

Bicycle Registration Fee

Bicycle Registration Fee: Although the City requires bicycle owners to register their bicycles with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) prior to operating on City streets, there is no fee associated with registration.

Description

Currently, bicycle owners are required to register their bikes with the CPD prior to operating on the public way. See MCC 9-120-020. CPD maintains a list of 22,000 bikes, 12,000 of which have been registered since 2009. There is not currently a fee or a fine associated with non-compliance.

Revenue Impact

Revenue resulting from a bicycle registration fee would depend on the amount of the fee (and any associated fine for noncompliance) and the number of cyclists registering their bicycles. A portion of this revenue would be offset by the cost of administering and enforcing the registration program.

While the total number of bicycles used in Chicago is not known, an estimated 15,500 cyclists commute to the central business district each day.

Legal Issues

Imposing a fee on bicycles is within the City's authority and requires amendment of the Municipal Code. However, any amount over the cost of administering the program would need to be justified by City expenses specific to bicycle use on City streets.

Other Cities

Several Illinois municipalities charge a nominal bicycle registration fee (\$1-\$2), including Carbondale, Evanston, Highland Park, Lombard, and Naperville.

Other major cities—including Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and Detroit—have eliminated their programs due to the cost of administering and enforcing the requirement.