



Bikeshare in Ithaca Request for Information

November 20, 2017

Bike Walk Tompkins, a program of Ithaca Carshare, Inc., requests letters of interest from bikeshare system operators to launch a community-wide bikeshare system in Ithaca, NY, serving the Cornell University campus, downtown Ithaca, and surrounding areas by early spring 2018.

About Ithaca

The City of Ithaca is located at the southern end of Cayuga Lake in Central New York. The city has a population of 30,014 (2010 Census) and is the commercial and cultural center of Tompkins County (population: 101,564). Ithaca is home to Cornell University and Ithaca College, and 60% of the population is currently enrolled in college or university. Ithaca receives the majority of Tompkins County's more than 840,000 annual visitors (2009). Ithaca has a climate typical of upstate New York, with moderate temperatures from spring to fall, and cold snowy winters.

Ithaca is defined by its geography carved by ancient glaciers. Downtown Ithaca is located on a flat area with the lake to the north and hills on the other three sides. Downtown is the home of a third of the population and a majority of the city's shopping, dining, grocery stores, and employment opportunities that are not affiliated with Cornell. The hills adjoining downtown have steep gradients of 8-10% for 0.5 miles (800 meters), which then flatten out to a more agreeable 2-3% gradient. The top of East Hill is home to Cornell and the Collegetown neighborhood, which together house half of the city's residents and provide additional dining and grocery shopping options. South Hill has Ithaca College and residential areas, and West Hill has the local hospital and residential areas with a focus on low-income housing.

Given the small area of the city (5.39 sq. mi.), residents primarily make short trips and this is reflected in the mode share to work: 40% walked to work, while 33% drove alone, 11% took public transit, 7% carpooled, and 2% bicycled (ACS 2011-2015). For their commute to school, 57% of Cornell students walked, 23% took public transit, 11% drove alone, 7% carpooled, and 2% bicycled (2008). While bicycling numbers are low, bicycling is primarily used for non-work or school trips within downtown and between places on East Hill. Anecdotally we have seen more people bicycling over the years as new bike infrastructure is completed and more people become aware of bicycling as a convenient mode of transportation. Ithaca was awarded Bronze by the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Communities program in 2016.

The Process

We are interested in understanding the systems provided by potential bikeshare system providers, so will be looking for information about the following aspects of systems in a letter of interest:

- The primary type of bicycle, including:
 - Features that make the bicycle safe to ride during the day and night
 - Features that make the bicycle comfortable for riders given our geography
 - Features that make the bicycle comfortable for riders of different body sizes
 - Details about the locking mechanism, and availability of on-board GPS tracking
 - Details about the standard “look” of the bikes and potential customization options
 - Availability of alternative bicycles, such as electric, cargo or adaptive bikes/trikes

- The user experience, including:
 - Standard method of registration and potential alternative methods
 - Standard method to borrow and return bikes and potential alternative methods
 - Payment methods accepted, and details on holds placed on credit or debit cards
 - Standard pricing tiers, and whether discounts can be made available to certain groups
 - Availability of a 24-hour emergency helpline for users and non-users

- Flexibility in and enforcement of bicycle parking rules and policies, including:
 - Occasions when users are advised of bicycle parking rules and policies
 - Proposed parking rules within the university campus compared to within the city
 - Methods to de-incentivize undesirable parking, especially on a university campus
 - Methods to incentivize parking in areas of greatest demand
 - Map of proposed geofenced area in Ithaca where flexible parking would be allowed
 - Whether parking rules can be changed after launch, and existing users notified
 - Strategies to encourage biking to – and ensure parking order at – temporary events

- Details of any proposed contract with a local operator (i.e. Ithaca Carshare), including:
 - Services covered by the bikeshare vendor (i.e. your company), and a generalized list of services Ithaca Carshare would be responsible for
 - Capabilities of system management tools, and availability of a demonstration
 - Branding and look of user-facing software or apps, and customization options
 - Opportunities to monetize the system apart from user fees (e.g. sponsorships)
 - Details of product warranties and liability coverage provided by your company
 - Potential of ownership of bicycles and related equipment

- Details of any proposed local operations by system provider (i.e. your company), including:
 - Number (in FTEs), seasonality, and typical pay rate of jobs created locally given proposed initial fleet size, and potential to contract out these services
 - Reporting methods and response time for improperly parked and damaged bicycles
 - Frequency of rebalancing, and criteria to determine when rebalancing is needed
 - Frequency of checkups on the entire fleet, and winter season plans
 - Localization of user-facing software and marketing campaigns
 - Partnerships with Bike Walk Tompkins and/or Cornell University to conduct outreach
 - Details of liability coverage provided by your company

- Availability and granularity of data to Ithaca Carshare and Cornell University, including:
 - Bicycle trip data such as number of trips per bike and GPS trails
 - Bicycle availability data such as number and locations of bikes in/out of service
 - User data such as names, email addresses, and university affiliation
 - Potential to survey users in the Ithaca area at least once a year
 - Legal ownership of data, and what can be shared with community partners and municipalities

- Cost and timeline to launch, including:
 - Proposed initial fleet size and any local one-time and recurring costs
 - Proposed fleet sizes in later years and any corresponding local costs
 - Expected mobilization time to public launch of bikeshare system

We would also like contact information for several references, ideally including both an active transportation advocacy organization and a university that your company has worked with. We are closely following conversations in Chicago and the Twin Cities regarding the future of bikeshare, especially how firms plan to interact with entities that have publically-minded goals.

Feel free to include other materials in addition to a letter of interest, either as attachments or links in the body of the email. Please mark any confidential documents clearly as such.

Please send letters of interest and any additional materials by December 1, 2017 5 PM EST to Hector Chang at hector@bikewalktompkins.org, either as email attachments or as a link to download. Questions can also be directed to Hector via email or phone at (607) 301-3181 x1 prior to the deadline.