



Silvertown Tunnel and the River Thames

The proposed Silvertown Tunnel is a new cross-river road crossing that will link Silvertown and the Greenwich Peninsula. Transport for London (TfL) has produced this information factsheet to help you understand what navigational impacts the Silvertown Tunnel scheme may have on the River Thames during the construction period. If you would like to discuss the contents of this factsheet with us, please contact us at rivercrossings@tfl.gov.uk.

On 5 October 2015 TfL launched a statutory consultation on our proposals for the Silvertown Tunnel. Further details about the Silvertown Tunnel project and on how to respond to our consultation are available on our tfl.gov.uk/Silvertown-tunnel.

The Silvertown Tunnel Project

Over the last 25 years we have invested heavily in new public transport services to link communities in the east. We will continue to invest in new public transport services so that as many trips as possible can be made by train, bus, cycle and on foot. However the scale of the growth expected to take place in east London in the coming years requires that we invest in all modes, including our highway network.

The proposed Silvertown Tunnel, providing a road connection between the Greenwich Peninsular and the Royal Docks, would address the current problems of congestion at the Blackwall Tunnel, improve the resilience of the surrounding road network and support economic and population growth. In recognition of the importance of the Scheme, it has been designated a 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project' by the Secretary of State.



Effects on the River

The Thames has great potential as a transport route and was once one of the busiest rivers in the world. To limit the number of lorries on London's roads during construction of the tunnel, TfL intends to encourage the transport of most of construction materials, equipment and excavated materials by river. This may involve constructing a temporary jetty structure and using an existing barge landing zone known as a 'Not Afloat but Safely Aground' berth at Thames Wharf. The temporary jetty would be in place for the duration of the construction works which will last approximately four years.

River-based activity during the construction of the tunnel is limited and will happen in three key stages, outlined below, along with their predicted timeframes:

Phase 1 -Constructing the temporary jetty

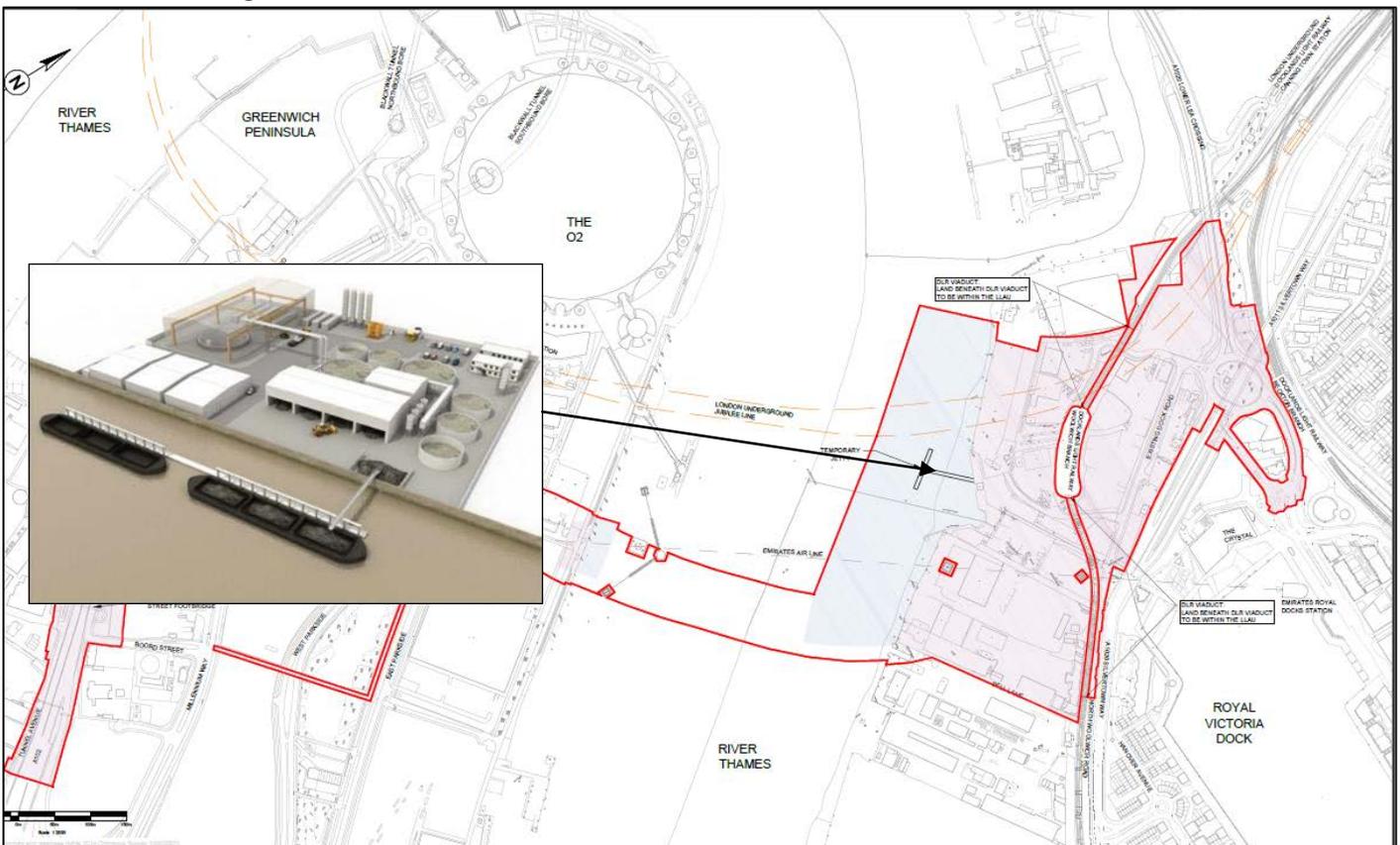
During this phase, river-based construction vessels would construct a flat landing area for barges adjacent to Thames Wharf and construct a 75m long jetty. This would lie approximately 80m outside the navigable channel. Taking only a few months, activities at this time will involve the use of a small number of construction support vessels, which may include barges, tugs and safety boats, for lifting and piling activities. Some dredging may also be required. Further details, including a chart indicating the location of the new temporary jetty are shown in the Consultation Maps, Plans and Drawings, which forms part of the documents available on our website during the consultation: tfl.gov.uk/Silvertown-tunnel

Phase 2 -Delivery of materials and removal of soil

During this phase, there will be transportation of construction machinery and materials that may involve using larger vessels of up to 90m in length (e.g. HAV ships and large barges). Key activities will include loading excavated tunnel material onto ships or barges via a conveyor belt so that it can be transported away from the site. We will also need to potentially transport tunnel segments and other construction materials to the wharf from various locations.

Phase 3 -Dismantling the temporary jetty and reinstatement

The temporary jetty will be removed and the landing area made good using similar equipment to those used during Phase 1.



What are the main impacts to the river and its users likely to be?

By maximising the use of the river during construction, the impact of the Silvertown Tunnel Scheme on both air quality and traffic congestion would be greatly reduced. These activities and other elements of the construction of the new tunnel would however have some impacts on the river, and potentially those who use it.

While TfL continues to study this in detail, the table below highlights the main outline impacts we expect the scheme could have:

Topic	Outline impacts
River Traffic	A new temporary jetty at Thames Wharf would be built approximately 80m from the navigable channel, and therefore would most likely not affect the movement of other vessels navigating past the site. There will be a local and temporary increase of construction related river traffic in the Thames Wharf area which would align with the start of construction activities in 2018 and last up to four years. with a peak expected in 2020
Environment	<p>During construction or maintenance of the temporary jetty, there may be temporary increases in turbidity if dredging is required. This could result in adverse impacts on marine ecology. We are carrying out grab sampling and ecology surveys to better understand the impacts and ensure that mitigation measures are adopted during construction.</p> <p>Some continual noise associated with loading and unloading barges will be generated during tunnel construction; there may also be short bursts of noise from specific activities such as piling during jetty construction.</p>
Recreation	An exclusion zone would be enforced in the immediate vicinity of the temporary jetty facilities, as a safety measure. We do not expect however that construction of the new tunnel would impact significantly on views of the river or reduce its visual amenity overall.
Employment	We expect that it would be necessary to recruit and train additional pilots and other crew. This may increase opportunities for employment.

We have taken the following steps to mitigate the effects of the Silvertown Tunnel scheme on the river and those who use it:

- Development of a 'Code of Construction Practice', which specifies our best practice requirements from those contractors who will build the new tunnel.
- Ongoing development of a Navigational Risk Assessment with the Port of London Authority and other key stakeholders.
- Adherence to all relevant water quality and waterway usage standards and guidance
- Reusing all suitable excavated material in a sustainable way. It might be possible for example to transport the spoil to Wallasea Island, where it could be used as part of the RSPB project to establish a new nature reserve.
- Commitment to employing qualified and skilled pilots, and providing sufficient training in advance to ensure there are enough skilled river related labour resources.

Further reading:

Further detailed information on how we might use the river during construction of the Silvertown Tunnel is available on our website tfl.gov.uk/Silvertown-tunnel.

