Response from Landscape Institute London Branch to Transport for London's Consultation "*A central London grid for cycling*"

This response is from the London Branch of the Landscape Institute to Transport for London's consultation on the "*A central London grid for cycling*" which includes both "quiet streets" and "superhighways". The LI London Branch consists of and represents landscape architects in Greater London, the UK body for chartered landscape architects representing over 15% of the UK's membership. We have a dedicated website which provides further information about our organisation- http://www.landscapeinstitute.org. The Branch welcomes publication of the draft document and the public consultation and makes the following points:

1.0 Emphasis on North London:
1.1 The area of the study (TfL zone 1) favours north London with only a small proportion south of the river. There are major growth areas south of the river at Elephant and Castle, London Bridge, and Vauxhall Cross areas and these should be adequately served. The study area should be extended at least as far as the north and south circular roads. Or, if this cannot be done in terms of acting upon the current stage, then a second phase should be implemented.

2.0 Planning and design
2.1 London needs a cycle network, which is both well planned and designed. LI London Branch believes that landscape architects can make a substantial contribution to this work. 'Quietness' is desirable but it is not the primary characteristic of a good cycleway. Routes should be functional, sustainable and enjoyable whilst contributing to the streetscape environment. Cycling should be accessible and safe.

Sustainability - in order to increase the percentage of London journeys made by bike (e.g.from 2% to 35%) cycle routes must lead from origins to destinations in the most direct way possible. An increase in cycle use would reduce air pollution, promote public health and exercise, reduce energy usage and assist in making London cleaner, eco friendly and more sustainable.
Functionality - cycle routes should be safe, well marked, well surfaced and separate from other road users where traffic use is significant enough to create conflict;
Visual Amenity and Experience - routes should give the cyclist as good an experience as possible - by being quiet and by providing an attractive visual experience, the surface should be cared for and not punctured with road gullies and bumps.
Accessibility - cycling should be accessible, for young and old, for advantaged and disadvantaged, male and female, and cater for different needs.Only when the cycle network is safe for 49% of journeys to school and for 25% of journeys to work, as in Holland, will it be possible to say that there is good provision for cycling in London. Much of London is as flat as Holland where 34% of all journeys less than 7.5km are by bicycle and 25% of all journeys are by bike, London is not as hilly as Switzerland where 9% of all journeys are by bike. London's percentage by comparison is 2%. Good landscape planning for cycle routes could do much to encourage cycling.

Cycling provision is a way of transforming the streets of London for all users. If 49% of all primary school children in London travelled by bicycle and if 25% of journeys to work were by bicycle then London's roads would be quieter, less polluted and more efficient. Vehicle congestion would be reduced and streets would be safer and friendlier for pedestrians. Proper cycle provision would be a way of making the streets of London safe, usable and accessible and pleasant for all. To quote the Dutch Ministerie van Verkeer end Waterstaat report '*Cycling in the Netherlands':* 2009:

> "Encouraging bicycle use is not an isolated objective. Stimulating bicycle use and providing cycling facilities serve a broad range of social objectives. By way of illustration, here are the objectives of the Amstelveen bicycle Policy Memorandum 2006-2015:
> • Increasing the accessibility of companies and facilities. Directly by improving the cycling

facilities for clients and employees arriving by bicycle. And indirectly, by stimulating clients and employees arriving by car to switch to the bicycle or to a combination of bicycle and public transport. This improves accessibility for other car traffic.
• Improvement in the quality of the living environment. Directly, because many inhabitants value safe and comfortable cycling facilities. And indirectly, because the bicycle replaces short car journeys which produce a relatively large amount of (noise) disturbance.
• Increasing social safety and traffic safety. Both objectively (reducing the number of traffic accident victims) and subjectively (reducing feelings of danger).
• Improvement of public health. Directly, as bicycle use contributes to a daily exercise regime. And indirectly, the air quality improves if people use the bicycle for short journeys instead of the car.
• Increase development opportunities. Many inhabitants in Amstelveen do not have access to a car. Good and safe bicycle facilities may allow them to participate in activities independently. Disabled people may also depend on the bicycle infrastructure. Indirectly, to promote independence and the development of children, it is important that they can move independently from a young age." (p.26)

Quietways are a useful but minor tactic. However, they should be welcomed and should be an element of overall traffic management, with bicycle priority and mix speed limits of 30km per hour (20 mph) as in the Dutch *fietstraat*. Experience of cycle planning in London over the last 30 years has shown that signposting quietways does little for cyclists. They are not the best way of addressing London's needs - which are for a type of cycle provision which is the norm in Dutch, Danish, German and Scandinavian cities.

In Holland the quickest way between any two places in a town is the route of the cycleway. This is the way to begin to address London's low level of cycling (2% of all journeys according to TfL figures). This is the way to enable young and old to cycle safely. Not until the Old Kent Road, Nine Elms Lane (one candidate for London's worst cycleway) and the Edgware Road have adequate separate bicycle provision as in Holland or Denmark will we be able to say London is really opening its highways to the cyclist.

The Dutch CROW manual provides an excellent model for cycle planning and has been translated into English. It is based on five principles:

- **Safety**
- **Directness:** short and rapid routes from origin to destination.
- **Comfort:** good surface, generous space and little hindrance from other traffic participants.
- **Attractiveness:** an attractive and socially safe environment, without smell or noise pollution.
- **Cohesion:** logical and cohesive routes.

Road engineering design should also follow Dutch practice, with separate low level traffic lights, separate cycle lane provision at roundabouts and cycle priority (no more cycle accident black-spots such as Lambeth Bridge south side, Blackfriars Bridge, St George's Circus or Bromley-by-Bow roundabout).

We also make the point that adequate bicycle provision should be seen as part of a policy of humanising London's streets by reducing vehicle dominance, and be linked to repaving of roads and footpaths and tree planting (to combat high temperatures in summer) similar to those policies followed in Paris and in France prompted in part by the ***loi LAURE**, (la loi sur l'air et l'utilisation rationnelle de l'énergie)* of 1996 particularly Article 20 (ref. http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=LEGITEXT000005622536&dateTexte=20091103).

We further point out that landscape architects working jointly with highway engineers and the local community are in an excellent position to design and deliver such a transformation of

London's streets. This policy should be a major commitment not a series of add-ons or paint and poster actions; such a policy would require a major political and financial commitment to retro-fit London's streets to make them fit for Dutch, Scandinavian and German levels of safe cycling.

3.0. Inadequate Superhighway planning:
3.1 We welcome the proposal for 20 miles/ 32 km of "Superhighways" planned to be "largely segregated and on main roads." However, the proposed network is too fragmented: refer to the map on http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/roadusers/central-london-grid-map.pdf

3.2 East-West links: we believe the network should be extended within the TfL zone 1 as follows:
a) East-west between Paddington and Old Street under Westway, then along Marylebone Road, Euston Road, Pentonville Road and City Road
b) East-west along the north bank of the Thames by filling in the missing links in the present Superhighway proposal between Lambeth Bridge roundabout and Westminster Bridge through Parliament Square, and westwards from Chelsea Bridge along Cheyne Walk and Chelsea Embankment
c) East-west south of the river between London Bridge and Vauxhall Bridge taking a line along Southwark Street, Stamford Street, York Road and Lambeth Palace Road.

3.3 North-South links: We note there is only one continuous north-south route across Central London. This provision is inadequate. Additional north-south routes could be:
a) Vauxhall to Maida Vale by filling in the missing link across Hyde Park, preferably by using Park Lane and extending northwards along the Edgware Road and Maida Vale. [b) Elephant and Castle (linking to the Old Kent Road southwards) to Euston and Camden Town along Waterloo Road, Waterloo Bridge, Kingsway, Southampton Row and Eversholt Street. The June 2013 TfL *Central London Cycle Census* identified the Elephant and Castle as the busiest cycle junction in London, which is a reason for a high level of investment in this route.
c) Elephant and Castle to Hoxton via Borough Road, London Bridge, though the City via Gracechurch Street and Bishopsgate to join with the current proposal northwards along Pittfield Street.

4.0 Integration with other transport modes: car and train
4.1 Cycling should be integrated with other modes of transport, an excellent example is the *OV-fiets* [public transport bicycle] in Holland which provides rental bikes at railway station which are charged for by scanning the public transport (season) ticket, in London this would be provided by scanning an Oyster card. Barclays' bicycle hire should be provided at London's railway and underground stations and be payable by Oyster card. There should be park and (cycle) ride provision as in Amsterdam where when you park a car in a parking garage you can get a bike as part of the parking charge.

5.0 Cycle Provision as part of new developments,
5.0 Cycle parking provision should be mandatory in new developments as part of the planning conditions. Cycle parking provision should not be hidden away in unsafe back-of-plot areas. The provision should be up front in areas where it can have visual policing. Larger developments should provide cycle hire, cycle parking and cycle repair facilities.

6.0 Cycling Education
6.1 Mandatory cycling instruction at schools should be introduced following not only Dutch example, but also English precedents in the 1950s. Such education based provision can be an additional holiday or end of the day activity. The aim should be to get the majority of London's children cycling safely.

7.0 Quietways on streets which are under borough council management: there needs to be a financial and political commitment at London Borough level.
7.1 It is of concern that there is no discussion in **"*A central London grid for cycling*"** of how the quietway proposals can be funded and implemented by the less-wealthy London Boroughs. While Westminster and the City may well be able to fund such improvements, other London Boroughs are not so favoured. In particular Southwark, Camden and Islington will require financial support, though there may be scope for section 106 funding from new developments for wider quietway provision. Currently, the commitment of many London's boroughs to cycle provision would require a culture change.

Finally we refer you to the ample literature available of how to implement effective cycling policies, a brief list is below:

Fietsberaad, a bicycle consultancy, funded by the Dutch Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, supports the bicycle policy of decentralised authorities with knowledge and information. **www.bicyclecouncil.org**

KpVV (Kennisplatform Verkeer en Vervoer, or transport and traffic knowledge platform)
http://www.crow.nl/vakgebieden/verkeer-vervoer/kpvv

The CROW is the national Dutch knowledge platform for infrastructure, traffic, transportation and public spaces. **www.crow.nl**.

The research unit of the Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, AVV, has a large number of reports on traffic in the Netherlands in the English section of its website, including 'passenger transport' and various publications relevant to bicycle policy**: www.rws-avv.nl**

Dutch Ministry of Transport **CyclingintheNetherlands 2009** is available on
http://www.fietsberaad.nl/index.cfm?lang=en&repository=Cycling+in+the+Netherlands

All are available either in English version or are easily accessible using translation software.

As a major stakeholder for the built environment, we would be pleased to assist TfL in formulating policies and strategies to significantly improve London's cycling provisions.

Yours faithfully,

Wing Lai

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