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[The Latest Must-Have: Bike Space](#)

By: Amanda Fung



ON A ROLL: One of two bike-storage sheds recently installed in back of 309 E. 87th St.

When Robert Schupp began apartment-hunting here last month, he thought a building with a children's playroom or a rooftop garden might be nice. But what he really focused on was a different sort of amenity: enough storage space for his family's four bicycles.

"Storage for bikes was an important factor, given how much we use them," says Mr. Schupp. He and wife Nona, who are moving to New York from the Netherlands, researched the bike paths near 80 Metropolitan Ave., the new condo development in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, where the family is in contract to buy a three-bedroom apartment.

"My eight-year-old twins had been cycling to school in the Netherlands almost daily, so we anticipate they will be cycling regularly to school here."

Suddenly, bike storage has become a make-or-break amenity for apartment buyers and renters alike. Scores of buildings across bike-friendly Brooklyn and even congested Manhattan are responding to the burgeoning demand, adding more parking space for two-wheelers. To keep some control over the newly popular perk, some developers have even begun charging fees as high as \$10 per bike a month.

"More people are asking for bike space or multiple bike spaces," says Jay Overbye, an associate broker at Halstead Property. "These conversations didn't happen a year ago."

The statistics are dramatic. Last year, the 201,000 bike riders who hit the streets on an average day logged a total of 1.7 million miles across the five boroughs, according to Transportation Alternatives, an advocacy group, and the city Department of Transportation. The number of two-wheeled commuters soared 79% in the past three years. At the same time, more than 200 miles

of bike lanes have been added to city streets, and bike-friendly parks along the Hudson and East rivers and underneath the Brooklyn Bridge have been expanded.

Taking note of the trend, the city passed a law last year requiring new residential buildings with more than 10 units to have one bike space per two apartments.

“With ridership increases, people have to park bikes somewhere,” says Caroline Samponaro, director of bicycle advocacy at Transportation Alternatives.

The days of storing bikes in an apartment or on the balcony or chaining them to a nearby lamppost are over.

At 309 E. 87th St., the condo board of the 125-unit property added two 10-by-10-foot sheds in the backyard in July, after it became clear that the 30 bike hooks in the building’s basement were inadequate.

“There just wasn’t enough space,” says Michael Donuk, director of management for Argo Real Estate, the building’s property manager.

Maxed out

Other buildings are repurposing underutilized storage rooms or parking spaces to accommodate the tide of cycles. Stephen Kliegerman, executive director of development marketing at Halstead Property, reports that four of the projects he is marketing all maxed out on their bike-storage space and have recently added more.

Steiner NYC, the developer of 80 Metropolitan in Williamsburg, is tripling the size of its bike-storage room, to 550 square feet.

“In Williamsburg there are more bikers than drivers,” says Steffan Stern, president of Steiner NYC.



Even officially designated green buildings, which have already allocated generous space to bike parking, are adding more in the face of demand that is outstripping all projections. The Visionaire in Battery Park City, a 243-unit condo, recently added 25 spaces and may add another 25.

Bike space has become such a hot commodity that some buildings are charging for it—if only to discourage people from taking up space with unused bikes. At The Edge, a 565-unit luxury condo tower along the Williamsburg waterfront, residents will be billed a small, to-be-determined monthly rental fee for using the bike room, according to Highlyann Krasnow, executive vice president of sales at The Developers Group, the exclusive marketer for the building.

At The Sheffield, an 845-unit condo conversion on Manhattan’s West Side, property manager Rose Associates Inc. quadrupled bike space to 169 spots when it took over the building a year ago. It began charging \$8 to \$10 a month per bike on Aug. 1.

“I thought there would be complaints, but there weren’t,” says Jack Levy, senior managing director at Rose. “The charge ensures that bikes are not left unused.”

Rose now charges for bike storage at two dozen of the buildings that it owns or manages in the city, Mr. Levy says.

Mr. Schupp, who hopes to close on his apartment at 80 Metropolitan within a month, has some misgivings about the idea of paying for bike space.

“If I was a single guy with one bike, it's not a big deal, but when you're paying for the whole family, it adds up,” he points out.