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ALLSTON BRIGHTON

Before Hub's bike share begins, a blemish at one station

Posted by Matt Rocheleau July 27, 2011 04:32 PM

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

A small amount of graffiti on the new Hubway bike share station in Allston's Union Square Tuesday afternoon -- two days before the program launches.

This story was updated Thurs., July 28 at 4 p.m. to note that the station's graffiti had been cleaned off by the day of the bike program's launch, and to add comments from a few other residents who spoke about possible future vandalism:

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

Before Boston's new bicycle share program was able to roll itself out, at least one of the bike stations was slightly vandalized.

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On Tuesday afternoon, a small amount of graffiti had been tagged on either side of the advertising space of a bike station in Allston's Union Square. By the time the program had launched Thursday it had been cleaned off.

Hubway officials said they were not aware of any other stations being subjected to vandalism. A spokeswoman said anyone who notices vandalism or other issues with a station can report the problem via a hotline number listed on a map on each station kiosk.

Fourteen-year-old Alex Nascimento walked by the Hubway stand on the plaza area in front of the Jackson-Mann School in Allston Tuesday. He had seen the large, empty-looking device a day or two prior, but wasn't sure what it was. Perhaps some fancy sort of bike rack he'd thought.

Upon learning that the station was, in fact, empty, and will be stocked with brand new, rent-able bikes on Thursday, he said it sounded like a great idea.

"Much more convenient than owning a bike," Nascimento, a former bicycle owner, said

But, the graffiti, "It's just dumb," he said, pointing out that the black lettering was mostly illegible. "I seriously don't see the point of it. What's the point of ruining it. What do you get out of it."

Late morning Thursday, as the bike share program was kicking off with ceremonies at City Hall, 20-year-old neighborhood resident Pat Farrell sat on a cement wall outside the Allston school.

Asked what his general thoughts were on the new bike share station several yards in front of him, he said, "we'll see how long they last on the weekends," and then made a kicking motion.

He said he expects the kiosks and bikes will become targets of destruction for mischievous patrons as they spill out of area bars.

Farrell added that he recently sold his bike to his friend seated next to him, 21-year-old Zach Crockett.

Crockett said he doesn't expect to use the new bike share system himself unless something goes wrong with the bike he just bought. But, the now-bike-less Farrell said he expects he may.

"If I ever myself in a jam and need to get somewhere," he said.

Anthony Kenny, 54, sat beside the two 20-somethings and said he's had three different motor scooters stolen off sidewalks in the Boston area in recent years. He wondered whether the new Hubway stations, which a bike will automatically lock themselves into as a rider parks it, might be targeted by thieves.

"If they can't steal them," he said, "they'll just wreck them."

To read more about the bike share program that launched in Boston Thursday -- two days after originally planned [due to a scheduling conflict](#) -- click [here](#) and [here](#).

E-mail Matt Rocheleau at mjrochele@gmail.com

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(Matt Rocheleau for Boston.com)

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