

Shoreditch High Street junction with Great Eastern Street - Improving safety: London TravelWatch's response

London TravelWatch is London's independent transport watchdog, using evidence to campaign to improve journeys, and advocate for all people travelling in London.

It is in this role that we are responding to TfL's consultation about the scheme to improve road safety in Shoreditch.

We make the following comments:

The rationale for making improvements

We note that sadly there have been 26 collisions at the junction of Great Eastern Street / Shoreditch High Street / Commercial Street in a three-year period, which resulted in 30 people being hurt. London TravelWatch supports TfL's aims in this proposal to address the causes of collisions, which will hopefully contribute to meeting the Vision Zero target by 2041, if not before then.

Concerns with bus stop bypasses

This scheme proposes implementing a bus stop bypass at bus stop N, which is a busy stop served by several high frequency bus routes. Here, passengers will need to cross over the cycleway to reach the pavement, where two pedestrian crossings would be provided.

[TfL's 2024 Bus stop bypass safety review](#) acknowledged that

'Some disabled people, particularly blind and visually impaired people, remain concerned that bus stop bypasses are not safe for them to use'

'Our disabled stakeholders explain that some people have no choice over what bus stop they can use and that the review of data doesn't capture the anxiety and fear they feel when using them.'

We know that many disabled people will still have issues with bus stop bypasses and so we are disappointed that there is no reference to their impact in this consultation's 70-page Equality Impact Assessment.

Further, whilst London TravelWatch has welcomed the opportunity to provide feedback to TfL's Bus Stop Bypass design enhancements guidance review, we ask why they are simultaneously pressing ahead with introducing new bus stop bypasses. This is not least because the engagement in TfL's review is yet to conclude, let alone that any design improvements have been agreed. We believe

that TfL should focus its efforts at this time on taking steps to improve current bus stop bypasses rather than installing new ones, particularly as they may not be compliant with the final revised guidance and so end up requiring further changes.

Bus priority

The bus is London's more accessible and affordable form of public transport and this scheme includes roads served by high frequency bus routes. And so, we are disappointed that TfL propose to remove the southbound bus lane on Shoreditch High Street. Oddly, its removal is being proposed at the same time as TfL continue to slowly introduce an additional 25km of bus lanes across the capital. London TravelWatch strongly argues that TfL should keep increasing the amount of bus lanes and their operating hours and not remove them.

While TfL note that this bus lane is "underutilised", it would appear that the planned relocation of the bus stand away from the current bus lane on Shoreditch High Street would have made the bus lane more useful because buses would no longer be blocked from fully accessing it by the standing buses.

TfL add that removal of this particular bus lane may have a minor negative impact by increasing bus journey times. We ask what remedial steps TfL will take if the negative impacts to bus journey times ultimately prove to be much more detrimental.

Elsewhere in the scheme, we welcome the proposed new section of bus lane on Shoreditch High Street / Bethnal Green Road, to give buses priority accessing the junction, and the improved priority on Holywell Lane, both of which will assist with journey times.

Other impacts on bus journey times

We note that TfL's traffic modelling for the busy junctions of Shoreditch High Street / Bethnal Green Road / Holywell Lane and Shoreditch High Street / Great Eastern Street / Commercial Street indicates 'negligible impacts' to bus services in both morning and evening peaks. TfL also acknowledge that the planned changes at the junctions of Shoreditch High Street / Commercial Street and Great Eastern Street / Curtain Road may increase bus journey times for routes 35, 47 and 78 due to reduced road space.

And so, as above, we ask what remedial steps TfL will take if the impacts of any or all these changes ultimately prove to be much more detrimental to bus journey times than anticipated.

Conditions for bus drivers

We support good working conditions for bus drivers and so welcome TfL's decision to relocate the bus stand on Shoreditch High Street to allow drivers to be able to access the upgraded driver toilet facilities on Calvert Avenue.

Improvements for pedestrians

We support the improvements which will benefit pedestrians including:

- The widening of pavements
- The widening of pedestrian crossings
- A new signalised pedestrian crossing with a countdown indicator to give a direct crossing to/from Shoreditch High Street Station
- A new 'straight-across' crossing on Bethnal Green Road.

Cycling infrastructure

London TravelWatch broadly supports the implementation of separated cycle facilities because we believe they encourage more cycling and provide real and perceived improvement of cycle safety. In terms of this consultation, it is positive that TfL is proposing infrastructure to make cycling safer, particularly given the high number of people cycling who have been injured at the junction.

It is important that where these measures are introduced, they are well-designed and a balance struck that favours the space efficient modes of walking, cycling and the bus.

Implementing the proposals

Should the proposed changes proceed, we urge TfL to do all that it can to limit disruption to people travelling in the area while the required works are carried out.