

Members' Briefing Papers

London Cycling Campaign

Living Streets

Royal National Institute of Blind People

Wheels for Wellbeing

Guide Dogs

London Cycling Campaign briefing on “bus stop bypasses” for City of London

June 2025

What is a floating bus stop? And why are they needed?

Floating bus stops such as Bus Stop Bypasses (BSBs) are what happens broadly where a cycle track goes past a bus stop. Without some form of floating bus stop, cyclists are expected to rejoin the road through the bus area. There are no alternative designs that cities have found yet for cycle tracks that pass bus stops that aren't some form of floating stop – so the main alternative done in some areas is to just end the track, forcing cyclists to rejoin the carriage through the bus 'cage' where the bus stops.

Just like with poor junction designs, we know the end result of doing that is road danger for those who currently cycle *and* a hostile barrier to cycling for those who would cycle if a continuous cycle track was available. Research including [‘The Near Miss Project’](#) shows women, children, the elderly and Disabled people are impacted more by gaps in provision. Absence of floating bus stops also means two-way cycle tracks along bus routes cease to be deliverable.

Active Travel England (ATE) has produced [guidance on bus stops](#) (TfL also, as below). It says: “Cyclists should be protected from buses, with interactions between pedestrians and cyclists being low-level. Well-designed bus stop bypasses help to reduce conflicts between cyclists, buses and moving traffic... Bus stop bypasses... [have] the potential to introduce conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists.... To minimise potential conflicts, the layout of a bus stop bypass must [consider] design details.” In other words, there is good guidance already on how to design floating bus stops to minimise risks to any pedestrians, conflict etc. and conflict levels are low.

Could the City reduce motor traffic enough to avoid cycle tracks on bus routes?

No. The main alternative for the City to avoid the necessity for cycle tracks and therefore bus stop provision would *theoretically* be to reduce private motor traffic to such an extent the City could deliver a coherent cycle network entirely on streets with very low motor traffic volumes. Most guidance (such as DfT's [LTN 1/20](#) Fig 4.1, p33) suggests above 2-3,000 PCUs* daily on a street, most people will not cycle when mixing with motor traffic. (* PCUs or ‘Passenger Car Units’ are a measure of motor traffic volumes taking into account sizes of vehicle. A cycle is generally 0.2 PCUs, a car 1, a bus or coach 2, an HGV lorry 2.3.)

Every main road in the City [far exceeds such PCU levels](#). A no cycle tracks approach in the City would therefore require removal of the vast majority of motor traffic on most roads and still likely wouldn't enable children, the elderly etc. to cycle comfortably there – as we know these groups will only cycle on roads with coherent cycle tracks or on roads with far lower levels of traffic still: hundreds not thousands of PCUs daily. This would mean traffic reductions far in excess of [current strategy](#) and seems unlikely to be (politically or logistically) deliverable.

Assuming the City is not realistically about to become a giant Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) with little in the way of buses, construction lorries or taxis then for the City's stated transport targets cycle tracks will be needed on some ‘main’ roads, including ones with bus stops – both to increase cycling rates and to increase safety, but also to increase cycling diversity.

TfL's Bus Stop Bypass Safety Review 2024

TfL and others internationally have [studied](#) floating bus stops. TfL analysis suggests the risk of a pedestrian being injured at a BSB is “very low” particularly when “compared to... the wider [road] network.” TfL's evidence also shows “slightly more disabled or older boarders at bus stops with bypasses, compared to bus stops without bypasses... and bus boarding patterns for older and disabled people found... a bus stop bypass did not subsequently affect overall numbers using that same bus stop.” In other words, Disabled or elderly people are not changing travel patterns to avoid BSBs. This is echoed by other data, for instance from Brighton where use of routes by Visually Impaired people with “bus stop boarders”, a type of floating bus stop, has risen.

TfL also mention the 2020 University of Westminster study that found “protected cycle infrastructure reduces risk of injury by 40-65 per cent for people cycling”. Floating bus stops are necessary for cycling safety and diversity, are uncontroversial across most of Europe and are not dangerous or causing significant barriers to mobility, based on TfL and other evidence.

Can't we just wait until better designs emerge?

Again, no. Significantly delaying rollout of BSBs means risks for the City achieving its transport strategy targets and delivering appropriate levels of mode shift to cycling etc. And there is no clear, rapid path to improvements that hasn't been considered or isn't being rolled out already (via TfL's design guidance, for instance).

LCC is very much in favour of improving design guidance as these designs progress. But delays cost lives and will impact your delivery of your transport strategy. And TfL has [already produced extensive design guidance](#) that highlighted that most 'issues' with current floating stops are on those not yet brought up to the latest standards.

Good design guidance for floating bus stops must at heart be evidence-led and also flexible enough to continue rollout – without so heavily adding to cost or reducing feasibility of delivery – so the City can realistically hit its targets and fulfil its strategy.

Vision Zero and the 'safe systems' approach

Central to the City transport strategy, as well as TfL transport strategy is a 'Vision Zero' approach to safe streets. This utilises a 'safe systems' approach to tackling the biggest issues as a priority. *All* street designs and associated design decisions in the City – from junctions, to speed limits and speed results, pedestrian guardrailling, bollards, kerbs, side roads, narrow pavements, paving slabs etc. - need carefully prioritising by the size of risk and size of barrier to mobility they pose, particularly for those who already face the largest barriers to safe and comfortable movement.

If the City of London wants to keep momentum in improving safety outcomes, rising cycling rates and safety for pedestrians too, cycle tracks are a priority and must provide constant protection from other traffic. We also need to ensure the best possible design guidance is developed that takes into account everyone's needs to ensure streets are more inclusive, as new street layouts rollout and the City changes. Design inevitably does mean some level of compromise, conflict even between road users, but the evidence says floating bus stops broadly work and are needed.

Inclusive Design at bus stops and continuous footways

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. We ran a major research study, looking at bus stops where there is also a cycle track, over three years (ending 2024).

We wanted to understand whether bus stop bypasses/floating bus stops were necessary, were effective, and whether they make streets more or less inclusive.

One of our ten 'detailed study sites' was on New Bridge Street, Blackfriars (City of London).

Our conclusions point to a complex and nuanced situation.

We are clear that further work is needed to ensure all those concerned are involved in evaluating whether our conclusions are correct, and in testing and/or refining the proposed design enhancements. A starting point is a series of pilots, and disabled people should be at the heart of this work.

What follows is an informal and greatly simplified summary to accompany an in-person briefing. This document's content should not be reproduced separately.

More formal information can be found at:
www.livingstreets.org.uk/inclusivedesign.

Purpose

- There has been confusion over the purpose of bus stop bypasses
- The purpose of bus stop bypasses is not primarily about separating cyclists from buses, nor the convenience of cycling, but because continuing a cycle track at a bus stop provides overall protection from traffic.

Evidence of exclusion/disadvantage

- There is inconsistency in current design approaches.
- Existing British bus stop bypasses do not reliably allow a blind or partially sighted pedestrian to stop cyclists.
- The level of cycling, along with the complexity of the environment, dictate the overall level of impact.
- The level of discomfort or difficulty most people experience in using these bus stops, when well designed, is very low.

Current attempts to mitigate issues

- Zebra crossings don't work reliably, but for complex reasons that are rarely understood/discussed
- Some of the features that have been used to try to slow cyclists may be having effects that are the opposite of those desired

Avoiding the use of bus stop bypasses

- Entirely ruling out the use of bus stop bypasses is not a viable option.
- It is preferable to avoid the need for bus stop bypasses in as many locations as is practical.

Minimum design quality

- Any design enhancements will only be effective if the basic design follows some key principles, which we outline.
- In absolutely all cases there must be sufficient space for accessible design, including sufficient footway width and a bus stop island/platform which can be easily negotiated using a wheelchair or other mobility aid.
- Many existing bus stop bypass designs do not meet the standard and principles we outline.

Three characters of site

The problems that bus stop bypasses create, and the enhancements needed, vary greatly according to the environment. We identified three broad site characters

- very quiet-simple,
- moderately busy-complex, and
- very busy-complex.

Possible design enhancements

For the most busy-complex sites traffic lights are needed to create safe crossing opportunities. These should **not** be used at the other sites.

For moderately-busy moderately-complex sites we propose the testing of three new approaches to provide pedestrians who need it with extra support to cross.

These enhancements should be designed on the basis that they will only be used rarely and by very few pedestrians, using a push-button system. They are:

- A detection system producing a sound/tactile signal as cyclists approach
- An AI based system, informing pedestrians about cyclists
- A highly-visible flashing lighting system, activated by pedestrians who want cyclists to know they are crossing.

It may be valuable to combine these approaches.

Cycle Tracks at Bus Stops

June 2025

R N I B

See differently

About Sight Loss in the UK (table has 1 row, 4 columns)

Every day 250 people start to lose their sight	More than two million people have sight loss	320,000 registered blind or partially sighted	Age-related macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness in adults.
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Summary

- Currently, there are no designs of cycle lanes at bus stops that enable blind and partially sighted people to safely cross the cycle lane to access buses. Whilst this remains the case, we should halt the building of bus stops with cycle lanes.
- Bus stops should be designed such that all passengers can continue their journey without crossing a live cycle lane.

Opportunity to make bus travel more inclusive

RNIB supports the Government's ambition to promote walking and cycling, but this must be underpinned by inclusive infrastructure. Getting the design right from the outset is essential. Retrofitting for accessibility is more expensive and leaves blind and partially sighted people excluded until changes are made.

Bus travel is a lifeline for people with sight loss

Blind and partially sighted people, who are excluded from driving, rely heavily on public transport, especially buses, as their main way of getting around. 83 per cent of respondents to a recent RNIB survey said it was "very important" for them to have the option to travel by bus and 95 per cent use buses at least monthly. If buses aren't accessible, it can leave them further isolated with few or no alternatives.

Accessible bus travel is even more vital because street design is often so poor—cluttered pavements, inaccessible crossings, and pavement parking mean that walking can be difficult or impossible. Many blind and

partially sighted people report using buses for even short trips just to avoid dangerous or inaccessible routes.

Cycle lanes at bus stops aren't safe for blind and partially sighted people

Floating bus stops pose significant challenges for blind and partially sighted passengers. They must first locate the often hard-to-detect cycle track, judge whether it's safe to cross, and then navigate to the bus shelter on the island. These difficulties come on top of the many barriers they already face when accessing public transport.

A recent RNIB study into bus travel found that, of the approximately 400 survey respondents who have encountered this kind of bus stop:

- 87 per cent report that bus stop bypasses make it harder for them to reach the bus stop.
- 59 per cent are prevented from using buses at bus stop bypasses.
- 55 per cent have changed their routes to avoid bus stop bypasses.
- 49 per cent make fewer journeys to avoid bus stop bypasses.
- 14 per cent no longer go out because of a bus stop bypass.

Blind and partially sighted survey respondents told us:

"I have been knocked down when crossing over the cycle path to get on a bus."

"Floating bus stops are a complete nightmare, and I will use a different stop if at all possible. They simply are not safe for me to navigate, and I put myself and my guide dog at risk when I am forced to use them. The design is not consistent; it is potluck whether I will find the crossing or not (or if it has one!). There is no mechanism for me to stop cyclists or e-scooters so that I can cross in safety. In a busy and chaotic place such as London this is a recipe for disaster."

Research by Guide Dogs has found higher physiological stress levels in blind and partially sighted people at bus stops with cycle lanes. Physical effects of increased stress can be severe and long-lasting with repeated exposure.

Despite their well-known risks, these bus stop designs are being rolled out in growing numbers by local authorities across the UK. With no standardised approach, they continue to put blind and partially sighted people in harm's way.

About RNIB

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is one of the UK's leading sight loss charities and the largest community of blind and partially sighted people. Every day 250 people begin to lose their sight. We want society, communities and individuals to see differently about sight loss.

Bus Stop Bypasses

– Wheels for Wellbeing briefing for City of London event 18th June 2025

1 Principles for accessible journey-making

Key principle: Everyone should have safe, accessible transport options that they can use to make the local journeys they want and need to make.

- (i) The [Equality Act \(2010\)](#) requires service providers to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments for Disabled people “to approximate the access enjoyed by disabled people to that enjoyed by the rest of the public.”
- (ii) Some Disabled people need to use [walking/wheeling](#) and buses/public transport to make essential journeys, and cannot make these journeys other ways.
- (iii) Some Disabled people need to use cycling, mobility scooters and other above-walking-speed mobility options ([amplified mobility](#)) to make essential journeys, and cannot make these journeys other ways.
- (iv) Some Disabled people need to use private motor vehicles (including taxis and private hire vehicles) to make journeys, and cannot make these journeys other ways.
- (v) Presently, poor accessibility of all travel modes in the UK [unfairly disadvantages many Disabled people](#). Poor safety and accessibility of infrastructure and vehicles, poor access to mobility aids (including cycles) and vehicles, and disabling societal attitudes are all factors worsening Disabled people’s access to journey-making.
- (vi) Both measures taken and not taken to improve accessibility for some groups of Disabled people using some travel modes can worsen access for others. For example, a decision not to install [modal filters](#) on one entrance to a street because some Disabled people using motor vehicles may be excluded from making trips by longer driving routes, will exclude some Disabled people walking/wheeling, cycling and using amplified mobility due to the risk of being injured or killed in collisions with motor vehicles. Collaborative working with pan-impairment Disabled experts is needed to negotiate best practice solutions to [access frictions](#).
- (vii) Reducing private motor vehicle use by non-disabled people is necessary to achieve mobility justice within an equitably accessible and safe transport system. This applies whether the vehicles are combustion engine driven, electric, owner-driven, private hire, human-controlled or autonomous: All contribute to [excessive hazard to Disabled people](#), inaccessibility of public spaces and environmental harm including climate damage, which [disproportionately affects Disabled people](#).
- (viii) Systems including legislation, funding, guidance, enforcement and infrastructure must facilitate and prioritise journey-making using travel modes that cause the least harm and most benefit to individuals, wider society and the environment, **that are also accessible for the person [or people](#) making the journey.**

We consider that dangerous and illegal e-cycle and e-motorcycle use by gig economy riders needs to be urgently but separately addressed by measures to make the companies commissioning the services of these riders responsible for their riders’ devices and behaviour.

2 Bus, cycle and pedestrian infrastructure for best practice pan-impairment, pan-modal accessibility

Improved funding for and levels of access/orientation training and support for Disabled people using all modes is needed, especially where changes are made to infrastructure. This applies to all schemes, whether or not the infrastructure includes bus routes or protected cycle tracks.

2.1 Hierarchy of design option accessibility for all Disabled people on bus routes

Bus stop bypasses are presently an essential part of [inclusive active travel](#) networks that enable pan-impairment Disabled people to make journeys. Formal, informal or de facto bans on bus stop bypasses prevent the development of safe, accessible active travel networks, resulting in ongoing exclusion of Disabled people including from bus use and additional deaths/injuries in collisions.

- (i) **On-carriageway cycling/amplified mobility:** Motor vehicle movements must be minimised to maximise accessibility for walking/wheeling, cycling and amplified mobility use. On bus routes, max <2000 PCU/day **and** <200 PCU/peak hour **and** vehicle speeds <20mph can enable relatively inclusive carriageway use to usually avoid the need for bus stop bypasses.
- (ii) **Separate routes:** Where motor vehicle volumes and speeds cannot be sufficiently reduced, protected cycle routes are required. In some locations, it is possible to provide [socially safe](#), prioritised and direct routes for cycling on parallel roads or paths to bus routes. Walking-speed cycling on footways must be permitted for Disabled cyclists to reach destinations.
- (iii) **Bus stops on opposite side of road from cycle tracks:** On streets with bus stops on one side only, two-way cycle tracks can be placed on the opposite side of the road from the bus stops, avoiding the need for bypasses. Controlled pedestrian crossings will need to cross the cycle tracks and carriageway. Controlled cycle/mobility crossings will be needed.
- (iv) **(Bus moves over cycle track to stop at pavement kerb:** At low bus frequency and low cycle track use locations, this could be investigated as a way to avoid installing bus stop bypasses. Will cause unacceptable risk to cycle track users and [bus passengers](#) at higher-use locations. Unlikely to be safe or accessible in any City of London locations.)
- (v) **[Bus stop bypass](#):** Where other solutions are not possible, we believe best practice bus stop bypasses are the most accessible available option for pan-impairment, pan-modal Disabled users. Bypasses are always less accessible for bus users than moving directly from bus to pavement, due to the extra crossings needed. May reduce [injury risk for bus passengers](#).

We do not consider [bus stop boarders](#) to be accessible **unless** there is an effective way to stop all cycle track movement while buses are present. This is due to lack of inter-visibility between users.

2.2 Maximising accessibility for all users where bus stop bypasses are needed

- (i) **For non-bus-using walking/wheeling**, continuous footway meeting [TfL Pedestrian Comfort Guidance](#) will be the most accessible option.
- (ii) **For bus-using walking/wheeling**, consistent bypass and island design with [accessible swept paths](#) such that Disabled bus users can move safely onto and around the island at busy times, on-bus announcements that the stop has a bypass, designated tactile crossings on desire lines with raised tables to emphasise pedestrian priority, measures to ensure Blind/VI and other Disabled pedestrians can identify that crossings lead to a bypass and use them safely, clear colour contrast between footway and cycle track, audio and visual bus arrival information, bus shelters with seating and for busy bypasses, crossing controls.
- (iii) **For cycle/amplified mobility users**, safe distance from side street crossings, clear sight lines, no objects near cycle track edges, [forgiving kerbs](#), full [accessible surface widths](#), clear colour contrast and minimised clutter will improve accessibility and help ensure cycle track users are aware of pedestrians. Measures such as high kerbs, speed bumps and “chicane” turns make spaces inaccessible to many Disabled users, are unlikely to slow fast cyclists, and will require attention to navigate, potentially increasing risk of collisions.

Designing for Inclusion

Briefing for City of London elected members

Following concerns raised to us by vision impaired people and our expert trainers, we commissioned University College London (UCL) to research the accessibility of four different types of infrastructure design in the built environment. These forms of cycle infrastructure are currently implemented across many UK local authority areas.

Summary:

- There is a need for safe, segregated cycle paths to protect cyclists.
- However, our research found four designs currently in use that incorporate cycle paths can cause fear and anxiety for disabled people, especially people with sight loss, which make them unsafe.
- This is particularly the case when disabled people need to cross a cycle path to get on or off a bus or to cross a road.
- Guide Dogs is calling on the Department for Transport to research how these designs and Local Transport Note 1/20 and other relevant guidance might be revised to take account of the technical findings of this research, with the involvement of disabled people and other infrastructure users.

Impact of incorporating cycle paths at bus stops

The report focused on two types of bus stop:

1. **Floating Island Bus Stops.** Also called Bus Stop By-passes, or just Floating Bus Stops. These are where a cycle path diverts from the kerbside to behind the bus stop, so buses can stop kerbside next to the bus stop. People wishing to catch a bus need to cross the cycle path to reach the bus stop on an island.
Example image: [Lambeth Palace Road, London](#)
2. **Shared Bus Stop Borders.** This is where a cycle path is raised to the level of the pavement and continues next to the kerb. This means the bus stop is next to the cycle path. People wishing to use the bus must step on to the cycle path in order to board or alight from the bus.
Example image: [Hoe Street, Walthamstow. London](#)

Our research found that Floating Island Bus Stops are difficult for people with sight loss to identify and navigate.

Experiments conducted by UCL found detecting a cyclist approaching a bus stop can be a real challenge, especially for blind people and people with vision impairments. The speed at which cyclists travel also increases the fear of a collision. Another concern with this design is the size of the island (platform) the bus stop is situated on, surrounded by a cycle lane and road. Some people need more space, including wheelchair users and people travelling with a companion or assistance dog.

We found Shared Bus Stop Boarders cause even more concern than Floating Island Bus Stops for disabled people, due to the challenge of boarding and leaving a bus directly onto a cycle path. This creates a clear conflict between three users of the same space: pedestrians, cyclists and bus users. This is in addition to the challenge of detecting an oncoming cyclist. Shared Bus Stop Boarders were found to be unsafe by all research participants.

Both bus stop designs were found to be unsafe by blind and vision impaired participants. This leads to a general sense of fear about using them, which causes some disabled people to avoid using bus services altogether.

Impact of incorporating cycle paths to footpaths

We also researched the impact of two different types of footpaths:

3. **Segregated Cycle-footways.** These are where a footpath and a cycle path are next to each other and separated by a delineator of some sort, such as a continuous raised physical delineator. In some instances, a painted white line is used.

Example image: [Lea Bridge, London](#)

4. **Continuous Footways.** This is where the road is raised to the level of the footpath to allow level crossing across a junction. This type of design is not exclusively used on routes that include cycle paths.

Example image: [Lea Bridge, London](#)

We found painted line delineators in Segregated Cycle-footways are difficult for people with sight loss to identify. Instead, continuous raised delineators were much easier to detect. Participants in the research found it difficult to know when they were moving from a standard pedestrian-only footpath onto a Segregated Cycle-footway, and which side they needed to be on

Our research also found Continuous Footways are dangerous for blind people and people with a vision impairment, as it is difficult to detect when they are



crossing onto a road, especially where tactile paving is not present. This means people with sight loss may not know when they are putting themselves in the way of oncoming cyclists and vehicles.

Guide Dogs recommendations

Based on UCL's findings, Guide Dogs developed fifteen recommendations

to improve these designs for disabled people. These include:

- Investigate how to make Floating Island Bus Stops safer for disabled people, focusing on the size of the island platform and ways to reduce the speed of oncoming cyclists.
Until further research is carried out, there should be a pause in the further implementation of Floating Island Bus Stops.
- Investigate if there are any means by which Shared Bus Stop Boarders can be made safe in practice. **Until there is evidence on whether they can be developed safely, the installation of Shared Bus Stop Boarders should be halted.**
- Segregated Cycle-footways should have a tactile paving delineator at all times rather than a painted white line, and tactile paving should be installed at the start and end, as well as at regular intervals along the route.
- Ensure tactile paving and other signalling are installed and consistent at all Continuous Footways.

By adopting these recommendations, local authorities can work towards delivering active travel networks that are truly inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

How City of London Authority can help

- Please write to the Secretary of State for Transport to ask that the department commission research to investigate how Local Traffic Notice 1/20 and other relevant guidance might be revised to take account of the technical findings of the research undertaken by UCL for Guide Dogs
- Guide Dogs welcomes the review of the public realm guidance measures City of London Authority is taking on cycle way design
- To conduct an audit of existing street layouts and infrastructure to identify areas for improvement



- To seek reassurances from Transport for London (TfL) that audible announcements are in place to inform passengers where a Floating Island Bus Stop or Shared Bus Stop Boarding is on a particular route
- Make a commitment that any proposals to introduce Floating Island Bus Stops or Shared Bus Stop Boarders are halted Until the outcome of the Bus Services (No 2) Bill. Specifically, clause 22 ‘Safety and accessibility of stopping places’, which enables the Secretary of State for Transport to create guidance on the accessibility of bus stops, specifically to meet the needs of disabled people. The Secretary of State for Transport and Lord Hendy have recently announced that they will be asking local authorities to pause any further plans to introduce this type of bus stop design

To access the full report, summary and all 15 Guide Dogs’ recommendations, please visit Guide Dogs website: <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/how-you-can-help/campaigning/our-current-campaigns/streets-ahead/>