

London Cycling Campaign

2 March 2016

Overall

The London Cycling Campaign is the capital's leading cycling organisation with more than 12,000 members and 40,000 supporters. We welcome the opportunity to comment on these plans and our response was developed with input from the co-chairs of our Infrastructure Review Group and our local group Camden Cycling Campaign, and in support of their consultation response.

We partially support the proposals in this scheme. We support the high-quality track in general, but we do not support the splitting of the track at Greville Street into a quiet route and a track.

Two-way track or two "with flow" tracks on Farringdon Road at least as far as Clerkenwell Road would be a far better option to ensure maximum safety for all cyclists and enable all-ages, all-abilities cycling – as well as provision on quiet routes. The quality of the southbound track, interrupted by bus stops, is also not as good as it needs to be to enable all ages, all-abilities cycling.

We are also concerned about remaining hook risks and other conflicts at several junctions – Snow Hill, Charterhouse Street, Clerkenwell Road and Ray Street particularly. To be clear, hook risks are not mitigated by "early release" signals or ASLs as neither solves the issue of cyclists that arrive during a green phase while traffic is flowing.

The London Cycling Campaign would also like to see all schemes given a CLoS rating (as well as adhering to the latest London Cycle Design Standards) that demonstrates significant improvement from the current layout will be achieved for cycling, and that eliminates all "critical fails" in any proposed design before being funded for construction, let alone public consultation.

Section 1 - Farringdon Street (between Stonecutter Street and Holborn Viaduct)

By transferring from a two-way track to "with flow" tracks at this point, an extra delay is created in cyclists' journeys, and this leads to issues at the Snow Hill junction also. We would prefer the two-way track to be maintained as far as the Charterhouse Street junction if at all possible.

Also, the proposals to put motorcycle and taxi parking bays between the cycle track and pavement would see cyclists and motor vehicles brought into conflict.

Section 2 - Farringdon Street (between Holborn Viaduct and Charterhouse Street)

The junction with Snow Hill and West Smithfield has a very poor record of collisions. The current plans are unlikely to improve this situation, and may worsen it. This connection also joins the North-South Cycle Superhighway to the Central London Cycling Grid at this point – reinforcing the importance of suitably calming it and increasing its safety for cyclists.

In the current plans there are several issues: cyclists coming southbound downhill on Farringdon Street will encounter traffic turning or edging into and out of these two streets, while potentially travelling at high speeds; cyclists crossing from travelling northbound on the Cycle Superhighway to eastbound on West Smithfield, and those travelling from Snow Hill to turn northbound on the Cycle

Superhighway face complex, fraught and potentially dangerous crossings which will see them stop alongside turning traffic streams that often include coaches and HGVs currently, and having to cross two lanes of traffic (in stages).

This junction requires further treatment to make it a safe intersection which is not a barrier to cycling. Either signalling it in concert with the Charterhouse Street junction, or some other method of radically calming it is needed.

As well as issues with the Snow Hill junction, there are issues with the Charterhouse Street junction.

The junction design removes left hook risks for cyclists travelling northbound – which is very welcome. And two-stage right turns are enabled turning off the Cycle SuperHighway in either direction – which is also welcome, despite current concerns about the implementation of two-stage right turns. But two-stage right turns are not enabled from Charterhouse Street into the Cycle Superhighway. And hook risks remain for cyclists travelling southbound on the Cycle Superhighway – "early release" signals do not remove hook risks.

The junction design (as with others here) is not only inconsistent on removing hook risks – it uses two paint colours confusingly also.

South of Charterhouse Street, we believe that the stepped track should be introduced immediately to give protection to cyclists on the approach to the bus stop bypass heading south, and should be run as close as possible to the Snow Hill junction also.

Section 3 - Farringdon Road and Saffron Hill (between Charterhouse Street and St. Cross Street)

It is likely cyclists will want to use Greville Street two-way and this should be enabled, rather than trying to design it out and instead designing in conflict with pedestrians. The wide crossing between Greville Street and Cowcross Street should also be aligned so as to provide straight-across movements for cyclists.

At this point, the route splits and northbound cyclists will continue via Greville Street and into quieter streets. This is not an ideal solution – as it risks splitting risk-averse and risk-aware cyclists into two groups – with faster, more confident cyclists continuing to use Farringdon Road, but without any added protection or safety.

Given that only a small number of buses use Farringdon Road, we would argue that there is capacity here to create cycle tracks there by removing the northbound bus lane (on top of any quiet route proposals). Either way, we do not agree with proposals to encourage cyclists out of the bus lane at bus stops – particularly not southbound as part of the Cycle Superhighway. Another solution, ideally a "bus stop bypass", is required.

On Saffron Hill and beyond, we remain concerned that a) not enough through traffic will be removed in current plans, and b) nor will waiting/loading restrictions be appropriately enforced to ensure easy passage, particularly important at peak times.

Section 4 - Farringdon Road and Saffron Hill (between St. Cross Street and Ray Street)

The plans for both Clerkenwell Road junctions are broadly welcome, particularly considering how key this area is for both north-south and east-west cycle movements.

At Farringdon Road, the greatest concern is left hook risks travelling northbound on Farringdon Road – an early release signal does not protect all users from this situation. We would also like to see left turns for cyclists from Clerkenwell Road heading west into southbound on Farringdon Road explicitly allowed.

Early release signals also are also not ideal for enabling all-ages, all-abilities cycling. So while most hook risks are mitigated at this junction, riding across it will still be done with traffic next to you for many cyclists, and directly behind you for others. Neither option is comfortable for less confident cyclists.

The slip track from Clerkenwell Road into Farringdon Road northbound, while welcome, is steeply angled.

One solution to removing further traffic on the quieter northbound route would be a no entry (except cycles) at Farringdon Road on St. Cross Street.

Section 5 - Farringdon Road, Ray Street, Herbal Hill and Warner Street

Southbound and northbound cyclists riding straight over on Farringdon Road remain at risk of left hook collisions – by motor vehicles turning into Ray Street Bridge or Ray Street.

The lights phasing will also determine junction capacity for cyclists – and so it's vital that lights are appropriately phased to future-proof the scheme, or can be modified as cycling demand grows.

We are also concerned that drivers already use Ray Street and Warner Street as a shortcut, and more may when this scheme is implemented. For all-ages, all-abilities cycling, it is vital these streets are suitably low in traffic volumes. So a modal filter or other method of control may be necessary.

Section 6 - Warner Street and Phoenix Place

We approve of these plans.

Section 7 - Pakenham Street, Calthorpe Street and Cubitt Street

Calthorpe Street features reasonably high traffic levels and driver behaviour around the width restriction and junction with Phoenix Place can be aggressive. Therefore we welcome the zebra crossing and closure at Pakenham Street to motor vehicle traffic.

That said, we would prefer the zebra to be a tiger with alignment closer to the junction with Phoenix Place to enable all ages and abilities of cyclist to cross in comfort. And we have concerns that the current design of the track might encourage some drivers to use it as a shortcut – and therefore wands at the centre and start and end of the track or some other method of discouraging such behaviour should be considered.

The link between Cubitt Street and Ampton Street is too narrow and should be widened.

Section 8 - Ampton Street, Sidmouth Street and Tavistock Place

An early signal release from Sidmouth Street will not remove left hook risks – instead, cycle only signals from Ampton Street and Sidmouth Street should coincide. The left hook risk from Gray's Inn Road for vehicles turning into Sidmouth Street should also be considered, as should methods for cyclists to turn right safely and conveniently from all arms.

The widening of Ampton Street's cycle-only track is welcomed (to ideally over 4m). But again a wand or bollard is needed to discourage some drivers from attempting to use this section.

Further on Sidmouth Street we approve of the width restriction, but would prefer slightly wider cycle bypasses, at a minimum of 1.5m – which could be achieved by narrowing the pedestrian islands.

Section 9 - Tavistock Place and Judd Street

We strongly support the modal filtering of Judd Street to through motor traffic, and similarly Lansdowne Terrace (in Camden Council's separate consultations). Without these, Judd Street will not be quiet enough to offer a high-quality, all-ages, all-abilities cycling environment – and we could not support this section of the scheme if traffic volumes remain high.

We would support retaining the pelican crossing on Judd Street near Hastings Street to enable visitors to the RNIB to cross in comfort.

At the Tavistock Place junction, there is a need to further eliminate hook risks and enable turning movements – early release does not do that.