Bus priority makes sense
Carefully planned bus priority measures are good for everyone. Bus passengers benefit from better and more reliable journey times. And as buses become more reliable, more people will be willing to leave their car at home in favour of public transport for everyone – including other motorists, business and car owners. With less congestion and more people able to access jobs and services more reliably, particularly in town and city centres, local economies can grow more rapidly.

Bus priority works for...

Business
Studies show that 20% less time spent in traffic on its own streets means Thistlebridge is no longer suffering delays. Traffic flow in Thistlebridge has in fact improved by 24%.

More convenient journeys for shoppers and smarter streets have created better conditions for retailers

Rochester: Faster buses, attractites centres

A creative approach to bus priority in Rochester has delivered major public realm improvements as well as more predictable bus journeys.

More convenient journeys for shoppers and smarter streets have created better conditions for retailers

Chorlton: A more vibrant district centre

Journeys into Leeds on one of the city’s busiest commuter routes are 44% faster than before, a large reduction given the heavy traffic of typical commuter journeys.

We created a more appropriate gateway to historic Rochester

James Lewis, Chair of West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee, said the project was “undoubtedly one of the most significant transport projects ever undertaken in Leeds in recent years.”

Barking: A force for regeneration

In Barking, the East London Transport scheme has contributed to a more prosperous town centre. More efficient journeys for shoppers and smarter streets have created better turnover for traders, helping them to combat difficult economic conditions. We expected initial concern from the motorists, but all of the improvements, including managing traffic flow in the town centre, have now materialised in practice.

Growth

“On the back of the bus priority scheme we've seen bus patronage rise 20%. We expected this, as some of the scheme’s improvements were already underway – also reducing risk of traffic congestion. The project included installing bus lanes on the Kirkstall Road. Initial monitoring shows bus user satisfaction with journey time and reliability has increased by 33%.

More convenient journeys for shoppers and smarter streets have created better conditions for retailers

Leeds: Better journeys for all

Journeys by buses along one of the city’s busiest commuter routes are 44% faster than before, a large reduction given the heavy traffic of typical commuter journeys.

Changes to traffic signals were expected to impact both journeys for traffic. Organising movement will continue the impact of the new network.

John Lewis, Chair of West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee, said the project was “undoubtedly one of the most significant transport projects ever undertaken in Leeds in recent years.”

Buses get young people into education and training, prevent older people from feeling isolated and make it easier for the unemployed to get into the workforce. So, they are crucial to the UK’s economic recovery, which is essential for growth. Growth is essential for the UK and its communities.

Growth

Growth

The improvements to the bus service make more people have chosen to use public transport – making garner more reliable and pleasant journeys. In the city of Medway, public transport usage has increased significantly.

Buses are crucial to the UK retail sector. A third of city centre visitors made their most recent trip by bus. Those bus users spend an average of £54 per city centre trip and make up 29% of all city centre spending. Thirty per cent of shoppers rely on the bus as they have no car, or they only spend an average of £29.66, this gives a total estimated £29.66, this gives a total estimated £15,000 per day.

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Bus priority

It’s much more than bus lanes

Giving buses greater priority on our roads matters because when road space is at a premium it makes sense to give priority to those vehicles that can move the most people in the most efficient way. And it’s well worth it. Bus service priority schemes can take up less road space than the equivalent number of cars. Faster and more reliable bus services bring a host of benefits. Bus priority schemes help improve air quality because they reduce congestion and delay for all road users. This helps reduce emissions from all vehicle types, including those from HGVs, which contribute the most to poor air quality in our towns and cities. Smarter streets

Bus priority is not just about bus lanes – though bus lanes can and do play a major role in any scheme. Other bus priority measures include giving priority through traffic lights, priority on dedicated bus stops, and priority on dedicated bus routes. Importantly, bus priority schemes involve far more than providing better conditions for bus passengers – they are also about providing better road space for all road users on our roads. Well-designed bus priority schemes can benefit all road users and improve air quality, as well as making our streets look better, feel safer, and more attractive. They can help local shops and streets to thrive.

Bus gates

Bus gates are often used in areas with limited road space for bus lanes. They can take the form of a series of ‘bus-only’ road gates, in-store parking, or selective vehicle priority (SVP) at traffic lights. SVP means high traffic lights are adjusted so that buses can pass through a junction more quickly. Light timings can also be adjusted to smooth out general traffic flow in Hazel Grove, Manchester. SVP has reduced bus journey times by three minutes and journey time variability by 50%, with very low congestion levels for all traffic by 75%.

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Fact:

Well-designed bus priority schemes mean more people can use more bus services at less cost. This helps reduce congestion and delay for all road users.

Fact:

Bus priority is bad for towns and cities because overall it slows down traffic.

Myth:

Well-designed bus priority schemes can benefit all road users and focus on providing priority where it delivers the greatest benefits. You might imagine journeys for two passengers, car drivers, vans and freight, particularly at the times of day when our roads are busiest. In reality, bus priority can have much bigger impacts.

Fact:

Investing in bus priority remains shouldn’t be a high priority for local council areas compared with rail or road schemes which will have multi-billons impacts.

Fact:

In a 2019 report for Greenerjourneys, HTW estimated that bus priority schemes can typically generate £3.12 of benefits for every £1 invested by Government. This represents excellent value for money, compares well with other forms of urban transport investment, and saves more than 10% of all major transport infrastructure projects. Bus priority schemes are also cheaper to build and maintain, and quicker to implement, than many traditional transport infrastructure schemes.