**National Association of
City Transportation Officials**

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NACTO's 1/16/18 Webinar – Unanswered Questions
"Linking Bike Share & Transit"

Thank you for tuning in to our webinar! As we were not able to answer all your questions during the event, we have compiled responses to all unanswered questions. If you have any further questions, comments, or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to events@nacto.org.

Questions for Pittsburgh:

- Can card accounts be linked if the card-holder is not the individual user? In Seattle, a huge percent of our ORCA cards are through business accounts, where the employer or university is the owner and payer of the transit card.
    - The card identifies a specific user in the bikeshare system and therefore needs to be unique to the card-holder. It is okay if an employer or other third party purchases the card for the end user as long as the card is not shared between users.

- Can you share a bit about your NPO staffing & funding model? What's the funding relationship with the bikeshare vendor?
    - We are a small nonprofit with 11 full time employees. We pay for our operating expenses with user fees and sponsorship income. We typically cover capital expenses with grants from foundations or governments. We pay a license fee to our hardware/software vendor Nextbike to use their platform. Nextbike has a lot of experience with bikeshare/transit integrations and was able to implement the Pittsburgh integration to our specification in just a few weeks. If you are interested in this subject, take a look at the bikeshare system in Cologne. It is a dockless system launched in 2015 with 1200+ bikes owned by the local transit authority. Public transit users get unlimited 30 minute free rides on the nextbike system by using their transit pass. It was our model as we designed our program.

- When a transit user is linked, what info is linked on PGH's user account?
    - We collect the chip ID of the RFID card and a mobile phone number provided by the user. We do not have access to any account data collected by the Port Authority, and the Port Authority does not have access to any user data collected by us.

- How confident are you that the free 15 minutes commute option will continue after the pilot is over? Given the new Tax laws in 2018 since the new laws affect the bike commuting tax credits.
    - We are confident that we will extend the pilot program in 2018. We are not using the bike commuting tax credit to fund this program in any way.

- Can you describe the difference in customer experience if you are a transit pass holder with a Healthy Ride account compared to a transit pass holder without an account (i.e. pricing beyond 15-min ride allowance, tracking user activity)?
  - You must have a Healthy Ride account to use the Healthy Ride system. If a user does not have a Healthy Ride account when they link their transit pass, we automatically create one for them in the backend. It happens so fast that the user experience is basically the same for new users and people who already have an account. The major difference is that people who already have an account with Healthy Ride do not need to agree to our terms and conditions when they link their card because they have already completed that step in their original registration.

- Do you have to ride the bus or transit in order to get the 15 min free ride? Or just getting the connect card?
  - You do not need to transfer from another mode in order to receive the free ride time.

- And why really + 2 dollars? Are people with a monthly card also to 'pay extra'; should we not pay for a global service, per month (MaaS) and not for extras?
  - I might be misunderstanding the question but yes, we do charge a pay as you go fee of $2/half hour to any user that exceeds the free ride time included in their pass. This is also true of our paid membership options. Bikeshare systems typically use their fee structures to encourage people to return bikes if they are not actively using them so that they will be available for other users.

- Can Healthy Bikes mention again how they were able to allow users to pay cash to use the bikes?
  - The ConnectCard (transit pass) can be purchased using cash at any of the Port Authority's automated payment machines or any of their retail partners. Once a user has obtained a transit pass they can link it with Healthy Ride and automatically receive unlimited free 15 minute trips. They do not need to link a credit or debit card to access the bikeshare system.

- Are ALL transit riders required to register a mobile number? If not, how do you get that data in order to link the Healthy Ride account?
  - A user must enter their mobile phone number into one of our kiosks when they link their transit pass with Healthy Ride. If a transit user never uses Healthy Ride, then they do not need to register a mobile number with anybody.

- Were there concerns about liability for the bikeshare system having people checkout bikes without an identifying account?
  - Not really- the user needs to verify their mobile phone number using a code that we send when they link their transit pass. We are able to contact everybody who uses the system even if they have not linked a payment method. Yes- it is possible to abuse the system but it hasn't really been an issue for us.

- For the graphs comparing Healthy Ride's usership this year vs. last, do they account for variations in weather? Say a warmer Fall than usual. Does it even matter for this magnitude of usership?
  - Good point- the ridership gains could be attributable to other factors such as changes in weather, advertising, etc… Anecdotally the weather seems to be much worse this year than last. We will continue to collect data and try to determine how strong the relationship between ridership growth and transit pass users is moving forward.

- How does the Healthy Ride system work if you are a visitor to town and do not have a bus pass?
  - You can sign up using our app, website, or at any one of our 50 kiosks. We recommend our pay-as-you-go plan of $2/half hour to visitors. It isn't possible to receive the free ride time without a local transit pass.

- How many collocated transit and bike share stations are there in Pittsburgh?
  - 94% of Healthy Ride stations are within 1000ft of 2 or more transit stops.

Questions for Milwaukee:

- In Milwaukee, have you considered reaching out to car share companies like zipcar or Car2Go to allow for a totally seamless multi-modal "one card to rule them all"?
  - We have not taken that step yet but working with car share services is on our radar.

- Does the sticker go onto the MCTS card? Or does the sticker go onto the Bublr card?
  - The sticker goes on the MCTS smartcard. More info here: https://www.ridemcts.com/about-mcts/news/the-busler-card.

- What are the transit agency's biggest concerns when setting up the partnership with the bike share company?
  - We did a lot of testing to make sure the chip in the Bublr sticker did not interfere with the chip in our car or the farebox. There were not any problems so that solved that issue quickly.

Questions for both cities:

- Any outside funding sources or grants used for these projects?
  - Pittsburgh- we are collecting data on the cost of providing free trips to all transit users and plan to approach a funder to offset those costs at a later date.
  - Milwaukee - not so far

- Are there any concerns (privacy or equity) with requiring a mobile phone number in order to activate service?
  - Pittsburgh- Not really. Any cell phone can be used to register, rent bikes, or generally use the service. A smart phone or data plan is not required. 95% of americans have a cell phone of some kind. Subsidized cell phones are widely available to people with low incomes through lifeline programs like Assurance Wireless.

- Can you speak to any change in ridership demographics you've seen since implementing the fare card integration?
    - Pittsburgh- We do not collect demographic information as part of our registration process, but we are attempting to answer this question using a survey. Unfortunately, results are not available at this time.
    - Milwaukee - The program has not been running long enough to answer this.

- How do you feel dockless or stationless bike share supports or challenges integration of bike share and transit? Did you consider using a dockless bike share system too? If not, why?
    - Pittsburgh- Dockless is an opportunity to enhance transit integration by reducing out of direction travel on multimodal trips, which could reduce friction associated with multiple leg journeys. Unfortunately most of the dockless providers do not have an RFID reader integrated into their bikes, so a smart card or fare integration is not likely from any of the new companies. They will probably figure it out soon. We briefly operated as a dockless system during a system enhancement project this past summer and as a result of that experience we think docks have value. Stations make the system more reliable for customers, ensure that the right of way is accessible and orderly, and reduce operating costs and incidences of vandalism. With that said there is consumer demand for a greater density of return locations and so we will move to a hybrid system in 2018 where users will be allowed to return bikes away from a station for an additional fee. We do see our unlimited free 15 minute ride time as a competitive advantage against any new dockless operators that come to town.

- Did you think about using Cellphone APP directly for bike rental, instead of using kiosk tapping? Maybe cellphone app can make the process feel more easier to the users
    - Pittsburgh- we didn't want to build a process that required a smartphone. We have the ability to link cards using the bikes on-board computer instead of a kiosk, but we wanted an intuitive and fast user experience that would be difficult to provide with that technology.

- Do you know of any transit authority purchasing bike share as a part of their fleet of vehicles?
    - Maybe Los Angeles and Las Vegas?

- Has any research been done into how well, or if, bike rides are being used to expand the reach of traditional transit - bus/rail, etc.?
    - http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0966692314001409
    - https://trid.trb.org/view.aspx?id=1093278
    - http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/jpt/vol12/iss3/5/
    - http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S014362281300132X

- Have either of you explored moving to an Account Based system for transit and are there more integration (fare?) opportunities you've considered/explored?
    - Pittsburgh offers an account based transit card system for people who would like to use additional features. For example topping up online or protecting your balance in case of a lost or stolen card. Transit riders must opt in to use these features. Otherwise the port authority transit passes are anonymous and card based.
    - MCTS - Our recently released app is account based but our smartcard, which is used much more is card based. If funding becomes available we would look to go to an all-account based system but at this point that is unlikely in the short term.

- How do you manage the design/integration of the physical infrastructure of transit/bike share with municipal requirements and best design practices? Who takes the lead, any key lessons learned?
  - Pittsburgh - we do our station planning and siting in house and then deliver to our city for approval. We closely follow NACTO and other resources to stay up to date on best practices for urban street design.

- How has helmet laws (if any) impacted your local bike share program? Many users of bike share programs do not have helmets.
  - Pittsburgh - in our area, helmet laws only apply to children under age 12.

- How do you handle the rush hour influence on bikes availability in the kiosks next to the stations?
  - Pittsburgh - We periodically calculate the net outflow or inflow of bikes to all stations and establish a setpoint for each station. Our field service team balances the stations according to those setpoints.

- A Bikeshare Transit Act has been introduced at least twice to the House, but has not moved forward. The bill would implicitly define bike share as public transportation and make projects eligible "transit improvement project." This would make bike share more eligible for congestion mitigation air quality programs and other similar programs. What implications does such a bill have for the future of integrating bike share and transit?
  - Pittsburgh- This would likely make it easier for transit agencies to say yes to allowing a bikeshare system to access the stored cash value on a transit pass. To the best of our knowledge it is not permissible to spend funds given to a transit agency by a customer on a service that is not classified as transit. We would all benefit from more clarity on this topic.

- Has there been any private sector participation where bikeshare provides a first/last mile connection between transit and a major employment center?
  - Pittsburgh- yes, we offer corporate memberships and also sell station sponsorships with some success.

- We are launching a bikeshare and would like to know the dollar amount you would suggest we ask for from our Community Foundation to offset the cost of free 15 minute rides for transit users--how much would you advise us to ask for?
  - It would depend on your operating costs which would be most directly tied to your ridership. Your ridership will depend on your system size and layout, as well as external factors like topography, weather, population and employment density. For a very dense system in a large city, assume you will generate at least two trips per bike per day. In a smaller city or a more spread out bikeshare system, assume closer to .5 trips per bike per day. Based on our experience you could estimate that 20% of the trips you would generate would be taken by public transit users with the free ride voucher. Once you can estimate how many rides your system will generate, you can estimate the marginal cost per ride by dividing the amount you have budgeted for all of your operating costs by the number of rides you anticipate will occur during your budget cycle. Multiply the marginal cost by the number of free rides you anticipate you will provide, and that is the amount you need from a sponsor to break even. On top of that, consider the real value of any sponsorship that would be associated with support for your program and be sure to factor that into your request.