Reclaiming Abandoned Bicycles on the Streets of NYC
THE CONTEXT
Biking is Hot in NYC

As of today, there are:

• 58% more bikes on NYC streets than we had in 2008.
• More than 500,000 adult New Yorkers using a bike at least once a month.
• Thousands of Citi Bike enthusiasts; it’s a clear success.
• Shoppers are increasingly travelling to commercial corridors by bike.

“NYC DOT found that protected bikeways had a significant impact on local business strength. After the construction of a protected bicycle lane on 9th Avenue, local businesses saw a 49% increase in retail sales. In comparison, local business throughout Manhattan only saw a 3% increase in retail sales.”*

Expanding bike networks supports local merchants and means we can only expect this trend to continue into 2014 and beyond.

*Source: “Measuring the Streets: New Metrics for 21st Century Streets” NYC DOT
THE CHALLENGE
Abandoned Bikes Remain an Unsolved NYC Problem

Abandoned bike carcasses litter the streets. Transportation Nation’s Abandoned Bike Tracker (April-May ’12) received over 500 pictures of derelict bikes. Only 150 were processed through 311, and only 19 were eventually removed.

- They take up valuable bike parking spaces.
- They create a liability for pedestrians.
- They mark sidewalks with the promise of insecurity (“this could happen to you!”) and invite theft and vandalism.
- To merchants and property owners, they say, “Don’t welcome bike-riders unless you want abandoned bikes cluttering your storefront!”

Overall, abandoned bikes present a sad, anti-cycling image and are a nuisance for local merchants and property owners that detract from otherwise clean commercial corridors.
A SOLUTION
Bike Rescue

The LES BID believes there is a hidden opportunity here. Working with Pilot Projects Design Collective, we have developed a comprehensive plan to divert abandoned bikes from the waste stream and into job training and local employment, while supporting small businesses, all though a zero-emissions model.
A CULTURE OF STEWARDSHIP
Bike Rescue Jobs & Job Training

Bike Rescue’s mission is to reclaim, recycle and restore. This process will provide local youth with valuable skills, training and employment opportunities. We will work with partners at Recycle-A-Bicycle, Henry Street Settlement and the LES Employment Network to leverage other sources of funding for a Bicycle Mechanics Academy to train and employ local young adults in bike mechanic jobs.

The method in 7 short steps:
1. Spot an abandoned bike;
2. Open Bike Rescue app and log location and bike condition;
3. Bike Rescue arrives on the scene (w/ branded tools, uniform, and tailor-made GPS devices).
4. The bike is assessed and tagged.
5. 3 days later, Bike Rescue returns on a pedicab, cuts the lock, and carts the bike away.
6. The bike is repaired using reclaimed parts, or properly recycled;
7. Restored bikes returned to streets!
FROM THE L.E.S. TO GREATER NYC
Location, Strategy, Projections & Possibilities

Bike Rescue can work for all of NYC, but this LES pilot will prove the concept in one neighborhood first.

The Bike Rescue LES Pilot will run for six months and use repurposed shipping containers as a base of operations for storage, repair, and training. If selected, the LES BID will utilize a portion of public plazas they manage along Delancey Street for this facility.

This allows for low overhead and a physical footprint that enhances existing public open space within the district.

Project Participants:
• Recycle-A-Bicycle
• Henry Street Settlement
• LES Employment Network

Prospective Partnerships:
• LES Ecology Center
• Transportation Alternatives
• NYC Dept. of Sanitation
• NYC Dept. of Transportation
• NYCHA
WHEN?
Bike Rescue Timeline 2014

Planning

January—March  Program planning/design, approvals, and staffing.

April  Program Launch, First Day tag 10 bikes! Gather web followers.

May  Target: Tag all LES problem locations and remove abandoned bikes identified in first month of operation, 1000 hits on app/website, drive program awareness.

6 Month Pilot

June  Pedicab demo-tours of Bike Rescue for public and officials.

July  Program in full swing, all abandoned bikes removed and restored to new owners per pilot program guidelines.

Succession Plan

August  Data showing community benefits, increased economic activity, recovered bikes and employment impacts.

September  Achieve external funding for continued pilot and NYC expansion.
**HOW MUCH?**

**Budget**

**PROJECT COSTS**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Capital Costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site Improvements and Facility Construction</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pedicabs</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
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<td>Tools and Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Website and Application Development</td>
<td>$15,000</td>
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<td>Project Design and Planning</td>
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**Pilot Costs (6 Month Duration)**

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<tr>
<td>Part Time Staff (4 @ 25 hrs/week)</td>
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<td>Program Administration and Payroll Costs</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Utilities</td>
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**TOTAL**  

|       | $120,000 |

**PROJECT FUNDING**

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<tr>
<td>Neighborhood Challenge Grant Contribution</td>
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<td>LES BID Contribution</td>
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THE OUTCOME
Bike Rescue Will Generate Multiple Tangible and Intangible Benefits

1. Creation of Local Employment and Youth Training Opportunities
2. Happier Cyclists and Potential Shoppers
3. More Bike Parking
4. Cleaner and Safer Sidewalks for Pedestrians
5. Cleaner and Clutter-Free Streets
6. Lower Carbon Emissions + Positive Impacts on Climate Change
7. Fewer Bike Thefts*
8. Happier Merchants and Property Owners
9. Better Image for Cycling in NYC
10. Demonstration of Community Engagement and Waste Management Principles for NYC

*Large numbers of abandoned bikes send a signal that bikes are untended property. Bike Rescue addresses that problem.