

Bank on Safety

23 November 2017

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bankonsafetyconsultation>

This consultation response is on behalf of the London Cycling Campaign, the capital's leading cycling organisation with more than 12,000 members and 30,000 supporters. The LCC welcomes the opportunity to comment on proposals. The response was developed with input from LCC's Infrastructure Advisory Panel.

The temporary scheme at Bank has been positively transformative and represents not just a leap in quality of the environment at the junction, but also a step-change in the ambition and willingness of the City of London to improve its streets for people. It should be made permanent, expanded with further funding to deliver an even more radical transformation and it should be used as an approach elsewhere in the City of London and beyond.

Specific points about the scheme:

- The scheme should, as quickly as possible, be extended in hours and days of operation to permanently close Bank junction to through motor traffic. Currently taxis and other motor vehicle traffic returns Bank to its previously dangerous, congested and polluted condition at 7pm every weeknight. For the scheme to extend safety benefits to pedestrians and those cycling through the area into the evening, but also to enable a greater transformation including potentially stimulating cultural and evening uses near the junction, the scheme should be 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- There are too many private coaches and other private vehicles passing through the junction currently. In the short-term, the scheme should be extended and improved, with more assertive enforcement etc., to remove all motor vehicles but TfL buses from the junction – including coaches, tourist sightseeing buses etc.
- Pedestrians still notably suffer many negatives at Bank junction, yet dominate the junction in terms of numbers. This use of space at the junction is simply not equitable. There are immediate adjustments that could be made to the scheme even on an interim basis that would deliver huge public realm and pedestrian benefits – most obviously re-timing traffic light phasings to favour pedestrians and removing guardrailing.
- Longer term, in the final scheme, the aim should be to create a public space that is liberated from motor vehicle traffic and prioritises the junction as a public space, even a square or piazza, rather than a through route. This gives further opportunities to widen pavements, or even remove the carriage for motor vehicles completely, to improve the public realm with seating and other new elements and to broaden the use of the junction and its arms.
- A more radical transformation will require removal of motor traffic not just through the junction, but the removal of as much motor traffic as possible from even approaching the junction. On that basis, buses should also be removed from travelling through the junction in the long-term, and wherever possible taxi ranks and pick-up/drop-off as well as delivery and servicing bays should be moved away from the junction. No motor vehicles should ideally pass through the junction (the current arrangement where vehicles can enter some sides of the junction, exiting on the same side, should be discontinued) unless in an emergency, and

streetscape designs should be to encourage very slow speeds.

- Given the hostility of nearby main roads surrounding the junction, and to enable those cycling to arrive at Bank junction and its amenities, particularly for those cycling with mobility issues, cycling should not be banned at Bank junction. Instead solutions should be developed to enable pedestrians and those cycling to arrive at the junction and pass through in comfort. This could, for instance, include segregated cycle tracks along key desire lines, and potentially “shared space” treatment for those arriving from other arms at the junction etc. to enable calm and courteous cycling to destination/cycle parking.
- Many organisations and individuals are clearly opposed to even the current trial changes at Bank. They have made many claims that the trial scheme has caused issues for those with disabilities and increased congestion and pollution in the surrounding area. It is for the City of London to assess these claims. Access for those with disabilities is, of course, vitally important. But there are many ways of achieving this outcome without enabling taxis and buses to drive directly through the junction. In the same vein, the answer to congestion and pollution elsewhere in the City is not to remove the current scheme, but the opposite – to progressively remove motor vehicle traffic from the City where possible, giving more space over time to walking and cycling.

General points about cycling schemes:

- LCC requires schemes to be designed to accommodate growth in cycling. Providing space for cycling is a more efficient use of road space than providing space for driving private motor vehicles, particularly for journeys of 5km or less. In terms of providing maximum efficiency for space and energy use, walking, cycling, then public transport are key.
- As demonstrated by the success of recent Cycle Superhighways and mini-Holland projects etc., people cycle when they feel safe. For cycling to become mainstream, a network of high-quality, direct routes separate from high volumes and/or speeds of motor vehicle traffic is required to/from all key destinations and residential areas in an area. Schemes should be planned, designed and implemented to maximise potential to increase journeys – with links to nearby amenities, residential centres, transport hubs considered from the outset.
- Spending money on cycling infrastructure has been shown to dramatically boost health outcomes in an area. Spending on cycling schemes outranks all other transport mode for return on investment according to a DfT study. Schemes which promote cycling meet TfL’s “Healthy Streets” checklist. A healthy street is one where people choose to cycle.
- All schemes should be designed to enable people of all ages and abilities to cycle, including disabled people.
- LCC wants, as a condition of funding, all highway development designed to London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS), with a Cycling Level of Service (CLOS) rating of 70 or above, with all “Critical Issues” eliminated.