

London Cycling Campaign response to TfL (in Hackney and Tower Hamlets) re: Hackney to Isle of Dogs Cycleway

10 June 2019

https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/cycling/hackney-to-isle-of-dogs/consult_view/

About the London Cycling Campaign

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is a charity with more than 20,000 supporters of whom over 11,000 are fully paid-up members. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in Greater London; and we speak up for a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

This response was developed with input from LCC's borough groups.

General comments on this scheme:

- This scheme is supported with caveats. If fully implemented and improved it could result in many more people and a wider range of people walking and cycling in the area. However, there are major questions remaining regarding its full implementation.
- Key issues in Hackney are that the route is far too unambitious, and as a result, far too low quality. The route alignment as currently proposed features too little filtering to deliver a far wider range of people cycling, and should only be considered as a viable alignment if it truly delivers quiet, comfortable and high-quality cycling throughout. Without further improvements, this section of the scheme falls significantly below the standards expected for a TfL and Hackney scheme.
- In Tower Hamlets, the "bus gate" on Grove Road should not include taxis and should continue into the night; there are missing details for Grove Road south of the park; the junction with Mile End Road will remain hostile and potentially dangerous for those cycling along the route alignment; there are side road junctions along Burdett Road that appear to retain considerable risks for those cycling across them; the entire Isle of Dogs section is missing – and this includes key onward links and destinations.

Specific points about this scheme in Hackney:

- Initial proposals for this scheme showed a potential route along Lauriston Road. This alignment is much stronger and should be rapidly developed – as the current proposals miss many key amenities and destinations in Hackney (and many potential areas for people to cycle from) by taking this back street alignment. Proposals along Lauriston road are required regardless of this proposed scheme, to see the removal of the dangerous and hostile roundabout at the junction of Lauriston Road and

Victoria Park Road. This was the site of a fatal collision with a person cycling in 2010.

- The southern half of Frampton Park Road, beyond Loddiges Road, likely carries too much motor traffic to be comfortable for all ages and abilities of cycling and further filtering should be considered to remove traffic here. This issue could also be compounded when Wick Road is made two-way. The same is true of the northern section of Skipworth Road (and we believe this issue will not be improved enough by the changes proposed for Grove Road).
- The treatment of Victoria Park Road is insufficient to enable people of all ages and abilities to walk or cycle here.
- The treatment of the junction of Skipworth Road with Gore Road and Morpeth Road is particularly worrying. The current width restrictions are not appropriate, but in this case, the one on Gore Road is to be removed, risking not only raising volumes of motor traffic but also motor traffic speeds. This also is the only section in Hackney where it looks like significant amounts of money will be spent on the scheme. This means this approach represents particularly poor value for money here, and instead, filtering should very much be considered here.
- The junction of Gore Road, Wetherell Road and Grove Road will remain hostile to those cycling – as will the surfacing, it appears, on Grove Road.
- The general failure to fully and appropriately filter all of the roads needed to enable all ages and abilities to cycle in comfort along the proposed alignment in Hackney are of grave concern: not just because the council are clearly capable of doing more and better schemes based on past performance, but also because material changes to roads in the area already in train, including at Wick Road, but also in light of the proposed Silvertown Tunnel, are likely to result in some of the roads in this scheme subject to rising motor traffic levels in the future without appropriate, further filtering.

Specific points about this scheme in Tower Hamlets:

- The “bus gate” on Grove Road includes taxis – it is likely this will then be heavily used by taxis, and as a result will ensure Grove Road, Gore Road and other nearby sections of the scheme will remain deeply hostile to cycling. Taxis should not be allowed through the gate. And at the very least, the scheme should be monitored carefully post-implementation, with a view to removing them if needed.
- The “bus gate” on Grove Road also runs only 7am to 7pm. Much of the most hostile behaviour of drivers in the area occurs at night, and this approach, combined with the closure of Victoria Park currently at night (unrelated to this scheme) and the high volumes of those cycling in the area after 7pm suggests that this scheme will pose serious risks to those cycling at night. The scheme should be 24 hours a day.

- The Old Ford roundabout, at the southern end of the park, and the sections of Grove Road alongside Tower Hamlet's Liveable Neighbourhood area feature high volumes of fast motor traffic. It is highly unlikely that the proposed bus gate alone will be enough to reduce these to appropriate levels. It is imperative that this scheme rapidly produces plans for this missing section that enable either physically protected space for cycling, or further traffic reduction proposals. (And either way, further speed reduction proposals.)
- With this scheme set to interact with Tower Hamlets' Liveable Neighbourhood plans for the Bow area, it is likely traffic displacement patterns and overall traffic evaporation will not be easy to predict. As such it is vital TfL and the borough commit to monitoring the area as both schemes go in, and further mitigating motor traffic movements where necessary.
- The Mile End Road junction retains "hook risks" for those cycling from Burdett Road and Grove Road that are partly mitigated by "early release" lights – but these confer no safety benefit for those arriving at a green light, and worse, without radical traffic speed and volume reductions on both roads will mean this scheme will remain too hostile for many to cycle here. For Burdett Road, a "cycle gate" approach might be suitable – but protected cycling provision must extend all the way to the junction and remove the left hook risk – if there is not to be radical traffic volume reductions. One approach here, and on other arms of the junction, could be to provide unsignalised left turn cycling options. At present, the lack of physical protection on approach to the junction means this section is likely a "critical issue" and almost certainly should fail TfL's new "Quality Criteria".
- For the Grove Road approach to the Mile End Road junction, the gap in scheme details to the north enables TfL and Tower Hamlets to decide whether to provide physically protected space or radical traffic reduction techniques here. But at anything above very low volumes of motor traffic here, this proposal would be too hostile for most people to cycle here, and given current "bus gate" proposals, it is likely the latter would be required. Given this, TfL should ensure the option to put cycle tracks in as much of Grove Road as possible remains – and that may mean less pavement widening is suitable at the approach to the Mile End Road junction.
- It is surprising that the bidirectional tracks are not located on the west side of Burdett Road, given the park means there are far fewer junctions that represent turning risks across the cycle track.
- Far too much motor traffic uses Hamlets Way already to avoid the Mile End Road/Burdett Road junction using Southern Grove. The banned turn at the junction is likely to increase traffic volumes. As a result, the junction with Burdett Road poses a major risk and is likely to remain very hostile to cycle across. Filtering should be applied to remove through traffic. This may require repositioning of other filters in the area to ensure that while through motor traffic is eliminated, residential access is retained.

- The same issue is likely the case for Thomas Road and possibly the Birchfield Street/Pennyfields junction. Both should strongly be considered for filtering.
- It is unlikely the current designs will reduce speeds on Burdett Road to 20mph. Further traffic calming or enforcement is required.
- Track widths, particularly on some sections of the bidirectional track on Burdett Road, appear very narrow. It is vital capacity for such a high priority (in TfL's Strategic Cycling Analysis) corridor for cycling is appropriately high.
- Given the well evidenced issues around bidirectional tracks and uncontrolled side road crossings, as a minimum Portia Way should be further narrowed and more thought applied to ensure those cycling are given very clear priority. A better solution would likely be to filter Portia Way and make it two-way.
- The car park access south of Eric Street should, at a minimum, get a continuous footway. As should accesses to the police station and Rugg Street.
- There is an opportunity long-term to improve connections to the Limehouse Cut at the southern end of Burdett Road.
- The scheme remains incomplete south of CS3. In order to fulfil its potential, it must offer high-quality, safe, direct and comfortable onward cycling to connect to the planned Canary Wharf-Rotherhithe bridge; to link directly into the employment centres at Canary Wharf; and to reach the southern end of the Isle of Dogs to connect to the Greenwich tunnel.

General points about infrastructure schemes:

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy relies on a growth in cycle trips to keep London moving. This means infrastructure schemes must 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 modes 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.
- Evidence from TfL and from many schemes in London, the UK and worldwide shows the economic benefits, including to businesses, to be found from enabling a wider range of people to cycle more. Further evidence shows how cycling schemes also benefit air quality and reduce climate changing emissions, as well as improving resident health outcomes and reducing inactivity, as mentioned above.
- 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. Above 2,000 Passenger Car Unit (PCUs) motor vehicle movements per day, or 20mph motor traffic speeds, cycling should be physically separated from motor traffic.