

Dear Student Sustainability Committee:

The Campus Bike Project (CBP), located at 608 E. Pennsylvania Ave. in Champaign, respectfully submits this letter of inquiry for a Sustainability Grant to fund the position of Campus Bike Project Manager for one year. We request a total sum of \$15,000, which would fund a 20-hour-per-week employee for one year. This grant will allow us to “bridge the gap” between the startup funds provided by the Student Sustainability Committee (for the facility conversion) and University of Illinois Facilities and Services (for staffing) and allow the CBP to become financially sustainable for the long-term.

## HISTORY

The Student Sustainability Committee awarded \$30,000 to the Bike Project of Urbana-Champaign in the spring of 2009 in order to extend the Bike Project's model of a do-it-yourself, membership-based bicycle repair shop to the U of I campus. The Bike Project has maintained a shop space with tools, repair stands, and helpful volunteer mechanics in downtown Urbana for more than three years. The SSC funds were used to convert 10 garage bays in the Natural Resources Garage to a heated, well-insulated, and efficiently-lighted DIY shop.

The CBP, opened in March of 2010, and has been serving the campus for 16 hours per week (open Monday mornings, Friday afternoons, and Sunday and Tuesday evenings) for the last eight months. During that time, the CBP has increasingly grown in popularity, serving over 50 students, faculty and staff members per week and originating 236 new memberships from 1,154 visits to the campus location (through November 23, 2010).

The Bike Project entered into a Facility Use Agreement, renewable annually on January 1, with the University of Illinois to operate the Campus Bike Project. Under the provisions of this Agreement, the University provides the space and utilities of the Campus Bike Project. The University also funded a Campus Bike Project Manager position through the Facilities and Services department as a 900-hour Extra Help employee. The Extra Help position is not expected to be renewed, and the funding for this position will be exhausted in March 2011.

## SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT

As an advocate of clean, green, low-impact transportation, the Campus Bike Project provides services which are important to the long-term sustainability of the University of Illinois campus, as well as the larger community.

- **Low-cost bicycle repairs, maintenance education, and building personal self-sufficiency (membership is only \$25 per year for students and \$40/yr for non-students)** — members perform repairs themselves with assistance from CBP manager and/or volunteer mechanics. Work equity memberships are also available: 8 hours of volunteer time = a one-year membership. Providing these services contributes to fewer cars on campus and a smaller carbon footprint for the University.
- **Recycling of abandoned or unwanted bicycles** — Between the Urbana and Campus locations, over 500 bicycles per year are either completely refurbished and resold, harvested of useful parts and recycled, or sent overseas to aid NGO's in developing nations through a partnership with Working Bikes. Members can repair a bicycle themselves through our Build-a-Bike program.
- **Commuting education and supplies** – The CBP offers educational materials and events, as well as partnering with established events such as Cranksgiving, Light the Night and Bike to Work Day, to assist those interested in using the bicycle as transportation with overcoming obstacles to that use. The CBP also offers lights, locks, and other safety items at a reasonable cost.

## **A FUTURE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

The CBP is a part of The Bike Project of Urbana-Champaign, whose original location in downtown Urbana has been growing steadily since its founding in 2006. The Campus Bike Project location has assisted in accelerating that growth. We are thrilled to be able to more directly serve the U of I community from an on-campus, highly-visible location.

Starting up the CBP required a significant investment of both financial and human resources on the part of the Bike Project. We allocated more than \$3,000 of our organizational funds toward repair stands, tools, parts, and supplies. We also more than doubled the number of hours per week which our shops are open, which greatly impacted our volunteer structure.

Since March of 2010, we've recouped the initial financial investment through sales of used bicycles and membership funds. And despite several of our key volunteers relocating away from the community in the past several months, we've been able to manage the increase in open hours through the utilization of the paid CBP manager position, as well as initiating a formal volunteer orientation program.

The initial SSC funds for the conversion of the space, as well as the U of I investment in the manager position, were tremendously helpful in getting the CBP off the ground. However, we are not comfortable that the CBP location is financially self-sufficient at this point in its development. We are committed to providing memberships, parts, supplies, and bicycles at low costs in order to foster an inclusive culture, and that often leads to revenues which are lower than the maximum possible.

Next year at this time, after another year of experience, as well as an increase in memberships and bicycle sales through increased promotion and advertising, we are confident that the CBP will be able to internally fund a part-time manager position. If this letter of inquiry is selected for a complete proposal, we will include a detailed plan for self-sufficiency in 2012 as part of that proposal. We appreciate the opportunity to submit this letter of inquiry, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

*Campus Bike Project*

Campus Bike Project