June 15, 2012

The Bike Project

Steering Committee

IMC, Urbana

Hello TBP Steering,

Facilities and Services (F&S) is very pleased with the great response to the Campus Bike Project at 608 E. Pennsylvania, Champaign. Thank you for all of your hard work and volunteer efforts to establish and maintain The Bike Project cooperative. This letter is a review of the current situation, and an update on the University’s position regarding the Campus Bike Project collaboration.

Two years ago, the University (UI) and The Bike Project (TBP) agreed to jointly open a second location of The Bike Project on campus. A Facility Use Agreement (FUA) was developed to guide the set-up of the new location and set certain guidelines on both parties. The initial collaboration involved the resources of many campus units and TBP. The Student Sustainability Committee contributed funds for the reconfiguration of a garage space that the Office of Sustainability identified. TBP provided many hours of volunteer time and the tools and equipment needed inside the workspace. F&S provided campus leadership for the efforts and funding for a one-time employee, to get the campus location started.

After the first year of operation, it was clear that the Campus Bike Project (CBP) was not yet self-sufficient. Therefore, the Student Sustainability Committee agreed to provide funding for half of the 20 hour per week employee and TBP agreed to provide the other half. The employee would still report to F&S, and TBP would send F&S a payment for their share of the FY12 half-time employee. During this year, the communication between TBP and F&S diminished, which led to some complications and frustration at the end of May 2012. F&S met with TBP representatives on May 24, 2012 to review the concerns and determine next steps. Since that meeting, I have been meeting regularly with TBP steering committee representatives to rebuild a healthy collaboration for the Campus Bike Project.

I have tried to capture each major point from the UI here, in no specific order, to facilitate further discussion.

1. The UI Office of Sustainability is working with community leaders to initiate collaborative projects, like the CBP and the John Street Watershed Project. These collaborations aim for greater community engagement related to sustainability issues and projects, and enhanced town/gown relationships. Therefore, rather than a standard UI departmental operation, the CBP will be a collaborative operation with ties to the community.
2. The CBP will be managed by F&S staff, using TBP techniques and principles. The new Shop Manager for the CBP will report to F&S and meet at least weekly with his immediate supervisor. A UI job description has been developed for this employee, and it is attached here. This shop manager will communicate with TBP volunteers and steering committee to handle operational details, related to the TBP practices and cooperative intentions. The shop manager will also be a liaison between the UI and TBP, attending standard TBP member meetings and representing the UI on the TBP steering committee.
3. The CBP is on the UI campus, thus it inherently represents the UI. Therefore, the UI intends to change the FUA so that the campus location is only open when a UI employee is on site. The TBP volunteers will no longer be given a key for unlimited access. However, with the expanded open hours and a full-time employee, the UI expects there will be sufficient access for TBP volunteers, as needed for the joint operation to run smoothly and effectively. There will be a key to the CBP garage in the Office of Sustainability, at F&S, and in the possession of the CBP Shop Manager. When additional part-time employees are hired, F&S may also choose to provide specific staff with a key.
4. The CBP is a sister location to TBP in Urbana, thus it also reflects upon TBP’s reputation. Therefore, the UI is willing to incorporate specific communication protocols in the revised FUA to address TBP concerns. These could address some of the following requests from TBP:
   1. Response times to hold meetings – we could agree to hold a meeting within ten days of a written request for a meeting.
   2. Response times to acknowledge requests for information – we could agree to acknowledge requests for information within two days of a written request.
   3. Discussion of employee disciplinary actions – we could agree to communicate or consult with TBP steering before taking disciplinary actions, with the limitation that the committee’s role would be advisory only. That is, we are happy to hear the TBP opinions, but we would not be bound to agree to them.
   4. Notice prior to temporarily closing the CBP location – we could agree to provide notice at least ten days in advance of any CBP closure and the anticipated re-open date.
5. The UI expects the CBP to become financially self-sufficient, and needs more detail about the current financial structure.
   1. The financial history for the first two years of CBP needs to be provided by TBP, with financial reports as required in the FUA provided to F&S.
   2. The UI is interested in developing formal financial reports for the CBP, in collaboration with TBP.
   3. The Shop Manager will work with the UI and the TBP to develop a proposed budget for FY14, with a goal of establishing a financially self-sufficient unit on campus.
6. There are a few operational concerns from the UI about the previous two years of CBP operations. These range from use of UI resources like computers and barricades, to compliance with the FUA regarding financial tracking reports, open hours, and use of space outside the garage during weekday hours. The revised understanding with a UI employee as Shop Manager in direct and frequent communication with both TBP volunteers and F&S staff will likely address these issues going forward, and some will be incorporated in the revised FUA.
7. Within the FUA, Section VI, the UI has authority to temporarily suspend the CBP operations. While the FUA is being revised, the CBP should remain closed.
   1. We anticipate opening it with the new schedule and new employee on August 1, 2012.
   2. We recognize that this is an inconvenience for TBP, but the UI deems it is in our best interest to keep the campus location closed to general members and the public while we renegotiate the FUA.
   3. The UI will issue a statement about the closure in the e-week newsletter, and through the Office of Sustainability newsletter, next week.
8. We are willing to discuss alternatives to a complete suspension of the CBP operations for the summer.
   1. Legal Counsel has advised us that while TBP is welcome to hire Carl for the Urbana location, given the nature of his dismissal, he should not be allowed to work at the Campus location. It is hereby requested that Carl relinquish any key(s) he may have for the campus location, which he indicated had been given to Barry Isralewitz and Joel Gillespie.
   2. If TBP would like to provide other primary volunteers to cover some of the regular open hours on campus, I would be willing to arrange to be there as the UI employee on site, during the month of July.

We recognize that this process is time-intensive, and we are glad that you have chosen to collaborate with the University to keep the Campus Bike Project active this coming fiscal year. The CBP is an integral part of a larger plan to provide infrastructure necessary for active transportation options on campus. Thank you for your continued support as we move toward a more sustainable campus, and encourage active transportation for our students, employees, and visitors. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 217-333-2668 or via email at mbjohnst@illinois.edu.

Sincerely,

Morgan B. Johnston

Morgan B. Johnston

Sustainability and Transportation Demand Management Coordinator

c: H. Coleman

S. Lage

M. Beverage

S. Veazie

Attachment: CPB Shop Manager job description