Introduction

(Tom Cohen)

Hello and thanks for listening to this podcast from the Active Travel Academy at the University of Westminster. I'm Tom Cohen, Reader in Transport Policy at Westminster and member of the ATA (as we tend to abbreviate it).

On 2nd May 2025, a conference took place at the University of Westminster called New Perspectives on Walking and Wheeling in the City. It was organised by the Sustainable Cities and the Urban Environment Research Community at Westminster (generally shortened to "SCUE"), in conjunction with the ATA and Footways. It was a very varied day, with talks ranging from Professor Shane O'Mara on walking and brain health to Dr Farzaneh Bahrami talking about long-distance walking. One of the many highlights was a panel discussion chaired by Footways co-founder David Harrison. Called How bold can we be in pursuit of the walkable city?, it featured Caroline Russell, Green member of the London Assembly, Adam Harrison and James McAsh, transport leads of Camden and Southwark, respectively, Andrew Gilligan, former Cycling Commissioner to Mayor Boris Johnson and more recently Transport Adviser at Number 10, and Professor Rachel Aldred, Director of the Active Travel Academy.

The conversation was wide-ranging, full of challenge, and, at times, spicey! It provided plenty of food for thought. We hope you enjoy listening to it.

A word about audio quality. The panel was recorded using handheld microphones and some voices were captured more successfully than others. There was an amount of background noise that we've tried to filter out. The result is not audiophile quality but you'll hopefully understand what everyone says.

Transcript of panel session

(Chair)

Hello, our speakers are here, they're ready to go. Tom Cohen at the back, can you take your seats please? Very good. Very pleased to hear it. So, my name's David Harrison from Footways London. You've seen our map. We're also keen on seeing huge improvements for pedestrians. And the title of our panel today is Creating a Walkable City. How bold can we be?

(Chair)

And we've got five people here, I hope willing to be very bold. We haven't defined what walkable means, but we hope they will. And you can join the discussion about that afterwards. So we'll begin with five minutes of comments from each panelist, and then go on

to a general discussion. So first off is Caroline Russell, former chair of Islington Living Streets, Islington Councillor and now Green Councillor on the London Assembly.

(Chair)
It's in that capacity.

(Unidientified)
London Assembly member, sorry, Caroline.

(Graham)
Thank you. Thank you very much.

(Caroline Russell)
I'm going to stand up because it's going to be easier to talk and I've just set my timer so that I don't overrun. So how bold can we be about walking? It's, you know, thinking in the context of London where we have very clear targets for the Mayor of London to hit through his Mayor's Transport Strategy and the work that he's doing on it. And we know that the mayor is behind on the target about reducing the number of people who are killed and seriously injured on our roads to zero by 2041.

(Caroline Russell)
He is also behind, and it's very hard to see a trajectory that allows him to meet it, his target for 80% of journeys in London to be made by walking, cycling and public transport, again by 2041. So in that context, it is absolutely critical that we look at how we can transform our city. Now I was out in Barnet earlier this week and I was on one of those very busy main roads with several junctions all along it and every junction had traffic signals and those traffic signals were for the traffic. The traffic wanted to go straight ahead, the traffic wanted to go left, the traffic

(Caroline Russell)
wanted to go right and at no stage in the signals was there a time for pedestrians to be able to safely cross the road. So people were having to take, their lives into their hands and they were trying to cross in gaps. But when you see someone who is a bit slower on their feet, someone who is using a rollator or is walking with white cane or in a wheelchair,

(Caroline Russell)
then that kind of crossing is absolutely unacceptable. So within that context, my first bold idea is make sure there are no signals left in London with signals for traffic without signals for people to cross the road. So next point is we just got to acknowledge that our cities do

not feel as if they are built for people on foot and they, our city has been shaped more and more and more around the needs of people driving cars, people parking cars, and people moving their cars and preventing buses from getting around efficiently. And those cars are getting bigger

(Caroline Russell)
and heavier with every single passing year. And the impact of that, both on the road danger in our city and also on the wear and tear on the roads and the amount of space for cars to move around, so i.e. impacting congestion, is really shocking. So my next bold idea is that all car parking should obviously be based on a weight factor and size factor,

(Caroline Russell)
because that would help in terms of Vision Zero and also would discourage people from driving inappropriately big cars. But also, is it possible to think about speeding tickets based on the weight of your vehicle?

(Caroline Russell)
Because you cause more harm by driving every extra mile an hour over the speed limit if you're in a heavier car. So my next thought is how do we, in the interim, reclaim our streets so that they work for the people who are walking? And to me it seems quite obvious we need to be introducing an awful lot more zebra crossings,

(Caroline Russell)
but more importantly anywhere where people are walking and wanting to cross the road we should reduce the speed limit to 10 miles an hour because that would take out the danger it would make it an awful lot less desirable to take a car out and drive around. Every car journey should be an absolute last resort. And this is in order to help the Mayor to meet his targets in his Mayor's Transport Strategy. And this has all got backed up by money. So we need to be thinking back actually to when Andrew

(Caroline Russell)
was around in City Hall and the scale of the mini-Hollands, you know, 30 million quid given to Waltham Forest, and my goodness, they did an awful lot of good with that. And we also need, so we need much, much more money put into walking and cycling, but also we need to make sure that the LIP money, which is the way that the mayor funds the boroughs to deliver on walking and cycling, and particularly obviously walking in this context, those rules need to be really clear. The mayor came a cropper with the Tower Hamlets case, and I noticed that

(Caroline Russell)
all the letters that had gone out to the boroughs with the latest round of LIP funding have been much, much stricter and more carefully drafted in terms of what boroughs can do with that money. So it is absolutely unacceptable that so many people are still being killed and seriously injured on our roads. And we need to take the boldest possible emergency action to make sure that it is safe, convenient, accessible for every single resident from the smallest child to the oldest person to be able to get around our city

(Caroline Russell)
under their own steam on foot.

(Chair)
That was great, thank you so much Caroline. Perfectly kept time, lots of bold points. Our next speaker is Adam Harrison, who is the Cabinet Lead for Sustainability in Camden and the Deputy Leader. And has done a great deal already in parts of Camden, you'll know the scheme as it's done and we hope to do a lot more.

(Adam Harrison)
Thank you very much David. Great to see so many people here. Thanks for coming along. It's certainly a very exciting weekend to be talking about walking because tomorrow we finally pedestrianise Camden High Street outside the tube line up close to Camden Lock. So that's a big project we've been working on for many years. I've just been seeing some images today, and they're exciting. And even in the last session, I was receiving WhatsApps

(Adam Harrison)
about Oxford Street pedestrianisation, trying to sort out a few things there … so close to Oxford Street. So it's clearly clear things are happening and it's a very exciting time. But how do you actually go about delivering the boldness that we talked about in pursuit of walkability? So for me, infrastructure

(Adam Harrison)
has always been key. You build it and then it's not always everyone comes back. People change their behaviour. But how do you get to building the infrastructure? You have to, my view is, you have to have the policy in place at a local level, at the borough level, that then guides what we do. And it's very clear, and it's democratically adopted, and helps you get through sometimes some of the challenges to delivering infrastructure. So in Camden, as with other boroughs and other parts of the country, we've for a long time

(Adam Harrison)
had a clear hierarchy of transport policies with walking right at the top. And that is really important to guide our decision making, but also to make sure that walking infrastructure doesn't get missed out. So there's always a lot of focus on cycling infrastructure. There's discussions about bus infrastructure as well as there should be. But when we are doing schemes like, for example, on Haverstock Hill, the scheme is on Hampstead and it's optimal to have us on cycle lanes and that's true, those are really important parts of

(Adam Harrison)
that successful strategy to change that. We've also introduced five new pedestrian crossings across Haverstock Hill, the patrol crossings, the crossings, that finally give pedestrians priority across that important road. Even after all these years for that scheme, those still don't really get talked about, but I always emphasise to make sure that as far as delivering those wider changes, you can deliver walking changes as well. But one of the challenges with walking infrastructure is, as I say, those still don't get talked

(Adam Harrison)
about. We really need to draw people's attention to what walking infrastructure makes a difference. There are so many changes. You probably know more simply from widening pavements, raising tables, introducing continuous crossings, introducing shorter crossings, so the distance between pavements is narrower. We have to point these out. So we can count, we're currently working on a video when we're going to really explain everything

(Adam Harrison)
we've been doing to improve work infrastructure and hopefully start to get people to notice it. I really feel people don't. I feel I certainly didn't notice half the things we could be doing before I took on the portfolio. a number of years ago. It's certainly been a learning experience. We have to generate the demand amongst people, realise that it's absolutely unacceptable that their road has no drop kerb,

(Adam Harrison)
that they can't cross properly, and so just rolling up the pushchair and the wheelchair, then they will start to demand change. We all play a role in that. So we've been rolling out as much infrastructure changes as possible. We've been counting for a number of years now and we think it has started to show results. So we know that our walking mode share for residents' trips in 2017 it was 42%, by 2023 it was 57%. That's a really big change. We've been doing that by making some of the changes that I've outlined. But there are even less noticeable changes, which we're going to do

(Adam Harrison)
more of. So we're developing certain principles around junctions or accessible junctions, which is essentially, if you notice, many times you get to a junction, you walk across over and there's a parked car or somebody in a green light, and there's no drop kerb, and there's no raised table. People can't follow those desire lines. We also want to build up that standard and get that sort of background back. Hopefully, get that adopted more generally. We've also been rolling out, we're moving parking at junctions for a number of years so that people can simply see if there's cars coming, so many people can stand there and then they move around and it's worse if you're smaller, if you're a child, if you're older

(Adam Harrison)
and you're slower. Inequality is absolutely baked into the way we've designed our cities and the vast solutions here in England and these are those. So I'll end there, but I completely agree, we need to think about how we get people noticing, discussing,

(Adam Harrison)
more infrastructure.

(Chair)
Thank you. Thank you.

(LT)
Thank you.

(Chair)
Thank you. Our next speaker is Andrew Gilligan. Andrew's had a remarkable career as a journalist and advisor to politicians. He together with Clyde Loakes opened the famous Walthamstow Mini Holland many years ago, which had such an important impact on improving walking conditions in the city and as you know, as Boris's adviser, has led to an extraordinary outpouring of low traffic neighbourhoods during Covid. So, Andrew, over to you.

(Andrew Gilligan)
Thank you. Thank you very much. Yeah, I mean, I think on the subject of BOLD, I've been involved with several things that could be called BOLD. So, Mini Hollands, the highway code guidance, I think that got mentioned earlier on. That was part of what I was involved in, was in government, LTNs during the pandemic, the bike lanes on the embankment. One of the

things you've got to do to be bold is piss people off. And some of what I'm going to say is going to piss you off. But if we are going to make progress

(Andrew Gilligan)
on this issue, we need to face some unpalatable truths. First of those truths is that walking has been by a long way the least successful of the sustainable modes in growing its volume and its mode share. In 2000, walking's share of journey stages taken in London was 21.7%. By 2023, walking's share was 21.7%. By 2023, walking's share was 22.7%. In volume over the same period, cycling is up by 330%, public transport use up by 43%, walking is stuck at 22%. Caravan and

(Andrew Gilligan)
taxi have fallen, so the overall rise in journey stages has taken a 17% of all modes. So walking's gone up a little bit more than the background rise, but only a very little bit. I get why politicians and council officers feel more comfortable talking about investing in walking than, you know, in bus lanes or cycling, because most people walk and it feels easier politically than taking away road space from motorists for buses and bike lanes. That investment has been quite substantial, but quite often, as those figures I just said suggest, it hasn't

(Andrew Gilligan)
worked. And I sometimes think the most dangerous two words in transport are public realm. We've had so many of these fucking public realm schemes in London that do little more than prettify the status quo. They install nicer looking pavements and some trees and benches, what are basically the same car dominated streets.

(Andrew Gilligan)
There's one near me on Deptford High Street, done about five, ten years ago now. It cost a lot of money, it caused great disruption to the traders, but it didn't do a single thing to reduce the amount of traffic going down that street. The lowering of kerbs actually meant that cars can park on the pavement more easily, which they do. Aesthetically, maybe you make the place

(Andrew Gilligan)
look a little bit nicer, at least for a while, but the materials don't always stand up to wear and tear, as you know. They crack, they get dirty, those little red bricks that so many schemes consist of, they kind of lift and they trip up people. I think, and if it's not well designed actually. It doesn't even look nice at the beginning. Sometimes you need to lay a carpet on it. It makes a street into a shopping mall.

(Andrew Gilligan)
So look, creative walking, walk up the cities is great. But you can't use walking schemes, as so many people do, to avoid making the real choices, the difficult choices about getting rid of road space for cars and vans, and stopping conflict between pedestrians and volume motor traffic. That is what makes the difference.

(Andrew Gilligan)
Fancy new materials are often a mistake. Some of the most successful schemes just put up a bollard or a planter and make little or no other change, perhaps a few more drop kerbs. But look, for instance, at Prince's Victoria Street in Clifton in Bristol looks absolutely fine. It took about three hours to install, as opposed to eight months in Deptford and it cost next to nothing. I know absolutely no evidence at all that doing noisier looking surfaces on its own gets more people walking. Because the fact is that most of these schemes will only improve slightly

(Andrew Gilligan)
a tiny fraction of someone's walking journey. The rest of it will still be made on the same old pavements and car-dominated roads. So in terms of sustainability, in terms of modal shift, public realm just often does very little apart from lining the pockets of consultants and contractors. But then it gets worse actually because we also get public realm schemes which are actively harmful to sustainability and modal shift. Another one in London, in Twickenham, in King Street, if you know that. What happened there, the council, again no change to the motor traffic,

(Andrew Gilligan)
they tightened up the pavements a bit, new stone slabs, but they also moved all the bus stops onto the adjacent roads. So the buses, like the rest of the traffic, still drive down King Street, but you've got to walk further to board your bus and cross a busy road which you didn't have to before, and interchange is more difficult and confusing than it was. If you're getting the bus from, say, Twickenham to Teddington, you used to have two, there were two routes from Twickenham to Teddington, they both used to stop on King Street and now they've, now they take different routes so you have to get them from different stops so your choice of buses if you're going to Teddington to

(Andrew Gilligan)
Twickenham has effectively been halved. On which subject? We cannot ignore the elephant round the corner, the pedestrianisation of Oxford Street. I think that's going to be a disaster, I think that won't take any cars away of course, because cars are already banned from Oxford Street. But it will devastate the bus service. Oh sorry, to start the whole thing again. OK, I was talking about what I think

(Andrew Gilligan)
is going to be the looming disaster of Oxford Street pedestrian intersection. That won't take any cars away because cars are already banned at most of that street. But it will devastate the bus service in central London. And it will discourage cycling because it'll shove cyclists off to

(Andrew Gilligan)
busier, less safe, less direct parallel routes, where they even exist, which of course, the eastern end of the street, they don't exist. Now, I'm kind of thinking buses and cycling, there are policy instruments which have a proven record of changing behaviour in the right direction. The bus lane, the segregated cycle track, they meaningfully increase journeys taken by bus and bike. That's why we're seeing those big rises that I gave at the beginning. They brought about real modal shift.

(Andrew Gilligan)
I'm not sure there's any equivalent purely for walking that can have the same effect. Firstly, because the interventions are smaller, more incremental. They don't represent the game-changing improvement that bus lane or bike lane represents. Secondly, of course, walking is, for most people, I appreciate the “hero walk”, as we've heard from in the last session, but for most people, walking is only feasible for much shorter distances than most people want to travel. So the

(Andrew Gilligan)
average passenger trip length of course almost in London is 6 miles, the average walking trip is 0.3 miles. So I think perhaps the best way of promoting walking, if you want to see the kind of numbers we've had increasing in cycling and increasing in public transport, the best way of promoting walking is to try to do it realistically with those other modes. So, you know, rather than doubling down on standalone public realm schemes, the best way of getting more people walking might actually be to get more people traveling by bus,

(Andrew Gilligan)
because at least you're walking to the bus stop. But of course, at the moment, in Oxford Street, for instance, and the guys and the walking scheme were doing the exact opposite. So equally, cycling schemes, and things I helped to do when I was Cycling Commissioner, they were mostly designed to give substantial amounts to pedestrians as well. LTNs, of course, but also the bike lanes included a lot, pedestrians. And again, in Oxford Street, we're doing the opposite. Unlike walking on its own, buses and cycling are

(Andrew Gilligan)

suitable for journeys of all lengths. They can contribute to what actually we need to work for, which is the creation of an overall sustainable transport ecosystem in which more people walk as well. And I don't think we should forget that lesson.

(Chair)

So thank you. Thank you very much Andrew. Now next speaker is James McAsh who is the Cabinet Lead for

Cleaner Streets and Waste from Southwark. And are we going to hear about removal of

traffic rather than prettification of Southwark?

(James McAsh)

Yeah, so my bold idea is to make the streets look nicer, but ultimately not change them in any meaningful way.

(James McAsh)
That was a joke.

(James McAsh)
So I should apologise, first of all, I'm not Rezina Chowdhury. She is a much more accomplished politician than I am, but I am from Southwark, which is a much better borough than Lambeth, so it really is a case of swings and roundabouts here. My big bold idea, the thing I want to talk about is walking as a question of land justice, like

(James McAsh)
some kind of agrarian revolutionary, but I think it is the correct thing to be talking about. Because how we use land says so much about our priorities, what we choose to use our land for tells us as a society what we think is important. In Southwark, the majority of our land is publicly owned. The majority of land is owned by the council, by TfL, by the NHS, et cetera.

(James McAsh)
And the majority of that is used for things that are so, so important and really deliver on a public good. So we're talking about beautiful parks, hospitals, schools, et cetera. These are all things that are designed for the use of everyone.

(James McAsh)
And then we have our streets, which on paper are designed for everyone, but are they really? In Southwark, 60% of people do not have access to a car, but the vast majority of our streets are designed with the car in mind.

(James McAsh)
There is

(James McAsh)
no way we would open a hospital that only 40% of our households are allowed to access. And equally, we know there's no way we'd open a school on the same basis. It's not just unequal, it's also inefficient. We know that cars are not used for 97% of the time. There's no way we open a hospital that is closed for 97% of the time. It's absolutely ludicrous. So my one bold idea is that we must reclaim space from cars for walking but indeed also for cycling and public transport as well. Our strategy in Southwark is called

(James McAsh)
Streets for People. It began its life as the movement plan then sustainable transport strategy and became Streets for People, it began its life as the movement plan, then sustainable transport strategy and it became Streets for People. And that change there is changing the emphasis away from transport exclusively to looking at our space in the round, looking at our land in the round. It's based on the why. Why it is we want to use our land for, what we want to achieve. We want cleaner air, we want to use our land for what we want to achieve? We want cleaner air, we want safer journeys,

(James McAsh)
we want places for children to play, adults to connect, we want to celebrate and allow our local economies to thrive, we want to protect our natural world. That's how we should be using our space. And the majority of people agree with that. Majority of people in London want that as well.

(James McAsh)
So, but when we talk in politics, it's sometimes very easy to have this kind of big vision and really positive things. People say, well, how are you going to do it? Typically in local government, we have no money at all. It's very, very difficult.

(James McAsh)
What we do have is a lot of space. So we're putting right at the very beginning, right at the

forefront, we are going to do this by taking space from cars for these things. It's a realistic proposition because you can see who the losers are in that. And it's a virtuous circle as well.

(James McAsh)
You reclaim space from cars, that increases active travel, that reduces traffic on the road. That means there is more space to reclaim as well. So, we released our strategy about a year and a half ago, and we initially think you would consult it. We'd ask people, do you agree we should do this? We thought, actually, you know what?

(James McAsh)
We won't. We've done this so many times. Over and over again, people tell us they want to do that. We're not going to consult. Instead, we took a different approach. We consulted on what do you want on your street?

(James McAsh)
Where do you want to walk? Where do you want to cycle? Where do you want new trees? Where do you want new crossings? Really concrete stuff that people understand and make sense to them. And surprise, surprise, when people wrote back to us, nowhere did they say they wanted tailbacks or congestion. Nowhere did they say they wanted to make it really easy for people to drive around.

(James McAsh)
They want the things that we all want in this route. We've got safe crossings, we've got smooth, wide, unobstructed pavements that are accessible for all people walking and wheeling. They want benches and parklets for older people and people who are tired can rest. They want trees that make it easy to walk around but also cool the climate. Flood relief, they want, and they want traffic reduction. But that was one of the key things that people, the top five priorities, the explicit one traffic reduction, and all the things I said before can only be achieved through traffic reduction.

(James McAsh)
So in that sense, everything,

(James McAsh)
every project is traffic reduction.

(James McAsh)
So that's what we asked them. And what we're doing now, we asked them exactly where do you want, which streets do you want to prioritize? In an ideal world, we look at every street

in the borough, we can't do that, we don't have the money, but we're looking at a network. Instead of key routes, we're looking at a network where you're never more than 200 metres away from it.

(James McAsh)
So we're talking about half the streets in the borough. We're then identifying what are the flaws on those streets, grading them, red, amber, green. So this street's a problem because it has too much traffic. are too narrow. And then we can ask those people, ask the residents again, how can we address these problems? You know, you've got this map in front of you. This street has too much traffic. How do you think we can reduce it? But right at the core of that, right at the beginning, we're saying very clearly, we are going to be taking away space

(James McAsh)
from cars for people, for active travel, for buses, for communities, etc. And the final thing I think we should be doing is, I think it's really easy to get bogged down in the nitty gritty of this is where we should do this crossing. So how we, those things are important. Those things are important, I think if you're a transport engineer, really to see the high level goals. So how are we gonna achieve the mode shift you've got to achieve it needs to be through redistributing land, to meet high level targets for land use, which of our streets and how much of our streets

(James McAsh)
devoted to walking, cycling, public transport, and how much is devoted to cars. I think until we see that change, I don't think we're going to see the modal shift we need to see.

(Chair)
And lastly, we'd like to have Rachel Aldred, Professor Aldred, who's one of the leading academics and researchers in this area, whose study of Waltham Forest and the increase in walking there has been so formative and important and many other studies since then. So Rachel, over to you. Thank you.

(Rachel Aldred)
Thank you very much. So yeah, it's been a really interesting day, really interesting session and I was asked to respond to some things that people said. So I've got a lot of barely readable notes on a piece of paper, so I shall talk about some of these in no particular order. So talking about a step change, you know, transformative visions for walking. And it really links to what Shane was saying, first of all, as well, about the imagination. It was really nice to hear Benedict Anderson being quoted and thinking about how we can imagine different futures. And one of the things that allows us to imagine different futures is differences that exist in the present.

(Rachel Aldred)
So the very different levels of walking in different contexts. For instance, the Swiss walk a good deal more than we do, despite the presence of hills, despite not having, you know, necessarily an optimal climate. There are very large differences by different population groups in terms of walking as well. So I think sometimes we forget the scope there is for a lot more walking and indeed, as people have said, if we look back and look in the past,

(Rachel Aldred)
the levels of walking that were considered normal were very different to the levels of walking, you know, in average terms, than are considered normal now. So yeah, I think being able to imagine things being different, and even within, when we look within England and the UK, of course,

(Rachel Aldred)
London appears to be doing relatively well. I've done quite a lot of research looking across England and the UK as well, more generally. And certainly when we compare with many other parts of England, the struggles, the difficulties in getting anything changed, in getting investment, in getting political will and so on, in walking and other forms of sustainable transport in other parts of the country are very much harder than in London. So London is doing relatively well, but that also means that London throws up the gaps and the massive chasm between where we are and where we would be if we achieved

(Rachel Aldred)
our climate goals, our health goals, and so on. And I think, as people have said, even in London, it's kind of like it's slow, sometimes sort of encroachment on, ideally, on car space. But sometimes it's encroachment from walking to buses, from buses to cycling, from cycling to bus. It's often just fighting over the crumbs.

(Rachel Aldred)
And it's a need to see it the other way around, isn't it really? It's a need to really see it from the priorities, from the currently marginalised but supposedly prioritised modes, you know, and as we're talking about today, walking and wheeling. And what would it really look like if we had a city built for walking and wheeling? It would be very different. It would be, you know, very slow speeds for most traffic. It would be people being able to walk slow speeds for most traffic. It would

(Rachel Aldred)
be people being able to walk or wheel all over the carriageway. It would be very, very different. And it's certainly not the city that we live in at the moment. And you can see it, you

know, because I'm a researcher in terms of like, I often think about data models and targets and so on. And often the data we have on walking is really poor. It is actually quite hard to plan for walking because it's not included well in modelling. It's not, you know, there's guidance on for instance,

(Rachel Aldred)
like counting pedestrians for a day before and after. And that's just, yeah, that is no good whatsoever. You need to do, you need to have much more thorough going, much more rigorous data collection on walking. And talking of which, when we studied the mini Holland, as has been mentioned, when we studied the impacts of those schemes and discovered that they had a transformative impact on walking primarily,

(Rachel Aldred)
which surprised me because again, just going back to the point about change, it's very easy to look at what exists now and to not be able to imagine it being different. But we found people walking around an hour a week more when those measures have been put in place, primarily low traffic neighbourhoods but also cycle tracks. But most of that, it looked like, was walking.

(Rachel Aldred)
And so the capacity for more local walking is really substantial. And that's thinking about schemes that are relatively small scale, low traffic neighbourhoods, which are quite small. Imagine the increase in walking we might have if we did something much more radical and transformative at a much larger level, which

(Rachel Aldred)
I entirely agree needs to evolve restricting motor traffic, because that's where we saw the impacts. When we looked at the impacts of low traffic neighbourhoods on road injuries, for instance, really substantial reductions. Reductions in injury risk by about a third.

(Rachel Aldred)
Really big falls. If we cared about people walking and cycling, if we cared about injuries, then why wouldn't we do this everywhere? Of course, we all know why we don't do these kind of things everywhere. And we just have these kind of encroachments

(Rachel Aldred)
that mean that we're not anywhere near at a city level, let alone at a national level, meeting the targets that we have. I just wanted also to say something around equity as well, because I think as someone who studies walking and cycling

(Rachel Aldred)
sometimes it's easy to think that walking has less of an equity problem because you know we know that cycling which is it may have gone up yet 300% in relative terms. It's always good to look at the absolute percentages too so that could be like 2% to 8%[1] is 300% relatively but yeah it's it's so in terms of cycling we've seen an increase in cycling which is great but we know that it's demographically still

(Rachel Aldred)
very unequal whereas walking is much less demographically unequal but what are those people experiencing and that again links back to some of the talks and Robin Mazumder has a concept of experiential equity you know looking at actually people if we're just you know you may be looking at the street from a pedestrian viewpoint but if it's a, you know, cis, heterosexual, white, male, able-bodied pedestrian viewpoint, then you're getting a very, very partial perspective and experiences of people

(Rachel Aldred)
who, you know, don't necessarily go out on the street expecting sociability, expecting pleasant interchange, but actually walking around with a nervous system that's shaped by the experience of harassment and violence. We also need to build those in to thinking about creating a city that works for everybody

(Rachel Aldred)
walking and wheeling. And that's probably five minutes.

(Chair)

Thank you very much to our panel. I noticed some potential tensions and disagreements amongst the panel. I just wondered whether any of you wanted to respond to any of your fellow panellists.

(Andrew Gilligan)
I don't think we're in disagreement, I just think we need to just be honest with each other about what works and what doesn't work. And public realm schemes without traffic reduction never work. And we wasted a hell of a lot of money on them. And we continue to do so. And Oxford Street isn't going to work. Oxford Street is going to be a disaster. And again, that might be a controversial view, but it's true and we have to face it.

(Chair)

[1] Modified following the session.

Anybody else want to comment? Just some of the public realm schemes, for example, around Covent Garden, around all the way to Chichester, public realm improvements and car restrictions seem to be very successful.

(Andrew Gilligan)
Yeah, but that's the car restrictions. It's not a... So, as I say, Deptford High Street is the one closest to me, but there's been lots of others. There's been one, the one I mentioned in Twickenham. There's at least a dozen I can think of in London alone, which is meant to be the best place,

(Andrew Gilligan)
where they've essentially prettified the status quo without doing very much, if anything, to restrict traffic. And I think Deptford is going to, I think Deptford is, there's some new proposal from Lewisham to do something further up Deptford High Street, which might be better. But, you know, there's a hell of a lot of these really bad schemes that we've just got to stop doing.

(Adam Harrison)
Thank you. I'll just take the opportunity to give a talk about what we can give in Fitzrovia, is that as a council, also as a board councillor for part of Fitzrovia, it's long been my campaign, which has taken a very long time to get a traffic scheme for Fitzrovia, which currently

(Adam Harrison)
has come from three basically rat runs through the area, which I think increasingly as London

(Adam Harrison)
is changing it around, because I'm hoping people are recognising that these rat runs through the area, which I think increasingly as London is changing

(Adam Harrison)
it around, because I'm hoping people are recognising that these rat runs, Regent Street, Mortimer/Goodge Street, Howel Street and the others, are completely out of, completely, extremely far from where we need them to be. So my consistent plea with TfL and with anyone who can help is that whatever happens with Oxford Street, we can't have just more traffic rushing into Fitzrovia. And actually, whatever happens with Oxford Street, Fitzrovia needs to change anyway, because if we bring in those changes and those restrictions, it will be completely transformed. So and we're in Fitzrovia now,

(Adam Harrison)
of course, so let's take a look at the right to report when you're walking out, I'm sure you're already doing so. you, I'll come out and show you what he did say

(Caroline Russell). Yeah I just wanted to pick up on the determination that Oxford Street won't work because if Oxford Street is pedestrianised but with traffic reduction and with clear routes for people to be able to cycle east-west and clear routes to manage the buses in a different way. I don't know, the transport planners haven't yet shared any detail but we all have the opportunity until midnight tonight

(Caroline Russell)
to tell TfL what we think about Oxford Street pedestrianisation and we should all do that. There's lots of people online, I've done a response, Possible have done a response, the London Cycling Campaign have done one, I think London Living Streets may have done one, yes. So you can look up those responses and just you know nab some ideas and send them in so that TfL does hear some constructive responses because I don't think Oxford Street deserves to remain in the state it's in at the moment. It

(Caroline Russell)
could be so much better but only if, as Andrew says, traffic reduction is absolutely at the heart of whatever it is that the Mayor decides to do.

(Andrew Gilligan)
I kind of, you know, I mean, you say that Caroline, but where are the buses going to go? Where can they go? There is no other place for them to go. It's either Marylebone Road, which is a long way to the north and a long walk, or it's the Strand, which is a long walk to the south. And you know, the only thing you'll be able to do with buses is literally stop them running, which is going to be devastating for tens of thousands of bus passengers every day.

(Caroline Russell)
I just think we have to wait and see what they come up with. And it's certainly if they come up with something that's really bad, I will be campaigning hard against it. But given that they're saying they're going to pedestrianise, and they're just only asking us at the moment on very generalised views about it, there's no specific plans, I think

(Caroline Russell)
we just need to wait for something solid to be there for us to be able to actually talk about.

(Chair)
Just to talk one question on low traffic neighbourhoods. Do I get the impression that these are the big transformative things? If we could roll out low traffic neighbourhoods right across London, that could really have the impact on walking?

(Andrew Gilligan)
The single most transformative thing we could do, which no-one's talked about in this session anyway, maybe I missed it in the morning, is road pricing. We're tinkering because at the moment, so the idea that LTN simply displace traffic is wrong. It does, traffic displacement does happen at the beginning as people find alternative routes, but it then dies away because pure people are making

(Andrew Gilligan)
short local journeys by car. And that makes up for any displacement if there is a longer distance journey. And we've got the data to show that. But in the end, you know, it's still about kind of trying to manage things rather than just an overall reduction in the number of vehicles. And that's what we need here. And I mean, the mayor has ruled it out for the rest of his term, unlikely. And so, let's hope we get a better mayor in four years' time. And I think that's how we make progress. And obviously,

(Andrew Gilligan)
there's all sorts of other reasons to do it, but that's one of the key reasons.

(Chair)
Road pricing does have to go hand in hand with the low traffic neighbourhoods.

(Andrew Gilligan)
Yeah, I mean, LTNs on their own, I think universal LTNs in all residential areas would, I think, probably put more traffic on the main roads. Because there's always going to be some traffic. But it wouldn't be as aggregative as most people, as most opponents would say, because of the reduction in short local journeys by car. So I'm completely up for that. And I've always, and you know, as this, I won't need to tell this audience,

(Andrew Gilligan)
the perception is that low traffic neighbourhoods are unpopular, including local politicians. They're really not. Every time it's been tested, both in opinion polls and electorally now, over several cycles, we've seen that campaigning against low traffic neighbourhoods, including for my party, hasn't worked. The only time any campaign against any traffic

measure ever worked is in the Uxbridge by-election, and of course even that went Labour last year. There's a kind of controversy acceptance cycle in these things as you know you get a controversial beginning and then people accept it and nobody will go back to it. Famously the mini Holland in

(James McAsh)
Walthamstow when that was first consulted on I think the consultation was more or less 50-50. Now I think only 10% of people would want to go back to how it was. That's what happens. But I do think we need, as I say, I'm all in favour of walking schemes, but it all needs to be done holistically. You need to think about it in a holistic context of all the sustainable modes and not do something which harms the other sustainable modes.

(Chair)
Any questions before?

(Chair)
The gentleman in the top right.

(Tom Cohen)
I'll be needing that.

(Speaker 16)
Would that person self-identify?

(Speaker)
Yes.

(Questioner)
Great, thank you. Everyone seems to agree-

(Chair)
Could we have your name please?

(Questioner)
It's REDACTED, I'm a Hackney resident and part of a campaigning group called Low Traffic Hackney. Everyone seems to agree that reducing traffic is the answer here, and that's one thing everyone's agreed on, but what could we do to make councils

(Questioner)
actually not only talk

(Questioner)
about it, but actually be bold in telling the public what they

(Questioner)
do?

(Questioner)
Because even Hackney Council, which is pretty bold, publicly pulls back when it gets a few motorists making a fuss about it or knocking down cameras or knocking down LTN signs. So they basically lose their nerve when they get a little bit of push-back from motorists.

(Questioner)
What can we do to stop that happening? I mean, you want me to answer that?

(Caroline Russell)
Shall I get that?

(Chair)
Yeah, go for it.

(Caroline Russell)
I think we have to talk about this in ways that people will understand. So if we talk about these measures in terms of improving public health, in terms of increasing people's years of active life, and fit and wellness in their lives,

(Caroline Russell)
there are so many benefits that go. Because obviously, when you're talking about stopping people being killed and seriously injured on the road, people kind of somehow seem to, unless they have intimate personal experience

(Caroline Russell)
of having lost someone or a friend on the road, they kind of just, people are completely normalized to the amount of death and injury that is happening. So we've got to try and find

ways to talk about it that kind of normalizes the acceptance that the way that cars have taken over the whole of the public space in our towns and cities is just, people need to see how utterly weird it is that we

(Caroline Russell)
have allowed ourselves to get into the situation that we're in. And I don't know, I'm not a proper comms person, but I do think that we all need to be thinking about how we communicate, how we talk about this stuff. And you know, it's like I do a load of work with delivery riders and people who someone earlier was talking about people who walk for their work and street cleaners and and sort of people delivering post or delivering

(Caroline Russell)
Amazon parcels so you know some of them are properly employed by councils some of them are employed in the gig economy and horribly exploited. But actually, thinking about how our public realm works for everybody in an inclusive way should be the absolute basic bottom line for every council just in terms of common decency.

(Caroline Russell)
And that actually extends to making sure that we have enough public toilets in our public realm. Because a lot of these workers who are walking for doing their work have no access to anywhere that they're able to go to the loo - halfway through their morning.

(Caroline Russell)
And these things are all incredibly important. Anyway, I've gone totally off track. I just think we have to kind of, we've just got to persuade everyone that it's normal to want less traffic, slower traffic,

(Caroline Russell)
and more space for people to get around.

(Speaker 19)
Can I have a...

(Unidientified)
Does anyone else want to...

(Speaker 21)
Rich?

(Andrew Gilligan)
I mean, this was half my life when I was Cycling Commissioner in London. And I think it's two things. Firstly, it's important to kind of prepare the grounds properly and prepare the proposal properly. And a lot of councils, even quite good ones, still aren't very good at that. So my local council in Greenwich, not a great council actually, but my local council in Greenwich has just put an LTN in my street. And they did it amazingly incompetently.

(Andrew Gilligan)
They didn't put signs up until the morning it started. And then the signs were wrong. And it's that kind of thing that builds opposition to schemes. So I think part of it's about implementing it properly and making sure you've got the data and the evidence to counter the usual objections. So that means doing your counts beforehand of how many cars there were before and how

(Andrew Gilligan)
many after. So, you know, you've got evidence to counter the misrepresentations. And it means implementing it properly. It means considering groups. I moved into superhighways, I remember, we had a lot of concerns along the one

(Andrew Gilligan)
that runs up Whitechapel Road about parking, because all the shopkeepers worried they would lose trade from us stopping parking outside the shops and deliveries and things. So where possible, we kind of re-provided deliveries last round the corner, that kind of thing.

(Andrew Gilligan)
So that took a lot of the heat out of that. But in the end, none of that is actually going to make these things controversy-free. They'll always be controversy. They'll always have partial support. They'll never have unanimous support.

(Andrew Gilligan)
And in the end, you need to remember these things are

(Andrew Gilligan)
popular.

(Andrew Gilligan)
And one of the things I'm doing now, actually, we're doing a research project to show how campaigning against LTNs and things with elections never works. And we've got several

cycles of election evidence to show that. And there will be a big data bank of evidence that we can

(Andrew Gilligan)
show councillors that you can afford to be brave on this don't worry it's not going to cost you votes these people are not vote losers. But you know in the end you have to have a political leader who's willing to be bold and brave and do it. There aren't enough of those people around

(James McAsh)

I think that the challenge sometimes, I think in a room like this, talking about, you know, talking about traffic restrictions and traffic reductions, the kind of thing that gets you cheers. But I think in the wider world, that's not so likely the case. I think in general, I think that kind of framing is quite

(James McAsh)
negative. Essentially, this is your council, your tin pot local elected people who are concerned with dog mess, telling you what you can and can't do. It's the nanny state, all that kind of stuff. That's not a great starting point, even if you do the comms right, that kind of thing. If instead we're talking about how we're going to provide all these new things from this space that we have collectively. So we're going to provide new benches, new trees. We're going to be able to provide safe routes for your children to

(James McAsh)
get to school. We're going to clean up the air in this area. I think that's the kind of framing that works. I think it's that recognizing as well, that you frame it in those terms, and then you can kind of expect that you are going to get some opposition from it, and you kind of have to see that out. I think the bottom line for me is

(James McAsh)
that this is a question of equity, and the bottom line is when people are in a situation of privilege, they experience equality as oppression, they don't experience equality, they feel that they're being treated unfairly. I think you kind of have to start from understanding that's going to be the case, try as much as possible to speak to people who will benefit from it, because often we end up just speaking to the car drivers anyway,

(James McAsh)
and then to recognize that some people aren't going to like it, but eventually they will. I mean, it's that, I think the quote that I always kind of refer back to, it's maybe ironic given that it’s about people who make cars, but it's Henry Ford said, if he asked people what they

wanted, they would have said a faster horse. And, you know, when people have loads of enablers

(James McAsh)
and we have these things, for me, in controlled parking zones, for instance, every time I try to use the controlled parking zone, everyone kicks off. We get lots and lots of opposition to it. I almost never get anyone telling me that they want their controlled parking zone removed. It just doesn't happen at all. So it's a very clear one direction in terms of where the opinion goes.

(Chair)

Adam, do you want to say anything?

(Adam Harrison)
Just for me, it's just so helpful to have groups in the community who are actively supporting the council, asking the council, and who are organised, that can help turn out the consultations, to be very honest. Because there will be councillors, and I've heard of councillors who will just treat the consultations as referendums and just say no, they take fright. It doesn't mean you have to be in every single consultation, you mean you have to win every single consultation. You can

(Adam Harrison)
get a majority on every single consultation. In Camden, we do generally get a majority for most consultations, but not all of them. And where you get minority support. We've also already going into that process, set out that this is part of our strategic goals, this is what we're trying to do. It's all rooted in the policy that they're basically adopted by the councillors, and so on. we're able to draw on a quite broad base with which to proceed. It is unbelievably helpful, especially with

(Adam Harrison)
more controversial proposals such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, to have an active community campaign who are eventually mobilising for a consultation, but also having those conversations with their neighbours in the local media and speaking to their neighbours and so on.

(Speaker 16)
Thank you.

(Rachel Aldred)

Thank you, we may not have time for many questions, if we all say something. But I just wanted to link what James said to what Andrew said, because this, you know, that's the role for public realm as well, isn't it? That's like giving something that is extra. You restrict most traffic and you also provide spaces for play, benches, parks, and so on.

(Rachel Aldred)
And that was the approach taken in Barcelona with superblocks and creating, for instance, new squares where you could have outdoor cinema. You could have games and so on. And obviously, it's easy to look somewhere else and say, oh, it was perfect for them.

(Rachel Aldred)
They have a lot of opposition. And they have a new administration not doing more super blocks so they obviously have problems too but I think the approach there did show that they saw benefits of giving something additional and providing the public realm as part of taking away space for most traffic.

(Chair)
I think it was the gentleman next to you with the black t-shirt, yes?

(Chair)
Okay, yeah.

(Tom Cohen)
It's a blue t-shirt.

(Chair)
No, the gentleman with the black t-shirt yes okay yeah it's a blue t-shirt no definitely with a

black t-shirt as well.

(Questioner)

I've got a very quick one which is REDACTED from JCP there's a new active travel bridge the first one for 25 years over the River Thames does anyone know where it is? Yes. So come on down, see all of these things you're talking about in action by stealth by Hammersmith Council. It's phenomenal to see an active travel briefing with people of all backgrounds and ages and abilities walking and cycling across the most fantastic bridge.

(Questioner)
It happened, a lot of people were against it, people's minds are changing. And as it's happening, it's open to you, to risk going, and there's a big pushback that I'm aware of from people that's being accepted. And we need to monitor it, we need to understand it. And as I say, it's doing all of those amazing things that the panel are talking about.

(Tom Cohen)
Should I get another one whilst I'm in this? Someone in a black t-shirt?

(Chair)
Did you want to ask a question?

(Speaker 19)
No.

(Tom Cohen)
I can't see the black t-shirt.

(Questioner)
It's a question for Caroline. I'm REDACTED. Basically I do agree with all your 10 and 20 mph plan. I mean you're very instrumental in implementing that in your data. But just thinking about Kings Cross gyratory where I see, on a regular basis cars going down the one-way street at 40 or 60 miles an hour.

(Questioner)
So has there been any movement on how we can enforce these Just enforcing 20 MPH, 10 MPH, I think that the probably the best way forward on this is for more camera enforcement and potentially camera enforcement with the revenue going to the boroughs, if that can be arranged, because the police, you know, and the police are, you know, they're capable of doing really amazing forensic investigations of a few, a hundred, of the worst collisions that happen in London every year. But they're just not taking Vision Zero particularly seriously. And so I think it is time for us to be

(Caroline Russell)
thinking about different ways of enforcing those speed limits. And people driving at 40 or 60 miles an hour down the street in London, it's just criminal. It's absolutely so it's so dangerous and is so likely to result in either damage to buildings or damage to people.

(Caroline Russell)
And very often that is catastrophic, fatal collisions. So absolutely, we've got to do more about it. I think it's really complicated with the police because they're not, it's clearly not a priority for them. I don't think they see how they can reduce harm by enforcing against speed.

(Caroline Russell)
And that's because speeding is so normalized as being not very harmful.

(Chair)
I'll just talk very quickly. Is pavement parking ever going to be tackled? If not, why not? Is pavement parking ever going to be tackled? If not, why not?

(Adam Harrison)
Well, I think we're all hoping that the stance of the last government will be shared by this government and that they'll take it up. I think the Speaker earlier said in Lewisham where he lives that it always feels like it doesn't exist. I see that. It's not forced and I see that in other parts of London. I think where it is enforced, the compliance is amazingly high. In Camden, I can't really understand it. And I'm sure people don't exactly

(Adam Harrison)
know that they're always in which borough they're in. But I think regular enforcement must make good things better. I don't really know how to say that, other than it would, it feels again like one of those things that once it gets talked about again, and then probably many more people across the country, given that the proposals were for

(Adam Harrison)
England, would respond and would welcome it. Polls always show that enforcement against pavement parking is popular. And you need to be telling those stories again about why, when people can't pass, it gets restricted in the inequalities that lie within.

(Adam Harrison)
So I do hope the government will see to it.

(Speaker 18)
Andrew?

(Andrew Gilligan)
So I love enforcement, and actually it's a way to square the circle. I think you said that you've got that money. Well, if you start levying loads of fines on people for parking on the pavement or people going over 20mph, you've got some money. And I believe actually that we do need to move more taxation away from good things like employment into bad things like pollution and it's often the objections to some of these schemes like LTNs and ULEZ or just money raising exercises, yes brilliant let's raise some money, we need

(Andrew Gilligan)
to raise some money, why not raise some money for people who are polluting the city and killing people rather than from you know somebody who's you know who's got a low paid job and three kids to support, let's raise the money from the right places. So I'm very much in favour of really tough enforcement. And that's one of the things I've tried to do in government with partial but not very complete success. And basically, letting councils do more and collecting money themselves, of course, in teams.

(Andrew Gilligan)
But it can be self-financing. I would strongly advise every council, every councillor, anyone listening to this online or wherever, to investigate whatever powers they've got now to levy fines on people and use them to the maximum, because it's a great way of earning some money.

(Unidientified)
So could you answer my question about why pavement parking is being blocked?

(Unidientified)
Are you able to talk about that?

(Andrew Gilligan)
Yeah, so what happened was that... So broadly, you can... I mean, my experience in government is you can almost do anything if you've got enough time. And unfortunately, Boris just didn't have enough time. It was too chaotic. It fell apart after about two years. So had I had a bit longer in Number 10, I would have got it done. But what happens is that you just need time to get these things done. So what then happened was that Boris fell in September 22, wasn't it?

(Andrew Gilligan)
Which is not much more than three years after he started. And then Liz Truss came along.

She wasn't interested in this agenda at all. And left. And Rishi wasn't very interested in this agenda. I did go back under Rishi, but I couldn't persuade him

(Andrew Gilligan)
to be interested. So I say to new people down the street, I have said to them, I talked to you, and several people I've worked with are still there. I said, look, you know, stop wasting time. You know, you've got to start from the beginning,

(Andrew Gilligan)
as if you were in a race, which you are, because, you know, time is the most precious commodity in politics. Just get on with it and do it. But we've seen, again, it's a bit like Sadiq. They find reasons not to do things, and they let people eat up their time and stuff doesn't happen as a result. Stuff gets eaten away. And we've seen that with, you know, government now.

(Chair)
Any more questions? REDACTED?

(Questioner)
I just wanted to respond to something that Caroline said about speed and potential catastrophe. It seems to me that the biggest problem with speed is that it puts me as the grandparent of letting my grandchildren go out onto the street. In other words, it's not the direct thing that matters so much as the general atmosphere of the street being a dangerous place . And moving on from that, I put, with lots of other people, put more effort into talking about traffic calming in this country in the 80s. And the Dutch had the standard

(Questioner)
speed hump that they refined after hundreds of experiments, woonerven of 12 centimeters high, or 8 meters long at a time. The Tory government, I can't remember which one, reduces the height from 12 centimeters to 10 centimeters. And most of the local authorities are afraid of putting in 10 centimeters in case

(Questioner)
that still isn't used. So they get implemented with 7.5 centimeters, in at 10 centimetres in case the system is successful. So they get implemented at 7.5 centimetres, making them almost useless. So we need proper traffic calming on roads that are busy, and properly designed so that the buses can go over them at reasonable speeds,

(Questioner)
but the Range Rover there whacking you down the street gets an to shoot for the sky.

(Chair)

Do we have another one as well?

(Speaker 14)
Thank you.

(Chair)
Oh, there's Laura behind there. Oh, there's an AP here.

(Laura)
One or the other.

(Speaker 17)
One or the other.

(Nick)
Take your pick.

(Questioner)
Hi. REDACTED, I'm a journalist. One thing, Rachel, you mentioned the superblocks. One thing that I noticed when I was in Barcelona was that they, you know, this is a lovely pedestrianised place and the traffic was largely curtailed there, but there were lots of delivery vans and it seems like a lot of pedestrianised places, lots of people-friendly places, don't

(Laura)
manage deliveries, like a lot of van traffic, which is obviously linked to people walking. And I wonder if anywhere has managed to solve this problem. I know London is classic for rubbish,

(Laura)
you know, 20 different rubbish collections on one street.

(LT)
Question?

(Caroline Russell)
Well, just thinking off the cuff and boldly, why don't we just ban all delivery lorries inside the M25 and have big delivery hubs that transfer goods to smaller electric lorries that actually bring stuff into the centre of, you know, into deliver stuff to all over London. I mean, the deliveries, there's so much scope for turning underground car parks into delivery hubs where goods come in there and then they go out from there

(Caroline Russell)
in e-bikes and little e-vans. And it's so easy to do that kind of thing because the car parks exist. If we were determined enough to be changing how the deliveries impact on everyone's everyday experience of our streets, we could do it. We just need to be much bolder about getting on and doing it.

(Caroline Russell)
And just the person about traffic calming, with a low traffic neighbourhood, you don't actually even need any speed humps. I mean, it seems to me that speed humps are just more extra stuff, you know, that take up energy because they kind of, you know, the cars that are driving around should probably be doing it as efficiently and minimally as possible. But so we need to be designing streets that don't actually need physical interventions

(Caroline Russell)
to slow people down. But in the places where we do have speed humps, I agree sinusoidal curves are a very good

(Speaker 16)
idea.

(Speaker 15)
And REDACTED?

(Speaker 14)
Yeah, sure.

(…)
I'll say something.

(Rachel Aldred)
So yes, certainly deliveries and freight are something that is even less looked at than personal travel data, it's much worse as well because you've got a lot of private companies, you haven't got good publicly available data sets, so it makes it quite hard for city planners as well. And it's something that you can see. Often you get isolated good example case studies, but you don't get change on a system level.

(Rachel Aldred)
And my colleague, Ersilia, who was speaking earlier today, in particular, has done some work around this, but looking at part of the issue of well being that the logistics sector, lots of really problematic practices in the logistics sector generally. And then you have companies that are trying to do things better that are using

(Rachel Aldred)
bike freight, that are potentially using walking within that sector, which has these deeply problematic practices. And margins are very tight. It's actually quite difficult to be in an ethical business. And they're not often creating the green and sustainable jobs and fair jobs that we would like to see. So it is a really important area. There's a lot of potential change as well. But there needs to be a lot more work and a lot more effort goes into it. Because at the moment, increasingly, you can see that freight and deliveries

(Rachel Aldred)
are such a big problem in London and many other cities. As personal transport has become somewhat decarbonized, then the issue of white vans and so on becomes more apparent. And there is a lot of scope for change, I think, as well. But at the moment, there's limited, certainly, in this country, limited good practice case studies.

(Rachel Aldred)
I think there's some good examples, for instance, in German cities and Dutch cities.

(Chair)
James.

(James McAsh)
So in the freight delivery timelines, there's lots of things you can do along the way. One

thing I want to talk about is right at the very end, at the loading point do along the way. One thing I want to talk about is right at the very end at the loading point outside the business. That's something that for me has been a real political challenge where people saying, well, business need access.

(James McAsh)
So therefore we can't do these kinds of restrictions. So, and so they've introduced, I think the first, I was one of the first in the country to have bookable loading bays, which essentially, which essentially you're allowed to, the normal rules are, if there's something in the loading bay you can load, book to 40 minutes, whenever you like, basically. For these loading bays, you have to book in advance, you have to have a registration

(James McAsh)
plate attached to it, and only that vehicle can load, and only at that time. So that does a number of different things. First of all, it reduces the amount of time that the company is allocating to the delivery. That means that they know they have to deliver there instead of having to wait nearby, etc. And that means that there's less vehicles moving around. It also gives us a lot more control. So, for instance, we have one of these loading bays outside a train station.

(James McAsh)
And this train station has very, very high pedestrian footfall at key points in the day during rush hour, essentially. So what we've said there is you can't book that loading bay during that time. So that loading bay essentially becomes part of the pavement. And then only during low traffic times does it become available for loading.

(James McAsh)
And the last thing you can do is you can link up the loading bay system with ANPR cameras that restrict general traffic access so that you can then have low-traffic neighbourhoods where, or bus gates, for instance, where businesses are able to get deliveries through that, but only at specific times and only with specific vehicles. So this is quite new, so we're not really sure exactly how it's going to work,

(James McAsh)
but we think it's going to offer a lot of flexibility. We think it's probably going to be something that will be a lot more common in the future.

(Chair)
Um, maybe you.

(Questioner)
Um, maybe big, but I'll be quick. To what extent should, sorry, I'm REDACTED, I don't think I'm from the university, to what extent should we be worried about car spreading, increasing size, weight, climate of private vehicles? And what does mobile action might look like? And also distractions as well, smart phones and digital smart gadgets in private cars?

(Caroline Russell)
Well, that was literally one of the things I talked about at the beginning, which was I was saying we should be linking speeding fines to the weight of cars, parking, absolutely, both visitor parking and residents' parking should be linked to the weight of cars, because that is a—I haven't got the bandings at the tip of my tongue, but the bandings for SUVs which have the higher bonnet, which is much more dangerous in collision with a pedestrian. It's very clear the SUV body shape links to heavier cars,

(Caroline Russell)
so they are much more likely to be causing harm. So I think there are absolutely ways that boroughs can be doing it, and Islington Council allowed me to do a weight-based parking budget amendment this year, and every previous year they've said, oh, no, you can't do that, that's far too hard. And they've allowed me to do a study into it in our budget amendment, but this year they actually took it seriously

(Caroline Russell)
and went through it. So I think it really is doable.

(Adam Harrison)
I just say, I think there'll be increasingly more that councils are able to do like Caroline was saying, we're certainly looking at in Camden, but I really think it also can't just be left to local authorities. It's a huge role for regulators to play. I think I saw the EU has actually just changed the regulations to use the amount of screen availability and distraction within the car, which was good. And it really feels like that ball was dropped a long time ago, probably mostly by EU

(Adam Harrison)
and else also covered by policy in the UK. So, it's really looking at this. And again, in terms of how do we talk about this publicly, there are real stories to tell, you know, we probably all see images and stories online about how you can't see a child under a bonnet

(Adam Harrison)

that's so high and so on. If we start to get this talked about more publicly in each mainstream, I think people will really respond. As the gentleman said, it's children, grandchildren, play out on the road. It's something that affects huge numbers of people.

(Adam Harrison)
But somehow we're still not there. I also fear that regulation won't change until there's more of a public health-style demand for things like this.

(Andrew Gilligan)
Yeah, we're also looking to the sense of that as well. I think the key thing for us was about people shifting to EVs that are much bigger and much heavier, kind of thinking they're doing the right thing by doing that. And in one sense, that's the right thing in terms of maybe carbon, but in lots of other ways, particularly in terms of road wear, et cetera, is very much not the right thing. So we are looking into doing this. It's one thing I'll say is I think I'm really pro this, really keen on this, but I think it is largely a campaign tool. It is a way of telling people, actually, these aren't the right decisions. It also may be a way of raising income.

(Andrew Gilligan)
I do agree that raising income is a good thing. But I think even if we're pretty harsh in terms of parking permits and charging, it's going to be a bit of a drop in the ocean for the people who are able to afford these very large vehicles.

(Andrew Gilligan)
So, you know, I guess what I'm saying is, yes, yes, really good thing to do. But I think let's not overestimate the impact it's going to have. I think it does need to have something much more substantial in terms of dealing with these vehicles. This is a pretty important question, because although, as I said in the beginning, there's been a decline in the number of miles

(Andrew Gilligan)
journey stages driven by cars on private motor vehicles, there hasn't actually been any decline at all in the amount of road space they take up, because although they're driving less they're bigger. And that's a particular problem in the last 10 years. And I think it probably does have to come down

(Andrew Gilligan)
with some form of extra charging. And I know we're not supposed to like crowd shaming, but maybe we could make an exception for the fat cars, I don't know.

(Nick)
But.

(Questioner)
Hi, REDACTED.

(Questioner)
I'm wondering whether,

(Questioner)
looking at this sort of sideways a bit, we're kind of assuming we need to get rid of road space, but that could be due. I don't know if it's going to come out of transport aspects. It might well be that some of the things we think are freeing up road space will allow

(Questioner)
are going to also drive this, sorry, not intended. But if you look at food, the food emergency, I look at Tim Lane's recent report to the National Food Areas Commission saying we have no idea how close we are to really with problems very fast on food supply. If we're thinking about nature-based solutions for cities, we might be thinking more radically about actually deciding that like half of the streets, the street space has to go to food production, that we need to be taking them up and basically growing food in cities,

(Questioner)
treating that as a national emergency, which it is. So maybe those are the things that need to start to really kind of become clearer over the next few years, that we might be more open to these kind of radical solutions which will then kind of push us along further, be more radical in shifting our motion

(Questioner)
and stopping this kind of motion us along further to be more radical in shifting our motion and stopping this kind

(Questioner)
of rise of normativity which is so incredibly problematic for us. So this is taking things like rain gardens one step further but it was a really interesting thing that is financing it, I mean there's obviously a lot of will, especially in London, to dig up the streets and to turn them for various green purposes. But how is it going to be funded?

(Unidientified)
I might add to the question.

(Caroline Russell)
Road pricing. I mean, seriously, at the moment, transport projects in London are paid for by the people who are paying to catch the bus or travel on the tube or the overground. London is the only capital city in the world that does not have subsidy for its transport system. And there are so many costs coming

(Caroline Russell)
down the tracks. We've seen Hammersmith Bridge, which has marvellously been turned into a pedestrian cycling bridge. But that has happened because of a lack of maintenance over the years and that bridge experiencing temperatures that it wasn't built for as well. And we've got problems with the Westway,

(Caroline Russell)
the speed limits on the Westway keep getting reduced. There's various bridges in and out of London that have weight limits. And there's a massive backlog of money that's going to be needed for repairs. So just the basics, the tunnels under the Thames,

(Caroline Russell)
the Greenwich foot tunnel with the lifts that are constantly out of order, Cutty Sark DLR station, the escalators have completely gone out of life, use and need replacing. You know, there's huge amounts of expense. And the one power that the Mayor of London has in the GLA Act is to bring in road user charging. And that is something that could be done in

(Caroline Russell)
a way that is fair and equitable and supports people on the lowest incomes, that supports people who are, say, driving home from a hospital late at night when there isn't any public transport. You can have different rates for people working in the NHS. You can have different rates for different times of day, different rates for the kind of car you're driving. So again, the SUVs get massively charged,

(Caroline Russell)
whereas someone who's driving in something very small would be charged much less per mile. And with fuel duty, the take from that going down year on year. And it's not just because the Conservatives froze it for such a very, very long time, but because more and more

(Caroline Russell)
electric vehicles are coming in, there is less money. VED is going to disappear as a source of money for funding transport projects. So road pricing is the only game in town. And the only reason I can think that the Mayor ruled out doing anything with it is because he wanted to leave space for the Labour government to be able

(Caroline Russell)
to bring it in nationally, because there is no logical reason why we do not have some form of road user charging so that people who are driving are chipping in to help keep TFL going and make sure all those transport costs are covered

(Andrew Gilligan)
Yeah, we didn't freeze VED, we we froze fuel duty. But something that's carried on by the current government at the same time is increasing other transport fares, which is mystifying to me. And that's something I thought, well, are we getting a better cost of living or not? Because this vote is sort of existential not just for the city, the streets, but actually for the whole government, because it brings all these various taxes on fossil

(Andrew Gilligan)
fuel vehicles, bringing in about 40 billion a year, which is 7.5% of the total income tax. And they're all going. So the sooner we start thinking about what's going to replace them, the better, because obviously the longer we leave it, and this is a case I've made unsuccessfully in government, the longer we leave it, the harder it's going to be because there are going to be more and more people driving EVs who are used to not paying very much and will fight very hard against paying any more. So anyone who's got any connections much and will fight very hard against paying any more. So anyone who's got any connections

(Andrew Gilligan)
and I said this to the current government as well, anyone who's got any connections please tell them to get on with it!

Closing message

(Tom Cohen)

How was that? Pretty good, no? If you enjoyed listening to it, please try some of our other material – occasional podcast episodes and recordings of meetings such as Cycling@Tea-time and Walking@Tea-time. And thanks again for listening.