

Generic CRISP – City Cyclists initial comments

Priorities

1. Other CRISPs have started to include a priority rating of 1, 2 and 3 on options or sections. It would be beneficial to do the same here. Some have included short, medium and long term options. Again this would be useful except for Victoria Embankment where the 100 Public Spaces scheme is likely to be considerable and preclude further changes for some time thereafter.

Being seen to be “doing something”

2. We are still seeing the classic “advisory cycle lanes where space is available” approach in many CRISPs from *motor* traffic engineers that know no better, which has rightly attracted significant criticism in the media and has reinforced the public's impression that cycle facilities in this country are at best a joke, at worst inherently dangerous. Part of the problem seems to be a view that the LCN+ as being seen to have (been seen to have) “done something” for cyclists, usually green paint and cycle logos, which is very different to the LCN+ objectives of making a world class cycle route which is “safe, fast and convenient”.

Driver awareness of cyclists

3. The theory of “raising driver awareness of the presence of cyclists” is the glue that holds many cycling recommendations together. Unfortunately not only is this theory without any evidential foundation whatsoever, the available research actually points the other way. The TRL report on Driver Attitudes to Cyclists went so far to suggest that driver awareness of cyclists is significantly *lowered* where cyclists are in cycle facilities (drivers then switch off as cyclists are “safely” in their own lane) and experience in London shows this to be correct. Danish research shows that at best coloured surfacing can help but only where used sparingly to highlight *conflict points between road users* – i.e. where a cycle lane crosses a side road – as opposed to general “awareness raising” of cyclists.
4. The National Standards for Cycling Training teach cyclists to keep well away from the kerb so that they will be in the central field of vision of drivers: there is extensive research to show that cycling too close to the kerb significantly increases risk of collisions. Therefore to facilitate driver awareness of cyclists, measures need to facilitate people to cycle well away from the kerb.

Data for cycling

5. There needs to be data on current peak and off peak journey times for cyclists on the route and collisions per km travelled by cyclists (to measure actual risk), stopping chance (due to traffic signals etc) so that there can be some measurement of how any measures implemented improve conditions for cyclists. This is of course normal for other modes such as buses and private motor traffic (such as in LIP indicators, NMD reports), the absence for cyclists here highlights the lack of value added by the CRISP procedures for auditing conditions for cycling. It is noteworthy that while a key recommendation of the TRL Review of TfL procedures (“TIRA review”) highlighted the absence of data on cycling, this is still not being addressed.
6. Key measurements for levels of service for cycling are:
 - width in nearside lane: tight (2.5m-3.2m), critical (3.2-4.2m) or spacious (4.2-4.7m);
 - motor traffic flow in nearside lane (possibly also turns across nearside lane);

- motor traffic speeds in nearside lane (in particular 85th percentile), and
- obstructions in nearside lane (parked vehicles).

Data sheets

7. In some CRISPs location sections are not clear enough, sometimes there is a generic sheet for a length of a link then a specific one for a specific junction, which can be a useful approach but can be difficult to follow. Data sheets need to state whether they apply westbound or eastbound or in both directions in the titles, also specify exactly which sections of the route they refer to. The link sections/elements chart should also clarify which data sheets apply to which sections.

Hierarchies

8. Consideration of hierarchies of provision and user (pedestrian, cyclists, bus etc) are key to formulating proposals. The Cycle Friendly Infrastructure (1996) hierarchy of consideration/provision has been adopted by the LCDS and DfT LTN 1/04 (both 2004). There seems to be a frequent misunderstanding that cycles are neither traffic nor vehicles.
9. DfT draft Local Transport Note 1/04 on Walking & Cycling states at 3.6.4 that “It is important that each option is considered thoroughly before resorting to any measure further down the hierarchy. ... In the event that none of the options brings about any improvement, doing nothing may well be the best course of action. The introduction of sub-standard measures should be discouraged, and authorities should seek opportunities to upgrade existing measures where these have proven to be inadequate.”

Design types of cyclists

10. LTN 1/04 lists different design types of cyclists. It is important to consider the different needs of different cyclists which vary *more* than any other class of road user, especially in term of road speeds. While children cycling to school may benefit most from a shared footway (design speed a mere 10mph), fast commuters and couriers will want optimised conditions on carriageway to let them travel at 20mph+.

Capacity

11. There needs to be consideration as to capacity in terms of moving people as opposed to metal boxes: this is a shift in thinking which has been taken up by TfL as part of its Network Management Plans, corridor as opposed to mode based thinking for London's major routes. Not only this but modal shift in accordance with the Mayor's Transport Strategy must be considered too: making routes more cycle friendly is likely to lead to people switching from cars and taxis to cycling, freeing up roadspace. It is rare for there to be “narrow carriageway widths” which prevent the implementation of cycle lanes etc. Normally what is meant is that engineers are speculating that politicians may be concerned about a reduction in space for inefficient motor vehicles: a two-way 3m cycle lane has over six times more capacity than a 3m general traffic lane (EC Commission: Cycling the way ahead). In other words reallocating road space invariably leads to capacity increases.
12. Link and Junction Capacity should be split into sections on motor traffic capacity key points and also where there is insufficient capacity for pedal cycles, be it at crossings or ASLs. In places with high foot fall, pedestrian capacity should be considered, e.g. where pedestrians overflow out of sheep pens or pavements.

General ideas for improvements

13. Extension of waiting & loading restrictions: Cycle routes, particularly where there are cycle lanes should not have any parking (waiting) permitted unless it is in bays or on lightly trafficked streets. Loading unless in bays should be restricted outside daytime hours (7am-7pm) or exceptionally only 7-10am and 4-7pm.
14. Extension of bus lane operation hours: bus lanes tend to operate only Monday to Friday peak hours or at best 7am to 7pm. This is a hang over from a time when bus lanes were enforced by people as opposed to cameras and when night time bus services were very limited. They should be upgraded to operate at any time to provide benefits to cyclists whenever they wish to travel. This also means a large cycle logo can be used in the lanes in accordance with the TSRGD 2002. Bus lanes can and should be continued across side roads with “advisory markings”, red surfacing with dashed lines.
15. Bus lane widths and exclusion of taxis in bus lanes: LCDS para 4.3.4 to 4.3.10 are key here. In particular there must be data on bus lane widths or taxi flows (see LCDS 4.3.9: the more motor traffic in such a lane, the less suitable it is for cyclists). While a bus and cycle cannot fit alongside in a 3m wide bus lane it does encourage taxis to try to squeeze past cyclists. Taxis should be excluded from travelling along the bus lanes though this would not of course prevent them picking up or setting down. The average load of a taxi is less than a car as they are frequently empty (other than the driver who shouldn't count).
16. Permeability: DfT LTN 01/04 states at para 4.2.8 that cyclists should be exempted from all one-ways and banned turns “unless there are overriding safety concerns that cannot be resolved”. That is clear and – in particular the word “cannot” - strong language. There are a number of banned turns that need to be considered. The excuse that cyclists can take another route is unacceptable: for a commuter taking a route on a daily basis, a detour can really add up. For someone new to cycling in an area, having to detour round one-ways can lead to orientation problems.
17. Zig-zag lines: Zig-zags were introduced in the late 1960s due to sight line problems around crossings where parking was previously permitted. With red route controls (or double yellows), there is no longer a need for any more than the minimum of two zig-zags. In any event since the decriminalisation of zig-zags in London and red route controls, violation either is now simply a civil contravention not an offence. Conversion to “Ped-X” crossings (with no amber phase) removes the need for any zig-zags at all. However we would support the conversion of signalled-crossings to zebra crossings (which operate successfully on busy roads such as Victoria Embankment) due to the reduced stopping chance for cyclists and the general traffic calming function they have.
18. Offsetting: rather than widening the carriageway, which we would strongly object to (not just because it reduces the space for cycle parking but also is highly detrimental to pedestrians) the central refuges at junctions can be offset so that rather than there being two general lanes in each direction there can be two general lanes plus a cycle lane towards a junction and a general lane plus cycle lane away from it.
19. Accidents: this is outdated terminology in the context of roads which police forces and medical bodies are turning away from, collisions or crashes should be used instead.
20. Traffic flow data: should have vehicles per day as well as per hour and be clear if it includes cycles or not.
21. Bus routes should say which are articulated buses. which pose special problems to cycles.

22. Motor traffic speed: Where motor traffic speeds exceed 20mph it is difficult for many cyclists to change lanes (e.g. to move into a right turn lane), it is frightening for less confident cyclists and most importantly of all the chances of a cyclist or pedestrian surviving a collision is drastically reduced. Research shows that vehicles which exceed the 85th percentile of speeds are much more likely to be involved in a crash: where there are a lot of cyclists on a route, this will bring the 85th percentile down strengthening the case for 20mph. Such data is needed in CRISPs not merely existing speed limits. Unfortunately many STAT 19 police reports only put down “excessive speed” as a casual factor for a collision where a speed is over the posted speed limit – so engineers conclude “speed is not a problem” – despite the fact that it is accepted that reductions in average speeds reduce collisions and that it is a speed limit not target.
23. Many engineers have an inbuilt reluctance to consider *20mph speed limits or zones* (the difference is important: see eponymous DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet) or any form of vertical traffic calming on major roads. However TfL has successfully introduced 20mph limits on some red routes (e.g. Upper Thames Street) and raised junctions (e.g. A10 Bishopsgate). So these measures should be at least considered. 20mph limits help traffic move more efficiently and can thereby free up signal time or road space for vulnerable road users, while having a negligible or even positive effect of overall journey times.
24. Pedestrian Amenity: this should include pavement capacity and locations of Pedestrian Guard Rails.
25. Enforcement issues. TfL Policing & Enforcement Directorate (plus local authority parking departments) should provide locations with high numbers of contraventions, fixed cameras sites and other intelligence.