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Transforming Oxford Street

Part 1: The Busttterfly Effect

11 min [95 comments](#)

Some readers may already be aware of the current consultation on the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street between Orchard Street (just to the west of Selfridges) and Oxford Circus. This is part of a programme to realise some of the Mayor's manifesto commitments. Unfortunately, in the minds of many, the scheme has become equated with removing buses (and other remaining traffic) from this section of Oxford Street.

It's only collateral damage

In reality, in the context of the overall scheme, the removal of buses from Oxford Street could be seen as a minor piece of collateral damage – it is certainly not what the scheme is primarily about. That is not how local residents, concerned that all the traffic will be diverted into local streets, see it. It has also not gone down too well with many proponents of bus usage – both individuals and organisations. Consequently, the scheme is controversial. But then, if it wasn't controversial it would have been done years ago.

We put the cart before the horse

The logical thing to do would be to look first at the scheme as a whole, its objectives and how it is trying to achieve them. But, as is often the case, focus gets drawn to one aspect of the scheme and, in this case, this is that removal of buses. So, to get this out the way and enable us to look at the total scheme without being distracted by bus issues, we have decided to focus in part 1 of this series on the issue of removing buses from Oxford Street.

Rerouting or curtailing bus routes has given rise to a lot of comment but it seems that, up to now, no-one, individual or organisation, has looked at *all* documents associated with the consultation to see what the plans actually entail. In particular, when looking in detail at some of the bus routes involved a slightly different picture emerges from the general overall picture given in the consultation.

Not an easy job

When Sadiq Khan was elected Mayor in 2016 it was soon clear that a priority during his tenure would be removing traffic from Oxford Street. Furthermore, the objective of doing this for almost the entire length of Oxford Street by the time the Elizabeth line opened in December 2018 meant that timescales were inevitably going to be tight.

A quiet moment, traffic-wise, in Oxford Street

TfL and the new deputy Mayor for Transport, Val Shawcross, were quickly on the case.

Unsurprisingly, they quickly realised that you could not just look at Oxford Street in isolation. The effect of removing buses from the street would not just lead to localised effects. At the same time, they were aware that bus passenger traffic in central London was dropping sharply and this was largely due to increased traffic congestion. This meant that people walked or took the Tube or other means to complete their journey – or did not make the journey at all. On top of that, the basic bus network structure had not really changed much over the years and seemed to be based on what was historically seen as the desired network. A thorough overhaul of the bus network seemed well overdue and now was the time to do it.

Considering the bigger picture

As Shawcross explained to the now-defunct TfL Finance and Policy Committee shortly after taking office, there was no point in looking at Oxford Street in isolation when any pedestrianisation scheme would have ramifications throughout most of Zone 1. Or, as she put it, you could well find yourself having to alter the stopping arrangements in Trafalgar Square as a consequence of changes you made in Oxford Street.

It was quickly decided to act on a long-suggested plan to significantly reduce the number of buses travelling along Oxford Street. The number of buses, many of them often nearly empty, had almost become a standing joke. It certainly seemed to many members of the public that buses in Oxford Street couldn't move because of the presence of other buses.

Broken links

The reduction in the number of buses going along Oxford Street appears to have taken place without too much concern on the part of the public. TfL calculated the number of 'broken links' (assumed to be per day) where a bus passenger could no longer make their through journey at around 35,000. Passengers affected would either have to change buses where before they did not have to, walk for part of their journey, find some other means of making the journey – or simply not make it. Some fare-paying passengers who now had to change buses would not experience an increase in cost because they had a Travelcard or the daily bus cap already applied to them, or because they were able to take advantage of the new hopper fare. Even so, changing buses would be an inconvenience.

London Travelwatch regard the number broken links with extreme concern. Looking at the absolute numbers does make it seem worrying, but the number of people affected amounts to around 700 reasonably filled buses. This is a significant number of people

but to what extent each is affected varies. For some it might just mean a slightly longer walk. Taken in the context of total bus travel within Zone 1 for the whole day it is still significant but nevertheless only affecting a small minority of bus travellers. TfL take the view that such inconveniences tend to be short-lived as there is a high rate of 'churn' in bus travel, so over time people adjust their place of work, places they visit for leisure and even the location of their home in the light of the transport system as it is.

Upside downtown

There is also, arguably, the upside of the reduction of buses along Oxford Street as those buses that remain can make their journeys more quickly. There seems to be no evidence published concerning this, one way or the other, and the suspicion (at least here in LR Towers) is that the void is likely being filled by more taxis taking advantage of the extra available road space.

Fewer buses means more taxis?

The results of reducing the number of buses through Oxford Street is important in the light of the proposed next stage as, according to the consultation, it is intended to reduce the number of through buses serving the Oxford Street area from nine to just two. The routes chosen to remain are the 139 and the 390. These were apparently chosen to minimise the number of passengers affected by the withdrawal of through routes. It is believed a lot of existing passengers who currently use the bus will take advantage of the Elizabeth line once it is opened, so a frequent service on the two remaining routes will be sufficient.

The key to the plan

To understand why it was decided to withdraw so many through routes one needs to understand the plan for the remaining routes and the reasons behind it.

Map showing Wigmore Street at the top. It also shows Henrietta Place, Cavendish Square and Margaret St

The obvious place to re-route the buses is along Wigmore Street to the north of Oxford Street. There are a couple of problems with this. The first problem is that the local street network probably could not cope with the volume of buses currently running down Oxford Street. Certainly, having sufficient bus stops in Wigmore Street would greatly

hinder other traffic and the extra traffic would probably put a severe strain on various junctions. The second problem with Wigmore Street is that it really is too far from Oxford Street to expect people, possibly laden with shopping, to use it to catch their bus.

Junction of Henrietta Place and Chapel Place

The plan is not to use Wigmore Street, or at least not much of it, for buses but instead to use Henrietta Place, the south side of Cavendish Square and Margaret Street as the main route for buses – a route which is much closer to Oxford Street than Wigmore Street. Currently, the roads involved are a bit of a mess, traffic-wise, as traffic flow is designed to support the current main flows in Oxford Street and Wigmore Street. Nevertheless, the route is nice and wide and, for the most part, ideal as a bus route.

Overcoming objections

The use of Henrietta Place as a through route for buses does much to overcome the local residents' objection that the displaced buses will clog up local traffic. The route will also be available to taxis and cycles – but not general traffic as entry will be restricted into Margaret Street. Whether taxis choose to use this route or use Wigmore Street instead is another matter.

Local protest

One of the objections to removing buses from Oxford Street is that people will have further to walk to a bus stop. There seems to be little evidence that people will have much further to walk to the *nearest* bus stop although it may be true that some fairly long walks may be involved if people wish to avoid changing buses.

Illusion or reality?

Part of the illusion of convenient bus stops in Oxford Street is down to the sheer number of them. This doesn't take into account that not all routes currently stop at all stops. So a bus stop for a required route could easily be 200 metres away. There are even bus routes that go along part of Oxford Street but do not stop at *any* stops in Oxford Street – for instance, route 13 stops in Orchard Street by Selfridges and then goes along Oxford Street without serving any stops before next stopping in Park Lane.

The proposed bus routes via Henrietta Place will be around 200m at most from Oxford Street with quite a few side streets available to walk down. Some will be pedestrianised and the consultation emphasises the importance of clear 'sight lines' so that people can see the street in question and could even see buses using it. With around 17.5 buses per hour proposed in each direction just on the two routes already mentioned, it should not be long before people are reassured by the sight of a bus.

Old Cavendish St as proposed looking north from Oxford St

Another advantage of the proposed routeing for buses is that some department stores already have entrances on the route. So, for many shoppers, it is simply a case of leaving the store by a different exit. A lot of the success, or otherwise, may well depend on how well the department stores signpost their exits so that bus passengers leave the store by the most appropriate exit.

A map that sends the wrong message

Supposedly the only two through routes remaining

One of the problems with the perception of what the plan is for buses is the prominence of the above map showing the proposed through routes. Whilst correct in showing the only two through routes, this map gives many misleading impressions to anyone who casually glances at it.

Route 22

For starters, route 22 is not shown. Route 22 serves Berkeley Square in the heart of Mayfair. It uses Conduit Street to reach its terminus at Oxford Circus and is a replacement for the traditional route from Green Park to Oxford Circus via Davies Street previously operated by various different bus numbers over recent years. Not showing route 22 gives the impression that the south side of Oxford Street is no longer served.

It also fails to show the through routes that use Regent Street. These three routes (C2, 88, 453) serve Oxford Street but appear to be excluded because they don't currently

run *along* Oxford Street. It could be argued it is fairer to talk about the through bus service being reduced from twelve to five routes rather than from nine to two.

No buses at all, apparently

Somehow, betteroxfordstreet.org comes to the conclusion that there will be no through routes left. Their poster asks “If Oxford Street closes, what route would you take?”. A valid question certainly but the suggestion that all the through bus routes in the area will cease to exist in any form is somewhat wide of the mark and somewhat contradicting their earlier suggestion that all the buses will be displaced from Oxford Street and be rerouted along other streets.

A better route 73 than today?

More critically, neither the TfL map described above nor any other of the documents prominently shown in the consultation make it clear that there will be another route serving Henrietta Place just north of Oxford Street. One of the unsatisfactory features of this consultation is that the most detailed maps of bus routes, the [bus flow maps](#) – the ones that actually give the useful and accurate information for those who want the details of the plan – are very difficult to find.

Route 73 in blue

In fact, one of the busiest routes in London, the 73 (shown in dark blue on the bus flow map), will terminate very close to Henrietta Place. Its last stop to set down passengers will be in Welbeck Street. Furthermore, the first stop for route 73 on its return journey to Stoke Newington is very conveniently located in Henrietta Street itself – just north of Old Cavendish Street. Route 12 (shown in red) will be going along three sides of Cavendish Square (including the south side) and also Margaret Street. Sadly it will be running empty whilst doing so – something that seems a bit of a wasted opportunity.

Maybe a better route 94 than apparent

The impression the consultation gives you for route 94

At the other end of Oxford Street, there is a similar situation where the future service portrayed seems to be worse than what is suggested by the detailed documents. Route 94 is a busy route from the west. On a map in the consultation document this is shown vaguely as terminating at Marble Arch. This would not be very convenient for passengers to Oxford Street and even less convenient to passengers *from* Oxford Street, as a trek across Park Lane is implied. At least part of the plan involves a new pedestrian crossing of the southbound lane of Park Lane.

North Row Bus Stand

This is not what is suggested by some of the [more detailed design documents](#). In fact, Westminster City Council's highly detailed maps are invaluable for trying to work out what the scheme actually involves, as they show all the proposed bus stands – and you don't have proposals for bus stands unless they are intended to be used. Couple this with the bus flow maps – provided as part of the consultation, but not easy to find – and one realises that the proposal is actually for route 94 to terminate at a stand on North Row just south of Oxford Street. Although it will convey passengers as far as the stand (according to the flow map) it will run empty from the stand. This is understandable because this fairly narrow and unappealing road is not an ideal place pick up passengers.

Route 94 (in red) shown on bus flow map

Sadly, yet again, we have a situation where the buses will be running empty past stops where there is bound to be passenger demand. TfL claim that there isn't the space to locate new westbound stops on Oxford Street between Orchard Street and Portman Street, yet this is fairly hard to believe. It may be the case that the proposed two-way Baker Street scheme would scupper any such proposal or it may be that, with a proposal to fully pedestrianise Oxford Street all the way to Marble Arch in future, TfL are anxious not to provide a new facility only to take it away again a couple of years later.

You ain't seen nothin' yet

There is little doubt that removing buses from Oxford Street between Oxford Circus and Orchard St is going to be fairly dramatic. Yet, this is just the first stage. By December 2019 it is proposed to remove buses between Oxford Circus and Tottenham Court Road station as well.

The obvious alternative route to avoid the eastern half of Oxford Street is via Mortimer Street and Goodge Street. The problem is that Camden Council is adamant that it does not want traffic funnelling into Tottenham Court Road, as it would if it used Goodge Street, as this would impact badly on [their scheme](#) to heavily restrict traffic on this major road and make it much more pedestrian-friendly. So, next year could be more interesting and maybe we will see the Mayor and TfL relent just a little and allow traffic into the extreme east end of Oxford Street so that diverted traffic can avoid travelling along Tottenham Court Road.

TfL also consider that when traffic is removed from all of Oxford Street then the time will be right to see if it is desirable or practical to have a small, disabled-accessible minibus that accesses various locations very close to Oxford Street to assist the mobility impaired.

Further than originally planned

There are now even proposals to remove traffic from the extreme west of Oxford Street – something that was not originally envisaged. That might only involve a short stretch of road but will probably be extremely challenging.

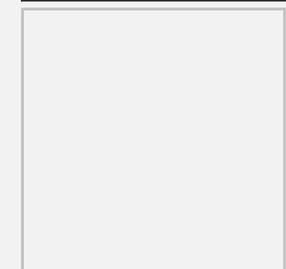
Having looked at the bus issues, the intention is to follow on with an article looking at the overall scheme proposed for Oxford Street, why it is happening, what it is intended to achieve and also look at how other forms of transport are affected. It may seem then that buses get off fairly lightly in the overall scheme of things.

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21 December 2017 by Pedantic of Purley



Written by Pedantic of Purley

95 Comments

1.



Chris Keene 21 December 2017 at 13:55

Really helpful post, which makes this much clearer, was baffled about how they could remove so many buses from Oxford St when so few alternative routes from a quick look at the map.

Forgive the slightly off topic, but (anecdotally) knowing how many people read this site, I was a little disappointed in how few have contributed to the patreon, 12 quid a year to me seems like a bargain for all the stuff I've read.

(PS Editors – if this message generates loads of additional donations can I request more Study's in Sussex please!)

2.

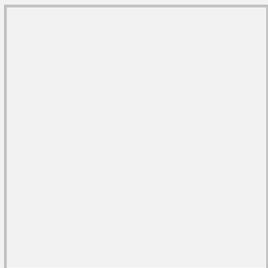


Littlejohn 21 December 2017 at 15:50

Have I misunderstood or is my maths wrong – if 'the number of 'broken links' (assumed to be per day) where a bus passenger could no longer make their through journey is around 35,000' then 'around 70 reasonably filled buses' means each one is carrying 500 pax. If each is carrying 50, which seems a fair guesstimate, then it is 700 buses? Or have I got the wrong end of the stick somewhere?

[Cringeworthy embarrassing that I got this wrong. I have amended the article and worded it slightly differently to take account the more significant number. I think I had it in my mind that not that many people were affected and never actually did the calculation. PoP]

3.



Southern Heights (Light Railway) 21 December 2017 at 16:23

@PoP: Under "You ain't seen nothing yet", first sentence: "between Oxford Circus and is going"...

Reference to answer from quiz removed perhaps?

[Nope. But I can't explain how 'and Orchard Street' got omitted. Now added. PoP]

Otherwise a very good article! I've enjoyed it very much. As I used to work in those parts, what's being proposed is the logical thing to do, without a doubt and something that should have been done decades ago.

4.



Chris J 21 December 2017 at 16:41

Very informative as ever. Just one pet peeve – a reference to buses 'servicing' the stops in Henrietta Place. Please, please, please, bus services 'serve' stops. Servicing is what you do with spanners or bulls, depending on the context.

[I know. I am tempted to say it was an oversight. Now corrected. PoP]

5.



Walthamstow Writer 21 December 2017 at 22:37

As you may imagine I don't agree with what TfL are proposing. While I appreciate the desire not to put forward an article that is entirely negative I do feel there is too much positivity here. The fact is that that thousands and thousands of people have already been inconvenienced and more will be after the next set of change. Within a few months there will no buses between Oxford Circus and Selfridges. Probably 11 months after that there will be no buses between Oxford Circus and Tottenham Court Road. I am assuming here that it will take Westminster City Council roundly a year to actually do the works.

The consultation from TfL is hopelessly rushed due to a politically driven timescale for some of the works to be finished prior to the Mayoral Election in 2020 and Crossrail's opening. The London Assembly have already asked for more time for the many issues to be given proper consideration by the public. It is also noteworthy that the cycle lobby has also been kicking Assembly Members over the proposed cycle route to the north of Oxford St given the flurry of questions from three AMs at last week's Question Time. You will note that that is very likely to clash very badly with any re-routing of buses. Guess which "lobby" is more likely to win in this battle – yep the cyclists.

The problem with these first stage plans is that they are just that. A first stage. I

frankly don't believe TfL and WCC (and Camden Council) have not fully considered the end state position and what will be needed to be done to rip buses away from yet more of Central London. I don't believe the 139 and 390 will remain north of Oxford St beyond 2019 and certainly not after 2020 when the western end of Oxford St is supposed to be paved over. The public are being denied proper oversight of the proposed end state now because the implications are no doubt completely unacceptable. There is certainly no clarity whatsoever as to how the Marble Arch and Tottenham Court Rd areas can handle large volumes of terminating buses. Marble Arch is already at capacity and yet TfL blithely expects yet more buses to terminate there. I believe Camden Council are on record as not wanting buses standing under Centrepont as they want that area as a new piazza. That leaves Earnshaw St which can't handle many buses per hour. That can only mean one thing – a mass withdrawal of many services and merging of others so they do not terminate at each end of Oxford St. It is also worth noting that the lobbying to fully pedestrianise Soho, parts of Fitzrovia and Regent St has already started. If Regent St is touched then we will have lost most of Central London's bus network.

I also feel it is borderline insulting to say that people "have accepted" the recent changes. Users on the Finchley Road have certainly not accepted the lot they've been dealt from the removal of the old route 13 and the con-trick of renumbering the old 82 as the 13. Andrew Dismore AM has been asking Mayor's Questions about this for months and getting precisely nowhere which shows the attitude that we are dealing with here. Unless someone has asked bus passengers about their views in some detail then we simply do not know what they feel about these changes. Previous rounds of consultation, at best a partial view of what the public think, have not endorsed any of the cuts but they have all gone ahead regardless. The shambles that has been foisted on Central London's buses means I have effectively stopped going there as I can't get around as I would wish.

Not everyone wants to walk everywhere in Central London. Not everyone wants to be forced into the Tube or Crossrail. People are being deprived of choice just to satisfy the demands of retailers. It is quite clear that TfL will do nothing to change things if to do so was to compromise the Mayor's policy in any way. We know that is the position because of the statements made to M Hodge by the current and former Transport Commissioners during the Garden Bridge investigation. Therefore people like me who *prefer* to use buses in Central London have basically been given "two fingers" by the politicians and those who answer to them.

I recognise all the above is not in tune with the general "feel" of the article but someone has to voice some disapproval about the systematic dismantling of Central London's bus network.

6.



Ned 22 December 2017 at 12:49

Regrettably, I have to echo Walthamstow Writer's views on this article. I certainly wouldn't refer to a 'better 73' until we can be sure that it will still serve Oxford Circus after the eastern end of Oxford Street is pedestrianised.

7.



Timbeau 22 December 2017 at 14:31

If, as the article suggests, the retailers are in favour of this project, we must assume that they think it will attract more people to the area than it drives away (especially as it will almost certainly also make their deliveries harder to schedule)

The current situation is the worst of both worlds, the pedestrians don't like the street clogged full of buses, and hardly anyone is using the buses anyway because they are not moving. One or two routes running along the backs of the shops along Wigmore Street (and, pace WW, the 390 will serve both Oxford Circus and Selfridges) at a reasonable speed is surely better than the present situation of a dozen or so routes going nowhere fast.

Oxford Street will not be the first High Street in the UK that was a main bus artery to be pedestrianized – far from it. For most of those that have changed, it is almost unthinkable now to imagine the way they were.

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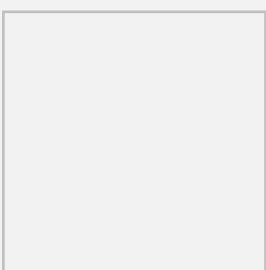
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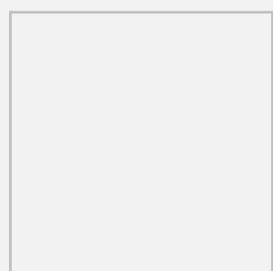
8.



Garry Brown 22 December 2017 at 17:25

As, thankfully, it's many years since I lived in London, clearly I'm going to be out of touch with current matters. But on the problem of room for terminating services at the ends of Oxford St, is it not the case that, like Tube frequency, typical inner London bus frequency is such that they don't need to wait there after load/unload? I.e. just set off back straight away, and if they are ahead of time deal with that by removing that place as a timing point and regulating somewhere a bit further away, where the different services have diverged.

A different but linked issue – are successive bus stops too close together for modern realities, anyway? In Edinburgh for example, some of the city stops for the same route are ridiculously close, while the tram has just one along Princes St between Shandwick Place and St Andrew Square



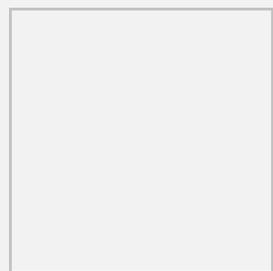
9.

IslandDweller 22 December 2017 at 20:32

Andrew Gilligan was back at city hall this week, giving his view on the Major Khan's progress on cycling infrastructure. Of course, Gilligan has an agenda, but all the same, he made an interesting point.

Gilligan noted that we assume declining bus use is automatically a 'bad thing'. If the people who previously used buses now use a private car or Uber, it probably is. But if (because the design of the urban realm is better) those folk are walking or cycling instead, that is probably a good thing. Certainly the new cycle infrastructure in central London has seen a huge increase in cycle journeys.

I don't think we have enough data to know if Gilligan's assertion holds water, but I was interested in his argument.



10.

Malcolm 22 December 2017 at 22:57

Garry: The great advantage of a terminus as a timing point (and also as a crew change point) is that you don't keep any passengers waiting. Waiting on a bus is even more annoying than waiting for a bus.

The third possibility, of not waiting at all, just forget the timetable, sounds initially attractive but is fatally flawed by bunching.

11.



Malcolm 22 December 2017 at 23:02

Indeed an interesting point from Gilligan. But it's not just data that we're missing. If we knew the numbers of new cyclists, new car users, and journey-abandoners to the last decimal point, we would still not have a way to weigh one number against the other. Do thirteen new apples beat eleven lost oranges?

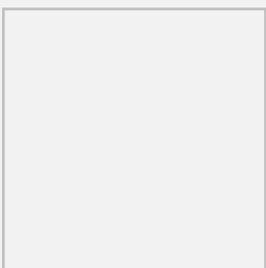
12.



Purley Dweller 22 December 2017 at 23:23

What Timbeau has said is precisely my view on this. Birmingham, Newcastle, Croydon have all got rid of central area buses along with many other places. I have been to Oxford street today, I caught the bus from Selfridges to Oxford circus, principally because I couldn't stand the crowds on the pavement. On the occasions when I have been on Oxford street when it is closed to traffic it has been so much nicer. The buses terminated elsewhere and the sky didn't fall in. It's time for a massive root and branch review of central bus routes, too many are hangovers from before the war (the first one in some cases). The routes that cross London should use roads that are built to cross London e.g. Euston road or the embankment. Routes that enter the central area shouldn't need to come out the other side and should terminate. Some people will be inconvenienced that is true, but if they need close together shops with easy road access then I give you Westfield or Brent Cross or Bluewater or Lakeside. Most people don't need it and will quickly get used to it. We are conservative by nature – no-one likes change, particularly those who feel negatively impacted by it but change comes and often it turns out those changes were for the better even for those who thought they were negative.

13.



timbeau 22 December 2017 at 23:53

@Purley Dweller

" It's time for a massive root and branch review of central bus routes, too many are hangovers from before the war (the first one in some cases"

A route local to me takes a long detour because it always has done, despite other routes covering both halves of the dogleg, This routing dates back to a time when the direct route was not possible because no tramlines had been laid on the direct road.



14.

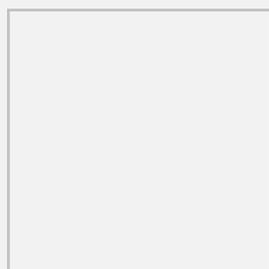
Walthamstow Writer 23 December 2017 at 01:13

@ Purley Dweller – If you want an example of an utter “dog’s breakfast” of a bus network then it is Birmingham. Heaven help you if you actually need to make a bus journey involving a trip across the city centre – you can’t do it on one bus. You are **forced** to trek through the streets to find another terminal point and pay twice unless you have a pre-paid ticket. Newcastle is a poor example too. Its East-West corridor has NOT been pedestrianised because the transport demand by bus is simply too great. The Metro does not cover journeys to the west of City Centre and only partially to some places out east. Most of Newcastle’s retail has been under-cover in the Eldon Square shopping centre and thus people are away from the traffic. Northumberland St was pedestrianised but it is nowhere near the length of Oxford St and John Dobson St runs parallel although access routes are poor because of the way that part of the centre was rejigged in the 60s. Just because lots of cities have identikit pedestrianised centres does not mean it is right or appropriate for central London or that the surface transport network should be hit with such collateral damage.

The fact remains that London’s transport demands are (most likely) greater than all those cities added together. It is all very well saying that the bus network has to be completely redesigned. It doesn’t work. All it does is confuse people and force them to use other modes – there are endless examples of clumsy network redesigns and renumbering in deregulated parts of the UK. The savvy places that have kept patronage relatively high have kept the fundamentals of the bus network broadly unchanged – in Newcastle I still know where the number 12 runs or the 39 or 40 etc. These are the money making routes and not even Stagecoach were daft enough to wreck them. The just retired MD of Surface Transport, Leon Daniels, has been “on the record” in front of the London Assembly umpteen times saying that mass network redesign is a recipe for chaos and a guaranteed way to lose ridership and revenue. I am left wondering whether the successors in Surface Transport are quite as experienced and clued up about the realities of bus operation as Mssrs Hendy and Daniels were. We shall see but the apparent willingness to just axe 10% of mileage without seemingly understanding the consequences of this makes me really wonder if they know what might be headed their way. I dare say there are those at City Hall who are hoping that a year long barrage of “Crossrail is

coming” and “pretty pictures of Oxford St with trees and swings” will work as a mass distraction tactic but that’s no good if your bus route in South Woodford has just lost 33% of its service and you’re freezing at the bus stop waiting to get home. That is the reality of what bus cuts mean to people. There are plenty of parallel consequences for people who live and work in and around Oxford St for whom buses are the best way to travel. Why should they be inconvenienced just so shops can make bigger profits? The same shops, barring Selfridges, that have branches in both Westfields and Croydon and elsewhere. It’s just corporate greed run riot that has nicely “captured” the politicians as well.

15.



Pedantic of Purley 23 December 2017 at 01:31

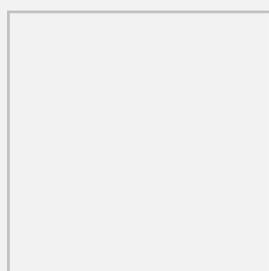
Walthamstow Writer,

Highly amused by your comment

I am left wondering whether the successors in Surface Transport are quite as experienced and clued up about the realities of bus operation as Mssrs Hendy and Daniels were

given Sir Peter Hendy’s reported views on Oxford St pedestrianisation that can be read [here](#).

16.



Greg Tingey 23 December 2017 at 09:07

Timbeau

It’s not the pedestrianisation that’s the problem, it’s the re-routing of the buses & their actual & potential future passenger loss that are the real difficulties. (I think)

ID

Bus-use transferred to cycling? Maybe, but this is one of the attractive mirages being pushed by the ~~Lyera~~ cycling lobby .. If you have mounds of shopping, or children, or are in any significant way disabled, or preganant, or have back/neck etc pain, or had a recent operation ... you cannot cycle.

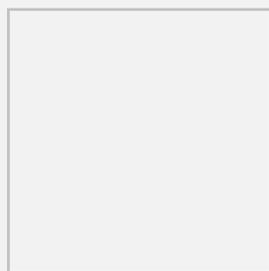
But, the cycle lobby always pooh-pooh this one away, I’m afraid.

WW

But ... Birmingham is like that, with or without bus routes (!)

I have also noted the disappearance of Mr Daniels & think that the prognostications of doom are unfortunately correct.

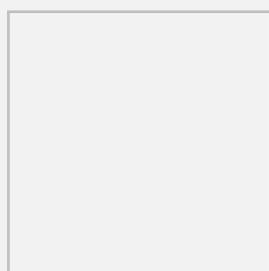
Incidentally [Diamond Geezer has a comment on this, today](#)



17.

Reynolds 953 23 December 2017 at 11:29

@islanddweller – the transcript of Gilligan’s appearance at the GLA is here (<https://www.london.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/b162...>) and while you certainly need to take account of his political point scoring, I thought one interesting comment was “In Oxford Street, the New West End Company’s vision of London is basically an outdoor shopping mall. It is basically Westfield without a roof on. I do not think that is all there is to London.”



18.

Reynolds 953 23 December 2017 at 11:47

@Greg Tingey – I don’t think “the cycling lobby” is claiming that loads of people will switch from buses to bikes, but I would summarise the cycling debate as follows (and this may be covered in part 2 of the article):

– Oxford St as a through route for cycling. If cycling is banned along Oxford St, I would say there is considerable scepticism that there will be high quality alternative routes provided. The situation may even be worse, dodging buses on one of the re-routes mentioned in the article.

– Accessibility for people on bikes. Even if Oxford St isn’t a through route for cycling, I think it is reasonable that some thought should be given to improve access as a destination for people who do want to cycle there.

I actually commute by bike eastbound in the morning along Oxford St and at about 7:30am, I find it tolerable as there isn’t much traffic, but in the evening, Oxford St is the seventh circle of hell for someone on a bike and I make a detour along New Cavendish St / George St.

19.



Pedantic of Purley 23 December 2017 at 13:51

Reynolds 953,

I don't want to cover cycling too much at this stage (as you say really for the next instalment). What I will say is that TfL have rather left cyclists in a state of limbo at this stage. For what may be very good reasons, the issue of a quality cycling alternative has been left to the next stage of the project. Meanwhile the main bus and taxi alternative (Henrietta Street) will be available to bikes and, because Margaret St will be restricted, there should not be much other traffic. You may consider this better or worse than the current situation.

20.



Pedantic of Purley 23 December 2017 at 14:01

NED,

To me the issue of route 73 is an interesting one. It used to run to Victoria but got curtailed to Oxford Circus. Arguably no big deal given alternative buses from Oxford St (or surrounds) to Victoria. Longer distance passengers have the alternative of route 38 via Piccadilly.

The question is: does it serve the east part of Oxford Street because that is where people want it to go or does it go along the east part of Oxford Street because that is a convenient route for it to go?

Camden's Tottenham Court Road consultation suggests they don't really want all those buses running along Tottenham Court Road and would rather at least some of them could be magicked away.

So, presuming the Oxford Circus area is where the demand is, we could potentially see route 73 take a shorter route via Goadge St after 2019 – but it might have to contend with other traffic. Or it could get diverted along the Euston Road for a distance. Or maybe it takes a convoluted route to try and replicate the current route as much as possible. Or it might be curtailed further.

I suspect this is one to watch, and as you imply, a bit of a bellwether route.

21.



IslandDweller 23 December 2017 at 15:43

Greg. Users of cycles are many and varied. Parcels can be and are carried by cargo bikes. For sure, some people are medically unable to cycle. But there are also others for whom walking is difficult but an adapted cycle (the “hand bike” type design) allows them to regain personal mobility.

The current Mayor has bold visions to increase walking and cycling. One of the points that Andrew Gilligan made in his evidence to City Hall this week is that you need to be willing to stir feathers if you really want to achieve any significant change.

22.



Rog 23 December 2017 at 16:14

Can't believe some of the half baked crap touted by TfL on this. Sending the 94 via North Row is an amazing indication of retrograde foresight. As you said, its narrow unappealing. Very true. But there's barely any space for even one bus to be parked. Imagine two, three, four coming along at the same time! Not only that its an extremely busy road too with vehicles trying to service the rear of Oxford street shops.

Simply sending the 94 down here will require total reversion of all the one way systems in the area. Considering the plans the future bus routes and the ways and means the one way system will have to be altered shall mean traffic in perpetual conflict (opposite flows interacting with each other at crucial points instead of being taken away from the area, such as the 390's new route fighting against a new one way flow required just to accommodate the 94!)

Yes pedestrianisation of Oxford Street is important but the absolutist notion that it MUST be done by the time of the opening of Crossrail in 2018 seems to be sending planners into a frenzy of “just do what you can! Do it with your eyes shut if you have to. The Mayor wants it fully ped by December 2018!” The street layout simply doesn't even allow for such a notion. The ONLY way it would work even 90% would be to totally remove traffic from the area.

Let me tell you the present Oxford Street is considerably more convivial now with the buses reduced, yet there's still a means by which the disabled, the elderly and

others can access the street without the massive brain fail changes some are proposing. I would think a more sedate approach would work better, and any thoughts of possible full pedestrianisation deferred a bit further into the future.

Do I have any authoritative views on this? Well I am local (even though I don't have work and live in a shithole compared to the many who live in the lap of luxury.) And please dont bash me thanks.



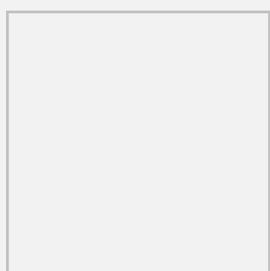
23.

Walthamstow Writer 23 December 2017 at 23:09

@ PoP – yes his public views from 2 years ago when he was still Commissioner and had clearly decided to “kowtow” to whatever pressure had come from the Boris led City Hall to at least show “willing” over the Oxford St issue.

My own view is that he had held back the worst of the bus cut nightmare scenario that follows on from pedestrianising Oxford St because he knew Boris didn't have a manifesto commitment on this and also, as a professional bus man, he knew what the ramifications could be. Therefore I expect he ensured, behind closed doors, that the people doing the “wavey hand, it'll all be OK” routine were given the hard facts about what changes to the bus network might involve. He's not at TfL now and it is up to Mr Brown who appears more acquiescent on a whole range of issues than his predecessor. This, in my view, explains why the axe is being taken to the bus network across London. All the “old hands” at TfL who really understood buses have gone so there is no one there to protect the network. The same is evident in public opinion (for now) hence TfL and City Hall believe they have “cover” for what they are doing and there are no negative consequences.

I suspect Mr Hendy's private views may be a tad different but I am obviously speculating as I've not had the pleasure of meeting him in person for a chat about buses.



24.

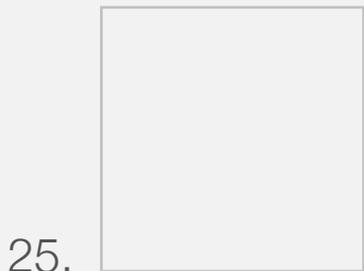
Greg Tingey 24 December 2017 at 09:57

ID
You are perfectly correct in half of your idea ... it's entirely possible that a lot more people could cycle, if they wanted to & were really encouraged (note)

But, at the same time, there is still a sizeable proportion who, either permanently, or temporarily are not or will never be able to cycle. It is this latter group which is being deliberately marginalised & ignored.

note: .. “Encouraged” does not mean “Beat any & all motorists with a stick”, either (!)

[Would all commentators (not just Greg) please note that we will be saying more about cycling in subsequent parts of this series, so please keep off it for now. Malcolm]



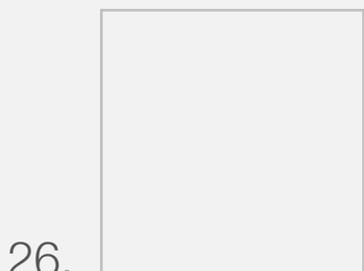
25.

Transport Insider Now In The Desert 24 December 2017 at 10:00

Walthamstow Writer wrote:

I am left wondering whether the successors in Surface Transport are quite as experienced and clued up about the realities of bus operation as Mssrs Hendy and Daniels were.

No. The new MD Surface Transport is a former consultant, and the former Director of Buses took redundancy last year. There are no people at senior levels in TfL Surface with a substantial bus pedigree.



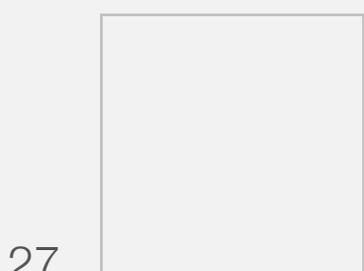
26.

timbeau 24 December 2017 at 10:08

@Greg

“It’s not the pedestrianisation that’s the problem, it’s the re-routing of the buses & their actual & potential future passenger loss that are the real difficulties. ”

But the two are inextricably linked – you can’t pedestrianise a street unless you divert the buses away.



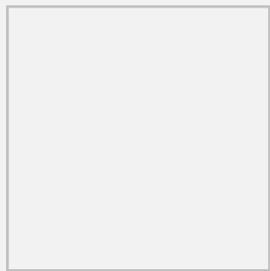
27.

Pedantic of Purley 24 December 2017 at 10:56

Walthamstow Writer,

Yes his public views from 2 years ago when he was still Commissioner and had clearly decided to “kowtow” to whatever pressure had come from the Boris led City Hall to at least show “willing” over the Oxford St issue

Er, no. Exactly the opposite. Sorry that the facts inconveniently get in the way but if you examine the date carefully you will see that this was stated when he knew that he was going to be the next chairman of Network Rail (even if most of the rest of us didn't) and he was at last free to speak his mind – which he generally delights in doing so when he can (e.g. Garden Bridge inquiry). The fact that he was still commissioner was a pure bonus.



28.

Graham H 24 December 2017 at 11:42

I hesitate to add to this exchange of deeply held views, but I can't help feeling that so much has changed in the way in which bus routes are used and the way in which they access Oxford Street that some fairly radical changes are inevitable.

1. Despite what some say here, it is far from clear that the bus services provide a local service along Oxford Street. Between Selfridges and Oxford Circus, each route serves at best three and in some cases just two stops.
2. Local movement by bus along the street itself is slow (walking usually quicker)
3. Each “stop” is, in fact and for good reasons, a number of multiple flags, with the result that for, for example, buses turning right into Regent St, the flags are nearly back at Bond Street and for those routes, the services provide only a very limited service along Oxford St itself
4. The flag spacing is such, in both directions, that for the unfamiliar, who tend to walk “forward ” in search of the next stop, they will already have walked half the distance in their quest anyway
5. The days of hop on a bus having disappeared with the introduction of doored buses, “intermediate boarding has ceased to be an option – so avoiding the rigidity of fixed stopping places is no longer possible.
6. This has consequences as either passengers are forced to find the right stop (see 4 above for the implications) or they find that waiting at the right stop, their bus is all too often the third or fourth in a queue for that flag with the drivers – understandably reluctant to open the doors until they reach the flag and either they have to wait for the flag to clear, or they run down the queue of buses only to find they can't board, but the bus moves up.

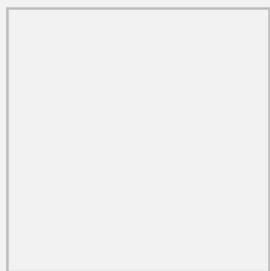
These are direct consequences of the sheer volume of buses using the street.

Then there are the routes themselves. WW describes the historic position in which major trunk routes such as the 12 or the 6 passed from one inner suburb to another along Oxford Street. Those routes provided not only a service to Oxford Street itself but also between the suburbs (eg Peckham to Shepherds Bush). That function has mostly disappeared with the truncation of such routes within the central area (for example at Aldwych) and, if served at all, it is by changing bus or by LO. Severance at Marble Arch of most of the remaining routes will simply complete a process already underway for years.

CrossRail will have little effect on local movement by bus along Oxford Street itself, but will deliver people to two points (3 with TCR) along the entire length. What CrossRail won't do at all is deal with the movements between inner suburbs which have now been abandoned by LBL, nor the inner movements from the west/north west to places just beyond Oxford Street, such as Aldwych.

It's at this point that a new strategy for bus services within and between the inner ring of suburbs becomes pressing (as WW implies), but given the functional changes that are unavoidable (as set above), they won't bear much resemblance to what is there now. It would be nice to see a coherent strategy being published. Far be it for me to mention the Bus-reshaping plan – other options are surely available [Crayons to remain in their tins].

PS I have tried to write – and hope I have succeeded – without resort to vulgarity and obscenity. I am very sorry to see that some contributors think that is a professional thing to do and that expletives are in any way a useful contribution to the debate.



29.

Pedantic of Purley 24 December 2017 at 12:36

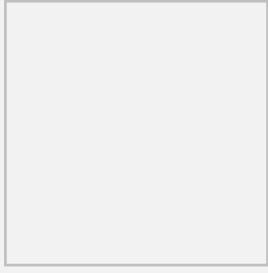
Graham H,

Thank you so much for that masterly comment. Even if people disagree it is very thought-provoking.

I think you have got across the point that I was trying to make about the bus stops much better than I could. It does seem to be fundamental problem to me that Oxford Street isn't actually that accessible by bus although pictures of a street full of buses suggest otherwise.

Also interesting to see the semantics in referring to 'stop' and then the 'flags' within that stop. We have probably been referring to a 'bus stop' rather loosely which could lead to confusion as to what is actually meant.

30.



Pedantic of Purley 24 December 2017 at 13:17

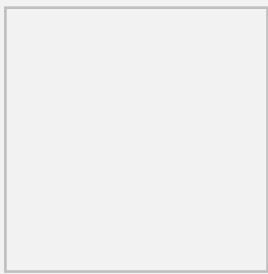
ROG,

The part of North Row where the route 94 bus stand is proposed has no Oxford Street shops backing onto it. When I visited there were no sign of deliveries- and no vacant bays in which to do it. Merely a lot of on-street parking which was fully used.

As for changing the one-way network, this is fully taken into account in the broader proposals.

As pointed out, we need more thoughtful comments not bad-language ones.

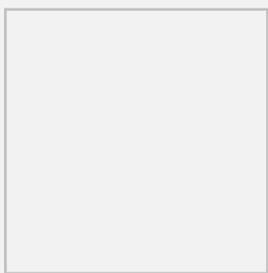
31.



Malcolm 24 December 2017 at 21:52

What is Oxford Street for? Is it just a shopping destination like many others, or does it also have some additional roles (and if so, what are they)?

32.



Graham H 24 December 2017 at 22:42

There's a fair amount of office employment half a block back from the main shopping streets.

33.



timbeau 25 December 2017 at 01:22

@Malcolm

Like most High Streets, its original purpose was as a thoroughfare. Indeed, as its origins are Roman, its original purpose was military. For several centuries, it was also a (gruesome) processional route, as it led from Newgate Prison to the gallows at Tyburn.

34.



Greg Tingey 25 December 2017 at 09:59

Malcom

I obviously phrased a previous comment very badly ...

But your question: *What is Oxford St for?* is really to the point.

I think we can all agree that the previous situation, where it was an almost-continuous stream of slowly-moving & often half-empty buses was unacceptable. But people were using those buses to make purposeful journeys from “A to B”, & taking away almost all those bus-routes all-too obviously won’t do any good either. Nor will Crossrail/Liz line be “the Answer” if only because it’s a damned long way down to there & then up again.

Maybe we are asking the wrong questions, & thus getting the wrong answers? Do we need routes either along Ox-St itself, or very closely parallel, for all of it’s length? (My opinion is: “Yes, but ...”) And the “but” is actually the important consideration – where do those routes then go, once they have reached either Tyburn Tree or Holborn Circus/”the Fleet-by-Farringdon”? You can’t just terminate them there, they should go on to some other useful interconnection/transfer points or nexus. Um.

I would, of course push for that pedestrian-friendly mass-transport option, the Tram, but that also has end-point & stabling problems, doesn’t it, even setting aside the construction costs?

Following PoP’s request, I won’t say anything about cycling/lanes here.

Also, ISTM that we are not addressing the other problem, that of surface-transport routes crossing or part-intersecting with the greater Ox-St ... If we are looking at the larger proposed scheme then crossing points are at: Oxford Circus, Tottie Ct

Rd, Bloomsbury St to the New Oxford St “kink” & then sorting out the problems by Holborn tube.

I hope that the further implications of “boundary effects” at the ends are not being ignored, either – people have mentioned the problem of bus stands/turn-arounds/waiting by Tyburn, but it’s going to be even worse at wherever the Eastern end of this peters out, whether its by J Smith’s Umbrella-&-Whip-shop, Holborn tube, or the Fleet valley.



35.

Walthamstow Writer 25 December 2017 at 14:26

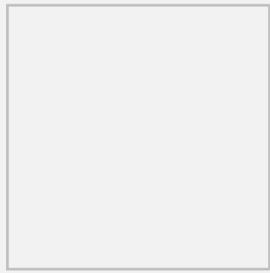
@ Graham H – while I understand all the points you make I am afraid I disagree to some extent. Even with the current stop spacing people *do* hop down Oxford St – I did it the last time I was there. Plenty of other people were doing the same. I agree the volume has probably fallen but then TfL have removed stops over the years as WCC have changed the pavement / road layout. TfL’s recent experiments with different vehicle configurations also had an impact.

However the argument put forward by the pedestrianisation advocates is that Crossrail and the Tube somehow magically provide an alternative to “hopping on a bus”. They simply do not do this in as accessible a way. Take a journey I made recently – John Lewis to Southampton St. The bus was well loaded throughout. Even if you know precisely where you are going and are fleet of foot it would take you 6 or maybe 7 minutes to get from John Lewis to the Bakerloo Line south-bound platform. You’d probably have a 2 min wait then a 5 min journey to Charing Cross and then another slog to reach the street at Trafalgar Square and then another 5 minutes at a brisk pace to reach Southampton St. The 23 bus beat that hands down plus I got a seat, had 1 staircase to climb rather than several and no faffing around waiting for trains, to get on to escalators etc. And that’s with me as an expert user. Throw in people who are not overly au fait with the tube nor tube station exits etc and it would take them vastly longer. If you can’t cope with stairs or are in a wheelchair then you are stuck compared to getting on a bus, That sort of easy accessibility is what is threatened. That is why I get cross. If there was something that was even 50% as good as what we have now (never mind had 2-3 years ago) then I might be more reasonably minded. However that proposition is not on the table. 2 routes shoved down Wigmore St is no replacement.

I am pleased you recognise that are other weaknesses, gaps and issues that urgently need to be sorted out with the bus network that is being ripped to shreds by this politically driven push to homogenise Central London. One day someone might publish something to address those bus network issues but I am not holding

my breath.

@ Malcolm – as I understand it the Oxford St area sustains a very varied spread of business activity. There are theatres, cinemas, retail (obviously), office based trades, the “rag trade” north of the eastern part of Oxford St plus a lot of hospitality business too. The area south through Soho also still has publishing, TV, music and cinematic trades but that may be changing as Soho is being trashed off the back of Crossrail led property speculation. In other words tens, possibly hundreds, of thousands of people are employed in the area not to mention all the trades who service / support those businesses or who visit those businesses. I am not convinced 100% of those people arrive in the area without using buses which are far more affordable than the tube will ever be.

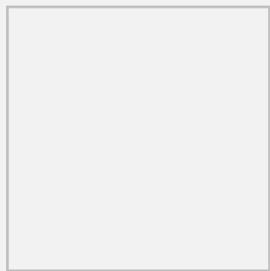


36.

[Southern Heights \(Light Railway\) 25 December 2017 at 15:54](#)

I'd say these days it's largely a tourist trap.... The eastern end has become infested by tourist tat shops and they are spreading west.

About the only reason to still go there are the big department stores. But then you don't really need them anymore either as the ones in Bluewater and Westfield are pretty much the same size and undercover!



37.

[Si 26 December 2017 at 13:17](#)

@SHLR

While the street itself is more for out-of-towners, the area around it is an important business district for Londoners. Oxford Circus isn't the 4th busiest tube station purely due people going shopping.

@WW

Isn't the official line (at least) about pedestrianising it for the Crossrail project's transition into the Elizabeth Line far more to do with the changing pedestrian flows and the increase of pedestrians on Oxford Street, rather than the Liz dealing with the journeys that buses do?

Certainly this problem was foreseen in the hybrid bill process, with at least one 'expert' proposing having a station on the southern side of Soho, rather than the northern side, so as to distribute West End bound traffic a bit better, rather than have two stops on Oxford Street.



38.

Rog 26 December 2017 at 22:44

Walthamstow Writer says: "If you can't cope with stairs or are in a wheelchair then you are stuck compared to getting on a bus, That sort of easy accessibility is what is threatened. That is why I get cross..... 2 routes shoved down Wigmore St is no replacement."

I endorse that sentiment. There's a lot of assumption that accessibility and other needs will be magically solved by Crossrail (with just four access points along the whole of Oxford Street, only one of which will be directly onto Oxford street) plus a couple of fudged bus routes that might as well stop at the Wallace Collection en route!

Pedantic of Purley says no rear entrances to Oxford Street shops. These are shown via Google street links below. Unless I'm totally mistaken and have got it all wrong, one is for River Island, the other for Bershka. The latter will be right where the 94 will stop. There are service access points on the south side of the road which will also require their access. Five parking spaces in between. One bus maybe could very sensibly stop here.

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.5131856,-0.15514...>

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@51.5133098,-0.15474...>

A lot of people are being paid to produce this scheme. Pedestrianisation's a good thing in many cases, however there are many problems in W1 that wont be solved by planners drafting ideas that are clearly remote from reality.

There are two local campaigns <http://betteroxfordstreet.org/> and another whom I cant think of right now. Their analysis is that the current plans will not do the area justice.

39.



Pedantic of Purley 27 December 2017 at 12:52

ROG,

I stand corrected regarding delivery entrances in North Row. Nevertheless one is way to the west of the proposed stand. It is actually at the junction with Red Place. From the links given I am convinced the other is also to the west of the proposed stand.

More to the point, these appear to be proper entrances to underground service areas. I suspect they actually are for multiple shops. This sort of delivery facility should be encouraged and not seen a problem. I was thinking more of 'round the back' delivery bays that many shops traditionally had. These are generally small (so can't cope with multiple simultaneous deliveries) and require the lorry to reverse in thus blocking the road while it does so. A further problem with some of these is that modern lorries are too long so they block the pavement – or even worse, part of the road.

I included a link to betteroxfordstreet.org. As implied in the article, I found some of their arguments contradictory. All very reasonable on their own but don't make any kind of sense when presented together. I had hoped to talk to some of the people from betteroxfordstreet.org at one of the consultations but, from what I had previously overheard, I came to the conclusion it wouldn't have been a worthwhile conversation.

40.



Aleks2CV 28 December 2017 at 04:31

Anything on security and enforcement?

Expect they will start with concrete barriers and cycle parks.

The larger stores with larger lorries have bays it's the smaller boutiques and subdivisions that only get front street access that rely on vans at night.

What it was for (A40 lots of closed department stores, music venues 100 Club) is not what it could become.

Lot's of Chinese / Japanese fly in and coach to Bicester. The Marble Arch end has become a busy hotel district.

The West End group has plans to offer street attractions for times when it's not

otherwise as busy.

[This comment really has nothing to do with buses in Oxford Street and is more appropriate for part 2 when it comes out. PoP]

41.



Southern Heights (Light Railway) 28 December 2017 at 12:55

@SI: I'm well aware that the area is also an employment hub. I worked on Regent St. for many years, so I'm familiar with the summer school groups of French students, the Christmas shoppers and the whistlestop tour of Europe, Chinese groups.

I did my best to shop there only in an emergency, as did most of my colleagues.

42.



Bob 28 December 2017 at 13:35

To address WW's concerns they could run a small fleet of battery-powered airport style micro busses down Oxford street.

If you made them free for anyone with a blue badge or a baby, and £20 a trip for anyone who's just feeling lazy, they'd pay for themselves.

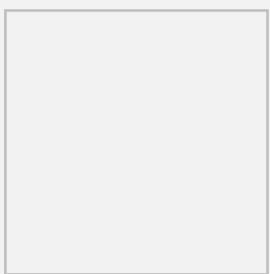
43.



Graham H 28 December 2017 at 13:38

£20 a trip ! I shouldn't think there'd be very many takers at that price! And I'd expect at least a sedan chair if not a sede gestatoria.

44.



ChrisMitch 28 December 2017 at 14:45

Denver, Colorado has a FREE electric hop-on hop-off tram-like bus trundling up and down its main pedestrianised shopping street. This solves the accessibility problem, but still gets in the way of pedestrians a bit.

45.

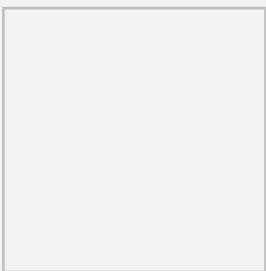


Walthamstow Writer 28 December 2017 at 22:45

@ Bob – well you highlight a rather critical issue with your response. Of course you could have micro buses or one of those “tourist train” things or pedicabs or whatever to provide an accessible service. However the second you do you don’t have a purely pedestrianised street. You have vehicles of some form intermingling with an assumed higher volume of pedestrians. From my albeit brief reading of parts of the consultation material I detect a distinct reluctance to have any vehicles inside the pedestrianised zone. This is why cyclists are being pushed to separate routes away from Oxford St itself. Quite how a cycle courier delivers to a business with its front door on Oxford St is open to question. I assume they will be forced to walk or else have their cycle confiscated by “pedestrianisation enforcement officers”.

As for charging some people £20 a pop – well that one won’t survive 5 seconds of questioning by Assembly Members. I haven’t checked if TfL have undertaken an Equalities Impact Assessment of their plans. Let’s hope they have or else that’ll be another front for certain Assembly Members to mount an attack from.

46.

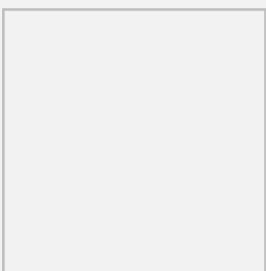


Pedantic of Purley 28 December 2017 at 23:32

Walthamstow Writer,

Accessibility Impacts Statement. The modern term it seems for Equalities Impact Statement. 30 pages of it.

47.

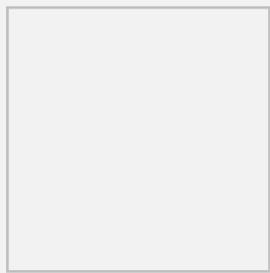


ROG,

I now realise that the detailed maps provided by Westminster actually show entrances to loading bays. If you look carefully at the map in the article which shows the location of the route 94 bus stand in North Row you can see the two entrances that you mention. One is just about opposite Red Place and the other is clearly just to the west of the bus stand.

Walthamstow Writer,

Yes there is an extreme reluctance to have *any* vehicles in the pedestrianised zone. We will cover this in part 2.



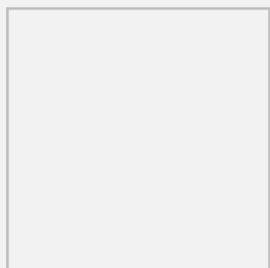
48.

AlisonW 28 December 2017 at 23:59

The idea that just two stops on Crossrail 1 could replace hundreds of buses is ridiculous, not only for the substantial walk down to the platforms (and up again) which will probably take as long as a fit person could walk between the two stations, but also because so many *_current_* routes link to multiple directions. Just as TL and CR services serve increased demand by providing non-terminating through services, so the current series of through bus routes do to. Terminating them at various locations along the flanks of Oxford Street seems destined to create blockages and delays on return journey schedules, especially as pick-up points on some routes are widely spaced. Oh for an Oxford Street tram!

And alongside WW, I'm someone who will always use buses in preference to metals due to more-local routing and disabled access. With Marble Arch and Oxford Circus being entirely unusable by many disabled and elderly folks, there will always be a place for buses.

And what happened to the plan to make Tottenham Court Road two-way with reserved bus and cycle lanes?



49.

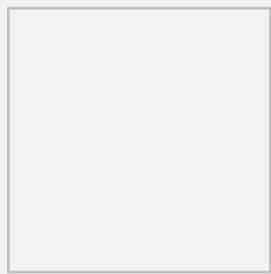
Pedantic of Purley 29 December 2017 at 00:24

Alison W,

And what happened to the plan to make Tottenham Court Road two-way with reserved bus and cycle lanes?

It is going ahead as planned. As I understand it, it will happen at about the same time. But there will be no reserved bus lanes and no reserved cycle lanes. The scheme is about restricting through traffic to buses and cycles but the latter will not be encouraged. There will be reserved cycle lanes in Gower Street which runs parallel.

As mentioned in the article, the impact of this scheme has to be considered especially when it comes to phase two. Camden did the sensible thing and got in first so that Westminster had to work around Camdens' plans and not vice versa.



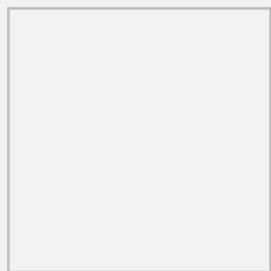
50.

Aleks2CV 29 December 2017 at 10:32

The present day use of buses on Oxford St does not seem to be for hopping rather getting to the part of the street you want or interchanging between routes. The relevance of Xrail is that there are sufficient exits added to LU ones to arrive reasonably close. Shoppers tend to walk a good length of road looking at windows anyway. Bus interchanging at Marble Arch, Regent St, and Tot Ct Rd sounds sufficient.

Would have been a good stretch to use the Boris open platform.

[Snip. More appropriate for part 2 PoP]



51.

Greg Tingey 29 December 2017 at 11:49

Oh dear ... are we sure bicycles are not "vehicles" (PoP @ 23.44) ??

Seriously though, I'm with both Alison & WW in having very deep misgivings about this scheme – especially the "expanded" version, simply because Crossrail cannot be an adequate replacement, for reasons I won't repeat.

OTOH, a really reduction in the amount of all wheeled traffic along Ox-St should be a really good idea, it's just that this doesn't seem to be the way to do it.

Does anyone have any better ideas, I wonder?



52.

Timbeau 29 December 2017 at 13:06

@GH

“the historic position in which major trunk routes passed from one inner suburb to another along Oxford Street. That function has mostly disappeared with the truncation of such routes within the central area”

@AW “Just as TL and CR services serve increased demand by providing non-terminating through services, so the current series of through bus routes do to. Terminating them at various locations along the flanks of Oxford Street seems destined to create blockages and delays on return journey schedules, especially as pick-up points on some routes are widely spaced.”

On the contrary, shorter routes are generally more reliable, which is why cross-London bus routes have been progressively shortened in a process that started at least as far back as the 1960s. (For example, the south western terminus of the 73 was, at one time, Hampton Court!)

Even on the railways, with their dedicated tracks, (XR, TL) cross-town services risk disruption at one end spreading to the other. As a regular user of the No 12 at Shepherds Bush when it used to run right through to Croydon, I recall it as chronically unreliable.

The benefits of cross-town bus services are very small – inevitably only a few of the possible pairings of suburbs can be catered for, and thus they will benefit relatively few passengers – the rest would need to change buses anyway. On the rails, it does allow passengers to be distributed over several stops instead of concentrating them in one terminus, but buses already stop every few hundred yards anyway.

As Graham has noted, the number of stops that each bus makes along Oxford Street is only three or four – not dissimilar to the number of Tube stations – so in the absence of open-platforms you are likely to have to walk just as far from the bus stop to your local destination as you would from the nearest Tube station.

As the article has noted, several bus routes in addition to the 139 and 390 will serve the area, notably the 22 and the 73.

@WW

“Take a journey I made recently – John Lewis to Southampton St. The bus was

well loaded throughout.The 23 bus beat [the Bakerloo Line] hands down plus I got a seat”

Such a journey would still be possible by bus after the revolution.....The 139 passes both John Lewis’s and Southampton Street. The only difference will be that it will pass the back of John Lewis’s instead of the front.



53.

Pedantic of Purley 29 December 2017 at 13:10

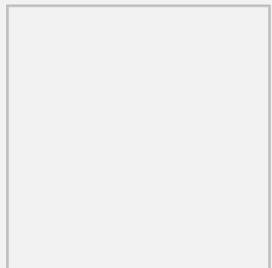
Greg Tingey,

are we sure bicycles are not “vehicles” (PoP @ 23.44) ??

We have been through this before. Bicycles are vehicles but they are not motor vehicles. A lot of traffic regulations, but not all, (e.g. speeding) apply only to *motor* vehicles. A further complication is that a bicycle is still a vehicle when pushed. It used to be the case that motorists weren’t obliged to stop for cyclists walking their bike across a pedestrian crossing. Not sure of the current situation but it also used to be technically an offence to push a bike in a pedestrian-only area.

The current intention is that bicycles will be allowed in Oxford Street but they must not be ridden. I am presuming that will apply to all non-motor vehicles and electric vehicles that are ‘walked’.

I don’t want to expand too much in part 1 but I think that the ‘Crossrail will be an adequate replacement’ argument has been overstated and not quite what has been claimed.



54.

AlisonW 29 December 2017 at 16:44

Greg: “Does anyone have any better ideas, I wonder?” – wasn’t there once a proposal for an elevated monorail along the street, keeping the ground level clear?

(Don’t worry, I know where my coat is...)

55.



Graham H 29 December 2017 at 17:19

@Alison W – there was a period when deck access was all the rage (think Barbican and London Wall) and the (I can't actually bear to write the word) was seen as the perfect "trendy" contemporary fit with that. To mention the Simpsons would be simply laughable, of course.

56.



Timbeau 29 December 2017 at 17:52

@PoP

In recent research I was inspired to do into the precise definition of "footway" as it relates to the powers of PCSOs to issue FPNs, I learned that there is case law that any vehicle propelled by a pedestrian is permitted both on footways and footpaths. A pedestrian is anyone with their feet on the ground, so a pedestrian-propelled vehicle includes everything from perambulators to skateboards, and includes a bicycle if it is being wheeled or "scooted".

A bicycle, when used as intended, is defined in the 1888 Local Government Act as a carriage for the purposes of the 1835 Highways Act, which prohibits driving carriages on a footway – which is in turn defined as "any footpath or causeway by the side of any road made or set apart for the use or accommodation of foot passengers"

Note the "by the side of any road" – if there's no carriageway alongside the footpath, the Highways Act does not apply, so by-laws have to be made to ban "carriages" (whether motorised or not) from pedestrian precincts.

57.



Greg Tingey 29 December 2017 at 19:06

PoP

Thanks for the clarification.

The current intention is that bicycles will be allowed in Oxford Street but they must not be ridden. And very good luck with that one, too, given some cyclists attitudes.

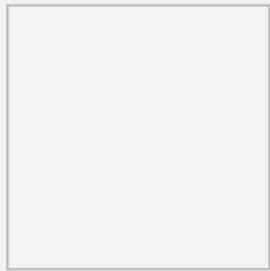
Alison

“SMILEY” – & I suggested a Tram, remember?

Timbeau

“FPN” – Fixed Penalty Notice?

[Yes. PoP]



58.

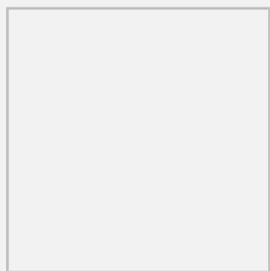
Si 29 December 2017 at 19:14

@Graham H/Alison W

Southampton had a proposal for a City Centre monorail loop in the 80s, linking shops to ships via stations (bus, coach, train) one storey above ground. On the main shopping street, there were to be some walkways and entrances at that level near the stops to allow access to the first floors of shops directly without needing to return to ground level and then come back up.

I believe the Oxford Street proposals were more extensive in having people access properties above street level – walkways all the way along and entrances and all that. Certainly I’ve seen more recent proposals (were they even this decade?), sans-monorail, to turn the street into a sort of mall, with the road still intact and the majority of people just walking over it on a deck.

All nutty proposals that make this one look somewhat sane, of course!



59.

quinlet 29 December 2017 at 21:30

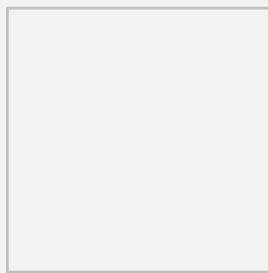
@timbeau

If Oxford Street remains a ‘highway’ – that is a way on which the public can pass and repass – it can also just have a traffic order which prohibits all vehicles (including cycles). You don’t need a carriageway to be a highway.

@Si

The City of London had the most advanced plans for high level walkways and quite a number – in and around London Wall – were actually built. The plans were for all the City to be served in that way, as and when comprehensive development allowed. The initial plans dated back to the 60s but by the 80s the concept had been dropped, not surprisingly, as a bad idea in practice. Many of the high level walkways around the Barbican are still there.

60.

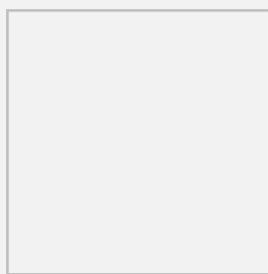


timbeau 30 December 2017 at 00:21

Quinlet – yes: a traffic order would be necessary. There is one already of course.

The point is that no special traffic order is required to prohibit cycling on a footway (i.e alongside a carriageway) – that is automatic under the Highways Act.

61.



Anonymous 30 December 2017 at 05:34

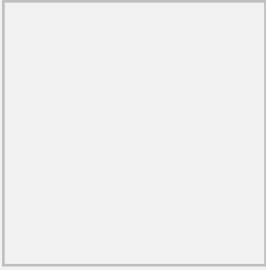
Good article and interesting comments.

I'm firmly in the "something must be done" camp. Oxford Street is generally an area I avoid, at least during shopping hours, if I can help it. The sheer volume of pedestrians overwhelms the pavements and Crossrail is just going to make this much worse. It's primarily a shopping street so the full width really is needed for the crowds.

For bus journeys I favour those routes that avoid the street itself, such as the 36, precisely because getting anywhere in a reasonable amount of time seems impossible otherwise. Yes there is a convenience to catching buses near the shops, and yes the current proposal appears to fall short in many respects. I would expect more use of Regent Street, and maybe Park Lane/Piccadilly/Shaftesbury Avenue to build an accessible network. Perhaps once the US embassy has moved and all the security paraphernalia can be removed from that area there could be an opportunity to run more buses through Mayfair?

It seems to me that of the old ideas that have come up, travelators down the middle of parts of the street is one of the better ones. Not without its flaws, but practical for aiding mobility without creating hazards.

62.



Greg Tingey 30 December 2017 at 08:44

Quinlet & others ...

.. on “elevated walkways” or “Pedways” as they were known ...

Very relevant [link from Diamond Geezer](#) on that very subject.

63.



RayK 30 December 2017 at 08:48

@Timbeau, 29th at 17:52

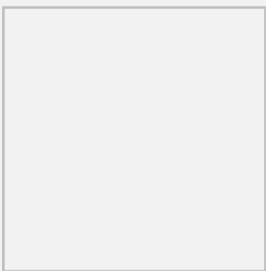
“A pedestrian is anyone with their feet on the ground,”

I would be surprised if that definition could be stretched to somebody who lifted both feet of the ground at the same time. This would immediately disqualify skateboarding and scooting no matter what was being scooted. A walking person, wheeling a bike or anything else, would qualify.

@ Anonymous. at 05:34

I suspect that there is too much cross street ‘traffic’ to allow any seriously useful length of travelator. I also suspect that the idea has been thoroughly ‘done to death’ many times.

64.



Aleks2CV 30 December 2017 at 11:56

ALISONW at 16:44 – wasn’t there once a proposal for an elevated monorail along the street, keeping the ground level clear?

(Don’t worry, I know where my coat is...)

simples ..

https://images3.the-dots.com/580082/COVER_B_RGB.jp...

65.



NickBxn 30 December 2017 at 12:14

I think a key thing is not to rush in too many changes at once. A decent overlap between the opening of through Crossrail services and these interim bus arrangements ought to be maintained to wrk out the true effect of one on the other, without trying to anticipate some end state with the hatchet in hand – there are always unintended consequences which may yet call for continued bus permeability.

A small example of an improvement is how the 3 (currently curtailed) will end up at the eastern end of Oxford Street rather than duplicating 159 to the western end. It will be the first time in decades that there will be a direct bus route between the busy Brixton/Kennington corridor and the TCR area which I'm sure will be well used. This has long been a crayon void, exacerbated by the Northern Line chucking you out at Kennington.

If they get the traffic layout and flows right, I foresee many benefits to businesses north of Oxford Street, which will suddenly become much more visible to bus passengers and benefit from greater footfall. I can see why residents may be concerned, but the weekend late night crowds are most likely to head for the Central line for the night Tube.

66.



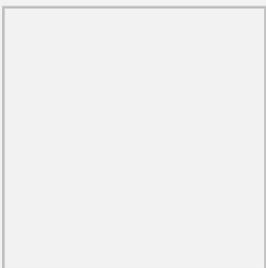
Greg Tingey 30 December 2017 at 15:01

NickBxN

I think a key thing is not to rush in too many changes at once

But ... that appears to be exactly what they are doing (!)

67.



Malcolm 30 December 2017 at 15:33

Just like every other word in every language, “pedestrian” is very difficult to define precisely. I am sure that I am still a pedestrian if I make one small leap in the air and

otherwise walk normally. The precise fraction of the time when both feet must be on the ground is not, and cannot be stipulated. And I am sure that any attempt to exclude footless people from pedestrian areas would be quite rightly resisted.

However, pragmatically it may be very wise to ban scooting in pedestrian areas, but I fear that doing so would need a special rule, rather than relying on mechanistic word-definitions.

68.



Si 30 December 2017 at 17:42

Running, by definition, means both feet leaving the ground – can I not run in a pedestrians-only area?

And would Ice Skating count (eg if they put a rink down for December) as pedestrian? If so, why not rollerblading/rollerskating, or the even more tricky-to-define Heelies?

But isn't all this philosophising about what forms of non-motorised transport are allowed for a part that isn't about buses, but bikes?

69.



NickBxn 31 December 2017 at 14:34

Greg 15:01 – I meant rushing to the latter phases at the eastern end as some form of end state before the Crossrail branches are fully plugged in.

For general interest and holiday browsing, I have a a fair few old maps and have scanned some to show snapshots of the central network in which some routes endure through time:

1927 – <https://flic.kr/p/22ZDM1f>

1967 – <https://flic.kr/p/22ZDHP5>

1983 – <https://flic.kr/p/J6zD2H>

I agree with others that there is a big risk of the future network looking more disjointed than it really will be. Perhaps they could develop a central area map similar to the current line-coloured tourist map, but that includes all of the routes properly,

and becomes as 'fixed' and familiar as the Tube map.

70.



Pedantic of Purley 31 December 2017 at 14:51

NickBxn,

I can tell you what TfL's argument to that would be. They would say there is no such thing as a stable state against which you can compare things. Activity is happening all the time and, even if TfL stays still, the private sector won't. So pausing for many months or years to more fully assess the impact of a scheme is just not practical. In that period a lot of external variables will be changing.

71.



Aleks2CV 1 January 2018 at 07:32

Buses replaced fixed trolleys and trams because of their flexibility.

Having a fixed mindset of users historic routes is limiting.

Roads change not to mention traffic.

Route mods cost TfL so they maybe are not flexible enough.

Experimentation by Ford, or CityMapper, or others is no bad thing to test gaps and market reaction.

For the Happy Feet roller skates out, trainers with roller heels OK ?

72.



Greg Tingey 1 January 2018 at 09:42

A2CV

Except there are certain major flows that seem not to alter, for which Trams or possibly Trolleybuses are ideally suited.

Unfortunately, we never had trams or trolleys down Oxford St.

Though the idea of a "Parallel" route for a major flow is not new, of course, as I can just remember ... trams running parallel to the Strand, by "diving" & going along

the Embankment(!)

73.



timbeau 1 January 2018 at 11:11

@Aleks2CV

“Buses replaced fixed trolleys and trams because of their flexibility. Having a fixed mindset of users historic routes is limiting.”

The fixed mindset is still there though. Some London bus routes still follow the circuitous routes dictated by the limitations of their predecessors' infrastructure. (The 281 is a prime example – 86 years after the tramlines were superseded, and 56 years after the trolley wires followed them into oblivion, the buses still faithfully follow their path instead of taking the direct route.

74.



Graham H 1 January 2018 at 13:53

@timbeau – to be fair, the 281 is very much the exception. In fact, very few trolley-bus routes have survived in their motorbus reincarnation, other than those which do follow natural transport axes like the 207 and 220. All the round the corner and similar in NW London have gone, as have all those that served the Chingford-Docklands corridor. Likewise with the tram routes – few survive now in motorbus form – the 95, 109, and 185 perhaps.

More surprising is the persistence of some motorbus routes such as the 77.

75.



Walthamstow Writer 1 January 2018 at 14:06

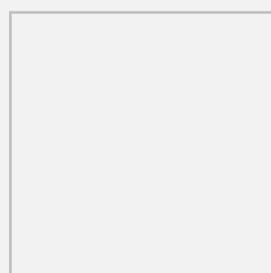
@ Nickbxn – the problem with the bus changes is that they been happening for the last 5-6 years. TfL have been quietly stripping out routes like the 15 and reducing peak frequencies for years. That, of course, satisfied no one on Oxford St but made the bus network worse. Paddington has been progressively denuded of bus

routes years before Crossrail opens. The current phase of plans just takes even more capacity away. It is all about making buses inconvenient and *forcing* people on to a vastly more expensive mode – rail. It is discriminatory against those who need accessible transport and who are on low incomes.

I am afraid I do not see the 3 ever making it up Charing X Rd to Russell Square. Something will arise that prevents that extension happening. The 23 was supposed to be being extended to Wembley and running from Lancaster Gate. Well that's died the death with the current ridiculous plan to merge it with the rump of route 10. I predict that stupid proposed service will last no longer than 2-3 years as yet another set of changes comes along to kill it off. Remember TfL are taking out another 10% of network mileage by 2020 thereby turning the clock back to 2004 levels of coverage. How to undo 16 years of positive bus network development in 2-3 years!

@ PoP – you are quite right that buses operate in a dynamic environment. However TfL take different stances on this when it suits them. When they need to save money or remove buses to meet other mayoral objectives, as with Oxford St, then they love dynamic environments because it gives them cover to make changes. On the other hand when we have new schools, hospitals, housing or whatever that would involve new or extended routes that cost money then all of a sudden that dynamic environment is ignored. It is only when a politician picks up the mantle and nags TfL to death via Mayor's Questions that something happens – the frequency increase on the C10 service in Bermondsey and Rotherhithe is a classic example. The ludicrous situation with the 343 bus in North Peckham took a television series (albeit TfL supported) and petitions to get the 136 extended to provide sufficient peak time capacity so people no longer had to wait 25-40 minutes to squash on to a bus. A bit of consistency wouldn't go amiss (and, yes, I am in idealistic mode in saying that).

76.



Aleks2CV 1 January 2018 at 14:25

I wasn't directly transferring fixed modes to fixed bus routes just that keeping things the same through generations is not always a good thing.

You do need good information to back up use of the flexibility, web page redesign and free wi-fi on bus routes. On OxSt extend coverage from LU entrances. The bus stops could be turned into travel enquiry points.

On affordability I do think that an extension to a 90 minute hopper would be farer.

77.

Pedantic of Purley 1 January 2018 at 17:18

Walthamstow Writer,

As a small point, I was merely pointing out what TfL would say if the question was posed to them – as it was at London Travelwatch meeting. Do not take everything that I report as the official line to mean that I agree with it.

I take your point entirely about buses being available for the poorer in society and forcing a change from bus to rail involves a cost increase to those least able to afford it. As anecdotal evidence, the time spent on the rear platform of a bus made me aware of how many people made longer journey by bus that I would have thought logically (if money was not a factor) one would make by rail or tube.

However, if you will permit me to suggest what ‘the Khan camp’ argument might be:

1. The objective is to make travel for people affordable to all and not to have discrimination by pricing people out of their preferred mode of travel. That is one of the reasons for the fares freeze.
2. Providing a comprehensive bus service everywhere in central London is simply not sustainable – or even desirable. As the centre gets busier it is essential that more emphasis is given to walking and making the walking environment more pleasant. To achieve this bus passengers will have to take their share of the pain.

On the second point I would merely want to add a personal view that I do get rather frustrated when people categorise different modes of transport users and don’t look at the overall journey for individuals. After all bus passengers, by their very nature, are almost always also pedestrians.

It was particularly frustrating to listen to a London Travelwatch meeting where they talked about the disadvantages to bus passengers but then mentioned there were benefits to pedestrians – as if these were two totally separate (dare I say it, discrete) categories of user. I know that they know and appreciate that this is not the case but this is the way their research comes across.

78.



Greg Tingey 1 January 2018 at 17:44

Graham H

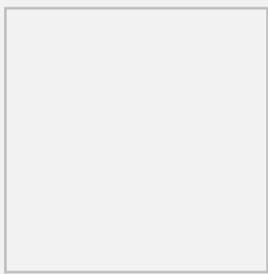
Chingford – Docklands ..

But the ghosts of the 557, 697, 699, 685, 687 still all run.

What has changed are the wandering end-points down in docklands, & a partial truncation in Chingford.

But the majority of the routes, especially the 75%+ “middle” sections are still all there ...

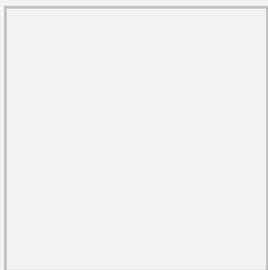
79.



Graham H 1 January 2018 at 20:27

@Greg T – sure the core parts of any route will always survive (not necessarily as direct descendants of the original route). The 269, 258 and so on have gone, however. [I fear the moderators will be gearing up to smite us, however, if we continue too far in this vein – interesting tho’ it is.]

80.



Walthamstow Writer 1 January 2018 at 21:00

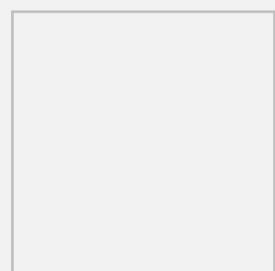
@ PoP – I will make a predictable point here about the fares freeze. It is going to be immensely damaging to TfL’s finances. It is a fine sounding idea but it is deeply flawed. Could TfL be made more efficient? – yes. Have the changes been done in a way that has improved efficiency? – not really. There are far too many obvious “cracks” appearing in the quality of TfL’s “public face”. The utterly farcical “non provision” of official information about bus diversions for the New Year’s parade today is one example. Another is the complete failure to give people accurate information about New Year’s Eve night buses. I understand, from anecdotal reports, that a Sunday service level was hopelessly inadequate with people being left behind as buses were full to bursting. That ignores the enormous cuts to suburban night routes – 70-80% of routes were scrapped last night compared to last year. In the end TfL’s Bus Alerts twitter a/c was forced to point the public to an enthusiast’s

website which was the only place online that had a list of the night routes that were scheduled to run. That was only put together by people slogging through hundreds of individual bus schedules to see what TfL had released into its electronic systems. I have never seen TfL had to “outsource” its own information provision before.

The fares freeze will do *nothing* to narrow modal fare differentials. It does nothing for Season ticket prices or daily caps because the Mayor is not in control of such things. Worse the differential between TfL and National Rail farescales widens every year. A point I made via these columns during the Mayor’s election campaign and which his opponents completely missed. I am therefore sorry but I disagree with your “Mayoral” argument as I expect an awful lot of people paying higher fares tomorrow will also do.

You will also not be shocked to hear I disagree with the notion of Central London not needing a comprehensive bus network. It has needed one for well over a century. Nothing much has changed or will change with Crossrail. I’d argue the original advent of the Underground lines in Central London was far more revolutionary than Crossrail will be. London has had far higher levels of road transport congestion in the centre than it has now – just watch news reports from the 1980s for evidence of that. I dare say the 60s and 70s were worse still. Makes you wonder what has been done to create a situation whereby lower traffic volumes create such monstrous congestion.

I think the issue with any statutory body is that it is constrained by its framework and objectives and Travelwatch (and its predecessors) have always been modally focussed. Clearly I am not going to disagree that someone who uses a bus or a tube or a train is not also a pedestrian. I think there is no real clarity as to how Travelwatch can or should represent cyclists and pedestrians. It’s an emerging area for “consumer” representation and there is probably a lot of policy work needed to better understand how multi-modal users are properly represented by a body like London Travelwatch. That’s my sense of things.



81.

[Pedantic of Purley](#) 1 January 2018 at 21:34

Walthamstow Writer,

In particular, when it comes to the fares freeze I was only trying to point out what the official viewpoint almost certainly will be – as I have heard something very similar being said.

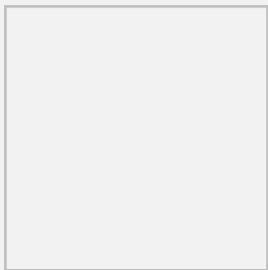
I understand your views regarding how essential buses are but personally I think we are at something of a tipping point regarding traffic congestion and the sheer number of pedestrians and something has to give. I do not disagree about poor information about the services we do still have running.

The current situation is really unsatisfactory. As timbeau argues, the worst of both worlds. In Oxford Street on Saturday I observed most buses almost totally empty but others fairly full. The number of them was dwarfed by taxis with their yellow light on – as usual. Given it was sale time and attracted the sort of people looking for a bargain (and not inclined to take taxis) I do wonder what benefit they really were.

I have been to many cities in Europe and not felt a need to use a bus. Equally there are others where they are almost unavoidable. For instance, try getting from the station on one side of the river to the city centre on the other side in Bratislava without catching a bus. It is practically impossible.

Every city is different and has different needs. I would argue that is also true for different areas of central London.

82.



Greg Tingey 1 January 2018 at 23:06

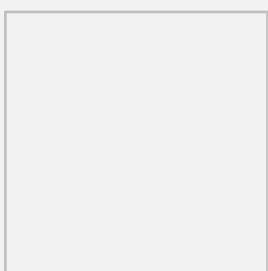
WW & PoP

There is certainly unfortunate evidence of TfL “Losing the Plot” as regards both services, present & future, & the information about them to the public.

Example: Over the Yule holiday, the Chingford & Enfield lines went to a Special Timetable, of which there was no mention at all on their web site ...

The trains were running at a different frequency (lower) & different times – a definite public relations fail, I’m afraid, especially as the timetable they were displaying was the one that finished on 9th December, oops.

83.



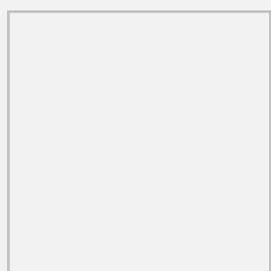
ngh 1 January 2018 at 23:31

try getting from the station on one side of the river to the city centre on the

other side in Bratislava without catching a bus. It is practically impossible.

Largely a legacy issue because the 2 halves of the current Bratislava were in different parts of the Holy Roman / Hapsburg / Austro-Hungarian. The city centre is the former Pressburg one of the 2 administrative centres of the Hungarian empire. The Austrians very carefully made sure the railway were constructed on their side of the Danube for military reasons in the 1840s (which created lots of logistics issues with Eastern mobilisation in 1914). Bratislava having a 2nd half on the western side of the Danube only occurred after 1918 as a side effect of trying to make an Austrian / Hungarian / Czechoslovakian border on land with the Czechoslovakians building completely over their new bit of land.

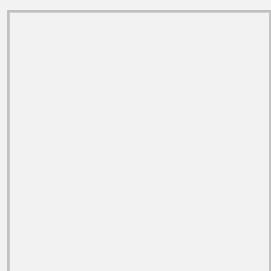
84.



Graham H 2 January 2018 at 08:36

@ngh – on the other hand it used to be possible to travel by tram from Wien to Pressburg!

85.



TBC 3 January 2018 at 14:28

As a daily bus user from inner north London to Holborn I can only welcome changes that will overhaul service provision in central London and hope they do not stop with Oxford Street. The current network in central London is not fit for purpose – it is bloated with too many duplicate routes that are barely half full whilst in inner and outer London services are rammed. Yes much of the congestion is due to the ridiculous amounts of road works that take place, but there is no doubt that the volume of buses is a cause for slow journeys as well. There are walls of buses all over zone 1. It's a shambles.

My current route, the No. 19, is typical of many peak journeys I have taken by bus over the years: full to the brim when it arrives – on many occasions I cannot even board it -, by the time I exit on Theobalds it might only be 10% full – yet it has completed just half of its journey. Years of using buses for weekday commuting purposes has told me that there is very limited demand for zone 2-to-2 journeys. Most passengers seem to board for short, or even very short trips, or they're radial

commuters to central London.

86.



Rog 4 January 2018 at 16:21

Personally I think Crossrail's quite behind with construction of the stations for Oxford Street. Pedestrianisation in 2018 will be to no good effect especially if people can't use the stations. That's putting the cart before the horse!

<https://1londonblog.uk/2018/01/bond-streets-crossr...>

87.



Greg Tingey 4 January 2018 at 17:37

TBC

Yes / maybe

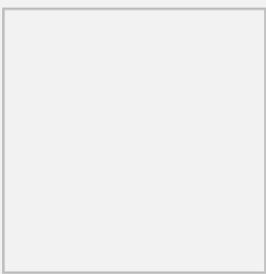
Your post re-highlights something always in the background of this discussion, that the state of Oxford St's transport (& as you say, other places) is awful.

Unfortunately, we seem to be up against a familiar trope:~

“Something Must be Done!”

This is something – & – therefore, it must be done

88.



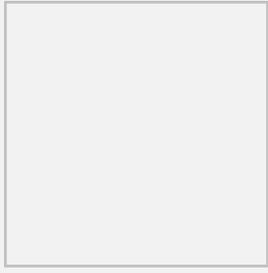
HowardGWR 4 January 2018 at 19:18

A city with a long shopping street is Amsterdam (Kalverstraat). Two tram routes (which buses and taxis can use, run down the middle of the adjacent parallel streets Rokin and the Nieuwezijds Voorburgwal (I love that mouthful). These routes all converge on the central station and in addition Amsterdam will soon have its crossrail tube (Noord Zuidlijn). There is no traffic in the Kalverstraat. It seems to work rather well. Whenever I have started from the central station, I have walked across to the start of the Kalverstraat and then walked to the other end, You have to, if you want to visit all the main shops. One then takes a tram back or walks back to visit the shop where you saw that interesting offer.

Surely this is the same as Oxford Street?

By the way, two department stores are on the Rokin but we are only talking of a 100 metre side step from the pedestrianised Kalverstraat.

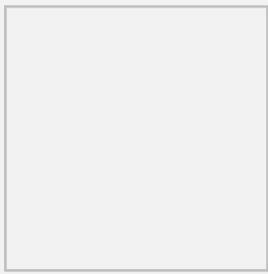
89.



HowardGWR 4 January 2018 at 19:37

I forgot to mention that Rokin is just an extension of Damrak (or vice versa) the latter at the north end starting at the station, reaching the Dam and then continuing with the Rokin.

90.

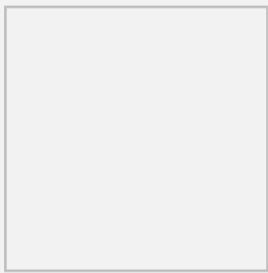


Greg Tingey 4 January 2018 at 20:23

HowardGWR

Yes ... but ... you used the unmentionable word: "Tram"
Which is why it works in Amsterdam, of course.

91.



Walthamstow Writer 5 January 2018 at 01:05

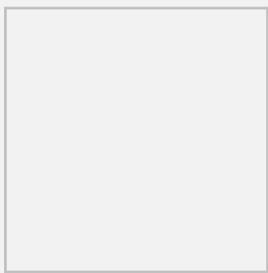
@ PoP – I was in Oxford St a couple of days ago when several routes were diverted along it because of the NYD parade elsewhere. It highlighted another issue – diversionary capacity when there are problems elsewhere. We will lose that in under 6 months when Oxford St West closes. Will be interesting to see how the remaining road network copes when we have Regent St closures, marches and other events in Central London. I expect it won't cope but I don't see where any of this is being addressed. Given there are sometimes marches or events every week from Spring to Autumn we are not talking about an insignificant issue here. Perhaps the public will just be left with no buses at all?

In terms of buses there were plenty of people waiting for the few routes that were running. Like your observations some were well used and others not quite so well.

However this is no different from *anywhere* in London where you will see buses with variable loadings in different places and different times. This argument that “lightly loaded” buses should be axed is simply falacious if taken in isolation. Like you I also saw far too many taxis crawling along Oxford St and also far too many private cars flouting the ban on access to the street. No wonder the place is still congested!

@ Greg – I am afraid the TfL website did say that a special service was in operation on the Anglia lines out of Liv St. It also stated which stations were closed. I agree a temporary timetable wasn't provided but it took a matter of seconds on realtime trains to see the times of trains. I actually used the service into Liv St and it was very quick. I am puzzled as to why so many stations were closed as no works seemed to be being done on the tracks or platforms and no sign of any contractors. Looks to me like a convenient saving for TfL at the expense of providing a service to the public which is not a good precedent at all. If trains could stop at St James St then why not Clapton or Hackney Downs? Seems a very odd decision to me. If anyone knows why so many stations were closed I'd be interested in understanding this.

92.

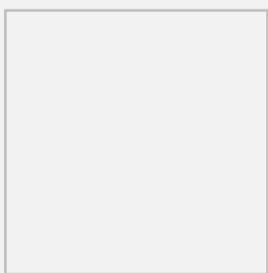


Aleks2CV 5 January 2018 at 10:02

@WW These measures won't stop with Oxford St.

Future candidates with diversionary implications could be Regent St & Shaftesbury Av restricted to zero emission buses and cabs.

93.



Southern Heights (Light Railway) 5 January 2018 at 10:07

@WW: *it took a matter of seconds on realtime trains to see the times of trains.*

You might have done that, but most people even don't know this exists (Real Time Trains), the point Greg is making is that they could have at least put up a single page to give travellers a clue as to what was happening. Pretty basic thing to do really!

94.



Greg Tingey 5 January 2018 at 11:09

SHLR

And, I did do that – but what about: “the general public”?

95.



Bob 6 January 2018 at 20:42

I don't think I'll be sad to see the end of buses, provided they are replaced by rail.

Our fairly typical bus experience today:

- get to the stop in time for the scheduled bus
- electronic bus tracking showed the bus arriving and leaving, despite no actual bus being present
- the bus turned up 8 or 9 minutes later at a time neither scheduled nor predicted by the tracker
- the bus proceeded to travel at walking pace
- then at Vauxhall bus station the service was regulated for several minutes

Despite the fact the 360 bus literally went door to door (our road to the museum) it would have been faster to walk to the station and take an indirect tube. It would have been much faster to cycle. Even walking at a brisk pace would have been a pretty close run thing – it took over 40 minutes for a 2.5 mile journey!

And, all of these alternative options would have been completely predictable. No hanging around in the cold at bus stops waiting to see if the service was actually running – wondering if I should give up and just walk.

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