

MENU

National Association of City Transportation Officials

Rogue Bike Share Providers Raise Concerns For Cities

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Coordination between cities and operators is key for successful systems

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Press contact:

Alexander Engel

646.324.2919

In recent weeks, “rogue” bike share companies have launched, uninvited, in U.S. cities with flimsy equipment and limited or no public notification, posing significant safety risks to the public, and fully

divorced from larger transportation planning and municipal needs. Photos from cities in China, where rogue systems are already in place, show junk heaps of broken bikes. People who have used the bikes in the U.S. report that they are of poor quality and often unsafe.

Bike share systems have a strong role to play in a city's transportation network. But, by starting up without invitation or coordination, these companies have shown that they are not serious about providing bikes as a real mobility option for people. Instead, their actions suggest that they are more interested in media attention and a quick buyout. Such fly-by-night operations put the public at risk.

With an exemplary safety record and more than 88 million trips taken in 55 cities in the US since 2010, bike share has shown that it can help reshape urban transportation and make cities better, safer places for their inhabitants. But this success has only come about as a result of good faith, hand-in-hand coordination between operators and cities. To that end, NACTO welcomes and supports bike share systems that provide:

- A cohesive network of safe, routinely-maintained, street-legal bikes and other reliable, high-quality equipment.
- Enforceable commitments to good, equitable system coverage, service quality, safe operating practices, and data sharing.
- Upfront and extensive coordination with local government for transportation planning purposes and to establish principles for the safe use of public space, especially in ways that limit encroachment on the already-scant space available to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Clear rules for bike rebalancing and the speedy removal and/or repair of dangerous, broken, and abandoned bikes and equipment.
- Ongoing collaboration with cities and other stakeholders to ensure connections to transit, as well as programming that increases access for people in all racial and socio-economic groups such as progressive pricing, hiring commitments, and safety and engagement efforts.

Bike share systems work when they are part of a city's overall transportation network and vision. Around the U.S. and the world, cities are looking to bike share and cycling to help them meet the mobility, sustainability, equity, and economic challenges of the future. Cities must ensure that any systems they allow to operate within their borders can be the partners they need to help meet their goals.

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About NACTO

NACTO is an association of 51 major North American cities formed to exchange transportation ideas, insights, and practices and cooperatively approach national transportation issues.

The organization's mission is to build cities as places for people, with safe, sustainable, accessible, and equitable transportation choices that support a strong economy and vibrant quality of life.

About the NACTO Bike Share Initiative

Bike share has rapidly emerged as a new transportation option that can bolster public transit usage and increase cycling, with systems in 55 U.S. cities. To facilitate conversations between peer cities, NACTO holds roundtables, workshops, and webinars and conducts research on best practices and challenges for the growing bike share movement.

NACTO is a member of the Better Bike Share Partnership, a JPB Foundation funded collaboration between The City of Philadelphia, Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia, NACTO, and PeopleForBikes, to build equitable and replicable bike share systems.

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