



Connected Southwark

A Strategy for Sustainable Transport In Southwark

12th June 2007

Connected Southwark - Summary

- The need for large scale use of sustainable forms of transport has never been greater. Halting the decline in levels of walking and cycling and instead delivering large increases can offer us the chance to address some of the most pressing issues we face as a society. These include the threat from climate change and poor health through low levels of exercise.
- Towns and cities throughout north-west Europe that have put walking and cycling at the heart of transport planning have seen large rises in the share of journeys that are made by these sustainable modes. We believe that Southwark is well suited to creating an infrastructure where there are far higher levels of walking and where cycling becomes a mass means of travel rather than a niche one as at present and thousands more are encouraged to make journeys locally on two wheels.
- Southwark is largely flat and most importantly the villages and town centres that make up the borough are close together – the borough is ideal for making journeys on foot and by bike.
- To make such a big shift in usage, big changes in behaviour are needed:
 - Large numbers need to be encouraged onto 2 wheels; they will do this when they feel that they will be **safe** on their bikes. Many new cyclists simply do not feel safe sharing the road with motorised traffic.
 - The walking environment needs to be attractive. The town centres that make up Southwark need to be attractive places where people on foot **want** to spend time.
- Southwark Living Streets and Southwark Cyclists are together proposing a programme that creates an environment in which walking and cycling can flourish. We want to create an infrastructure that encourages cycling as a mass mode of transport between the town centres of Southwark and a high-quality walking environment for those who visit them and shop in them.
- We would like to see:
 - **Dedicated cycle routes that are separated physically from both cars and pedestrians (this underpins schemes in towns and cities in NW Europe) between the town centres of Southwark and on major routes connecting Southwark to other boroughs.**
 - **Wide pavements for pedestrians in town centres (as with the Walworth Rd project). Other elements would include entry treatments at all side roads, regular crossing points at pavement level, 20mph limits for traffic and improvements to the environment such as providing seating at regular intervals and planting far more trees in town centres.**

Connected Southwark – Proposals in More Detail. Sustainability is at the heart of much of the regeneration under way in Southwark today. This proposal aims to increase sustainable travel dramatically.

- A number of major factors are driving us towards a more sustainable society. These factors exist at both national and local levels and all can or will have an effect on the lives of everyone in Southwark.
 1. **The Threat of Climate Change.** There is a real and pressing need to reduce our dependency on fossil-fuel based forms of travel.
 2. **Health.** There are many indicators that link the reduction in physical exercise through walking and cycling over the past 30 years to increases in illnesses related to being overweight such as type 2 diabetes.
 3. **The Regeneration of Our Cities.** Cities such as London are once again being seen as positive options as places for people to live. Large population growth is expected in Southwark over the next two decades. The Olympics will be held in London in 2012.
 4. **The Desire To Build Strong Communities.** Communities are far stronger when they are built around vibrant town centres that people can reach easily and where people want to shop and spend their leisure time.
- There are many projects under way at present that support these goals and are aimed at improving living in and moving around our part of the city. Key for Southwark are:
 - The Cross River Tram and projects such as the Walworth Road and possible Borough High Street improvements. Sustainable travel initiatives such as the Goal 2012 bridge proposed by Sustrans.
 - The regeneration of the borough with major projects at the Elephant & Castle, Canada Water, Bermondsey Spa and the redevelopment of the Aylesbury.
- These developments will have a tremendous effect on the quality of life in Southwark and the desire of people to travel both to and around Southwark to reach these regenerated areas.
- We believe there is an opportunity to increase dramatically the proportion of journeys made by sustainable means (on foot and by bicycle).

Higher levels of walking and cycling can address many of the major issues the borough faces such as improving levels of public health and fitness, reducing CO2 emissions and boosting local business.

- Increasing the proportion of journeys made by foot and by bicycle can address and support all of the issues outlined on the previous page and:
 - Help significantly to reduce the emission of global warming gasses through reductions in car-based journeys.
 - Help improve air quality throughout the borough.
 - Help increase levels of exercise amongst children and adults and tackle problems with obesity and ill-health that are endemic in Southwark. These problems have a clear and significant cost to local health services as well as blighting the lives of many local people.
 - Allow land-use planning to be weighted towards there being more journeys made on foot and by bicycle. These require far less space (compared to car parking for example) and can contribute towards the goals for high density urban living that Southwark needs to achieve with projected increases in its population.
 - Address crime issues and fears for personal security. Having more people actively present on our streets helps reduce levels of crime and anti-social behaviour.
 - Be a boost for local business; people on foot/bike stop and buy things! Business benefits from bicycles and pedestrians that come to an area rather than cars that drive through to other places; lower levels of congestion are good for jobs and businesses. Surveys show that overall spending in an area is highest amongst those who live locally and shop on foot.
- We believe that Southwark is well suited to walking and cycling:
 - the borough is largely flat.
 - the borough is still very much based around the original village/town centres and each is say 20 minutes walk or 5 to 10 minutes cycle ride from another; for instance centres such as Camberwell and Peckham are only 10 minutes cycle ride from each other.

Creating the right infrastructure for walking and cycling can have a dramatic effect on their usage levels. More than a third of journeys in both Amsterdam and Copenhagen are made by bicycle.

- Initiatives in Europe show how it is possible to change modal use away from car-based journeys and towards journeys that are made on foot and by bicycle. In Groningen in Holland 60% of all journeys are made by bicycle and even in capital cities such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam between 25% and 35% of journeys are made by bicycle. It is important to stress that journeys by bicycle have not always been this high in these places. It has taken a conscious shift in more recent times in transport policy and land-use planning in favour of walking and cycling to reach these levels.
- Interest in walking, cycling and healthy lifestyles is on the rise but will not become a mass activity until entry-level cyclists feel they can move around safely and quickly. This cannot occur with the current cycling infrastructure that means that they share the road with cars and other motorised traffic. Common to all towns and cities where levels of cycling have increased dramatically is the creation of protected cycle lanes that separate cyclists both from motor vehicles and pedestrians.

"What makes life more dangerous are the ludicrous green-painted cycle lanes on city roads. They are not even an apology for a bike lane. They delude the cyclist into a sense of wellbeing when in fact they are setting the cyclist up for slaughter. They are parked in, motorcycled in and ignored by motorised traffic. Their message is clear. Scrap the paint and put in full-blown two-way cycling lanes separated from both pedestrian and car by substantial curbs."

Jon Snow, Channel 4 News - Patron of Sustrans and President of CTC (Guardian Saturday March 3rd 2007)

- Measures to increase cycling also have the effect of improving conditions for walking. The quieter, less polluted and safer environment boosts both these sustainable modes of travel.
- This is the idea at the heart of this proposal :
 - **to create an infrastructure that will attract truly large numbers of people to make journeys by bicycle (as many would like to do if they felt it was safe enough)**
 - **to make our town centres attractive places to shop and spend time on foot.**

For these changes to occur, dedicated and protected cycle routes need to be created along main routes in the borough. These will be the key to encouraging mass cycling in our area.

1. Improvements To The Infrastructure For Pedestrians & Cyclists

A. Cycling

- The provision of dedicated routes for cycles that are segregated physically from both cars and pedestrians (with the extra space being removed from the road rather than the pavement!) along all of the principal and most direct routes between the main locations in Southwark (see page 9 for map). Each cycle lane would be a minimum of 1.5 metres wide.
- The introduction of measures that ensure that cycling routes are simple and direct between locations (e.g. one-way streets to be open for clearly marked two-way bicycle traffic); creating short-cuts for cyclists.
- Universal provision of safe bike parking spaces close to shops, railway/tube stations and places of work.
- Clear signage that tells cyclists and pedestrians how far they are from key locations (perhaps in minutes by bike and on foot).
- Systematic processes to make all the streets of Southwark safe for cycling, particularly by widespread well enforced 20 mph speed limits.



Dedicated and protected cycle lane (in Camden)



Convenient bike parking



Separated on-pavement cycle lanes

Provision for pedestrians also needs to be improved so that the town centres of Southwark become more attractive for those on foot – the group that spends the most with local businesses.

1. Improvements To The Infrastructure For Pedestrians & Cyclists (cont'd)

B. Pedestrians

- 20mph limit in all town centres in Southwark
- Zebra/pedestrian crossings at frequent intervals
- Zebra crossings at footway level
- Entry treatments (raised tables) for all side roads.
- Widened footways
- Trees to help separate pedestrians from traffic (and in some places cyclists) and to improve the environment
- Seating, with benches orientated southwards where possible
- Street art.



Wide pavements



Raised crossing on a well-used route to school



Raised pedestrian crossing, even on a bus route

As well as making improvements for pedestrians and cyclists, it is important to ensure that they feel that the walking and cycling environment is safe with lower car speeds and traffic free shopping.

2. Getting The Environment Right For Sustainable Forms Of Transport

As well as these changes to promote walking and cycling, the overall environment needs to be sufficiently unthreatening for those using these sustainable forms of transport. Proposed initiatives here include:

Reducing road widths to provide wider pavements and the new protected cycle lanes.

Closing roads to through car traffic especially in the town centres to provide a safer and less car dominated environment. The aim for the new town centre at the Elephant & Castle is to create a car-free pedestrian experience. Initiatives that improve the pedestrian environment are likely to assist local businesses in the town centres.

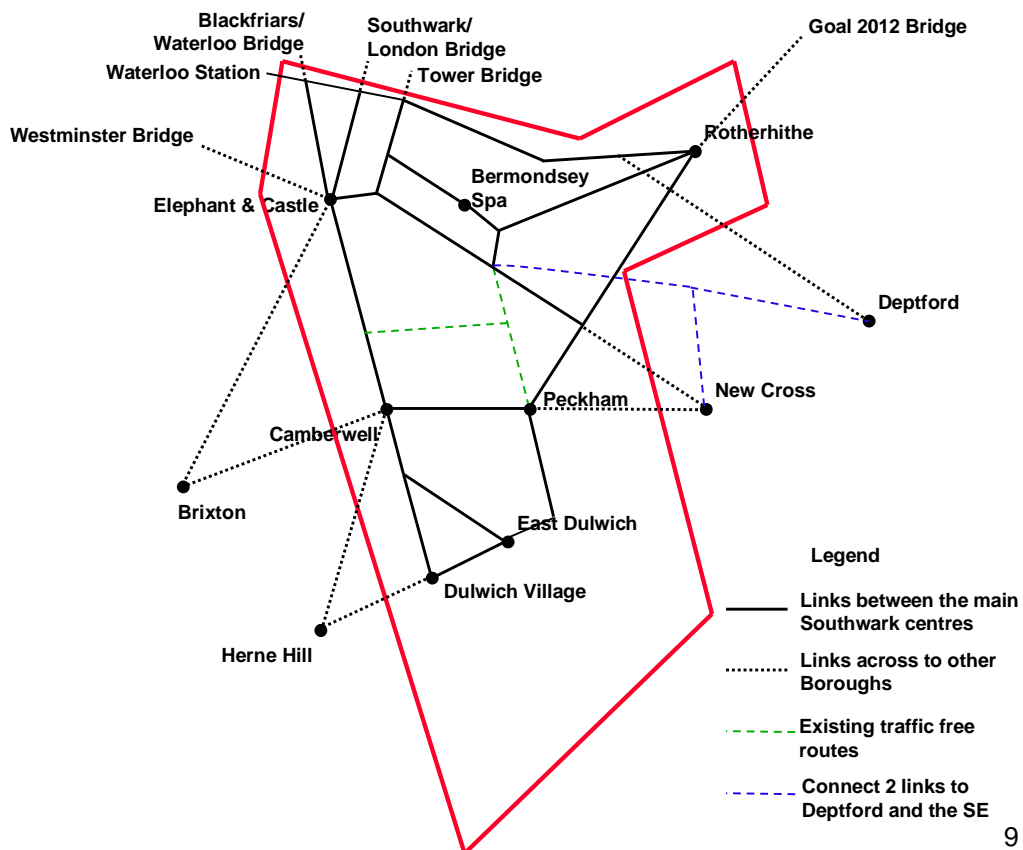
Reducing and enforcing lower vehicle speeds. This again seeks to reduce casualty levels and to make taking up bicycling far more appealing to less confident cyclists.

Initially the project aims to link the main town centres in Southwark with dedicated cycle routes; in time the routes would be extended to town centres in adjacent boroughs.

Sustainable Travel Links in Southwark – Initial Ideas

These changes will require the creation of new protected cycle routes throughout the borough. These will serve journeys within the borough but in time will form a network of links with neighbouring parts of London.

Our vision for the first set of connections looks like this:



We believe that there is a considerable prize on offer here. No UK town or city has managed to unlock the potential of far higher levels of travel on foot and by cycle. Southwark is ideally placed to do this.

- This plan offers the opportunity to integrate sustainable transport further into the regeneration of Southwark that is currently being planned and is under way. Southwark already has strategies to develop both walking and cycling - we feel that Connected Southwark can help these modes grow faster and to a greater degree. There is a substantial latent demand for these modes if the infrastructure can be created to make them safer and more attractive.
- High levels of walking and cycling can become the glue that ties people into where they live so that they are able to:
 - shop locally
 - travel quickly and pleasantly between different parts of the borough
 - be a presence on local streets so that those streets themselves can become safer
 - travel more often in a way that promotes health and fitness
 - increase usage of the borough's parks - wherever possible routes would go through parks and other green spaces.
- The plan can also operate at a number of levels. The long term aim is to develop both an improved environment for walking and protected cycle routes across the borough. But the scheme can also exist at a local level. Simply by building a high quality route between Camberwell and Peckham, local people will have travel options they did not have before and, for example, a trip from SE5 to the Peckham Multiplex by bike will very much be on the cards for a family with young children in a way that would not be contemplated today. In the longer term, the scheme fully implemented will offer links to other boroughs and other parts of London that are speedy, safe and sustainable.
- Although clearly this project would have considerable costs associated with it, we believe that this is a good time to be considering initiatives of this kind:
 - Funding for sustainable transport is considerable with projects like the sustainable towns initiative (eg Peterborough & Worcester) currently under way. If this scheme is felt to be attractive, the arguments are strong to promote this scheme for funding as the first London borough truly attempting to develop sustainable travel links.
 - The scheme ties in perfectly with the Mayor of London's vision for developing a sustainable city and the large sums currently being invested in cycling and new plans for green and off-road cycle routes.
 - It brings together in a coherent way many of the Council's own objectives and plans (eg with current projects such as Connect 2 in Rotherhithe).

Next Steps.

- We hope that Southwark Council will find these proposals of interest and will be keen to take them forward. Obviously how that occurs is very much down to the support the scheme has from Southwark Council and Transport for London.
- Next steps may include:

- Making a bid for funding to the Mayor that ties in with his clear intentions to support walking and cycling and most recently his Climate Change Strategy.
- To make bids that relate to this project as part of Southwark Council's future funding submissions to TfL.
- A bid to the DfT for an extension to the Sustainable Towns programme to include a big city.
- A pilot scheme in Southwark of one of the routes identified. A good starting point could be the Camberwell to Peckham route owing to the proximity of the two town centres and the issues of regeneration that both towns face.