

LONDON AMENITY AND TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

CRITERIA FOR A REVIEW OF GLC HIGHWAY SCHEMES JUNE 1981

General Considerations

Schemes currently programmed or planned in London fall into one of three categories:

1. Unacceptable in any form
2. Unacceptable in present form but capable of satisfactory modification
3. Acceptable and desirable in present form

The aim of this paper is to set out criteria against which the acceptability of schemes can be decided. The general degree of acceptability will depend on three interrelated factors discussed below.

i. Value for money

This may imply the use of sophisticated evaluation methods, but no satisfactory technique has yet been devised which can provide an objective assessment of urban road schemes.

LATA believes that for the time being, value for money should be related to the transport and environmental priorities which the Council wishes to pursue. (For example, a scheme which increases road capacity may appear to represent good value for money if for a small outlay, great savings in time for private motorists are obtained. However, if this means - as it probably will - that travel by car will become relatively more attractive than travel by other modes, then the scheme cannot be said to represent good value for money.)

ii. Public acceptability

Many road schemes have not been properly discussed in public, and have not been included in borough plans. Any scheme which has not been the subject of full public consultation should be deferred.

iii. Consistency with Transport Policies and Priorities

Whilst a review of current road schemes is an urgent task, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive transport strategy in London of which roadbuilding should form a part, but not the most important part.

The Council has already made clear its intention to review transport policies and priorities. The main test for road proposals should be their consistency with the new transport strategy. LATA hopes that the GLC will adopt policies in line with the views expressed in LATA's various publications.

CRITERIA FOR APPRAISAL OF GLC HIGHWAY SCHEMES

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LATA's policies for roads are set out fully in the document "Roads Policy for London" which was produced in response to the GLC document entitled "Roads for London". The immediate need, however, is for decisions on the road schemes currently proposed or planned. We set out below the criteria which we believe should be used in conducting this review.

Schemes will be unacceptable if they

- are designed to increase capacity for general traffic
(With proper management, the present road network is capable of carrying all non-work trips by car for the foreseeable future, as well as buses, commercial vehicles and taxis. **Increased capacity will simply lead to more traffic and declining public transport use.**)
- **benefit general traffic in directions (or corridors) not served by public transport**
(**This encourages trip patterns for which people are entirely dependent on the car. An important example is the South Circular Road along which longer journeys can be made only by car.**)
- benefit longer distance or "through" traffic at the expense of local movement and access.
(Top priority should go to local access, pedestrians, cyclists and buses, all of which can suffer from schemes designed for through traffic)
- exceed environmental constraints
(It is insufficient to "minimise" the environmental cost of road schemes. **Standards should be agreed and schemes which do not meet these should be dropped.**) **Schemes which do not meet the requirements of local residents have been dropped** [GLC insertion]

Many schemes have been initiated on the basis of increasing capacity for general traffic (despite other arguments used by highway6 engineers to support them) and these **should be have been** abandoned using the above criteria.

There **may, however, be are** existing schemes which in their present or a modified form could satisfy one or more of the following criteria.

Schemes **may be are** desirable if they

- replace a route that is less satisfactory in terms of road safety or environment.
(The by-passed route should, however, be simultaneously **closed restricted** so that the benefits are secured. There should be no increase in capacity, only a replacement of capacity for general traffic.)

- enable special provision to be made for buses, pedestrians or cyclists (E.g. wider nearside lanes for cyclists, wider pavements, physically segregated bus or cycle lanes) **These should be put in at the same time.**
- improve site access to industrial or commercial premises (This is concerned with new or improved junctions with the Metropolitan road network, not enlargement of the network itself)
- improve road or junction alignments which pose a safety hazard (Congestion should be reduced by means other than roadbuilding and does not itself constitute a safety hazard.)

Finally, roadbuilding is usually both costly and disruptive, whatever its objectives. It is therefore important that the main effort should be devoted to devising traffic management schemes to meet transport objectives. Only when this effort fails to provide what is desired should major infrastructure changes be planned. **It follows from this, and indeed from the foregoing paragraphs, that there needs to be a major change in the type of work done by the GLC's traffic and highway staff.**

T M Pharoah
June 1981

On behalf of LATA

Historical note

The GLC document "Roads for London" referred to in the text was produced by the Conservative administration. The incoming Labour administration in 1981 was keen to abandon the pro-roads stance emphasised in that document and thus needed to quickly review the many road schemes - large and small - that they had inherited.

[A start had already been made on 1st July when a planned underpass at the north side of Vauxhall Bridge (Millbank underpass) was scrapped. LATA had fought this scheme to the wire and intervened to prevent the Chairman of the Tory Highway Committee (Councillor "Sandy" Sandford) from signing the construction contract immediately before the election, thus saving Londoners £5 million at 1980 prices.]

Tim Pharoah met with Councillor Paul Moore (In charge of highway planning from May 1981) on 9th July who agreed the general stance taken by LATA on roadbuilding and draft criteria for reviewing the inherited road programme. The criteria produced by Tim Pharoah for LATA were adopted, with the amendments shown, at the GLC Transport Committee on Tuesday 21st July 1981. A diary entry shows that the criteria had already been agreed by Transport 2000.