The evolution of London’s cycling infrastructure from 2011 to 2016 - five years which achieved more than the previous thirty

Neil Guthrie, Atkins
Why am I presenting this?

- London-based resident since late 1990s
- Live at southern end of Cycle Superhighway
- Worked on many cycling projects (for campaigns, consultancies and research organisations)
- Seconded into TfL 2012 and 2013 when major developments took place
1st phase Cycle Superhighways implemented 2010 but …

- relied on conventional UK cycling infrastructure (painted lanes, advanced stop lines, Toucan crossings)
- impressive increases in flows due to route length, continuity, blue colouring, effective marketing (paid-for and earned)
- May 2010 to Sep 2011, 16 months’ successful operation (high increases in cycling, no safety problems)
- **Oct 2011**, first fatal collision on a Cycle Superhighway (Bow roundabout)
- **Nov 2011**, second fatality at Bow roundabout (not on Cycle Superhighway)
2011

- **November 2011**, Times journalist, Mary Bowers, serious injuries, cycle collision with left-turning lorry

- **December 2011**, TfL launches ‘Better Junctions’ programme – all ‘major’ junctions in London assessed for cycle safety
2012

- February 2012, The Times launches unprecedented campaign, ‘Cities fit for cycling’
- Several editions with front-pages dedicated to campaign – scale of coverage hitherto unseen in a major national paper
2012

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- A change in the way urban cycling presented

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Cycle Infrastructure Design

Old approach

New approach

Thursday 18 October
9.30am – 5pm
Church House
Conference Centre

Love London
Go Dutch
2012

- June 2012 ‘Early start’ Danish style layout at Bow roundabout (cycle gate)
- First attempt at protected junction treatment – but hamstrung by conventional UK signalling equipment
- Confusing layout with a forest of signals but … a start
2013

- March 2013, ‘Mayor’s Vision for Cycling in London’ published
- “a key step forward not just for London but for the whole country”
- change of TfL design criteria for cycling schemes
  from (motor traffic) capacity neutral
  to high-quality protected facilities
2013

TfL commissioned trials of innovative facilities (roundabouts, segregated links, low-level cycle signals) at Transport Research Laboratory
2013

- Autumn 2013, First Dutch-style protected cycle tracks (but not junctions) in London on the CS2 extension
- DfT also permits first use of low-level cycle signals and red aspect
- Very little sign of progress on London’s streets. Campaign groups growing impatient but…

- TfL busy developing designs for considerable lengths of route
2015
- First junctions completed featuring the new innovative techniques
- Queens Circus (July 2015) first signalised segregated roundabout
- Kennington first ‘hold the left’ (August 2015)
2015
- Cycle Superhighway 5 opened (autumn)
- a short route (1500m) but…
- first end-to-end continental standard route with high-quality protected junctions
- Vauxhall, a beacon of innovation
2016

- Mass roll-out of high-quality protected route – CS3, CS6, CS2 upgrade, Elephant & Castle roundabout conversion

- Approximately 12km in total, costing around £60m

- Delivered just in time for the mayoral election (May 2016)
2016

- Changes to legislation and national cycling design guidance
- Changes to TSRGD (national traffic signs and signals legislation) provided new tools (e.g. low level cycle signals, Zebra type cycle/pedestrian crossings)
Since 2016

- Small sections of protected cycle route opened in central London (e.g. extensions to CS6 and CS3)
- Mass roll-out of Quietway programme but largely discredited (to become rebranded) due to quality concerns
- Most new infrastructure restricted to Outer London through Mini Holland programme – quality is mixed
- Current mayor has relied more on analysis and extensive consultation – Johnson’s second term, ‘build it and they will come’
- May 2020 next Mayoral election – may see a flurry of newly constructed routes in the run-up, as with the 2016 election
2011 to 2016 – summary of key drivers for high quality infrastructure in London

Need:

1. Funding increased from £100,000 to £1-5 million per km (in central London, less elsewhere) – (London had pre 2011)

2. Expertise to design high-quality provision (pre 2011)

3. Willingness to reallocate road-space and signal time (2013)

4. Legislation/technology to allow for complex provision at signal junctions (2016)

Also, quality control and a willingness to experiment.
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Other key factors
- High-profile fatalities
- Journalists and campaigners driving the agenda, not politicians
- 4 yearly mayoral term demands ambitious proposals in manifestos, and a tight timescale for their implementation

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