Bike theft
A 100 year old problem

David Timoney
Dublin Cycling Campaign
What we’ll cover today

- Why we looked at bike theft
- What we did
- What we found
- What we did with what we found
- What we learned
Reported bike theft rose by 160% from 2008 to 2017.

Reported thefts 2003 - 2017

BIKE TO WORK INTRODUCED IN 2009

Reported thefts 2003 - 2017

- 2003: 1.7K
- 2004: 1.8K
- 2005: 1.7K
- 2006: 2.0K
- 2007: 2.1K
- 2008: 1.8K
- 2009: 2.9K
- 2010: 3.1K
- 2011: 4.1K
- 2012: 4.4K
- 2013: 4.8K
- 2014: 4.2K
- 2015: 4.1K
- 2016: 4.1K
- 2017: 4.1K

DUBLIN CYCLING CAMPAIGN
Dublin bike theft survey & European comparison

- Dublin bike theft and bike parking survey
  (1500 replies)

- Bike theft projects in Netherland and London
Bike theft is not a new problem

Irish Independent, 1935

Dublin Cycle Thefts
Carelessness of Owners
Parking Places Urged

Hard Labour for Cycle Thefts
Judge Issues Warning to Receivers

Irish Independent, 1943

Thefts Of Bicycles
Gardai On Duty Outside Churches

The authorities had taken such a serious view of the stealing of bicycles from outside churches that they had placed Gardai on duty at churches all over Dublin, said Detective-Officer Murphy at Dun Laoghaire.

Dublin Thief Cycled Under Lorry

Det.-Sergt. Corry said that following the theft Nolan had an amazing escape from death. When a crowd followed him he cycled under a lorry of hay at the junction of North King Street and Coleraine Street. He sustained injuries to his head but when he was being attended to he jumped up and ran away.

Irish Independent, 1940

Advice to Cyclists
Combating the Cycle Thief

Don’t leave your machine unlocked.
Always worthwhile turning the key in the lock, even if you’ll only be absent a few seconds.

If you’ve forgotten your lock or key, deflate one of the tyres and remove the valve.
A barrier to increasing cycling numbers

THE IMPACT OF THE BIKE THEFT

1 in 6 people do not replace their bicycles

42% STOP OR REDUCE THEIR CYCLING

26% REDUCE HOW MUCH THEY USE THEIR BICYCLE

DUBLIN CYCLING CAMPAIGN
Apartment car parks, streets, gardens & sheds

TOP BIKE THEFT LOCATIONS

- Homes, back gardens & sheds
- Underground car parks
- Streets
Bike Theft campaign
Issued a press release and had a photo call
What happened – action group through council

- Councillors
- Gardai
- National Transport Authority
- Dublin Cycling Campaign
- Bike Shop representatives

Focus:

- Communications campaign on bike locking
- Bike Parking Guide & new guidelines in City Development Plan
- Central Statistics Office (CSO) survey on unreported bike theft
CSO: actual bike thefts 3 times reported level

Reported and estimated thefts 2003 - 2017

- **Reported thefts 2003 - 2017**
- **Estimated thefts 2003 - 2017**
What we didn’t do

Bike registration

- Heavy administrative burden
- No willing owner in Ireland
- Mixed results from registration schemes abroad
- Focused on what we felt we could influence with limited resources.
What we haven’t achieved

Bike Parking:
• Still a shortage of secure bike parking in the city.
• Retrofitting of existing apartment blocks with Sheffield Hoops.
• Mandatory Sheffield hoops in new apartment blocks.

Bike Locking:
• A significant, (but reducing), % of cyclists still use poor quality locks.
What was important

- Gathering local data – survey.
- Visually interesting – infographic, map of bike theft locations.
- Media: The more facts the better & write a clear press release. 24/7 news cycle – they need stories.
- What would be useful: Case studies for similar projects stored with ECF for easy reference.
The solution has been known for a long time...

Supervised/ secure bike parking

Better locks

Bike registration

Irish Independent, 1936
Thank you!
Bike theft location from survey
Some comments from the survey

**On bike parking**

“Drury street is great but we need much more secure bike parking places in city including the Northside”

**On Garda action**

“Gardai don't take bike theft seriously. If this was car theft Gardai would be all over it”

**On bike theft**

“Bike theft is rampant. I would love to cycle to more places if I didn’t think my bike would be stolen”

**On bike locking**

“Owners do have to take responsibility too. Get a better lock! Double lock! Watch what you lock it too!”

“Am very careful & still have had 3 bikes stolen. Everyone I know that cycles have had bicycles stolen.”