



Nicholas Navin
Parking Director

MEMORANDUM

TO: Eileen M. Donoghue, City Manager *EMD*

FROM: Nicholas Navin, Parking Director

SUBJECT: Council Motion of 1/30/18 by Councilor Kennedy/Councilor Cirillo
Request City Manager meet with representatives from the Ofo bike sharing program and provide City Council with a report regarding the feasibility of establishing a bike sharing program in Lowell

Bike sharing has been an emerging service available in the Commonwealth and around the nation that has grown especially in the past decade, with most notable examples being dock-based models such as Hubway serving the metro-Boston area and Zagster serving Salem, MA. The dock-based model has many advantages and positive externalities but can be cost prohibitive to develop a thorough network due to the upfront costs associated with the docks, and the somewhat limited connections that can be made utilizing only dock-to-dock trips.

Most recently, the service and industry has evolved to create a dock-less bike share model where the locking mechanism is on the bike itself, allowing for greater flexibility for one-way trips and nearly limitless connections. Ofo is probably the most well-known dock-less bike share provider, along with Limebike and Spin, with many other emerging companies joining the market. In these dock-less scenarios, the upkeep of the fleet and other logistics are handled without cost to the City.

Since the motion request, the City has assembled a team that has reached out and met with representatives from Limebike and Ofo, and have solicited proposals from them to review in an effort to establish a pilot program of dock-less bike share for the City of Lowell. To aid in this effort, UMass Lowell has generously agreed to lend their resources and expertise to plan a thoughtful approach to the implementation of the pilot, including vetting proposals, developing marketing strategies, identifying key connections, and focusing on other areas of critical importance.

In the coming months, we should have in place a working committee comprised of City and University officials, as well as stakeholders to include LRTA, to develop the specifics on a year-long pilot program for dock-less bike share. Once the details of such a program become clear, we would like to present this information to the City Council.