



Design Resources > Design Responses >
About Parking Facilities > Examples > **Transport Interchange**

Takadanobaba, Tokyo, (JP)

May 2008



Facility:

This is an example of the prevalent type of bicycle parking facility in central Tokyo that requires minimum investment in infrastructure. The bicycle parking service consists of renting public space in designated areas to cyclists. The local administration issues annual or monthly stickers that must go on the bicycle frames; they state the site (street name or number of the facility) within the borough and the expiry date of the subscription.

Provider:

Shinjuku Ward.

Designer/ Architect:

Shinjuku transport and roads administration office.



Cost of Provision:

Undisclosed information, but staff member stated its funding is annually included on road marking and road signage budgets of Shinjuku ward.



General Description:

Takadanobaba is a transport hub for commuters travelling in from the west of Tokyo as it is home to three popular train lines: the Seibu Shinjuku Line, the JR Yamanote Line, and the Tozai Line. During the morning rush hour, Takadanobaba is one of the hot-spots of the Tokyo transport network with all three stations bursting at the seams with local residents, students and commuters. After the Japanese economic collapse of the late 90's, bicycle use increased dramatically in Tokyo raising issues of public space occupation. The local governments then started to adapt and redistribute the public space to serve both bicycle users and pedestrians. To discourage the nuisance and accidents caused by bicycles randomly left on the streets, the local governments identified the highest concentrations of bicycles parked around the stations and assigned specific areas. The assigned areas consist of floor markings or 'boxes' where a limited number of bicycle spaces are leased to subscribers, mostly commuters and students who transfer at Takadanobaba to other forms of transport. This facility doesn't have racks or furniture to lock bicycles to, since the standard urban bicycle in Japan is equipped with kick stands (leg stands) and wheel locks and road-legal bicycles are expected to have both elements; this also makes it easy to park and lock bicycles anywhere.



Location of Facility

East exit at Takadanobaba train and metro station, served by JR Yamanote line, Seibu Shinjuku line and Tokyo metro Tozai line. This is an area known for its high student population and student housing.

Scale (capacity):

This site accommodates 100 bicycles. Takadanobaba has 10 sites similar to this distributed within 50m radius around the station.

Length of Stay:

24 hours.

Charges (cost to user):

Monthly subscription is ¥1800 (£9), annual subscription cost ¥5000 (£25). Annual subscription applications are submitted in February and run from 1st April to 31st March the following year, or from any month to 31st March of the following year; the price does not vary.

Access:

The site is open access and has no fences; it is located on a walkway.

Signage:

There is specific signage indicating the subscription conditions, fees and procedures that apply to it. There are also warning signs indicating that this space is only to be used by tenants (subscribers) and any bicycle that failed to display a valid sticker will be removed

and taken to an illegal bicycles storage. This suggests a fine has to be paid upon release. The signs show administration telephone numbers and remind that there are CCTV cameras in operation, and that bicycles are left at users' own risk.

Furniture:

The Facility has wall markings and white lines on the tarmac delimiting the bicycle designated areas. There are also stand alone metallic signs that can be moved along the facility and are interchangeable with the other nine sites surrounding the station since they have the same content. The site is limited by traffic cones on both ends, to stop the row of bicycles spreading on the adjacent streets.



Technical Requirements:

The floor marking boxes measure 1.7m x 65m along the street, every 5 m there are subdivisions and gaps. The bicycles are supposed to be parked at a 30 degrees angle to the wall.

Security, Guardianship and Lighting:

At this site bicycle security relies primarily on the quality of bike locks, since it doesn't have any gate, walls or furniture to lock to. These facilities have no appointed guardians. There is a silver team (retirees) who clean and reorganize the rows of bicycles, stick warning tickets and remove illegally parked bicycles. They work at the site from 0700-1800. Cycle crime is very low in the area, though there have been sporadic cases of bicycle theft. The lighting at this particular site is very poor at night; there are lampposts at both extremes of the road. CCTV covers the nearby roads but not the site in particular.

Maintenance and Servicing:

All maintenance is managed by Shinjuku transport and roads administration office.

Service Period (how long it will last):

Unspecified, but there have been talks about increasing its capacity by installing new multilevel racks, this suggests a 10-15 year plan on the local transport agenda for this site.

Strengths:

- Reordering and regulating stationary bicycles on a public space, by assigning paid bicycle parking areas, is a good way of organising the public space.
- The site is allocated within 30m of the train station gates, it is very convenient.

Weaknesses:

- The lack of security infrastructure, or shelter for the bicycles shows very little interest in bicycle security, some users (5 of 6 spoken to) consider this parking not as a service but as an expense, a rent for the privilege of leaving a bicycle on the public spaces without the fear of getting the bicycle removed by the local authorities and without having to pay expensive fines (¥3000, £15)
- The lighting is really bad and bicycles can be a hazard for pedestrians at night. The street has a steep rise of 15 degrees, and bicycles are parked transversely. As a result they occasionally fall downhill pushed by the next bike in a domino effect.

Useful References:

Takadanobaba, bicycle parking application procedures (Japanese):

http://www.city.shinjuku.tokyo.jp/foreign/japanese/guide/seikatsu/seikatsu_2.html