

East-West Cycle Superhighway Public Consultations - ABD Comments

(the consultation is available from: <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/cycling/eastwest>)

Transport for London (TfL) have launched detail proposals for the East-West Cycle Superhighway that may run along the Embankment and through the City of London on Upper and Lower Thames Street (TfL's picture below, and if you believe that traffic will flow like that, then you will believe anything). It is the ABD's opinion that this will create major additional congestion on this main arterial route between the City and West End contrary to the stated objectives of TfL and the Mayor, and the wishes of the vast majority of the road using public.



This is one of the worst proposals in a number of years to come out of TfL and the Mayor. Many of the elements of this proposal mean a major reduction in road capacity on the main east-west route between the City and West End. It is also a route used by traffic from other parts of London such as the East End to Kensington and Chelsea because there are no other practical or sensible alternative routes. The Embankment and in particular Upper and Lower Thames Street are already severely congested for much of the day with the result that they breach air quality standards due to that congestion. These proposals will just make matters worse.

Such a reduction in road capacity will have damaging impacts on the business vitality and economy of London - for example taxis will be delayed substantially and the movement of goods delayed and hence made more expensive.

Routing cyclists down these roads is in essence daft. It might look nice having them cycle next to the Thames but in reality they will be mixing with heavy traffic on a polluted road when they could be located on quieter roads further north or to the south with less disruption to vehicular traffic.

In addition we object to the reallocation of road space from vehicles to cyclists. The latter are a very small proportion of the road using public and there is no reason why they could not share roads with other road users rather than have exclusive space dedicated to them (as they do at present of course).

The visual images (another couple below) that are used to inform the consultation are of course grossly misleading in that they show smooth flowing and little traffic on roads that are going to be constricted and hence become more congested when those same roads today will appear more congested in any photographs taken during normal days (or even at weekends).



As the consultation document states: "the proposals would mean longer journey times for motorists and bus, coach and taxi passengers along most of the route" and "longer journey times for users of many of the road approaching the proposed route".

In essence this is a stinker of a proposal. No sensible justification is given for these proposals other than the fact that the Mayor would like to promote cycling. There is no estimate of the additional costs that will be incurred by road users as a result of these proposals (e.g. from congestion delays). So there is no cost/benefit analysis as should be required of all major capital expenditure proposals. Indeed there is not even a likely cost mentioned in the consultation proposals so that people can judge for themselves whether it is worthwhile.

It is a defective plan promoted by a defective consultation. We urge all readers to respond to the consultation, and oppose this proposal based on the ABD's submission above.

The following are the responses submitted by the Alliance of British Drivers (London Region) on behalf of motorists which you are welcome to replicate.

1. Tower Hill

The reduction of Tower Hill from two lanes to one (in both directions) will create massive additional traffic congestion on a route that is already heavily congested at peak times, and frequently at other times of the day also. As this road is one of the major east-west routes through the City and West End (indeed probably the primary one), this is a massive erosion of the road capacity of London.

Note that I gather you intend to reduce traffic by measures such as controlling signals further out from the centre, diverting traffic to the inner ring road and other such measures, but that will simply move the congestion elsewhere (the inner ring road has similar capacity problems and is simply not designed for large traffic flows, apart from the fact that it is a very long diversion for a lot of the traffic that uses the Lower/Upper Thames Street - Embankment route).

The closure of Shorter Street to "buses only" will create major problems. Vehicles parked in the Minorities Car Park will have no way of exiting towards the West (currently they exit onto the Minorities and have to go around via Mansell Street/Shorter street to go west). They will not be able to do so in future. Likewise vehicles coming from the City to the north or around the Inner Ring Road via Mansell Street will have no way of going to the West other than via a long circuitous route (across the river and to the south).

2. Lower Thames Street - Tower Hill

The reduction of Tower Hill from two lanes to one eastbound is simply unacceptable on what is one of the key arterial routes in London. There is no justification for removing one traffic lane and effectively turning it into a cycle lane. There is no reason why cyclists cannot share this route with other vehicles, as they do at present.

Routing the cycle superhighway along a road which is the main east-west route for motor vehicles is simply wrong. It would have been better (safer, and more pleasant for cyclists) to route it through other roads in the City and West End where there are lower traffic volumes and less pollution (the pollution on Lower/Upper Thames Street will actually increase with these measures).

3. Upper Thames Street (Lambeth Hill - Arthur Street)

Same objections as to Lower Thames Street and Tower Hill. Halving of road space for traffic will create massive additional congestion and longer journey times for vehicles.

4. Upper Thames Street (Puddle Dock/Castle Baynard St)

Reduction of east bound Upper Thames St from two lanes to one before the junction with Lambeth Hill/Castle Baynard Street will create a major congestion point which is already an existing hot spot where traffic merges in from Castle Baynard Street (it is not clear whether the intention is to try and close that road to vehicles but it should not be so).

It makes no sense to have an arterial route which is now a consistent two lanes in both directions turned into one which is a mixture of two and one lanes when most of the traffic on the road is using most of the route. Such arrangements will obviously create pinch points and congestion.

5. Victoria Embankment (Temple Avenue - Blackfriars)

Closure of the southern slip road onto the Embankment will create problems for vehicles travelling north on Blackfriars Bridge, south on New Bridge Street or west on Victoria St. Apart from the fact they will face a very confusing junction, they will all end up on the same single carriageway and have to queue to get onto the Embankment with insufficient capacity for the traffic volumes.

6. Victoria Embankment (Temple Place East)

The removal of an east bound lane altogether will create congestion.

7. Victoria Embankment (Temple Place West)

Removal of one lane west bound at the junction with Temple Place will create congestion, and of course the removal of an east bound lane altogether will also create congestion.

8. Victoria Embankment (Savoy Place)

The cycle superhighway should not be located down the Embankment.

9. Victoria Embankment (Northumberland Avenue)

The removal of an east bound lane altogether will create congestion. Reduction from three lanes to two westbound near to and at the junction with Northumberland Avenue will create congestion and reduce traffic flows.



10. Victoria Embankment (Horse Guards Avenue)

Removal of both east bound and west bound traffic lanes will increase congestion. It is impractical to reduce 4 lanes to 2 on this road.

Horse Guards Avenue should not have mandatory cycle lanes on each side. There is no reason why cyclists could not share this road with vehicles.

11. Victoria Embankment - Westminster Bridge

Removal of both east bound and west bound traffic lanes on Victoria Embankment near the junction with Westminster Bridge will increase congestion. It is impractical to reduce 4 lanes to 2 on this road given the existing volume of traffic and demand for that road space.

12. Parliament Square - Great George Street

Reduction of Great George Street from two lanes to one will create long queues of traffic back to the west as this junction is already congested at that point due to traffic lights holding up vehicles on Gt George Street.

No entry right bound into Horse Guards Parade from Gt George St/Birdcage Walk will mean vehicles have in some cases to take a long circuitous route to their destinations. We see no good reason for closure of that turn.

13. Hyde Park Corner

Redesign of the junction of Constitution Hill with the Hyde Park corner gyratory appears to reduce traffic lanes from three to two westbound for no good reason, and it suggests the slip road be removed from the gyratory exit when there is no obvious reason for that change.

14. Hyde Park Corner

As there is no plan provided in the consultation on this section of the superhighway, it is impossible to support the proposals.

15. Lancaster Gate

The removal of an east bound traffic lane on Bayswater Road and removal of a lane on Brook Street will add to congestion.

16. Westbourne Terrace

Reduction from two lanes to one for traffic on Westbourne Terrace will create congestion. Also the replacement of single yellow lines by double yellow lines will reduce usage and access to the Hyde Park on Sundays.

17. Westway - Acton

As there is no plan provided in the consultation on this section of the superhighway, it is impossible to support the proposals.

18. Overall Comments

See the start of this article for a summary. But it's worth stating that if these proposals are progressed then Boris Johnson's departing legacy for London will be the destruction of a major element in London's road network. Whoever designed this scheme clearly had not driven very often on these roads otherwise they would have realised how problematic these proposals are going to be, effectively putting back the roads of London to the Victorian era when the Embankment was first constructed.

If you can identify any other specific problems these proposals will create that are not included in the above, please let us know.

Note that there is also a public consultation open on the linked North-South cycle superhighway (available here: <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/cycling/northsouth>).

Our main comments on this are that we are likewise opposed to the removal of shared road traffic lanes for the introduction of road space dedicated to cyclists, and we particularly object to the redesign of the junction at the north end of Blackfriars Bridge. It is in essence a mess and simply complicates what was a previous poor design implemented only recently at large expense.

Further Information

For further information or to support our campaign on this proposal, please contact the following:

Roger Lawson
Alliance of British Drivers (London Region)
Tel: 020-8295-0378
Web: <http://www.freedomfordrivers.org>

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