

CHAPTER 3: BICYCLE PARKING

INTRODUCTION

Secure bicycle parking provided at likely destinations is an integral part of a bikeway network. Bicycle thefts are common and lack of secure parking is often cited as a reason people hesitate to ride a bicycle to certain destinations. The same consideration should be given to bicyclists as to motorists, who expect convenient and secure parking at all destinations. Bicycle racks must be designed so that they:

- Don't bend wheels or damage other bicycle parts;
- Accommodate high security U-shaped bike locks;
- Allow users to secure the frame and both wheels;
- Don't obstruct pedestrians (especially when bikes are parked);
- Are covered where users will leave their bikes for a long time; and
- Are easily accessed from the street and protected from motor vehicles.

The simplest, easiest to install and most effective bike rack is the "inverted U" or "staple." Both fulfill all of the above design requirements.

To establish a theme or motif, "art racks" are often created to add whimsical and artistic touches to otherwise perfunctory bike racks. In many cases they function well for bike parking, and don't interfere with pedestrian travel. But some racks have features that make it difficult to lock a bicycle securely, or protrude too far into the pedestrian's path of travel. The best art racks are variations of the commonly accepted inverted U or staple designs.

Bicycle parking facilities are generally grouped into 2 classes:

- **Long Term:** Provides complete security and protection from weather. It is intended for situations where the bicycle is left unattended for long periods of time: apartments, condominiums, schools, places of employment and transit stops. These are usually lockers, cages or rooms in buildings, providing real security for the bicycle (with its easily removed components) and accessories (lights, pump, tools and bags).
- **Short Term:** Provides a means of locking the bicycle frame and at least the front wheel, but does not provide security for accessories, or weather protection unless covered. It is for parking where the bicycle is left for a short period of time and is visible and convenient to the building entrance.

The following recommendations are presented to help cities and counties develop local bicycle parking ordinances.

RECOMMENDED STANDARDS

DIMENSIONS

The recommended dimensions ensure that bicycles can be securely locked without undue inconvenience and will be reasonably safeguarded from theft as well as intentional or accidental damage.

- Bicycle parking spaces should be at least 6 ft long and 2 ft wide, and overhead clearance in covered spaces should be at least 7 ft.
- A 5 ft aisle for bicycle maneuvering should be provided and maintained beside or between each row of bicycle parking.
- Bicycle racks or lockers should be securely anchored to the surface or a structure.

COVERED PARKING

Pacific Northwest winters have mild temperatures and periods of intermittent rain. Many short trips can be made by bicycle without getting wet; however, a rider might hesitate to leave a bicycle exposed to the weather if it's left unattended for a long time.

Covered parking is necessary for long-term parking (mostly residential and employee uses). For customers, visitors and other occasional users, covered parking is also beneficial. Covered spaces can be roof overhangs, awnings, lockers or bicycle storage spaces within buildings.

Covered parking needs to be visible for security, unless supplied as storage within a building. Covering should extend 2 ft beyond the parking area, to prevent cross-winds from blowing rain onto bicycles.

- Bicycle parking for residential, school and industrial uses should be covered.
- 50% of bicycle parking for commercial uses should be covered.
- Where motor vehicle parking is covered, bicycle parking should also be covered.
- Where there are 10 or more bicycle parking spaces, at least 50% of the bicycle parking spaces should be covered.

LOCATION

Bicycle parking should be located in well lit, secure locations within 50 ft of the main entrance to a building, but not further from the entrance than the closest automobile parking space; and in no case further than 50 ft from an entrance where several entrances are involved.

The effectiveness of bicycle parking is often determined by location. To reduce theft, a highly visible location with much pedestrian traffic is preferable to obscure and dark corners, even if the more visible location is more distant. Because of its smaller size, the bicycle can be parked closer to the rider's destination than a car.

Racks near entrances should be located so there are no conflicts with pedestrians. Curb cuts near the rack location discourage users from riding on the sidewalk to access the racks.

Many sites need two types of bicycle parking: short-term for customers (up front); and long-term (covered) for employees, which may be placed further away from the main entrance.

Separating bicycle from car parking by a physical barrier or sufficient space protects bicycles from damage by cars.

Bicycle parking provided in the public right-of-way should allow sufficient passage for pedestrians (6 feet).

Bicycle parking may be provided within the public right-of-way in areas without building setbacks, subject to approval of local officials and provided it meets the other requirements for bicycle parking.

In Central Business Districts, simple racks placed along the sidewalks serve bicyclists riding to various locations along a commercial street. They should be placed in the furniture or the frontage zone, so they do not interfere with pedestrians. There should be several per block: smaller bicycle parking areas are preferable to one large centralized area both for convenience in access and greater security.

Bicycle parking on curb extensions

Curb extensions create good opportunities to provide bicycle parking out of the pedestrian zone, especially in areas where sidewalks are narrow. They also benefit from the proximity of a curb cut at the corners. The parking should be placed where it will not obscure visibility of pedestrians crossing the street, or motorists waiting to enter a street.

On-street bicycle parking

Where there is insufficient room on the sidewalks to provide sufficient bicycle parking without cluttering the pedestrian zone, bicycle parking can be provided in the street. One parallel car parking spot can provide parking for up to 12 bicycles. It must be buffered by bollards, curb extensions or other forms of positive protection.

Bicycle parking may also be provided inside a building in secure and accessible locations. This provides a high degree of security and protection, at the expense of some convenience. Dedicated rooms with card locks are very effective. Locating a room close to changing and showering facilities enhances its attractiveness.

NUMBER OF SPACES

See Table 3.3.400 in the model land use and development codes developed by the Transportation and Growth Management program: <http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM/docs/modelCode05/pdf/art3.pdf> The TGM recommendations are based on specific and easily measurable criteria; e.g. size of buildings, number of residential units, number of classrooms, etc.

Combined parking could be allowed in areas of concentrated small businesses, such as downtowns and business parks. Publicly provided bicycle parking could also be used.

For park-and-ride lots, requirements need to relate the number of bicycle parking spaces to the probable service area; e.g. the number of residents within a three-mile radius of a facility.

The amount, location and usage of bicycle parking should be monitored and adjusted to ensure that there is an adequate supply. If bicycle use increases, the need for bicycle parking may increase above that specified when facilities are constructed. Local jurisdictions may have to require additional bicycle parking to meet the demand.

Employment and retail centers should voluntarily provide additional parking to satisfy the demands of customers and employees.

SIGNING

Directional signs are needed to guide cyclists if the bicycle parking locations are not visible from building entrances or transit stops. Instructional signs may be needed if the design of bicycle racks isn't readily recognized as bike parking, such as art racks.

But for security reasons, it's better not to sign long-term employee parking within a building, to avoid bringing bicycles to the attention of potential thieves.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Long-term bicycle parking spaces should be provided at no cost, or with only a nominal charge for key deposits, etc. Residential parking spaces should be available to residents as part of rental or ownership contracts. This does not preclude the operation of private for-profit bicycle parking businesses.

Short-term bicycle parking should be available near the building entrances of all land uses, and should be free.

Well placed bicycle parking

Upside-down U accommodates 2 bicycles

Fanciful rack accommodates bicycles

Fig 1: Bicycle parking dimensions

Covered bike parking on curb extension

Bike racks placed close to store entrance

Fig 2: Bike parking on sidewalks in CBD

Fig 3: Bike parking on curb extensions
Fig 4: Protected bike parking on street
Secure employee bike parking in basement room

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