

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL

SUBJECT: SMOOTHING TRAFFIC FLOW

DATE: 10 NOVEMBER 2009

1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED

- 1.1 To update the Surface Transport Panel on the work Surface Transport has undertaken to develop an implementation strategy and framework of actions to deliver the outcomes set out in the draft Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS), aimed at smoothing traffic flow and improving journey time reliability.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Chapter 5.6 of the draft MTS sets out the Mayor's aim to effectively manage the road network to make the most of available road space and to introduce measures to smooth traffic flow, manage congestion and improve journey time reliability. Customer research carried out by TfL in the summer of 2009 confirmed that the majority of those surveyed agreed with the definition of smoothing traffic flow as "delivering more reliable journey times and more free flowing travel conditions than at present".
- 2.2 The draft MTS defines journey time reliability as 'the percentage of journeys completed within five minutes of a specified typical journey time', which, to be representative of all journeys across London, has been assumed to equate to an average 30 minute journey. The draft MTS goes on to set out six key proposals to manage the road network effectively and implement the smoothing traffic flow agenda. The activities currently being progressed by TfL under these headings are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Having engaged with a variety of organisational stakeholders, both directly and through an online forum, an implementation strategy is being developed by the Smoothing Traffic Flow Board (STFB) and has been shared in draft with the GLA for comment. It develops an overall implementation strategy and a framework of actions to smooth traffic flow in London, and identifies the need for, and progress in developing, a measurable outcome around journey time reliability to demonstrate this.
- 2.4 The strategy underpins the outcomes outlined in the draft MTS and will be refined to reflect internal and external stakeholders' views on smoothing traffic flow specifically and those received on the draft MTS more generally. The intention is to develop and finalise the strategy to coincide with the publication of the MTS in spring 2010.

3 RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Surface Transport Panel is asked to NOTE the report.

4 CONTACT

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TFL ACTIONS TO IMPROVE JOURNEY TIME RELIABILITY

Draft MTS Proposal	TfL Actions	Examples of Recent/Planned Activity
<p>Maximising the efficient and reliable operation of the road network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a better understanding of the performance of the network to identify pinch-points, valves and hot spots, targeting interventions to improve journey time reliability for all users. • Introducing Split Cycle Offset Optimisation Technique (SCOOT) technology to enable signals to adapt automatically in real time to prevailing traffic conditions • Reviewing traffic signal timings to improve the flow of traffic • Developing pedestrian countdown technology • Considering, with London Boroughs, the removal of traffic signals, where safe and practical and where it aids traffic flow • Improving/simplifying the road network (e.g. parking/loading/stopping/bus lane hours etc) • Allowing motorcycles in the majority of TfL-controlled bus lanes on an 18 month trial basis • Engaging with Freight Transport Association, Noise Abatement Society and relevant boroughs over recent trials with businesses to identify and promote good practice in relation to use of night time servicing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL will introduce SCOOT to 1000 sets of traffic signals by 2015/16, which, under normal flow conditions, could deliver a 12 per cent reduction in delay and an 8 per cent reduction in stops (but in abnormal conditions, i.e. during an incident, up to a 29 per cent reduction in delay and up to a 25 per cent reduction in stops). • TfL will review traffic signal timings to improve the flow of traffic (including pedestrians) along corridors or between links at a rate of 1000 sites per year over the next 6 years to optimise the balance of traffic phases. • TfL is developing pedestrian countdown technology to maximise efficiency of operation for pedestrians and vehicles, with the intention of carrying out off-street trials before end of year 2009 and thereafter, subject to the outcome of those trials, on-street trials at carefully selected junctions • TfL is discussing the potential for the removal of specific traffic signals in Ealing and the City of Westminster. • A trial to allow motorcycles in the majority of TfL-controlled bus lanes commenced on 5 January 2009.

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<p>Minimising the impact of planned interventions on the road network with the potential to disrupt traffic flows</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a better understanding of the cause/effect nature and impact of planned interventions, through the development of modelling technology, to identify and target appropriate measures to mitigate disruption caused by such events • Developing Londonworks to improve coordination of roadworks between different highway authorities and utilities across London • Delivering the London Permit Scheme • Improving enforcement work to minimise disruption from planned roadworks • Engaging with DfT on further legislative powers to incentivise reductions in the duration of roadworks • Developing workathons/extended hours and 24/7 working/plating etc • Improving engagement with stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 15 October DfT approved TfL and 18 boroughs' application to operate a common permit scheme in London • TfL has written to DfT stating its intention to operate the scheme from 11 January 2010 • TfL has agreed to take part in a trial increase in Section 74 overstay charges, to be applied to overrunning works on the TLRN • TfL is engaging with DfT on a potential lane rental scheme, to be developed to apply on the busiest and most congested parts of the TLRN at traffic sensitive times, thereby encouraging speedy completion of works avoiding traffic sensitive times. • The Mayor's Streetworks Code of Conduct, introduced on 16 April 2009, encourages better collaboration and joint working between TfL, Boroughs and Utilities. Some utilities are plating over excavations and there has been an increase in usage of temporary variable message signs to better inform members of the public of disruption caused by works to allow diversion to other routes. • There has been a number of workathons, most recently over the August bank holiday weekend on Commercial Street, where TfL and 12 works promoters undertook 3 months' work in a single 72 hour closure. • Excellent collaboration between TfL, City of Westminster and BT/Barhale, including an agreement to extended working hours for non-noisy works, Barhale's work to demolish and rebuild a BT inspection chamber on Victoria Street were completed 3 weeks ahead of schedule, reducing disruption to traffic significantly

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<p>Minimising the disruption from unplanned events (accidents, emergencies, etc) in real time as they occur and return the network quickly and efficiently to its planned steady state operation as soon as possible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a better understanding of the cause/effect nature and impact of unplanned events on the network, through the development of real-time traffic modelling capability, to improve the effectiveness of incident responses • Deploying Image Recognition Incident Detection (IRID) camera technology, which automatically detects traffic congestion as it builds up, to enable faster response to incidents and congestion • Delivering better integration of police, traffic and bus operations through a combined Surface Transport and Traffic Control Centre • Improving enforcement and incident response 'on the ground', targeting key locations where incidents have the most effect on overall network reliability • Improving real-time public information to enable motorists to avoid disruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TfL recently installed image recognition incident detection (IRID) technology to enable 20 CCTV cameras automatically to detect and alert control room operators to congestion as it builds. The technology was developed by TfL's technical experts in partnership with Ipsotek Ltd • The Surface Transport Traffic Operations Centre (STTOC) opened on 28 September, bringing together for the first time the Buses, Police and Traffic Control Rooms, maximising joined up management of incidents on the ground
<p>Achieving modal shift away from car based traffic movements towards more sustainable modes to reduce traffic growth pressures on the network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of specific activities is being pursued to promote modal shift, such as the introduction of cycle superhighways and schemes such as cycle hire and Legible London; promotion of smarter travel and provision of improved user information to support this • In addition, TfL will target modal shift work (e.g. smarter travel initiatives) at key locations on the network where reductions in traffic flow volumes can deliver the most benefit in terms of road network reliability 	<p>TfL is currently implementing two major schemes to improve the urban realm and conditions for pedestrians and cyclists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brixton Town Centre Project to develop a new square for the Brixton community, improve pavements for pedestrians and enhance the movement of traffic on the surrounding roads. Work commenced in spring 2009 and will be complete late in 2010 • A316 Richmond Circus improvement scheme began in July 2009. The scheme will incorporate improved cycle and pedestrian facilities, upgraded traffic signals, a new traffic lane on the A307 exit road towards Richmond town centre, footway and carriageway resurfacing and improvements to the urban environment, with new trees planted in the central island. The works will be completed by Christmas 2009

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<p>Where feasible, and where there is an overall congestion reduction and local economic benefit, developing the road network</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where a strong economic cases exists and environmental benefits can be mitigated (e.g. a new East Thames road crossing) pursuing targeted improvements to the road network to improve overall reliability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A406 Bounds Green improvement scheme will introduce a number of safety and environmental improvements along the North Circular Road between the A109 Bounds Green Road and Green Lanes. Works are programmed to commence in April 2010 and complete by February 2012
<p>Maintaining road network assets in a good state of repair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuing to maintain all road network assets (eg road surfaces, traffic signals equipment, tunnel systems etc) to maximise availability and network resilience, and minimise disruption from maintenance activities and equipment failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A127 Gallows Corner – Works commenced in May 2009 to replace the parapet rails on the 1970 Gallows corner flyover which during maintenance works had been found to be heavily corroded. To minimise traffic disruption, works were carried out seven days a week allowing the project to be completed by August 2009 Replacement of two bridges that have come to the end of their useful life at Hanger Lane, which take the A406 North Circular Road over mainline railways. The scheme also includes road safety improvements on Hanger Lane and improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Work commenced in summer 2008 and is expected to complete in summer 2011 Blackwall Tunnel northbound refurbishment – project to upgrade the 110 year old tunnel bore to allow the continued safe and efficient operation of this strategic Thames river crossing.