

**Attitudes to bus
priority schemes**

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Research conducted by Synovate

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1. Executive summary

Support in principle for Bus Priority Schemes is high, with more than 8 in 10 Londoners recording their support in response to the following question: *Bus priority schemes, by which we mean things like bus lanes and giving priority to buses at traffic lights, seek to allow quicker and more reliable bus travel. In principle, to what extent do you support or oppose such initiatives in London?* Nearly half (45%) told us that they strongly support such schemes. The level of support is broadly similar across all transport users. Those that drive a car are the least likely to support the Bus Priority Schemes, though even among this group, 8 in 10 are in support.

The main reason supporters support the Bus Priority Schemes is because they believe they allow for quicker, more efficient buses that will get people around faster. Nearly 4 in 10 supporters give this as a reason for support, with women being more likely to attribute this as a reason for support than men.

The main reason for opposition to the Bus Priority Schemes is that bus lanes increase congestion and create more traffic in other lanes.

Bus Priority Schemes are rated as having the most *positive effect* for those who travel around the Capital by bus, followed by those that cycle. Around three-quarters of bus users (76%) say that such schemes offer a *positive effect* when they are travelling by bus, and a third of cyclists feel that Bus Priority Schemes have a *positive effect* when they are cycling in London.

On the other hand, more than four in ten drivers (44%) say that Bus Priority Schemes have a *negative effect* when they are driving, along with around a third (35%) of passengers in a car (though the vast majority still support the schemes in spite of the perceived negative effect on them when they are travelling by car). Eight in ten walkers feel that the Bus Priority Schemes have no effect on them when they are walking.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

Transport for London has a number of Bus Priority Schemes, such as bus lanes and giving priority to buses at traffic lights, which seek to allow quicker and more reliable bus travel.

2.2 Research objectives

To assess attitudes to the principle of Bus Priority Schemes among Londoners as a whole and also, specifically, among users of each of the main transport modes

2.3 Methodology

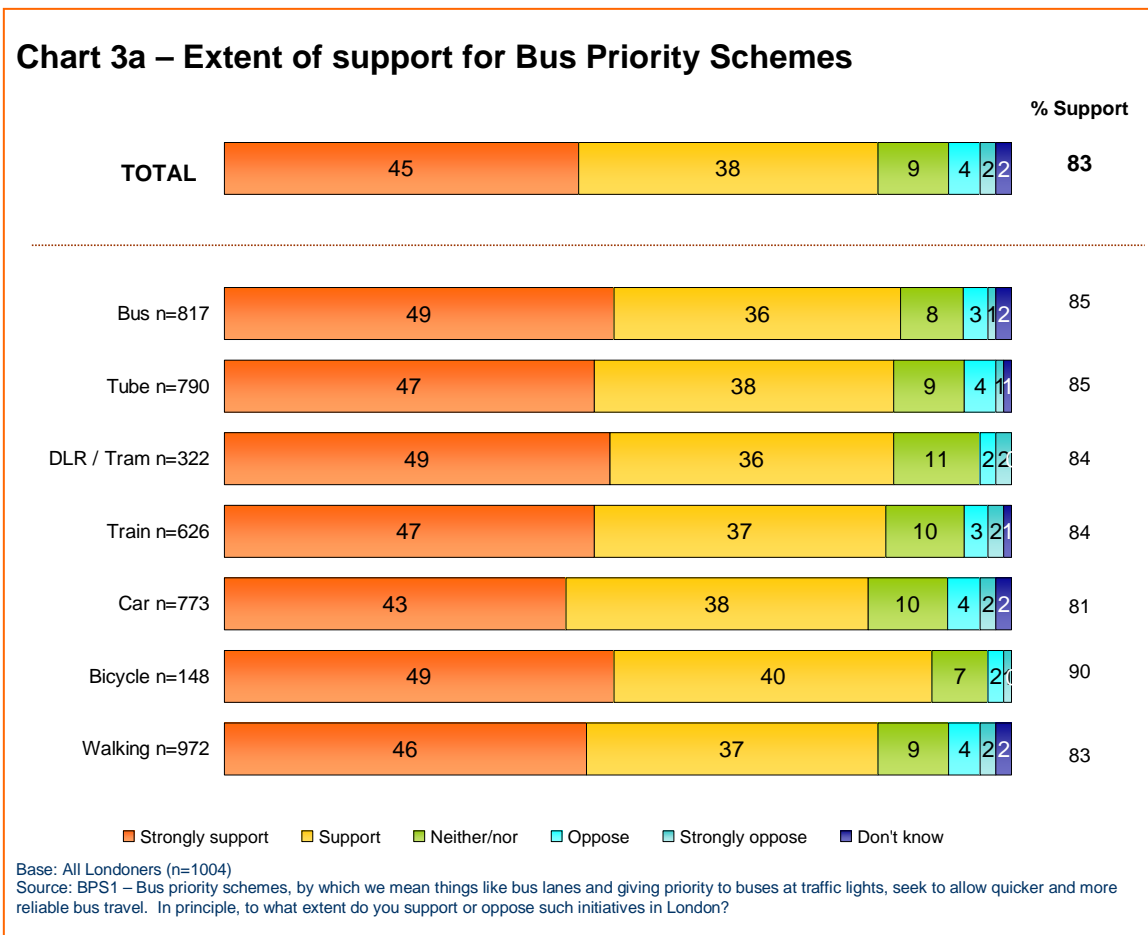
- The Attitudes to Bus Priority Schemes questions were put as part of one of the TfL/Synovate Regular Research Slots in March 2009
- 1,004 telephone interviews were conducted among a representative sample of Londoners by fully trained Synovate interviewers
- Interviews were conducted with the member of the household with the 'next birthday'
- Fieldwork dates: March 3rd-31st 2009
- Data were subsequently weighted to the London profile (based on Office of National Statistics data drawn from the London section of the 2001 Census)

3. Support for Bus Priority Schemes

3.1 Extent of support for Bus Priority Schemes

Q: Bus priority schemes, by which we mean things like bus lanes and giving priority to buses at traffic lights, seek to allow quicker and more reliable bus travel. In principle, to what extent do you support or oppose such initiatives in London?

Chart 3a below shows the level of support for the principle of Bus Priority Schemes among different transport users to whom we had read the description and put the question above. As can be seen, never fewer than four in five Londoners who use any of the most commonly used modes of transport expressed support, in principle, of Bus Priority Schemes.



As expected, bus users demonstrate a high level of support for Bus Priority Schemes: more than eight in ten (85%) support such schemes, with nearly half of these (49%) offering strong support. Cyclists also demonstrate strong support with 9 in 10 supporting such schemes.

3.2 Reasons for level of support

Table 3b below and continuing on the following page shows a summary of the unprompted reasons given by Londoners for *supporting* Bus Priority Schemes.

Table 3b – Reasons for supporting Bus Priority Schemes

Those that support Bus Priority Schemes	Total	Males	Females	16-34	35-54	55+	White	BAME	Inner London	Outer London
<i>Base n=</i>	833	404	428	320	293	218	582	202	337	496
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
It's quicker/more efficient for buses/speeds up bus journeys/helps people get to places faster	39	33	43	41	36	39	38	41	44	35
It encourages bus travel	10	13	8	9	14	8	12	9	9	12
Buses carry more people/passengers so should be given priority	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	8	10
More convenient/makes bus journeys easier/helps get people around more easily	9	8	9	8	9	10	8	8	8	9
It helps buses move around/get through traffic	9	9	9	6	10	12	10	7	7	10

Helps improve/speed up traffic flow/keep traffic moving	8	9	6	6	6	12	9	6	8	7
Help reduce traffic/congestion	8	7	8	9	8	5	6	11	8	8
Discourages vehicle use/stops people from driving	6	7	5	7	5	5	6	5	6	6
Use/frequently use buses	5	4	7	8	3	4	4	6	5	6
Helps with punctuality/helps keep buses to timetables	4	5	3	4	4	6	3	7	2	6
Improves reliability of bus services	4	5	4	5	4	3	4	6	5	4
Buses are more environmentally friendly/energy efficient/produce less pollution	4	6	3	3	5	5	4	6	4	5

The most commonly given reason for supporting Bus Priority Schemes is that they facilitate quicker and more efficient bus journeys. Nearly 4 in 10 supporters of the schemes mention this. Women give this as a reason for support more than men, as do those in Inner London as compared to Outer London (more than 4 in 10 females and those in Inner London, slightly more than a third of males and those in Outer London).

Another reason for supporting the Bus Priority Schemes is because it encourages bus travel (felt more strongly by males than females). Those aged 35-54 are also more likely than other age groups to have given this reason.

Table 3c below shows the reasons Londoners gave for *opposing* Bus Priority Schemes.

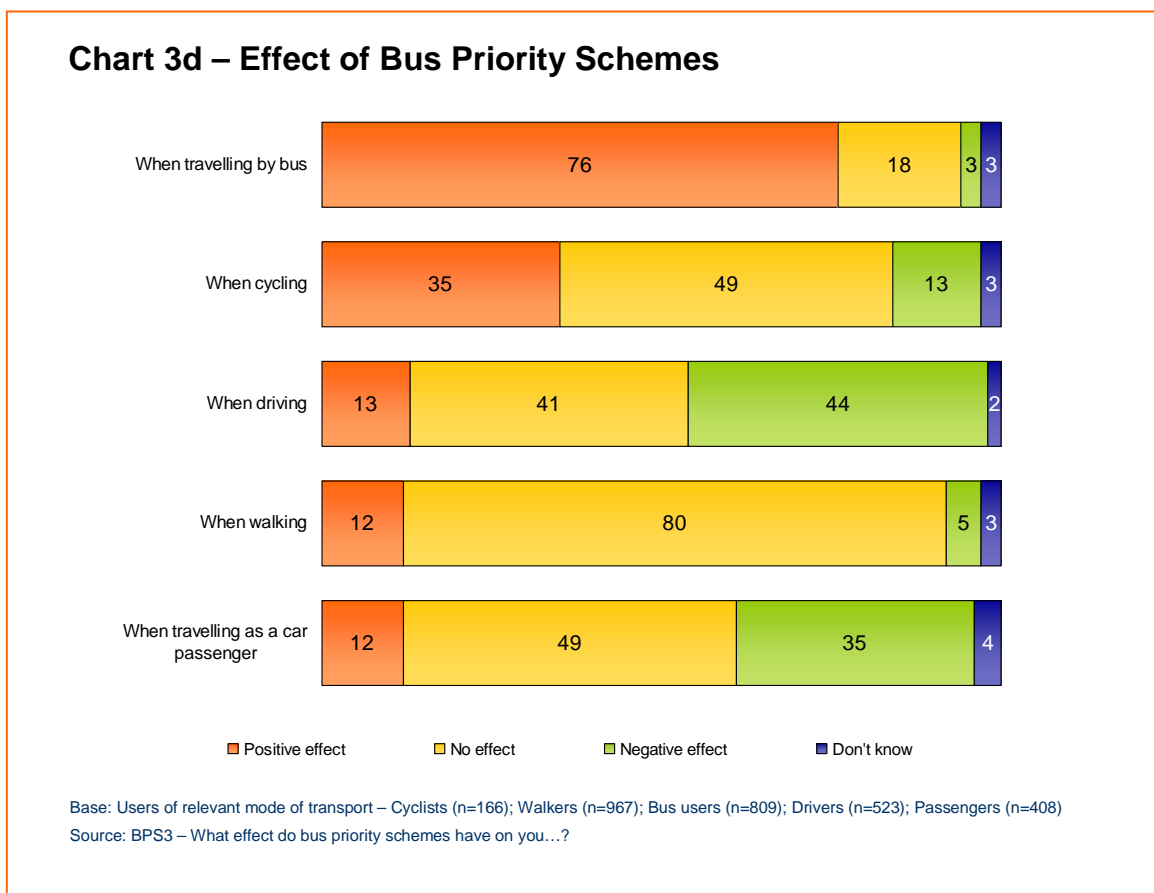
Table 3c – Reasons for opposing Bus Priority Schemes

Those that oppose Bus Priority Schemes	TOTAL	MALES	FEMALES
<i>Base: n=</i>	60	39	21
	%	%	%
Bus lanes increase congestion/create more traffic in other lanes	35	45	17
Bus lanes often empty/not being used	19	20	17
Buses/bus lanes are too big/take up too much road space	15	18	11
Bus lanes are inconvenient/annoying/a danger for vehicle drivers	12	4	7
Poor/dangerous bus drivers	12	8	19
Bus services are poor/unreliable/slow	5	0	14

The main reason for opposition is that bus lanes increase congestion and create more traffic in other lanes (slightly more than a third oppose the schemes for this reason), and this tends to be a viewpoint more strongly held by men (more than 4 in 10 males who oppose the schemes mentioned this reason). Due to small sample sizes further subgroup analysis is not possible.

4. Effect of Bus Priority Schemes

Chart 3d below shows Londoners' perceptions of the effect Bus Priority Schemes have upon different modes of transport in the Capital.



Not surprisingly, Bus Priority Schemes are rated as having the most *positive effect* for those who travel around the Capital by bus. Around three-quarters of bus users (76%) say that such schemes offer a *positive effect* and only 3% say they have a *negative effect*. Just under a fifth (18%) observes *no effect*.

A third of cyclists feel that Bus Priority Schemes have a *positive effect* when they are cycling in London. Half (49%) observe *no effect*, while around one in ten (13%) say such schemes have a *negative effect*.

Bus Priority Schemes are perceived to have a similar level of *positive effect* when Londoners are:

- Driving (13%)
- Travelling by car as a passenger (12%)
- Walking in London (12%)

However, while the majority of walkers (80%) say that Bus Priority Schemes have *no effect* on them while walking, fewer than half of drivers and passengers are likely to say this (41% and 49% respectively). Instead, more than four in ten drivers (44%) say that Bus Priority Schemes have a *negative effect* when they are driving, along with around a third (35%) of passengers. This, as we have seen already, however, does not result in the majority of car users, nor anything like a majority, opposing the schemes.

5. Appendix

5.1 Questionnaire

I would now like to ask you a few questions about bus priority schemes.

ASK ALL

BPS1 Bus priority schemes, by which we mean things like bus lanes and giving priority to buses at traffic lights, seek to allow quicker and more reliable bus travel.

In principle, to what extent do you support or oppose such initiatives in London?

Would you say you...

READ OUT

SINGLE CODE

1. Strongly support
2. Support
3. Neither support nor oppose
4. Oppose
5. Or strongly oppose
6. (Don't know)

ASK ALL

BPS2 Why do you say that?

PROBE FULLY

OPEN ENDED QUESTION

ASK IF 'CYCLIST' (CODE 7 @ QFREQ) OR 'WALKER' (CODES 1-7 @ QWALK) OR 'BUS USER' (CODE 1 @ QFREQ) OR 'CAR USER' (CODES 1-7 @ QFREQ_CAR)

BPS3 Thinking about the transport modes you use in London that you mentioned earlier, please tell me the effect that bus priority schemes have on you when you are using each type of transport...

So what effect do bus priority schemes have on you **XXX** ? Would you say a

READ OUT

And XXX (What effect do bus priority schemes have on you then?)

REMIND OF SCALE AS NECESSRY

- 1) When cycling (**DISPLAY IF CODE 7 @ QFREQ**)
- 2) When walking (**CODES 1-7 @ QWALK**)
- 3) When travelling by bus (**DISPLAY IF CODE 1 @ QFREQ**)
- 4) When driving (**DISPLAY IF CODE 2/ 3 @ QFREQ_5a**)
- 5) When travelling as a car passenger (**DISPLAY IF CODE 1/ 3 @ QFREQ_5a**)

1. Negative effect
2. No effect
3. Positive effect
4. (Don't know)