

Future Transport London campaigns for sustainable solutions to London's transport problems favouring public transport, walking and cycling over private cars.

Membership £15 a year.
Please join us.
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The newsletter is edited by Chris Barker. Contributions are welcomed. Opinions expressed are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of Future Transport London.

Please look at and comment on our new website at <https://www.futuretransportlondon.org/>. All issues of the newsletter can also be found there.



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Our podcasts are also available on the website. The latest is by Andrew Braddock, immediate past Chairman of the Light Rail Transit Association, looking at the future of the tram in our cities.

Some progress towards a more accessible underground

Given the parlous state of TfL's finances, no immediate large scale improvements can be envisaged to the accessibility of the tube to users of wheelchairs, mobility scooters, buggies, wheeled luggage and shopping trolleys.

Planning continues, however, and TfL has recently announced the results of a consultation aimed at establishing a policy for where such improvements should be made when and if funds become available. The survey targeted older and disabled people, parents and carers.

Of the more than 5,500 respondents, 66% said they

would use the tube more if there were more step-free stations. Currently these comprise about a third of the network, but are concentrated on newer lines including all of the Elizabeth Line and DLR, and the Jubilee Line extension. The preference of a majority of respondents was to improve small or medium sized stations in areas where there is currently a dearth of step-free stations, stations which provide interchange with other transport services (such as mainline railways) and those serving health-care facilities. Making larger and more complex stations (such as Baker Street) totally step-free,

which would eat up a large element of what would be a limited budget, was less popular.

Meanwhile at existing step-free stations, funding is being made available to improve/repair accessible toilets, install better signage to step-free routes and enhance staff training, especially in the use of boarding ramps.

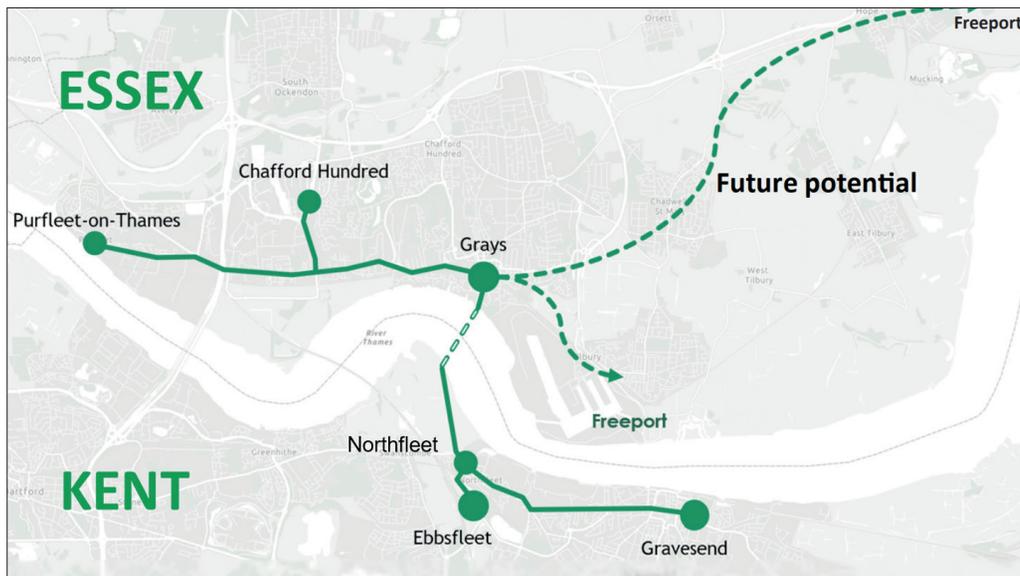
Some more good news has been announced, especially for wheelchair users whose front caster wheels can twist and get trapped in the gap even at otherwise level access points. The concept of the small bridging device, or gap filler, was thought up by a staff member

and is now on trial at some stations on the Jubilee Line. It is the same width as a regular ramp but is much lighter and easier to handle. Passengers can request its use, or it will be offered by staff, who will also record customers' comments.

The consultation was devised in coordination with TfL's Independent Disability Advisory Group (IDAG), some of whose members also tested the new bridging device with their own wheelchairs and mobility scooters, and gave it a big thumbs up.

Maggie Heraty
Member of IDAG

website: <https://www.futuretransportlondon.org/>
tweet@FutureTransportlon.



Sustainably Crossing the Thames

KenEx, the new sustainable tramway between North Kent and South Essex, is moving on to prepare a Full Business Case in 2023

There has been a sustainable river crossing connecting North Kent and South Essex for many hundreds of years. Previously carrying millions of passengers a year, within the last 60 years car centric planning assumptions have seen sustainable cross river services seriously degraded. Journey times have increased and the reliance on the car has brought the additional disbenefits of congestion, cost, pollution and the leaving behind of those unable or unwilling to drive.

Thus in many ways the River Thames at this location is more of a barrier than it was 60 years

ago. However, the team behind the KenEx project, including a number of railway project professionals with successful projects already achieved, together with investors (without a car centric agenda), have identified a cost-effective proposal, not just to cross the river, but also to develop a comprehensive tramway of some 18 kilometres / 11 miles connecting Purfleet-on-Thames to Gravesend.

In developing the proposal, the team has listened carefully to many interested parties including environmental, cycling, local authorities, and developers.

The team see Purfleet-on-Thames to Gravesend as a core proposal which could see additional routes added in time. After all it took Manchester Metrolink just 30 years to grow from nothing to a total route length of around 103 kilometres, and the Metrolink team have already been lobbied by politicians to look at new routes.

The proposal is part of an integrated and sustainable local

transport solution and connectivity has been carefully thought through. This was one of the key requirements of the Department for Transport for the Outline Business Case stage. In North Kent this includes railway interchanges at Gravesend, Northfleet and Ebbsfleet International. The last will also benefit from the proposed Ebbsfleet Southern railway link which will halve the journey times between Bromley and Ebbsfleet when compared to undertaking the journey by car. In South Essex interchanges are proposed at Purfleet-on-Thames, Chafford Hundred Lakeside and Grays. There would be, of course,

also key interchanges at various locations with buses, taxis and the local ferry.

With such good connectivity to existing public transport and by avoiding the need to take a detour into London for an eastward journey, the system will ensure more efficient and significantly faster journeys between areas of London, South Essex and North Kent creating a more cohesive and dynamic economic zone.

As for costs, the significantly lower costs of light rail per kilometre makes the business case for light rail much stronger when compared with roads, even before other positive factors are accounted for, such as cleaner air, greater energy efficiency, removal of road congestion, faster journey times, improved journey reliability and an improved urban realm.

The total cost for the proposed 18 kilometre initial length is currently estimated at £900 million which includes a cross river tunnel and urban realm improvements. This compares with the proposed Lower Thames Road Crossing which at an estimated £9 billion cost is about enough to build a comprehensive Manchester Metrolink, city sized, light rail system three times over.

Gordon Pratt
Managing Director
Thames Gateway Tramlink Ltd
website: www.kenextram.co.uk

Car Free Visions TOOTING

We've been working in London to raise ambition on **cutting private car use**. This is an opportunity to hear from local councillors, stakeholders and workshop participants on how we can create an **equitable, car-free London** and your chance to put questions to them directly.

We'll be sharing some brand new **visions for car free spaces in Tooting**, designed with local residents, that meet the needs of all our communities.

We want you to be there!

Monday 30th January 2023, 6.30 to 8.15pm
United Reform Church, Rookstone Rd, SW17 9NQ



Register at:
wearepossible.org/london-visions

Possible.
 Inspiring climate action

Southeastern cuts trains without consultation in new timetable



Government-owned Southeastern Railway unilaterally imposed new, reduced timetables on and from 11th December, having consulted neither elected representatives nor rail user groups, let alone its passengers.

Outrage at the plans led local MPs of both main parties to hold a Parliamentary debate on 6th December.¹

Southeastern have given several reasons for now running 302 fewer weekday trains and 426 fewer at the weekend, compared with September 2019 services. Those reasons don't bear scrutiny: they state that the opening of the Elizabeth line has reduced demand for their services. No doubt some former Southeastern (and Thameslink) passengers going to/from Woolwich Arsenal and Abbey Wood have switched to the Elizabeth Line. However, Southeastern serves 178 other stations. Its services were being used to/from some of them to connect with the Elizabeth Line but those connecting services have now been cut! The new timetables are,

apparently, based on six-month-old demand figures, predating significant post-pandemic resumption of demand. The first phase of the Elizabeth Line only opened on 24th May: long term demand changes could not have been established six months ago.

One of the purposes of a timetable is to make the best use of scarce resources and avoid running empty trains on some routes/at some times of the day/week while other trains are overcrowded. So, where demand patterns have changed long term, it is reasonable to adjust the timetable.

However, a great number of Southeastern stations served via Lewisham have now lost most of their direct services: either to/from Charing Cross and Waterloo East or to/from Cannon Street. This has nothing at all to do with changes in demand and many passengers are now being forced to change additionally at Lewisham or London Bridge, with journey times extended accordingly. This goes against the stated objective to 'grow rail usage'.

There are also concerns about the capacity of Lewisham station to accommodate a sizeable increase in interchange numbers. Moreover, for months, local PA announcements have been stating that 'some of the lifts at Lewisham are out of service' which made it problematic for mobility-impaired passengers using Lewisham.

Southeastern tried desperately to make a virtue of changing at London Bridge:

'We will be making the interchange at London Bridge as seamless and accessible as we can. London Bridge Station is safe, gated, well-lit and weatherproof, with CCTV, customer help points, 17 defibrillators (one on every platform), free Wi-Fi and extra staff on hand to help with assisted travel. The British Transport Police and London Ambulance Service also have a presence at the station. The £1bn redevelopment of London Bridge has provided step free access to all platforms and easier connections to other rail services and the Tube.'

Although many aspects of the rebuilding of London Bridge station were welcome,

the new platforms are a significantly longer walk to/from the Underground station than at other termini and to/from the old London Bridge platforms. Moreover, some of the new lifts and escalators, from the giant concourse to the platforms, have recently been out of service, suggesting that all those defibrillators and ambulance crews might come in handy!

Southeastern says it hopes to improve reliability through Lewisham Crossover Junctions (see photo) by reducing the number of conflicting train moves. That might be justified if more intensive metro style services were being planned through Lewisham, but none are. With the current series of rail strikes, whether reliability improves remains to be seen.

It is true that, under the old timetable, trains were often delayed for a few minutes on the approaches to Lewisham Crossover Junctions. These delays could have been reduced less painfully for passengers by better scheduling and/or by better engineering of the complex crossovers which seem to require very slow speeds but nonetheless give a very poor ride quality. There does not appear to be sufficient space to rebuild this junction with grade separation (as was achieved with the Bermondsey dive-under a few years ago, when the Greenwich line lost its direct services to/from Waterloo East and Charing Cross) without demolition of many tall new buildings in the area.

Other changes which have been introduced include more clockface services, the abolition of First Class and withdrawal of direct services between the Woolwich line, the Sidcup line (sparking a petition)² and (on Sundays) Lewisham. Accessing the Elizabeth Line or the DLR at Woolwich is, for many now, a slower journey on buses.

Neil Roth

¹<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-12-06/debates/11B2B-2CD-2C65-46D7-8EF1-4A2EAE3F6B7/SoutheasternRailwayTimetableChanges>

²<https://www.change.org/p/save-the-loop-train-service-from-sidcup-line-stations-to-abbey-wood-woolwich-and-charlton>





All that's left of the Busway.

Rise and fall of Greenwich Millennium Busway

Segregated busways – Segregated busways – roads where a physical barrier separates buses from all other traffic – can be found in many parts of the world.

In some places buses are guided automatically so they always follow a set path ensuring they line up accurately with the kerb at stops. In London, the 1.8 km Millennium Busway, through Millennium Village, had been designed and built just in time for the opening of North Greenwich station and the yearlong Millennium Exhibition at the Dome (now the O2). The location of that station, at the tip of the Greenwich Peninsula, had been fixed by the Jubilee line extension alignment. TfL/TfL recognised that many potential users would live/work well beyond the station's walk-in catchment area and the bus network was developed accordingly.

One objective of the Dome Transport Strategy was for any new infrastructure to have legacy wherever possible. So, the planned 16 km 'Intermediate Mode' Greenwich Waterfront Transit (GWT) specification was applied to the Millennium Busway,

planned to be GWT's first phase and running along the spine of the Greenwich Peninsula. <https://www.tbush.org.uk/greenwich.pdf>

That specification included: high priority, segregation, electronic guidance, and tram-style bus stops for step-free, gap-free boarding/alighting and minimum dwells, all to provide shorter, more reliable journey times. The geometry allowed for the operation of trams (and/or trolleybuses) at some future date.

Kerb guidance was roundly rejected because it is incompatible with pedestrian areas, cannot handle tight curves, cannot pass unequipped buses or maintenance vehicles, so it requires a maintenance road adjacent and parallel to the guideway (at extra cost and width, unless a suitable road happens to be there) and has serious mechanical disadvantages.

For the duration of the millennium year, high quality bus route M1 was planned to connect North Greenwich bus station with Charlton station via the Millennium Busway. Each M1 vehicle was fitted with an aerial on the front bumper which would guide the steering system

to follow twin cables buried under the busway while the driver controlled the accelerator and brakes. Beyond the busway, the buses were to be driven normally.

The electronic guidance system was supposedly proven technology, used by the safety-critical Service Tunnel Transport System in the Channel Tunnel. However, it was problematic under extensive testing (required by Her Majesty's Railway Inspectorate) in open air conditions and never went into public service. That delayed M1 buses being driven conventionally along the Millennium Busway for some months, so they used parallel roads. Other electronic guidance systems in other countries have since achieved the Holy Grail of combining many advantages of trams with the much more route flexibility and much lower cost of buses.

The plan had been to withdraw route M1 after millennium year, but it proved popular enough to be made permanent (as route 486) and extended far beyond Charlton station.

While segregation avoids many of the disadvantages of bus lanes (for example, the burden of enforcement and

parked cars preventing bus doors being brought close enough to the kerb) pedestrians and motorists confused by the unusual road layout were deemed to have caused road traffic accidents and, after about 17 years of operation, the section of Millennium Busway adjacent to West Parkside Road was downgraded to a conventional dual carriageway with bus lanes. Between West Parkside Road and Peartree Way, segregation remains and the bus stops at Millennium Leisure Park are closer to the superstore doors than most car park spaces.

Nowadays, no fewer than eight bus routes work the busway's whole length, including two 24-hour routes. One of the latter (108) continues through the Blackwall Tunnel; the other (472) follows a route like that planned for GWT between North Greenwich and Abbey Wood.

All the tram and transit schemes developed by TfL (including GWT) were cancelled by Boris Johnson when Mayor of London.

Neil Roth



Five new parklets for The Cut

The Cut is a busy road connecting Waterloo Road with Blackfriars Road. Most buildings are commercial. They include the Old Vic and the Young Vic, branches of Lewisham and Southwark Colleges, and a number of bars and restaurants.

The road also now boasts improved cycle parking and also five parklets, each taking at least one car parking space.

Anthony Lau, founder of Cyclehoop which installed to parklets, said: 'By extending the pavement, the parklets offer additional space for pedestrians with a safety barrier protecting users from road traffic. This means the main pavement thoroughfare is not disrupted and visitors can relax and enjoy the outdoors. By providing 24 cycle parking spaces on the carriageway this frees up even more space for pedestrians.'

The parklets are not only of benefit to pedestrians and cyclists. According to Lau, restaurants which use the parklets to extend their seating area can experience a 30 per cent uplift in turnover, and, together with improved cycle parking, can increase retail spend by up to five times.

Using the Silvertown Tunnel

One of the benefits to be brought about by the opening of the Silvertown Tunnel is the opportunity presented for improving public transport connections between north and south London.

In January TfL's Silvertown Tunnel Implementation Group proposed five new bus routes through the tunnel. One was an extension of route 129 to run from Greenwich to Beckton and another was an extension of 309 to run from Bethnal Green to North Greenwich. Another route is described as route 104a although it would no doubt be allocated another number if it were to be introduced. It would run from Stratford to North Greenwich. New routes suggested to penetrate further into south

London linked Grove Park with Canary Wharf and Eltham with Beckton. Curiously the 108 is to continue to use Blackwall Tunnel meaning it will remain a single-deck route and be subject to serious delays.

These proposals have now been substantially watered down. Only two routes will use the tunnel with 108 continuing to use Blackwall Tunnel. The proposal for route 129 will remain, terminating at London City Airport, and the other will be an express route labelled X239 linking Grove Park with Canary Wharf. The plans envisage 20 buses an hour using the tunnel in the peak hours although there is an aspiration to increase that to 37 in due course.

CLr David Gardner, chair of Greenwich Highways Committee, deplores the fact that

EXTENDING THE GOBLIN

Following the overhead electrification of the orbital Gospel Oak to Barking line (GOBLIN) completed in 2019 and its eastwards extension to Barking Riverside, opened in July of this year, is there any case for extending it westwards?

As well as adding to the number of station catchment areas GOBLIN would serve directly, a westwards extension could give it interchange with the Jubilee line and Thameslink at West Hampstead and with the Bakerloo line and radial London Overground services at Willesden Junction.

However, the existing layout of tracks and platforms at Gospel Oak would prevent that station being served by GOBLIN trains, if extended westwards, without major modification and service disruption: GOBLIN trains currently reverse in terminal platform 3 while freight trains can pass on adjacent Tottenham & Hampstead tracks: new platforms could not be built alongside those T & H tracks without obliterating terminal platform 3 and GOBLIN trains could not reverse there while through platforms were being built (if they are feasible at all).

Just before the pandemic, we had suggested the reopening of Junction Road station (closed during the Second World War) to London's then Deputy Mayor for Transport to give interchange with the Northern Line at nearby Tufnell Park (as well as serving the local catchment).

Rather than rebuilding Gospel Oak, would scarce funds be better spent creating a new station at Junction Road while trains continue to operate through the site during traffic hours? Once that station opens, GOBLIN trains could call there and be extended westwards from Gospel Oak without calling at Gospel Oak. Interchange with North London Line services would be available at Hampstead Heath.

GOBLIN trains would still be able to reverse at Gospel Oak platform 3, if scheduled to do so, or if required for engineering works or at times of disruption.

Neil Roth



Site of Junction Road station

none of the buses connect with Woolwich or Eltham. He proposes that there should be a route from Canary Wharf to Eltham via Woolwich.

Meanwhile Sian Berry, GLA Green Party member, proposes radical new ideas for using the tunnel. She suggests that the second bore should be cancelled and the one now nearing completion should be used only for sustainable transport. Suggestions include a tram link continuing to Greenwich

and Woolwich, an extension of the DLR or for a high quality walking and cycling link.

Future Transport London proposes that the northbound bore of the Blackwall Tunnel with its restricted dimensions making it unsuitable for modern traffic, should be repurposed for cyclists and pedestrians. One of the three remaining bores should then be reserved for buses in both directions, leaving the remaining two bore for general traffic.



Active travel back on agenda

A number of schemes to improve roads for walking and cycling are back on the agenda having been suspended when TfL funds were hit during the Covid crisis. Amongst those being funded are safer junction schemes in Holloway Road and at Battersea Bridge. A further 28 kilometres of TfL roads are to be restricted to 20mph in North London. 14 kilometres of additional cycle lane sections are to be added and a further 16 kilometres of cycleways including the missing section of C4 on Lower Road, extending C2 from Stratford to Forest Gate, extending C6 from Kentish Town to Hampstead and protected cycle lanes on Loughborough Road. A new cycle route from Wembley to Wood Lane is to be installed. There will also be bus journey time improvements including 25 kilometres of new bus lanes.

Funding will also be available for firms to install kit to freight vehicles so that they comply with the Direct Vision Standard (DVS) scheme required by TfL for vehicles operating in London. To obtain the required safety permit vehicles over 12 tonnes need to be equipped with a number of features to protect pedestrians and cyclists. These include mirrors to increase the field of vision for the driver in the blind spot directly in front of the vehicle, a camera monitoring system and an audible warning of left and right turns and reversals.

ULEZ extension

The Mayor has said that the ultra low emission zone will be extended to the boundary of Greater London from 29th August 2023. He says that London has made significant progress over the last six years in improving air quality. However, toxic air caused by traffic is still leading to children growing up with stunted lungs and thousands of premature deaths a year – with the greatest number of deaths attributable to air pollution in London's outer boroughs, which the ULEZ doesn't currently cover.

A new vehicle scrappage scheme announced by the Mayor will include a grant of £2000 for any non-compliant vehicle which is scrapped. The money will only be available to people in receipt of certain benefits. The money can be used to purchase a compliant vehicle but can also be used for greener transport such as cargo bikes. An additional option is to receive a free bus and tram pass for a year, although this would not include rail. Higher grants will be available for scrapping vans or minibuses (£5000 for a van and £7000 for a minibus) for small businesses and charities. Disabled drivers will be able to continue to use non-compliant vehicles until 24th October 2027.

New developments in electric traction for buses

Developments in electric traction for London buses are proceeding at a rapid rate.

There are now, as of the end of October, 850 all-electric buses in operation in London. They are able to operate without recharging for a little over 100 miles which is not really enough for a full day's work.

A new facility at Bexleyheath garage has one answer to this problem. 18 buses on route 132 are able to call into the garage during the day for a quick recharge. A 10-minute top-up can recharge the battery by about 20 per cent, giving them around 20 miles more running time. Recharging is through a pantograph which is lowered onto a receptor on the roof of the bus,

operated by the driver. One of the advantages of this new facility is that it might make it possible for buses to use smaller batteries saving on cost and weight.

An alternative to frequent recharging is to install larger or more efficient batteries to extend the range and bus operator Go-Ahead is trialling an experimental electric double decker which is claimed to run 250 miles on a single charge, enough for a full day's work in London traffic. Additionally, LT11, one of the so-called Boris buses, has recently been converted to full electric operation. If the experiment is successful consideration will be given to converting all 1000 of these buses.

Another development is the introduction of so-called 'tram-buses' on route 358 between Crystal Palace and Orpington early next year. These are single-deck buses supposedly designed to look like trams, (although the only nod in that direction appears to be the covered wheel arches). Like the double-deckers on the 132 they will also be recharged during the day, sitting for ten minutes under a pantograph, in this case not at a depot but at each end of the route.

Renwick Road on again

Development of housing in ex-industrial areas in Barking – Creekmouth, Castle Green and Thames Road – partly depended on the provision of a new station on the Overground extension to Barking Riverside. Financial problems appeared to have scuppered both the station and the houses but now plans for the new station are being worked on by TfL. This should enable the delivery of 10,000 new homes on these sites by 2030.

The new station, provisionally named Castle Green, would sit on an island site where the lines in and out of Barking Riverside have been built wide enough apart to accommodate it. Renwick Road would form one entrance and another, at the other end of the platform, would serve new housing. Funding is likely to be a mix of developer money and some central government funding via the Housing Infrastructure pot

Wandsworth Future streets

After more than four decades, Wandsworth Council changed political control from Conservative to Labour in the May 2022 elections. Many hopes are riding on the new administration for a more wholehearted commitment to healthy streets and active travel - two sides of the same coin.

In early November, the Council announced its 'Future Streets' approach, essentially a badging and bringing together of a number of related policies - perhaps most importantly, its brand new Walking and Cycling Strategy. Although Wandsworth has (in the past) published a Walking Strategy, and several iterations of a Cycling Strategy, this is the first time the two modes have been brought together into a single Strategy. One element of 'Future Streets' is a re-balancing of support for electric cars, with increased emphasis on the positive role of active travel in tackling the cost of living crisis, highlighted by the Cabinet Member, Clare Fraser, when introducing 'Future Streets'.

Shortly after its 'Future Streets' policy announcement, the Council announced that it was tackling carelessly parked Lime Bikes, perhaps partly as a counter to political opportunism on this issue. Whilst tackling pavement obstruction is welcome, the lack of reference in Council communications to the parallel need to provide road space for parked Lime Bikes (or to pavement parking of motor vehicles) was noted by some local activists. The Council Leader's subsequent - somewhat car-centric - messaging about the, very welcome, expansion of ULEZ also raised eyebrows among some observers. Clearly, while an encouraging start, there is work to do to properly embed the 'Future Streets' strategy into Council policy and processes.

You can read Wandsworth Council's press release on its 'Future Streets' strategy at <https://wandsworth.gov.uk/news/news-november-2022/future-streets-wandsworth-s-ambitious-plans-for-cleaner-greener-safer-travel/>