

London's smart move

When physical constraints restrict the expansion of transport infrastructure to relieve congestion, Travel Demand Management opens additional, complementary opportunities. London has embraced this approach, as examples from the Borough of Hounslow show.

(illustration: Karin Dekker)

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With a population of 7.5 million, London is by far the largest city in the United Kingdom. It has suffered from traffic congestion for many years. Indeed, by the mid 1990s traffic in the centre of the city moved little faster than in the days of horse-drawn carriages.¹ This congestion causes economic, health and environmental impacts. The dense nature of London's fabric makes it impossible to relieve traffic congestion by increasing the road space available, and the underground and rail network is also at full capacity. Therefore other means of impacting of traffic congestion in the capital have been sought. The most famous of these is the London Congestion Charge, under which all vehicles entering the central business zone

of the city pay a daily charge of £8. Since its introduction in 2002 the number of vehicles entering the charging zone has fallen by 21%,² with considerable benefits in terms of reductions in pollution. At the same time, huge investments were made in London's bus network, partly funded by the congestion charge revenue, and a corresponding increase in bus usage has been seen. While further increases in bus usage may be possible and further investment in transport investment is planned, it has become increasingly apparent that addressing how and when London's population travel is of equal importance in providing the infrastructure necessary for Londoners to travel.

WHAT IS TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT?

In essence, Travel Demand Management (TDM) focuses on changing when and how Londoners travel, in particular reducing the use of the private car for short journeys. TDM projects include such measures as travel planning, car clubs, promoting walking and cycling, homeworking and home delivery. In the UK such measures are also known as 'smarter choices' or 'soft' measures as compared to hard (physical) infrastructure improvements. Studies have shown that when implemented in a coordinated way, such measures can reduce peak period urban travel by up to 20%, at an average cost of 1.5p (€ 0.02) per vehicle kilometre taken off the road.⁴ However, these cuts in travel are →

often theoretical rather than proven as coordinated TDM programmes are rare. Transport for London is hoping to address this with a more coordinated programme, for example in the borough of Sutton where a wide range of TDM measures are being implemented in one area over a three year period.⁵

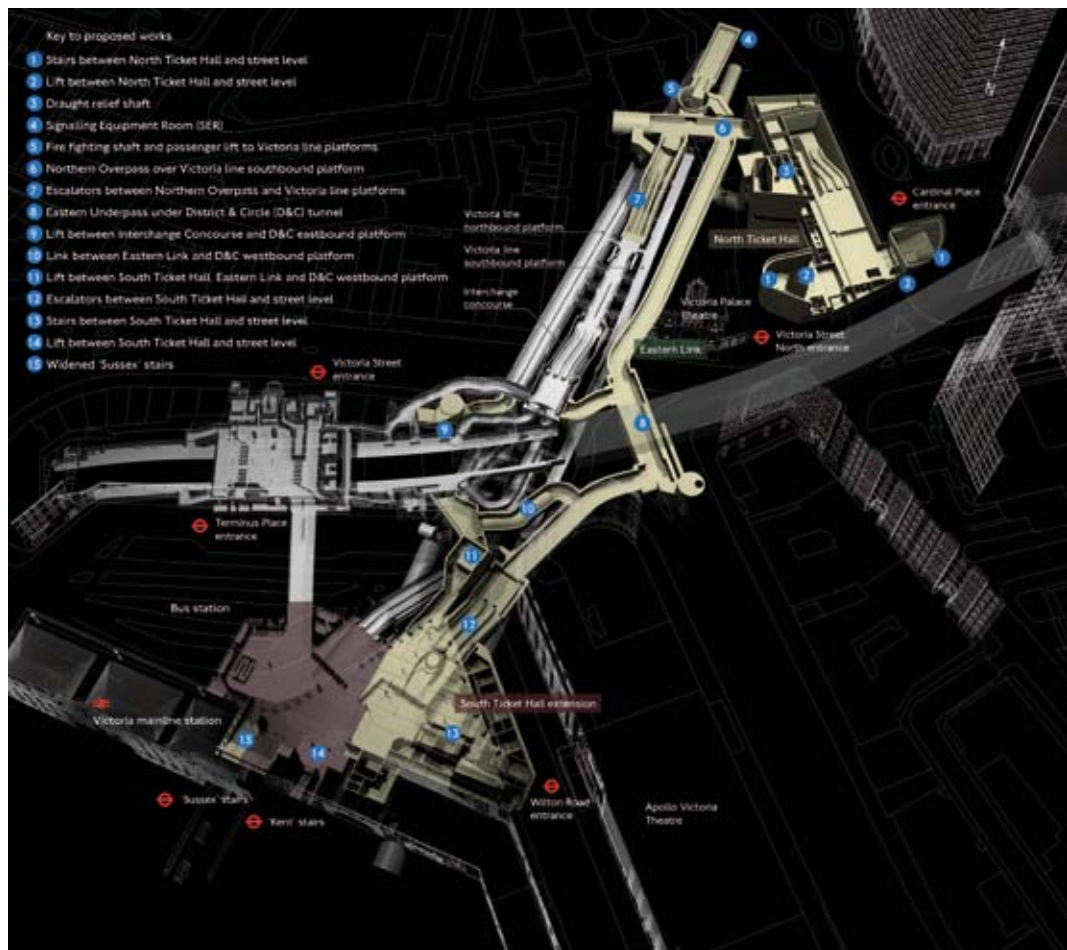
TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT IN LONDON

Transport for London has recently increased the priority it gives to TDM programmes that encourage people to reduce their reliance on the private car for short journeys. Additional funding for TDM was announced by the Mayor recently, following budget discussions with Green Party Assembly Members. During the next year, funding will increase by £ 5.5 million to £ 30 million (€ 38.5 million). Transport for London currently forecasts that journeys in the capital will grow from 27.2 million in 2005 to 31.2 million journeys a day in 2025. As Figure 1 shows, the aim is to reduce both the proportion and the absolute number of journeys made by car. Combined with the growth in journey numbers, this means that an extra 5 million journeys per day need to be accommodated by public transport, walking or cycling.

Travel Demand Management aims to optimise use of London’s transport system by promoting smarter options. These options might include:

- More sustainable patterns of vehicle ownership and use (e.g. car clubs, ecodriving).
- Public transport, walk or cycle instead of using the car (e.g. school travel plans, personalised travel planning).
- Walk or cycle instead of using public transport (e.g. cycling campaigns).
- Travel less (e.g. home shopping, flexible working).
- Avoid congested areas and times (e.g. travel off peak).

To date, in London TDM has focused primarily on work- and school-related trips which make up over 70% of vehicle kilometres in the morning and evening peak traffic flows. Between the two peaks, journey purposes are much more varied. Leisure and shopping are responsible for much larger proportions



(photo: Transport for London 2008)

| LONDON IN NUMBERS | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Population | 7,512,400 (mid 2006) ³ |
| Forecast population increase by 2025 | 800,000 |
| Forecast increase in jobs by 2025 | 900,000 |
| Journeys per day in London (2005) | 27.2 million |
| Forecast journeys per day in London (2025) | 31.2 million |

of journeys, although work-related journeys still take up the largest share of vehicle kilometres (35%).

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

A number of studies have divided drivers into groups depending on their attitude to their car and other modes of transport. Some of these groups are more likely to respond to some measures than others, and knowing your target audience is crucial to effective TDM measures. The most commonly used categories are given below (percentages come from a study by Transport for London in 2006 and the Scottish Executive in 2005), together with some TDM measures which can be used to assist each group to change its travel behaviour:

- Malcontent moorists (30%)
'I'd like to use the car less, but don't know how else to get around.'
 - Complacent car users (26%)
'I like driving, but wouldn't mind taking the tube.'
 - Aspiring environmentalists (18%)
'I enjoy driving, but know it pollutes, so should drive less.'
 - Diehard drivers (19%)
'I like to drive, and it's my right to drive.'
 - Car-less crusaders (4%)
'I don't use the car, and neither should you.'
- Each of these groups will have different motives for reducing their car use, and some will be more open to change than others. Generally, 'aspiring environmentalists' will be one of the easiest groups to address, whereas

‘diehard drivers’ are unlikely to respond to anything other than firm measures like congestion charging.

Perception is also a key issue, as people tend not to see themselves as part of the cause of congestion and the environmental problems caused by heavy traffic. Lecturing people on the need to cut their car use and using guilt as a motivating factor is generally not effective; better results can be achieved by supporting and motivating people and facilitating the shift towards an achievable vision for the future. Travel Demand

Management is about empowering people and giving them choices – for example, ‘Yes, the car can be convenient but in some circumstances cycling is faster’ – and then helping the uptake of cycling by offering training or guidance on safe cycle routes. Role models and peer support groups are also important; if cycling or public transport use appears normal it is more likely to appeal to others.

CUTTING SHORT JOURNEYS

To encourage walking and cycling, the key journeys to target are the short ones for which taking the car is a matter of convenience rather than necessity. There is no shortage of such journeys. Indeed, half of all car trips in suburban London are less than 2 kilometres (see Figure 2). Understanding why people make such short journeys is vitally important. In Hounslow, for example, research connected to the publication of its first Sustainable School Travel Strategy in August 2007 suggests that only 16% of primary age pupils live further than a mile from their school, and yet over 40% are usually driven – and in many schools this proportion is far higher. To address this more research is needed to understand the reasons. For example, is travelling by car perceived to be safer, or are parents dropping children off at school on the way to work?

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO TRAVEL DEMAND MANAGEMENT IN THE LONDON BOROUGH OF HOUNSLOW

The London Borough of Hounslow has embraced the TDM agenda as a strategic

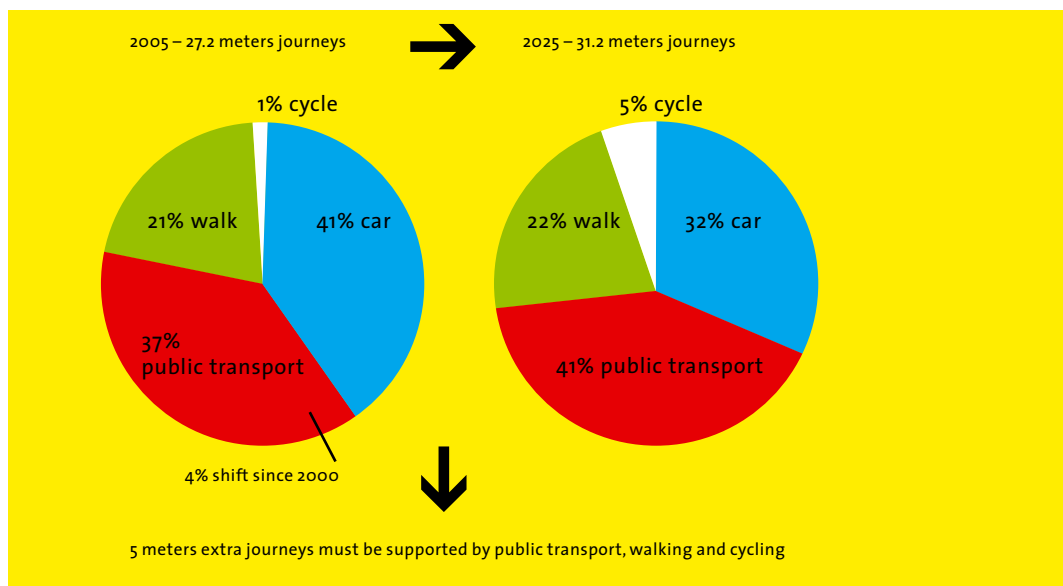


Figure 1. Forecast growth in journeys in London by different modes.

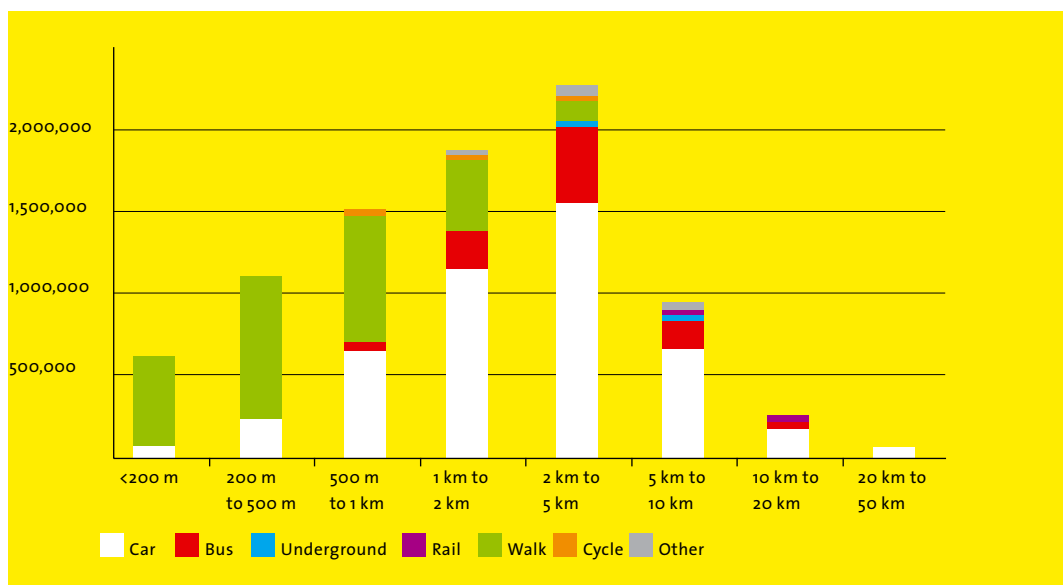


Figure 2. Total Journeys in Outer London by mode and distance.

tool for managing congestion on the roads. Hounslow is a main gateway to London from the west and experiences severe traffic congestion due to the two major generators of traffic, the City and Heathrow Airport. However, despite the large number of trips generated by these external drivers of demand, we know a number of the users of the network make short local trips. Various Travel Demand Management programmes in the London Borough of Hounslow are summarised below.

Workplace Travel Planning

The council has secured a number of ambitious and innovative travel plans from a range of companies across the borough, notably the media giant BSkyB and

pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline. It is currently working to collect ongoing data from companies to better monitor the effectiveness of the plans and enforce non-compliance with planning agreements. There is a desire to engage further with new and existing workplaces and residential developments to develop additional voluntary plans, using Transport for London’s Enterprise and Corporate support packages.

School Travel Planning

Hounslow’s award-winning School Travel Plan programme continues to deliver travel plans in line with its commitment to meet the Mayor of London’s target of all schools with travel plans by 2009. With well over 85%



(photo: Transport for London 2008)



(photo: Transport for London 2008)



of all schools with completed plans, or engaged in the process of developing one, emphasis is now shifting emphasis onto the delivery of innovative initiatives that target barriers to the uptake of sustainable travel to school. The borough has been at the forefront of developing new initiatives designed to reduce the barriers to the uptake of sustainable travel to school – most notably in terms of increasing cycling rates. Transport for London sponsored initiatives such as ‘Cycling Communities’ (a partnership project with Groundwork Trust), incentive schemes such as our ‘Cyclicious’ campaign (aimed at teenage girls) and ‘Go Bike’, alongside a bicycle loan scheme (‘Try Cycling to School’) are all being developed in the borough.

Travel Awareness Activities

Hounslow has most commonly run its travel awareness initiatives in association with the schools programme, notably during Bike Week and European Mobility Week. Examples of initiatives include the popular ‘Bike Breakfast’ initiative, alongside promotions such as ‘In School Without My car’ and ‘Big Wow day’. In addition, a growing Car Club programme is running in the Borough, alongside promotion of Londonliftshare.com, a car sharing database.

‘HARD’ MEASURES

Obviously, Travel Demand Management initiatives can only go so far in increasing the uptake of sustainable transport.

Re-allocation of road space and the removal of actual or perceived physical impediments to walking, cycling or public transport use are also vitally important, if only to ‘lock in’ the change achieved campaigns such as those implemented in Hounslow.

Hounslow has been working hard to implement a range of schemes designed to break down the physical barriers to the uptake of sustainable transport and linking these to the TDM measures outlined above. Some key infrastructure and TDM schemes which have been successful in Hounslow are outlined below.

School Travel Plan implementation

Onsite and offsite engineering measures which complement a school’s travel plan can have a huge impact in terms of increasing the uptake of sustainable transport methods.

LONDON CYCLE NETWORK AND BUS PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT

Hounslow are currently in the process of implementing a large number of London Cycle Network+ linked schemes, generally in association with its award-winning bus priority programme.

Other initiatives

Hounslow has also been successful in improving bus services around the target area through the application of Section 106 funding.⁶ The borough is currently assessing the rationale for developing bus routes to better link up the mainline and tube infrastructure, as well as putting forward plans for a direct Hounslow-Stratford service using existing heavy rail infrastructure.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN HOUNSLOW

The London Borough of Hounslow is in the process of developing an integrated strategy for the development of its Travel Demand Management activities over the next three years. This builds on current successes, but pays greater attention to three core strategic approaches:

- Developing bespoke approaches for the delivery of Travel Demand Management initiatives for each of the different communities in Hounslow – paying

particular attention to developing appropriate engagement techniques and effective initiatives for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups (which in Hounslow are actually the majority), the elderly and those with disabilities, and women and girls. This relies on coupling information on individual attitudes to cars and driving with social segmentation databases such as MOSIAC.

- Evidence suggests that the majority of people only give consideration to their travel mode when they are forced to consider their habitual behaviour as a result of some external trigger. This trigger could be moving house, changing job or school, experiencing a health scare or any external stimulus that results in a re-evaluation of an individual’s value set. As such, we are seeking to concentrate and target our travel awareness campaigns, wherever possible, towards these ‘trigger’ moments – e.g. at a point when people are forced to consider their travel habits or lifestyle, as opposed to a blanket approach.
- Wherever possible, maximise the use of resources in engaging residents and link together a range of partner objectives, for example:
 - Linking physical activity promotion by our colleagues in the PCT together with our own cycle promotion.
 - Getting business buy-in by developing networks looking at the wider issues of sustainability, with a focus on travel and transport embedded within.

The strategy identifies three ‘engagement techniques’, outlined in Figure 3, which will form the basis for future work packages in this field.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that Travel Demand Management can play an important role in reducing both peak and overall pressure on London’s congested road space. Additionally, it has the advantage of being quicker and easier to implement than larger infrastructure projects. However, more coordinated approaches to both Travel Demand Management and infrastructure improvements are required. This will help with determining how effective a coordinated approach is, and also help to assess to what degree hard infrastructure changes are required to lock in soft Travel Demand Management measures. Work in London, including Hounslow’s integrated approach outlined in this article, will help reduce traffic congestion on London’s roads and demonstrate the value of combining Travel Demand Management and infrastructure improvements.

References

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- Congestion Charging information: www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/projectsandschemes/roadsandpublicspaces/2265.aspx

Notes

- 1 www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/Collections/OnlineResources/X2oL/Themes/1337
- 2 www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/fifth-annual-impacts-monitoring-report-2007-07-07.pdf
- 3 www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/ssdataset.asp?vlnk=9664&More=Y
- 4 Phil Goodwin, ACT conference February 2008
- 5 www.tfl.gov.uk/corporate/media/newscentre/3543.aspx
- 6 Section 106 funding comes from binding agreements between developers and the local authority, under which the developer agrees to pay towards improvements linked to the development as part of the planning permission. For example, the developer may agree to fund improved bus services or cycling facilities.

| ENGAGEMENT TECHNIQUE | THEMATIC WORK PACKAGES |
|----------------------|--|
| Strategie and policy | 1 Planning and DC review |
| Business to business | 2 School travel plan programme 3 Travel planning for the health sector 4 Workplace travel planning 5 Destination travel plans |
| Bussines to consumer | 6 Targeted travel awareness campaigns 7 Personalised travel planning |

Figure 3. Hounslow’s engagement techniques for Travel Demand Management.

