

A-6 | Create Cortland's First Community Bike Share in the Downtown

DRI Funding Request/Total Project Cost

\$35,402/\$70,805

Project Description

Seven Valleys Health Coalition (SVHC) is partnering with the Cortland Free Library (CFL) for the startup of the community's first Bike Share, located at the CFL in the downtown. There will be a total of 40 bikes provided to the public including 24 adult bicycles, 4 adult tricycles, 12 children's bicycles (6 each 24-inch and 20 inch), and 4 child trailers. Helmets and locks will also be provided to the public. This program will include additional bike rack installations at CFL and the not-yet-determined second location.

Members of the public will be able to go into the library to check out a bike (and helmet if desired or required depending on age) and will sign a waiver. After registration is complete, a borrower will receive a numbered key that corresponds to a bike lock that will unlock their bike. This lock may also be used while borrowing the bike.

SVHC and library staff will initially manage the Bike Share with in-kind labor and a pool of volunteers for at least the first year, keeping the program free to customers. SVHC will maintain future fiscal viability via sponsorships (ads on bicycle basket placards), grants, and donations.



Precedent image of bikeshare

Project Location/Address

32 Church Street, at the corner of Church and Court Streets in the heart of downtown Cortland and a second location to be determined if the project is selected

Sponsor

Seven Valleys Health Coalition

Strategies

- Create strong gateways, wayfinding and complete streets to strengthen connections between destinations and amenities and to make the downtown inviting and accessible to all;
- Create an identity that will appeal to current and future generations; and
- Encourage projects that reduce the City's environmental footprint.

Public Support

This project is part of the implementation of the City's newly adopted Complete Streets policy and the City's Comprehensive Plan that was completed with significant public input. The City had already agreed to provide the liability insurance for the program prior to receiving DRI funding. A community bike share is strongly supported by the Cortland County Traffic Safety Board's Bike/Ped Subcommittee, Cortland County, SUNY Cortland, the City Library, Sustainable Cortland, Seven Valleys Health Coalition (SVHC), United Way, and individual community members.

The Cortland County Health Department already operates bicycle safety and helmet programs and they have pledged their support to this project. The plan for the Bike Share has also received positive verbal support from at least one local hotel owner, the Convention and Visitors' Bureau, and every community member with whom SVHC has discussed the plan.



Precedent image of bikeshare

Jobs Created (does not include construction jobs)

As the program grows, it is likely to create two half-time positions for bike maintenance and program administration.

Ownership of Property

The Cortland Free Library. The Library Board has determined it has the space to operate the Bike Share Program, with little or no interior renovations. It will not disturb library operations.

Acquisition of Real Property

N/A

Anticipated Revitalization Benefits

As noted, this will be Cortland's first Community Bike Share Program. It will be a welcome addition to the multimodal transportation system, which includes miles of sidewalk throughout the City of Cortland and a public transportation system, Cortland Transit. The City is currently completing a Bike/Ped Plan which will lay the foundation for preferred bike routes throughout the community. Cortland also has additional plans for new bike lanes and paths, which will be a perfect long-term accompaniment to this project.

Many residents rely on the Cortland area's limited public transportation system to get to work, medical appointments, and for recreational pursuits. Cortland's poverty rate hovers near 25% and loaning free, quality bikes and helmets will have the most significant impact to those with limited income and who are at risk for chronic disease. Since anyone will be able to use the bikes, the project contributes to overall quality of life and will also complement tourism by adding another method for visitors to discover the area. Other benefits include increased community interaction and learning to ride or renewed interest in bicycle riding without the upfront investment of funds to purchase a new bike. One of the largest benefits will be to improve the City's social capital and rating for bikeability, which is has become an increasing priority for successful city planning efforts throughout the U.S.

Future Use of Structure

N/A

Project Budget

\$70,805 – SVHC will fund the remainder of the project through in-kind services (\$13,495), cash (\$2,500), and projected grant funding and private sponsors (\$19,407). The total project cost reflects start-up costs and three years of operation.

- Purchase bicycles, helmets, bike racks, signs, lock, chains - \$17,200
- Year-1 maintenance/bike shop - \$10,200
- Year-2 maintenance/bike shop - \$11,200
- Year-3 maintenance/bike shop - \$12,200
- Annual administrative fees - \$10,080 (\$3,360 per year)
- Annual media/advertising - \$6,300 (\$2,100 per year)
- Indirect expenses - \$3,625

Feasibility and Cost Justification

An article from Fortune Magazine titled “Flying Cars, Bike Share, and Space Tourism: How You’ll Be Traveling in 2018” (November 20, 2017) predicts that bike sharing will grow across US cities. The article emphasizes that as changes to the traditional docked model of bike shares evolve, this may “encourage city leaders wary of bike-sharing to finally jump on board.” According to the NY Bicycle Coalition, “most studies show that multi-day bicycle tourists spend between \$100 and \$300 per day on food, lodging and other items.” Moreover, as AARP’s Livable Community’s website points out, bike sharing provides additional benefits to cities such as supplementing public transit, reducing travel-related carbon footprints, and increasing the physical activity of residents.

Although the proposed free bike share program is on a smaller scale than those in larger cities, not investing in expensive docking stations that go along with traditional bike shares allows cities to devote more money to bike infrastructure, which enables riders get access to cycling at a cheaper cost. The model being proposed in Cortland is similar to one that has experienced success in Bethlehem and Pottstown, Pennsylvania. Pottstown, with a population of around 22,000, is very similar in size to Cortland. It’s free bike share program started in 2008 with 30 bicycles, has since grown to four locations and is still running strong.

Regulatory Requirements

The project sponsors will confer with the City of Cortland regarding the use of city streets for this project and any recommendations or concerns they may have. The City of Cortland has already agreed to extend its liability insurance coverage to this program.

Timeframe for Implementation and Project Readiness

Total project timeline is approximately 4 months.

- Acquisition of equipment (bikes, bike racks, bike basket placards, etc.) will take approximately 3 months;
- Installation of racks and setting up all equipment and structure for borrowing from library – 1 month;
- A second location for bike sharing is anticipated, but a specific site has not been secured.
- The sponsor’s goal will be for the program to start at the library no later than May, 2018 depending on the start date of funding. The program will run from April - November annually.

Project Reporting

Project reporting will include the number of bicycles and helmets purchased under the program, monthly reports on the number of users, verification of in-kind contribution, and a detailed report on the programs successes and challenges.