

# Bicycle Registration

## 1972 Mayor's Bicycle Task Force Report states:

- Bicycle Registration was intended to make it easier to return recovered lost or stolen bicycles to owners
- The solution to lost/stolen bikes was a National registry system but none existed at that time
- Registration cost was \$1/yr and bikes received an actual license plate

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# Bicycle Registration

## Current Ordinance – 12.78 Registration of Bicycles

- Registration and Licensing of Bicycles . No person shall operate a bicycle upon any public way within the City of Madison unless said bicycle shall have been properly registered by the City of Madison as hereinafter provided, or shall have a valid current registration in another municipality
- 4 year registration costs \$10; 3rd bike in family is \$8
- Bike registration requirement includes most children's bikes (wheels 14 in or larger)

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# Bicycle Registration

- **Current Revenue**

- Average of \$20,000/year (over last 3 years)

- **Expenses**

- \$4,000 for decals, registration forms, and renewal mailings, other misc. office expenses
- Advertising (have not been advertising in recent years)
- Treasurer's Office staff hours for registration renewal processing & data entry (~30 hours/year)
- 60% FTE Bike Registration Coordinator
  - Other duties such as bike parking, pedestrian flag program, education assistance, etc.

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## Issues:

- **The income from registration does not cover the program expenses**
- **Lack of compliance by bicycle owners and bicycle vendors**
  - Only around 12,000 bikes are currently registered (~2,800/yr)
  - Many bicyclists and bike shops say that they see little benefit in city registration program
  - Department stores often have a cumbersome registration process and staff turn over makes it hard to increase awareness
  - City's online registration system is seen as difficult to use

# Bicycle Registration

## Issues:

- **UW Transportation Services is not currently promoting bicycle registration**
  - 1997 Ordinance Amendment allows the UW to register bikes and retain ½ of fee
- **Bicycle Registration Coordinator position not used efficiently to promote a safe and equitable multi-modal transportation system**
  - Switching to promotion of a free, national program would allow for the reclassification of the current Bicycle Registration position to one better aligned with the goal of improving walking and biking in Madison

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# Bicycle Registration

## Issues:

- **Registration discourages a travel mode the City is trying to encourage**
  - Even a small fee can be burdensome for some residents, especially with requirement to register most children's bikes (Equity Issue)
    - Do offer free registration for bikes through Wheels for Winners, Dream Bikes, St Vincent de Paul and Goodwill (~300/year)
  - Registration process is cumbersome
  - Perceived as opposite to other City efforts to get more people biking
- **Currently little to no enforcement of ordinance, very low priority for PD**
  - Some cities have been criticized for the use of bike registration compliance to do traffic stops (Stop & Frisk)

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# Bicycle Registration

## Issues:

- **Perception that “bicyclists don’t pay their way”**
  - Most bicycling takes place on local streets and roads that are primarily paid for through property taxes and other general local taxes.
  - Bicycling inflicts virtually no damage on roads and streets compared with automobiles and trucks.
  - A 200-pound bicyclist with a 50-pound bike will impose approximately 1/65,000th the roadway damage of a 4,000 pound car.

\* Information from “Who Pays for Roads?” Published by U.S. PIRG Education Fund (2015)

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# Bicycle Registration

## Issues:

- **Perception that “bicyclists don’t pay their way”**
  - Motor vehicle use imposes costs on the environment and public health in the form of air pollution, noise, injuries and damage from crashes, and a host of other rarely quantified costs. These costs are borne by all of society.
  - A 2009 analysis by the Victoria Transport Policy Institute estimated that the external cost of a mile of bicycling was less than a penny, while the cost imposed by a mile of walking was 0.2 cents—compared with external costs of driving of more than 29 cents per mile.



# Bicycle Registration

## Bicycle Recovery Program:

- Police Property Room recovers around 400 bikes/year
  - Approximately 5% are registered (20 bikes)
- Police Property Room returns around 30 of those bike/year
  - Approximately 20% of the returned bikes are registered (5 bikes)
- Bicycle Registration Coordinator assists in returning 8 to 10 other bicycles per year

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# Bicycle Registration

## Bicycle Recovery Issues:

- **Bicycle owners register with incorrect serial numbers**
- **Bicycle owners register but don't notify city of address or other contact information changes**
- **Police Property Room staff need a way to get recovered bicycles back to owners**
  - Currently only search City registration records, Madison Stolen Bicycle Reports, National Crime Information Center database
  - Access to national program database costs approximately \$1,000/year

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# Bicycle Registration

- **National bike registration options now exist and they may be more effective**
  - One national program reports over 800 bikes from Madison in their system already
  - That system has over 1,000,000 bikes in their registry which can be searched when a bike is recovered
- **National registration programs are generally free for individuals, and easy to use (app based)**
  - Individuals can buy a registration decal to put on their bike but it is not required
  - One national program works directly in some bike shop point of sale programs for easy registration at the bike shop

# Options

- 1. Repeal Ordinance – Use national program to assist with bicycle recovery program; promote free national registration as option for local bicycle owners**
- 2. Increase marketing/promotion of current program and outreach to UW/bike shops/department stores to build awareness and compliance**
- 3. No Change – Keep current ordinance; continue with current level of promotion and outreach**

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