

Vauxhall Northern
Pedestrian Tunnel

TfL number: 13019

SPA FT number: 1692

FINAL REPORT





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Background, objectives and method

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Background

Cycle Superhighways have been introduced across London and provide cycle priority routes for key transport corridors. Along the Superhighways infrastructure has been carefully considered and is designed to promote safe and efficient use of the road space

As part of this continuing initiative a number of infrastructure changes are proposed during the installation of Cycle Superhighway 5, specifically around Vauxhall Cross where there are plans to adapt the current layout to enable safe mixed mode or segregated use for cyclists and pedestrians

Cyclists and pedestrians both currently use the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel (NPT). With potential for increased cycle traffic in the tunnel following the infrastructure changes, it is important to assess pedestrians' and cyclists' attitudes towards the improvements and behaviour following the changes to see whether users report positive impacts or area of concern



Objectives

The research sought to understand the current behaviour and attitudes of cyclists and pedestrians in the Vauxhall Cross area, specifically:

- 1** How safe users feel when using the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel (NPT), both from the risk of collisions / near misses and from crime / anti-social behaviour
- 2** Whether users find the tunnel easy to use
- 3** How clear users find the layout of the NPT and ease of following signs / road markings



Method

This is a baseline study to measure the attitudes of cyclists and pedestrians towards the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel. Further research will be conducted after the proposed modifications to the tunnel have been implemented in order to compare attitudes and experiences to measure the value of the changes



ONLINE

Once they had come to a natural stop, cyclists in the Vauxhall Cross area were handed a hanger with an invitation to an online survey and a unique survey ID

In total, 1,940 hangers were distributed to cyclists during the fieldwork period and of these, 127 completed the online survey

FACE-TO-FACE

137 in-street interviews were conducted with people walking in the Vauxhall Cross area during the fieldwork period

Fieldwork was conducted between 6 and 26 October 2014



A pilot survey was also conducted between 8 and 24 September 2014, with 86 online and 38 face-to-face interviews completed.

Responses to open-ended questions in the pilot survey were used to create pre-codes for the main stage of the fieldwork in order to facilitate the interviewing process

NOTE: Due to the different survey methods (online versus face to face), responses may not be directly comparable. We see generally higher ratings where the questionnaire is interviewer-led (mainly pedestrians) than from the online survey (mainly cyclists) where there is no interviewer.

N.B throughout this report we refer to users of the NPT as 'cyclists' and 'pedestrians'. A 'cyclist' is defined as someone who has ever cycled through the NPT and a 'pedestrian' is someone who has ever walked through the NPT ie someone who was cycling in Vauxhall and given a hanger during the fieldwork period could have answered the online survey as both a cyclist and as a pedestrian



Key findings

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Key findings

Current situation in Vauxhall

- There is considerable scope for improving the design of the NPT and surrounding area for both pedestrians and cyclists
- Currently, wayfinding, the layout of the tunnel and users' sense of safety from the risk of collisions receive low ratings, and many (both cyclists and pedestrians) consider there is inadequate space for cyclists
- The eastern end of the NPT is a particular issue, with the tunnel wall creating a blind spot, increasing the risk of collisions

Moving forward

- There are indications that the proposed enhancements to the NPT could address outstanding issues:
 - The modification of the footbridge at the west end of the NPT could ease cyclists' concerns about pedestrians blocking the entrance
 - Difficulties sharing space in the NPT may be improved through clearer signs and markings both inside and outside the tunnel
 - The expansion of the tunnel and removal of five cycle hire stands may improve perceptions that the tunnel can cater for the volume of users
 - The widening of the east end of the tunnel should increase visibility and allay concerns about blind spots and potential for collisions



The current situation in Vauxhall

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The current situation in Vauxhall

Throughout the tunnel, there is scope to improve wayfinding and the clarity of the layout. There appear to be particular issues at the eastern end of the NPT at present for cyclists and pedestrians alike

Western end

- Sharing space is currently an issue for cyclists and pedestrians
- Cyclists report instances of the west entrance being blocked by pedestrians at the bottom of the pedestrian footbridge



Inside the tunnel

- Users also cite difficulties sharing space inside the tunnel
- Cyclists sometimes feel their path can be obstructed by Cycle Hire users
- Some pedestrians think cyclists travel through the NPT too quickly, potentially increasing the risk of collisions



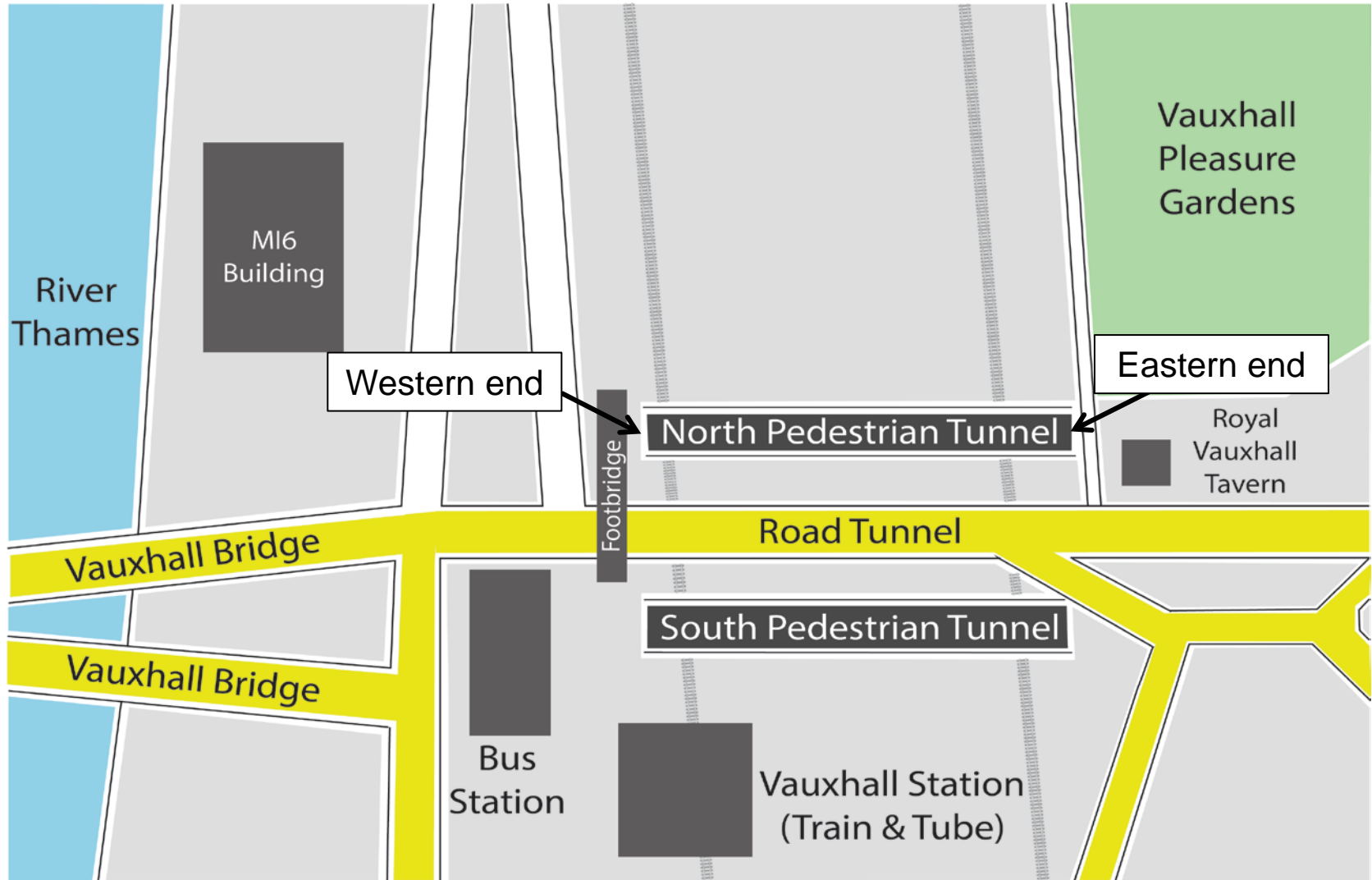
Eastern end

- The east end of the NPT is felt to be too narrow at present
- A lack of visibility caused by blind spots is the chief concern at this end of the tunnel for cyclists and pedestrians alike





The Vauxhall Cross area at present



NB diagram not to scale, for representation purposes only



Cyclists sometimes use the other tunnels where they consider the NPT inconvenient or difficult to use

From the survey, roughly two fifths of cyclists occasionally use the road tunnel or the Southern Pedestrian Tunnel

"If I have come up from Oval cricket ground and I am going to St George Wharf it saves two road crossings."

"The Northern Pedestrian Tunnel is really inconvenient as pedestrians often ignore the fact that there is a cycle lane, and once you get through it is very difficult to re-join the road without being run down by cars who will not let you back onto the road."

"Northern is a bit of a pain, you have to get off the road and slow down and avoid pedestrians and then negotiate getting back onto the road outside the pub – there are cyclists and pedestrians and it's slow. I tend to just use the road."

"I occasionally use the road tunnel as an alternative to the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel when I am going towards Oval. I use the Southern Pedestrian Tunnel when I am coming from Oval."

"It is badly designed for cyclists. When travelling south it is difficult to access it, when coming out the other end you are immediately in the way of pedestrians, you can't see the pedestrians when trying to leave the tunnel and it's very difficult to re-join the road as traffic is either traveling too fast or stationary."

"The road tunnel is quicker by bike in light traffic and also safer. No need to get across pavement and navigate tunnel entrance by pub. Use Southern tunnel on foot when coming from bus/tube."

"It is faster to go south via the car tunnel, also the entry back to the road after the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel is difficult."



Western end of the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel

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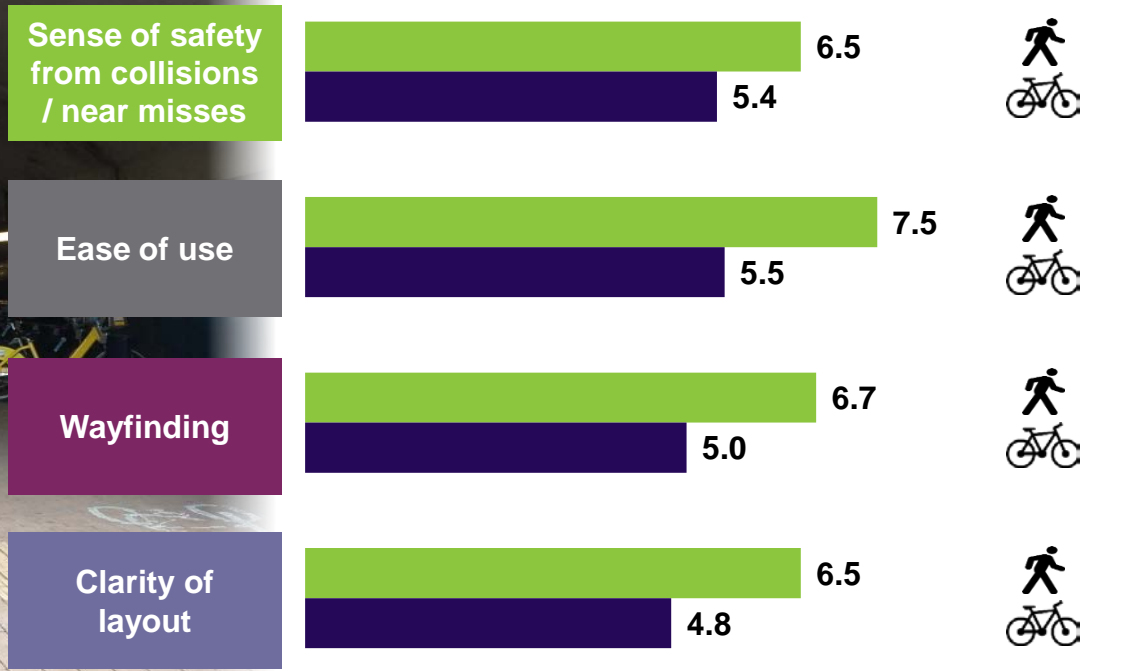


There is clear room for improvement at the western end of the NPT

It is evident that the west entrance could be easier to use, the layout could be clearer, signs and markings could be easier to follow and users' sense of safety from collisions / near misses could be enhanced



Perceptions of the western end of the NPT



Ratings are an average on a 0-10 scale

Opportunity

- By creating more space at the west entrance to the tunnel with the modification of the pedestrian bridge, this may ease fears around potential collisions or near misses
- There is also potential to make the west entrance easier for cyclists to use with the planned enhancements to the junction on approach to the tunnel



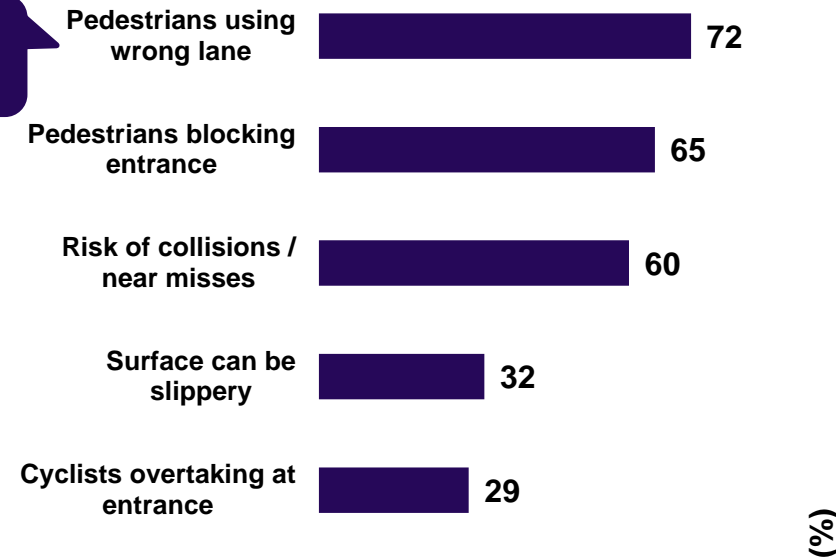
B1. How safe do you feel from collision or near misses when using the west entrance to this tunnel? B2. How easy or difficult is it to use the west entrance to the NPT? B3. How clear is the layout at the west entrance to the NPT? B4. How easy or difficult is it to follow the signs/road markings around the west entrance to the NPT? Base: All users of the NPT (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205)



Difficulties reported by users centred on concerns around sharing what is currently a limited space

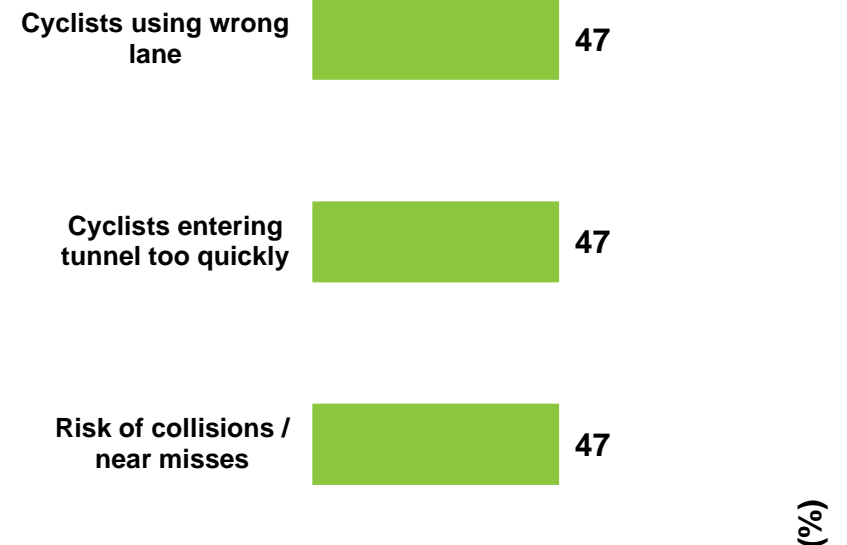
There appears to be a particular issue around users in the wrong lane which could potentially be addressed by improving the signs and markings at the west entrance

30% of cyclists have experienced difficulties at the western end of the NPT



“People coming round the corner and walking into the bike lane.”

14% of pedestrians have experienced difficulties at the western end of the NPT



NB users were asked to select all the issues that had applied to them, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%

B5. Have you experienced any difficulties using the west entrance to the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel? Base: All users (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205) B6a/B6b. What difficulties have you experienced using the west entrance as a cyclist / as a pedestrian? Base: All users who have experienced difficulties using the west entrance to the NPT (cyclists – 75, pedestrians – 34)



Inside the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel

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Wayfinding and clarity of layout are also an issue inside the tunnel

Qualitative comments suggest there is confusion over which lanes cyclists and pedestrians should use, however there is potential for this to be addressed when the NPT becomes eastbound only for cyclists thus reducing opposing movements within the tunnel



Perceptions of the inside of the NPT

Sense of safety from collisions / near misses



Ease of use



Wayfinding



Clarity of layout



Ratings are an average on a 0-10 scale

Opportunity

- There may be an uplift in the number of cyclists using the tunnel as the works will provide a clear joined up route through the junction and tunnel which should improve the clarity of layout and ease of use
- Perceptions around wayfinding could potentially be improved through clearer signs and markings

“Very poor road surface layout.”

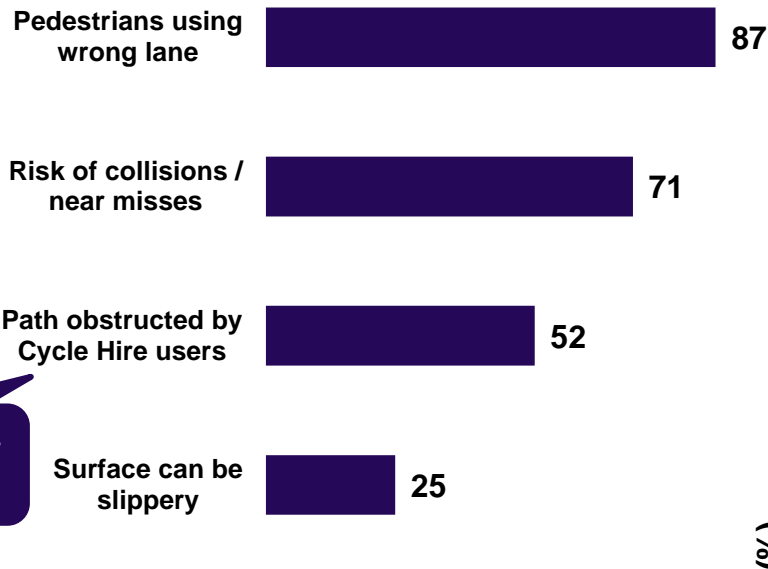
C1. How safe do you feel from collision or near misses when travelling through this tunnel? C2. How easy or difficult is it to travel through this tunnel? C3. How clear is the layout inside this tunnel? C5. How easy or difficult is it to follow the signs/road markings inside this tunnel? Base: All users of the NPT (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205)



Ensuring users remain in the right lane is an issue inside the NPT too

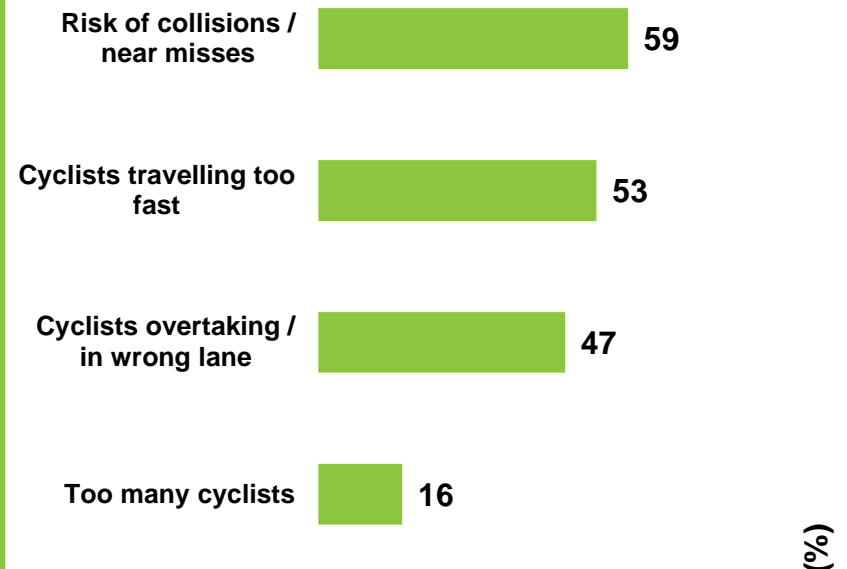
The proposal to make the tunnel eastbound only for cyclists along with improved signs and markings and could help to address the issue of users in the wrong lane, while widening the tunnel at the eastern end could make people feel safer from the risk of collisions or near misses

28% of cyclists have experienced difficulties inside the NPT



"People taking out Boris Bikes sometimes get in the way."

13% of pedestrians have experienced difficulties inside the NPT



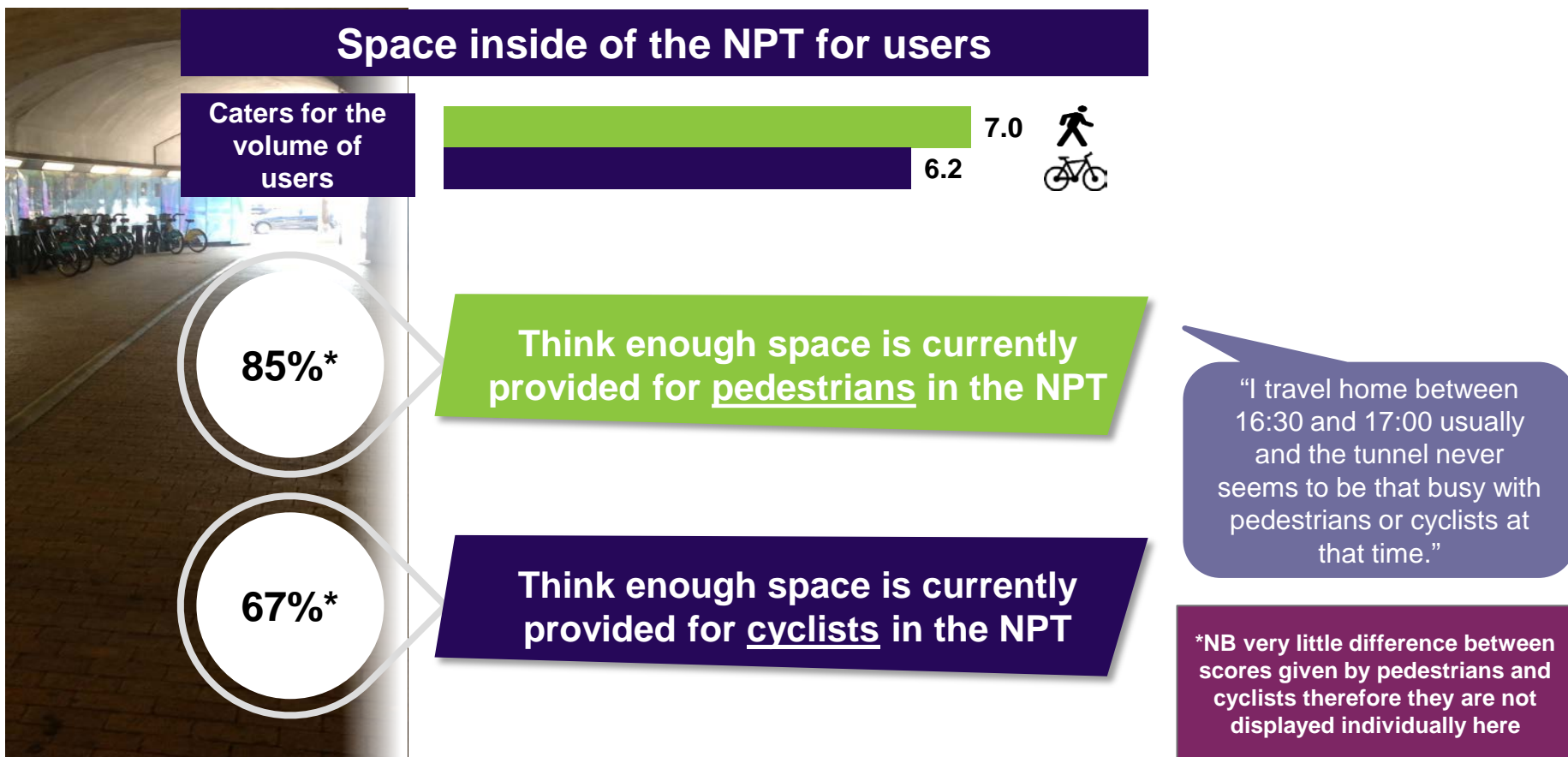
NB users were asked to select all the issues that had applied to them, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%

C6. Have you experienced any difficulties while travelling through this tunnel? Base: All users of the NPT (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205)
C7a/C7b. What difficulties have you experienced when travelling through the NPT as a cyclist / as a pedestrian? Base: All users who have experienced difficulties travelling through the NPT (cyclists – 69, pedestrians – 32)



Overall, the NPT is mostly felt to provide enough space for both cyclists and pedestrians

However, there is scope for improvement and the removal of some of the Cycle Hire stands could help to improve perceptions that the volume of users can be sufficiently catered for – particularly space for cyclists



C4. How well do you think the tunnel caters for pedestrians and cyclists using the tunnel? C8. Do you think there is enough space provided for...? Base: All users of the NPT (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205)



Eastern end of the Northern Pedestrian Tunnel

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The eastern end of the tunnel appears to be particularly problematic for both cyclists and pedestrians

Cyclists and pedestrians feel less safe from collisions, find it more difficult to use and to follow signs / markings, and think the layout is less clear than at the west entrance or inside the tunnel

Perceptions of the eastern end of the NPT

Sense of safety from collisions / near misses



Ease of use



Wayfinding



Clarity of layout



Ratings are an average on a 0-10 scale

Opportunity

- The planned widening of the eastern end of the tunnel could help to make users feel safer from collisions / near misses by increasing visibility for both cyclists and pedestrians
- This modification may also increase ease of use for all users by separating cyclists and pedestrians at the eastern end of the tunnel and avoiding a potential conflict point



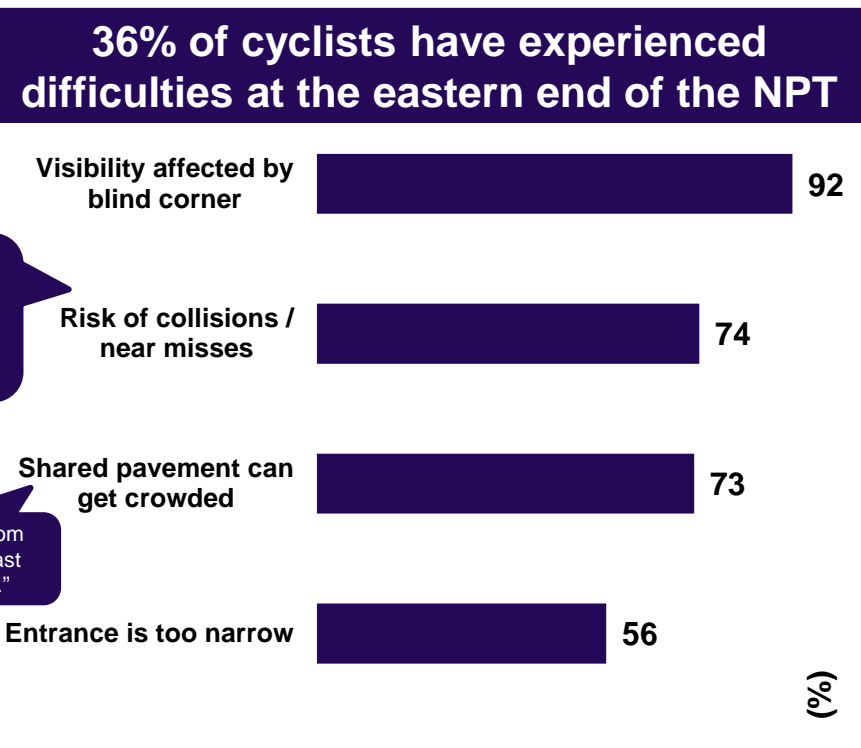
D1. How safe do you feel from collision or near misses when using the east entrance to this tunnel? D2. How easy or difficult is it to use the east entrance to the NPT? D3. How clear is the layout at the west entrance to the NPT? D4. How easy or difficult is it to follow the signs/road markings around the east entrance to the NPT? Base: All users of the NPT (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205)



Lack of visibility is the primary concern at the eastern end of the NPT

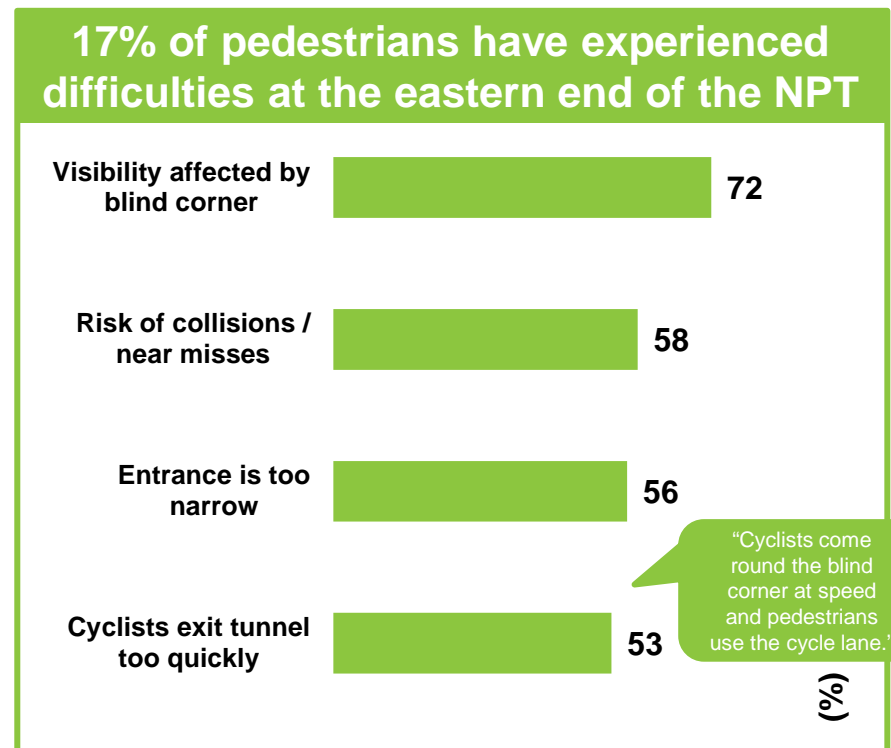
The current layout is creating a blind spot that is perceived to increase the risk of collisions / near misses

The eastern end is felt to be too narrow and can get overcrowded with pedestrians, while some pedestrians think that cyclists exit the tunnel too quickly at times



“People walking in to the tunnel using the cycle lane. I always ring my bell and look at the mirror.”

“People spill out from the pub into the east entrance at night.”



“Cyclists come round the blind corner at speed and pedestrians use the cycle lane.”

NB users were asked to select all the issues that had applied to them, therefore responses may sum to more than 100%

D5. Have you experienced any difficulties when using the east entrance of the Northern Pedestrian tunnel? Base: All users of the NPT (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 205) D6a/D6b. What difficulties have you experienced using the east entrance as a cyclist / as a pedestrian? Base: All users who have experienced difficulties using the east entrance to the NPT (cyclists – 89, pedestrians – 43)



Personal safety

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Fear of crime / anti-social behaviour also appears to be an issue for users of the NPT

Ratings for sense of personal safety from crime / anti-social behaviour are generally quite low



E1. How would you rate your sense of personal safety from crime / anti-social behaviour when using this tunnel? Base: All users (cyclists – 141, pedestrians – 203)



Recap

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Recap

Current situation

- Generally fairly low ratings indicate there is clear scope for improvement, particularly at the eastern end of the NPT
- Difficulties at the western end and inside the tunnel are also highlighted, including issues around wayfinding, clarity of layout and confusion around which lanes are designated for cyclists and pedestrians

Moving forward

- There is also scope for the proposed modifications to the tunnel to:
 - Enhance users' attitudes towards the NPT
 - Improve the experience of using the NPT for both cyclists and pedestrians
 - Increase users' sense of safety from collisions / near misses