



## Media Advisory

**Date:** April 8, 2016 - for immediate release

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**What:** Red Bike Project Kickoff

**When:** 4 p.m., April 15, 2016

**Where:** Rydjor Bike Shop 213 Main St N, Austin, MN 55912

**Background:** Join us for a community kickoff event for the Red Bike Project at 4 p.m. on Friday, April 15, at Rydjor Bike Shop in Austin. The event will include a ceremonial ribbon cutting and short bike ride.

Project organizers are excited to launch a free bike share program throughout the City of Austin. The project's goal is to encourage healthy living and reduce traffic congestion. By having this free bike share option in the community, residents will be encouraged to try making routine trips by bike and ride more often.

This program will be based on the honor system with the theme of RIDE, RESPECT, and RETURN. We ask that anyone who uses a bicycle take care of it and simply return it to one of the Red Bike Racks when finished riding. Bicycles will be available for use at any of the Red Bike Rack locations in Austin.

A big thank you to the organizations involved in this project: Rydjor Bike Shop, Austin Park and Recreation Department, SHIP Mower County, Vision 2020 Walk/Bike Trail Committee, Hormel Foods, Riverland Community College, Quality Bicycle Products, Austin Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Austin Police Department. We would also like to recognize the many volunteers who donated time and effort to help transform the donated bikes into Red Bikes, specific thanks to the Austin High School Cycling Team and the Southern MN Bike Club.

**Red Bike Rack locations currently placed (stay tuned as more racks will be placed at a later date):**

- East Side Lake, parking lot area
- Noon Lions pavilion on Oakland Avenue, South side of the road
- Parking lot off of 1st Street NE, East of the Spam Museum
- West of Ellis Middle School
- Ankeny's Mini Mart on 14th Street NW
- Municipal Pool

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## PRESS RELEASE

The City of Austin is officially launching Red Bike—a free bike share program—by accepting donations starting Monday, September 14.

The goal of the Red Bike program is to encourage healthy living and reduce traffic congestion. Making biking free and easy encourages residents to try making routine trips by bike and some will see the benefits and choose to ride more often. This also builds on our many efforts of trail development, bike designations on the roadways, bike fix it station and moving towards becoming a Bike Friendly designated community.

The public is asked to join in on these continued efforts by donating bikes in rideable condition at Rydjour Bike Shop at 219 North Main Street. Rydjour is open Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closing late at 8 p.m. on Thursday and closing early at 5 p.m. on Saturdays. Bikes will be accepted until Wednesday, September 30.

The Red Bike program is particularly seeking adult, single speed, pedal brake bikes. Bikes that can't be used by Red Bike riders will be used for other community purposes. Multi-speed bikes will be converted to single-speed, pedal brake bikes and painted red for the Red Bike program.

Cash donations are also encouraged to help offset the costs of converting and maintaining the bikes. Checks should be mailed to Austin Area Foundation at 110 1st Ave SE, Austin, MN 55912. Please mark checks for Red Bike program.

After collecting bikes this fall, Rydjour Bike staff and volunteers will convert bikes over the winter. The plan is to install Red Bike at 11 sites in Austin in the spring. To date, three businesses have agreed to participate by hosting a rack and two or three bikes at the business site. Sites will be scattered over the city and some may be located at public parks, depending on the response from businesses.

Red Bike is a City of Austin initiative with partners Mower County SHIP, Rydjour Bike Shop and Vision 2020 Bike Walk committee. Funds for converting bikes, bike racks and signage explaining the program will be provided by Mower County SHIP, donations from individuals and business site sponsorships.

Any Austin resident or visitor will be able to use Red Bike to travel through the city. Riders are asked to return bikes to the racks where they started when possible and to abide by the 'Ride Respect Return' motto.

Red Bike Austin has consulted with counterparts in Wilmar, Minnesota to learn from the first-year experiences in Wilmar's bike share program.