About these proposals

Overview

We are proposing to introduce a new cross-river cycling facility to help transport cyclists across the Thames as part of the opening of the Silvertown Tunnel in 2025. It is important for us to ensure that we provide cyclists with an efficient, convenient and safe way to travel across the river via a service that responds to cyclists' needs and creates new journey opportunities in east London.

The purpose of this consultation is to understand how cyclists might use this river-crossing facility. We are seeking views on the mode of transport preferred, specific operational elements of the new service, such as when it would operate, the accessibility and connectivity of the service, as well as what sort of journeys cyclists might use the service for in the future. Your feedback will be vital to shaping how the final service operates as we continue to develop our proposals. We have considered options for different types of shuttle bus service for cyclists, and also a potential future ferry crossing. You can read more about these options below. The IFS Cable Car will also remain available for cyclists to use as a way to cross the river during its hours of operation.

Alongside the proposed new service, we are also developing proposals at the Lower Lea Crossing that connects Canary Wharf to Silvertown to make improvements to the walking and cycling environment. These improvements along with the existing cycle infrastructure north of the river will provide cyclists with a high-quality connection between Silvertown and Canary Wharf. We will consult on these proposals separately later this year.

Our cross-river cycling service will be a key part of the local cycle network and help to promote sustainable travel, improve health, and increase access to jobs, education and leisure opportunities in east and south-east London. Our key objectives for the service are to improve connectivity for cyclists between the Greenwich Peninsula, Silvertown, and Canary Wharf, provide a safe and convenient way for cyclists to cross the river, support a major growth area in the capital and provide more people with the opportunity to choose cycling as their mode of travel.

What options for the cyclists' river crossing have we considered?

While developing the Silvertown Tunnel scheme, we considered whether cyclists could use the tunnel, either by sharing the bus lane or via dedicated segregated cycle infrastructure. After careful consideration, we decided that walking and cycling would not be permitted through the Silvertown Tunnel for safety reasons. In addition, providing a segregated lane and larger tunnel would add substantial additional cost and would be unlikely to provide significant benefits as the environment inside the tunnel was unlikely to be attractive to cyclists.

As part of the permission granted for the construction of the tunnel, we therefore committed to investigating and delivering an alternative cross-river facility for cyclists

and pedestrians, to be delivered by tunnel opening in 2025. We have been considering different options to provide cyclists with a dedicated facility to cross the river in this part of London. We want to use feedback from this consultation to help inform the development of our proposals.

Shuttle bus service

We ruled out the option for cyclists to take their bikes on our regular bus services at an early stage, as cyclists (with the exception of folded cycles) are not permitted to take their bikes on any London bus service across the city due to space constraints, and potential impacts on journeys due to cycles being loaded and unloaded at stops, and this needs to remain consistent.

However, we are considering a bespoke shuttle bus service for cyclists as one of the options for our river crossing facility. This option provides us with the greatest flexibility to trial a service when the Silvertown Tunnel opens in 2025, and would enable us to respond to demand and user preferences as these evolve over time. A shuttle bus service is our preferred option for the crossing facility and there are a number of factors to consider further, including but not limited to:

- the location of drop off/pick up areas, and the route which could be taken by the service (and integration with the existing cycle infrastructure north and south of the river)
- the associated journey times, timetabling and operating hours of the service
- the type of vehicle which could be used and the implications this has for the number and type of bicycles that could use the service
- arrangements for the loading and unloading of bicycles
- assigning responsibility for the security of bicycles being transported across the river
- whether the service will be free of charge or users will pay a fare

What about route and frequencies of this service?

While no final decisions have been taken, we have identified some potential areas where the shuttle bus service could start/stop and are seeking views on the most suitable locations. We are keen to ensure that the bus stops for the service would drop cyclists in close proximity to our existing and proposed high quality cycling infrastructure to ensure good connectivity for cyclists to continue their journeys.

On the Greenwich Peninsula, we think a stop located on John Harrison Way, or Southern Way, close to the existing Cycleway 14, would be the best location for a stop. While this is relatively far from the river, we think this location would be more convenient for cyclists to access from the local area. Alternatively, the stop could be located closer to the tunnel portals, for example near Millennium Way.

North of the river, we think a stop located close to Royal Victoria DLR station in Silvertown would offer good access into the Royal Docks and onward connections through the planned cycling improvements along the North Woolwich Road corridor, and Lower Lea Crossing. Alternatively, or in addition, the stop could be located

further west around Poplar High Street and Blackwall DLR to drop users along Cycleway 3, closer to Canary Wharf and the City.

Between the chosen stops, different routing options would be possible for the service, and we are interested to hear your views on the following options:

1. A point-to-point service between the Greenwich Peninsula and Silvertown, via the new Silvertown Tunnel.
2. A point-to-point service between the Greenwich Peninsula and Blackwall DLR, via Blackwall Tunnel.
3. A circular loop connecting the Greenwich Peninsula, Canary Wharf and Silvertown operating one or two ways. Whilst more extensive, this option would mean longer journey times for some cyclists. The link between Canary Wharf and Silvertown will be upgraded for cyclists as part of our work at the Lower Lea Crossing and we believe that ultimately cycling between Canary Wharf and Silvertown will be a more attractive and efficient offer for cyclists.

We would like feedback on where potential users are likely to travel from and to, so that we can design a service that best meets their needs.



Map showing potential bus stop locations and cycling infrastructure nearby. A larger map is available online or by request.

Our indicative operating plan for this service suggests a starting frequency of six bus shuttles per hour. We will use feedback from this consultation to understand potential demand and whether we would need to increase frequencies, particularly at different times of the day to accommodate this demand.

Alternatively, we could offer an on-demand service, whereby cyclists call for a service on arrival at a stop. This would again depend on demand levels for the crossing and the feedback received during this consultation.
Once the bus shuttle is operational, we will review levels of demand and will be able to respond appropriately; one of the benefits of this kind of service is our ability to be scale up in response to demand and be flexible in response to customer needs.

What will the stops and vehicles look like?

It is important that the service we provide is high quality, accessible to as many users as possible and is easy to use and follow. Whilst no final decisions have been made on the look and feel of the stops, we expect them to take the form of a simple stop marked out on the carriageway where the bus service will stand and a shelter on the footway with a designated waiting area for cyclists. We will also provide some customer information at the stops such as timetables or frequencies and maps to show the local cycle routes to help with onward connections. We would like your feedback on what is important for potential users of the service.

The vehicles themselves have not been specified yet and the exact nature and design of these will be informed by feedback from this consultation alongside discussions with potential suppliers on the detailed options. However, there are two main options under consideration; a vehicle which allows cyclists and bikes on board, possibly with internal racks or storage areas, or a vehicle with a bicycle trailer fitted to the back. Both have their strengths and challenges although vehicles with external storage on bicycle trailers appear much more common.

A vehicle with internal storage would mean less overall space for cyclists when compared to the trailer option. It would likely require larger buses which are retrofitted to remove some seating, thereby being a more expensive option. Ensuring quick and smooth boarding would also be a challenge with different bicycles.

The trailer option may carry more cyclists and bicycles overall but may result in longer journey times with additional time to load and unload bicycles. We also recognise that not all users can 'dismount' their bike, which might be used as a mobility aid. If this option were to be taken forward issues around security of the bicycles being transported would need to be discussed and resolved.

The images below show some artist impressions of the two different options outlined above.





Images showing visualisations of how a bus shuttle service might look.

Will I have to pay for this service?

It is important to us that this service offers good value for money for both the users and to TfL. The shuttle bus service could be free to users but this would require ongoing public subsidy which may result in a lower-quality service in response to financial constraints. Alternatively, a fare could be charged to recoup some of the

operating costs. This could then be invested into improving the service for example providing more frequent services, better vehicles and facilities at the stops, or longer operating hours. No decisions have been taken on whether there will be a charge for this service or whether it will be free; we would like to know if a charge will impact your decision to use the service.

We have not made any final decisions yet; this consultation will help inform our decision and help us develop the indicative operating schedule for the service, such as timings, frequency and stops for this potential service.

Ferry shuttle service

North Greenwich Pier on the south bank of the Thames and Trinity Buoy Wharf Pier on the north bank are existing piers in close vicinity to the Silvertown Tunnel, although Trinity Buoy Wharf is not designed for regular passenger/cyclist services. Other piers on both sides of the river are planned but not currently built. We have considered a privately operated, cross-river ferry shuttle service between North Greenwich and Trinity Buoy Wharf (or other piers once built). This would be a completely new service, open to both cyclists and pedestrians. We have also considered opportunities to utilise new piers delivered privately through emerging and future developments, but these are unlikely to be in place in time for when the Tunnel opens. You can view a map of the pier locations below.

As a completely new service, this option would require significant investment in piers and boats to ensure they are cyclist friendly and ready for use by 2025. Additionally, a privately operated ferry service is unlikely to be free of charge, and our modelling data suggests that there would be low uptake amongst cyclists. The initial capital investment, as well as the ongoing operating costs required by TfL to operate a ferry service is not currently affordable within budget constraints and therefore overall, this option does not represent good value for money at this time. Private sector partners could potentially provide the investment in the necessary infrastructure to make a ferry shuttle service a possibility and we will keep this option under review as development comes forward on both sides of the river.

In summary a ferry service is not our preferred option currently. We intend to keep this option under review should the necessary infrastructure be developed as part of local developments and if demand is demonstrably growing.



Map showing locations of existing and proposed piers. A larger map is available online or by request.

What are we consulting on?

We are consulting on the operational elements of the river crossing service, to help us understand how cyclists want the service to run and ensure we develop an efficient, convenient, and safe service for users.

We intend to use your feedback from this consultation to inform our final plans for how the service will look and to ensure we deliver a river-crossing solution that works for cyclists.

Specifically, we want to understand the following

- What type of bicycle do you use?
- Would you use the shuttle bus service?
- Would you be willing to pay to use the shuttle bus service?
- Would you use the IFS Cable Car service?
- How often you might use the service?
- What time of day / night you might use the service?
- What sort of journeys you might make in the future?
- What accessibility and connectivity elements are important to you?
- Any additional comments, concerns or suggestions you have on the potential impacts of the river-crossing service

Silvertown Tunnel Background

In 2018, the Secretary of State gave permission for the Silvertown Tunnel to be built, linking the Greenwich Peninsula, located south of the river, with Silvertown, located north of the river. Construction of the tunnel is now underway and is expected to open in 2025.

You can read about the background and progress of the tunnel on our Silvertown Tunnel project page or by visiting Riverlinx's website. Riverlinx are the consortium

delivering the Silvertown Tunnel through a design, build, finance and maintain contract.

Next Steps

Once the consultation closes, we will begin analysing all responses received. Once all responses have been analysed, we will produce a consultation report detailing the outcomes of the consultation and the analysis. We will also respond to the issues raised throughout the consultation and publish these with the final consultation report.

The final decision on the proposals will be taken once the consultation report is complete and the next steps agreed. We will publish our final consultation report later this year and notify all respondents to the consultation and stakeholders when we do so.

How to have your say

We are holding an eight-week public consultation to hear what you think about these proposals.

You can reply by completing our survey at Haveyoursay.tfl.gov.uk/silvertown-cycling-service which should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. The closing date for comments is **10 September 2023**. Our website can be translated into many languages using the translation tool at the bottom left of the webpage.

To take part in our online survey you will need to register with your email address. Your details will be kept secure and only used, with your permission, to update you about the outcome of the consultation and next steps.

If you prefer, you can also:

- Email: haveyoursay@tfl.gov.uk
- Telephone: 020 3054 6037 to leave your name and contact number and we will call you back. Please quote ‘Silvertown cycle-crossing’ when leaving your message
- Write to: FREEPOST TFL HAVE YOUR SAY (no stamp required)