

## Frequently asked Questions and Answers concerning Bike Sharing Relative to the United States Department of Transportation

Bike Sharing has quickly attracted attention as an effective complement to public transportation. It increases mobility options, gets more Americans biking and enhances the overall transportation networks in our cities and towns. Bike sharing involves a network of bicycles and stations, where a member or renter can check out a bike from a station and return it to any other station within the network. When planned well, these systems complement existing transportation systems by offering users an option for quick and reliable one-way trips.

Below is a series of questions which have been frequently asked of both the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) related to bike sharing systems, their eligibility, funding, and relevance within the Department.

For questions or concerns, please contact [Edwin Rodriguez](#) or [Joanne Waszczak](#) (FTA) and/or [Christopher Douwes](#) (FHWA).

Question	General Answer
Q: <i>What is bike sharing?</i>	A: Bike sharing is an innovative transportation solution, ideal for short-distance, point-to-point trips. These systems provide 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 service area. Additional information on bike sharing can be located through the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center at: <a href="http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/promote/bikeshare.cfm?/bikeshare">www.bicyclinginfo.org/promote/bikeshare.cfm?/bikeshare</a> .
<b>Funding</b>	
Q: What types of Federal funding may be used for bike sharing?	A: FHWA and FTA administer various programs that can be used to fund bike sharing systems, amenities, infrastructure, and components. In 2011, FTA issued a policy stating that amenities related to bicycle access to public transportation have a <i>de facto</i> relationship to transit within a 3-mile radius, and that capital funds could be used for these eligible expenses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A full list of FTA programs and eligibility requirements can be found here: <a href="http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/Flyer_BikesandTransit_Full.pdf">www.fta.dot.gov/documents/Flyer_BikesandTransit_Full.pdf</a>.</li> <li>• A full list of FHWA programs and eligibility requirements can be found here: <a href="http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/bp-guid.cfm#bp4">www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/guidance/bp-guid.cfm#bp4</a>.</li> </ul>
Q: What existing USDOT discretionary grant opportunities are available at the Federal level for bike share programs?	A: FTA initiates most discretionary grant programs by publishing a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA). Each NOFA explains the eligibility and evaluation criteria associated with each opportunity. Eligibility under a discretionary grant program will depend on the ability of the bike sharing project to satisfy the eligibility and evaluation criteria. In the recent past, FTA funded bike sharing projects under the Bus Livability Program.  Most FHWA funds are apportioned to the States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) by formula, and the States and MPOs select projects for

	<p>funding. FHWA administers a few <a href="#">discretionary grant programs</a> for which bike share projects may be eligible. These include the Transportation, Community, and System Preservation Program, which has provided support for bike sharing programs.</p> <p>Bike sharing projects also are eligible under the <a href="#">DOT TIGER</a> program.</p>
<p>Q: What costs can FTA funding be used for in establishing a bike share system?</p>	<p>A: FTA funding may be used for bike share docks, equipment, and other capital costs including infrastructure and amenities related to bicycling, as long as they are related to public transportation (defined by the FTA <a href="#">Bike and Pedestrian Catchment Policy</a>). FTA funds cannot be used to purchase bicycles. Historically, FTA has not included bicycles within the definition of public transportation. Additionally, FTA funds cannot be used for operational costs, or costs associated with system startup.</p>
<p>Q: What costs can FHWA funding be used for in establishing a bike share system?</p>	<p>A: In addition to bike sharing docks, equipment, and other capital costs, FHWA funds may be used to purchase bicycles that are integral to a bike sharing system and that provide facilities for bicyclists as a transportation enhancement activity or that facilitate non-automotive travel in a non-attainment or maintenance area. FHWA may fund some other costs associated with safety education. FHWA’s <a href="#">Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Guidance</a> provides information on <a href="#">policy</a>, <a href="#">funding</a>, <a href="#">eligibility</a>, <a href="#">planning</a>, <a href="#">project selection</a>, and <a href="#">design</a>. FHWA also describes concepts that may help project applicants or project reviewers to determine which costs are eligible in its <a href="#">Guiding Principles and Questions for Transportation Enhancement Activities</a>. While this guidance was written for TE, the general principles may apply to bike share projects using other types of FHWA funding. FHWA funds cannot be used for operational costs.</p>
<b>Policy</b>	
<p>Q: Are there any restrictions on advertising or sponsorship with bike sharing systems?</p>	<p>A: Aside from its standard requirements like full and open competition procurement and a requirement that “program income” derived from advertising be used for public transportation, FTA does not place any restrictions on advertising or sponsorship of bike sharing systems that receive FTA funds. Further, State, local, or transit agencies may have their own restrictions on advertising and sponsorship. However, FHWA does have some restrictions on <a href="#">outdoor advertising</a> at bike stations if the bike station is located along or adjacent to a highway that is on the <a href="#">National Highway System</a>, or was on the Federal-aid primary system as of June 1, 1991. Additionally, FHWA has issued a <a href="#">policy on sponsorship acknowledgments</a> within the public right-of-way.</p>
<p>Q: How does the Buy America Act apply to bike sharing?</p>	<p>A: FTA and FHWA have separate and distinct Buy America rules. Under FTA guidance, a bicycle sharing system is comprised of several end products. Each end product and its components must be produced in the United States. FTA’s rules originated with a provision in the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1978 and are currently codified at 49 U.S.C. § 5323(j) and implemented by regulation at 49 C.F.R. Part 661. Under FHWA’s Buy America requirements, steel and iron purchased on a contract funded with Federal funds must be produced in the United States. These requirements apply only to the actual steel and iron that is incorporated into a product, and there is an allowance for a minimal amount of foreign-produced steel or iron (\$2,500, or one-tenth of one percent of the total contract price, whichever is greater). Consult <a href="#">FHWA’s information page</a> for more</p>

	information on its Buy America guidance. FHWA’s Buy America rules are codified at 23 U.S.C. § 313 and implemented by regulation at 23 C.F.R. § 635.410.
<b>Bike Share in General</b>	
Q: Are there any examples of bike sharing in smaller communities (under 100,000 in population)?	A: In the US, examples include Boulder B-Cycle in Colorado (Population: 97,000 / 110 bicycles), Decobike in Miami Beach (Population 88,000 / ~1,000 bicycles), and others in the planning stages.
Q: Is theft an issue with bike share bicycles or components?	A: Bicycle theft has not been a significant problem in current bike share systems in the U.S., as technology for bicycles locks has greatly improved and has reduced theft. Furthermore, bike sharing bicycles are typically made with special proprietary parts that would not be usable with other bikes, which greatly deters theft of bicycles or parts. Interestingly, Minneapolis only had one theft in 2011, and DC/Arlington Capital Bikeshare’s theft rate is less than 1%.
<b>Transit and Bike Share</b>	
Q: Are there problems keeping bicycles and open docks available for users at high-traffic transit stations?	A: During peak hours, stations in high demand areas do or can experience shortages. However, most programs have redistribution efforts and vehicles to help address this concern and try to keep bicycles available. This can include providing incentives to users to redistribute bikes (e.g., credits).
Q: Are there any examples in the United States of bike share systems that are planned as a complement to a transit system?	A: Several systems (including Boston’s Hubway and an upcoming Orange County CA system) are using FTA discretionary and/or formula grant funding to locate bike share stations at transit stops, along with other bike share stations within the three mile radius around transit to allow transit patrons to take bike sharing to their stop.
Q: Are there any examples of bike share and transit systems sharing a common farecard?	A: In the United States, not yet. There are examples in Europe of transit systems and bike share systems sharing a common farecard, and even offering bike share use as a free transfer from transit.
Q: Are there any examples of any transit agencies that have included bike share stations on their transit system maps?	A: There are examples of integrated transportation, however, they typically do not (yet) include public bike sharing. A key example of a program where bike sharing is integrated with public transportation is in Guangzhou, China. Guangzhou Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) integrates with bike lanes, bike sharing, and Metro stations. The program also employs a single card that pays for buses, bikes, and Metro.