



Catalyst for Regional Progress

PVPC

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Communities Approve Intergovernmental Compact to Advance New Regional Bike Share Program

ValleyBike may be coming to a city or town center near you soon, offering a new way to commute by bicycle to destinations in the region without using your car.

An intergovernmental compact, or MOU, to advance a new Regional Bike Share Program has now been approved by the communities of Springfield, Holyoke, Northampton, and Amherst, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission. The agreement establishes the commitment of these communities and institutions to move forward with a pilot scale bike share program, which has been tentatively named "ValleyBike." Signatories to the agreement include: Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno, Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz, Holyoke Mayor Alex Morse, Amherst Interim Town Manager David Ziomek, University of Massachusetts Amherst Chancellor Kumble R. Subbaswamy, and Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Executive Director Timothy Brennan.

Bike share is a useful means to extend the public transit system, reduce auto trips, provide short-range commuting alternatives and opportunities for exercise. Bikes are made available to members for a small fee to make short, point-to-point trips from one station to another station. Bike share programs are being successfully established in cities, large and small, across the United States, with notable examples including Hubway in Boston, Citibike in New York, and many more.

A regional Bike Share program for the Pioneer Valley will offer significant benefits to the region's communities, residents and businesses, including:

- Extending the service area of the region's new high speed rail system;
- Providing opportunities for healthy exercise and recreation for residents
- Offering a non-auto commuting option for short trips
- Reducing air quality emissions and greenhouse gas impacts
- Promoting economic development in our downtown areas

- Attracting and retaining young professionals and new businesses to enhance urban centers
- Enabling college students better access to neighboring town centers and colleges

The approved MOU establishes a Steering Committee with representatives from each signatory to guide the next steps in the process toward formal launch of a bike share program. It also lays out roles for each signatory, and the needed next steps.

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission has provided staff support to lead efforts to prepare for a launch of a new regional bike share program. The communities of Northampton, Amherst, Springfield and Holyoke, as well as the University of Massachusetts have provided staff to participate in the bike share feasibility analysis and develop the program details. In 2015, PVPC completed a detailed Feasibility Analysis study for bike share. In 2016, PVPC worked with Alta Planning as consultants to complete advanced feasibility analysis for Bike Share, including recommendations for an equipment model, business and operations models, and detailed station locations plans. Project proponents are currently seeking a corporate sponsor for Valley Bike, and federal grant funds to purchase the needed equipment.