Optimizing Dockless Bikeshare for Cities

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I. Background: Dockless Bikeshare Regulation

II. Risks & Opportunities

III. Policy Framework

IV. Looking Forward
Dockless bikeshare regulation:

- **2014**: Dockless bikeshare emerges on several university campuses in China – largely unregulated.
- **April 2017**: Chinese cities explore options for regulating supply of bikes, managing public space, ensuring user privacy.
- **July 2017**: Seattle releases first comprehensive permit structure to manage dockless operations before companies launched bikes.
- **April 2018**: 30+ cities worldwide have drafted and/or adopted dockless bikeshare regulations.
Risks & Opportunities

Despite the risks, many cities have allowed unregulated dockless bikeshare to operate.

- “Wait-and-see” approach can lead to poor service delivery
- Could jeopardize political will or future investments in cycling
- Threat to bikeshare as a viable transportation mode

Clear, outcome-oriented regulation expands the opportunity of dockless bikeshare

- High-quality service for users
- Predictable, fair environment for operators
- Utilize bikeshare as a tool to achieve broader city goals
OPPORTUNITY: Dockless bikeshare has replaced an estimated 10% of car trips in Shenzhen, China.
Policy Framework: Purpose

- Promote fair, efficient operating environment
- Ensure high quality of service for users
- Establish a baseline from which success can be identified and measured
Policy Framework

1. Position bikeshare within city goals

2. Establish operations level objectives
   - Effectively manage public space
   - Foster equity & accessibility
   - Improve planning & enforcement
   - Protect users

3. Access & verify operator data
   - Monitor operations
   - Enforce policies

4. Amend policies (if necessary)
   - Consider new technologies, business models, etc.
   - Evaluate policies

Real-time evaluation framework

Analyze operator data & user feedback
Policy Framework

1. Position bikeshare within city goals

**Policy**

- Data-reporting standards

**Operations - Level Objectives**

1. Effectively manage public space
2. Foster equity & accessibility
3. Improve planning & enforcement
4. Protect users

**Citywide Goals**

- Improve transportation infrastructure planning and cycling network connectivity
- Track progress toward city goals

**User Education**

1. Effectively manage public space
2. Foster equity & accessibility
3. Improve planning & enforcement
4. Protect users

- Increase physical activity
- Reduce traffic injuries and fatalities
- Provide affordable, reliable options for multi-modal trips
Policy Framework: Operations-Level Objectives

- Effectively manage public space
- Foster equity & accessibility
- Improve planning & enforcement
- Protect users
Policy Framework: Operations-Level Objectives

Effectively manage public space

Policy Options

• Fleet size cap
• Time-bound response to parking complaints
• User education
• Lock-to requirement
• Dockless bikeshare parking areas
Policy Framework: Operations-Level Objectives

2 Foster equity & accessibility

Policy Options

- Bike distribution requirement
- Flexible & reduced payment options
- Transit integration
Policy Framework: Operations-Level Objectives

3 Improve planning & enforcement

Policy Options

• Data reporting standards
• User survey requirement
Policy Framework: Operations-Level Objectives

Policy Options

4 Protect users

- Clear safety information
- Equipment standards
- User deposit refund protections
Effective monitoring and enforcement of dockless bikeshare operations requires:

1) Real-time and reported data from each operator

2) Dedicated government staff capable of validating data submitted by operators

3) A strategy that imposes penalties for non-compliance
GOAL: more trips made by bike and fewer made by cars.

Cities can achieve this by:

- Developing outcome-oriented policies
- Establishing data requirements, staff, and a clear enforcement strategy
- Being proactive and nimble in approach to regulation
- Periodically evaluating and adjusting policies based on system performance over time
Learn More

ITDP Resources

- Dockless Bikeshare Blog Series

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