

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Title	Smoothing the Traffic Flow
Objective	How road users perceive the network and what their needs are in terms of operational factors and information. Testing response to some potential interventions
Date	April 2009
Methodology	14 x 2 hour focus groups, each consisting of 6-8 road users, covering various modes

Key findings

- Road users' understanding of traffic flow is broadly in line with that set out by the Mayor. Traffic which flows well is thought to be consistent and predictable. A consistent flow of traffic means driving at a constant speed with minimal 'stop-start driving'; and predictability means feeling confident about how long a journey is going to take before setting off.
- People agree that traffic flow in London can and should be improved. Road users are able to describe measures intended to smooth traffic flow but are generally sceptical as to the degree they are succeeding. People find it easier to identify factors which they perceive impede traffic flow.
- Those travelling in outer London experience less dissatisfaction than those travelling in inner London. However, views on what measures could be taken to improve road travel are largely consistent.
- Co-ordination of road works and re-phasing of traffic lights were considered to be the most potentially impactful interventions to improve the flow of traffic. Measures giving priority to buses and cyclists were also thought to have some potential. Improving road surfaces was considered quite important by most people and particularly important by cyclists and P2W riders.
- Addressing information gaps e.g. providing information regarding roadworks and other unforeseen events during a journey, could improve predictability and provide a greater feeling of being in control. People feel this would help them to feel less stressed.

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