

Beijing plans 1st exclusive bike lane

Beijing plans to build its first special bicycle lane connecting a crowded residential area with a business center to solve traffic congestion in the area, it was announced on Monday.

Unlike other bike lanes in Beijing, which are often crowded with cars, this one will be exclusively for cyclists.

The 6.3-kilometer lane will connect the Huilongguan residential community in Changping district with the Shangdi of Haidian district, where many companies are located, said Rong Jun, a spokesman for the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport.

“In the future, the lane will extend to Zhongguancun Software Park where many IT companies are located,” he said. “The traffic in the area needs to be improved because of high population density.”

The Beijing Municipal Institute of City Planning and Design proposed the bike lane last year. It takes just 20 to 30 minutes to commute between the locations by bicycle, while it can take more than an hour by car because of heavy traffic.

About 370,000 people live in Huilongguan, with up to 20 percent working in Zhongguancun. More than 16 percent work in Shangdi.

Even if people don't drive and choose public transportation, they still have to leave home an hour in advance because of the large number of people using buses and subways during rush hour.

Ji Zhonghui, a teacher in his 40s who lives in Huilongguan and commutes by car, said he welcomes all methods that can ease congestion.

“If the bike lane is built, people will definitely ride to work when the commute distance is within 6 to 7 kilometers,” he said.

Yu Shenlan, a resident of Huilongguan in her 30s, said she doesn't think people can easily change their ways of commuting. When it's too cold or too hot, many people still prefer to drive.

“I believe the key issue is the huge population in the area,” she said.