

Southwark Harper Road width restriction

7 December 2017

https://consultations.southwark.gov.uk/environment-leisure/harper-road-trial-width-restriction/consult_view/

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. This response was developed with input from Southwark Cyclists, London Cycling Campaign's local branch, and LCC's Infrastructure Advisory Panel.

This scheme is opposed. It will not improve conditions sufficiently on a Quietway route to enable a wider range of people to cycle – the stated aim and guiding principle of Quietways. Instead, a “low traffic neighbourhood” or “modal filter cell” covering the area bounded by the A2, A3 and A201 is recommended.

Specific points about this scheme:

- Removing wider vehicles from these streets will simply not provide major benefits to walking, cycling or the local community. It is likely many large vehicles will simply divert to other side streets in the same area – such as Avonmouth Street, Tiverton Street and Rockingham Street. More of an issue, all of the small vehicles, and possibly more than before, will continue to use Harper Road as a through motor vehicle route. In the middle of Harper Road, over 6,000 vehicles daily use the street, of which less than 5% will be removed by a width restriction of this nature. On a weekday, by Southwark Council figures, over 6,000 motor vehicles would still use Harper Road (5,903 week average).
- Harper Road forms part of the Southwark Spine Quietway route. Motor vehicle volumes of over 6,000 vehicles daily cannot be considered “quiet” enough to enable a wider range of people to cycle there than currently do. LCC policy mandates that physical separation is required on any street with over 2,000 PCUs of motor vehicle traffic daily and/or 20mph. This is in line with the Dutch “CROW” guidelines. Above this volume, streets remain far too intimidating for all but the fit, fast and fearless to ride in mixed with motor vehicles. Given this, for Harper Road to be part of the Southwark Spine, either segregated tracks along its length will be required or dramatic motor vehicle reductions, beyond the likely amount provided by width restrictions, will be required.
- A very small number of “modal filters” would be required in the area to remove all through traffic from it, thus avoiding displacing traffic “onto side roads where buildings are much closer to the road kerb”. As an example, filters on Bartholemew Street south of Deverell Street, on Bath Terrace south of Harper Road, on Rockingham Street south of Harper Road, on Falmouth south of Harper Road, on Tiverton Street, on County Street west of Harper Road and on Harper Road south of Falmer Road (locations indicative only) would completely remove through motor vehicle traffic from the entire network of residential and side streets bounded by the A2, A3 and A201. This would likely be of far greater benefit to residents in terms of pollution, health, noise, community cohesion etc. This would be more in line with the Mayor's draft Transport Strategy to tackle vehicle dominance and promote “Liveable Neighbourhoods”.

- If any width restriction scheme does go ahead, design should be to ensure cycling along this route is not worsened. Width restrictions such as this one proposed can introduce points of conflict between those driving and those cycling – and care should be taken to ensure cycling is given clear priority through the restriction, and to slow motor vehicles down. Ideally a bypass for cycling will be provided with a design that again reinforces cycling priority at entrance and exit. Similarly, parking around such width restrictions should be spaced away from the restriction appropriately to avoid conflict. Any cycle provision should be 1.5m wide to enable a wide range of cycle types to pass through.

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 Fails" eliminated.