

Shifting the shift towards space and place

Roy McGowan and Kana Nomoto believe that a holistic transport strategy working collaboratively puts transport at the forefront of addressing and fighting climate change



Roy McGowan is managing director and Kana Nomoto a consultant at Momentum Transport Consultancy

We're in the midst of a shift in thinking – and action. Brought about by some stark facts: transport is the largest contributor of emissions in the UK, but the speed of change in reducing emissions since the 1990s has been so slow, the UK risks not meeting its target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

In London the Mayor has set the target of being a zero-carbon city by 2030, alongside a vision for walking, cycling and public transport to comprise 80% of journeys by 2040. But there is understandable concern that the challenging progress with transport will fail to meet these targets.

The DfT's 'decarbonising transport – a better, greener Britain' (published July 2021), the government's hydrogen strategy (published August 2021), Gear Change (published July 2020), the bringing-forward of the ban on the sale of pure internal combustion engine cars to 2030 and the Mayor of London's expansion of the ULEZ scheme (with little objection) all led us into last November's COP26. The culmination of COP26, from a transport perspective, was a declaration on accelerating the transition to 100% zero emission cars and vans, signed by more than 30 governments, as well as regional governments, automotive manufacturers and others.

For many the solution to transport's climate change challenge seems to rely on electrification and other technologies and fuels. However, the DfT's strategy clearly underlines that this alone cannot give us the results we need: "We cannot simply rely on the electrification of road transport, or believe that zero emission cars and lorries will solve all our problems, particularly for meeting our medium-term carbon reduction targets to 2035. It continues: "We cannot pile ever more cars, delivery vans and taxis on to the same congested urban roads. That would be difficult for the roads, let alone the planet, to tolerate. As we build back better from the pandemic, it will be essential to avoid a car-led recovery."

The shift to space and place

This is why the shift needs to shift – towards thinking about space and place.

At Momentum we've previously talked about transport as an enabler, in the context of looking for solutions for London's housing crisis. We believe this is true when it comes to tackling climate change too.

And in seeking to address the challenges of climate change (and air quality, and public health) through a holistic transport strategy we also set into motion a virtuous circle which shifts our thinking from simply decarbonising motor vehicles, towards equitably taking cars and freight off our roads and freeing up 'spaces' - so that we can then create 'places' that people enjoy spending time in.

At a recent New London Architecture (NLA) event (titled

Embracing Changing Transport Methods), at which we were honoured to speak, we highlighted the challenging position that London is in.

We are seen as one of the most congested cities in the developed world, air pollution from road vehicles is a significant problem, car usage has rebounded following Covid, we have an increasing amount of freight on the roads and a road safety problem - and we have hugely ambitious targets to meet. But there are transport strategy levers which we can still pull. These include distance-based road user charging (an opportunity to offset TfL's current funding challenges), shifting modal priorities, achieving car free environments, introducing micromobility and harnessing the use of river and rail, last-mile deliveries and freight consolidation.

It's a sobering statistic that half of the freight vehicles in the City of London have neither an origin nor a destination in the City.

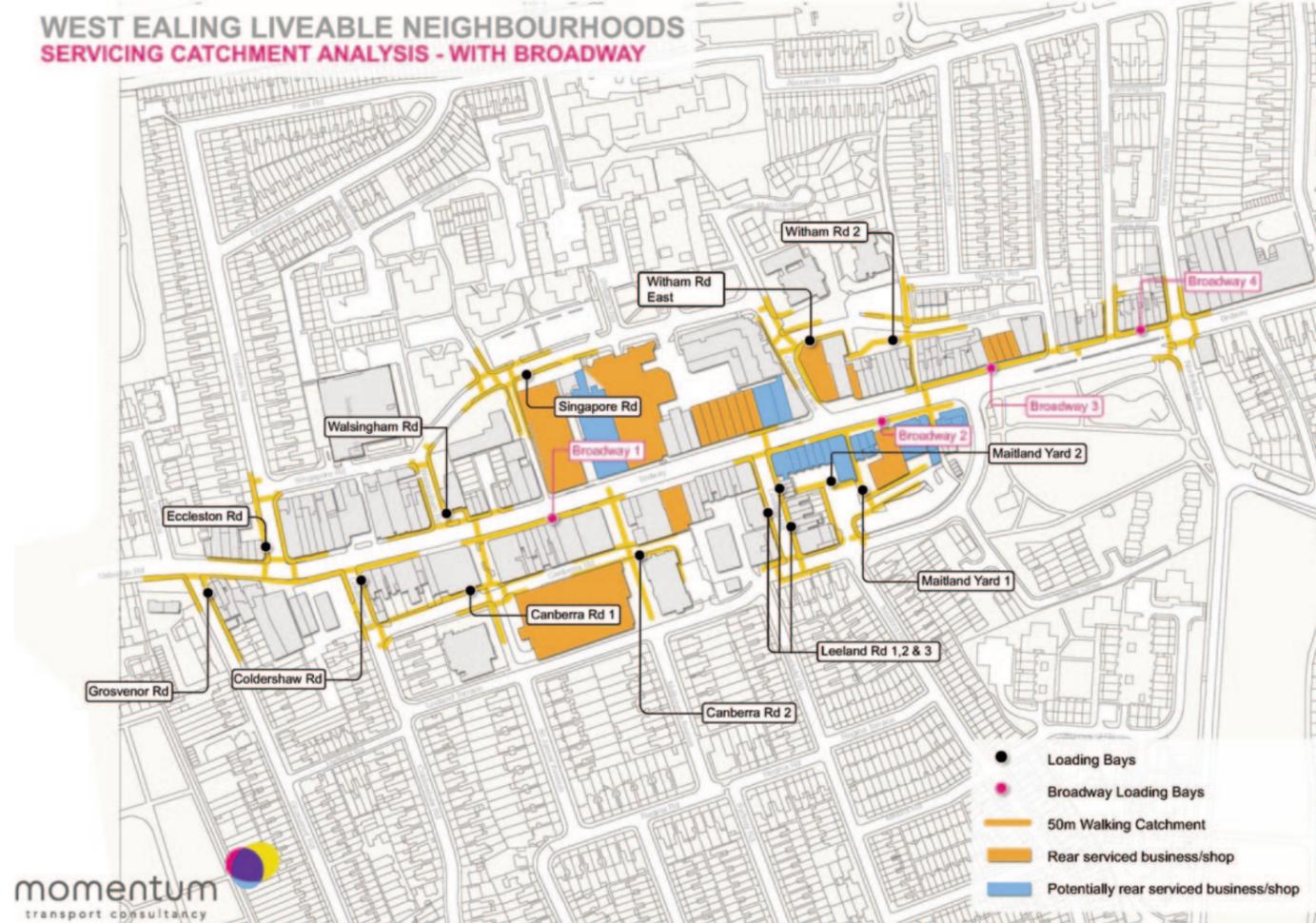
Within DfT's Decarbonising Transport report, it's recognised that road freight is a key contributor of carbon emissions in cities and there is a significant opportunity to decarbonise the last mile. The report also supports a modal shift from road to more sustainable alternatives, such as micromobility and light rail. When we look at transport more strategically, we start to see solutions. Such as how we might deliver freight consolidation strategies using measures such as collective procurement to reduce the number of trips from suppliers; and the use of e-cargo bikes to lower emissions generated and the space used by delivery vehicles.

The report also highlights the role of new technology, shared mobility and data to increase average road vehicle occupancy by 2030. Shared mobility offers an alternative to traditional mass transit, decongesting our transport network by offering first- and last-mile solutions. Building on the UK's national and regional e-scooter trials, we developed an in-depth study of rental e-scooters in Dublin for e-scooter provider Dott, which found that their success requires consideration of the site-specific context and strategic locations near transport hubs.

Finally, the DfT more holistically focuses on how we can achieve these targets within the planning system to fuel a long-term shift towards a decarbonised transport network. The guidance notes that there is no uniform approach to reducing transport's environmental impacts and actions must be place specific. A place-based approach - working closely with local authorities to understand the local context both from a transport and policy perspective – is critical to achieve the targets.

Case studies

Momentum's sustainable transport strategies make the best use of available land and encourage the use of public and active transport. We devise mobility and freight solutions that



ABOVE AND LEFT: West Ealing servicing catchment analysis

Roy McGowan is managing director at Momentum Transport Consultancy and has a passion for designing world-class transport solutions for cities. With a career spanning 40 years, his projects cross the Americas, Middle East, Asia and South Africa. In London, his experience includes the King's Cross regeneration, London 2012 bid and delivery, Wembley and Arsenal Emirates stadium, Nova Victoria and Museum of London. Kana Nomoto is a consultant in Momentum's London office and has contributed to masterplanning schemes such as the Olympia redevelopment and Brabazon Masterplan, as well as working with local authority clients including LB Camden on the Phoenix Road Public Realm. Kana graduated from UCL with an MSc in Sustainable Urbanism and is passionate about making our cities more people-friendly through sustainable and inclusive transport infrastructure.



>>> support the resilience of urban spaces including micromobility and innovative urban logistics such as consolidation and 'first and last mile' strategies. We help our clients (including local authorities, councils, commercial developers and architects) to develop more efficient and sustainable transport strategies. These strategies can reduce their transport carbon footprints, positively respond to ESG requirements and help make better use of existing infrastructure for servicing, mobility and permeability.

We have delivered a substantial breadth and depth of transport strategies for our clients including:

- Introducing cargo bike deliveries to the Museum of London

- At a major development proposal in central London we developed a comprehensive consolidation strategy to bring down delivery vehicle numbers
- At Filton Airfield in Bristol we're working to deliver thousands of much-needed homes, as part of the Brabazon Masterplan, without putting a single additional car on the road
- At Olympia, through design development and strategic work with the client and wider project team, we helped to reduce the logistics and parking areas and enable full future provision for electric vehicle charging. The existing multi-storey car park is now permitted to be converted to a hotel and a school.

- At Ilford Gyrratory we developed highway design proposals that re-accommodate general traffic away from the town centre and rebalance the streetscape in favour of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.
- In West Ealing Momentum was commissioned by LB Ealing to develop a freight and servicing strategy for the area. With the overarching aim of reducing the impact of freight and servicing activity, we investigated the potential for collective procurement of common supplies, last-mile deliveries using e-cargo bikes and ultra-low emission vehicles, and the reduction and retiming of delivery trips to, and generated by, businesses. Our work has also been integral in informing streetscape, gateway

and public space concept design proposals being led by the wider project team, ensuring the delivery of beautiful yet functional spaces for different user groups.

Speaking at the London Car Free Day Summit 2021, our colleague David Hart argued that many of the interventions which are necessary to address the challenges society faces are "being progressed with policy support, albeit in a piecemeal way. Fundamental changes that bring more impactful change are also needed." We believe that a holistic transport strategy, working collaboratively with government, local authorities, commercial developers, architects and communities puts transport at the forefront of addressing and fighting climate change. ■

ABOVE:
Olympia development
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