

## **Tower Hamlets Wapping Bus Gate**

*8 April 2019*

<https://www.pclconsult.co.uk/projects/wapping-bus-gate/>

### **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 proposal is supported. It is likely to improve cycling, walking, living and working in the Wapping area, by significantly reducing volumes of through motor traffic. This scheme should be rapidly progressed and should serve as a template for other schemes in the borough.

No motor vehicles should be exempted from the scheme, which should operate constantly. The scheme so that local residents driving to/from their residence, those delivering or servicing by motor vehicle etc. will not be significantly affected by the scheme, but exempting some drivers risks limiting the scheme's benefits.

### **Specific points about this scheme:**

- Preferred Location: the western location would be easier to implement but either location would be acceptable.
- Times of operation: The bus gate should operate constantly ("24/7"). Although through motor traffic avoiding The Highway is concentrated at morning and evening peaks, dangerous and antisocial driving in the area is experienced in the late evening and to a lesser extent, through the day.
- Exemptions for residents: the bus gate should not have exemptions for residents. All premises in the area would still be accessible by motor vehicles, so exempting residents is likely to encourage short local journeys by motorised modes.
- Exemption for taxis: Private Hire vehicles and taxis form a significant part of the through motor traffic in the area. Any exemption would significantly reduce the benefits of the scheme - indeed it could lead to no net benefit of the schemes as more such vehicles replace vans and other through motor traffic successfully displaced out of the area.
- Exemption for motorcycle/mopeds: there is much less of an issue with "powered two wheelers" (PTWs) using the streets to drive through, but the greatest benefits to

the area will be realised if PTWs are also not exempted. And again, there is a risk that any such exemption risks increasing numbers of such vehicles.

- The proposed bus gate may not address all possible through motor vehicle routes that could be taken through the area. It is therefore recommended that traffic is monitored through the area after implementation and any resultant issues are addressed. Wapping Lane and Pennington Street should be the priority for monitoring, and consideration for more modal filtering and further amendments to the scheme if needed.
- A number of useful routes for those cycling in and through Wapping have very poor surfaces - in particular Wapping Wall and Wapping High Street where cobbles are both unpleasant and potentially dangerous to ride on - and represent a particular barrier to those cycling with disabilities who can either not rise out of the saddle or use an adapted cycle, trike etc. Adding smooth strips for cycling (such as those installed on Columbia Road, or in some other way reducing the impact of cobbles, would deliver significant benefits to the scheme proposal.
- The council should also consider further improvements to the Wapping Lane/Wapping High Street and Wapping High Street/Vaughan Way junctions as an addition to this scheme, removing the mini-roundabout at the former and reducing speeds, increasing cycling and walking amenity.
- A useful link to Cycle Superhighway CS3 could be created by upgrading the pedestrian crossing south of Dellow Street to a toucan and replacing the current gates on Dellow Street with bollards - this scheme has already been consulted on by Tower Hamlets and should be implemented rapidly. The route south onward through the park would also benefit from use of tarmac to replace uneven and broken paving slabs.
- The artist's impression of the bus gate shows a design that unnecessarily puts those cycling close to the kerb. The bus gate, wherever it is placed, will be on streets where those cycling will need to ride in the primary position mostly, away from kerbside loading and parking. Therefore, the bus gate should be a continuation of this. A simpler design with those cycling riding in primary position through the gate could also provide greater opportunity for public realm improvements and greater opportunity to provide visual clarity of the gate for those driving.

#### **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.