



A vision for London:

a world class walking city

A report setting out priority areas for action, to turn
our capital into a world beating walking city

Living Streets
November 2009

LIVING STREETS

PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk.

This document sets out a vision for London, highlighting the key issues that we believe will help London to meet its potential as a world beating walking-friendly city. It provides a framework for our own work in London, both as a national organisation, and as a network of local groups in many of London's boroughs. Our activities and campaigning work will be based around the calls to action we set out in this document. There are five priority areas on which action needs to be taken to achieve our vision, with detailed calls within each one.

Framing our vision for London

There are four key principles underpinning our suggested approach:

- **Leadership and long-term vision**
Ambitious modal shift targets, strong political leadership and a visionary outlook
- **Effective Delivery**
Boroughs need to be innovative and effective in their delivery of schemes, enabled and supported by TfL
- **Activities and interventions on the ground**
Specific schemes, projects and interventions on the ground.
- **Promotion and marketing**
Marketing and promotion of walking as an overarching public facing campaign.





Priority area one: Ambition for London

- We need an ambitious, long-term vision statement on walking and public realm improvements that sets out commitment to achieving a transformation in the number of walking trips. Currently half of trips between 0.5–2km in length in London are made by car, but only 29% of them on foot.
- We want to see these numbers reversed as a first step to making walking the natural choice for short journeys in the capital and this should be adopted as a central plank of the Mayor's transport strategy.
- A greater proportion of the TfL budget should be invested in walking, with a specific objective to "invest to save" as part of managing demand for private and public transport travel. Health budgets must also be more actively targeted to support walking project delivery, reflecting the huge positive impact that active travel has on public health.
- We need to use the Olympics to establish a true legacy for Londoners- a once in a generation opportunity to encourage everyday activity and transform the way we think about the city and how we interact with it. Regular and prolonged car-free events and festivals should become the norm, with trial pedestrianised areas showing how our city can be improved for everyone.
- We need to invest and extend existing schemes which we already know work, such as Living Streets' Walk to School campaign and Walking Works campaign.
- We need to compare London's Walkability to other cities and benchmark our own performance, so we can see how well we're doing and where we need to focus resources.
- A strong multi-stakeholder steering group on walking and public realm should be created to advise and support the vision of London as a world class walking city, and support delivery partners such as voluntary sector organisations.



Priority two: Revitalise the West End

- The quality of the pedestrian experience on Oxford Street is a national scandal. We need a staged pedestrianisation of Oxford Street, transforming it into a world class destination befitting its status as the country's most famous shopping street.
- We need to connect the islands of great public space in central London by developing a network of pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces, free of barriers to walking and free of traffic domination, where people on foot can relax and feel comfortable. The network could be built up on a step-by-step basis, starting with a central hub such as Leicester Square, and linking it to important nearby destinations like Trafalgar Square, Covent Garden, and Chinatown. From there, the network would extend outwards to take in the busy pedestrian highways, the main tourist attractions, the great parks, the river, and central London's mainline stations.

Priority three:

Thriving town centres and neighbourhoods

- Outside central London, our town centres and high streets should be well-designed, liveable and welcoming places. We need to transform the quality of the pedestrian environment and revitalise our village and town centres all across Greater London.
- We need to assess the walkability and permeability of local neighbourhoods and town centres and put in place improvements so that more people walk for local trips, supporting local shops and services.
- The London Plan and Transport strategy and borough plans must recognise the importance of local town centres, with a stronger emphasis on local facilities to reverse the necessity of car travel for work, leisure and retail trips
- We need to support the establishment of car free developments in London- not simply preventing tenants and residents in some developments from obtaining parking permits, but developing or retrofitting developments which are truly car free, as seen in many successful initiatives in mainland Europe.



Priority four: Creating space for people

- Transport provision in London is not balanced. As the population of the capital continues to rise, so the space afforded to different modes needs to be reconsidered on an ongoing basis. Flagship initiatives to re-allocate space to pedestrians should become principles firmly embedded in both TfL and Borough maintenance and improvement schedules.
- 'Naked streets' principles should form a key part of TfL and Borough planning; with an ambitious and staged programme of de-cluttering, and a better balance between different transport modes. Although high profile flagship projects (e.g. Exhibition Road) are an important way of making improvements, we also need stronger promotion of cheaper and less radical approaches. Recent schemes such as those on Dagenham Heathway and Walworth Road need to be replicated elsewhere, as examples of improvements that are applicable to London's high streets and neighbourhoods.
- The principle of "smoothing the flow" must be about people flow, not simply motor vehicle flow. Changes made on this basis must be empirically-informed and proportionate between modes. When it comes to walking, improvements must relate to Londoners' everyday experience: such as overcrowded footways, inadequate crossings, street clutter and uneven surfaces.
- Pedestrian pinch-points must be addressed as a specific part of "smoothing the flow"- reallocating space away from the carriageway (characterised by low rates of people flow) to the footway (characterised by high rates of people flow). Pedestrian space should not be sacrificed to accommodate more cycling- this should be done by re-allocating space within the carriageway.
- Where a satisfactory balance between road users cannot be achieved, some sort of framework for identifying priority between them must apply. Principles of 'capacity to cause' harm (health, climate change, noise, danger to others and air pollution) must underpin decision-making- using the "link and place" methodology already being explored by TfL.





Priority five: Safe and civilised streets

- We need 20 mph speed limits across London where people work, live or play. Not only will this drastically reduce injuries, but will also provide a more civilised climate which will encourage walking and cycling. TfL and Boroughs should work together on achieving this as the single biggest measure to make our streets safer and more civilised.
- A radical reduction in the numbers of HGVs on London streets. This can be an extension of a successful ODA programme for the 2012 Olympic development, which has seen 57% of materials by weight delivered to site by more sustainable modes (rail or river). HGVs used in London should also be fitted with mirrors that better enable the driver to see pedestrians and cyclists alike.
- We need to re-connect our communities by improving pedestrian crossings. Our streets should be generally more permeable with informal crossing acknowledged and supported (as in the Strand). Formal crossings should be in place where people want to walk, and meet all accessibility standards and best practice. We need to ensure that all Londoners can cross our streets with confidence and in safety.
- The 484 pedestrian crossings across London that are not currently compliant with TfL's SQA-0064 Design Standards for Signal Schemes in London must be brought up to standard with urgency, and TfL should publish a timetable to achieve this by March 2011.

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians.

With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. We work with professionals and politicians to make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces

Join our Community for Change

To find out more about Living Streets local groups near you, or to become a supporter and help our work continue, see www.livingstreets.org.uk or telephone 020 7377 4900.

Want to find out more?

Contact us on 020 7377 4900, or email info@livingstreets.org.uk
www.livingstreets.org.uk