



CITY COUNCILMEMBER
RIGEL ROBINSON
 DISTRICT 7

CONSENT CALENDAR
 March 21, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Robinson (Author); Councilmember Hahn (Co-Sponsor); Councilmember Harrison (Co-Sponsor); Councilmember Taplin (Co-sponsor);

Subject: Referral: On-Street Secure Bike Storage

RECOMMENDATION

Refer to the City Manager to develop and return to Council with a plan to create on-street secure bike parking in multi-family residential and commercial districts across the City in parking spots previously reserved for car storage. Take associated actions, including:

1. Determining recommended locations for installation that take into consideration factors such as equity priority neighborhoods; transit connections; bicycle network connections; areas with high percentages of tenants; access to destinations such as schools, community centers, employment centers, and businesses; and public input.
2. Developing and issuing a Request for Proposal for an operator to install and maintain on-street bike lockers, including lockers that can accommodate bikes of varying shapes and sizes.
3. Pursuing available grant opportunities to fund initial costs and ongoing maintenance.

CURRENT SITUATION

The City of Berkeley does not currently maintain or contract with an operator to maintain secure bike parking facilities. Bike parking in Berkeley is provided through a number of mechanisms:

- Short-term and long-term bicycle parking requirements for new construction and building expansions, both non-residential and residential.¹
- City-installed bike racks (placed on sidewalks) and corrals (placed in on-street parking spots), which can be requested by residents, workers, and businesses.²
- Secure parking facilities at Downtown Berkeley, Ashby, and North Berkeley BART, the Berkeley Marina, and the Berkeley Caltrain station, operated by BikeLink.³

¹ <https://berkeley.municipal.codes/BMC/23.322.090>

² <https://berkeleyca.gov/city-services/getting-around/walking-and-biking/bike-parking>

³ <https://www.bikelink.org/maps>

- Secure bike cages on the UC Berkeley campus for use by UC affiliates, operated by UC Berkeley Parking & Transportation.⁴
- Other non-City-owned bike racks, including in BART stations, on the UC Berkeley campus, and on private property.

Policy D-2 of the City's Bicycle Plan states that the City should "continue to expand citywide bike parking supply including short-term and long-term facilities for both commercial and residential land uses." This includes regularly reviewing and updating parking specifications and requirements that provide "long-term parking for maximum security and weather-protection, per City specifications for high-capacity bicycle racks, bicycle cages, bicycle rooms, and other secure enclosures."⁵ BART's draft Berkeley-El Cerrito Access Plan recommends expanding bike parking at BART stations and increasing secure bike parking options to accommodate larger bikes, such as tandem and cargo bikes.⁶

BACKGROUND

Secure bike parking refers to parking facilities that shield bicycles from theft, damage, and inclement weather. Ideal for longer-term parking needs, secure end-of-trip facilities complement other aspects of the bicycle ecosystem such as the low-stress bicycle network; bike education programs; maintenance and repair shops; and short-term parking. Oonee (Figure 1) and BikeLink (Figure 2) lockers are examples of secure bike parking solutions that have been implemented in cities across the country, including in the Bay Area. These lockers are efficient uses of the public right of way, turning a parking space for one car into parking for as many as six bicycles.

Figure 1: Oonee Mini Pod⁷

⁴ <https://pt.berkeley.edu/SecureBikeCages>

⁵ https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/2022-01/Berkeley-Bicycle-Plan-2017_Ch2_GoalsPoliciespdf.pdf

⁶ https://www.bart.gov/sites/default/files/docs/221213_BECCAP_Public_Review_Draft_clean.pdf

⁷ <https://www.oonee.us/mini>

Figure 2: BikeLink Locker⁸

In the Bay Area, most secure bike parking facilities are operated through BikeLink, a bicycle parking system deployed by Berkeley-based company eLock Technologies. Rates for locker use typically vary from \$0.03-\$0.05 per hour, and with the help of external grants, cities such as Oakland, Fremont, San Jose, and Santa Clara have been able to offer the first several hours of locker use for free. The system is accessed with a secure BikeLink card or app. Additionally, riders can connect their Clipper card to their BikeLink account, allowing them to pay using Clipper at specified locations.

⁸ <https://www.sjpl.org/bike-lockers>

Studies show that secure bike parking is important for increasing bicycle mode share.⁹ One study found that the presence of secure parking results in the same effect on the attractiveness of a trip as a decrease of 26.5 minutes spent cycling in mixed traffic. Bicyclists broadly prefer higher-security parking options that deter theft. This is especially true for younger bicyclists, for whom a bicycle represents a higher proportion of their income, and for women.

Bicyclists park their bikes for the longest period of time at home; however, there has been less of a focus on residential bike parking than on bike parking near transit or work.¹⁰ Residents of single-family homes have more options for bike parking than residents of multi-floor, multi-family buildings. While the City requires new construction to include bike parking, older multi-family buildings do not always provide bike parking for their tenants. A tenant in these buildings must either park their bike at a nearby City-owned bike rack (not always available), affix it to a pole or staircase (prohibited behavior that can create access issues), or carry it up multiple flights of stairs to store indoors (requires that they be able-bodied and have a large enough apartment). This additional burden and potential for theft may act as a deterrent to purchasing a bike for many tenants. On-street bike lockers in multi-family residential neighborhoods would give tenants more options for safely parking their bikes.

The rise in popularity of electric bikes creates an additional need for secure bike parking. E-bikes weigh between 40 and 80 pounds in part due to the additional weight of the battery, which is much heavier than traditional bikes. This makes it more difficult for a resident of a multi-floor building to carry it up stairs. E-bikes are also more expensive than traditional bikes, increasing the importance of parking facilities that reduce theft. The availability of secure bike storage in residential areas, along with bike theft, were concerns that community members raised to Waterside Workshops as they were conducting outreach for the Berkeley E-Bike Equity Project funded through the Berkeley Climate Equity Fund.

Lastly, e-bikes come in varying shapes and sizes that allow them to act as car replacements. Cargo bikes that are longer and have more luggage baskets and/or seats make it possible to transport families, groceries, and other heavy loads. E-tricycles provide a more stable and comfortable alternative to a two-wheel e-bike that can be appealing to seniors. Adaptive bikes and trikes such as handcycles, recumbents, and wheelchair carrier bikes make bicycling possible for people with a range of physical disabilities. Secure bike parking that accommodates these non-traditional bikes will make bicycle-based transportation and recreation accessible and practical for a broader range of Berkeley residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

⁹ <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/143013/1/Bicycle%20parking%20paper%20revision3%20final.pdf>

¹⁰ <https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/143013/1/Bicycle%20parking%20paper%20revision3%20final.pdf>

Initially, staff time. This item refers to staff the development of a secure bike storage plan. Through the development of that plan, staff are encouraged to develop costing estimates and make funding recommendations to council for the implementation of the plan.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Secure bike storage is an important strategy to increase residents' mode share by bicycle. Replacing car trips is essential to local greenhouse gas reductions.

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