

Sanyo sets up solar parking lots for electric bikes

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People rent power assisted bicycles at a "solar parking lot", a new initiative set up by Tokyo's Setagaya ward with Japanese electronics company Sanyo, near a railway station in Tokyo, on March 16.

Japanese electronics giant Sanyo said Tuesday it had opened two "solar parking lots" in Tokyo where 100 electric hybrid bicycles can be recharged from sunlight-powered panels.

The system uses lithium-ion batteries to charge 100 of Sanyo's "enloop" bikes, with enough power left over to also illuminate the parking lot with LED lights at night.

The concept is a "completely independent and clean system eliminating the use of [fossil fuels](#)", said [Sanyo Electric](#) Co, which has emerged as a leader in solar and other alternative energy technologies.

The two lots, which also feature electric outlets to power external equipment in an emergency, were set up near commuter train lines in Tokyo's Setagaya ward, where the cycles will be parked for community use.

The charging points rely on rooftop photovoltaic panels, and Sanyo said the system also works on rainy days.

The enloop "peddle-assist" bike features a "dynamotor" built into the hub of the front wheel, which charges a battery when the [bicycle](#) is cruising downhill or a rider is braking.

The bicycle's electric motor kicks in when a rider peddles, providing a virtual wind at one's back and making inclines feel more like flat terrain. There is a power boost mode for particularly steep climbs.

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