

SSL: Expanding its Scope, Paul Gannon and Paul Gasson, March 2000.

Seven Stations Link: Expanding its Scope and Tackling 'Traffic Displacement' 28/3/2000. Paper for discussion at Camden Council's Cyclists & Pedestrians Liaison Group. By Paul Gannon & Paul Gasson, on behalf of Camden Cycling Campaign.

For full details of the Seven Stations Link see our dedicated SSL web page.

1. Wider benefits for pedestrians, local residents and employees, and the local environment.

The Camden Cycling Campaign proposal for Seven Stations Link (SSL) high-quality cycle route has always been seen by the CCC as a way to make local environmental improvements for the benefit of residents, people working in the area, visitors and pedestrians, as well as a cycle route.

However as these were not identified by CCC as one of the key objectives of the SSL, and were only listed as secondary features of the scheme, these vital aspects of the project have been somewhat overlooked so far.

CCC believes that it makes a lot of sense to include measures into the SSL which extend the potential of the scheme to as many as possible of those who live and work in the area.

In particular CCC proposes that:

- Pedestrian measures (such as physical design measures to ensure pedestrian priority over motor vehicles at side road junctions; moving signage to increase usable pavement space; extending pavement widths, etc) should be incorporated into the scheme, so that the potential traffic evaporation benefits from the proposed traffic calming and traffic flow redirection measures are not wasted. Such measures would encourage commuters arriving at, say, Euston, to walk to work in Bloomsbury or Fitzrovia due to the pleasant environment and the removal of danger at every junction.
- Streetscape enhancements (eg removal/rationalisation of street furniture clutter, tree planting, making use of spare space for sitting areas etc) are used to underpin the concept of a central London oasis. It is also important to minimise the impact of cycle route engineering measures as much as possible, such as using road surface signs rather than those mounted on posts.

These enhancements will allow Camden to promote the scheme as a truly pedestrian-and cyclist-friendly Green Route through central London... a relative haven where people can escape the worst of the noise, pollution, stress and dangers caused by motor traffic.

It will also formally move the SSL away from being a single modal measure, albeit one with strong integrated transport features with regard to the links to railway stations, towards a multi-modal role which is clearly beneficial to the majority, and can thus also be viewed as a way of upgrading the entire area through which the route travels.

This extension to the current brief offers huge publicity potential to the council, as a successful implementation would point the way towards practical implementation of John Prescott's much integrated transport policy, as well as providing an sound bedrock for addressing other urban issues, such as sustainable development & economic regeneration.

There are obvious funding issues behind this proposal as the budget necessary for the scheme will rise; however a number of government organisations & NGOs have already demonstrated interest in the cycle route aspects of the scheme, and CCC believes that additional funding can be found from those sources.

1. Traffic evaporation or displacement?

Concerns are regularly generated by those who oppose traffic reduction measures, based on the idea that any traffic reduction measure leads inevitably to traffic displacement, despite considerable evidence that traffic reduction measures actually lead to traffic evaporation as drivers find alternatives.

For the SSL, it would be useful for the consultants to take account of this potential line of opposition to the SSL from the motor vehicle lobby and to define

- a) an objective with the SSL to ensure that through traffic displacement is directed to the Red Routes which are designed to carry such traffic, and
- b) include in the SSL design tried and tested measures to encourage traffic evaporation rather than displacement. Also,
- c) for measuring the levels of evaporation/displacement over the initial periods of the SSL to ensure that the objectives are being met.