

DC to Launch Bicycle Rental Program

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Looking to take a weekend bike ride but don't have the bike? Looking to find a way to avoid jumping in the car and fighting the traffic by riding a bike to meet-up with friends across town (or down the street) but you're still lacking a set of wheels?

DDOT is considering an automated bicycle rental system in DC in partnership with Clear Channel. Similar to car sharing, the system would allow members to swipe a card and release a bike from a kiosk (DDOT says to think of it as kind of like an airport luggage carts -- but better).

According to DDOT, Clear Channel is operating similar systems in Europe, and this would become the first of its kind in the Northeast U.S.

DDOT is requesting that residents take a short survey to solicit locations for the rental kiosks (several possibilities are in Ward 6). The proposed contract will allow for 120 bikes at 10 kiosks. Officials cite research and experience indicating that the kiosks should be located near each other, and they are limiting the system to the greater downtown area. DDOT has shared these other items to consider regarding locations:

- Locks will not be provided by the system, so cyclists can only park the smartbikes kiosks
- Because of the web-based registration and member card requirement, the system is not geared toward tourists
- Each kiosk is roughly 30 feet by 6 feet, considerable space, but we will scope out the exact site
- Locations with lots of jobs, housing, retail, major attractions, and nearby bike facilities are obviously best.

DDOT has reviewed census data, discussed locations internally and at the bicycle advisory council meeting, and have some initial ideas, but they want to include as much public input as possible. Please take a minute to respond to the survey at this link. It's only 3 questions!

Let us know where you'd like to see a bicycle rental kiosk in your neighborhood! There's only going to be 10 in the first round, so make you speak up and help select the locations you want. If you've got any questions about this program, please contact Jim Sebastian, DDOT's Bicycle Manager, at jim.sebastian@dc.gov.