



# Central London Grid: Changing the culture of cycling in London

Proposed cycle routes in central London for local engagement

December 2013

**MAYOR OF LONDON**



**TRANSPORT  
FOR LONDON**  
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

In partnership with:

Canal & River Trust  
City of London  
City of Westminster  
London Borough of Camden  
London Borough of Hackney  
London Borough of Islington  
London Borough of Lambeth  
London Borough of Southwark  
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea  
The Royal Parks  
Transport for London

## Foreword by Boris Johnson



In surveys, huge numbers of people tell us they would love to cycle but are put off by the prospect of having to do it on busy roads, and by what they see as the rather impatient nature of some London cyclists.

So we are creating a new network of routes for a new kind of cyclist; routes for people who want to cycle slowly, in their ordinary clothes, away from most of the traffic.

In this document City Hall, Transport for London (TfL), the seven Zone 1 boroughs and the City of London, along with The Royal Parks and the Canal & River Trust, set out our plans for central London, the busiest cycling area. We're calling it the 'Central London Grid'.

Some of the routes will be 'Superhighways' on main roads. Most of these routes will be physically separated from the traffic and cyclists will be given their own protected space on the road. This will also happen on other main road routes, where possible.

But most of the routes will be 'Quietways', using London's matchless network of quieter side streets – along with routes through parks and on canal towpaths, which they will share with pedestrians. Quietways will be your secret cycling passages through London. They will take you everywhere you need to go, directly and easily, but using routes you might never know existed until we showed you.

Many of our routes will run in rough parallel with Tube and bus routes, so you know where you're going. They'll be properly-signposted, so you can follow them easily. And unlike some cycle routes in the past, they won't give up at the difficult places.

I want to 'de-Lycrafy' the bicycle. This new network and its users will gradually, I hope, change the very culture of cycling in London. I want to reduce the testosterone levels; reduce conflict between other vehicles and cyclists; and move towards a continental-style cycling culture, where cycling is normal, not something you have to gird up for. I want more women and older people cycling.

And even if you have no intention of cycling – even if you hate cyclists (there are, I hear, one or two of you around) – the Central London Grid will help you as well. More people cycling means less traffic, less pollution, more seats on the Tube and the bus.

It means more trees, new vitality and lower crime on underused streets. It will create a better London for everyone.

This document is a first draft, not a final answer. The routes on the map are not fixed and unchangeable. They are the product of discussions with each individual borough, and several probably will change. Following the publication of this document, the individual Quietway routes, together with any changes to the road layouts required to make them happen, will be consulted on by the boroughs whose roads they are. Superhighway routes will be consulted on in detail by TfL.

For now, though, we would like to know your answers to broader questions: Do you agree with the concept of the Central London Grid? Are the routes in the right places? Are there any we've missed?

And because the Central London Grid will not just benefit cyclists, we don't just want to hear from cyclists. We want to hear from pedestrians, businesses and residents, whether or not you cycle.

Please let us know your thoughts by emailing [grid@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:grid@tfl.gov.uk).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Boris Johnson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Boris Johnson  
Mayor of London

## **Cycling in central London has grown and we have to cater for it**

Just under a quarter of all rush-hour traffic in central London is now bicycles — almost two-thirds on some main roads. In the morning rush hour, no fewer than 38,000 people enter the centre by bike, but there is also growing concern about cycle safety. The Mayor and the boroughs have promised to improve routes and make cyclists safer.

Cycle commuting into the City and West End has grown by 210 per cent in 10 years. At the same time, and surely not unconnected to it, the amount of motor traffic in central London has fallen sharply — by more than 30 per cent on some roads.

In central London, the bicycle is now a mass mode of transport and an indispensable one. Life for everyone else would be more difficult if all those 38,000 people were driving cars or crammed into the Tube.

The central section of the Regent's Canal towpath has seen huge growth in cycling journeys. The Central London Grid includes a route along part of it, but also an alternative route to relieve pressure on another part of it, though cyclists will still be able to use the towpath as they do now.

## **More cycling is better for everyone**

Even if you never cycle, and have no intention of getting on a bike, more people cycling will benefit you through reduced traffic congestion, reduced crowding on public transport, less noise and less pollution.

In June 2012, a report for the Central London Air Quality Cluster group of local authorities found that if just 14 per cent of journeys in central London were cycled — an achievable target — emissions of the greatest vehicle pollutant, oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), would fall by 30 per cent, or 453 tonnes a year. Emissions of the other main pollutant, particulate matter, would fall by 24 per cent, or 33.8 tonnes a year.

According to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, air pollution from vehicles prematurely kills 2,200 Londoners each year, many of them in central and inner London. Increased bicycle use could therefore, over the years ahead, save literally hundreds, or even thousands, of lives.

## **What is the Central London Cycling Grid?**

**It is a connected, safe set of routes taking cyclists across central London.** It consists of our proposed cycle routes in an area that roughly (not exactly) corresponds to the Tube's Zone 1. This area includes the whole of the City of London and the City of Westminster, most of Kensington & Chelsea and parts of five other boroughs — Lambeth, Southwark, Hackney, Islington and Camden. It also includes routes through five of the Royal Parks and a section of canal towpath managed by the Canal & River Trust.

**The Central London Grid consists of two kinds of routes.** Approximately 20 miles (25 per cent) of the Grid will be higher-intervention Superhighways, largely segregated and on main roads. Approximately 60 miles (75 per cent) will be lower-intervention Quietways, mainly on back streets.

**The routes run largely on roads owned and controlled by the seven London boroughs, the City of London and the Royal Parks, not TfL.** The routes in this document are the product of discussions by a Board chaired by a borough officer and comprising representatives of the Mayor, TfL, each borough, the City, the Royal Parks and the Canal & River Trust. The boroughs will deliver them, using TfL funding (except for the Superhighways, which will be delivered mostly by TfL directly). In some places, alternative routes are given, denoted by a broken line, so people can say which they prefer.

**The routes in this document are not fixed and unchangeable.** Part of the purpose of this document is to find out what people from all groups, not just cyclists, want from the Grid network. These routes are our suggestions, and several may change. Following the publication of these maps, the individual Quietway routes, together with any changes to the road layouts required to make them happen, will be consulted on by the boroughs whose roads they are. Superhighway routes will be consulted on in detail by TfL.

## **Superhighways**

There will be eight, largely segregated or traffic-free Superhighways running through central London. In the Grid area they will total 20 miles or 25 per cent of the Grid. On most, but not all, of the Superhighway routes, the cycle track will be physically separated from traffic. Where the route travels on quieter streets, segregation will not be necessary. Each route is shown on the map.



*Visualisation of North-South Cycle Route (Blackfriars Road)*



*Visualisation of East-West Cycle Route (Victoria Embankment)*

Further Superhighway routes beyond the eight, such as the current Superhighways 2 and 3, will start on the edge of the Central London Grid area or run in the suburbs, so are not part of the Grid. Full details of all the Superhighways throughout Greater London will be announced in the New Year.

## Quietways

There will be over 60 miles of lower-traffic Quietways in central London (75 per cent of the Grid). These will be on quieter side streets, through parks and along a section of the Regent's Canal towpath.

Many of these routes already exist – it is often just a matter of guiding cyclists to them. For instance, cycling between Tower Bridge and Liverpool Street is far more pleasant and safer if you use backstreets and cycle along Hammett Street, America Square, Vine Street and Jewry Street than if you use the series of intimidating and busy one-way systems at Minories, Mansell Street and Aldgate High Street. But few people know the backstreet route is there.



*Goldsmiths Row, Hackney*

In other places, relatively small tweaks – such as allowing two-way cycling on a one-way street, or blocking it to through-traffic – can create a highly usable cycling route, such as at Black Friars Lane (pictured over the page), which runs parallel to busy New Bridge Street. Again, few people know this exists. Along towpaths and in parks, improvements will be made to support safe, shared-use cycling.



*Black Friars Lane, City of London*



# Proposed Cycle Routes in Central London for local engagement

**Key**

- Proposed Quietway routes, including main roads where interventions will be considered
- ⋯ Alternative Quietway routes
- \* \* \* Route under discussion
- Existing and proposed Cycle Superhighways

Correct as at 18.12.2013



- A** Routes in Soho are subject to further discussion with Westminster and Camden, in light of Crossrail construction timetable.
- B** Routes subject to further discussion with Camden.
- C** A study of this area is proposed to consider whether there is scope to reduce or prevent some or all through traffic, apart from buses, along this route.
- D** The route of CS11 south of Marylebone Road is subject to discussion with Westminster City Council.
- E** Cycle route through park subject to discussion with Royal Parks.

This is a base map for initial engagement - routes may be subject to change, with additional routes being added and others not taken forward. Some existing and proposed routes are not shown. Where routes do not currently link, further options will be developed locally for integration with other schemes.

## “Victoria Line”



## “Circle Line”



**Key**

- Example alignment of Quietway Route “Circle Line”
- Example alignment of Quietway Route “Victoria Line”
- Example alignment of Quietway Route “Q7” or “Q38”
- Proposed Quietway routes, including main roads where interventions will be considered
- - - - Alternative Quietway routes
- \* \* \* Route under discussion
- Existing and proposed Cycle Superhighways

Correct as at 18.12.2013

## “Q7”



## “Q38”



Example alignments of potential Quietway Routes



This is a base map for initial engagement - routes may be subject to change, with additional routes being added and others not taken forward.

Some existing and proposed routes are not shown. Where routes do not currently link, further options will be developed locally for integration with other schemes.

Routes will run roughly parallel to several Tube lines and bus routes, to help people understand where they go. They will not parallel them precisely – they will not, for instance, run right past the entrance of every station – but they will run close. The maps on the previous page show some of the example routes.

### **Who will use these routes?**

Quietway routes are slower than the main roads. They are not aimed at speedy commuter cyclists, who will almost certainly stick with the fast main roads. They are intended for people who want to avoid the main roads and want to take it more slowly and calmly – the new kind of cyclist we want to attract.



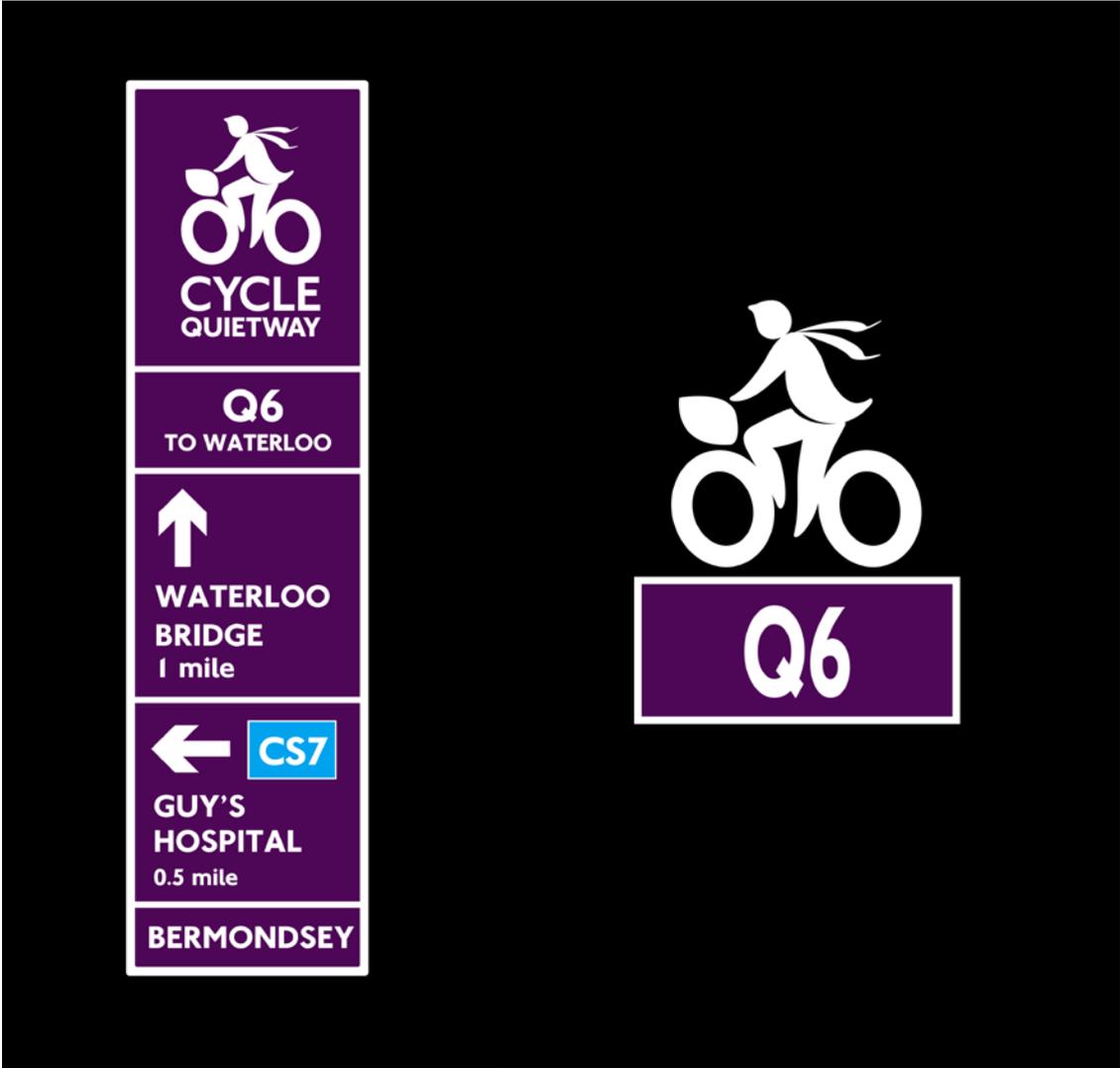
### **These are low-intervention routes.**

Because traffic is lighter and travelling more slowly, and there are fewer or no heavy goods vehicles, segregation will not usually be necessary on Quietway routes.

The main change you will see along each route will be simple signs on the carriageway – known as ‘waymarking’ – to guide cyclists. Typically this will be a square symbol on the road surface at every decision point (junction or turning) to show cyclists where to go next, perhaps with one or two more in between to reassure them that they are on the right route. There will be no long strips of paint.

We will avoid signs on poles as far as possible, especially if it means installing new poles. In some places where there is too much information to convey on the road, we will have to use signs.

A new colour scheme will be used to distinguish the Quietways from other cycle routes. The colour and the look of the waymarking will not jar with historic or heritage streets. Before making any decision about the design of the signs and marking, we will consider the findings from focus groups and research that we commissioned



Potential examples of wayfinding signage (left) and carriageway markings (right)

Like the name suggests, Quietways will use the quietest roads possible while balancing the need for directness, usability and safety. In some busy parts of central London there are no absolutely quiet roads, but all will be significantly less busy than the alternatives, with fewer vehicles, travelling at lower speeds. Critically fewer or no heavy goods vehicles of the type which are hugely over-represented in cycling injuries and deaths.

## Cycle contraflows

The Quietway network will use cycle contraflows, where cyclists are allowed to ride both ways down a quiet one-way street, to make the network more direct and less complicated. Motor traffic will continue to only travel one way on these streets.

Some of the contraflows will be new but many on the Quietway network have existed for years and are working well. Two-way cycling on one-way streets was pioneered in Kensington & Chelsea, which has more than 15 contraflows, nearly all on residential streets, and in the City, which has more than 40, nearly all on non-residential streets. In the Grid area in total, there are more than 100 contraflows already.

Again, the amount of physical intervention needed on contraflow streets is minimal. Kensington & Chelsea puts up signs as shown below. The City and some other authorities paint the entrance to their contraflow streets with arrows to show motorists that contraflow cycling is allowed.



*Contraflow cycling facilities: Holland Street (left) and Long Acre (right)*

The boroughs have extensively monitored and researched the safety of cyclist contraflows. Accidents on the existing contraflows, involving either cyclists or pedestrians, have not increased since they were introduced.

All the streets proposed for contraflows have been carefully assessed to ensure that the traffic levels are low enough and the street is wide enough for two-way cycling to be safe.

On a few streets where there is more traffic, a slightly higher level of intervention may be needed. This could be similar to what has been done on Hanover Street in the City of Westminster, pictured below, or Royal College Street in Camden, where parked cars have been moved out from the kerb, with no loss of parking, to separate the contraflow cycle lane from the traffic lane.



## **New crossings**

Where a Quietway has to cross a main road, new or improved crossings may be provided for cyclists. This could mean moving an existing pelican/ toucan crossing by a few yards if one is near, or installing a new crossing if one does not already exist. Crossings will not be provided everywhere, only where the traffic is heavy enough to make it necessary.

At some junctions, kerblines may have to be changed to ensure a smooth transition. The new crossings and the kerblines changes will improve the experience for pedestrians as well as cyclists.

## **Junctions**

The main interventions will be where a Quietway has to cross a handful of unavoidable major road junctions. Safe routes for cyclists will be provided through these junctions, separated physically or by traffic light phases from most motor traffic.



*'Apex' junction, Shoreditch - example of a junction that will change*

### **'Cycle streets' closed or restricted to through-traffic**

Most of the Quietways are on streets where there is little or relatively little traffic. But we are suggesting some of the busier secondary streets, where there is heavy cycle demand, are closed or restricted to through-traffic to make them more cycle-friendly. Camden is currently investigating this for Tavistock Place and Torrington Place in Bloomsbury - already a very popular and overcrowded cycle route.

### **Holborn - Old Street roundabout corridor**

'Wands' separating westbound cyclists from oncoming eastbound traffic will be installed by the London Borough of Camden early in the New Year along the contraflow bus lane in Vernon Place and Bloomsbury Way, allowing westbound cyclists to use it and to avoid the Holborn gyratory. Medium and longer-term solutions to this gyratory are being investigated.

East of here, the Theobald's Road - Clerkenwell Road - Old Street corridor from Holborn to Old Street roundabout is one of the most heavily-cycled routes in London (more than 50 per cent of the westbound traffic in the morning peak is bicycles, and 64 per cent at the western end). However, it is busy with other traffic and there is no quiet side-street to use as an alternative route. Fully-segregated cycle tracks will also be difficult here because of the narrowness of the road and the large numbers of bus stops along it.

The three councils responsible for the area – Camden, Islington and Hackney – and TfL will undertake a study into how cycle facilities can be safely implemented on this corridor and to address the impacts of traffic. No options have been ruled in or out.

## **Parking**

What happens to parking along the routes will be the decision of each individual borough. Large-scale removal of parking will seldom be needed, though smaller amounts may be affected. Any changes to parking will be fully consulted on when individual routes are brought forward.

## **What happens outside the Central London Grid area?**

The Superhighway and many of the proposed Quietway routes shown in this document will continue to inner London and the suburbs. Borough officers are in close discussion with each other, and with their suburban counterparts, to ensure a continuous network of routes for long-distance travel throughout London. Full details of the Superhighway network across Greater London will be published in the New Year. The first Quietway routes outside central London will also be announced in the New Year.

## **What happens next?**

We are keen to hear your views on:

- The Central London Cycle Grid in general
- Specific routes in this document
- Any routes you think may be missing

Please email [grid@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:grid@tfl.gov.uk) or contact the relevant borough.

Comments sent to TfL will also be shared with the borough whose road it is. If you could indicate the borough(s) to which you are referring, we will ensure that these comments are forwarded on.

The deadline for comments is 14 February 2014.

A response to this document, and any changes, will be published after this date. It is intended that the first few routes will open by the end of the year and at least half the Quietway network in the Grid area will be in place by 2016. All the Superhighways in this document will open by 2016.