

Module 1: Why Bike Parking?

Introduction

At its most basic level, bike parking encourages people to cycle. If a person chooses to ride a bike and at their destination they find that bike parking is unavailable or inconvenient, they may choose another option, like driving alone or going elsewhere for their needs. Lack of conveniently placed, secure and effective bike parking is a major barrier to cycling regularly. In order for cycling to compete with other modes of transportation, it must be convenient and efficient to ride and to park your bike.

Benefit to business

Bike racks provide additional parking capacity for customers to visit local businesses. Bicycle parking not only invites cyclists in but shows the business values sustainability and community health, which are important factors in the decisions of increasingly health and environmentally conscious consumers. Encouraging bicycle travel to a place of business also reduces the demand on costly and often limited vehicle parking space.

Benefit to the disabled

Good bike parking benefits the disabled. By providing adequate, well-planned bike parking, business owners or property managers can ensure that hand rails and ramps intended for accessibility purposes are not clogged with bicycles from those looking for a bike parking spot.

Benefit to pedestrians

Pedestrians also benefit when orderly and aesthetic bike parking is provided. Not only does it improve the appearance of the area, it ensures that sidewalks and benches intended for pedestrians are not cluttered by bikes that do not have a designated parking space. In this way, bike parking can also prevent damage to other street furniture like garbage cans, posts, benches and trees while ensuring bikes don't block entrances or walkway accesses.

Across North America the growing trend towards development of complete streets will continue to bring cycling to the mainstream and will drive a need for more cycling infrastructure at 'end of trip' locations.

Theoretical vs Actual Bike Parking

When planning any type of bike facility, whether it is a single rack or a significant standalone facility, it is critical that providing quality bike parking be considered with the same level of care that is given to providing for car parking or for the pedestrian realm.

When decision makers don't know what constitutes a quality bike parking solution, the outcome can be poor. Bicycle parking can often become an afterthought resulting in installation of ineffective and inferior racks often poorly placed. The result is that the quality of the bike parking solution is not sufficient to meet the needs of visiting cyclists and does not match the caliber of the surrounding environment.

Partly, this stems from a difference between the theoretical specifications of a solution and the actual reality of the rack given the space considerations and constraints that are being accommodated. It is also important to make sure that the theoretical listed storage, provided by the manufacturer, can actually accommodate the same number of bicycle parking spaces in the area that has been designated. In other words, it's important to ensure that it is physically possible to park the number of desired bikes given your space constraints and the rack that you choose.

Bike parking does not just involve a single bicycle at rest but also needs to take into account the space required by a bike and rider to maneuver around to access the rack, to lock up, and to unload gear. (Like planning a car parking lot, the dimensions do not only include the stalls, but also space to comfortably open doors, move in and out of the parking spot, and maneuver around other users who are trying to park.)

As you read further about bicycle parking best practices, keep your space in mind so that you do not just provide a theoretical number of spaces but also create high quality, functional, safe, and secure facilities.

Short Term vs Long Term

Bike parking solutions can be thought of in different ways depending on the length of time it is expected that users will park for and level of security that you want to provide. Often both short term and long term facilities are required in order to accommodate different types of trips.

Short-term bicycle parking is designed to be used for a few minutes up to a couple of hours. As a result, short-term parking should be easily accessible, provide a secure point for locking up and ideally be covered for weather protection.¹

Long-term bicycle parking is intended for use over several hours or overnight. As a result, this parking must be designed to protect bicycles parked for longer periods of time (from theft and from the elements)

Short Term	Long Term
also referred to as "Type 2" or "Class 2" "or Class B" bicycle parking	also referred to as "Type 1" or "Class 1" or "Class A" bicycle parking
includes bike racks in easily accessible locations	includes bike racks in enclosed secured areas with

¹ Toronto, 2008

Short Term	Long Term
that are available for public use	limited access, like cages, bike rooms
can be sheltered or unsheltered	also includes secure individual enclosures like bike lockers
does not provide additional protection from vandalism or theft	

Basic Dimensions

Bicycles are among the easiest vehicles to park because they are small in size and simple in design. Bicycle parking is significantly more efficient than parking for motorized vehicles. One car parking space can provide from 5-10 bicycle parking spaces.

- A standard bike is 6' long with handle bars 2' wide and approximately 4' tall
- Envision the bicycle as a box that you need to move within the given space
- Increasingly there are modern city and commuter bikes which tend to have wider handlebars and e-bikes which tend to be longer than standard bicycles
- There are also many other non-standard bicycles like beach cruisers, recumbent bicycles, and cargo bikes which should be considered based upon your specific demographic

