

CYCLING CYCLE HUBS, SMART AND SECURE BIKE PARKING

KEY ISSUES

- Secure bike lockers at public transport stations have significant impacts on the increase of cycling (Taylor and Mahmassani, 1996).
- Even if paid parking replaces free parking at stations, evidence shows that most current cyclists will continue to ride into a station providing free parking facilities are made available at circa 5mins walk, (Molin, Maat, 2015).
- Willingness to pay for bicycle parking is low (Transport Research Board, Canada, 2014).
- Cities where cycling rates are high provide detailed and online maps of their full cycling facilities, including parking (Pusher, Buehler, 2008).
- More than 45% of London cyclists have been the victim of bike theft at least once (Quanteze, 2016).

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Cycle hubs are secure spaces designed for bike upkeep and parking in mobility nodes (often train stations). Access is possible 24/7 and is provided to cyclists by being a member and paying an annual fee. The space can be closed, or the bicycle parking made secure.

LONDON CONTEXT

Examples of cycle hubs can be found in London. In 2013, the Mayor of London awarded three boroughs 'Mini-Holland' funds. With the funding, Enfield opened two cycle hubs, Enfield Town and Edmonton Green. The annual fee to access them is £25 a year, and the hubs were built by UK based company Cyclehoop. Waltham Forest has pledged to open **nine cycle hubs** near stations by the end of 2019, with eight currently in operation. They can be accessed for an annual fee of £25, and they all provide help points, CCTV and cycle

pumps. Cyclepods, a British company, built the hubs.

Beyond Mini-Holland funding, boroughs have been constructing specific infrastructure: Haringey has a hub with 147 spaces, located near Finsbury Park Station (£10 a year/£5 after the first year or 50p a day). London airport Heathrow has built a **cycle hub** for its employees, in partnership with cycling charity **Sustrans**. The hub includes a repair station as well as guidance and information and is linked to Heathrow's cycle to work policy.

Chapter 8 of the London Plan provides guidance on cycle parking hubs: they 'should be able to offer both a high quantity and quality of cycle parking to meet existing and future demand and to promote modal integration, helping to open up possibilities for people with long commutes who may wish to cycle for part of their journey'. They list several criteria for the cycle hub to be successful, underlining the role they play in making cycling more attractive.

Obstacles to the creation of cycle hubs are mostly linked to cost: most authorities that have been able to construct some in London did so with specific funding from the London Mayor. The cost is also high for users, which might put some off. Hubs could also suffer from misuse or degradation once in service.

The online portal **Urban Cycle Parking**, benefits mainly from user-uploaded content, could be further improved by adding cycle hubs. Beyond that, a cross-borough agreement for a database of secure access to parking would greatly benefit London commuters.

One of the key factors of success for cycle parking infrastructure is the choice of location, in response to user demand. Working with local communities and charities, such as Sustrans, is necessary when designing this infrastructure, ensuring locations are provided to benefit commuters. Working with community

groups who have or are benefiting from **Cycling Grants London** would be complementary to this.

INSPIRATION FROM ELSEWHERE

The Hub, Stockton (UK). Funded by Sustrans and Stockton, **the Hub** offers information and advice on cycling as well as training courses and free parking. It is opened Monday to Friday during working hours.

Vadebike, Barcelona (ES). Funded under the Horizon 2020 programme, **the project** (2017-19) is led by a Spanish SME. It is a system of smart private bike parking, providing a secure parking location on the streets of the city and space for helmet keeping, as well as an optional insurance system (up to 300€). Parking is limited to 24 hours. A platform integrating different systems of secure bicycle parking will also be developed. The annual fee is 25€, parking under 8 hours free then 0,09€/hour, and the first 3 months give access to free bike reviews at a specialised shop.



First Vadebike station, © Vadebike 2015

The creation of cycling hubs is additionally an opportunity for local authorities to improve the cycle parking network with high-quality infrastructure. Cycle hubs can also be integrated into wider mobility hubs, where electric charging stations, carsharing parking or bike sharing would be provided. In the Dutch town Utrecht, a **project of mobility hub** is accompanying the development of 9,000 new houses, intertwining human and vehicle mobility, with options to rent, park or hire bicycles and cars.

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