

A City for all Londoners consultation
City Hall
yourviews@london.gov.uk.

7 December 2016

Dear Sir or Madam

A City for all Londoners

London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting services;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region. But, with the pressures of population growth, demographic change and economic development, the challenge of improving people's travel experience is a constantly demanding one.

In the run up to the mayoral election, we published 10 policies to keep Londoners moving:

1. Sustained investment to meet London's ever-growing transport needs
2. A road network that makes the best use of scarce capacity
3. As many of London's rail services as possible co-ordinated by the Mayor
4. Reliable bus services that keep up with the pace of change
5. Simpler fares, better value for money and a fairer deal when things go wrong
6. A co-ordinated approach to transport interchanges
7. Transport networks accessible to all
8. Reliable, accessible and timely information
9. Everyone able to travel without fear of crime or anti-social behaviour
10. Disruption effectively managed

Broadly, London TravelWatch supports the direction of travel set out in A City for all Londoners with our comments below.

Yours sincerely

Vincent Stops

Policy Officer, London TravelWatch

A City for all Londoners, London TravelWatch submission, 7 December 2016

Increasing capacity through small and medium investments

Capacity on London's rail networks has to continue to increase to keep up with demand. Those being built now or are in the pipeline are supported. However, there will still be a shortfall in capacity. London TravelWatch advocates that there are multiple opportunities for small and medium scale interventions. Some of our ideas are identified in our report, *What next for London's transport infrastructure?* The proposals are listed below. The full report is attached and available at: http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4254&field=file

1. Larger scale projects with potential high impact and significant potential to stimulate growth and regeneration

- Chiltern Metro
- West Hampstead Interchange
- Providing more cross London links and services
- Re-signalling major National Rail routes to enable high frequency Metro services to operate
- Extension of the Bakerloo line into southeast London

2. Improving orbital public transport

- North Downs electrification
- Tramlink extension to Sutton, Orpington, Crystal Palace and south Wimbledon
- Barking to Gospel Oak electrification
- Developing London's outer rail hubs
- West Ealing - Greenford electrification
- Reopening of Southall – Brentford freight line to passengers (plans being considered for Great West Road regeneration area)

3. Providing additional capacity at central London rail and underground stations

- New entrance to Covent Garden station near to the Royal Opera House / Aldwych / Temple station
- New entrance to Waterloo East station from The Cut / Hatfields
- New passageway on 'paid' side linking City Thameslink and St.Paul's stations
- New entrances at Embankment end of Charing Cross National Rail station to give access to Embankment underground station and pier

- New passageway on 'paid' side linking Camden Town underground and Camden Road national rail stations.
- Step free access and new passageway on 'paid' side linking the two Edgware Road underground stations
- Step free access and new passageway on 'paid' side linking Regents Park and Great Portland Street underground stations

4. Re-using redundant infrastructure for public transport and/or cycling

- Bow Church to Hackney
- Finsbury Park to Muswell Hill
- Mill Hill East to Edgware
- Belmont to Harrow & Wealdstone
- Croydon to Canary Wharf cycle route using redundant railway alignments between Crystal Palace and Nunhead, and through public parks between Croydon and Crystal Palace

5. Connecting London's inner orbital and radial rail routes – a 'string of pearls'

- Junction Road – Tufnell Park
- Maiden Lane station for Kings Cross (North)
- Brixton station High Level platforms
- Brockley station High Level platforms

6. Connecting West London and increasing capacity to Heathrow Airport:-

- West Drayton to Uxbridge and Denham
- Southern access route to Heathrow
- Taxi and private hire vehicle co-ordination at Heathrow Airport
- Cross boundary bus integration at Heathrow Airport
- Extension of Oyster / Contactless fares and ticketing to rail station in the Spelthorne and Elmbridge areas of Surrey

7. Regenerating road corridor routes from central London

8. Cross River Light Rail transit

9. Smaller schemes with wider and bigger impact:

- Ticket gates at major inner and outer London stations
- The 10 minute interchange challenge
- Small scale step-free access at underused stations
- Tackling transport deserts – advance guard planning
- Greater pedestrian connectivity at out of town retail outlets
- Tackling 100+ barriers to completing the London cycle network
- Rebuilding Seven Sisters station
- Rebuilding Silver Street station.
- Reinstating the westbound link to the Angerstein Wharf branch for rail freight at Angerstein Junction.
- Developing freight consolidation centres

10. Schemes with potential to stimulate regeneration through tourism

- Cannon Street to Southwark footbridge alongside the Cannon Street rail bridge
- Reopening part of the King William Street to Borough underground railway tunnel as a pedestrian route.

Tackling congestion on London's streets

London's roads have become busier and more congested over the last few years and that without intervention the problem will get worse in the future. The mayor's Roads Taskforce report suggested that congestion would increase by 15, 25 and 60% in outer, inner and central London respectively by 2031 even with all of the proposals of the extant mayor's Transport Strategy implemented.

More congested streets mean longer and less reliable journeys whatever mode one uses. More congested and busy roads mean that vulnerable road users will be involved in more frequent collisions, air quality will be poorer and public health outcomes negatively affected due to diseases of inactivity.

London is growing. This will mean a million more homes, one and a half million more people and millions more road based trips a day. London has to grow, but must grow in a smarter way: Our streets and public spaces should be more pleasant so that residents want to spend more time using their streets and public spaces. More journeys should be made by public transport, cycle and walking. There should be fewer private cars and a greater proportion of car-club cars. Goods and services should be delivered by fewer vehicles and on time.

Over a number of years we have considered these issues and conclude that a strategy of improving public transport, cycling, walking and public spaces is vital. We think that it is important to prioritise the most space efficient modes on London's streets. But, we also think part of the solution is a wider more sophisticated strategy to manage demand for road space. This should include the management of parking by price, reductions in parking availability in areas well served by non-private car modes and a more sophisticated system of pricing road use.

We have met with business groups, professional transport planners, London borough transport officers, academics and many other stakeholders. All share our concern regarding rising levels of congestion. Most think roads pricing should be considered as part of a solution.

Our submission to the London Assembly scrutiny that is investigating congestion on London's streets is attached. It includes a list of interventions that London TravelWatch advocates to address congestion on London's streets.

Interchange matters

Passengers dislike interchange. Given the volume of interchange that occurs daily in London it is a strategic issue just as important as line capacity. All that can be done to ensure that interchange is as seamless as possible for passengers should be.

London TravelWatch published its report *Interchange matters* in 2015:

http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4040&field=file

Buses and trams

Buses move more Londoners than any other mechanical mode. They operate 24/7 are accessible to all and serve every part of London. Buses are the most affordable public transport mode.

However, buses are getting slower, less reliable and are overcrowded. They are more expensive to operate than they should be. In our response to the London Assembly described above we describe how bus services should get the priority they need on all London's street.

Where passenger loadings are high along particular corridors, it makes sense to use higher capacity vehicles. High capacity articulated buses and tram services would be appropriate for some corridors in London.

Public space

Great public spaces support walking, cycling and public transport use. London TravelWatch supported the ideas in the report commissioned by TfL: Towards a fine city for people. This suggested an incremental strategy to declutter the streets and improve the quality of the public realm. The document is available via the link:

https://issuu.com/gehlarchitects/docs/issuu_270_london_pspl_2004

Public spaces in London may well be designed to a high standard, but the management of them is poor. For example, TfL has delivered many good streets schemes, but has then allowed the pavements to be filled with advertising boards and other unlawful objects. Any strategy should ensure that the management of the public realm is also recognised and undertaken to a high standard.

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4 August 2016

Dear Georgina

London's congested roads

London TravelWatch is the statutory body that represents London's transport users. Thank you for consulting with us and inviting our views on this important issue for Londoners. This is a very pertinent investigation and responds well to our call in the run up to the Mayoral elections, 2016 for:

A planned and co-ordinated approach to reducing road traffic demand, which considers all measures including road pricing¹.

Introduction

We agree with the premise of this investigation, that London's roads have become busier and more congested over the last few years and that without intervention the problem will get worse in the future. The mayor's Roads Taskforce report suggested that congestion would increase by 15, 25 and 60% in outer, inner and central London respectively by 2031 even with all of the proposals of the extant mayor's Transport Strategy implemented.

More congested streets mean longer and less reliable journeys whatever mode one uses. More congested and busy roads mean that vulnerable road users will be involved in more frequent collisions, air quality will be poorer and public health outcomes negatively affected due to diseases of inactivity.

London is growing. This will mean a million more homes, one and a half million more people and millions more road based trips a day. London has to grow, but must grow in a smarter way: Our streets and public spaces should be more pleasant so that residents want to spend more time using their streets and public spaces. More journeys should be made by public transport, cycle and walking. There should be fewer private cars and a greater proportion of car-club cars. Goods and services should be delivered by fewer vehicles and on time.

¹ Transport users' priorities for the 2016-20 mayoral term. London TravelWatch, February 2016

Over a number of years we have considered these issues and conclude that a strategy of improving public transport, cycling, walking and public spaces is vital. We think that it is important to prioritise the most space efficient modes on London's streets. But we also think part of the solution is a wider more sophisticated strategy to manage demand for road space. This should include the management of parking by price, reductions in parking availability in areas well served by non-private car modes and a more sophisticated system of pricing road use.

We have met with business groups, professional transport planners, London borough transport officers, academics and many other stakeholders. All share our concern regarding rising levels of congestion. Most think roads pricing should be considered as part of a solution.

I hope the Commission find this submission useful. We have additionally appended a series of recommendations that describe what actions need to be undertaken to address congestion in London. If we can assist the commission further please contact me at Vincent.Stops@londontravelwatch.org.uk

Regards

Vincent Stops
Policy Officer

The Assembly's questions

1. How has traffic congestion changed in London in recent years? Are there differences in the amount, time, type and/or location of congestion?

We are aware from TfL's monitoring of traffic volume, speeds, Journey Time Reliability (JTR) and bus speeds that traffic congestion started to rise in London in about 2011. First in outer London, but latterly in inner and central London. More recently and associated with the Mayor's major highways schemes, there has been a rise in congestion in central London that has meant bus service performance has significantly declined. Some bus services have had to be curtailed before their planned destination.

Bus route numbers curtailed as of March 2016: 3, 8, 15, 53, 115, 148, 254 (though the 254 has also been affected by the closure of Aldgate bus garage). The 25 was diverted over the Bow Flyover and so stopped serving passengers at stops at ground level. The 53 recently reverted to its route.

2. What are the key causes of these changes in congestion?

The link between traffic volume, traffic capacity and congestion is complicated but generally traffic volumes have risen because of:

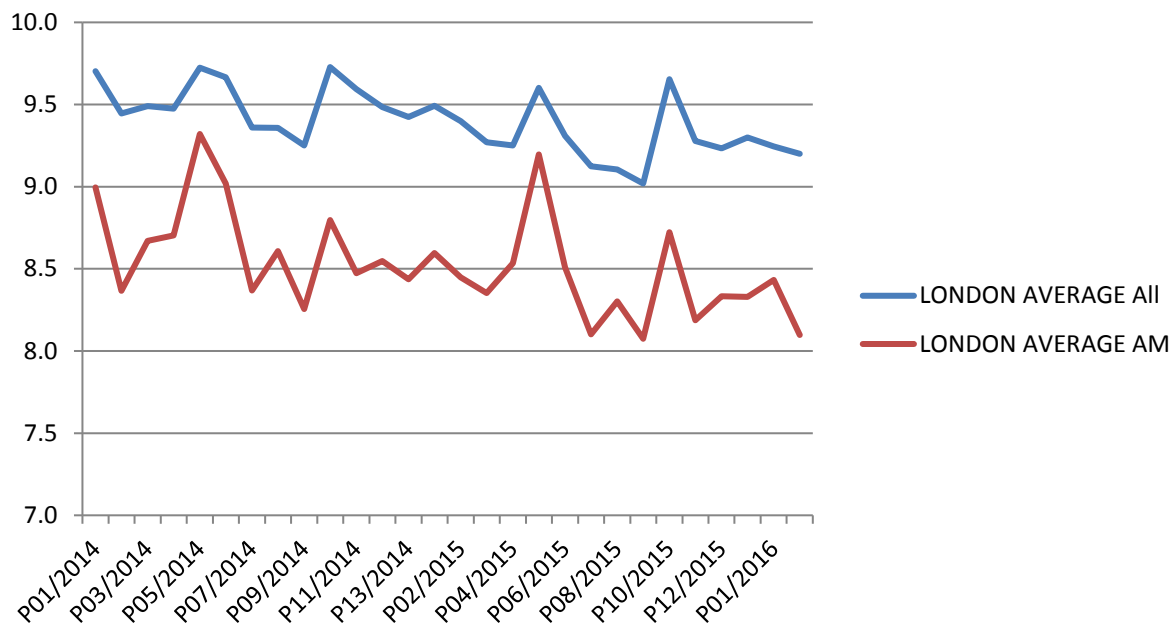
- a growing population;
- a recovering economy;
- a drop in fuel price;
- a rise in the number of private hire vehicles and white vans;
- the withdrawal of the Western Extension Zone of the congestion charge zone;
- as an unintended consequence of a policy of 'smoothing the traffic'.

Traffic capacity has been reduced generally because of:

- town centre and other amenity schemes, road safety and cycling schemes;;
- the introduction of a grace period for parking violations;
- disallowing the use of cameras for the enforcement of parking violations;
- many major third party building projects taking highway space.

3. What impact does congestion have on Londoners, the city's economy and its environment?

Many bus journeys are taking longer and are less reliable. The graph below shows the trend over time in bus speed. Over the past couple of years, bus reliability has also deteriorated



Average bus speeds across all of London at all times and in the am peak. Speeds are in mph and include dwell times²

Recently some bus services have been curtailed on a temporary basis due to the TfL's major works programme. Routinely there will be additional ad-hoc curtailments of bus services in poor traffic conditions. Curtailments are very frustrating for passengers.

Many millions of bus passengers have abandoned bus services, particularly associated with TfL's long-term road works³.

TfL tell us that there has been a reduction of £71 million in fares income compared to budget over financial period 2015/16 and possibly £200 million over the business plan.

As well as lost fares revenue there has been additional cost to TfL because it has had to pay for additional buses to try to maintain performance as best as it can. Greater priority for bus services would mitigate and could deliver significant cost savings as well as improve services across the network.

² TfL measure and publish bus speeds for all bus routes in London at: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/buses-performance-data>

³ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/stp-20160225-part-1-item05-managing-directors-report.pdf>

Of course, delays are also experienced by general traffic. Extended journey times and poorer journey time reliability for general traffic will mean inconvenience for all users of London's road network. There will be a substantial cost to the economy.

Higher levels of pollution are associated with congested traffic flow conditions compared to freely flowing traffic.

Cycling along and walking across the road becomes more problematic and less pleasant in heavily congested conditions.

More collisions would be expected where there is more vehicular traffic.

4. What can London learn from other cities in its effort to reduce congestion?

We have no data on other cities congestion, but would direct you to the INRIX company scorecard. INRIX attempts to compare congestion in different cities. There are some surprises in the list.

Average Hours Wasted in Traffic in 2015⁴

1.	London Commute Zone, UK	101
2.	Stuttgart, Germany	73
3.	Antwerp, Belgium	71
4.	Cologne, Germany	71
5.	Brussels, Belgium	70
6.	Moscow, Russia	57
7.	Karlsruhe, Germany	54
8.	Munich, Germany	53
9.	Utrecht, Netherlands	53
10.	Milan, Italy	52

Copenhagen is an exemplar. It recognises the need for trip end restraint (reduced car parking availability). Over a number of years, the Copenhagen authorities systematically reduced the amount of parking in the central area. This has the affect of reducing motor vehicle trips and more use of alternatives. This would be an appropriate intervention for central London and some other congested, accessible centres.

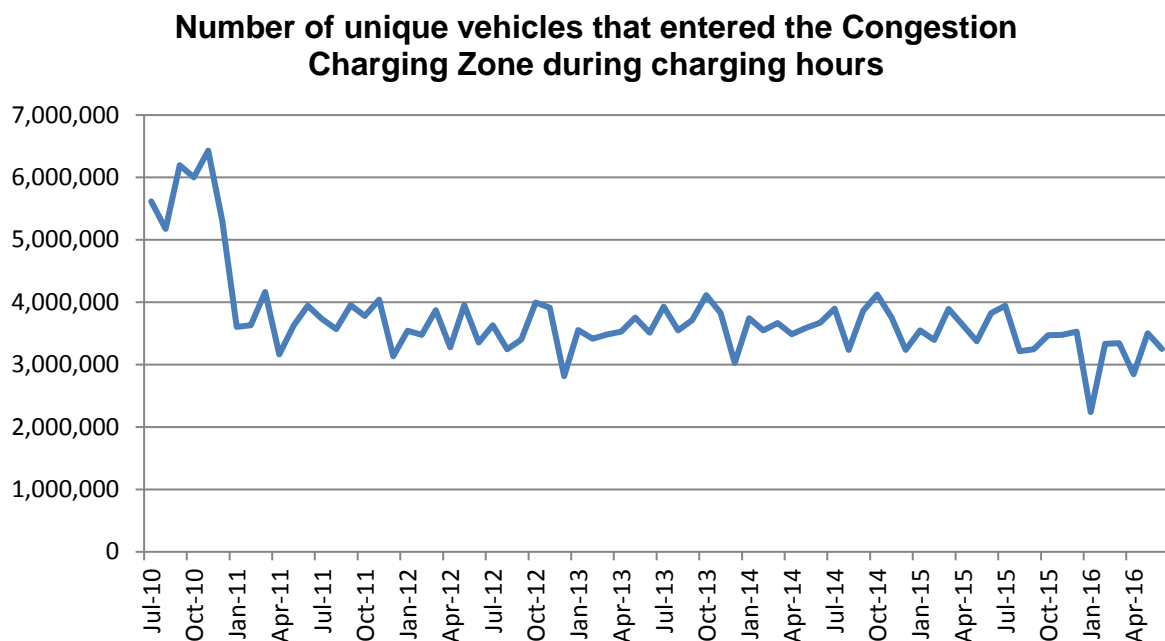
Delft is the classic example of a city that has restrained through movement for vehicles into the centre of town. Again, this discourages motor vehicle trips and encourages the alternatives. To a degree, this is achieved in central London using the congestion charge.

⁴ INRIX Scorecard 2015: <http://inrix.com/scorecard/>

There are a number of successful cities, such as Amsterdam, that have increased cycling levels, but it should be noted they have lower walking mode share than London, are much smaller and less reliant on bus services.

London has been the most successful very large city in terms of shifting journeys from private car to public transport and so it would be remiss not to learn from London's success. It is also important to recognise the differences in the scale, intensity and transport histories of different cities.

5. How effective is the Congestion Charge? How should this scheme be modified.



Taken from the London data Store: <http://data.london.gov.uk/dataset/vehicles-entering-c-charge-zone-month> The dip occurs at the time that the Western Extension was deleted.

The central area congestion charging zone, introduced in 2003, was the most ambitious traffic management scheme of its kind in the world. It successfully reduced the number of vehicles entering the central area by between 15 to 20% and reduced congestion by 30%. This was at the top end of expectation at the time.

There have been changes to the operation of the scheme. The Western Zone was added and then deleted. There have been numerous changes that have reduced the road capacity to improve local amenity, prioritise the bus, cycling and walking. Early on, the Shoreditch Triangle was reverted to two way operation, more recently road capacity has been significantly reduced for motor vehicles with the works of the Roads Modernisation Programme⁵. TfL told us in May 2015 that this amounted to some 25% (time and space) within the inner ring road, though they have subsequently said they have not continued the analysis that generated this figure. We also know that following consultation there were changes to the east west cycle scheme that would have reduced this figure. The Roads Modernisation Programme

⁵ http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4026&age=&field=file

works have resulted in increased congestion within the central area as evidenced by TfL's Journey Time Reliability Statistics and bus speeds / reliability measures. The graph above indicates that there may also be fewer vehicles entering the central area.

The central area congestion scheme does need further modification to take account of reduced motor vehicle traffic capacity. London TravelWatch thinks it should become more a more sophisticated system, cover a wider area and prioritise the most space efficient mode, the bus.

Modifications could include:

- charging according to location, time and distance travelled
- removal of exemptions for private hire vehicles and taxis
- a reduction in the discount for residents.

A trial of such a more sophisticated system could perhaps be carried out on a small scale if the suggestion of the previous mayor, to introduce congestion charge to private hire vehicles, were implemented.

6. To what extent would a usage-based road pricing regime help reduce congestion?

A usage-based road pricing scheme would mean that the strategic transport authority would be able to manage demand at a level that was felt appropriate, as opposed to the present situation where traffic levels are being restrained by congestion.

There would, of course, be income from such a scheme. The existing scheme led to the introduction of 10,000 extra spaces on buses entering central London in the busiest hour. An even greater level of investment into public transport and other modes would be possible with a wider, more sophisticated scheme. This would, in turn make the space efficient modes more attractive.

7. How might the Ultra Low Emission Zone and Emissions Surcharge affect congestion levels?

This would, in the short term add to the cost of driving in and around London and therefore reduce congestion levels. However, in time it would have only a small impact because it is likely that its implementation and other regulations for cleaning up vehicle emissions would lead to a substantially compliant fleet.

8. What would be the benefits and drawbacks of these other interventions? - Tolling for river crossings or other major infrastructure - Workplace Parking Levy - Devolving Vehicle Excise Duty to London

Short of a wider, more sophisticated charging scheme, London TravelWatch supports the tolling of river crossings because this would manage the demand for the crossings. This is particularly important with any new road capacity, as the potential benefits would be undermined by the increase in motor vehicle traffic that would occur.

There would be an issue if only the new crossing were to be tolled. There would be some displacement to other crossings that would have implications for the local road network there. We have supported TfL with respect to tolling the Silvertown Crossing, where they would also toll the Blackwall Tunnel. However, we have suggested there may also be an impact at the Rotherhithe crossing.

The leader with respect to workplace parking levy is Nottingham City council. The levy has funded a new tram system. Nottingham has a particularly high number of workplace parking spaces and so a levy was thought to be particularly appropriate. We don't have any sense as to its appropriateness or otherwise in London, though it would certainly reduce congestion if applied.

The retention of VED would allow TfL to be more innovative in developing a pricing system for London. It would make a pricing system more acceptable because there could be a lower charge for Londoners using the roads than otherwise would be the case.

Trip end restraint (parking control) is also particularly effective. Indeed, it is claimed that it was the key to transforming Copenhagen. Adopting a programme to reduce the amount of on-street parking in central London and other centres would allow improvements to be made for all the space efficient modes. It would be particularly useful to initiate such a programme in central London and is relevant to the Oxford Street debate.

9. How can the Mayor and TfL reduce the number of delivery vehicles on London's roads, especially in congested areas at peak times?

A wider, more sophisticated road user charge would mean that all the chargeable users of London's roads would use them more efficiently. The delivery industry would become more efficient, consolidate deliveries and change the times at which they deliver to the less congested times.

10. To what extent is an increase in minicabs contributing to traffic congestion, and how could this issue be addressed?

The rise in PHV registrations has been remarkable. However, we have no sense of the scale of the impact of this rise in registration.

A wider, more sophisticated charge would mean that all chargeable users of London's roads would use them more efficiently. The private hire vehicle industry would charge a little more for using London's busiest streets at busy times. This would lead to a reduction in private hire vehicles using London's busiest streets at the busiest times.

Charging PHVs the true costs of the congestion they cause is a far more proportionate and effective method of reducing their impact than some of the other operating restrictions that have been proposed, all of which would have the effect of reducing consumer access.

11. What contribution can car clubs make to tackling congestion, and how can the Mayor and TfL encourage these?

The best assessment of car clubs we know of can be found at:

<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/tfl-car-club-strategy.pdf>

In summary car clubs can bring wider benefits such as:

Freeing up parking spaces through members selling a car or deferring a planned purchase of a car;

improved air quality, reduced CO2 emissions through use of cleaner vehicles (particularly if electric vehicles are used in the fleet) and greater use of sustainable transport ;

Increased familiarity with electric vehicles;

making them more visible, desirable and accessible to a wider audience;

the true costs of owning a car (including upkeep, maintenance and depreciation) are often underestimated by owners;

car club users can make significant savings when switching from private ownership;

car clubs can have financial benefits for businesses through rationalised business travel and reduced commuting by car.

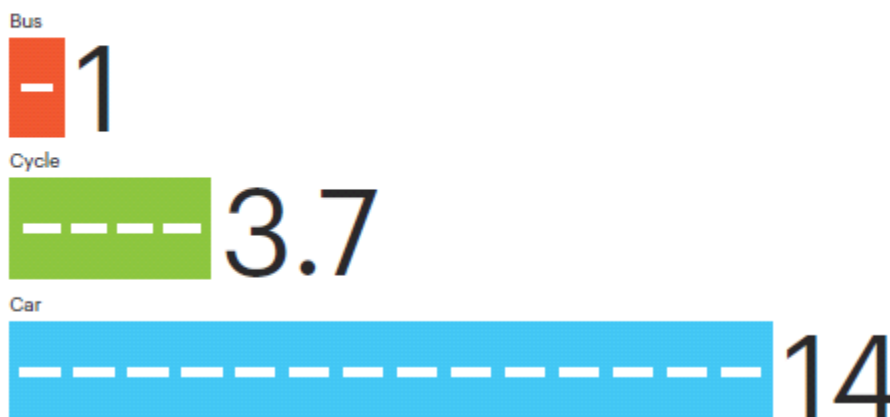
12. To what extent could greater efficiency in the provision of bus services help reduce congestion, and how?

There are 7000 buses in London and 2.6 million private vehicles.⁶ In London, it makes sense to prioritise the most space efficient users of road capacity. The previous mayor's Roads Taskforce report⁷ published the figure below that illustrates the relative space efficiency of bus, cycle and car.

⁶ Census 2011

⁷ The Roads Task Force (RTF) was set up by the then-Mayor of London in 2012 to tackle the challenges facing London's streets and roads.

Figure 4: Indicative average amount of road capacity required per person
Based on 2011 morning peak period, inbound central London cordon count and national transport modelling assumptions



Roads taskforce final report, chapter 1, page 42

The Roads Taskforce said:

Given the important role of buses in moving large numbers of people, it is essential that bus reliability and journey times are at least maintained as London grows.

Buses are part of a solution to London's congestion and air quality problem. Improved public health outcomes are also associated with higher levels of bus use because using the bus involves walking⁸.

However, bus journey times are getting longer (2% year on year) and reliability has declined because congestion is rising⁹. This decline in bus service performance in London must be reversed. To do this, buses should have priority on all the roads they serve. Too many of London's buses are delayed by congestion because vehicles are legally and illegally allowed to park on the roads they operate on.

There should be more bus lanes operating for longer hours. 24 hour bus lane operation with loading allowed out of peak hours should become the norm. Yellow and red line restrictions on bus routes should operate for longer hours, parking on bus routes reviewed and loading allowed only out of peak hours should become the norm. This would also benefit bicycle users.

Buses should be prioritised at traffic signals and given exemptions where general traffic is banned.

⁸ <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/improving-the-health-of-londoners-transport-action-plan.pdf>

⁹ TfL briefing to London TravelWatch, July 2016

Some roads, particularly in busy centres, should become bus, cycle and walking only with access and other traffic restricted. Camden council's proposal for Tottenham Court Road is a model for this approach.



Tottenham Court Road will prioritise bus, cycle and walking. Servicing and taxis will have restricted access

This approach would also substantially benefit cyclists because the lane widths are designed to be wide enough for cycles to safely pass buses and buses pass cycles. London TravelWatch has also welcomed a similar proposal of the City of London for a bus, cycle and pedestrian only Bank junction because these are the most space efficient modes.

13. How can TfL further encourage a shift from private car use to public transport or active travel modes?

Bus

Prioritising the bus is the most important intervention to encourage more bus use because reliability is the most important attribute of the bus service, See section 13.

Public transport passengers do not like to interchange, although it is a routine part of travelling in London. London TravelWatch published its report, *Interchange Matters* earlier this year.¹⁰

There are some excellent interchanges where passengers can change modes easily. However, more can be done to improve bus stations and interchange between buses on street. Care must be taken not to be complacent about the importance of interchange. London TravelWatch was very concerned that the bus stop outside

¹⁰ *Interchange Matters*: http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/documents/get_lob?id=4040&field=file

Elephant and Castle Underground station was moved. This is one of the busiest stops in London and now huge numbers of passengers must walk a little further to interchange. This must be avoided if at all possible. Bus stops should be close together and close to the junction where interchange is possible.

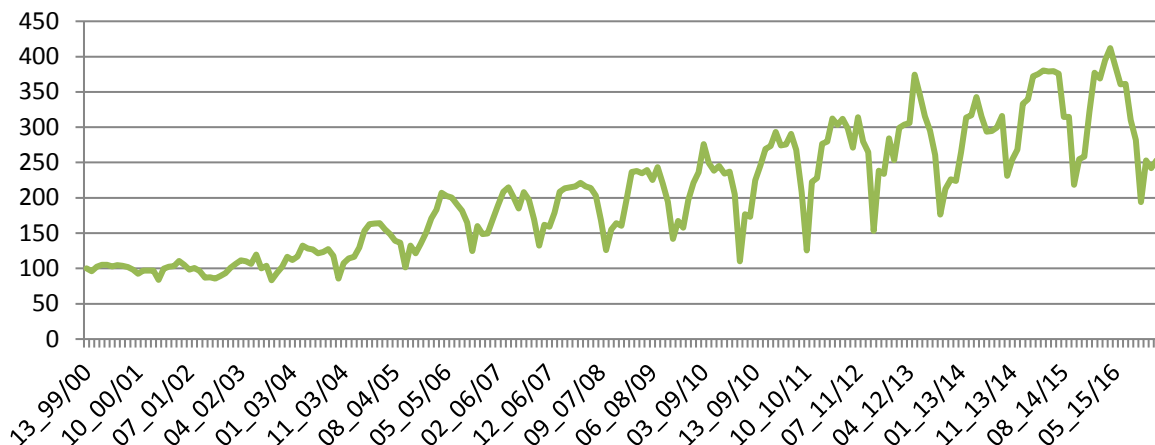
The cost of fares are important to passengers, but are also an important tool of transport policy. Higher fares will mean less passengers travel by public transport. In central London this will have only a limited effect because the options are limited, but in outer London, where the car is the alternative, higher fares (and lower fuel costs) will influence passengers to travel by private car.

Cycle

Our general support for the Mayor's cycling target is based on two key considerations – the health and social benefits of cycling, and the importance of cycling as a contributor to the efficient use of scarce road capacity. But, in this latter respect, cycling is not unique. Buses also allow for a very economic use of road space, and there are of course many bus users for whom cycling will not be an option. In our view, it is essential that a careful balance is struck between the interests of cyclists on the one hand and bus passengers and pedestrians on the other.

Cycle use started to rise in 2003 following the introduction of the central area congestion charging zone. The number of cycling trips has been steadily rising. The variation in trips over the year that can be seen in this graph is related to the season.

Cycle Counts on the TLRN Indexed to 100



Cycle use started to rise with the introduction of the central area congestion charge in 2003.

Much can be done to promote more and safer cycling and there should be different interventions on different street types. The Roads Taskforce matrix (see below) identifies 'core roads'. These may be candidates for separated cycle lanes at one extreme. At the other extreme 'local streets', 'town squares', 'city places', traffic reduction, slower speeds and road safety interventions (particularly at junctions where 80% of collisions occur) may be more appropriate. Traffic reduction, by means

of closing streets to general traffic, is a particularly effective way of reducing traffic levels and improving London's un-classified streets for pedestrians and cyclists.

The other street types present different problems in terms of improving conditions for cycling because there will be significant impacts on buses, bus passengers, pedestrians, motor cycles (reduction in lane widths) business loading and general traffic if kerb separated lanes are provided for cycles along with separate green signal time. There are also issues for cyclists in providing separate cycle lanes in busy urban areas. London TravelWatch has called for a comprehensive assessment of the positive and negative impacts of the new cycle superhighways that demonstrate some of these issues.



Walking

All too often walking is taken for granted, but it is an important transport mode both as part of public transport journeys and in its own right. At 9%¹¹, more than twice the number of Londoners walk to work than cycle. It is clearly space efficient, has public health benefits with no air quality issues. There are no land use issues in terms of providing parking or bus stand space.

¹¹ Census 2011

As well as not recognising the significant role of walking, there is also too little understanding of what pedestrians want and what will make it easier and increase the amount of walking. The report commissioned by London government in 2004 to look at improving London as a walking city¹² was clear. Pedestrians want a level, clean, clear footway with single stage, direct pedestrian crossing at the locations where they want to cross allowing the shortest possible journey. Pedestrians, particularly older pedestrians, want seats in the public realm and pleasant places to sit and enjoy city life.

This means providing good quality paving, dropped kerbs where necessary. Clearing illegal obstructions and other clutter and barriers to walking such as posts, railings and advertising boards. Most importantly, it means that London's streets need actively managing better than happens at present

Signing is important to pedestrians who want the freedom to occasionally go 'off-piste', but know they can find their way. The Legible London wayfinding system is the best wayfinding system we know of and is being slowly rolled out across London. However, the system is a map based system that is being 'dumbed down' by the use of finger posts that were only ever intended to be used minimally.

Multi-modal trips

All of these modes above, along with rail, can be part of a multi-modal journey. Providing good interchange between modes is important. A good interchange is described in our report: *Interchange Matters*¹³

Taxis and private hire vehicles

Taxis and private hire vehicles play a vital part in London's transport system. Taxis are particularly important for disabled travellers and at times and places where other modes are not available. But these modes are inefficient users of road space. For example, TfL have said that taxis on Oxford Street use 37% of the road space, but carry only 1% of the passengers. Some of London's bus lanes are so heavily used by taxis that there is little benefit to buses, for example along the Strand and Park Lane. Other bus lanes specifically exclude taxis.

In London's busiest locations the volume of taxis and private hire vehicles can be such that bus services are disproportionately affected by the congestion they cause. There should therefore be a means of setting the right incentives for taxis and private hire vehicles. This could be achieved by either pricing mechanisms or restricting access to some sections of the road network.

¹² Towards a fine city for people, Gehl architects, 2004

¹³ Interchange Matters: http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/our_work/interchange_matters

14. Can new road infrastructure help reduce traffic congestion? What specific new infrastructure is required in London?

It is widely accepted that the benefits of building new infrastructure in a city with a mature transport network will be lost because of latent or suppressed demand. Essentially any new road capacity will soon be taken up by new journeys that do not presently take place because they are constrained by congestion.

A wider, more sophisticated roads pricing system is needed to 'lock in' the benefits of additional new road infrastructure. It may then be the case that additional capacity is useful. Additional infrastructure such as bus only roads and off road cycle roads may be appropriate in some of London's developing areas where wide scale regeneration is planned.

15. To what extent is there a risk of new roads encouraging more people to drive? How can this risk be avoided?

Many of the interventions described in section 13, and others, would be beneficial on their own. But, they won't result in less congestion because there is too much latent (or suppressed) demand for travel. This means that if some choose to change and travel by more space efficient modes then others will seize the opportunity and use private car, taxi etc. This happened at Henlys corner where, very quickly, more traffic used the higher capacity junction.

There is an exception to the above phenomena and that is within the central area congestion charge zone. Within the zone, the number of vehicles (except those exempted) can be managed by charging. This means that within the zone, if road space is freed up then the intensity of use can be managed by varying the charge.

New roads will encourage more people to drive. This can be avoided by the implementation of a wider more sophisticated system of roads pricing.

16. How should new road infrastructure be funded?

New roads infrastructure should be funded by users, those that will benefit from improved access (developers and landowners) and the taxpayer. This is a similar manner to that which funds rail infrastructure.

17. How effective are TfL's measures to limit roadworks, such as the lane rental scheme? How can these measures be made more effective?

TfL have been actively managing road works. They have established a maximum number of road works as a target. This target is generally met.

18. What effect has the additional space provided for cycling and pedestrian infrastructure had on congestion?

There have been numerous highways schemes undertaken by TfL and the local highway authority to benefit local amenity, cycling and walking. Most of these have

been incremental with small local benefits. They will have, cumulatively led to a reduction in transport capacity.

The Roads Modernisation Programme has had a much greater and immediately apparent impact resulting in a substantial and permanent reduction in road capacity in the central area. TfL have also implemented changes to the traffic light timings further out of central London to manage the traffic towards the central area. This will mean a rise in congestion at locations further out of central London.

19. How can the use of technology be enhanced to help TfL manage congestion? For instance, how can the iBus system be used for this purpose?

TfL use traffic signalling technology to manage congestion. They have been actively increasing the use computer controlled systems to manage signal timing. They are also utilising the same signalling techniques (Active Traffic Management or Gating) that were successfully used during the Olympic Games to slow traffic coming into the central area to enable traffic to continue to flow there.

However, without any mechanism such as pricing to 'lock-in' the benefits the additional capacity that these systems deliver will be lost due to latent demand for travel.

Cameras are a very effective tool in managing parking violations, however since the law was changed recently the London boroughs are unable to use this technology. This change in the law should be reversed. Alternatively, it is now possible for the London boroughs to implement red Route controls that can be enforced effectively by camera.

20. How effective has the Road and Transport Enforcement team been in tackling congestion?

We have no knowledge of the operation of this team, however, it is important to note that the team will generally only be active on the TLRN. 80% of the roads that London's buses use are on borough roads that are not covered by a similar operation.

Appendix

Below is a summary of recommendations that respond to the question as to what practical actions could be taken to address congestion in London.

Recommendation 1

Manage demand for road space at the most congested locations and times using pricing, reductions in the availability and price of parking and restrictions to access.

Recommendation 2

There should be more bus lanes operating for longer hours. 24 hour bus lane operation with loading allowed out of peak hours becoming the norm. This would benefit both buses and cycles. Yellow and red line restrictions on bus routes should operate for longer hours, parking on bus routes should be reviewed and loading allowed out of peak hours becoming the norm.

We understand that the London boroughs can now introduce Red Route controls which would allow a higher level of enforcement. This should be considered where buses are delayed by illegal stopping, waiting and loading.

Recommendation 3

Buses should be prioritised at traffic signals and given exemptions where general traffic is banned.

Recommendation 4

Some roads, particularly in busy centres, should become bus, cycle and walking only with access and other traffic restricted in a similar manner to that proposed for Tottenham Court Road.

Recommendation 5

Investment in kerb separated cycle infrastructure should focus on London's busiest, fastest roads that are identified as Core Roads by the Roads Task Force.

Recommendation 6

'Local streets', 'town squares' and 'city places' (as defined by the Roads Taskforce) should have measures to reduce traffic, slow speeds and improve road safety (particularly at junctions where 80% of collisions occur). Traffic reduction, by means of closing streets to general traffic, is a particularly effective way of improving London's un-classified streets for cycling and walking.

Recommendation 7

All streets should have good quality paving and dropped kerbs where necessary. Direct, single stage crossings should be installed at locations pedestrians use most.

Recommendation 8

Illegal obstructions and other clutter and barriers to walking such as posts, railings and advertising boards should be cleared from London's pavements. TfL and London's local authorities should more actively manage and maintain their streets.

Recommendation 9

Provide seating in the public realm and introduce / improve places for pedestrians to sit and enjoy city life.

Recommendation 10

The London boroughs should be incentivised to set up an enforcement team that is focussed on keeping London's bus routes operating as they should.

Government should be lobbied to reverse the recent change to parking regulations, i.e. the grace period for loading bays and the disallowing of camera enforcement.