

Workshop: Bicycle Parking

Th3/E2: Copenhagen Cycle Parking Strategy

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1. Copenhagen cycle parking strategy

At the end of every cycle trip there is a parked bicycle – a fact Copenhagen has neglected, having concentrated its efforts on building new cycle tracks. Thanks to a substantial growth in the number of cycling trips, the cycle parking situation in Copenhagen is now getting even more chaotic. Sometimes visitors tell us, it is a problem they envy us!

Not only the City, but also the cyclists have responsibilities when it comes to parking their bicycles. In that respect, I guess you can say that cyclists have become their own enemies.

Good parking conditions for cyclists are essential if cycling should be felt attractive by the citizens. In the Bicycle Account, cyclists value cycle parking facilities rather low, giving only 3 points out of 10 possible. When asked about the combination of cycling and public transport, 5 points has recently improved to 6. – This is probably due to the fact, that bicycles can now be carried on local trains at all times. Bicycle parking is as bad as ever at terminals!



Chaotic bicycle parking outside the Main Station of Copenhagen.

Fortunately, there is now a high political focus on cycle parking problems in Copenhagen and the Traffic Department is working on how to solve them.

2. Cycle parking strategy versus instant results

3-4 years ago we realised, that a cycle parking strategy was needed. All aspect of cycle parking should be dealt with and the ambitions were high...

However, in 2005 and 2006, the Department realised, that the politicians wanted instant results and that action should not await finalising the cycle parking strategy. This was underlined by a political willingness to finance improvements. So the focus of the Department was changed from the strategy to a more practical approach.

The plans for 2006 did not include cycle parking projects at any length, but the first step towards improvement of cycle parking was taken.

3. The bicycle vulture and the Ministry of Justice

The first bicycle vulture campaign was launched in 2006.



From the "Vulture campaign".

The idea behind the vulture campaign simply was that it is much more expensive to build more bicycle parking than taking away "dead bicycles"! The very first campaign made it clear that there is a great potential. Nearly 40% of the bicycles were "dead". To stress, that the City was serious about improving cycle parking, the campaign also included extra cycle racks.

Because of Danish legislation, in principle only the police are allowed to remove bicycles from the streets. However, thanks to cooperation with the local police, a procedure was set up. This included marking of all bicycles and warnings to the owners. One month after marking, the bicycles not in use were removed. Some were sold at auctions, others were recycled!

To be able to make more efficient campaigns, the City of Copenhagen has asked the Ministry of Justice to change the rules, allowing the City to remove illegally parked bikes from the most sensitive areas. But: No way!

So, for the time being, we have decided to continue the vulture campaigns (within legislation) in the years to come.

We know, that car parking does not work without constant supervision and we have learned, that neither does cycle parking – therefore routine clearing should be seriously improved.

4. General solutions

In Copenhagen, the Vekso NO rack is the one normally used. It is very well designed, and it works for bicycles with both narrow and wide rims.



The NO-rack is the standard solution in Copenhagen when it comes to bicycle parking.

At stations, another design with two layer racks is sometimes put up to accommodate more bicycles where space is limited. Unfortunately, the upper layer cannot be used without difficulties for the cyclists.



The two layer parking at Norreport Station.

5. Send more money!

A recent political initiative granted a substantial sum to improve bicycle parking in Copenhagen within the next 3 years.

This makes it possible to amend neglects of the past, especially poor parking facilities at the new metro stations. It also allows experiments with new solutions, e.g. improvements of the two layer racks mentioned earlier.

We have realised, that 2 kinds of racks cannot solve all cycle parking problems in Copenhagen. So, new solutions are looked for. E.g:

- Temporary parking facilities which can easily be set up/removed on special occasions
- A new rack design to be used outside shops
- Space saving automatic bicycle parking.
- Bicycle stations.

6. Space saving bicycle parking

In some areas of the city, the demand for cycle parking is much higher than the supply of parking facilities. This is for example the case at the Town Hall Square.

We think an automatic solution can work at this location, because the cyclists may be willing to use a little more time to store their bicycle in a safe place. Cyclist in this area will often go to a cinema, a restaurant etc.



Photo manipulation showing entrance to automatic underground bicycle parking.

7. Bicycle stations

We believe that at the 2 major stations in Copenhagen (The Main Station and Norreport), it is necessary to change strategy from supplying racks on the surface to establish cycle parking in construction (e.g. parking house), thus saving space.

In contrast to the situation at the Town Hall Square, the customers at stations are more in a hurry. Therefore, the solution at Norreport may be to set up a 2 x 2-storey bicycle parking house, to accommodate some 500 - 1.000 bicycles. This will not solve all problems, but will give us some experience with how this kind of design will suit Copenhagen cyclists. We hope it will work, as it already does in Lund and Amsterdam!

The financing is not quite in place, and the project needs the cooperation of the City and The Danish State Railway. So this is not an easy task!

The square in front of the Main Station is being renewed for the time being. Unfortunately, there will only be minor improvements of the bicycle parking situation, so there is still a huge problem to solve here.

8. The cycle parking strategy is still on its way

The subject of this paper originally was the cycle parking strategy. It was overtaken by practical initiatives, but now is the time to finalise the cycle parking strategy and to bring it to the political level.

The intention is that the cycle parking strategy will be an instrument to integrate cycle parking at all levels of planning such as cycle tracks have been for years in Copenhagen.

The draft strategy deals with cycle parking in connection with 7 city functions:

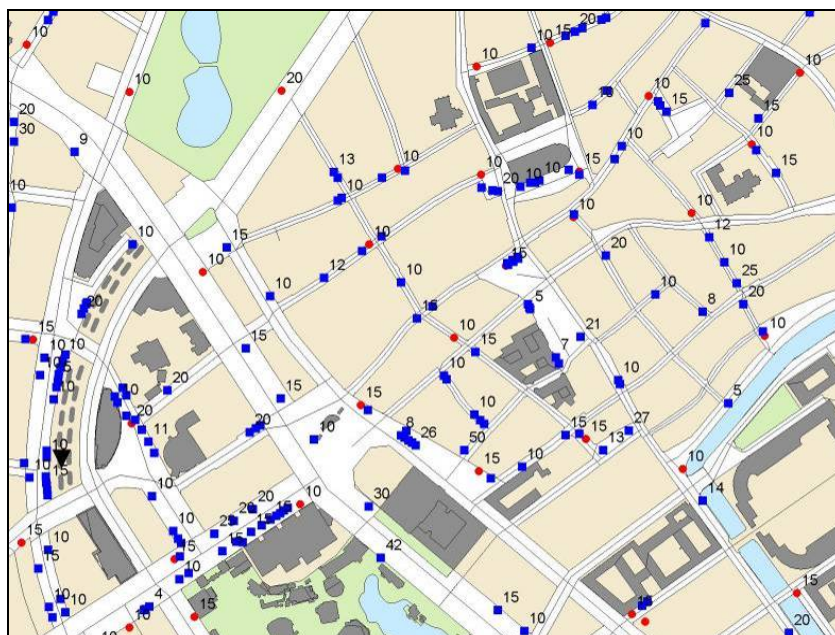
- Public transport
- Housing
- Entertainment and leisure areas
- Workplaces and institutions of education
- Schools and children's institutions
- Shops and shopping centres
- Other purposes



*The cover of the draft "Cykelparkeringsstrategi"
(Bicycle parking strategy).*

In the draft cycle parking strategy, which was set up in spring 2007, we consider the following goals:

- Citizen satisfaction with cycle parking should possibly be increased from 3 to 7 points (to be evaluated in the Bicycle Account)
- Cyclist perception of how the combination with public transport works should be increased from 5 to maybe 7 points (Bicycle Account)
- Cycle parking problems should be solved at the Main station and Norreport
- Standards for cycle parking in relation to city functions should be fixed
- Registration of cycle parking utilisation should be systematic to give input to demand considerations



Cycle parking availability in the City centre of Copenhagen. Blue dots shows parking for ordinary bicycles, red are special racks for city bikes.

For the time being, regulations concerning the number of parking places are very weak for new projects in the City. "Sufficient" has been used a lot, but should be replaced with specific figures related to various city functions, when the municipal administration approves projects.

Standards could e.g. be

- 2.5 cycle parking places per 100 m² of new housing area
- 0.5 per employee at workplaces
- 2.0 per 100 m² of shopping area.

Goals and standards will, when approved by the council, commit both the Department and the politicians.

9. Conclusion

When it comes to parking your bicycle in Copenhagen, we are aiming at substantial improvements. The ambitions of the strategy are high and the political willingness to finance cycle parking infrastructure is at hand. It is a unique chance to handle one of the worst problems for the promotion of cycling in Copenhagen.

And if we sometimes think cycle parking problems are difficult to cope with, we try to remember, that 10 parked bicycles equal 1 parked car!