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Do you have any comments?:

I am writing in response to the Lambeth Bridge North Consultation, part of the TfL junction review process. I think the junction review process is an excellent opportunity to raise the standard of cycle provision, to test and monitor new solutions. However, I am concerned that at present, the design does not take full advantage of this opportunity. It provides a two-tier solution with potential problems for cyclists using each option (the pavement, or the road). Alternatively, we could provide and trial a Dutch-style roundabout in this location, which offers one high-quality (both fast and safe) solution to all cyclists. This could be done within current regulations; or, if preferred, it could be done outside regulations, as long as reasons for this are explained and the results are monitored. For example, as noted by Sustrans (2011) a combined (but segregated) cycle and pedestrian zebra has been installed in Canterbury; this design is outside the current regulations yet monitoring suggests it is working well and accepted by users. (Other examples of non-standard crossing layouts are given in the Sustrans report).

My concerns about the current design centre around providing two sub-optimal options, rather than one better option. Cyclists using the road will have less space than at present, due to the carriageway narrowing, potentially increasing conflict. (Motorists may also expect them to use the pavement). However, cyclists using the pavement facility may (a) have trouble leaving the road at a sharp angle, (b) then come into conflict with pedestrians, and (c) experience problems crossing using the zebras, including conflict with motor vehicles.

The zebra issue requires some further comment: the London Cycle Design Standards (2006) state that 'It is not legal for cyclists to ride over zebra crossings'; although TfL now believe this to be incorrect, because a zebra crossing is still part of the carriageway. The Highway Code tells cyclists to dismount at zebra crossing; this does not amount to legal prohibition, but importantly, someone cycling over a zebra crossing lacks legal priority over motor vehicles (unlike pedestrians using the zebra). TfL's summary of cyclists' use of zebra crossings states that cycling over a zebra, as a breach of the Highway Code, 'could be used as evidence of an offence, eg cycling dangerously, or of evidence of negligence in the event of a collision.' Surely a crossing with priority would be preferable to placing cyclists at a legal disadvantage in this way? Figure 10.2 from Cycle Infrastructure Design (LTN2/08) indicates how this can be done using a raised table. Current regulations would stipulate a two zig zag gap between this and the pedestrian zebra, although Canterbury and other places have decided to install parallel priority crossings without this gap.

A Dutch-style solution, using parallel priority crossings for cyclists and pedestrians, would be entirely feasible here, either following the regulations (with the zig zag gap) or not (as in Canterbury). I would recommend that TfL test here a high-quality solution that would appeal to all cyclists, who would not then have to choose between conflict with pedestrians, and conflict with motorists. At present the design, while interesting, looks like the cycle facilities amount to parallel minor modifications of pavement and of road: if we're attempting to learn from Dutch design, we should design here a dedicated route for cycling (particularly with it being a key strategic cycle route).