

Upgrades to the Barclays Cycle Superhighway between Aldgate and Bow roundabout

Tower Hamlets Wheelers response to Transport for London's proposals

November 2014

Tower Hamlets Wheelers is the borough group of the London Cycling Campaign with over 450 paid-up members living in Tower Hamlets. Our main objectives are to encourage more people to cycle, improve conditions for cyclists and to raise the profile of cycling in our borough. We liaise with and bring issues to the attention of the local council and other authorities. We run cycling community projects and organise social rides and events to bring cyclists in the area together.

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General comments

Tower Hamlets Wheelers fully support the proposals to build segregated cycle lanes and introduce cycle specific junction lighting phases along Cycle Superhighway 2 (CS2) between Aldgate and Bow roundabout. This scheme fits perfectly in-line with the objectives of the London Cycling Campaign's well publicised and supported *Space for Cycling* campaign. In a survey carried out as part of this campaign in December 2013, asking what improvements should be made to the roads in Tower Hamlets, the vast majority responded that their main demand was protected space along CS2.

At the local elections in May 2014 there was cross-party support for the *Space for Cycling* campaign in Tower Hamlets with both leading parties unanimously signing up to its objectives, which included protected space for cycling along CS2. Following the elections, the programme of the *Space for Cycling* campaign in the borough was approved at a full council meeting hence giving members' backing to segregated cycling tracks along the A11.

We know that there are experienced cyclists who would be commuting to work along this important direct route if it was attractive to do so. We know from our work in the community that the potential amongst those who would like to cycle is high but there are understandable worries about safety. Many more would be cycling between Aldgate and Bromley by Bow if it was both safe and attractive to do so. More people cycling would improve the health of the borough, relieve overcrowding on public transport and aid tight family budgets by cutting transport costs. These proposals will enable these improvements.

Overall technical comments

Unsegregated sections before and after junctions

The distance that the physical segregation ends before and starts again after side road junctions is inconsistent and in many cases too long. To adequately force motor vehicles to slow down before turning into/out of the side roads the segregation needs to be continued much closer to the junctions to tighten the corners. This is especially important as in this track layout the raised tables are placed on the side road side of the cycle lane and so do not help in initially slowing down a vehicle turning off the main carriageway.

At Alfred Street (Section 6 eastbound) for example, the floating bus stop segregation goes almost level with the start of the side road. If this is adequate to accommodate turning

vehicles here then we request that this should be made the standard distance that segregation stops before side roads along the whole length of the CS2 route.

We have noted in our comments in each section where we feel the unsegregated section should be reduced but basically request that this is reviewed for all side roads.

Floating bus stops

We are aware that concerns have been raised about the use of floating bus stops on CS2 on grounds that this is a busier section for bus passengers than Stratford High Street. We understand that discussion continues between London Cycling Campaign and disability group users and we would reserve our comment for the present.

Pedestrian crossings

We are pleased to see and supportive of the conversion of several pedestrians crossings to straight across. We have noted in our comments on each section where we would like other crossing to also be converted to straight across.

Kerb construction

We would like to see the use of chamfered kerbing on either side of the cycle track with the difference in height between top of the kerb and track being shallow. This will maximise the width of the track that cyclists can use and provide accessibility for those with visual or mobility impairments.

Drainage

Side inlet gullies should be installed for cycling comfort when installing new cycle tracks. When side inlet gullies are not practical a standard flush with surface level grated gully should be installed in the cycle track instead. The grating on the gully chamber should be able to expand and contract within its frame or housing so as cope with the effects of freezing and thawing.

Construction should be properly done by placing the gullies at the edge of cycle track and at strategic locations to allow for efficient storm water collection especially where the levels of the cycle track change e.g. before and after ramp-ups/ramps-downs at floating bus stops etc. This Google map streetview viewable via <http://tinyurl.com/ouomaln> is an example of a poor storm drainage outcome.

Blue paint

We are concerned that the cycle track is unnecessarily painted along its whole length. We feel the physical segregation in between junctions is more than enough to distinguish the lane's purpose. The painting will obviously incur a maintenance cost which is money that could be used for improving cycling elsewhere. The streetscape will also look much better without it.

Motor vehicles turning across track into side turnings

The potential arises at all unsignalled junctions for motor vehicles to turn across the track whilst cyclists are passing but particularly when motor vehicles are turning left. We appreciate that there is a debate about the value or not of marking the track blue to alert drivers to the possible presence of cyclists. As part of the continuing discussion with the borough could TfL give thought to the value of promoting Highway Code rule 183.

Cycling traffic volume

Cycle counters make cyclists feel acknowledged, appreciated and encourage infrastructure use. A few counters, like the one installed on Goldsmith's Row, at carefully chosen locations

will not go amiss. The data can be used to help calculate cycle traffic levels and promote the route.

Comments on each section

Section 1 (Aldgate to White Church Lane)

Commercial Street-Leman Street junction

We feel this junction could be improved to provide adequate provision for cyclists travelling in all directions and not just east-west. In conjunction with the London Cycling Campaign we will be separately forwarding an alternative junction design for consideration.

Commercial Road junction

ASLs not necessarily required westbound or northbound - keep the segregation and lanes going up to and after the crossings.

Turning from Commercial Road, bring the start of the segregation further east to increase protection from turning lorries and buses.

Introduce a yellow box at this junction, especially westbound.

Osborn Street junction

ASL not necessarily required here, more important to keep the segregation going before and after the pedestrian crossing to tighten the corner and slow down left turning motor vehicles.

Section 2 (White Church Lane to Cambridge Heath Road)

Vallance Road-New Road junction

We feel this junction could be improved to provide adequate provision for cyclists travelling in all directions and not just east-west. In conjunction with the London Cycling Campaign we will be separately forwarding an alternative junction design for consideration.

Whitechapel market area

We recognise that the design of the cycle track in the market area has to meet the needs of cyclists, the market traders and bus users. We are confident that this can be done without losing the segregation necessary to protect cyclists on this busy road.

Pedestrian crossing at Whitechapel station

We note the addition of a pedestrian crossing at Court Street but we request that the existing crossing at Whitechapel station is kept in place.

We support the removal of the physical median along this section to give the width required for segregation but appreciate this reduces the opportunity for informal crossing in this busy pedestrian area.

We would suggest linking the lights so that both are in phase together as we assume this would then have minimal impact on traffic flow.

Section 3 (Cambridge Heath Road to Beaumont Grove)

Cambridge Heath Road-Sidney Street junction

We feel this junction could be improved to provide adequate provision for cyclists travelling in all directions and not just east-west. In conjunction with the London Cycling Campaign we will be separately forwarding an alternative junction design for consideration.

Stepney Green junction

The right-turn ban unacceptably reduces permeability for cyclists. We request that consideration is made for allowing cyclists to turn right at this junction.

In conjunction with the London Cycling Campaign we will be separately forwarding an alternative junction design for consideration.

Anchor Retail Park

If the signalised pedestrian crossing is removed then this junction needs drastically reducing in width and the corners tightening both in terms of kerb radius and the distance segregation stops/starts either side of the junction.

Unsure if signals are being kept for vehicles leaving the retail park. If not then appropriate markings across the junction need to be added.

Cephas Avenue

Reduce the distance that segregation ends/starts.

Section 4 (Beaumont Grove to Westfield Way)

Globe Road-White Horse Lane junction

The current arrangement of this junction is unacceptable for several reasons. The lack of proper pedestrian crossing provision across both Globe Road and White Horse Lane junctions must be addressed and was recognised as a necessity in a previous consultation on this junction.

Provision for east and westbound cyclists wanting to turn right needs to be introduced into the junction arrangement, which will see many more cyclists using this as a direct route and hence increasing use of north/south routes at this junction. It will be virtually impossible to do this safely unless they happen to arrive in good time at a red light to enable positioning on the right of the ASL - this will be a very small time window.

In conjunction with the London Cycling Campaign we will be separately forwarding an alternative junction design for consideration.

Unsegregated section east of White Horse Lane

We urge TfL to liaise with LB Tower Hamlets to come to an agreement to take over a strip of land to the north of the Ocean estate to give the width required to continue the segregated lanes along this section.

If this agreement isn't reached before the initial build of this project then, in the meantime, we request that where the cycle lanes merge with the bus lanes on both east and westbound carriageways, priority is reversed and the lane layout reconfigured to reflect this. The majority of buses will stop or at least slow down at the bus stops before this lane merging, the onus should therefore be placed on the bus drivers then continuing their journey to give way to cyclists.

Bancroft Road junction

We suggest this junction be re-designed to take account of present and potential cycling traffic exiting Bancroft Road rather than trying to incorporate shared-use on a busy stretch of pavement, especially on the north side. This is a Superhighway and we don't believe shared-use facilities should have a place on such a designated route. We will be discussing

with the borough modal filtering to curb the very high level of rat-running traffic using Bancroft Road.

It is not clear if the current banned right-turns for motor vehicles out of and into Bancroft Road would remain.

West of Harford Street

We would appreciate if further consideration could be made to starting the physical segregation west of Harford Street further to the east, ideally at the junction with Harford Street.

Harford Street junction

Convert pedestrian crossing to straight across.

Westbound ASL not required, keep segregation up until junction.

Section 5 (Westfield Way to Merchant Street)

Burdett Road-Grove Road junction

We consider that the design of this junction is unnecessarily complex. We object to the current proposed configuration that imposes right-turn bans from and into Burdett Road. This will force motor vehicles to use residential streets for north-south movements. With increased rat-running, the surrounding residential areas north and south of Mile End Road will see an increase in risk to pedestrians and cyclists as well as a lowering of quality of life for residents. We cannot accept this as an acceptable trade-off for keeping existing motor vehicle capacity through this junction.

We also have regard to the high pedestrian usage at this junction and have concerns about the use of staggered crossings on all arms. Frustrated pedestrians attempting cross by dashing through traffic cause problems to cyclists.

In conjunction with the London Cycling Campaign we will be separately forwarding an alternative junction design for consideration.

Pedestrian crossing west of Westfield Way

Convert to straight across.

Westfield Way to Whitman Road

Support relocation of bus stop which we understand is already being considered with input from Queen Mary University. We support solutions to the heavy morning peak use of the pavement as contra-flow from cycling commuters to Queen Mary entrance Westfield Way whose southbound journey via the canal towpath/Mile End Park exits at Whitman Road.

Pedestrian crossing east of Eric Street

Convert to straight across.

Rhondda Grove and Tredegar Square junctions

Greatly reduce the distance that segregation ends/starts at these junctions.

Coborn Road junction

Eastbound, include physical segregation between pedestrian crossing and side road.

Pedestrian crossing east of Coborn Street

Convert to straight across.

Section 6 (Merchant Street to Bromley High Street)

Pedestrian crossing outside Bow Road station

Convert to straight across.

Pedestrian crossing west of Addington Road

Convert to straight across. Eastbound, include sufficient length of segregation from crossing to Addington Road junction.

Bromley High Street junction

The cycle lane is not marked across this junction.

Section 7 (Bromley High to Bow roundabout)

No specific comments although we recognise that Bow roundabout continues to be a severance to a continuous safe and attractive route. We look forward to further developments in the near future.