

TfL (Southwark) St Thomas Street

9 April 2018

<https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/roads/thomas/>

About the London Cycling Campaign

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is a charity with more than 40,000 supporters of whom 12,000 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 and is in support of the response from the local group Southwark Cyclists.

General comments:

This scheme is opposed. It clearly fails to provide needed cycling facilities and represents a retrograde step for the street, area and cycling and walking.

Specific points about the scheme:

- It is highly unlikely, given taxi pick-up and drop-off movements already clearly visible around The Shard entrance that include passengers not accessing The Shard, but the station, and given the difficulty in enforcing "access only" arrangements when allowing in residents and private vehicles for deliveries, that this proposal will result in motor vehicle traffic kept "to a minimum". And thus it is also unlikely this proposal will "make the place better for people walking and people cycling". Indeed, it is likely to significantly worsen cycling (and possibly walking) conditions.
- Currently, due to the closure to motor vehicles, many of those cycling on St Thomas Street do so in both directions. The proposal would limit all cycling to westbound solely, severing an already popular route to many amenities nearby, and ensure a complex route for anyone travelling through the area travelling westbound who ever wanted to return eastbound. This is entirely needless – as contra-flow cycling facilities required, if motor traffic levels are to genuinely remain kept "to a minimum", would be minimal.
- Given the wide western end (particularly if parking and taxi bays etc. were appropriately rationalised) and given the footway on the southern side of the eastern end has been closed for a long time, without problems, then it should easily be possible to provide not just minimal facilities, but a wide contra-flow lane.
- Without enforcement, 10mph signage will be widely ignored. The western end of the street is also proposed to work effectively as a two-lane one-way from Joiner Street onwards. And driving from taxis and delivery vehicles accessing The Shard's front standing, as well as the accesses beyond, is often aggressive already. Given these issues, the likely net effect will be

this one-way street will be driven along rapidly and aggressively.

- Weston Street has also successfully been closed at its northern end for a long time. Reopening it (including a route for taxis to access their rank via Fenning and Melior Streets) further risks enabling aggressive driving in the area and further risks reducing amenity for those walking and cycling, many of whom currently use the full width of Weston Street.
- TfL's own Strategic Cycling Analysis highlights that the street is in an area of the highest current cycling and walking rates and with the highest potential for more too.
- Overall, the scheme appears designed for volumes of rapid and aggressive driving along St Thomas Street. This will reduce pedestrian amenity around The Shard, and will result in worsening conditions for walking and cycling. As such, this scheme should in no way be badged a "Healthy Streets" scheme. And to do so risks devaluing the approach.
- At a bare minimum, a wide contra-flow for two-way cycling should be introduced, with exempted turning movements for cycling to enable turns onto London Bridge, and speed humps etc. to enforce low speeds through physical design. Far better would be to approach the street with a fresh start, likely including retaining a modal filter on St Thomas Street for through motor vehicle traffic, with service access acting as a turning point for motor vehicles, and on Weston Street, and designing physically for very slow speed motor vehicle movements, with pedestrians given priority throughout. This approach would likely reduce "friction" between motor vehicles and those walking and cycling far more effectively than creating a faster one-way and increasing volumes of motor vehicles, while reducing pedestrian and cycling amenity.
- It should also be possible to extend contra-flow cycling facilities further east, along Crucifix Lane and Druid Street.

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.