

Oxford Street transformation

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Freight Plan summary

The continued economic success of the Oxford Street District is a key objective of the Oxford Street District transformation. A major part of ensuring this success is dependent on being able to get goods and services to and from businesses and residents as required. Therefore the ability of freight and servicing vehicles to be able to move around this area and drop off or pick up goods is a necessity.

As the district still needs freight and servicing, we recognise the need to balance and rationalise the requirements for freight across the area to ensure the economic success of the district and the need to reduce vehicle congestion to improve air quality, traffic flow and pedestrian experience. The approach will be to minimise freight trips where possible and ensure the remaining trips are managed effectively, making best use of available space and work with our businesses to ensure they are able to operate.

Understanding freight within the District

Extensive background analysis has been undertaken based on TfL's '*Summary Report and Delivery and servicing tool kit*' methodology. A data gathering process was undertaken to determine the delivery and freight operating environment currently within the district.

The information gathered during this process has allowed a detailed picture of the existing delivery and servicing activity across the district to be developed, which in turn has helped support and inform the wider changes proposed as part of the transformation of Oxford Street and its side streets.

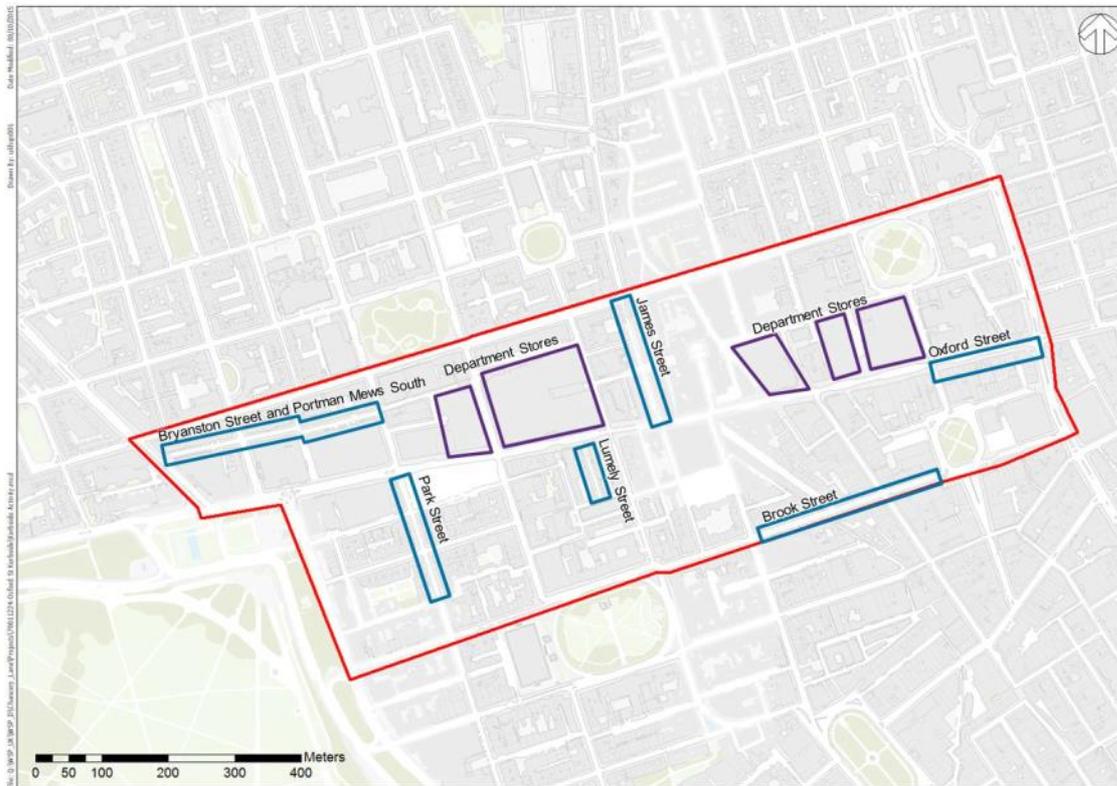
Data from a variety of sources was collected and collated, including

- 24 hour vehicle kerbside activity surveys across the entire district,
 - In-person kerbside observations;
 - Noise complaints data;
 - Land use and planning permission information;
 - Penalty Charge Notices;
 - Air quality data;
 - Footway obstructions
- Pedestrian counts; and Current Traffic Management Orders and kerbside restrictions.

All this information was mapped and analysed to understand the current freight and servicing issues and highlighted areas of high freight and servicing demand.

Focused research was conducted in seven key areas which were representative of other areas of the district. They were areas with a concentration of kerbside freight activity, or where the freight activity conflicts with other activities in the area. As part of this work, we engaged with over 400 businesses and residents to understand how they operate, and furthermore add to the observations which were conducted across the district.

- Park Street – identified as a key traffic movement street combined with high demand for kerbside freight.
- Lumely Street – identified to investigate interaction between the residential area, and freight and Oxford Street activity.
- Brook Street – identified due to office and retail land-uses and a high demand for kerbside freight around Bond Street and South Moulton Street.
- Oxford Street – identified due to a high demand for freight and pedestrian flows, and history in freight behaviour change associated with the Elizabeth Line construction.
- James Street – identified due to a high density of small-retail, and restaurants potentially generating a larger number of small deliveries.
- Bryanston Street and Portman Mews South – identified due to having a high variance of land-uses, kerbside restrictions, combined with significant kerbside delivery and servicing activity.
- Department Stores – identified due to a high demand for freight, and large typically off-carriageway loading facilities



The key findings of the observations and engagement surveys were:

- All study areas displayed a high volume of delivery, collection and servicing activity, with multiple vehicle movements and limited kerbside availability throughout the day;
- Delivery and servicing movements are predominantly condensed into a short time period creating peak freight conditions between 7am and 11am;
- Businesses and operators are using inadequate loading facilities and confined kerb space;
- Construction servicing activities involve many of the largest vehicles accessing the district and their presence causes a disproportionate impact upon local streets, leading to congestion and increased pressure on kerbside space; and
- All five department stores have off-street loading which (coupled with their internal restrictions on delivering, servicing and accessing the shop floor during trading hours) enables a reasonable number of deliveries to be made out of hours.

These data sets were then mapped against each other to understand where freight and servicing movements have temporary conflicts, volume or intensity issues, different modes of transport competing with each other, or wider areas of concern such as safety, noise, air quality and compliance.

Together, the data and engagement informed the proposed design of the street and kerbside layout, details of can be found here...)There will be opportunity to review the proposed kerbside allocation as part of this consultation. There will also be an opportunity for continued review covering management & enforcement to understand if the street and kerbside are being used to their full potential.

Oxford Street option development

To further inform the design, the loading activities of each of the businesses along Oxford Street West were reviewed to identify both the availability of off-street loading facilities and the location of the closest proposed loading area to the businesses, and further engagement with the businesses on the street. We wanted to ensure appropriate loading spaces are available for businesses in areas where it has been identified that vehicle traffic could be removed.

The development of options has also looked at how the side streets of the district will operate with the expected numbers of delivery and servicing trips to balance the need for loading space with other aspirations of the project, such as providing increased pedestrian space of footways. The figure below shows an example working drawing, showing businesses on Oxford Street and the immediate side streets located within 50m (as the crow flies) of loading locations, to identify areas needing further investigation. Through this consultation and with further stakeholder engagement we aim to discuss specific loading requirements with businesses and how we can transform the district while still enabling businesses to operate.



Engagement

Engagement with businesses and stakeholders continues to feed into the development of an active freight plan for the Oxford Street district. We've been liaising with small and large businesses, international businesses, retailers, landowners, logistic operators and residents in the Oxford Street area to find out about their needs for freight, deliveries and servicing.

As part of our stakeholder engagement, we are working closely with NWECC and jointly hosted a workshop on servicing and deliveries to businesses and retailers in the area. We are also engaging with business and freight industry organisations, including the Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Central London Freight Quality Partnership as well as the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Federation of Small Businesses.

This has been essential in understanding the existing activities undertaken in the highway space in the district and understanding the concerns of the businesses,

residents of the district and visitors to the district. Understanding these activities through the various studies and engaging with these stakeholders allows us to look at how the freight needs of the district can be catered for in the design of the scheme, and how we can better manage these activities in the future.

Ways to improve freight and servicing across the district

Freight and servicing is a key topic of debate across central London, it is recognised that servicing is essential to keep London functioning, but it also contributes heavily to air pollution, noise and an already congested road network. As Oxford Street is a retail dominated district there is a high demand for freight and servicing space, however there is a limited amount of space for this to operate. There are a number of ways, listed below, in which we can work with statutory authorities, businesses and logistic companies to reduce freight movements, while still allowing businesses to function.

- Planning policy – potential changes to policy to ensure freight demands are catered for effectively
- Behaviour change – enacting behavioural change amongst suppliers, delivery companies, businesses, employees and customers through education, cooperation and changes to current practices;
- Enforcement – focus on improving enforcement and publicity of existing regulations;
- Physical Street Improvements – changes or reassignment to existing provision;
- Physical Premises Improvements – changes or optimisation of business facilities;
- Technology – better organisation and planning (for example dynamic kerbside restrictions and live parking and loading space tracking)
- Waiting and loading restrictions – adjustments to restrictions; location, timings, vehicle types; and
- Green Measures – promoting environmentally-friendly transport and the reduction of overall trip demand.

Delivery Plan

From all we have learnt for the extensive research, analysis and engagement, a delivery plan of measures and solutions is being created. These measures can be classified as district wide initiatives which focus on behaviour change, site specific solutions to help businesses or operators to better function, or kerbside solutions to be delivered as on street interventions.

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The first outcomes of this study are already being put into place. The information gathered during the study has been used to review loading locations throughout the district, to make sure they are in the best possible places and that we are helping balance the supply with the demand for space. This paves the way for further measures to be implemented in the delivery plan.

The implementation of the delivery plan will not only require Westminster City Council and Transport for London to act, but also the business improvement district, in this area, NWECD, and critically the individual businesses. Together we can improve the operation of freight and servicing in the district and minimise the negative impact on our streets and spaces across the district.