

Wandsworth Cycling Campaign



Pre-CRIM Submission

LCN Link 209 – Chelsea Bridge South to Cedars Road



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1.0 SUMMARY

- This link forms part of a north/south corridor of strategic importance to cyclists.
- At peak times, cycle traffic represents 40% or more of all traffic using this link.
- At off-peak times excessive motor vehicle speed presents a danger for other road users.
- Current cycle facilities lack coherence & continuity. Some are dangerous to use.
- The character of the southern section changes markedly when parking is allowed.

We propose a number of measures including:

- Effective control of vehicle speed by measures such as enforcement.
- Re-location of southbound on-footway cycle path between Chelsea Bridge and Queens Circus.
- Provision of well-marked advisory cycle lanes between Queens Circus and Silverthorne Road.
- Provision of shared-use on-footway alternatives to the use of the central railway underbridge.
- Clear prohibition of Right turns out of Southholm Street
- Measures to control speed of vehicles turning right into Silverthorne Road.
- Removal of pinch point at Broughton Road.
- Provision of dispersed cycle parking at retail locations.

2.0 General discussion of the Link

This short Link forms the primary N/S route in this part of London. To the South it links directly to Clapham, Tooting, Balham and Streatham. To the north it links to Victoria, Westminster and the West End. In addition to supporting a considerable number of commuter journeys, it also carries local traffic, as shown in Figure 1. The impact of cycle traffic on enhancing the overall capacity of this route without detriment to the environment can be determined by an analysis of traffic count data.

The WBC pre-CRIM report gives summary data on traffic volumes based on surveys of cycles carried out in November 2002. It is noted that, averaged over a day, over one in 11 vehicles using this route is a cycle. However, in contrast to the overall traffic volumes, cycle traffic is concentrated in the morning and evening peaks (Figure 1). In the morning peak the northbound flow measured by the cycle count was 385 cyclists per hour (7:30 to 8:30). This may be compared to the maximum vehicle volume of 569 vehicles per hour from the traffic survey. Even if one assumes that no cycles are counted by the automated traffic counter, this shows that, at peak, cyclists make up a minimum

of 40% of the northbound vehicle traffic. This value is likely to be an underestimate of the current situation since the overall vehicle peak volumes fall outside peak commuting times (likely owing to congestion reducing capacity) and because the numbers cycling have increased considerably since 2002.

The cycle survey conducted in 2002 (Figure 1) also shows considerably more cyclists travelling north in the morning peak than using this link in the opposite direction in the evening peak. This disparity supports the reports from individual WCC members that they preferred not to use this link in a southbound direction.

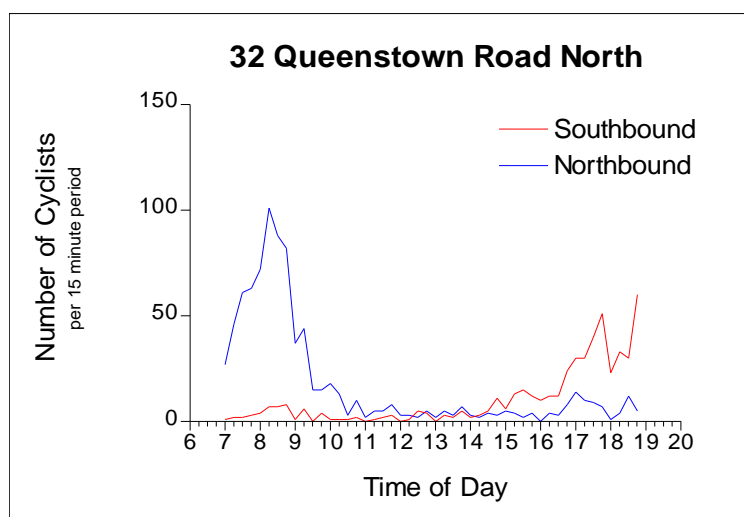


Figure 1. TfL screenline cycle survey, November 2002

3. Comments on the WBC Pre-CRIM report and the CRISP process

The WBC report gives a good summary of the nature of the roads involved and of the existing cycle-specific measures in place. However, we have a number of comments on matters of detail which are listed below.

- (i) Wandsworth Cycling Campaign was not sent the Stakeholder Questionnaire prior to the setting of a date for the CRIM. We deprecate the explicit policy decision to set dates for the CRIM during working hours when external user representatives – key stakeholders - could be expected to have difficulties in attending.
- (ii) The current entry treatment at Silverthorne Road listed in the pre-CRIM report as an existing cycle facility appears to be designed to allow HGVs to turn into Silverthorne Road at speed and cannot be considered a facility for cyclists.
- (iii) In general, we agree with the report in finding that the volume of (motor) traffic using this route is a major constraint to cycling (and walking). We would, however, add that the relatively high speed of this traffic is equally important as a deterrent at least to cyclists, especially at off-peak times.
- (iv) We note that the report does not suggest any specific measures that might improve conditions for cyclists using this link.

4. WCC Link Inspection

Following a call on our e-mail discussion forum, a group of WCC members visited the Link on Saturday 30th October. The results and conclusions of the detailed examination that was carried out will be presented as appropriate during the post-CRIM design process. Only the main impressions are given here.

Chelsea Bridge to Queens Circus

This is a straight section of road that suffers of excessive traffic speed at off-peak times (and is regularly used as a motorcycle racetrack). Northbound cyclists have a choice of using the bus lane or a cycle track on the footway. The track on the footway is appreciated by less confident cyclists and requires only minor improvements to the surface and to improve circulation in the area of the bus stop near the north entrance to the park. This footway is little used by pedestrians and is not interrupted by access routes. The bus lane, although narrow, provides a reasonable option for more confident cyclists. Southbound cyclists presently have the choice of sharing the single traffic lane on the carriageway or using the cycle track located on the eastern footway. Cyclists wishing to use the road after crossing the bridge on the shared-use footway are well served by the newly-built ramp leading to a short mandatory cycle lane built to proper standards (although this narrows to just under the minimum 1.5 m as it leads into the ASL). There are no major barriers to on-road cyclists until the lead-in to the traffic lights at Queens Circus. By contrast the cycle track on the eastern footway is of extremely poor quality and places those using it in danger of collision at several points. The northern end of this track is disjointed and does not deal well with movement around the bus stop. Further on, the track is blocked by young trees, forcing cyclists into the pedestrian area. At three points, those using the track must give way to other traffic using access roads. Two of these, Sopwith Way and, in particular, the entry to the service station, have large radii, resulting in vehicles turning in at speed. It is unlikely that motorists making these turns would notice and give proper consideration to any cyclists on the footway. Cyclists approaching these junctions would need to stop in order to ensure that none of the vehicles approaching from behind were about to turn. The participants of this CRIM are invited to cycle along this section of footway, to assess for themselves the difficulties, including poor sightlines, of cyclists using this infrastructure. We propose that this be rebuilt as part of the carriageway. This will have benefits for pedestrians as well as cyclists.

Queens Circus to Battersea Park Road

In general, Queens Circus was not thought to present particular problems to the WCC inspection group in its present form. However, we would welcome the introduction of a signalised junction since we believe that, if properly implemented, it would improve conditions for cyclists. The short section between Queens Circus and the junction with Battersea Park Road was thought to present particular problems because of its narrowness and high volumes of motor traffic. We would oppose the introduction of an additional lane of traffic on this section as suggested in the proposals of the developers of the Power Station. We would like to see the introduction of well-marked advisory cycle lanes of adequate width in both directions on this section. Alternatively, we would welcome the introduction of a bus lane here if it was felt appropriate. The junction with Battersea Park Road needs further clarification of the proper line that cyclists will be taking. Northbound cyclists need to cross two lanes of right-turning traffic in order to proceed on this link whilst Southbound cyclists need to move to the right as they cross the junction in order to properly line up with the slightly staggered entry to the southern part of Queenstown Road.

Junction with Battersea Park Road to Junction with Silverthorne Road.

This section forms the most difficult part of this Link since it involves fast moving traffic negotiating a blind bend where the road passes under the second of the railway overbridges on a section of road immediately bordered by walls. In general, for southbound cyclists, we thought that the bus lane (just) gives adequate protection. We would like to see this lane enforced at all times, rather than the present limited times. Drivers turning right out of Southholm Street present a considerable danger to northbound cyclists (and other road users) since they are hidden by the bend in the road. We propose banning right turns from Southholm Street. We also ask that the possibility of linking Southholm Street with Strasburg Road for foot and cycle traffic is investigated. In addition, we propose that a pathway (most likely shared-use) is placed on the footway, primarily to link with the cycle routes on Ravenet Street which are currently greatly under-used. A shared-use link from Ravenet Street to Broughton Street on the western footway would open up an important North-South corridor to less confident cyclists.

Southbound cyclists do not have the benefit of a bus lane in this section. We would especially welcome effective measures (such as active enforcement) to reduce vehicle speed in this section. We also propose the introduction of a well-marked, advisory cycle lane of adequate width for the entire length of this section. This will not, however, be sufficient to support less confident cyclists and we therefore propose that a shared-use cycle path is introduced on the eastern footway between the point at which it becomes raised above the carriageway near Queenstown Road Station to a point just north of Ingate Place. It appears to us that the footway is of sufficient width throughout and that this could be incorporated in the proposals for improvements in access to the Station. The Junction with Silverthorne Road is currently used by a considerable number of HGVs that take the turn at speed, endangering northbound cyclists travelling uphill on Queenstown Road. We propose that this junction is re-modelled in order to reduce the speed of turning vehicles.

Junction of Silverthorne Road to Cedars Road

This section of route presents most difficulties when parking is allowed at 'off-peak' times. At these times the remaining carriageway is very limited and all but the most confident cyclists are squeezed alongside the parked cars giving a high risk of 'dooring', particularly perhaps for those travelling downhill. Any cycle lane marked on the road would need to be separated by at least 1 m from the outer edge of parked cars. However, such a lane might be considered to be positioned unnecessarily far out into the carriageway at those times when the northbound bus lane is clear of parked vehicles. One specific problem in this section is caused by the pinch point at the junction with Broughton Street where the southbound carriageway narrows to just over 3 metres. We propose that consideration be given to removing the island carrying the traffic signal and that the signal be cantilevered from the edge of the road. We also note that vehicles leaving the eastern part of Broughton Street jump the red light much more frequently than they do at other places. The reasons for this should be investigated and remedial measures proposed.

5. WCC proposed Improvements

The improvements suggested above are summarised in the table below.

Ref.	Site	Problem	Proposed Action
209.1	Toucan Crossing near S. end of Chelsea Bridge	Poor location to assist cyclists entering park	Install 'slave' crossing to N. of park entrance or relocate present crossing
209.2	Northbound cycle path on footway between Queens Circus and Chelsea Bridge	Poor surface in parts, conflict at bus stop and park entrance	Remedial works, minor re-alignment
209.3	Southbound cycle path on footway between Chelsea Bridge and Queens Circus	Incoherent design, multiple obstructions, dangerous junctions	Incorporate cycle path onto the roadway as mandatory cycle lane of at least 2 m width with full priority at junctions. This will necessitate re-location of a small number of saplings and some re-allocation of space away from pedestrians, but is justified by the reduced danger and increased facility for cyclists and by the greatly lessened potential for conflict between cyclists and pedestrians
209.4	Queens Circus	Multi-lane roundabout	We support signalisation with well-designed facilities for cyclists
209.5	Section Queens Circus to junction with Battersea Park Road,	Narrow, busy carriageway.	We oppose the introduction of further, narrow traffic lanes. We propose the installation of well-marked advisory cycle lanes of adequate width
209.6	Junction with Battersea Park Road	Poor indication of cycle routeing and staggered alignment	Provision of well-defined guidance for southbound cyclists at the junction. Provision of 'elephants foot' markings to establish proper line for northbound cyclists
209.7	Southbound section from Battersea Park Road to after junction with Silverthorne Road	Fast moving traffic, blind bend, no 'escape route' onto footway at roadside	Provision of well-marked advisory cycle lanes of adequate width Introduce effective measures to curb speed
209.8	Southbound section from north of Queenstown Road Station to south of Ingate Place	Fast moving traffic, blind bend, no footway at roadside	Shared use on-footway alternative to road. Will need careful design at Station entrance. Should be integrated with planned access improvements

Ref.	Site	Problem	Proposed Action
209.9	Junction with Southholm Street	Vehicles turning right into Queenstown Road with very poor sight lines	Prohibit right turn
209.10	Section from Broughton Street (west) to Ravenet Street	Lack of access to/from useful, quiet cycle routes	Provide on-footway shared use two-way cycle path to link quiet cycle routes either side of the railway
209.11	Junction with Silverthorne Road	Vehicles turning right into Silverthorne Road at speed conflicting with southbound cyclists	Re-model junction to reduce vehicle speeds
209.12	Junction with Broughton Street (east)	Pinch point – traffic leaving Broughton Street running red light	Remove island, investigate sequencing of lights
209.13	Section from Silverthorne Road to Cedars Road	Parked vehicles and fast traffic	Provide clear marking to show proper line for cyclists when parking allowed Introduce effective measures to curb speed
209.14	All sections	Lack of short-term cycle parking	Install 1-2 Sheffield Stands by each group of shops etc.