



## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

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Following on the commitment to becoming more bike friendly and making continued bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure investments, the Delaware Department of Transportation and the City of Wilmington secured Century Engineering and Toole Design Group to conduct an analysis of implementing a bike share program in Wilmington.

Bike share is a flexible and convenient transportation and mobility option that allows users to have access to bicycles throughout a community. Bike share systems offer specially-designed, durable, and versatile bicycles. A bike share system can be accessed through low-cost passes ranging from a few dollars for a single ride to regular passes that range from \$5 to \$15 per month. In the last few years, many cities around the U.S. have implemented bike share programs to provide effective transportation options for trips that are too long to walk but too short to drive. Additionally, bike share has become a great complement to other public transportation options including the bus, light and heavy rail as it provides point-to-point first and last mile connections to transit.

Most existing U.S. bike share systems allow pass holders to take unlimited trips during their membership period, usually between 30 to 60 minutes. Following this “free ride period,” users may be charged incremental fees to encourage users to return the bicycle and make spaces available for other users to park their bicycles. This, along with the proximity of stations, encourages high turnover of bicycles and short trips. In fact in most U.S. bike share systems, most trips are between 15 to 35 minutes in duration, and one-to-three miles long.



**Figure 1: Opening Day, Indego (Philadelphia, PA)**



**Figure 2: Deco Bike. Miami Beach, FL**

Bike share is different from bicycle rentals in that it encourages short trips and high turnover by using a fee structure that continues to charge by time the longer a bicycle is kept out. In this way, renting a bicycle is generally more cost effective for longer time periods. Most bike share systems require the use of a credit card to access the system and check out a bicycle. However, in the last year, new pricing schemes have been implemented that allow users to access bike share systems using cash, and also to purchase single trips. That is the case of Philadelphia’s bike share system, Indego which allows members to purchase a 30 day membership using cash, and tourists to purchase one way 30 minute trips for \$4.

Bike share can provide a transportation alternative for multiple types of users. Local residents, commuters, visitors, college students, and tourists all benefit from the convenience of bike share mobility. Bike share also represents a way to reduce car related emissions. Additionally, bike share serves as an attractive amenity for residents and visitors in communities seeking to revitalize a downtown area. In the last six years the number of bike share systems in the U.S. has jumped from only four in 2010 to over 60 bike share programs as noted on **Figure 3**.

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