



Small is Beautiful – medium term rail improvements for the London area

A consultation paper by the London Transport Users Committee

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Introduction

1. Public discussion about improvements for London's rail network tends to polarise around two extremes.
2. On the one hand there are initiatives to improve day to day performance – e.g. through timetable changes, re-franchising and route utilisation strategies – and to raise awareness of what national rail has to offer, notably the Overground Network pilot project.
3. At the other extreme are the large multi-million or multi-billion pound projects. These schemes - East London line extensions, Thameslink 2000 and Crossrail - are not only expensive, they also take very many years to come to fruition, even when funding has been agreed. None of these projects has yet passed this major hurdle.
4. The London Transport Users Committee (LTUC) and its predecessor the London Regional Passengers Committee have long advocated smaller, more affordable rail improvement schemes which could benefit large numbers of people, but it has been a struggle to make our voice heard. Few of these ideas have found their way on to the industry's agenda for feasibility and business case studies. Even those which have been studied have attracted little public debate.
5. The apparent lack of interest in smaller investment schemes is surprising, in view of the evident success of providing new facilities in areas where rail transport has hitherto been lacking. Examples of areas which have clearly benefited as a result of providing new access to rail services include Addington and Addiscombe (Croydon Tramlink), Bermondsey (Jubilee line) and the Island Gardens / Mudchute area (DLR).
6. The forthcoming Mayoral and London Assembly elections provide an opportunity to raise the profile of such schemes. This paper therefore invites views on the merits of a range of proposals aimed at increasing the usefulness of the rail network in and around London.

Please Tell Us Your Views

RESPONSES TO THIS CONSULTATION

This consultation paper is being circulated to the following London area authorities, representatives and stakeholders:

Mayor of London
London Assembly members
Members of Parliament
Local authorities
Local public transport user groups
Local amenity societies and community groups
Transport for London (including London Underground & Docklands Light Railway)
Strategic Rail Authority
Train Operating Companies

Your views are sought on the proposals listed in the following table. After considering all comments received, LTUC plans to issue "Small is Beautiful - a manifesto for medium term capital investment in improvements to London's railways"

Please reply by inserting your comments in the table and returning it to us, or respond by e-mail.

Responses are invited by 23rd April 2004, to

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Location	Project	Current status	LTUC commentary	Comments by respondent (please insert name) _____
Eastfields (Mitcham)	New station between Streatham / Balham and Mitcham Jct. (Thameslink & South Central services)	Not known	<p>Eastfields is in Mitcham, by the level crossing at Eastfields Road and Tamworth Lane. This is a section of line where trains pass at low speed.</p> <p>It is near a large residential area which is isolated from any rail stations. It is also only about ¼ mile from Mitcham town centre - much closer than Mitcham Jct. station or Mitcham Tramlink stop.</p> <p>The best direct route at present from Mitcham to central London is by bus to Tooting Broadway (badly affected by traffic congestion), then by Northern line. A station at Eastfields would offer a much faster and more attractive service, with additional benefit of easing conditions on the heavily crowded Northern line.</p>	
Brockley	New platforms on Nunhead – Lewisham line	Not known	<p>Dartford – Victoria trains currently pass over the London Bridge – Forest Hill – Croydon / Crystal Palace metro route at Brockley station.</p> <p>Platforms on this line would provide the locality with new direct services via Lewisham and Peckham, and open up new connectional opportunities between the two routes.</p>	

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Camberwell	Either: a) New station between Elephant & Castle and Loughborough Jct. / Denmark Hill (Thameslink / South Eastern services) or b) Proposed Cross-River Transit to serve Camberwell by means of an additional south London branch	Not known	<p>In steam railway days there was a station at Camberwell – there is still a road called Camberwell Station Road - but it closed in 1916 in the face of competition from electric trams. In the 1930s parliamentary powers were obtained to extend the Bakerloo line to Camberwell; this idea was revived in the 1950s and again in the 1970s, but abandoned on account of cost.</p> <p>Camberwell is thus a major area of south London without access to the tube or to National Rail.</p> <p>Construction of a new station may be relatively expensive, as the railway runs on a four-track viaduct and is closely hemmed in by buildings – hence option b) as a possible alternative.</p>	

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Brixton	New platforms on South London line tracks	Being studied by TfL London Rail	<p>South London line trains (London Bridge – Victoria) presently run through Brixton without stopping because there are no platforms on its tracks. Construction of platforms would enable the line to serve this busy town centre, and provide interchange with the Orpington – Victoria via Bromley and Herne Hill service.</p> <p>The TfL study shows that construction costs would be high. However there has not yet been any public debate, and it may be that costs could be cut if the project scope could be reduced.</p> <p>The benefits will increase when East London line extension trains operate over the route from Highbury to Clapham Junction, opening up travel opportunities from Brixton and stations on the Orpington line to wide areas of south-west, east and north London.</p>	
West London Line – Chelsea area	Signalling improvements to enable new station at Imperial Wharf to have an all-day train service.	Not known	<p>The new station at Imperial Wharf will serve a large but presently isolated area of new housing between the Thames and Kings Road, Chelsea.</p> <p>It is expected to open in February 2005.</p> <p>However the initial train service will be peak hours only, because of signalling and capacity limitations on the West London line. These issues should be addressed so that trains can call all day.</p>	

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West London Line – Shepherds Bush area	Signalling improvements to enable new platforms at Shepherds Bush to have an all-day train service.	Not known	<p>The new platforms at Shepherds Bush will be adjacent to and combined with the existing Central line station.</p> <p>The platforms are expected to open in February 2005.</p> <p>In addition to serving the important Shepherds Bush town centre and the new White City development, the new facility will provide a very useful interchange between the Central line serving west and west central London and routes accessed by the West London line at Clapham Jct. and Willesden Jct.</p> <p>However the initial train service will be peak hours only, because of signalling and capacity limitations on the West London line. These issues should be addressed so that trains can call all day.</p>	
Shepherds Bush (Hammersmith & City) station	Re-naming to Shepherds Bush West to clarify that this is a different station from the newly combined Central line / West London line station	LTUC and local authority request to TfL / LUL	The advent of the new West London line platforms at what is now Shepherds Bush (Central line) adds new weight to long-standing calls for the two LUL stations to have clearly differentiated names.	
Ealing Broadway	Enlarge booking hall and improve all passenger facilities	Not known	The number of passengers using Ealing Broadway – a National Rail station but one where the majority of passengers use LUL's Central and District lines which terminate there – has totally outgrown the cramped and non-accessible booking hall and associated stairways.	

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Acton Central	Provide direct footpaths between the station and Acton High St.	Not known	<p>The North London line crosses the main road through Acton just south of Acton Central station. However the station entrance is in a back street and invisible to many potential users. Provision of footpaths to the High St. either side of (and parallel) to the tracks would improve the visibility and general accessibility of the station and would improve the interchange with local bus services.</p> <p>The land in question is owned by Network Rail or LB Ealing.</p>	
Willesden Junction	New platforms	SRA has stated it is not considering this proposal at present.	<p>Willesden Jct. presently offers interchange between the North & West London lines and the Euston – Watford Silverlink Metro and Bakerloo lines.</p> <p>It has the potential to become the ‘Clapham Jct. of north-west London’, but for this to be realised new platforms are needed to enable the Silverlink County service (Northampton line) and South Central’s Gatwick – Watford trains to call.</p> <p>Signalling alterations would be needed to enable ‘County’ trains to call without reducing line capacity.</p>	

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West Hampstead	New platforms on Chiltern and Metropolitan lines.	<p>TfL has recently completed a study.</p> <p>Chiltern Railways is developing the concept as part of a scheme to enhance the surrounding area.</p>	<p>There have been proposals for many years to create an integrated interchange between Jubilee line, North London line and Thameslink at West Hampstead.</p> <p>These have been given new impetus by inclusion of the idea as an option in the new Chiltern long-term franchise, and by increasing concerns about the poor streetscape and heavy traffic pollution in the area.</p> <p>LTUC advocates that all Thameslink Bedford – Luton Airport – Gatwick Airport – Brighton services, plus some Midland Main line semi-fast services, should call at West Hampstead to further enhance the interchange benefits.</p> <p>The project has strong local support and it needs to be brought to a successful conclusion as quickly as possible.</p>	

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Junction Road (Tufnell Park)	New station on Barking – Gospel Oak line between Upper Holloway and Gospel Oak	Not known	<p>This site is very close to the Northern line station at Tufnell Park – only 2 min. walk.</p> <p>It would provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) an additional public transport service in a densely populated area – including connection to east, north-west and south-west London via interchange with the North London line at Gospel Oak. b) a useful interchange between the radial Underground route and the orbital Barking – Gospel Oak line, in a segment of London where connections between radial and orbital routes are presently poor. <p>Given the basic nature of the Barking – Gospel Oak service (2-car paytrains), the cost of this station should be low.</p>	
Lea Bridge and Ruckholt Road	New stations on line between Stratford and Tottenham Hale	Not known	<p>Long standing suggestions for stations on this line have been hampered by the absence of a clear strategy for the future use of this section of the National Rail network, which presently has only one train each way per day.</p> <p>National Express, winners of the new Greater Anglia franchise, have announced plans to re-introduce daylong passenger services on the line from December 2005 and have indicated that they are willing to consider their trains calling at new stations.</p>	

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Northumberland Park	Construct station at LUL Victoria line train depot	Not known	<p>This proposal has been considered from time to time by LUL. It would provide an additional northern terminus on the Victoria line, utilising existing tracks presently used only for empty trains going to and from the line's train depot.</p> <p>As well improving transport and catering for regeneration in the immediate area, it could contribute to solving capacity problems on the adjacent West Anglia Lea Valley line.</p>	
Walthamstow Queens Road - Walthamstow Central	Interchange footpaths linking Queens Road station with Central station, the bus station and the town centre	Stalled	These links have been discussed for several years, but have stalled for lack of a sponsor to take them forward.	
Chingford Hatch	New station on Chingford line between Highams Park and Chingford	Not known	To be located near junction of Larkshall Road and New Road. Would break up 2 mile gap between Chingford and Highams Park, which is a long distance for a fully built up area within 8 miles of central London	
Limehouse	Create direct link between c2c westbound platform and DLR eastbound platform	Being investigated by a working party sponsored by DLR	These two platforms are adjacent at the western end of the station. Providing a direct link would greatly ease interchange for passengers from c2c to Docklands. Also, as the DLR platform has a lift, such a link would make the c2c platform fully accessible.	

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Euston – Euston Square	Direct interchange subway connecting Euston main line station with Circle / Hammersmith & City / Metropolitan lines at Euston Square (double-ending of Euston Square station)	Not known	<p>This is a long-standing proposal now given new importance because of the growth and concentration of traffic into Euston which will occur when the new Virgin Pendolino timetable is introduced in September 2004.</p> <p>A combination of more inter-city passengers brought into Euston by faster and more frequent Virgin Pendolino trains , plus associated concentration of Silverlink services onto 12 car instead of 8 car trains, will cause additional congestion in Euston LUL. It is believed that the latter will be unable to absorb the extra numbers without crowd control being implemented on a daily basis.</p> <p>A direct interchange to Euston Square, which has long been desirable for the daylong convenience of many passengers, would be additionally valuable in reducing congestion at Euston LUL.</p>	

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Watford	Croxley link	<p>Project led by Hertfordshire County Council</p> <p>Government has recently refused funding in light of what it regards as an insufficient commitment by LUL.</p>	<p>The Croxley link would divert the Metropolitan line from its present remote terminus in the Watford suburbs to link with National Rail at Watford High St. and Watford Jct.</p> <p>It would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) improve access to Watford town centre from a large area of north-west London, Herts and Bucks b) allow interchange between these areas and the west coast main line without the need to travel via central London, and thus contribute to congestion reduction at Euston. <p>The Croxley link is a long-standing project (20+ years) which has made excruciatingly slow progress.</p> <p>Leadership of the project has taken up by Herts CC, but firm support from SRA and TfL / LUL is vital and LTUC wishes to know what rôle they are playing to secure an early start to construction.</p>	

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Dartford / Orpington / Hayes – Charing X / Cannon St	12 car metro trains	Not programmed	<p>There is a South Eastern Trains (formerly Connex) project to introduce new purpose designed metro trains (with fewer seats but better standing space) during 2004. However it is weakened by the fact that they will only be 10 cars long.</p> <p>LTUC's stance from the start has been that likely traffic growth plus the reduction in seats mean that 12 car trains are necessary.</p> <p>Most platforms on the route were extended by BR to accommodate 12 car Networker trains, but declining traffic was used as a reason for leaving the programme with a few platforms uncompleted.</p> <p>With the declining traffic trend having since been reversed, and with recent developments in more economical platform construction by (for example) Laing and Corus, LTUC believes that this project should now be completed. Where there are particular site difficulties at outer area stations (e.g. Dartford), selective door opening can be considered as an alternative to platform extension.</p>	

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Throughout LTUC area	Toilets at stations	Not programmed	<p>Provision of toilets at stations is a major issue for many passengers, particularly women, the elderly and young children.</p> <p>It is a matter of concern that in the 21st century the rail industry has no coherent policy to address this issue.</p> <p>LTUC considers that a plan should be drawn up now for all stations to be provided with toilets by 2010. At smaller stations consideration could be given to providing prefabricated coin-in-the-slot self-cleaning toilets as now provided by many local councils.</p>	

Location	Project	Current status	LTUC commentary	Comments by respondent (please insert name) _____
Throughout LTUC area	Review of accessibility at stations	Not programmed	<p>Whilst LTUC recognises that provision of step-free access at all stations will be a very long-term project, there are many smaller improvements (e.g. colour contrasting, automatic doors, more and better designed seats, low level phones) which can be introduced at little cost.</p> <p>Several stations have level access from the street to one platform but not the other. Such stations may require only a new or modified footbridge, or at worst one new lift, to become fully accessible.</p> <p>LTUC is also aware that some TOCs have procured lifts at relatively low cost (e.g. Chiltern at Princes Risborough, Virgin at Runcorn). Low cost lifts may permit a much faster extension of step-free facilities than has so far been thought affordable.</p> <p>It may often be the case that accessibility can be improved by replacing just three or four steps with a ramp.</p> <p>LTUC considers that a plan should be drawn up for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) all stations to be provided with full accessibility facilities EXCEPT step-free by 2010 b) a substantial core network of step-free stations by 2010. <p>NOTE In addition to this specific accessibility item, most of the schemes listed in this table involve new construction which would necessarily comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. They would therefore contribute to improving accessibility to public transport for people with mobility problems.</p>	