



DANGEROUS JUNCTIONS SUMMIT

March 2022

INITIAL SUMMARY

Junctions are where most serious and fatal collisions happen. They're often not only dangerous but also feel so hostile to those walking, cycling and wheeling they become barriers to active travel in an area and through it.

London Cycling Campaign has protested at and campaigned around junctions for decades, but following the fatal collision with Dr Marta Krawiec at Holborn in 2021, we launched an ongoing **#DangerousJunctions** campaign – to not only highlight and tackle individual dangerous junctions but to tackle systemic road danger issues at far too many junctions in London and the ongoing slow pace of action around them.

When junctions are made safe the payback is huge – they unlock miles of new cycle routes and make walking, cycling and wheeling safer for many people. Right now, fixing junctions is one of the most important things we can do to make cycling in London safer. So why has progress on dangerous junctions been so slow and so partial? Why have multiple Mayors struggled to deliver more than a handful of genuinely safer, better junctions?

In March 2022, LCC convened a high-level summit of expert practitioners on junctions to discuss ways to improve pace and quality of delivery of schemes. Practitioners came from transport authorities and consultancies, modelling, design and planning backgrounds. A full report on how we might improve this deadly situation will be out later this summer. But here are a few of the most obvious conclusions from the summit so far...

KEY FINDINGS

TWO KEY ISSUES IMPACT DELIVERY

- Too much (unnecessary) private motor traffic – when junctions are designed to be changed, safety improvements are often weakened because computer modelling shows they will worsen existing congestion and lower motor traffic flows.
- Lack of political clarity – when designers and engineers are asked to not impact bus journey times, nor general motor traffic congestion, while simultaneously improving safety, it becomes impossible to deliver bold schemes – everyone ends up dissatisfied with a scheme that delivers only marginal benefits at best.

“With all the outcomes you’re expected to achieve, you go round and round to the point where you’re not worsening any outcome, but not improving any either. No one hates the scheme, but no one loves it.”

“We’ve got a toolbox of things we can do from a design perspective. But designers don’t have a tool to adjust or reduce demand. That’s something policy makers have to do.”

SOLVING THOSE ISSUES

- **USE BEST PRACTICE**

There are now examples of better, safer junctions across the UK that 'work' (Manchester's CYCLOPS and Waltham Forest's variants, TfL's 'Hold The Left' and 'Peninsularisation' for major roundabouts, Cambridge's 'Dutch Roundabout' etc.). Separating flows of turning motor vehicles from those cycling is vital for cycling safety; better provision for pedestrians is also vital, with green person signals on all arms, shorter wait times for a green and longer times to cross the road. Better, safer junctions are possible, but are often costly, slow and complex to achieve fully.

- **TEMPORARY WORKS AND TRIALS**

Recent changes during the Covid pandemic in London, as well as following fatal collisions, demonstrate temporary materials, trial schemes, even simple banned turns can deliver rapid and relatively cheap safety benefits – and short-circuit a lengthy modelling process in some circumstances. There seems little reason why such an approach couldn't be done proactively at known dangerous junctions rather than waiting for a fatality.

- **DEMAND MANAGEMENT**

Approaches like road-pricing are needed to reduce private motor traffic levels (and thus free up 'capacity' for change at junctions).

- **PRIORITISE SAFETY**

Until demand is managed, such as by road-pricing, we need politicians to bravely prioritise saving lives – and be clear about who is being prioritised and who isn't and why.

- **DESIGN FOR THE FUTURE**

Junction design is nearly universally hobbled by current motor traffic volumes, despite schemes being expected to last for decades. We need to stop designing for what we have today and start designing for what we expect and need to have in the medium-term.

- **LONG-TERM STABLE FUNDING**

The current ongoing funding crisis at TfL has heavily impacted London's ability to deliver on road danger (and climate), with higher budget and longer projects effectively off the table.

- **A NATIONAL JUNCTION DESIGN REVIEW GROUP**

Multi-agency, to review and encourage innovation, but also fix failing, lethal junctions.

- **MODELLING TO IMPROVE, NOT REJECT**

Computer modelling of junctions prior to scheme approval should be and increasingly is an optimisation process – not 'computer says no' but how do we improve this initial design for everyone?

- **WALK, CYCLE, WHEEL, BUS PRIORITY**
Fulfilling the Mayor's Transport Strategy means growing bus ridership will be vital, but so will increasing cycling, wheeling and walking – and that means safety at junctions must be a priority.
- **BUS 'GATES' AND BUS LANES**
Running bus lanes right to the junction, and/or using camera 'gates' to stop private motor traffic driving the length of certain roads or across certain junctions (as seen at Bank junction, Bishopsgate, Stoke Newington Church Street etc.), represent bold opportunities to improve safety for vulnerable road users and improve bus journey times.
- **SHORT-TERM FIX, AVOID THE JUNCTION?**
We cannot let people continue to die at lethal junctions, but sometimes, short-term, routing cycling away from the junction, until motor traffic levels can be reduced to deliver a high-quality design, will be the best way to unlock rapid change. This should not be a default approach – as many current cyclists will continue to ride through dangerous junctions when presented with a safer alternative that goes round the houses.
- **SIDE ROAD ZEBRAS AND 'YIELD AT TURN'**
These innovative approaches are used all over Europe, are championed by many practitioners and could deliver huge safety and congestion benefits, but need government level action to realise.

“The average road death costs something like £2 million pounds. So we need to put these costs next to each other – the delay to traffic versus the cost of losing lives.”

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