

13 Walking

13.1 Where do we want to be?

Walking should be encouraged across the Borough as it is the most efficient and the only fully sustainable mode of travel, providing environmental, personal well-being and commercial benefits.

An increased propensity to walk means less use of the car, less traffic congestion, improved air quality and road safety. It encourages greater public transport use but for shorter trips also helps relieve congestion on overcrowded bus and tram services, thereby the need for costly public transport upgrades. Walking promotes good health by building physical activities into everyday life.

With many journeys by car being short, making the route more attractive people can be encouraged to walk to a nearer destination rather than drive to a more distant one. A good walking route through a retail area can also benefit trade by attracting new customers. This ultimately will help improve the commercial viability of local shops and centres that in turn be reflected in land and property values and rents.

Walking to work, school or to access public transport services should be a much more common activity across the Borough. With substantial levels of residential growth planned for the CMC the number of local people seeking access to shops, employment, schools and public transport networks will grow. These new developments will generate a significant numbers of walking trips and it is important that the urban environment supports safe and direct routes within areas of good public realm.

A key requirement is to provide high quality pedestrian routes between the CMC and its surrounding residential and employment areas but also between the parks and green open spaces in Croydon. The aim is to make a 'step' change in the level of walking activity within and into the CMC, helping to relieve overcrowding on the public transport network and thereby ease pressure to increase capacity on bus and tram services.

The emerging five Masterplan proposals and other major development site within the CMC provide an opportunity to recreate a city centre which is comprehensively walkable at all times of the day. Strong walking links between residential, retail employment zones and public transport hubs (such as East and West Croydon station) will help support strong sustainable economic growth that delivers attractive, vibrant and lively areas with a good sense of community.

Croydon's extensive areas of parkland and green open spaces offer residents a range of recreational and leisure activity opportunities. Quiet and attractive routes between these areas will help encourage walking and cycling as a leisure activity which in turn may act as a precursor for people choosing to walk to work, school or local retail.

Key attributes of the walking network should be:

- direct and well connected routes;
- attractive walking environments with well maintained paving, sufficient lighting and uncluttered footways;
- safe environments with pedestrians feeling part of the local environment and without the fear of crime;
- sufficient resting points with benches to assist people with different physical abilities;

- good permeability along streets and across railway lines.

Direct, safe and secure walking links between the CMC and key destinations such as the business and retail parks along the A23, Mayday University hospital, Selhurst Park and the BRIT school are seen as essential.

For other parts of the Borough the majority of walking activity occurs within or close to local centres with trips related to high street shops, local schools or stops and stations to access public transport services. Issues related to walking in these areas include concerns about safety and the fear of crime; pedestrians crossing busy roads; and indirect or incomplete walking routes to local amenities. The issues affecting these local walking trips are more connected to the amenities and facilities within local centres and neighbourhoods and therefore are covered in Chapter 14 of this Strategy.

13.2 Where are we now?

13.2.1 Overview

Walking is the least understood mode of transport in the Borough in terms of numbers, routes, purpose and reasons for, or against, walking. Walking trips into the CMC are most probably to access retail, employment and education services or to join bus, tram or rail services. Reasons for walking could be financial, as means of exercise or just a personal preference. Walking for leisure to access parks and areas of green open space are even less well understood.

It is difficult to quantify how much of Croydon's population currently walks as part of their daily routines, identify the most popular routes or understand where improvements to the network are most required. The development of this Strategy is therefore based on the assumption that the current provision (in most cases) is not sufficient to encourage the levels of walking that are both desirable and achievable across the CMC. In contrast to the development of other modal strategies, this walking component of the Strategy takes an opportunity led approach, in identifying ways to increase people's propensity to walk rather than building a Strategy from specific identified problems.

13.2.2 Provision & performance

Within the CMC

The majority of pedestrian activity within the CMC occurs within the catchment areas of the mainline rail stations, the pedestrianised retail areas along North End, key employment and education sites within the southern areas of the CMC. It is suspected that most of this walking activity in these areas is from those who have arrived in the CMC by public transport.

Key routes for pedestrians include North End, High Street, George Street, Tamworth Road, Station Road and parts of Wellesley Road. Observations suggest that the footways along George Street (near East Croydon station) and the area around the junction of Tamworth Road with Station Road (near West Croydon station) are particularly congested¹¹. The link between East Croydon and West Croydon stations has been cited as a key route¹² via George Street, Wellesley Road and Station Road or using the Whitgift Shopping Centre as a cut through to North End.

Pedestrian activities is more dominant in the weekday evenings and Saturday peak hours when there is a larger proportion of people shopping or attending social activities than during the weekday morning peak when most pedestrians are commuting to work.

The review of the existing pedestrian network within the CMC revealed the following concerns with current arrangements:

¹¹ From road traffic accident data both these junctions have relatively high numbers of personal injuries involving pedestrians.

¹² The rail service provision at East Croydon and West Croydon stations serve different areas of the Borough due to the limitation of railway track coverage. Travelling across the Borough may therefore require a trip between the two stations which is either a bus ride or a 15-minute walk.

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- Congested footways along **George Street** due to the footway widths being unable to accommodate demand for the heavily use route between East Croydon and North End.
- Heavy pedestrian, traffic and public transport movements at the **George Street j/w Park Lane/ Wellesley Road** combined with a multi-stage crossing introduces severance and road safety concerns at this junction.
- Congested footways along **North End** (north of the Station Road junction) due to the footway widths being unable to accommodate the numbers of pedestrians.
- Heavy pedestrian, traffic and public transport movements at the **North End j/w Tamworth Road/ Station Road** has a poor environment for pedestrians which makes movement difficult between key transport nodes (West Croydon railway and stations and the nearby Tram stop) and the retail areas fronting North End.
- Poor crossing facilities on **Wellesley Road** with the only at-grade crossings located at the George Street and Station Road junctions. The limited number and poor quality of pedestrian crossings on Wellesley Road causes severances and disrupts the pedestrian connectivity within the area.
- Pedestrians wishing to cross Wellesley Road at any other location are encouraged to use the subways provided close to the Lansdowne Road and Bedford Road junctions. Although beneficial in removing pedestrian/ vehicle conflict they create a hostile walking environment for pedestrians.
- **Park Lane** between the Croydon gyratory and the George Street junction has no at grade crossing with the only safe route via a subway accessed from Queens Gardens and the forecourt of Fairfield's Hall. The Croydon underpass combined with the multi-lane highway contributes towards the severance experienced by pedestrians and cyclists as they attempt to move between College Green and the Katherine Street/ Queens Garden areas.
- There is a significant proportion of walking routes in the CMC that are only suitable for walking in during daylight hours ('**day only routes**').
- There is a proliferation for redundant or unnecessary street furniture throughout the CMC including guard railing, telephone boxes, advertising displays and signage. This clutters streets, making them less attractive to walk along while also obstruct pedestrian movement in areas of high demand.
- There is a general lack of **pedestrian wayfinding** information within the CMC and of those signs that do exist many are lost within busy streetscapes.

Links to the CMC

The most direct pedestrian routes into the CMC for the surrounding residential areas are:

- North: Mitcham Road/ Derby Road, London Road, Whitehorse Road;
- East: Sydenham Road, Morelands Road/ Cherry Orchard Road, Addiscombe Road;
- South: Brighton Road/ South End/ High Street, Hillside Road/ Duppas Hill Terrace/ Abbey Road;
- West: Mill Lane/ Waddon Road

There is a need to assess the quality of the pedestrian environment along these routes as no data currently exists. With many of the routes adjacent to busy roads, the impacts of road traffic in the form of severance, noise and air pollution are likely to be the main causes of a degraded environment for walking.

Severance

The flyovers, underpasses and gyratory to east, south and west of the CMC create a concrete collar that acts as both physical and environmental barrier to pedestrian movement to and from the town centre. This severs potentially good pedestrian routes between the surrounding residential areas and key employment, retail and transport destinations in the CMC.

A similar issue affects walking routes in other parts of the Borough but relates to the severance impacts of railway lines and major roads such as the A23. The lack of, or poor crossing facilities can result in long circuitous routes or in some cases makes it almost impossible to walk between two areas directly adjacent to a railway line or major road. This is a common problem at railway stations when the station only has one entrance but can also between residential areas and links to schools and employment sites. Footbridges are often in isolated locations while pedestrian routes under railway or roads tend to feel less safe due to blind corners or inadequate lighting.

The north-south alignment of many of the Borough's major roads and railways, combined with the lack of appropriate crossing locations creates particularly severance for east west movements across the Borough.

There are a number of junctions across the Borough that has poor pedestrian crossing facilities. These include the Parchmore Road j/w Beulah Road, South Norwood Hill j/w Beulah Hill, Whitehorse Road j/w Windmill Road and South End j/w Brighton Road/ Southbridge Road.

Walking for leisure

The majority of leisure walking activities would take place in one of the many areas of park land or green open spaces within the Borough. There are over 120 parks and open spaces in Croydon. Some are urban parks, often with facilities such as benches or playgrounds but these are usually fenced and locked at night. The green open spaces are also great for walking and watching wildlife, but which have no facilities, be exception being South Norwood Country Park which has a visitor centre and other facilities.

As part of the TfL Walk London programme, seven main walking routes were defined to promote walking of which the Capital Ring and the London Loop goes through the Borough. Section 4 of the Capital Ring is 6.5km long, starting from Crystal Palace railway station to Streatham High Road. This route takes pedestrians through green spaces in Croydon including the Upper Norwood Recreation Ground, Biggin Hill Woods and Norwood Grove. Section 4, 5 and 6 of the London Loop is 31km long in total, starting from West Wickham Common to Banstead Downs. In Croydon this route takes pedestrians through Three Halfpenny Wood, Addington Hill, Bramley Bank Nature Reserve, Littleheath Woods, Selsdon Wood, Kenley Common, Coulsdon Common, Devilsden Wood and Oaks Park.

13.3 What are the options for change?

Targets

The TfL Walking Plan [TfL, 2004] for London aims for a short term target to stop the decline in the number of journeys per person on foot, and three long term 2015 targets to:

- increase the modal share of walking for trips under two miles by ten per cent;
- increase the average number of trips made on foot per person/per year by 10 per cent; and
- increase the level of London's walkability both in terms of people's perceptions and in actual measured terms against other world cities.

It has not been possible to establish during the preparation of this Strategy how Croydon has fared in achieving these targets. With investments in improved walking routes it should however be possible to achieve these targets (from a 2010 base) along the key walking routes serving the CMC. **[WN.01]**

Routes & infrastructure

The improvements to crossings facilities, pavement conditions, lighting and the reduction of litter and street clutter along walking routes would enhance the environment for people who are currently walking in the area and improve people's attitude towards walking. The 'walkability' of a place can be characterised by the '5Cs' [TfL, 2004] which states walking networks and facilities should be Connected, Convivial, Conspicuous, Comfortable and Convenient. In summary these are defined as:

- **Connected:** Residential areas linked to key 'attractors' such as public transport stops, schools, work, and leisure destinations with routes connect at the local and district level, forming a comprehensive network.
- **Convivial:** Routes and public spaces should be pleasant to use, safe, inviting, with diversity of activity to encourage social interaction between people and other road users.
- **Conspicuous:** Routes should be clear and legible with good wayfinding (if needed) and Street names/ property numbers comprehensively provided.
- **Comfortable:** Routes should have high quality pavement surfaces and attractive landscape design with as much protection or freedom from the noise, fumes and severance effects of passing traffic.
- **Convenient:** Routes should be direct and designed for the convenience of pedestrians not vehicles. Good road crossing opportunities should be located on desire lines.

To achieve these qualities the following improvements should be sort.

- **Inadequate lighting:** Ensure that footways in residential areas, on access routes to employment/ commercial and retail areas are adequately lit.
- **Inadequate footway widths:** Widen footways in locations of pedestrian overcrowding, congestion and at pinch points where footways do not meet minimum width requirements for pedestrians with pushchairs and wheelchair users.
- **Barriers to movement:** Guard railing and street furniture may be installed to provide guidance for road users or to separate traffic activities on the carriageway away from the pedestrian activities on the footway. However, excessive amount of guard railing and street furniture may also clutter the footway space, making it difficult for pedestrians to access their desired lines. Ensure development is not severed by major transport infrastructure or other barriers to movement, provide crossing facilities where required and remove excessive guard-railing.

- **Poor quality of footway paving:** Pot holes, cracks on paving slabs, irregular gradient on footways and surface water ponding are all potential trip hazards for pedestrians; which may also impede pedestrians with special needs (wheelchair users, mobility scooter users) from completing their journey. The quality of paving on footways should be monitored regularly to ensure that they are well maintained. The TfL Principle Road Maintenance Programme may be able to help provide funding for larger scale maintenance works.
- **Insufficient facilities for the mobility impaired:** Wheelchair/ mobility scooter users travelling on the footways would require additional provisions to ensure smooth and safe progression for the whole journey that may include step free accesses, footway with gentle gradients, flat landings between ramps as resting points, and wider accesses to allow for turnings. Footways and accesses that are DDA compliant will not only enable the mobility impaired to complete their whole journey, but also provide general pedestrians a better environment when carrying bulky items or travelling with pushchairs.
- **Lack of desirable routes:** Walking routes within a built-up area can be convoluted and hostile due to existing buildings, busy roads, or the train/tram lines. The opportunities to provide more direct and inviting walking routes may be available when re-developments were to be introduced within the CMC. At locations where direct/ straight forward walking routes were not available, clear signage should be used to assist with way finding.
- **Lack of connectivity and permeability:** Facilities provided along a walking route may not be consistent throughout the whole length and there are little encouragements along the route to promote confidence that the route would lead to a sensible destination. When possible, a consistent theme should be used along the whole length of the walking route by using similar construction materials or street furniture throughout the route to promote the sense of integrity for pedestrians. The use of subways/ footbridges to relocate pedestrians from general traffic should be avoided. If an alternative arrangement was not feasible, such infrastructure should be well designed to avoid hostility. Clear and frequent sign posting along the route, indicating connections to nearby landmarks, key buildings and public spaces would also improve the sense of permeability across the CMC.
- **Fear of crime:** The fear of crime may discourage people from walking along a certain route or walking at a particular time of day. The most efficient way to reduce the fear of crime is to encourage more people to walk, and to encourage people to use all walking routes at all times throughout the day. Increased police patrol and surveillances, formally or informally, will also reduce the fear of crime. Installation of help points along routes that are further away from the main roads may also improve pedestrians' confidence that help will be available when needed.

The previous section identified some broad issues affecting the main walking routes to the CMC from surrounding areas but also walking as a leisure activity. The baseline data from which this was developed is far from complete and there is a need for a more detailed assessment of the problems. In light of this, it is suggested that key walking routes (commuter and leisure) with the Borough are confirmed within a Walking Plan for the Borough **[WN.02]**.

At present the key commuter routes are those focused on the CMC, namely:

- North: Mitcham Road/ Derby Road **[WN.03]**, London Road **[WN.04]**, Whitehorse Road **[WN.05]**;
- East: Sydenham Road **[WN.06]**, Morelands Road/ Cherry Orchard Road **[WN.07]**, Addiscombe Road **[WN.08]**;
- South: Brighton Road/ South End/ High Street **[WN.09]**, Hillside Road/ Duppas Hill Terrace/ Abbey Road **[WN.10]**;
- West: Mill Lane/ Waddon Road **[WN.11]**.

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Complimenting this are the Connect2 proposals [WN.12/ CN.19] that via the 'Croydon Park Links' propose an east-west walking and cycling route through the CMC. Greenways proposals [WN.13/ CN.18] are also seeking to develop a network of primarily leisure routes across the Borough.

There are two junctions away from these routes that require an upgrade to pedestrian crossing provision and are located at the Parchmore Road j/w Beulah Road [WN.14] and South Norwood Hill j/w Beulah Hill [WN.15].

With the many railway lines and major roads running through the Borough good pedestrian and cycle links to cross them are important as they can provide a short cut to nearby schools, retail areas and employment sites thereby reducing the need to drive. Improvement to footpaths and associated bridges and underpass will help create safer routes and more permeable areas increasing local residents' access for facilities. [WN.16]

Funding to achieve these improvements will generally come from the annual LIP grant funding from TfL but also through new development Section 106 funding. The Neighbourhood & Corridor programme is the most likely area for improving strategic walking links there is opportunity under the Principle Road Maintenance programme that adjacent footway resurfacing can be carried out as part of any road carriageway works. [WN.17]

Area wide initiatives

New developments offer an opportunity for the Council (through the Planning system) to secure safe, high quality walking environments within the development but also on key surrounding routes. This can include all streets and spaces that are used by the public and allow the removal of known severance points or the creation of new links. Ensuring this gain through new development is particularly relevant to the CMC and the emerging Masterplan developments. [WN.20]

Walking can be seen to be an unattractive mode of transport for certain trip purposes. For example the conflict between the perceived suitable attire for the walking trip and for the office can make walking unappealing. **Travel plans** can be used to persuade employers to help those who want to walk to work overcome some of these barriers by providing shower and changing facilities, the loan umbrella's and perhaps arranging for walking events to encourage more walking. [WN.21]

Providing information on the benefits of walking and the location of good walkable routes within the Borough is a key part of encouraging more people to walk. It is suspected that many local residents are unaware of strategic walking routes and information showing how they can be accessed and the destinations they serve may help encourage people to try existing journeys as a pedestrian. Part of this information provision could be the form of a map (paper or web-based) [WN.22] or with carefully located and high quality signing [WN.23].

Further to the above improvements, TfL also actively encourage people to take up more walking activities throughout London. "Walking Works" is one of the initiatives that encourage people to walk to work. There are three parts to this scheme, by promoting the health benefit of walking and setting out the 10,000 steps challenge; by providing advice for employers to make the workplace more suitable for people who walk to work; and providing a channel for people who walk to work to assess the quality of their walking routes. [www.walkingworks.org.uk] [WN.24]

