OpenPlans

OpenPlans is a social enterprise developing open-source technology solutions that make cities run better. Shareabouts is one of our open source software tools for civic engagement and better planning.

Find out more at **openplans.org**

OpenPlans

New York City, NY

Citi Bike will give New Yorkers access to sturdy, safe bikes at self-service docking stations around the city. Most trips (54%) that New Yorkers make are less than two miles, a perfect distance for riding a bike. Citi Bike will give New Yorkers a cheap, easy, efficient and fast option for these short trips by providing ready access to a bike, without having to worry about storage or maintenance.

New York City's bike share program will consist of up to 10,000 bikes at up to 600 individual stations.

10,000+ suggestions

60,000+ clicks of support

371 public meetings

600 attendees

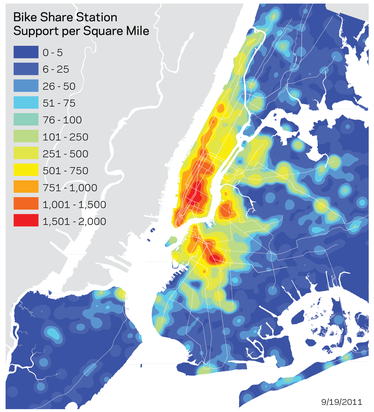
Phase One will launch with 5,500 bikes. The stations will be located on sidewalks, parking lanes, plazas, in parks and on private property.

NYCDOT had several objectives for the outreach process:

- Involve all New Yorkers
- Create a dialog
- Make it easy to participate
- Keep the discussion constructive
- Tap into local knowledge

The online map had a low barrier for entry - users could remain anonymous, or connect their submission to an existing social media accounts. Users could optionally leave an email address, so NYCDOT could follow up with emails based on the location of their suggestion or zipcode to let them know of upcoming meetings.

Online was a driver for more conventional engagement at in-person community meetings that NYCDOT promoted on the website and in traditional ways.



NYCDOT held 372 meetings, demos and workshops, with 600 attendees and 120 community groups represented.

For use in planning the system, NYCDOT were able to easily export data and sort by neighborhood, username, IP address, date, number of supports, etc.

NEW YORK CITY DOT

Contact:
Neil Freeman. NYC DOT. nfreeman@dot.nyc.gov

Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center has a semi-covered, well-lit cove outside one of our parking garages on Wellington Ave. that would serve as an ideal spot for a bike station. It's also located right next to the Wellington L station and the hospital.

-- Andrea Benda suggested a station in Lake View on December 7, 2012.

YES!!!! GREAT LOVE IT

-- MONICA FRAZIER on December 12, 2012 at 8:22 pm

Yes, I would use this all the time and encourage my coworkers to do so also.

-- Lisa Harris on January 14, 2013 at 5:14 pm

Great idea. I love Chicago.

-- Mary Williams, CNM on December 12, 2012 at 3:44 am

What a great way to take a stroll (exercising) to and from work during those warm summer days. I just love the outdoors. This is a great idea!

-- April Lane on December 11, 2012 at 7:07 pm

One proposed location in Chicago has received 60 comments. Here are a few of them...

Chicago, IL

The Chicago Department of Transportation retained the Sam Schwartz Engineering team to plan its upcoming bike share system and conduct public outreach. The project included developing an overall system area for each rollout, obtaining suggestions from the public for potential bike share locations, and siting each individual station.

The public outreach for the project consisted of introducing bike share to Chicago's residents and employees and receiving suggestions for locations where bike share stations should be located. Five public meetings, including a pop-up meeting at Union Station, were held across the City to introduce bike share to the public and ask for suggested bike share locations. Commissioner Gabe Klein, Managing Deputy Commissioner Scott Kubly, and Bicycle Coordinator Ben Gomberg lead each meeting.

In addition to the in-person meetings, an interactive siting website was developed by Open Plans to allow people to suggest locations. It also provided a means for public discussion as users could provide feedback on each site. The most popular station, at the Polish Triangle, received over 130 supports and sparked a conversation on not only siting a bike share station, but also on other improvements for the site.

Chicago's bike share system will initially consist of 300 stations and 3,000 bikes and will eventually be expanded to 400 stations and 4,000 bikes. The system will launch in 2013 and Alta Bike Share is the vendor.

1,270 suggestions

1,157 comments

11,958 support clicks

400 stations in final system

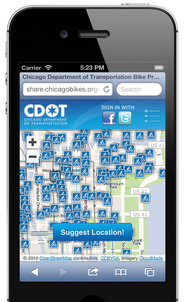
4,000 bikes in final system

Public meetings:

CDOT CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

SAM SCHWARTZ ENGINEERING

Contact:
Mark de la Vergne, Sam Schwartz Engineering, mdelavergne@samschwartz.com.



I already bike to work a couple of times a week to Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, and I think this is a great spot for a bike share station. I love that the city is adding bike share locations in high traffic areas like this!

-- Chris Toft on December 11, 2012 at 5:55 pm

This is great, both for patients and for staff. Everyone wins when getting exercise is made easier!

-- Frank S on December 11, 2012 at 5:36 pm

Perfect spot for a great program!

-- Noreen K. on December 11, 2012 at 4:31 pm

Cincinnati, OH

Cincinnati's Department of Transportation & Engineering commissioned Alta Planning + Design to study the feasibility of implementing a bike share system to complement the city's expanding Bicycle Transportation Program.

As part of the study, Alta gathered public input on possible station locations. The public suggested 300 locations and cast nearly 2,000 votes. The online maps were the primary tool for public engagement, with some additional stakeholder meetings.

In addition to public input, Alta considered other factors for location suitability, including: population density, employment density, mixture of land uses and entertainment destinations, connectivity with existing and planned transit networks, and the terrain in the immediate area.

The proposed system would have 35 stations and 350 bikes, to be implemented over two phases in Downtown, Over-the-Rhine (OTR), and Uptown. The City of Cincinnati has not yet selected an operator for the system.

300 suggestions & comments:

2,000 clicks of support

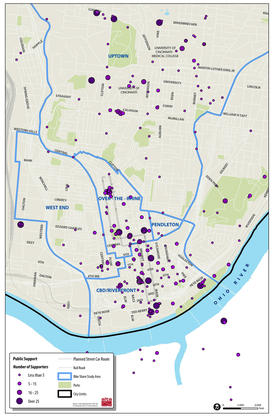
35 stations in potential system

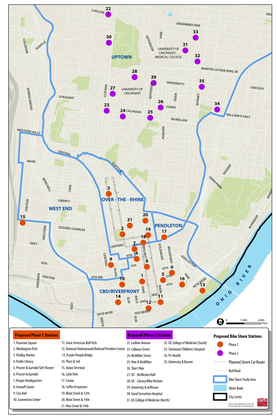
350 bikes in potential system

alta PLANNING + DESIGN

Contact:
Matt Berkow, Alta Planning + Design, mattberkow@altaplanning.com

Suggested bikeshare docks (left) and proposed dock map (right):





This would be great if somebody has to run a quick errand during lunchtime or just to get a little exercise in the area. The neighborhood is great for cycling around!

-- melinda h. on December 12, 2012 at 7:17 pm

That would be very nice and convinient!

-- Jonatan Cami on December 12, 2012 at 6:04 pm

What a wonderful idea & this is an ideal location (next to the L station).

-- Rochelle Petefish on December 8, 2012 at 12:29 am

Excellent location.

-- Nancy Wokke on December 12, 2012 at 7:49 pm