

# NOT JUST CARS ANYMORE

By Joe Balskus

As a transportation engineer and being relatively new to parking in the last decade, I have learned that the worlds of parking and mobility are merging into a new paradigm. Mobility includes parking but is not defined by it. The principles of Complete Streets are mainstream, and we no longer plan only for cars but also for pedestrians, transit riders, and bikes.

I'm a triathlete who has designed Complete Streets projects, along with parking facilities and garages, so this intersection of transportation and parking comes at a perfect time—one that also intersects with my turn as a New England Parking Council (NEPC) board member and that group's rebranding as a parking and transportation organization.

## Biking and Transportation

The NEPC held its University Forum focusing on transportation and parking at Yale University in June. There, the design of the urban or university environment to accommodate all modes of transportation was discussed with many local municipal and university transportation and parking professionals. The forum was purposely held at Yale University, a League of American Bicyclists bronze-certified Bicycle Friendly University, where the mixing of bikes and transportation is personified by Director of Sustainable Transportation Systems Holly Parker, who led the forum.

Holly is doing great things at the university to further increase bike riding around the campus and the city (see the September issue of *The Parking Professional* for more on Yale's program). Outside New Haven, there are numerous examples where bike and car parking are interlinked. Whether it's by having bike lockers at a transit station parking garage or bikeshare stations at parking garages, co-locating cars and bikes provides a direct modal connection for commuters, visitors, tourists, and employees.

An example of successful bike parking at a transit station garage is Union Station in New Haven, which enables train riders to New York to ride their bikes for the first leg of their journey. In New York City, one in 10 Citi Bike stations is within 100 feet of a subway stop and nearly three-quarters of bikeshare stations are within a quarter-mile of a stop.


Bikeshare programs have been an overall success, replacing trips that would otherwise have been taken by car or taxi. At the moment, there are approximately 40 bikeshare systems in the U.S. Naturally, these bike parking locations are most heavily used in dense urban



areas—locations where parking facilities intersect with demand for minimizing footprints on the urban landscape. Interestingly, bikeshare and bike rental programs are thriving in the northern states as well, but the West Coast cities have some catching up to do.

## Standards

You thought you knew all there was to know about parking for cars? There are similar standards and designs for parking bicycles. Stall size, aisle width, locking and other security options, and short- vs. long-term parking features are all important considerations. There are also bike lockers for locations in colder climates. Design constraints are certainly much less critical for the lighter, two-wheeled transportation mode than for cars, but given the resurgence of bikes, the number of bicycle parking spaces that must be provided per square foot of new construction is among the guidelines some cities are asking planners to consider for bike parking facilities. Leading the way on these guidelines are the urban American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the National Association of City Transportation Officials.

Many in the parking industry have already heard the beat of the sustainability drum to reduce parking in urban areas. While some may see this as a potential threat to the parking industry, we need to embrace it. Where we are removing car parking, we are adding parking for other modes. Bike parking can share the space with parking garages and allow the parking industry to be sustainable, connect transportation modes, and enhance mobility. 



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