Southwark Motoring Grid

High levels of motor traffic on a street cause air pollution and noise pollution, reduce neighbourliness, dissuade people from walking, cycling, and spending time there, and pose a danger to vulnerable road users.

Many of the negative effects of motor traffic can be eliminated from residential and shopping streets through full or partial closure, such that only people who require access to the street itself drive there. However, closure of an individual street often simply moves the problem onto a neighbouring street.

Southwark streets should therefore be divided into the following categories:

- Through road
- Distributor road
- Destination street

Through roads are e.g. for drivers travelling from Lambeth to Lewisham, or Bromley to the City.

Destination streets are principally residential or shopping streets. The only vehicles on these streets will be accessing properties on them.

Distributor roads connect Through roads and Destination streets. The only vehicles on these roads will be accessing destination streets connected to them. It is important that Distributor roads cannot be used as through roads.

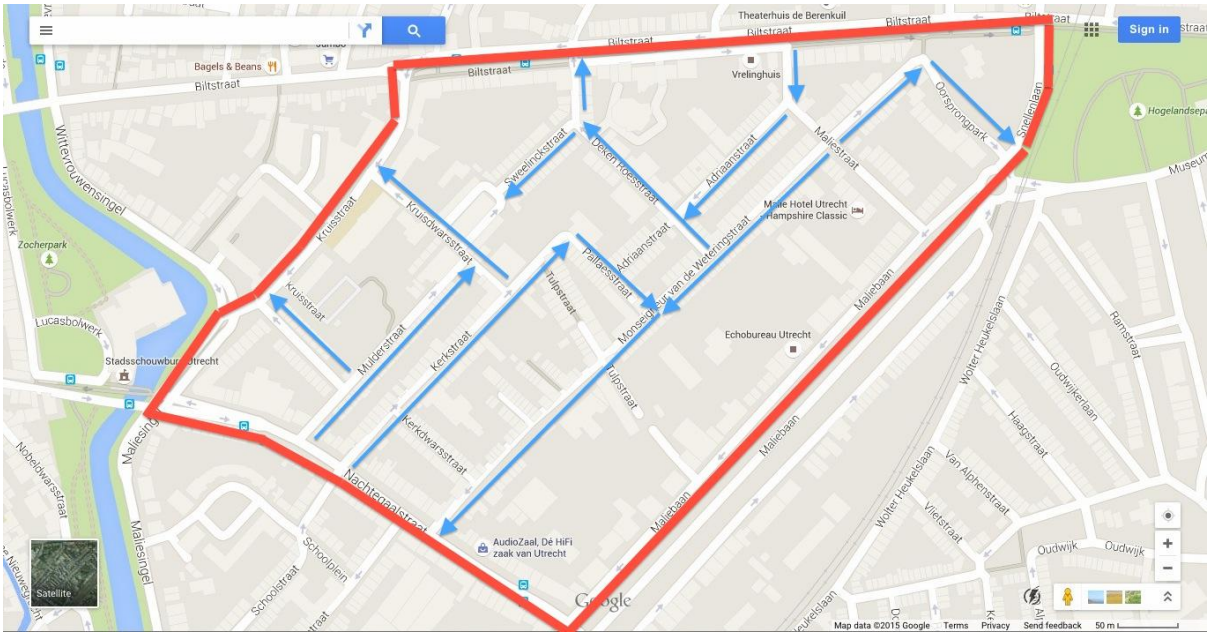
An example in Southwark is the Rotherhithe peninsula. Lower Road (A200) carries any through traffic. Salter Road (B205) acts as a distributor road for any traffic wanting to access Rotherhithe itself, but simply rejoins Lower Road at both ends, making it useless as a shortcut for through traffic. The remaining roads are dead ends for cars, but are connected for pedestrians and cyclists, leaving a dense grid of possible walking and cycling routes, but no incentive for outside motor traffic to use the area.

A first approximation of the Southwark Motoring Grid could be that A-roads are Through roads, B-roads are Distributor roads, and everywhere else is a Destination street. This fits quite closely with the TfL Red Routes and bus routes.

By categorising all roads like this, Southwark can avoid piecemeal traffic management solutions which simply move the problem around. Instead, it is decided strategically which roads are required to carry a high volume of motor traffic, and which are required not to. This is in essence the first part of a Mini Holland plan.

The density of the through traffic grid in Southwark will be between 1km-3km between parallel routes. Turning the remaining roads into Distributor and Destination roads (i.e. useless as through routes) will therefore not majorly inconvenience the (minority of) Southwark residents who drive. Journeys requiring a car will take at most a couple of extra minutes in reaching a through road, compared to the present situation. However, everyone who lives, walks or cycles on those streets will benefit from the reduction in through traffic.

Once a motoring grid has been decided on, the changes required to make current shortcuts into Distributor and Destination streets can be implemented in each grid cell individually.



A motoring cell in Utrecht, The Netherlands

References / further reading:

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