



Hasan Abdullah

Monjirul Dolon

Ibraheem Khalifa



Who We Are

WeCycles addresses the short-trip urban transportation void by offering subscription-based and pay-per-use based infrastructure bike rental solutions in American cities. WeCycles offers an interconnected network of conveniently located bike checkout facilities with self-serve kiosks throughout the urban core, allowing residents and commuters to quickly and efficiently get around without the hassles of cars, taxis, or buses, and without the hassle of having to bring their own bike with them. WeCycles will utilize not only advertising revenue but also a mix of pricing plans which will attract multiple segments of our targeted market.

Borrowing from the successful car-share business models precedent of Zipcar, WeCycles will become the next must-have feature of progressive communities, alongside farmers' markets and train corridors reclaimed as greenways. It is important to note that WeCycles is not intended to be a system of bike rentals for only tourism or recreational purposes, rather it an evolution of public transportation and a complement to traditional urban transport. WeCycles primarily aims to serve as a supplement to cars, buses, and taxis, and to be superior to those modes for efficiently covering small distances.

Opportunities

The city of Chapel Hill provides an excellent public bus system free of charge. However, buses are constrained to their routes and timings, and would be complimented very well with bicycles, which while having limited range provide flexibility in time and freedom of travel, connecting neighborhoods and city areas. In addition parking spaces on average have a one-time cost of between \$18,000 and \$25,000 per space for a parking deck and between \$4,000 and \$10,000 per space for a parking lot. Over time, maintenance costs can also easily add up. Additionally, space is very valuable in any city - any space used for parking cannot be used for any other purpose. The UNC campus already has a low ratio of parking spaces to students, causing congestion during peak hours and increased difficulty in students' lifestyles.

Our program encourages utilization of existing and proposed bicycle infrastructure. Strategic placement of kiosks near greenways and major bicycle lanes would promote their use. It also encourages a healthy and green alternative to other forms of transportation. The city of Chapel Hill intends to reduce CO2 emissions by 60% of 2005 levels, and with 25% of emissions coming from transportation, WeCycles' service can effectively help the city meet its sustainable goals.

Viability

Concept acceptance has been very strong in several international areas with programs like OYBike in London, Vancity in Vancouver, and Bixi in Montreal. It was important for us to test whether the attractiveness of the concept was also a reality in the U.S, and we found that they were. Summarized results were:

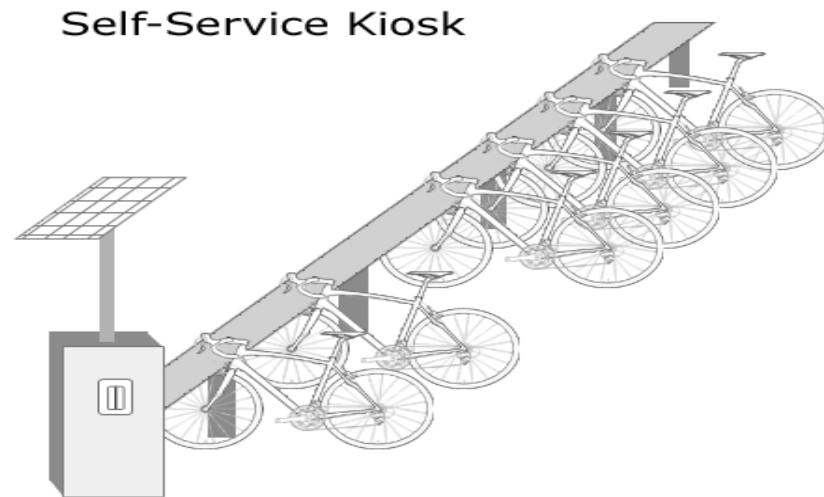
- 29% acceptance (rated by respondents as “high value”) of our core offering of annual bicycle rental program membership for \$45 per year.
- 38% acceptance (28% high and 10% very high) of pay-as-you-go pricing schemes such as \$4 per hour or \$12 per day. This is corroborated by similar flexible pricing scheme precedents with offerings from Bicing, for example.
- SmartBike DC operates a bike-sharing service in the Washington, DC metro area, the first of its kind in the United States. SmartBike DC is an exclusive partnership between Clear Channel Outdoor and the District Department of Transportation in DC, and the service now caters to several DC residents who pay a yearly usage fee.
- In Denver, Colorado, Humana has teamed up with Trek and Crispin Porter Bogusky to create a new bike-sharing program based off their successful Freewheelin' campaign, which provided bikes at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.
- In the Midwest, Nice Ride Minnesota has finalized their business plan and is expected to launch a new bike-sharing program in Minneapolis by the end of May 2010.

In our survey results, we also found that at least 30% of our target customers would rent a bike from the following locations: subway/train stations, bus stops, parks, universities, business sectors, and hotels. This result shows that a bike rental station is viable in almost every major location in the city. In both surveys, using a bike rental system would most likely replace the use of taxis/limos by 40%, buses 35%, rental cars 26%, walking 66%, subways 31%, and trains 17%. Since WeCycles will only supplement the current forms of transportation, our survey proves that the targeted customers are willing to incorporate bike rentals fully into their everyday lifestyle.

Our Plan

Throughout the US and abroad, the bike rental industry has started to blossom. Rising gas prices and a down economy have forced people to search for alternative means of transportation. Bike rental, in the forms of bike sharing, or bike stations, is a fast growing and developing market. WeCycles will provide a cheaper, environmentally friendly alternative to fuel-based transportation by providing a network of bike rental kiosks positioned throughout Chapel Hill. Residents can rent bikes using their credit card, university ID card, or company card distributed from our own innovative kiosk system. Our customers will no longer need to worry about bringing their own bikes to their travel destination, finding a safe place to park it, or constant maintenance. Now you will be able to enjoy the transportation freedom your life has always been missing, while helping the environment and being healthy. WeCycles will allow you to experience your life on two wheels!

WeCycles will use an innovative kiosk system where residents can rent a bicycle from any of our network stations positioned throughout the city using their credit card, university ID or company card (available from the kiosk itself). The kiosks will be powered using solar energy and include state-of-the-art electromagnetic locking technology and safety features. Customers can then return the bike at any one of our stations, conveniently located throughout the city closest to their destination of choice.

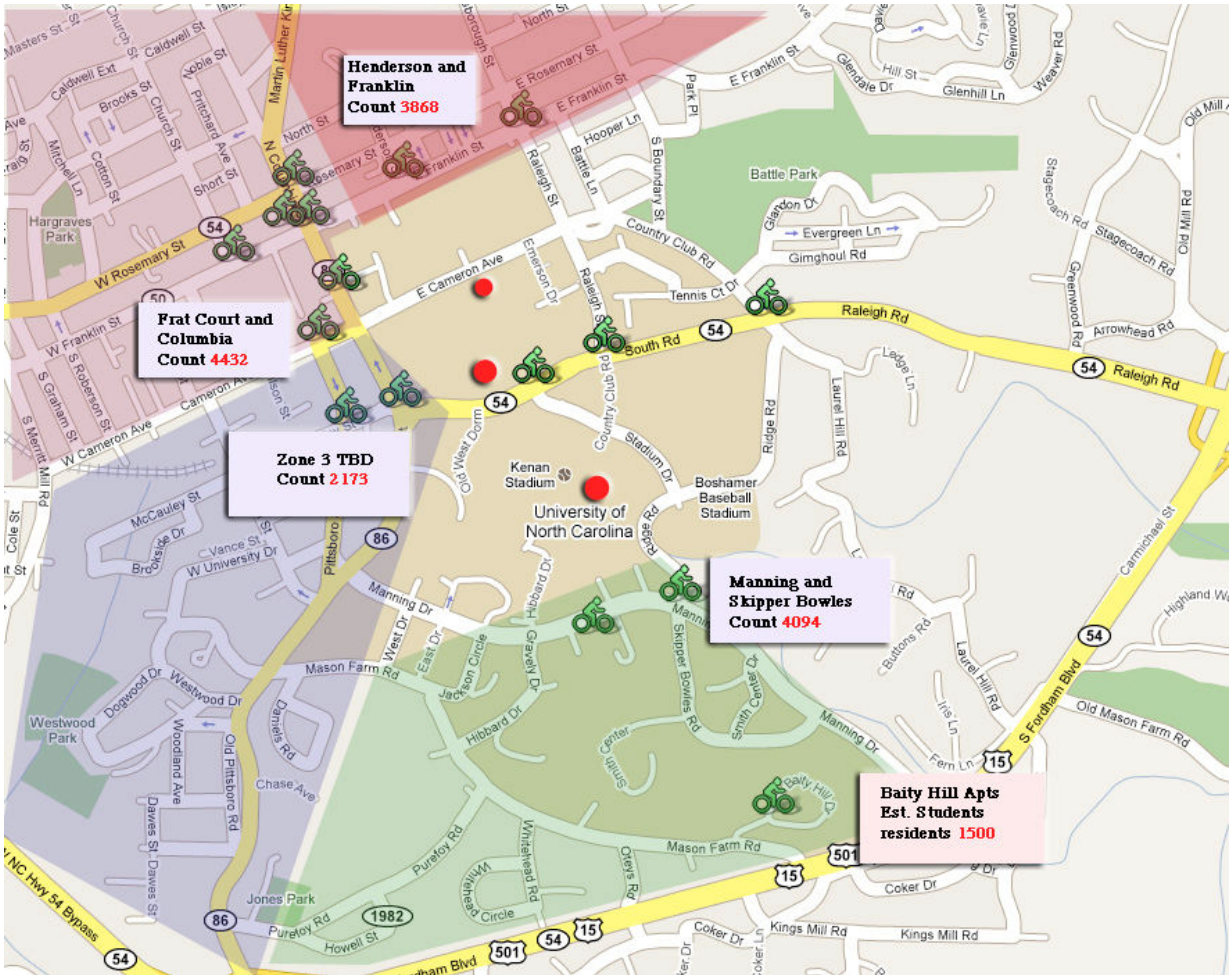


We plan to provide kiosks throughout bikeable areas in Chapel Hill such as:

- 1) Weaver Dairy
- 2) Franklin Street, downtown Chapel Hill
- 3) University of North Carolina Campus

There has been great interest at the University of North Carolina. We have had discussions with Chancellor Thorpe and Chief of Police Jeff McCracken, who have both shown interest in the WeCycles service. From our market research of the University of North Carolina, we have found that 60% of students are willing to pay a forty dollar annual membership fee for WeCycles. We have also found that 97% of students would rather rent a bike from our self-service kiosk, a key factor in determining customer satisfaction.

Students are actively seeking a convenient way to travel. Survey results show that the majority of students are not fully satisfied with the current campus means of transportation. WeCycles are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, providing unparalleled availability and convenience to students. Bike availability will be easily viewable from an online interface, allowing students to determine whether they can rent a bike from a station before physically approaching it.



Our bike kiosks can help with mobility within the city and to campus by strategically placing kiosks in well-traveled city zones.

Recyclery: The Difference

The Recyclery is a non-profit organization based in Chapel Hill that restores used bikes. The Recyclery initiated the Blue Urban Bikes program that allows members to loan bikes for a \$10 dollar annual fee. Even with great success, the Recyclery and Blue Urban Bikes program does not address the growing transportation inefficient and sustainability problem. WeCycles will bring bikes to the community in high traffic areas and allow residents to rent bikes at their convenience with our 24/7 self-service kiosk. WeCycles distinguishes itself by providing:

- 1) Control: Rent and return a bike whenever you want to
- 2) Accessibility: Kiosks are available where you want to go
- 3) User Friendly: Biking is no longer a hassle, rent a bike and never worry about vandalism or maintenance

Our Structure

We will establish ourselves as a non-profit organization following commitment from the city of Chapel Hill. The advisory board is currently expanding, but as of now includes:

- 1) Parrish Ketchmark, Founder and President of Parrish Partners
- 2) Ted Zoller, Associate Professor at UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School

WeCycles intends to be a self-sufficient, non-profit venture with the goal of providing the greatest overall benefit to the most amounts of people. We feel our current stakeholders are not only potential customers, but also the city as a whole since environmental degradation through unsustainable practices affects all people.

In order to maintain self-sufficiency, a portion of our revenue for business operations will come from advertising and sponsorship. We intend to limit advertising to only companies that share a similar goal and vision as WeCycles: companies that encourage bike usage as a supplement in everyday transportation and provide a social benefit for the entire city. In order to foster sustainable growth within the city of Chapel Hill, WeCycles will encourage sponsorships and accept collaborative work with local companies. An example of this endeavor is the possibility of working directly with local bike shops in the supply and maintenance of our infrastructure.

WeCycles will intend operate on a unique business model, garnering revenue from three areas: Membership and usage fees, advertising, and sponsorships.

Benefits for The City of Chapel Hill

WeCycles presents multiple benefits to the town of Chapel Hill, the first of which will be national recognition of a bike-sharing program that supplements urban transportation. The City of Chapel Hill can further their sustainability goals by endorsing and providing greener means of transportation encouraging the reduction of carbon emissions and a healthier overall lifestyle. Some approximated statistics include:

- CH Population: 79,138
- WeCycles will provide about 30 bike stands and 300 bikes
- If 10% of CH uses the bikes for 30 miles, it will total 240,000 miles
- Help reduce traffic by almost 8,000 cars
- The city will burn a total of almost 11 million calories (3,000 lbs, or 0.5 lbs per cyclist)
- The city will reduce carbon emissions by 114 tons, saving nearly 12,000 gallons of gas (saving \$175,000 in total)

What We Need

In order to determine the feasibility of this venture for the city of Chapel Hill, the following points need to be addressed:

- 1) Is there interest
- 2) Permission for kiosk placement
- 3) Discussion with Chancellor