

APPENDIX 11: SUPPLEMENTARY GUIDANCE ON CAR PARKING

About this guidance

This guidance seeks to build on [the operational advice for local authority parking and traffic management during the coronavirus pandemic](#), issued through London Councils. It sets out a strategic approach to car parking management and space re-allocation as London's economy re-starts, within which operational matters are best considered.

Car parking makes up a significant part of the transport landscape and urban realm in London, and the supply of parking strongly influences car use. Parking also takes up considerable space, often in the very locations where more room is needed for walking, queuing, cycling and dwelling as businesses re-open. While there may be challenges in changing this status quo, it is necessary to review parking provision across the city to deliver the Streetspace for London programme. This involves repurposing space quickly to enable the required increase in walking and cycling – including for expanded pavements, safe cycle lanes and cycle parking – to support our economy as it recovers. It also means discouraging unnecessary car journeys as much as possible to relieve pressure on London's roads for those who need them most.

Why a London-wide approach to car parking is necessary

The need for London-wide approach to parking is in part a consequence of TfL and the boroughs' road management duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004. The Government has now issued [new statutory guidance](#) for network management and reallocating road space in response to coronavirus. This builds on the Traffic Management Act and councils must now have regard to this when carrying out their network management duty (which involves aiming for 'expedient movement' of traffic, including pedestrians and not limited to private vehicles). This applies not only to their own road network, but to the networks of other highways authorities. In London, traffic generated in one borough significantly impacts those around it, with more than two thirds of London drivers' car trips starting or ending outside their home borough,¹ and many travelling via the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). This necessitates a strategic approach.

While driving will continue to play a role in London's overall transport mix, the pre-crisis scale of public transport use right across London – the highest² nationally – clearly means it is not possible to absorb a capacity reduction as high as 85 per cent through car use instead. This is reflected in the government guidance, which states that local authorities in areas with high public transport use should take measures to reallocate road space to people walking and cycling, as quickly as possible and 'within weeks.' TfL and the boroughs should therefore:

- Provide safe alternatives to avoid the risk of severe congestion, economic and health impacts
- Take all appropriate opportunities to provide safe walking and cycling options, including the suspension/re-allocation of car parking bays as suggested by government guidance
- Fulfil our network management duties as London highway authorities under the Traffic Management Act by discouraging discretionary car journeys as far as possible during this period
- Carefully manage how limited road space is used to promote a shift to more local travel that does not require a car and de-prioritise general car parking as needed

¹ London Travel Demand Survey

² At the time of the last census, the 32 boroughs and City of London together had the 33 highest proportions of people travelling to work by public transport.

While some might argue for retaining parking for longer journeys, it is important to note that even in outer London, two thirds of residents' car journeys are less than five kilometres in length.³ As part of this approach, many journeys that would have previously be made in a car will now have to be made by foot or cycle. Some cars journeys will be to different, more local destinations, particularly for shopping and leisure purposes. Others will have to be re-timed for when demand for road space and parking is lower. We recognise this will be a change for many residents, but it is essential we work together to manage the impacts of this crisis and that parking policies and messaging supports these efforts.

How car parking management and reallocation should support Streetspace for London

Converting car parking plays a critical role in freeing up space for walking and cycling. Bays should be suspended if the space is needed for other purposes such as:

- Social distancing on the footway and safe crossing points
- Safe cycling routes
- Additional cycle parking
- Preventing crowding at bus stops
- Enabling businesses to reopen, for example to enable queuing or put out tables and chairs (once the hospitality sector is permitted to re-open)

Where parking is judged appropriate to retain, it should be prioritised appropriately and adequately priced and enforced to discourage unnecessary journeys by car.

High priority on-street locations

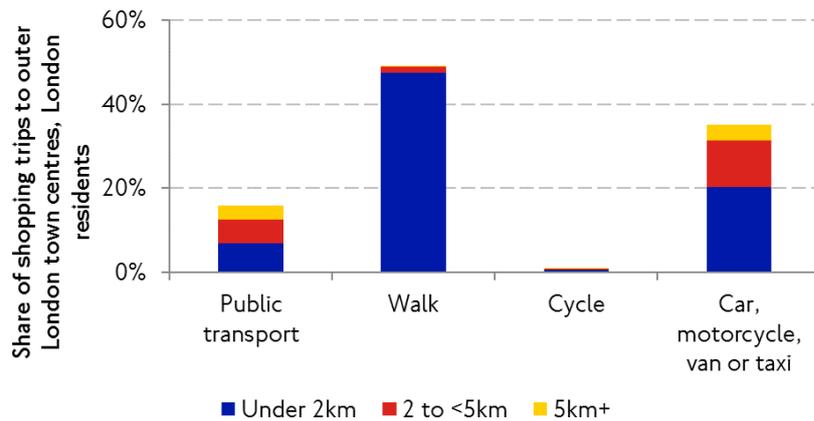
The first locations to consider suspending parking spaces are in town centres and along high streets, where pressures on street space are often the greatest, both for movement through and access via the kerbside (including bus stops, cycle parking and loading). The suspension of on-street car parking bays can help relieve this pressure to support greater movement and access for walking, cycling, buses and freight. Retaining car parking in these areas should not be at the expense of accommodating these needs and access to shops and amenities.

Town centres and high streets are already predominantly accessed on foot, and there is considerable potential for more access by walking and cycling. For example, of Londoners' shopping trips to town centres in outer London (where car use is generally higher), 48 per cent are walked. While cars also provide access, 20 per cent of these trips are car journeys under two kilometres and for most people could easily be walked. Just four per cent are car journeys over five kilometres. Enabling access by active travel will be a key part of London's economic recovery, as evidence⁴ suggests that those walking to high streets spend up to 40 per cent more over the course of a month than those driving.

³ London Travel Demand Survey

⁴ Economic benefits of walking and cycling, <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/economic-benefits-of-walking-and-cycling>

Figure 1 – Outer London town centre shopping access by mode and distance



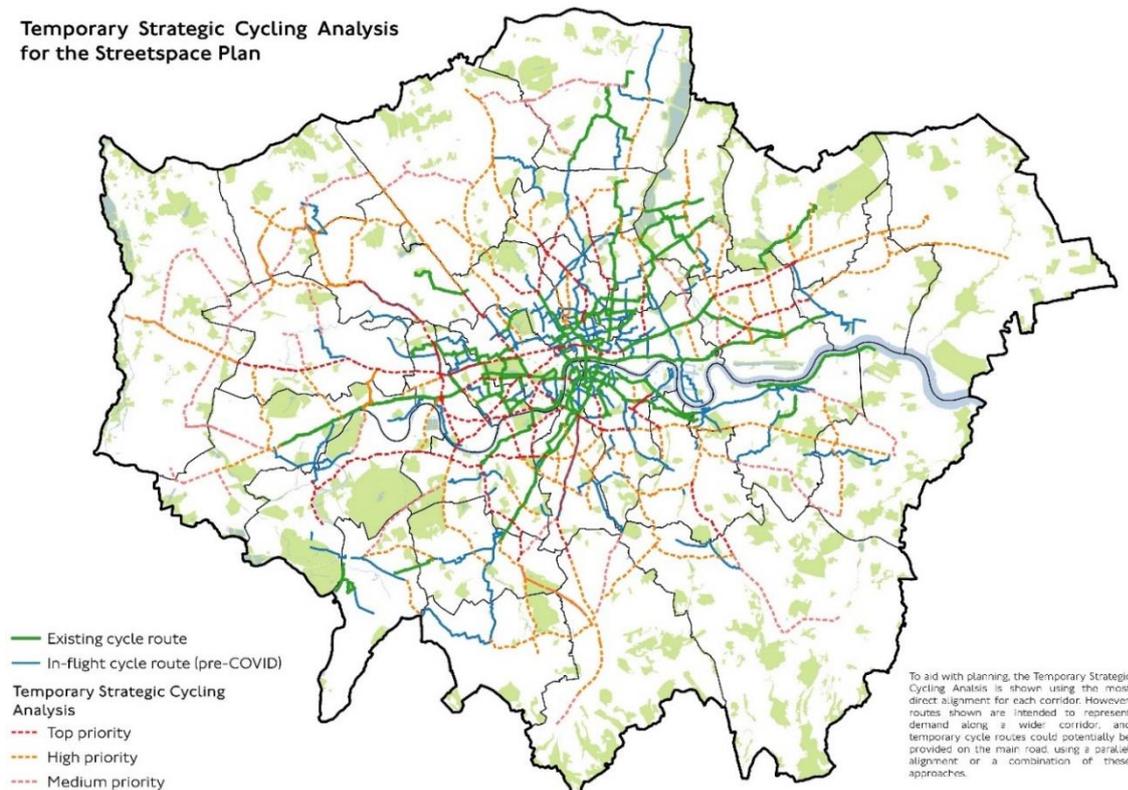
Source: London Travel Demand Survey

These are encouraging foundations for promoting shopping closer to home, both to support local businesses and relieve pressure on the transport network. It is important to plan pro-actively for the outcomes required, in this case local shopping patterns based on walking and cycling. Basing provision on current or perceived demand for car parking overlooks that a significant portion of that demand arises from making the car an easier option than walking or cycling short distances.

For other locations where additional space is likely to be required, boroughs should refer to the Temporary Strategic Cycling Analysis (figure 2 below and appendix five of the street space guidance) and footway width/town centre analysis. We will continue to work with boroughs to identify where the need for space-reallocation is greatest.

Figure 2 – Temporary Strategic Cycling Analysis

Temporary Strategic Cycling Analysis for the Streetspace Plan

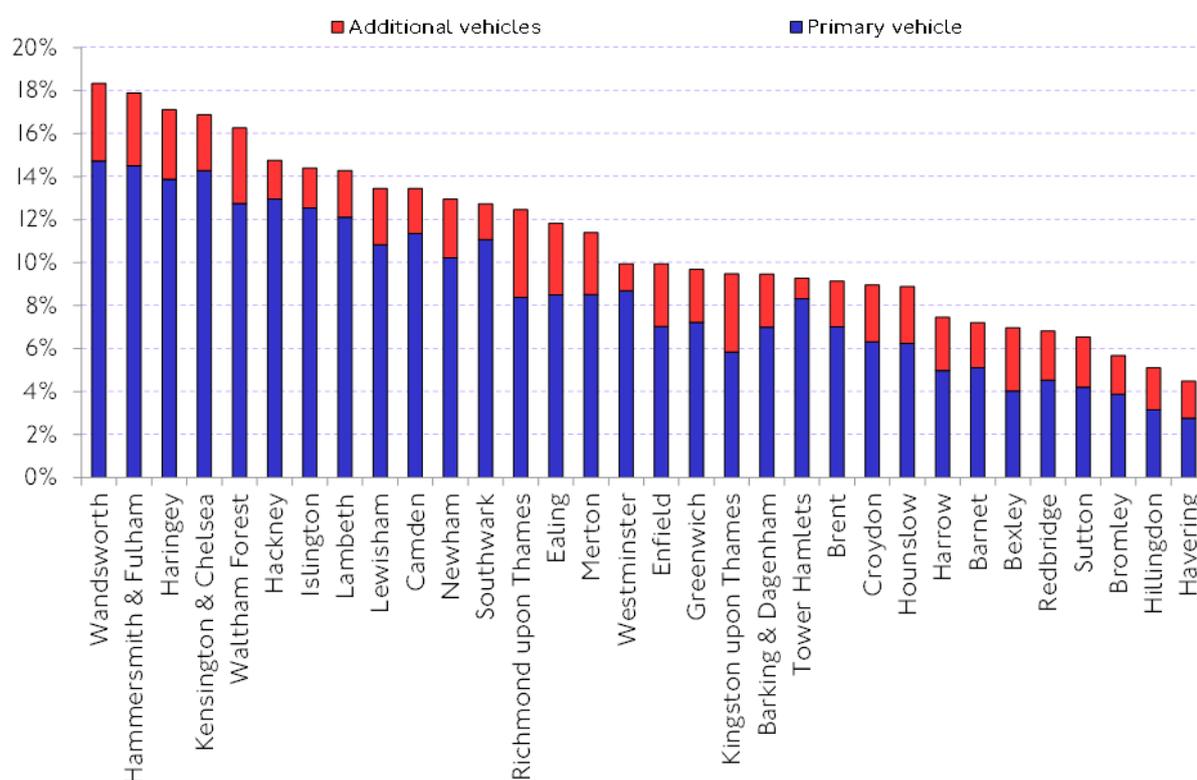


Residential parking

Residential areas typically have both lower movement and access needs, with some exceptions such as home deliveries. While wholesale reallocation from residential parking may not be feasible in the short term, it is important to allocate limited public space appropriately. As shown by Figure 3, residents' parked cars make up a significant proportion of overall road space, particularly in inner London. In outer London, a higher proportion of cars on-street are households' second or third vehicles, rather than a primary vehicle.

Boroughs should look for opportunities to redress this balance, including through permit charges/structures and the suspension of bays to help enable social distancing and reduce road danger. Suspending specific bays can provide gaps between parked cars to improve sightlines and allow residents to safely pass each other or cross the road to where the pavement may be clearer. This is particularly important at junctions and pinch points (such as where street trees are on the footway). Car parking bays can also be repurposed for on-street cycle hangars to enable more cycle ownership.

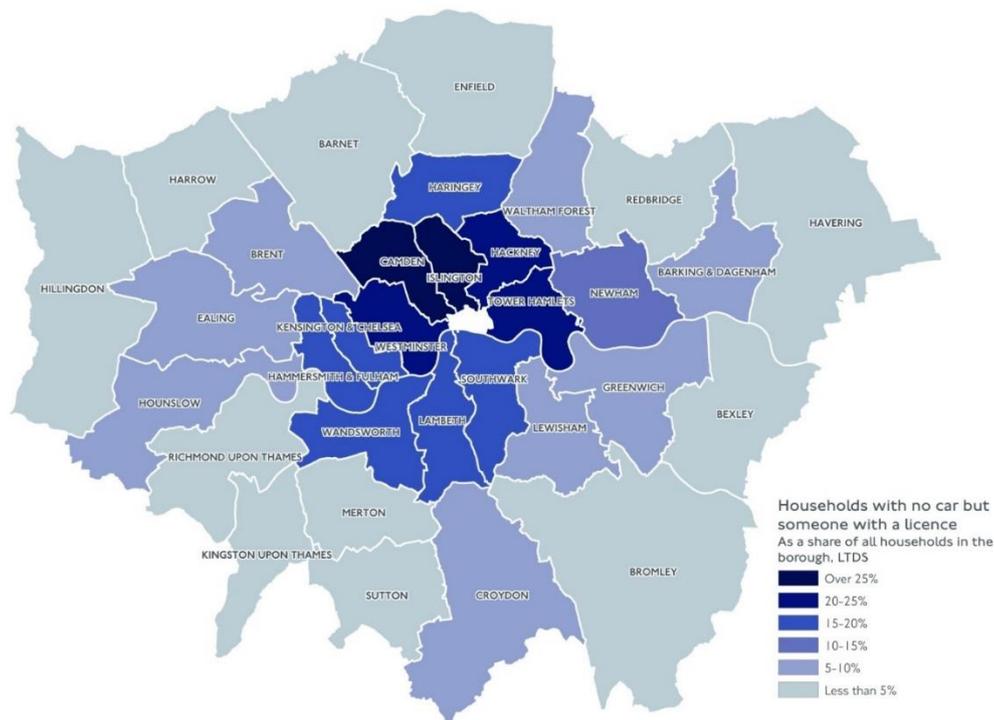
Figure 3 – Proportion of road space taken up by residents' vehicles parked on-street



Source: Analysis of OS MasterMap Highways Network (2019) and London Travel Demand Survey

It is also important – particularly in some boroughs – to consider the risk of conditions for active travel in residential areas worsening as people respond to the changing transport context. In some parts of London, there are high numbers of households that do not currently own a car but where at least one person has a driving license (see Figure 4 below). Should this change, car ownership could in theory almost double in some boroughs. These boroughs are often where on-street parking already takes up the most space, meaning even a small increase could significantly harm conditions for walking, cycling and social distancing. Boroughs may wish to temporarily pause issuing new residential parking permits while more information about the medium-term effects is gathered. In areas already under high parking stress, boroughs may wish to look at capping the total number of permits issued and operating a waiting list, as done by Brighton & Hove City Council.

Figure 4 – Car ownership increase risk by borough



Source: London Travel Demand Survey

Off-street car parks

While off-street car parks may play a different role to on-street parking, there is still potential for space to be re-purposed in the short term. Surface parking located near shops, cafes and other destinations can be used for overspill space including for queuing and cycle parking, but also for tables and chairs that enable social distancing for nearby businesses (once the hospitality sector is permitted to re-open).

Multi-storey car parks could potentially play a role in enabling freight by more sustainable modes such as cargo bike, as well as providing secure cycle parking and priority access for Blue Badge holders. Opportunities for this may be particularly important where on-street cycle parking is limited and potential volumes of people wanting to park a cycle are high, such as at cultural venues like the Southbank or Barbican, or in high density office locations like the City of London or the Isle of Dogs. Cycle parking should be located as conveniently as possible and additional security measures may be required. The need for such space may increase over the medium-term as the expansion of protected cycle lanes enable more people to cycle.

Where parking is judged appropriate to retain in council-run car parks, local traffic levels should be monitored and charges set at an appropriate level to manage demand both for parking and for road space (with potential exemptions e.g. for NHS/care workers as appropriate).

Enforcement

As the economy re-starts, there are important reasons for enforcement activities to resume, as reflected in the updated operational advice linked above. This will be particularly significant for

ensuring our streets remain safe and accessible for people walking and cycling, as well as functioning for those who need to use buses and for essential deliveries and servicing. As parking is reallocated to support additional space for walking and cycling, the reduction in overall supply is likely to make enforcement more important, especially in some locations. Enforcement can also support the prioritisation of limited car parking space for those who need it most.

The operational advice cited at the beginning of this guidance recommends a phased reintroduction of previously relaxed activities. This may be necessary in part due to recovering staffing levels. Boroughs should prioritise resources where they are needed most to support walking, cycling, buses and essential freight (as explained in more detail in the operational advice) and return to full enforcement as soon as it is safe to do so.