

LONDON 2012 Transport Strategy – *Don't even think of using your car*

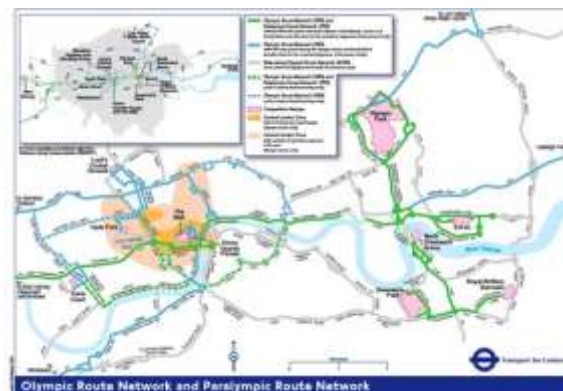
By Camilla Ween
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Photo: Olympic Development Authority

I met Hugh Sumner, director of London 2012 Olympic transport strategy, in his glass box office in a tower block in Canary Wharf overlooking the Olympic Park. Some joker had stuck a note on the glass: “*Hugh’s Haunted Den*” – that is clearly not how he sees his office or his mission. He is confident that everything has been thought of and that his “bonkersly aggressive programme” of communicating the options of how to travel to the Games will work.

The challenge and commitment is to move approximately 2 million extra passengers per day on public transport. 9 million tickets will have been sold, each generating a trip. 1 million spectator journeys are expected per day and up to a further million journeys will be created by the staff at the Olympic Park (who will get free travel) and visitors to



Map: Transport for London

cultural, tourist and hospitality events and festivities across London. He sees 4 challenges:

- Move everyone on time (athletes, spectators and businesses)
- Keep London moving during the Games
- Create a legacy of thinking differently about travel
- Ensure value for the money.



There are lots of '4s' - also 4 key strategies:

- Focus should be on the athletes
- Movement is based on incentives for walking and cycling and public transport (including a free public transport ticket and extending hours of operation of services)
- This will be an inclusive Games – Public Transport services have been enhanced to meet the needs of users that are mobility impaired
- London 2012 should be the “sustainable games” (by investing wisely in public transport for the benefit of Londoners for the future).



Javelin train, photo: London and Southeastern Railway Ltd.

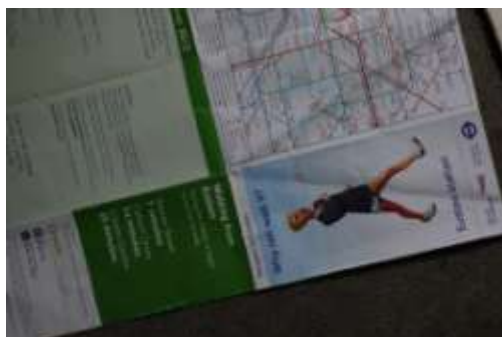
London 2012 will be the first ever public-transport-only Olympics in terms of spectator access. Every ticket sold for the events includes a free travel pass for the day the ticket is valid, across 9 travel zones on the public transport services. The public will have an extensive choice of transport options. The transport strategy, initially conceived by Transport for London at the bidding stage, built on London's excellent transport network - making improvements and bringing forward enhancements that were in the pipeline - rather than creating new infrastructure. This was initially viewed as the weakness of the London bid, as it did not include any new sexy transport infrastructure. Instead, across London there has been a £6.5 billion investment in upgrading public transport and walking and cycling. However, one high-speed temporary service will be run during the Olympics. By borrowing the Kent high-speed rail fleet for the duration of the Games, and shuttling these back and forth between central London St. Pancras station and Stratford, a high-speed metro service will be laid on – the Javelin Service – which will take just 7 minutes, and trains will leave every 5 minutes.

The Olympic Park is served by 3 rail stations and 10 rail services. There will be 1 train arriving every 13 seconds at the Olympic Park, delivering 120,000 passengers per hour. About 20% are expected to arrive by other means, mainly by bus (there are 17 bus routes), walking and cycling and special transport for those with disabilities.

The “Olympic family” is about 55,000 (athletes, medical and technical crews and officials). Sumner stresses that they need safe and secure and reliable transport, so they will have access to dedicated Olympic highway lanes and a fleet of 15,000 coaches. It was not considered realistic to have the large



teams with even larger crews and lots of equipment travelling on the public transport network. The Olympic Road Network (ORN) connects central London to the Olympic Park as well as the other Olympic venues across London and just beyond and will ensure that athletes arrive at the venues on time and unstressed (anyone sneaking into these lanes will get a \$200 fine). The ORN will be heavily policed and camera-controlled from Transport for London’s central command centre. The centre, which will have extra staff and 24/7 operations during the games, will maintain visibility of the entire network and will be able to intervene if necessary. Some pedestrian crossings are being suspended and traffic light signal timing will be altered at certain junctions to ensure free-flowing traffic. Non-games traffic will still be able to travel on the roads that have ORN lanes (only 2 streets in central London will be permanently closed to traffic) but they will be segregated from them and are inevitably going to experience some congestion. Should anything go wrong, there is an ‘Alternative ORN’ that can be put onto service. Transport for London also has a Transport Coordination Centre, which will monitor all transport modes, and if there is an incident on one mode they will be able to liaise with other transport operators to ensure the public are informed and offered alternatives without delay.



The public transport network will be under strain in the morning peaks, as it is under strain even in normal times. Much of the emphasis is on travel demand management – effectively managing not just how and when people travel to the events, but also how Londoners travel. Simple choices can free up extra capacity on the transport system. It is also about keeping the rest of London moving and communicating to businesses how

Map: Olympic Development Authority

to manage journeys most efficiently. The core principle is based on a further **4 Rs**:

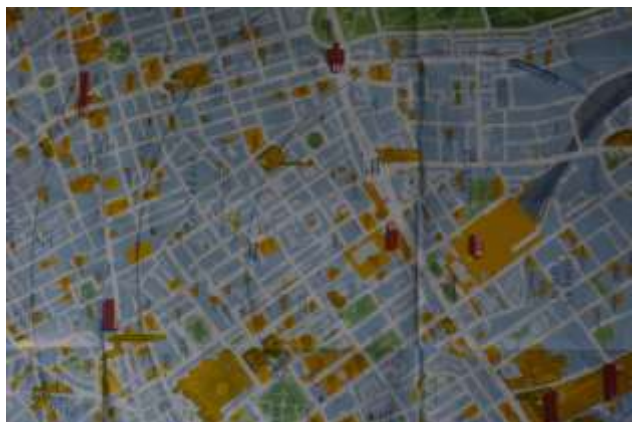
- *Reduce*
- *Re-route*
- *Re-time*
- *Re-mode* (the latter being about shifting to more sustainable travel modes).

The messages have been disseminated widely through advertising on the Underground, radio and posters.

Sumner is proud to have spent £25 million on improving walking and cycling, and getting the message across. He says that for London this is doubly valuable, as the infrastructure will be there for years to come and hopefully the travel adaption will also stick. On 4th July the Olympic Development Authority launched its [Active Travel website](#).

7 million walk maps have been distributed, showing a key location such as a station at the centre surrounded by concentric circles showing 10, 15, 20 and 25-minute walk distances. The message about walking is: *"It's quicker than you think"*. Spectator Day Planners have been created in conjunction with national rail operating companies and are available on the Internet and as a smart app, allowing travellers to plan in real time as well as following twitter on 'Getting Ahead of the Games': [@GAOTG tweets](#). (Displayed in bright pink, the Games colour – Mayor Johnson was opposed until it was demonstrated that this is the only colour that will not be confused with the colour-coded Underground lines!)

Sustainability has been the central message throughout the planning and delivery of the games and transport was no exception. The government has set up The Commission for a Sustainable London 2012, to ensure that the Olympic and Paralympics Games and the Legacy are meeting their sustainability commitments. A new British Standard in Sustainability Management Systems for Events was developed to create a benchmark for how major events should be planned around key sustainability principles; the Olympic Development Authority is the first and only organisation to have been awarded this standard.



Map distributed by Olympic Development Authority

It is London 2012's target that games travel will generate 60% less CO₂ than 'business as usual'. BP is an official Carbon Offsetting Partner and has committed to offset 40% of carbon generated by the Games. They will be offsetting vehicles' carbon emissions using *BP Target Neutral*, a

not-for-profit programme aimed at encouraging individuals to reduce, replace or neutralise (offset) their carbon emissions from travel. “*London 2012: Fuelling the Future*” is BP’s programme for inspiring change and raising awareness of mobility choices. It has created an offset offer for all ticketed spectators, helping them to reduce and offset their emissions from travelling to the Games and for the carbon emitted by the athletes as they travel for training and competitions and prepare for the Games. BP will also be providing responsible transport fuel options, such as advanced biofuel blends (in advance of their commercial launch), which will be available at one (but only one) of their retail sites in west London. They will promote biofuels from a new technology that unlocks energy in grasses and converts the sugars into diesel and a new generation of advanced fuel molecule for blending with petrol.



The cynics will say this is all a bit nebulous and it will be interesting to see if there is any post-games monitoring of this programme to see if anything close to the 60% reduction target has been achieved.

What are the biggest headaches? As Sumner explains, you can’t test run or practice anything. Bad things will happen, that is normal life – the unexpected happens. But the plan has resilience and lots of redundancy built in.

P.S.

London’s newest addition to the public transport network is a cable car from Greenwich to the Royal Docks. This is separate from the ODA’s plans and has been mainly (totally?) funded by Emirates Airlines. It will be a huge tourist attraction and is seen mainly as a regeneration project that will bring attention to the Royal Docks and Greenwich, but will be part of the Transport for London ticketing system.

Camilla Ween is an architect and urban planner and a director of Goldstein Ween Architects. She worked for Transport for London for 11 years, where she advised the Mayor on the transport implications of land use policy and development, and developed planning policy for many of London’s key growth areas. She is Chair of the Trustees of the Spacelink Learning Foundation, Vice President of the London Chapter of the Women’s Transport Seminar and was a 2007 Loeb Fellow.