



London Cycling Campaign response to Silvertown Tunnel - Cross River Cycling Service

<https://haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/silvertown-cycling-service>

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About LCC

London Cycling Campaign (LCC) is a charity with more than 20,000 supporters, of whom more than 11,000 are fully paid-up members. We speak up on behalf of everyone who cycles or wants to cycle in Greater London; and we speak up for a greener, healthier, happier and better-connected capital.

Response

London Cycling Campaign opposes the construction of the Silvertown Tunnel. We have long called for the tunnel to either not be built or to be repurposed for public transport and active travel. Adding a motor vehicle crossing to the Thames at this point, in a climate crisis, is the wrong approach.

Additionally, we have concerns with the proposed 'cycle shuttle bus', and how suitable it will be as a cycle crossing. While this could be a useful supplemental crossing, East London needs a cycle crossing that meets the criteria below – which a shuttle bus can not.

We also call on TfL to strategically look at all of London's river crossings (and potential crossings) as a whole, looking at both east and west London, and deliver a coherent plan as to capacity of each mode, where cycling, walking, wheeling, freight etc goes and how.

Our concerns with the proposed 'cycle bus' specifically are:

- Many people cycle for convenience, speed, and predictable duration of journey. It's likely they won't wait for a bus and will make a longer journey to use another river crossing.
- It will be nigh on impossible to include appropriate levels of provision for cargo freight cycles and adapted cycles. For commercial cargo bike operators this means they will be at a disadvantage compared to less sustainable commercial modes of delivery across the Thames and whose vehicles will be able to be heavier, larger, have trailers etc.
- It won't be roll on/roll off and will require people to dismount, making it inaccessible for some users.
- Cost and operating hours remain unclear and could well change in the future due to budget constraints. Any costly service, any service that isn't available when wanted, undermines this approach as a way of crossing the river – yet the service is unlikely to be popular enough to be self-sustaining due to its inherent weaknesses.

Cycle river crossings in East London are very limited and most present barriers to people cycling. More river crossings east of Blackfriars are needed which must be:

- Free and available at all times of day/night and every day of the year
- Accessible to cargo and adapted cycles, not requiring dismounting or walking of cycles
- Available nearly instantly, a high frequency of operation
- Safe at all hours of the day, including capacity for high volumes of cycling and appropriate levels of separation from motor traffic

Possible solutions that meet these criteria that TfL should consider are:

- Making Rotherhithe and/or Blackwall tunnels cycle and pedestrian only
- Implementing bus gates across Tower Bridge
- Revisit the idea of a walking and cycling bridge east of the Thames

Tolls from the Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels should be used to partially fund these measures.

While unlikely to provide primary and widely suitable crossing of the Thames, as they are not fully inclusive, limited in access hours and with cost, the following ideas could provide temporary and supplemental improvements to existing river crossings subject to longer term improvements:

- Improve the existing Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf ferry so it is ideally usable by cargo freight, adapted cycles and has frequent and cheap service. Make it free for people cycling.
- Invest in the Greenwich and Woolwich foot tunnels to ensure lifts are reliable. Frequent availability of lifts would assist cycle freight operators to more reliably be able to use the tunnels. Allowing slow, careful cycling in the tunnels would make them more accessible for people who can't dismount and cargo cycles that are difficult to push.
- Make the cable car free for people cycling at all times of the day.