A TRANSPORT AGENDA FOR OUTER LONDON

A submission to the Outer London Commission by Campaign for Better Transport and London Cycling Campaign with contributions from Living Streets.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR PRINCIPLES

From the text that follows we draw the following principles which we consider to be crucial. Transport and spatial policies for outer London should:

- Attach paramount importance to reducing carbon emissions
- Promote shared space and permeability of the street network for walking and cycling
- Emphasise the role and assist the viability of local neighbourhood centres which can be reached on foot and by bicycle
- Intensify development round transport hubs and town centres
- Achieve substantial increases in active travel: walking and cycling
- Lever gain out of public transport by a) measures such as improving information, station access and security, cycle parking at stations, cycle carriage on trains etc and b) developing orbital routes by exploiting underused rail lines, installing bus priority lanes, integrating services and improving interchange.

We also note the potential for applying the 'link and place' function and the critical importance of applying parking standards to restrain the provision of parking in new developments, town centres and elsewhere.

The proposal for super-hubs requires careful scrutiny and should only be considered if it can be shown that they will not be traffic generating, will enable exemplary walking and cycling based development and will not detract from a polycentric pattern of development.

Structure of this submission

This briefing will look at a number of ways to improve transport in outer London:

- what can be done so that people do not have to travel so far between home, work, health, education, shopping, leisure and other amenities in order to improve access and transport choice
- Improving alternatives to the car to make them easier and more attractive
- Managing demand for car travel by various measures that ***'help people out of their cars by persuasion'*** (WTG p11)
- Changing travel behaviour mainly by using travel plans, marketing and awareness campaigns to relieve travel pressures and encourage use of the most efficient modes.

Any text in bold italics is a quotation from Mayor Johnson's *Planning for a Better London* (PBL) or *Way to Go* (WTG), the discussion documents for the current revision of the London Plan and Transport Strategy.

BACKGROUND

'more emphasis needs to be given to issues affecting outer London' (PBL, p8)

It was often said that the last Mayor had transport policies for central London but not for outer London. Boris Johnson intends to do more to meet outer London's needs. His Outer London Commission will focus particularly on economy, quality of life and transport and make recommendations for policies to be included in the revised Transport Strategy and London Plan [1].

[1] Initial Questions for the Outer London Commission Consultation

The new emphasis is very welcome. Outer London is crucial to London's transport future. Nearly two thirds of Londoners live there and almost two thirds of journeys in London begin, end or are within outer London. Levels of car use and ownership are much higher than in inner London: 53% of journeys in outer London are made by car and only 13% by public transport. Almost a third of journeys are made on foot but only a tiny proportion, perhaps about 1%, by bicycle. The potential to promote active travel and encourage travel by other means than the car has barely begun to be tapped.

Traffic demand already exceeds capacity in many parts of outer London. Rail services are overcrowded at peak times and suburban buses are frequently delayed by congestion. Population, job numbers and car ownership are all forecast to grow. Traffic in outer London is forecast to increase 14% by 2017[2]. According to TfL, even with a major investment programme, road congestion will get worse, rail and underground will be more overcrowded, little will be done to improve quality of life and the needs of outer London will remain unaddressed[3].

There are signs of decline in some suburban areas. Many of these are transport related including congestion, poor public transport connections, domination of many residential districts and town centres by traffic, unsatisfactory conditions for walking and cycling, decaying town centres. There is growing recognition of the need for transport improvements.

A recent London Councils report[4] recognises overlapping problems. Traffic congestion is endemic on major routes and in town centres. Transport interchanges are often poor and feel unsafe. Town and district centres suffer poor quality public realm, competition from out-of-town shopping, inadequate transport links and traffic domination. Investment is needed in community infrastructure and neighbourhood facilities if the suburbs are to cater for changing lifestyles and remain good places to live and bring up families.

As London Councils also points out, carbon emissions are higher for outer than inner London residents, and for that reason too, there is a need to change people's behaviour and reduce dependence on the car. Curiously London Councils does not mention people's aspirations for a healthier lifestyle; nor that reducing car dependence in the suburbs can partly be achieved by promoting much higher levels of walking and cycling.

REDUCING JOURNEY LENGTHS THROUGH BETTER CO-ORDINATION OF TRANSPORT AND LAND USE PLANNING

'there is much the planning system can do to ensure effective and environmentally supportive transport choices' (PBL, p 29)

'it is obviously essential to consider where people will live, work and take their leisure, and how they will move between these activities. The best option – environmentally and economically – is to reduce the distance between them and simply to reduce the need to travel longer distances. This is one of the reasons for making sure that outer London delivers its full potential.' (PBL p 29)

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[2] *London's Suburbs – Unlocking their Potential*, BURA and Urbed, 2007 citing *Transport 2025*, TfL
[3] Presentation by Michele Dix, 12.02.09
[4] *'Successful Suburbs'*, London Councils, March 2009

Londoners spend longer travelling to work than people in any other part of the country. In fact, the latest *London Travel Report* [5] states that for the period sampled (autumn 2006), "[o]n average, the travel time to work was nearly twice as long for those living in London as it was for those in the rest of Great Britain." While Londoners therefore accept disproportionately long commutes as part of their daily routine, in general people do not want to travel any further for work or any other purpose than they have to. If a policy objective is to increase walking and cycling, as it is, then we must ensure that more jobs, services and amenities are closer to where people live and can easily be reached on foot and by bicycle. But the average journey length in London continues to increase. People are having to travel further not just to go to work but for other purposes as well, for example to go to the post office, hospital, doctor (especially with the advent of poly-clinics) or nearest grocery shops.

Homes near work and work near homes

'We can do much more to help the transport development of the outer boroughs of London, to help people to live and work in the same area…' (WTG p 12)

In the last London Plan, forecasts of economic growth were based on the assumption that more than half of the growth in employment would be provided by expanding financial and business services. Employers would wish to locate most of such jobs in central London or in an west/east corridor from Heathrow across central London to Docklands. But most new homes would be in east London or in outer London. People would have to travel further between the new homes and the new jobs.

As Boris Johnson put it, such a work-travel pattern can ***"mean missing the potential for people to work closer to where they live, reducing the strain on the transport links into central London by encouraging new centres of employment in parts of outer London, like Barnet or Croydon"*** (PBL p 10). That is, there are other ways of envisaging the spatial development of the capital – ways that promote mixed-use development in the multiple centres of the capital and so can act to reduce demand for travel, in particular on already over-subscribed radial routes to and from central London and congested roads in outer London.

Critically, the ongoing recession calls into question the assumption, at the heart of the existing London Plan, that much of the capital's economic growth and jobs provision would be driven by the expansion of the financial industry (and related services). Future economic growth is less assured and less likely to be based on financial and business services. This presents an opportunity, or requirement, to promote job creation in other sectors and to encourage employment in or around town centres in outer London, nearer where people live. One potential driver of growth already articulated by the Mayor is for more green collar jobs in the capital[6], and such diversification of the job market could in turn drive regeneration in outer London by creating a new light industrial employment base in the region.

On the whole policies to promote economic development and job creation are beyond the scope of this submission. However much of what is said below has implications for economic vitality and employment in outer London's town centres.

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[5] Transport for London, *London Travel Report 2007*, p 8

[6] See *Mayor calls on Government to support electric car revolution in the capital*, 8th April 2009 [available at: http://www.london.gov.uk/view_press_release.jsp?releaseid=21677].

Questioning the case for super-hubs

One of the principles that has come to characterise much of the debate about outer London has been the 'super hub' or 'growth hub' concept. A number of concerns have been raised about such hubs, not least the risk that they will become large-scale retail centres (and that in turn that they will suck the economic and social life out of the smaller-scale neighbourhood centres discussed below).

This is certainly a valid concern, and we would resist the development of any such hubs in this way. Until now retail centres have been designed with car use in mind – Stratford City and Brent Cross are both striking, and highly relevant, examples – and it is exactly this sort of car-dependent development that we need to get away from.

However, it is also clear that the role for 'growth hubs' is still up for discussion, and if any notion of first level centres is to be developed in outer London this is a discussion that must be had. Clearly, if 'growth hubs' are to be planned as areas of intense economic activity and job creation that are intended to relieve pressure on an already oversubscribed radial public transport system in the capital, and to reduce the length of journeys to work to distances that can be travelled on foot and by bike, then there is some value there.

With this in mind, we propose that any 'growth hubs' that are considered must be planned from the start as exemplary walking and cycling cities. This would require a co-ordinated land use and transport planning approach, as the Mayor advocates, comprising not only walking and cycling measures (the Cycle Hire Scheme, Legible London, naked streets and permeable street networks) but also principles of mixed used, high density and zero-carbon development that will create the conditions in which walking and cycling can become the natural choice for short journeys. Community, residential and development travel plans, as well as work place travel plans have a valuable role to play.

Super or growth hubs is should not detract, in policy or resource terms, from the network of town centres across the whole of outer London which is the essence of the concept of the polycentric city.

A network of town centres

The Mayor has said that he will support '***initiatives to make the most of London's rich network of town centres.'***(PBL p23) The current London Plan describes a network of almost 1,400 town and local centres in five categories ranging from major international shopping districts to local neighbourhood centres. A new focus on outer London town centres is welcome. Many of us have argued for a polycentric pattern of development which now seems likely to be taken up in drafts for revision of the London Plan and Transport Strategy.

The principle transport reason for a more polycentric pattern of development is to improve access: locating more jobs or services within easy reach of where people live will reduce overall journey lengths, make it more feasible for journeys to be made on foot, by bicycle or by local public transport thus reducing traffic and strain on public transport services.

Another issue is the impact of traffic and transport on the health and vitality of the town centre. Two aspects are considered here.

Business location and working practices

Research for the Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment[7] found that occupiers of high quality urban design areas benefit from increased prestige and a healthier, happier workforce with reduced absenteeism and staff turnover. Research among London businesses[8] found that retaining staff is more difficult if their locations suffer from a poor general ambience and environment. It also found that "the existing or potential streetscape is an inherent part of a tenant's decision to locate in an area and is an important facet of continued economic success".

The State of the English Cities report[9] stressed the importance of liveability issues, as a key competitive element between cities in terms of attracting both people and businesses to a city. It recommended that "Policies should recognise that liveability as well as economic success is crucial to people's choice of places in which they want to live" and that "This leads to a concern about the public as well as the private realm and the quality of services offered, as opposed to simply the economic opportunities that are offered."

Finally, recent evidence has shown that businesses can substantially reduce absenteeism, as well as carbon emissions, by introducing smart travel plans for their work force. At BT, for example, the introduction of flexible and home working generated considerable benefits for the company. Specifically, it has reduced absenteeism to 3.1% (the national average is 8.5%) and made savings of over 7.5 million kg of CO^2 emissions from journeys no longer made by the workforce.[10]

This evidence demonstrates that it is not simply the planning policies that guide the location of businesses that need to be reviewed in London, but also policies guiding daily work practices. Delivering a vision of London as a polycentric city will take time and in the interim other measures to reduce travel demand should be actively considered. These include the use of travel plans to encourage and 'greener, cleaner and more efficient' modes, the promotion of home- and flexible-working patterns, and also what the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) has termed 'healthy working centres' – purpose-made locations for remote working by residents of a given locality.[11] Such centres – see 'the hub' in Kings Cross as a practical example[12] – would negate the need for long-distance commutes and so promote active travel modes.

Retail performance

There is a significant body of evidence suggesting that high quality public realm, particularly associated with schemes to give greater priority to pedestrians, improves the retail performance of locations. A review of the literature by TfL[13] found that pedestrian schemes have a positive impact on a town centre's vitality and viability. Similarly, CABE found[14] that "in London an achievable improvement in street design

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[7] *The value of urban design*: a research project commissioned by CABE and DETR to examine the value added by good urban design (CABE / Bartlett School of Planning for DETR, 2001)
[8] *Quality Streets* (Central London Partnership/Llewellyn Davies/TfL, 2003)
[9] *State of the English Cities* (ODPM, 2006)
[10] See the DfT press release *Businesses urged to look at a bigger, more cost effective, travel picture*, 20th April 2009.
[11] See SEEDA/European Social Fund (2004) *Healthy Working Centres: Final Research Report.*
[12] See http://kingscross.the-hub.net/public/.
[13] *The Benefits of Town Centre Pedestrianisation and Public Realm Schemes* (TfL, 2002)
[14] *Paved with Gold*, Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment, 2007

quality can add an average of 5.2 per cent to residential prices on the case study high streets and an average of 4.9 per cent to retail rents."

Extensive research over a number of years[15] shows that schemes to increase pedestrian priority have the potential to bring about increases in footfall for retail services of about +20% to +40% with more than 17% increase in turnover and a similar impact on rents. More general improvements to the public realm for pedestrians suggest that the quality of the shopping environment and shops is more important than the ability of shoppers to drive past shops or park very close to them[16].

Many businesses recognise the importance of quality public realm to their business. For instance, 85% of respondents to a survey by the Central London Partnership identified the quality of the streetscape as important to their ability to attract customers or tenants. However, many shop owners overestimate the numbert of shoppers using cars to get to the shops. Research by Sustrans in a Bristol retail centre showed that 55% of shoppers walked to the shops, 6% cycled, 13% came by bus and 22% drove. However, shop owners significantly overestimated the numbers of those coming by car – they estimated that car users were 41% of the shoppers.

Poor public realm and heavy motor traffic is also associated with poor retail performance. For instance, surveys of Leicester in the early 1990s[17] found that there was a statistically significant correlation between streets with high motorised traffic and high numbers of vacant shops. Areas with poor or derelict shopping areas visible to passing traffic can contribute to the stigma faced by deprived areas and contribute to a cycle of decay[18].

Elsewhere, the Commission for Integrated Transport found that shoppers tended to overestimate the spending of car-users over those who walked or used public transport[19]. With this in mind, TfL's own *Town Centre Survey* shows that if we consider average total spend per week by mode, spend for those who walked to their town centres (£91) is almost 50% more than that for those who visit by car (£64) or bus (£63)[20].

London Councils has said that successful town centres ensure that they are not dominated by traffic[21]. The evidence cited above clearly shows that there are widespread misconceptions about the importance of car-borne custom to town centres and therefore also about the desirability of large amounts of parking. Copious parking, and the traffic it attracts, are harmful not helpful to town centre vitality. These are some of the transport and planning measures that could enhance the prospects of town centres.

- Set up traffic free town centres
- Dismantle one-way systems (see below, pages 10 & 11)

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[15] *The effect of urban quality improvements on economic activity* (Tim Whitehead 1, David Simmonds 2 and John Preston, Journal of Environmental Management, Volume 80, Issue 1; July, 2006)
[16] Paved With Gold? A Study of the Economic Impact of Pedestrianisation and its Relevance to Leicester (Environ, 1992)
[17] Ibid
[18] *Retailing, sustainability and neighbourhood regeneration* (Michael Carley, Karryn Kirk and Sarah McIntosh, published by YPS for JRF, 2001)
[19] *Sustainable Transport Choices and the Retail Sector* (CfIT, July 2006). Based on quantitative survey of 1,600 shoppers in six areas with additional focus groups and interviews.
[20] *Town Centre Survey*, TfL, 2004: 15
[21] *Successful Suburbs*, London Councils 2009: 6

- Improve streetscape and provision for walking and cycling
- Introduce town centre congestion charges
- Introduce superstore parking charges and tighten up parking standards to discourage new car-dependent developments
- Use existing powers to introduce workplace parking charges
- Replace town centre or edge of centre car parks with mixed use, higher density car-free development
- Ensure complete coverage by controlled parking zones
- Facilitate development round stations and transport hubs, raising densities, increasing custom for local services and travel by public transport
- Use travel planning to effect changes in travel behaviour.

A version of this approach to town centres is now being considered by the London Borough of Sutton in its current consultation on Long Term Plans for Sutton Town Centre[22]. Two of the seven objectives of its proposed changes are

- Putting pedestrians and cyclists first and improving public transport, including better bus facilities and the extension of Tramlink into Sutton
- Insisting on high quality design and creating a safe and attractive environment with new and better-connected green and open spaces.

Sutton also plans to develop new housing, redevelop town centre car parks, add new shops, restaurants, cafes and cultural facilities and attract new businesses and jobs thus reducing the overall need to travel.

Alongside these generic measures, it is also clear that there is a strong potential for TfL to deliver some of its more innovative existing schemes (namely the Cycle Hire Scheme and Legible London) in the outer London town centres. It is precisely in these more densely populated and travelled areas that such schemes will be most cost effective and will deliver the greatest returns on investment.

The importance of local, neighbourhood centres

But the indications are that the policy focus is not yet fine enough. We need to consider what can be done to provide more services and amenities at the very local shopping districts which can easily be reached on foot and by bicycle and which could provide a hub for the residential neighbourhoods in which they are located. This approach has a long pedigree, for example in work done for the GLA on London as a city of villages[23] or the neighbourhood improvement districts proposed by the Young Foundation.

There are many local parades of shops and other amenities, which are, or once were, valuable centres of their local communities. Many are decaying because of the loss of local facilities like post-offices or competition from superstores with large catchment areas and parking provision which have undermined local shops. Measures that would help revitalise local centres include:

- Identifying sites for higher density development in or near local shopping parades or other neighbourhood hubs such as railway stations
- Carrying out accessibility audits and plans to identify and make good gaps in the provision of local services including shops, post offices, health facilities and facilities for the voluntary and community sector
- Creating high quality walking and cycling routes between local centres and surrounding residential areas

[22] Sutton Town Centre Plan_outline_spring09.pdf

[23] See for example *A City of Villages: promoting a sustainable future for London's suburbs,* URBED with the TCPA for the GLA, 2002

- Offering business rate discounts to essential businesses like food shops
- Supporting facilities at risk such as post offices
- Emphasing the social 'place' functions of local shopping streets, through changes to street design and management using the 'link and place' approach (see below).

There's no reason to raise densities uniformly across whole suburban areas. Densities should be intensified selectively around local centres, promoting accessibility in its widest sense by making amenities available to everybody without having to travel far – and without having to travel by car.
Again the London Borough of Sutton is in the forefront and has recently consulted on a project to create a thriving sustainable community in the suburb of Hackbridge[24]. Proposals in the consultation exercise included:

- Adding new shops, cafes, community and leisure facilities and a GPs surgery
- Building new homes
- Improving public transport and a bus interchange
- Putting pedestrians and cyclists first with new and improved routes
- Creating more green space
- Insisting on high quality design.

A report for Transport 2000 (now Campaign for Better Transport)[25] concluded that it would eventually be possible to secure a 20% reduction in car traffic through land use policies including promoting improved access, higher densities and reduced parking. This would allow a corresponding increase in the proportion of journeys made on foot and by bicycle.

Avoiding car-dependant communities
'We must not create new communities that have to be dependant on the car' (PBL p 31)
Campaign for Better Transport has just published the *Masterplanning Checklist for Sustainable Transport in New Developments*[26] which sets out the planning factors which enable less car dependant travel patterns for residents of new developments.

Among the factors included in the Checklist are:

- Providing local jobs, amenities and services which can be reached on foot and by bicycle
- Residential density and parking levels which support local services and make car use less tempting
- Designing streets and developments to make walking and cycling safer and more attractive, and more convenient than travel by car
- Locating developments near public transport so that longer journeys can be made without having to drive
- Not developing sites until they are well served by public transport.

These principles have not been applied to many development schemes that have recently been approved or are now in the planning pipeline. Research published by Campaign for Better Transport in September 2008[27] found that there were between 5,600 and nearly 10,000 car parking spaces each in five development schemes for

[24] http://www.sutton.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=3989
[25] *Low Carbon Transport for Outer London*, Transport 2000 Trust, 2006
[26] *Masterplanning Checklist for Sustainable Transport in New Development*, Transport for Quality of Life, published by Campaign for Better Transport, 2008
[27] http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/media/press_releases/september_2008/london_parking

'opportunity areas' in outer London. In one of these, for Cricklewood/Brent Cross, the developers are now proposing 12,000 spaces (in addition to 8,000 spaces at the existing shopping centre) rather than the 9,000 odd our information suggested at the time. Clearly these are car-dependent developments on a massive scale.

If we are to create communities that are not dependent on the car, restraint in the provision of car parking is clearly essential and car parking standards should reflect this.

IMPROVING ALTERNATIVES TO THE CAR

'Our job…is to help people to recognise that there are cleaner, greener and more efficient alternatives (to the car)' WTG p11

There is substantial potential for many more journeys in outer London to be made on foot and by bicycle. Even in outer London most journeys are short – over half are less than 2km and more than four fifths are less than 5km. The car is useful or even essential for some journeys but almost four fifths of car journeys in outer London are less than 5km; many of these could be made by other means.

Moreover, research for TfL has found that across London "[a]lthough walking dominates where trips are less than half a kilometre, for trips which are between half and two kilometres (which account for 37% of all trips in London), the walk mode share is just 29% with half of these trips being made in a car."[28]

Car clubs

People in London without constant access to a car are obviously more likely to walk, cycle or use public transport. Car clubs have a potentially important role to play. A car club provides its members with access to a communal car for short term hire. Members can make use of car club vehicles as and when they need them.There are many fewer car club members and club cars in outer London than in inner London and therefore considerable scope for car club development. It is often not worth the trouble of obtaining a car for short journeys even if one is available through a car club. Club cars enjoy the convenience of dedicated parking spaces provided the surrounding area is a controlled parking zone.

Improving public realm

'Some streets are being redesigned with great care…but the most important transformation is in the balance of power between the pedestrian and the motorist' (WTG p 23)

The Mayor has already stated his support for radical improvements to the public realm in terms of its potential to improve the walkability of London (WTG, 23-24). Often, such improvements are associated with high profile central London locations such as. Trafalgar Square or Oxford, Regent and Bond Streets – and again it could be argued that a strategic vision for public realm improvements in outer London has been relatively absent thus far.

The appointment of an Outer London Commission therefore presents a clear opportunity to address this disparity, and to reassess outer London's public realm. As part of this reassessment, some core principles should be brought to the fore.

[28] TfL (May 2008: 1) *Walking in London*.

Lower speeds
Transport for London showed in 2003 that 20 mph zones reduce the frequency of fatal or serious road casualties by 57% (and for children by 60%). It also estimated that 20 mph zones could be installed on 60% of the road network for a cost of approximately £230m but would allow savings in the first year alone of £248m in the financial costs of road casualties[29].

In order to create the conditions in which people feel confident to walk and cycle some or all of the way to work, or for shopping, leisure or other purposes, there is a need first and foremost to restrict motorised traffic speeds in places where people live, work or play. Specifically, default 20mph limits should be applied to those routes within a given permeable network of streets that are open to motorised traffic.

This is by no means a radical position, but rather echoes both calls from a London Assembly investigation[30] as well as current national policy proposals to make Britain's roads "the safest in the world" by reducing speeds limits from 30 to 20 mph in urban locations.[31] It would not only serve to reduce road danger but would also increase local residents' confidence to use their streets on foot and by bike. Evidence suggests that this in turn would serve to improve the liveability of local areas in terms of noise and crime levels among other things.[32]

Link and Place
Secondly, these permeable networks of streets should be planned according to a more people-centred approach to planning. Of particular use here is the notion of 'link and place,' or more specifically the recognition that streets serve not only 'link' functions (transport), but also 'place' functions (social). This approach to street design, layout and management "represents a major departure from conventional practice, where it is often assumed that the Link function is the opposite of the Place function, and traditional high streets have been treated as an historical anachronism."[33]

This approach to both the Transport for London Route Network and the Borough Route Network is particularly important in outer London where many centres have been experiencing decline. Rather than compound this decline by developing large out-of-town shopping centres accessed by car, there is a need to re-prioritise the place functions of our road network and recognise that in doing so the vitality and economic sustainability of our local town centres and neighbourhoods will be enhanced.[34]

Filtered permeability
Thirdly, the existing balance of power between sustainable and motorised modes needs to be addressed, and the number of short distance journeys undertaken by car tackled. To meet these aims, the street layout in outer London needs to be made more amenable to walking and cycling. We argue that this can be achieved through

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[29] *Review of 20 mph Zones in London Boroughs,* TfL Street Management, 2003
[30] London Assembly Transport Committee (April 2009) *Braking Point: 20 mph speed limits in London*. [Available to download from: http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport.jsp].
[31] See DfT (April 2009) *Making Britain's streets the safest in the world* [available to download from: http://nds.coi.gov.uk/environment/fullDetail.asp?ReleaseID=399115&NewsAreaID=2&NavigatedFromDepartment=False].
[32] See DfT (2003) *Urban Street Activity in 20mph Zones – Literature Review Report.*
[33] Jones, P., Boujenko, N. and Marshall, S. (2007: 22) *Link & Place: A Guide to Street Planning and Design*
[34] E.g. see http://www.pluggingtheleaks.org/index.htm.

attention to *permeability*. This principle, in particular if focussed around the 'neighbourhood centres' discussed already, would use not only urban design principles (dropped kerbs, raised tables etc.) but also transport planning measures (e.g. traffic light filters and phases) to ameliorate conditions for those travelling by bike and on foot.

Most residential neighbourhoods in London have been designed to permit cars to move through them unimpeded in all directions – that is to maximise permeability for cars. Consequently, the car is seen as the most convenient and quickest mode of transport for all trips, short or long. Domination of neighbourhoods by motor traffic – much of it through-traffic – lowers the liveability of both streets and neighbourhoods, making play and social interaction impossible, walking and cycling unpleasant, and contributing directly to the national obesity crisis partly caused by physical inactivity.

Low levels of walking and cycling can be directly attributed to a poor quality of the urban realm. A new approach to spatial and traffic planning is needed which simultaneously improves the quality or liveability of neighbourhoods and creates advantages for travelling by foot or cycle.

The approach, sometimes known as filtered permeability has been successfully applied in a number of European cities and at a smaller scale in some London streets. Filters are point road closures which maximise permeability for bikes, buses and pedestrians (and allow accessibility by emergency services) but restricts it for cars. Applied to whole neighbourhoods or clusters of neighbourhoods the aim is to channel through traffic around residential or traffic-calmed zones (a coarse-grain network for cars) and promote a highly permeable network for cycling and walking (a fine grain network of routes). The net effect is to create calmed neighbourhoods and give the active travel modes of walking and cycling an advantage for local trips which compared to the car become quicker, more direct, pleasant and convenient.

In cities such as Freiburg, Groningen and Zwolle the principle of filtered permeability is acknowledged as a key element in their success in restraining car use and promoting alternatives (Steve Melia, Local Transport Today, Jan 23rd 2008). Jan Gehl, the internationally respected expert in improving the public realm of cities, emphasises the importance of switching from a car-centred planning default to one based on the creation of walking and cycling cities[35].

Filtered permeability is a coherent solution to the declining liveability of neighbourhoods, a national health crisis arising from physical inactivity, and dependence upon the private car. It restores the neighbourhood and place functions of residential streets and enables people to exercise their choice to walk of cycle.

Such prioritisation of cycling and walking (and the attention to the reconfiguration of the urban realm that is needed to predispose the local environment to these modes) can be seen in the Sutton Town Centre 'area action plan,'[36] for example, and we would like to see similar principles guiding transport and land use planning policies in other parts of outer London.

Improving cycle-access: cycling permeability
'I believe that the cycle-ised city is the civilised city' (WTG p 26)
The mayor recognises that small measures can make a lot of difference to cyclists locally. As a distance-sensitive mode, cyclists require a very high degree of network

[35] *Towards a fine City for People – Public Spaces and Public Life – London 2004*, Jan Gehl Architects
[36] See http://www.sutton.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1398.

permeability. This is a fundamental and underlying requirement which will often critically influence the success of other measures discussed below, and will frequently occur in discussions of them.

One example may be to allow cyclists two-way access to certain one way streets, a policy that has been rolled out in LB Hackney since 1995 and LB Ealing since 1998 and is currently being trialled in the RB Kensington and Chelsea and in the City of London. Such measures are often referred to as improved 'permeability' for cycling and can facilitate cycling through a wide area and enable cyclists to avoid busy main roads

The Mayor should therefore introduce an innovative new programme of permeability for cycling. This means 'maximum route choice, minimum diversion' at three levels:

- Level One: Returning gyratories to two-way operation;
- Level Two: Returning one-way streets to two-way operation or making one-way streets two-way for cycling;
- Level Three: Improving cycle access, e.g. by dropped kerbs or cycle gaps.

Such improvements are of major benefit for cyclists. Only Level One measures require major capital investment. Levels Two and Three are low-cost.

Shared space

Finally, there is a need to promote the spread of shared space principles out from the centre and flagship schemes such as Kensington High Street and Exhibition Road. Critical, here, is the need to understand shared space in terms of the civic behaviour that it seeks to foster rather than in very specific design principles.

The concepts of shared space or 'naked streets' are not coterminous with shared surface as a design principle. Rather, the key outcome of shared space in urban realm terms should be that a greater balance between different road users is achieved.[37] Different road users should be encouraged to negotiate use of the street through social interaction, with the result that not only are road speeds calmed but also that more civility is encouraged. At the same time, the prevalence of formal regulations and controls – traffic signals, guard railing etc. – should be minimised.

Critically, the means through which shared space is achieved in a given network of streets should not be overly prescribed – rather, the key thing is that the measures introduced act to balance the need for on-carriageway traffic movement and the social, walked uses of our streets. Some important things to consider, however, are that adequate tactile clues for visually-impaired people are factored into the design and that a sufficient number of demarcated crossing points are designated in the scheme for more vulnerable road users who may not be confident enough to cross the street wherever they please.

When applying these principles, it is important that they should not only be retrofitted to the existing urban morphology, but also incorporated in proposals for new developments. As the British Urban Regeneration Association put it[38]: "[t]raditionally low densities in suburbs have meant that car dependency has often been high…. That walking and cycling are often unattractive even for short distances further reduces the chance of people taking these routes to get to public transport

[37] See Living Streets (2009: 5-6) *Policy Briefing 01/09: Naked Streets* [available to download at http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/news_and_info/media_news_releases.php?id=936].
[38] *Suburban Regeneration: the real challenges*, BURA 2008

stops/stations – people often take the view that if they're in their car they might as well stay in it...."

With these structural barriers to walking and cycling in mind, then, it is clear that design that can surmount such problems must be prioritised. This can comprise 'putting the urban into the suburban,' as BURA put it, through high density, mixed-use development, but also attention to the permeability of the space between buildings for those travelling on foot or by bike. The government guidance *Manual for Streets*[39] covers many of these issues for urban planning in residential areas, and an additional document, *Manual for High Streets*, is currently in development.

Walking

'with the nation engaged in a struggle against obesity, we at TfL are going to do everything in our power to make walking through this city as attractive and enjoyable as possible.' WTG p 23

Walking is a particular challenge in outer London given that the overall proportion of trips by foot "is higher in Inner and Central London than Outer London."[40] This despite average travel times to work by main mode, for example, being less in outer London (13 minutes) than inner (16) or central (21) London.

With this challenge in mind, policies to increase the proportion of journeys made on foot include

- creating an environment that makes walking safer and more pleasant, such as naked streets, more pedestrian crossing facilities, upgraded traffic signals, wider pavements and regularly spaced seating;
- redressing the balance between motorised traffic and pedestrians that has come to define the suburbs as car-friendly by, for example, making 20 mph limits the norm for residential streets and shopping areas, filtering motor traffic out of built-up areas and/or introducing road-user charging (congestion charging or workplace parking levels) and allocating some of the funds raised to improving pedestrian environments;
- adopting school and workplace travel plans that encourage walking and cycling, and build them into work and school journeys;
- so called 'smart travel' or individual travel marketing schemes that promote changes in travel behaviour;
- encouraging the provision of local facilities, including shops, open spaces, pubs and schools by increasing development densities and concentrating development around town and local centres as described above.
- Supporting innovative ways of bringing the workplace closer to home not only by promoting homeworking (and acknowledging the contribution this can make to travel demand) but also by piloting local 'healthy working centres' in outer London, where local residents from diverse organisations can come together to work remotely in a well-equipped office environment.

Public transport

The main items in TfL's substantial investment programme are CrossRail, the modernisation of the Tube and the North London Line, expansion of the Docklands Light Railway, the reopening of the East London Line and the realisation of an inner London orbital route. Network Rail is funding the Thameslink upgrade. Most public transport investment is aimed at increasing capacity to central and inner London or

[39] *Manual for Streets*[39] DfT, 2007

[40] See TfL (May 2008: 8) *Walking in London Report*.

making good a longstanding funding backlog. TfL has little or no money for major new public transport projects in outer London.

Making better use of the extensive overground rail network offers the largest, relatively inexpensive, opportunity for the expansion of public transport in outer London. Calls have often been made for improved orbital public transport in outer London, some of which might be rail, partly to displace many orbital journeys currently made by car. In the absence of investment funds, creating bus lanes on the road network may be the most viable means of connecting orbital transport routes already partly formed by, for example, Croydon Tramlink or the rail line linking Wimbledon, Kingston and Richmond. The North Circular Road has often been suggested as a possible tram or express bus route.

Meanwhile inexpensive measures to enhance the rail network include:

- improving access to rail stations for pedestrians, cyclists and bus passengers and carrying out station travel plans
- providing cycle parking
- improving the security and attractiveness of stations
- providing better information about services
- working with train operating companies to increase the frequency of services and with bus companies to provide feeder services to stations
- preparing planning briefs to secure high-density development at stations and interchanges.

Despite progress in recent years, much more can still be done to improve bus services and, again, this would not make impossible demands on scarce investment resources. Measures to be considered include

- Installing more bus lanes and other forms of bus priority
- Using traffic management and restraint to reduce the impact of congestion on bus services
- Introducing demand-responsive transport to serve suburban areas which would not provide sufficient demand to support a bus route
- Ensuring that bus services link more effectively with the rail network.

MANAGING DEMAND FOR CAR TRAVEL

The Mayor has said that it is not his job to punish the motorist but to ***'help people recognise that there are cleaner, greener, cheaper and more efficient alternatives. And where those alternatives do not exist – as in many parts of outer London – our job is to supply them.'***

In this paper we have suggested many ways of improving the alternatives to the car. However there is a role, we would argue a growing role, for methods, such as parking controls, that have been used for decades to deter car travel to areas where demands on road space are greatest.

Reducing the availability of parking

We have shown above that the provision of parking space may not be the requisite for economic vitality that many shopkeepers and others imagine. On the contrary raising the quality of the streetscape and making it more attractive for people to travel on foot, by bicycle and by public transport may be crucial. Reducing parking is also essential to avoiding car-dependent development. If existing policy aspirations are to be pursued effectively, the revised London Plan should set out standards that introduce greater restraint in parking provision in new residential and commercial development as well as policies that discourage the provision of parking in town and local centres.

Parking control and enforcement
Local authorities have comprehensive parking responsibilities covering their own off-street car parks, on-street parking and enforcement, residents' parking schemes and controlled parking zones. Nevertheless there is scope for the Mayor to work with the boroughs in introducing policies to limit the amount of parking while allowing exemption from some parking regulations for, for example, car club vehicles.

Controlled parking zones
CPZs are often opposed by residents before introduction but popular afterwards. They can reduce the amount of traffic in an area and the existence of a CPZ is now cited as a selling point by estate agents. This is another matter on which the Mayor can work with the boroughs. Car-free development can only work satisfactorily if parking is controlled in the surrounding area.

Car-free development
Car-free developments have been approved or are being planned in numerous London boroughs including in outer London. Often designed in conjunction with other measures to reduce car use, such as travel plans or car clubs, they must be accessible by public transport. By avoiding the requirement for car parking space car free development allows a site to be developed to a higher density or with additional amenities.

Congestion charging
The Greater London Authority Act of 1999 which gave the Mayor / GLA the power to introduce the central London congestion charge also allowed London local authorities to introduce their own congestion charges. None has yet elected to do so. However the introduction of a congestion charge for individual town centres is a possible means of tackling town centre congestion. The Mayor would have to work with the boroughs to enable this to happen as the introduction of local congestion charges must be consistent with the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

Workplace parking levy
Another power conferred by the GLA Act, also as yet unused, allows the London boroughs to introduce a workplace parking levy. Such a levy would allow a local authority to influence the provision of parking at *existing* development which is often substantial in town centres and at business parks and generates a great deal of traffic. The proceeds of a workplace parking levy, and a congestion charge, must be used for transport purposes and again is required to be in conformity with the Mayor's Transport Strategy. This is another matter on which the Mayor would need to work with the boroughs.

CHANGING TRAVEL BEHAVIOUR
Other measures of changing travel behaviour, including the use of school and workplace travel plans, individual travel marketing and travel awareness campaigns have been the subject of a pilot project in Sutton known as 'Smarter Travel Sutton.' Richmond is now starting a similar project.

'Smarter travel is a term that is now used to describe relatively low-cost measures such as direct marketing, publicity and information provision that aim to persuade people to adopt different ways of meeting their everyday travel needs. Providing information about available travel choices and support to throw off old habits can lead to people embracing new modes and routes, more suited to their current lifestyle.

Some measures are focused on people in their homes, other measures target travel destinations such as workplaces, schools, hospitals and places of worship.'[41]

Key elements of Sutton's project have included:

- School and workplace travel plans
- Personal travel advice and information
- Advertising, marketing and promotion
- Car clubs and car sharing
- Cycle training and parking projects

Results at the end of the second year of Sutton's three year project show a number of substantial improvements:

- Bus patronage in Sutton grew by 12.9% over the two years (compared to 8.7% growth in the control area)
- Cycling levels were 50% higher in April – October 2008 compared with the same period in 2007 (in contrast to a 14.2% drop in the control area)
- A 19% fall in the number of pupils travelling to school by car (compared to a 13% fall in Outer London as a whole).

TACKLING CARBON EMISSIONS FROM TRANSPORT

'The Mayor is committed to making London a world leader in tackling climate change.'[42]

Outer London is critical for London's overall transport emissions. Half of all journeys and 87% of all car driver trips are made in outer London. Only 13% of journeys are made by public transport in outer London and a negligible proportion by bicycle.

The Government target for the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions is 60% by 2050. A measure of the gravity of the climate change crisis was the adoption by the previous Mayor of a much more imminent date for achievement of that reduction: (60% by 2025) and the retention of the more rigorous target by Boris Johnson.

It is likely that even this target will have to be revised. At any rate it will be absolutely essential to ensure that the target can be met in outer London where carbon emissions from transport, as from other sources, are much higher than elsewhere.

May 2009

[41] Smarter Travel Sutton, 2nd Annual Report, 2009
[42] A New Plan for London, Mayor of London, April 2009