

Response to the Consultation on West End Project

To West End Project Team WestendProject@camden.gov.uk

We are writing on behalf of Camden Cycling Campaign. This response has been influenced by views from members and others collected by Camden Cycling Campaign from a variety of sources: by email, on CycleScape (goo.gl/Y49lSn) and at a public meeting held on 30th June on this issue.

We applaud Camden's aspiration to be London's best walking and cycling borough and approve of their overall vision for the West End with reallocation of carriageway space for walking, cycling, trees and public space on Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street and fewer buses on New Oxford Street.

We welcome the increased permeability planned for cyclists in the area through two-way access to the many side streets as well as on Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street. These are important for the two planned east-west Quietways.

However, the West End Project does not provide adequate space for cycling. Although the 2000 people who currently cycle daily in Tottenham Court Road may experience a faster and more comfortable journey, with 900 buses per day on TCR in each direction the changes will not do anything to encourage new cyclists. To quote one of them: *"I don't cycle in London; it's terrifying. I want a place where I can cycle; I wouldn't cycle on TCR with buses. I don't think it will work to encourage more people to cycle. Cycle lanes need to be wider and better protected ... It's not an issue of speed; it's the feeling of a large metal box behind or alongside you. I can't quantify how slow it would need to be, especially if I think about cycling with a 10-year-old child"*. Another cyclist and local resident said: *"When I cycle along Oxford St I don't look at the shops because there are so many other vehicles; it will be the same on TCR. There will be too many buses to make me a shopper."*

The proposed lightly-segregated cycle lanes in Gower Street at 1.5m wide are not up to the current minimum standard of 2m wide. While such protected space may be attractive to new users, it will not be adequate to cater for them as well as the current 1700 people who cycle daily in Gower Street.

In order to give our support to the West End Project, we are looking for all of the following:

- ❖ A minimum of 4m width of "protected space for cycling" in either the Gower Street alignment (Gower Street–Bloomsbury Street –Shaftesbury Avenue) or in Tottenham Court Road. This could be provided in one of the following ways:
 - filtering of Gower Street so as to eliminate all through motor traffic.
 - a pair of one-way two metre wide protected cycle tracks in the Gower Street alignment, for example implemented as stepped cycle tracks*, with a view to implementing a new crossing over Euston Road from North Gower Street.
 - a pair of one-way two metre wide protected cycle tracks in Tottenham Court Road, for example with island bus stops or a wide protected median track.

We believe that the provision of one of those alternatives will increase cycling numbers to a level where it may become politically feasible to reallocate further road space to cyclists.

* Our detailed survey of Gower Street indicates that this is feasible for most of its length with reduced width only in short sections.

- ❖ Tottenham Court Road to be two-way for buses and cycles only all hours, every day, with exceptions for loading at those premises without rear access between 11pm and 7am. Vehicles of 18 tons and over should apply for night time access using the normal London Lorry Control Scheme permit process.
- ❖ Under no circumstances could we support the scheme were the restrictions on access to Tottenham Court Road for taxis to be relaxed.
- ❖ The restrictions on the end-to-end access to Tottenham Court Road and the local access cross routes need to be backed up by appropriate filtering so that:
 - the additional motor flow on Tottenham Court Road is due to truly local traffic (no rat-running via the side streets such as via Howland Street to Marble Arch)
 - the motor vehicles that would otherwise use Tottenham Court Road or Gower Street are not redistributed onto roads on the proposed Grid routes or on to what should be quiet local streets with a view to keeping flows below 2000 pcus per day; including
 - GNS1: Gordon Street, Malet Street, Montague Place
 - GEW5: Howland Street, Torrington Place
 - GEW6 (also QW38): Bedford Square (N), Russell Square
 - local streets: Cleveland Street, Charlotte Street
- ❖ For the Seven Stations Link (i.e. the Tavistock - Torrington Route GEW5): the junction of Capper/Tottenham Court Road/Howland Street should be modified to allow this route to avoid TCR by using Huntley Street and Capper Street with a possibility of future two-way working in Howland Street.
- ❖ All the major junctions on Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street down to and including Princes Circus to be designed to eliminate left hooks and to provide a direct and convenient route for cyclists. Endell Street will allow two way cycling but the connection to Endell St is very poor. There should be a straight line for cycling between Shaftesbury Avenue and Endell Street that also integrates with the curved part of Shaftesbury Avenue and avoids turning conflicts.
- ❖ Cycle parking: the consultation just says “New cycle parking” but at the meeting on 30th June, Phil Jones said: “More cycle parking on side streets so as not to clutter up TCR.” It is essential to provide cycle parking that is conveniently close to the many destinations in TCR, including some cycle parking on the widened pavements in TCR.

We look forward to working with Camden to achieve those enhancements.

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