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Ueno Naka Okachimachi, Tokyo, (JP)

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Facility:

Underground bicycle parking and bicycle rental. The entrance to the facility is via a wide staircase leading underground. There is a ramp to wheel the bike down and a motorised travelator to assist users leaving the facility with their bike.

Provider:

Taito city

Designer/ Architect:

Taito city planning office. Racks made by Cycle Techno Corporation.

Cost of Provision:

Funded by Taito city administration, the cost of the provision is undisclosed.





General Description:

The facility is located in downtown Tokyo, an area that has been traditionally active due to its temples that attract not only businesses and the community but also tourists. Naka Okachimachi underground parking is allocated at the south side of Ueno Station, a major station in Japan with services of the Shinkansen railway network which deposits in Ueno thousands of travelers from all over Japan every day. The facility not only offers cycle parking spaces but also has a bicycle hiring scheme for visitors. This site is one of the biggest among the 26 cycle parking areas in Taito ward and is one of the 5 sites that offer bicycle rental service. The user group in this site is mixed and includes students, salesmen, housewives, tourists, elderly people and children. The underground space was developed along with the infrastructure of the closed expressway and was expected to last 50 years at least.

Location of Facility

The facility is at the junction of National Road No.4 and Kasuga dori (avenue), Naka Okachimachi, Taito-ku, Central Tokyo.

Scale (capacity):

500 bicycle spaces and 20 Bicycles for rent.

Length of Stay:

1 day ticket entitles 24 hours of parking use, the facility opens 19 hours every day, from 0530-0030.



Charges (cost to user):

Parking fees include one-day use fees of ¥100, and regular-use permits of ¥1500 for one month, ¥4000 for three months (for Taito residents), or ¥2500 for one month, ¥6000 for three months (for non-Taito residents). The fees for renting a bicycle are from ¥200 for one day.

Access:

From the pedestrian path at the crossing Nakaokachimachi and Kasuga dori, the gate has a staircase with ramp to wheel the bike when entering and motorized ejection band when departing with the bike

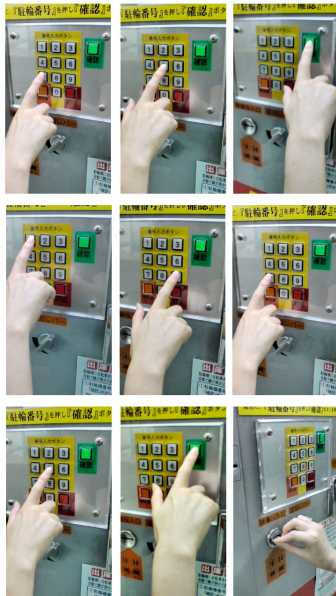
Signage:

The signage consists of instructions on how to use the electric locks, the tier racks and the ejecting ramp (conveyor belt) at the gate. There are signs stating prices for daily, weekly and monthly subscriptions for residents and non residents, the rental bicycle service, emergency telephone numbers, police and fire brigade.

Furniture:

420 bicycle parking spaces of front wheel locking rack type and 80 spaces of tier rack type (used by subscribers).





Technical Requirements:

There are two types of rack at this site, single deck tiers (80 units) and front wheel locking racks (420 units). Both types are equipped with electric controlled locks and the network is centralised so users can interact with a vending machine allocated within the site. The procedure is simple.

- To lock, the user enters the number of the rack (like number 75 in the picture) and presses the green button (enter) to confirm.
- Then types a personal code of three digits (a random figure of free choice) and presses the green button (enter) to confirm. This action locks the wheel and the system starts timing the parking occupation.

On return the procedure is identical:

- The user enters the number of the rack (for example number 75 in the picture) and press the green button (enter) to confirm
- Then types the personal code of three digits and presses the green button (enter). This action will stop timing the parking occupation and will display the charges due
- To open the lock and release the bike a payment has to be made

The tier racks are said to require more maintenance than the wheel lock racks but they are certainly more space effective. The tier rack dimensions are 1600mm x 520mm, 420mm between two of them (tier racks). The dimensions of front wheel locking racks are 725mm x 610mm on the front wheel locking stand.

Security, Guardianship and Lighting:

Guardians are responsible for charging fees and unlocking bikes when the electronic systems fail. Guardians maintain and clean the site and collect forgotten items and lost property; they report damage or malfunctions on the CCTV, electronic locks, lighting and vending machines. The site is equipped with fluorescent light tubes.

Maintenance and Servicing:

A Contractor maintains the CCTV, electronic locks, lighting and vending machine.

Service Period (how long it will last):

Unspecified, but use of zinc and galvanized finished components suggests potential of 15-20 years.



Strengths:

- The smaller front wheel lock racks are smaller and easier to maintain than the larger tier racks
- The space looks wider and neater with them than with the tiers
- The vending machines are among the simplest to operate in Japan

Weaknesses:

- There are only 20 bicycles for rent and according to the staff they run out of bicycles every day by 8:30 in the morning

Useful References:

http://www.city.taito.tokyo.jp/foreign/e_guide/liv/bicy.html

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=42lkDGZDz6s>

<http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=rw2IMZK3U0U>