

HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Rochester Bike Share



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EN ESPAÑOL

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Executive Summary

The Rochester Bike Share program can play a more integral role in helping the city of Rochester become a healthier community and in helping city residents achieve better health outcomes.

The Rochester Bike Share grew out of a study designed to determine whether implementing a bike-share program would be feasible in Rochester. Following an analysis of population and employment trends, an evaluation of existing plans and regulations, a review of existing conditions, and a stakeholder and public engagement process, it was determined that a bike share in and around Rochester's Center City was viable.

When launched in 2017, the Rochester Bike Share exceeded its initial goal of 250 bicycles and 25 bike-share stations, to reach 340 bicycles via 46 bike stations, utilizing the more than 60 miles of on-street bike lanes currently available in Rochester.

The bike-share system is currently available seven days per week, 24 hours per day between April and November. It is operated solely by Zagster Incorporated, selected as the official provider based on the city's decision that the company had the best bike model and shared the city's vision for a system with access throughout city neighborhoods. As of April 1st, 2018 Zagster Inc. is rebranding the bike share here in Rochester as "Pace" (Zagster Inc., 2017).

The Rochester Bike Share (RBS) offers an active transportation network throughout Rochester. For residents who do not own a bicycle, or for those who want an alternative to an automobile, the Rochester Bike Share provides a means of increasing physical activity through recreation. It also offers potential for improving health through greater physical activity for those commuting from home to work, improved socialization among neighborhoods and improved access to food by creating efficient routes to grocery stores.

Some aspects of the program, however, may be unintentionally limiting its utilization and its potential positive impact on people's health – leading to health disparities. These include:

- Access to the bike-share program – and subsequently to more physical activity – is largely dependent on the geographic location of bike-share stations as they relate to the proximity to neighborhoods.
- Not all city residents can utilize the system, as Zagster Inc. current payment model requires users to have both a credit card and a smartphone with Bluetooth technology to unlock bikes.
- While the bike share may help to improve access to healthy-food options, including supermarkets and other public markets, no bike-share stations are located directly at supermarkets (as of the time of this report).

Common Ground Health and the Genesee Transportation Council (GTC) produced this Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as part of their efforts to advance health-informed transportation decision-making across the Genesee-Finger Lakes region. This report focuses on the RBS inaugural phase linked to health disparities and health outcomes within the city of Rochester. Conducted from 2016 to 2018, it is the result of extensive research and analysis, as well as guidance and feedback from an array of stakeholders from community health, transportation, planning and community engagement.

This HIA also seeks to identify any potential barriers to access, including where vulnerable populations such as those with health disparities may not yet have bike sharing available to them.

Four health determinants were identified for further analysis to assess the health disparities that may currently exist: physical activity, social cohesion (how well integrated and connected a community is socially), economic benefit and equitable access, and food access.

Following are a set of recommendations that can help increase Rochester Bike Share usage, and in the process, help improve people's health. The recommendations involve:

- Promoting more physical activity in Rochester by placing bike stations closer to grocery stores, farmers markets, parks and other community resources.
- Maximizing RBS utilization through improved bicycle facilities and infrastructure.
- Encouraging more community education about the RBS and its potential health impact, especially with vulnerable populations.
- Enhancing user safety by ensuring bike-station placement in high visibility areas.
- Improve the payment system to reduce barriers for all populations and allow different membership options to reach low-income residents.

These suggested recommendations could increase bike-share utilization, help to overcome identified health disparities and foster improved health outcomes in the region.



Health Impact Assessment Recommendations

Physical Activity

Locate bike stations within 0.5 miles of community resources to improve health outcomes.

Specific Actions:

- Expand access to grocery stores, farmers markets, city parks, community centers, schools, and places of employment.

Encourage recreational cyclists, non-cyclists and pedestrians to be more physically active.

Specific Actions:

- Improve bicycle facilities/infrastructure, including bike lanes and new-station placement, which may increase opportunities for physical activity.

Establish baseline conditions and physical-activity goals for users.

Specific Actions:

- Integrate recorded Zagster Inc. data on total minutes of physical activity per trip.

Locate and prioritize bike stations in city-census tracts with high rates of chronic disease.

Specific Actions:

- Priority 1: Tracts 65, 92, 49, 15, 96.03
- Priority 2: Tracts 96.02, 52, 50, 93.01, 46.02
- Priority 3: Tracts 27, 80, 64, 79, 13

Social Cohesion

Encourage face-to-face communication and education around the bike share.

Specific Actions:

- Empower ambassadors/advocates of RBS at a neighborhood/census tract level
- Offer training courses through the City of Rochester or community partners to educate new users on how to utilize the bike-share system.
- Educate on New York State Department of Motor Vehicles safety policy and advocate that material on cyclists and bike share be included in driver-safety material.



Maximize communication on RBS health impacts, especially with vulnerable populations.

Specific Actions:

- Develop strong relationships with area health-based employers.
- Produce incentive-based promotional events through Zagster Inc. and local businesses to encourage the public to ride.

Increase overall social connectedness to the bike share.

Specific Actions:

- Connect bicycle paths and transit lines and streets via sidewalks.
- Enhance connection between neighborhood destinations. Make active transportation modes (walk, biking) easier to engage.

Determine where to locate future bike-share stations.

Specific Actions:

- Prioritize locations by health disparities or other barriers to access, including chronic-disease rates; low socioeconomic status; lack of access to reliable transportation; ethnicity; age; proximity to community resources/transit stops.

Ensure station placement maximizes safe locations and provides user guidance.

Specific Actions:

- Support station placement in areas with high visibility.
- Increase wayfinding signage to guide cyclists, increase engagement of riders and mitigate the potential for getting lost.
- Provide signage at stations with proximity to nearby destinations, including cultural institutions, parks, markets and area neighborhoods.

Economic Benefit & Equitable Access

Promote the integration of the bike share with other public-transportation options.

Specific Actions:

- Partner with public-transit providers to create mobility hubs across Rochester.
- Partner with ridesharing services such as Uber/Lyft.

Move away from individual station sponsorships to new models to support RBS overall.

Specific Actions:

- Explore methods to increase investment from public and nonprofit sectors.
- Partner with local institutions and organizations to provide subsidized memberships to low-income city residents.



Improve the bike-share payment system to reduce barriers to access for all populations.

Specific Actions:

- Move away from a smartphone requirement and enable a cash-membership option.
- Allow different membership tiers such as subsidized annual options for low-income users.

Food Access

Increase food access and improve health.

Specific Actions:

- Partner with area food advocates and farmers markets to increase food access.
- Demonstrate health impacts of the bike share to food providers to enable stronger ties and foster food access as a stated goal of the RBS.





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