To:	Neighbourhoods and City Development
From:	Adrian Davis
Date:	25/05/12
Subject:	Essential Evidence on a page: No 83 Bike-rail integration?

Top line: Bike–rail integration can make a contribution to reducing both carbon emissions and car dependence, but a lack of integration within the rail industry and other agencies is limiting the delivery of policies to enhance the opportunities.

Currently 2% of British rail passengers cycle to the station, in contrast to 40% in the Netherlands, but the combination of cycling with rail use presents a potentially attractive alternative to car use with carbon reduction and health benefits. A study examined the motivations and behaviours of people who integrate bicycle and rail use, focusing particularly on the provision of station cycle parking as a facilitator.[1] A methodology was applied to two intercity stations in Bristol (Bristol Temple Meads and Bristol Parkway) to examine movements within an extensive cycle parking area.

71% of bike–rail users are male and in their thirties. Income levels were similar to those of rail travellers generally. 89% were in employment. Their cycle journeys to/from railway stations had an average length of 3.7 km. Although some of the journeys were made infrequently, for the sampled individuals, selection of bike–rail integration when they did travel by rail was very frequent: 91% mostly or always cycled to the station. This suggests that most of the 2% of UK rail trips that begin and end with a bicycle leg are made by a relatively small share of rail passengers for whom this is the main rail access mode.

44% of survey respondents reported having a car available to use for the particular journey, indicating that they actively chose to bike–rail integrate. However, respondents found it hard to entertain using an alternative rail access mode, although when prompted, half suggested walking as an alternative to cycling. The reluctance to answer this question suggests that respondents had developed a strong habit[2] for a practice that suited them well, and they were therefore not seeking alternatives.

Motivations about perceived advantages and disadvantages were diverse from high parking charges and traffic congestion, to enjoyment cycling or travelling by train and dislike of driving. The main motivations were saving time or money and taking exercise. Responses are likely to be station context dependent and in this case, congestion in both station environs and high occupancy of car parking facilities were deterrents to driving. Qualitative data highlighted a range of personal cycling 'biographies', showing that bike–rail choices were strongly influenced by the individual's social and cultural context.

Given the amount of forward planning each person needed to carry out – choosing between fixed and folding bicycles; deciding whether it was feasible to find a space on the train or to park at one end or even park and maintain a bicycle at both ends – the authors noted that it might be argued that people at present are largely integrating bicycle and rail in spite of, rather than because of, any facilities with which they are provided. This time investment is likely to discourage those wishing to make more casual or one-off journeys, including leisure and tourist journeys and the removal of practical barriers may release suppressed demand and encourage more people in the UK to access rail by bicycle.

[1] Sherwin, H., Parkhurst, G., Robbins, D., Walker, I. 2011 Practices and motivations of travellers making rail-cycle trips, *Transport*, 164(TR1) ICE Proceedings

[2] See Essential Evidence No 18 www.bristol.gov.uk/tpevidencebase