

To: Transportconsultations@camden.gov.uk.

CC: Acacia Hasler, Peter Ashley, Simi Shah, Sam Margolis and Steve Cardno.

## **Gray's Inn Road Cycling, Walking & Road Safety Proposals**

This response to the consultation on Gray's Inn Road Cycling, Walking & Road Safety Proposals is from Camden Cycling Campaign, the local borough group of London Cycling Campaign. We represent the interests of cyclists living or working in Camden and aim to expand the opportunities for all to cycle safely in the borough. We have this consultation by email, online (using Cyclescape) and at our committee meeting on 18th November.

### **Introduction**

We are very strongly in favour of the proposal to install protected cycle tracks on Gray's Inn Road between Harrison Street and High Holborn which will add over 1km to the Central London Grid section of the proposed borough-wide cycle network. It will also provide very useful linkages with C6 and with the east-west routes along Guilford Street, Theobalds Road and High Holborn. It is essential for keeping the network mesh size down to 400m e.g. when measured along the Theobalds Road-Clerkenwell Road alignment between Farringdon Road and Red Lion Street.

We are grateful to Camden for providing the video simulations of how the traffic will use Gray's Inn Road at the am and pm peaks. This has been very helpful in evaluating the proposals for improvements at the junctions with Sidmouth Street and Guilford Street.

### **Our detailed response to the proposals**

#### **The width of the cycle lanes**

We follow the consultation in referring to the infrastructure as 'cycle lanes' and we assume from the drawings that these are all to be mandatory. They are described as 'generally, 2m-wide cycle lanes in each direction' and we accept that where the carriageway width is below 11m, 2m-wide cycle lanes are all that can be accommodated. However wider lanes (e.g. 2.5m) would allow for an increasing number of users and allow slower users to be comfortably passed and should be provided north of Guilford Street where the carriageway width is generally around 12m.

#### **The protection proposed for the cycle lanes**

We would have preferred stepped tracks throughout but appreciate that these are not available due to budget constraints. It is our opinion that there will be immense benefits from this new protected route with 'light segregation' – such as orcas or wands between the junctions. We support the use of kerb segregation on the approaches to the junctions at Sidmouth Street and Guilford Street; and the use of stepped tracks opposite the bus stop bypasses. But we hope that at a later stage the cycle lanes can be upgraded to stepped tracks.

#### **The major junctions that are to be improved**

##### ***Sidmouth Street - Ampton Street junction***

We strongly support the proposal for a dedicated cycle stage on the C6 alignment; the provision of the separating island on Sidmouth Street to allow both directions to run concurrently separates the eastbound cycles from interaction from motor vehicles – essential on a high-quality cycle route. Will this reduction in the number of stages result in a reduced cycle time – people complain about the long waits?

On the Gray's Inn Road alignment, northbound cyclists could experience left hooks since the early release does not protect those that arrive while the signal is green. We ask Camden to monitor the situation soon after implementation. The two-stage right turns will be essential for allowing people to access the C6 alignment.

## **Guilford Street - Calthorpe Street junction**

We strongly support the proposal for a dedicated cycle stage on the Gray's Inn Road alignment which will provide safe passage across the junction with the ability to join the Guilford - Calthorpe alignment in either direction.

However there is a great deal of concern about the left hook risk for people cycling on the Guilford - Calthorpe alignment in either direction. The AM video at about 1:17 shows cycles on Calthorpe Street heading into Guilford Street and indicates that early release is insufficient for cyclists to clear the junction with the lead motorist swerving towards and then into the path of the cyclists heading west.

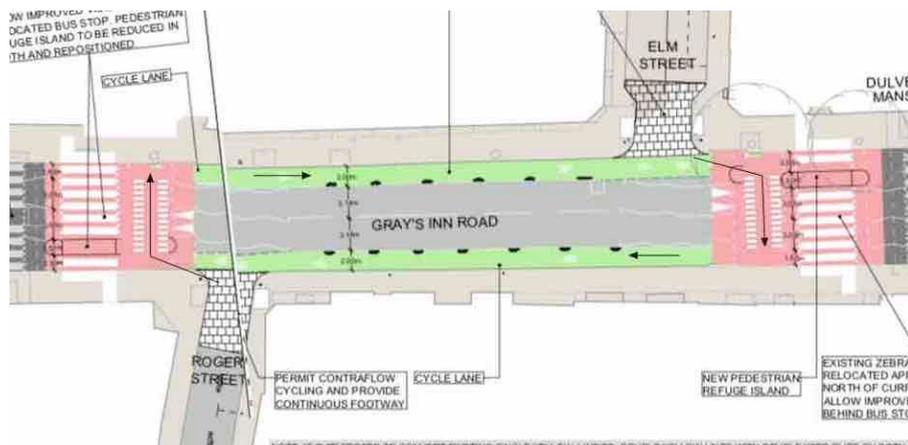
### **Other measures**

**Bus stop bypasses:** we are pleased that Camden intends to mark zebra crossings across the cycle track. We understand that the lack of carriageway width leads to a narrow (1.5m) cycle lane behind the bus stop island and another narrow raised cycle lane opposite the bus stop. The cycle lanes on both sides of the road should revert immediately to their normal 2m width as soon as they are clear of the bus stop as they do at the bus stop between Harrison Street and Sidmouth Street. The cycle lanes between the bus stops on either side of Baldwin's Gardens should be at their normal width as they pass this junction.

**Improvement of permeability:** e.g. by making the one way side streets such as Roger Street two-way for cycling.

**Roger Street:** we support two-way cycling in Roger Street between Doughty Street and Gray's Inn Road, which is a long-term outstanding request (a two-way route between Elm Street and Roger Street across Grays Inn Road would be useful to complete a route from Doughty Street and John Street towards the Mount Pleasant area). Elm Street already has a cyclists' bypass to the junction with Mount Pleasant.

**Tiger crossings:** these can be used to enable easier crossing of Gray's Inn Road by those cycling to and from side roads. In particular the proposed scheme includes zebra crossings north of Roger Street and south of Elm Street. A parallel eastbound cycle track could be added to the south side of the former and a parallel westbound cycle track could be added to the north side of the latter, as in our sketch below. This should be relatively inexpensive and would make a big difference, especially for less confident cyclists, including children.



**Northington Street:** is one-way westbound between Gray's Inn Road and John Street. There is a cycle hire station on the south side close to the junction with Gray's Inn Road. If feasible, it would be useful to provide an exception for cycles to allow them to ride out of Northington Street into Gray's Inn Road; which would require the relocation of two parking spaces further away from the junction.

**Harrison Street – Frederick Street:** C6 runs along Sidmouth Street – Ampton Street but some people prefer to use an alignment along Harrison Street and Frederick Street with an alternative crossing over Grays Inn Road. To enable this there should be a gap in the light segregation of the southbound cycle track opposite Harrison Street. In general, gaps in lightweight segregation should be left opposite all side roads – or in the case of stepped track e.g. opposite Coley Street, a ramp should be provided.

**Continuous footways across priority junctions:** on the drawings, these look like conventional raised junctions. The kerb line should be straight across the junction and the colour of the paved crossover should match that of the footway on either side as in the ones recently installed in Prince of Wales Road e.g. at Truro Street; or in the illustration from Waltham Forest shown on page 5 of the consultation.

**Cycle lane across priority junctions:** we assume that these will be separated from the motor lane by long dashes and marked with logos before and after and with two at the junction.

**Cycle Hire docking station on Gray's Inn Road:** to the north of the junction with Guilford Street/ Calthorpe Street; a kerb-protected cycle lane runs outside it. It would be safer to have the cycle lane inside the docking station. Is cost an issue, or was this a design decision?

#### **Zebra crossings:**

- The two zebras north of the Calthorpe Street junction are unchanged with 1.8m central refuges and cycle lanes 2m wide – narrowed from our recommended width of 2.5m. We ask that the motor lanes be reduced to 3.25m in the crossing by Trinity Court so as to allow more width in the cycle lanes.
- We have serious concern about the safety of cyclists at the other three zebra crossings (north of Roger Street, between Elm Street and Northington Street and near to Baldwin's Gardens). The motor traffic lanes are only 3m wide and the adjacent cycle lane 1.5m, putting people cycling across the crossing (where there is no protection) at risk from side swipes from motor vehicles. We therefore object to the pedestrian refuges on these three crossings on the grounds that they take away space that could be used to bring the motor lanes up to 3.25m wide and the cycle lanes up to 2m wide.
- The build out on the west side of the Baldwin's Gardens zebra is redundant and should be modified so as to provide a straight edge to the cycle lane, making it a little wider.

#### **Summary of our main points of concern**

- On Gray's Inn Road (G.I.R.), wider cycle lanes (e.g. 2.5m) should be provided north of Guilford Street where the carriageway width is generally around 12m.
- There is a great deal of concern about the left hook risk for people cycling on the Guilford Street - Calthorpe Street alignment in either direction.
- Northbound cyclists on G.I.R. may experience left hooks when passing Sidmouth Street.
- At bus stops, the cycle lanes on both sides of the road should revert immediately to their normal 2m (or 2.5m) width as soon as they are clear of the bus stop.
- Consider using Tiger crossings to enable easier crossing of G.I.R. to and from side roads.
- Opposite all side roads, provide gaps in lightweight segregation or ramps on stepped tracks.
- At the Trinity Court zebra reduce the width of the motor lanes to 3.25m.
- The pedestrian refuges on the three zebra crossings south of Guilford Street should be omitted. The build out at the Baldwin's Gardens zebra should be cut back.

#### **Questions**

- Will the reduction in the number of signal stages at the Sidmouth Street junction result in a reduced cycle time?
- Is the decision to put the cycle lane outside the cycle hire station a matter of cost?

#### **Future improvements when more funding becomes available:**

- Upgrade all the cycle lanes to stepped tracks.
- Move the cycle lane inside the cycle hire station.

Please acknowledge receipt of this response. We would be very happy to discuss any aspect of our comments. Our contact details are below.

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