



South London Trams

Transport for Everyone

The case for extensions to Tramlink



South London Trams Introduction



South London Partnership is the strategic partnership for south London. It promotes the interests of south London as a sub-region in its own right and as a major contributor to the development of London as a world class city.

Given the importance of good integrated transport and the proven success of Tramlink in the region, South London Partnership together with the London Borough of Lambeth has established a dedicated lobby group – **South London Trams** – to promote extensions to the Tramlink network in south London, drawing on the widespread public and private sector support for trams and extensions in south London.

Tramlink is a highly successful public transport system. It is reliable, frequent and fast, offers a high degree of personal security, is well used and highly regarded.

This document sets out the case for extensions to the tram network in south London.

South London Trams Transport for Everyone



“Light rail delivers fast, frequent and reliable services and provides a comfortable and safe journey.”

National Audit Office report
Improving Public Transport in England
Through Light Rail (April 2004).

The introduction of Tramlink has been hugely beneficial for its local south London community. It serves the whole of the community, with trams – unlike buses and trains – being used by all socio-economic groups – from daily business commuters to elderly pensioners and weekend shoppers.

Those who experience difficulty with other modes of transport – such as mums with pushchairs or the mobility impaired; as well as those residents who previously did not have access to frequent and reliable public transport – find Tramlink a safe, easy and convenient mode of transport. Journeys are secure– with on-tram CCTV and every driver and every tram stop constantly monitored by the control centre, even late at night.



No need for a ramp operated by the driver



The tram has also enabled previously isolated local residents to travel to jobs, training, leisure and cultural activities – giving them a greater feeling of being part of London.

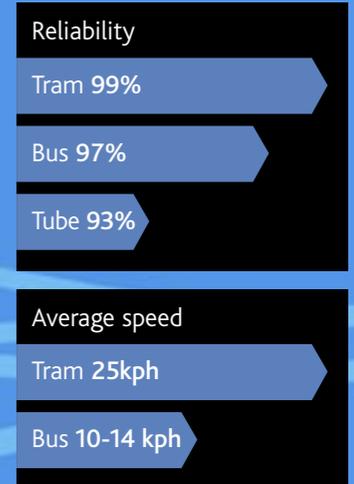
Tramlink is a fully integrated system with over 50 local bus connections. With these local bus connections, interchanges with 7 mainline rail stations and the tube at Wimbledon, the tram works in harmony with other public transport services to provide a fully co-ordinated, seamless journey for the passenger.

The NAO evaluation of national tram services (April 2004), reports that:

“We found that integration with bus services was poor to moderate on four of the five systems when they first opened – the exception being the Croydon Tramlink”.

Integration is key to Tramlink’s success. Extending Tramlink provides an opportunity for the wider south London community to enjoy these benefits.

Tramlink carries almost 20 million passengers a year and the numbers are still growing. The extended network will provide new links to the proposed East London Line extension, the tube, hospitals, town centres and employment parks in south London.



South London Trams Good for the Environment

Trams are environmentally friendly. By providing fast reliable and attractive public transport, they encourage people to leave their cars at home.

Running right into the heart of town centres, Tramlink is a viable, realistic form of transport for those wanting an alternative to the car. Almost 20% of passengers have switched from their cars to the tram.

Powered by electricity (with 15% currently purchased from renewable energy sources), trams use far less fuel per passenger journey than buses, cars or taxis and do not emit fumes, thus improving the air quality in urban areas.

In addition, each tram can carry over 200 passengers – equal to nearly 3 double-decker buses or 2 bendy-buses. Trams take up less road space than buses. Less cars and fewer buses mean less congestion.

Tramlink has eased local congestion, achieving a 4% reduction in the annual average daily flow of traffic. (NAO report Improving Public Transport in England through light rail)



The River Wandle in Morden Hall Park



Tram passing through Lloyd Park

Extensions to Tramlink will give even more people access to south London parks and open spaces – including Crystal Palace Park and its sports facilities – and the proposed 500 hectare Wandle Valley Country Park.

Tramlink has not only helped to reduce pollution and congestion, it has also helped to create new green spaces, enabled the planting of more trees and made parks and rivers more accessible.

- Replacement tree planting significantly increased the number of trees growing in the area
- The Phipps Bridge tramstop provides a new public transport gateway to Morden Hall Park, river and wildlife areas – making this accessible to more people
- Improvements to open space including the South Norwood County Park and Wandle Park, and the creation of 11 acres of new public space in previously neglected and overgrown areas.

South London Trams Good for Regeneration

Unemployment has been reduced. Between 2000-2002 unemployment in areas served by the tram fell by 9.3% more than areas not served, with one area, Fieldway, seeing unemployment fall by over 35%.

In addition, better and more reliable training and jobs have been brought within reach of people living on isolated housing estates.

Local businesses and the retail industry have benefited. Most describe the tram as having a positive effect, helping to raise their profile and increase customer and business activity. Weekend patronage of the tram serving certain shopping areas is far higher than the average. Tramlink has helped to attract inward investment by creating new fast public transport links and encouraged development on industrial estates along the route.

Employers have benefited as a result of the tram's long operating day. New areas for recruitment have opened up as staff can be recruited from further afield. Employers state that they have seen an increase in the punctuality and productivity of their workforce due to the tram's reliability.

“[The Tram] has opened up areas [for recruitment] like New Addington and Mitcham because the early tram meets our requirements”

Large shift-based employer in Croydon – 'Economic and regeneration impact of Croydon Tramlink', Colin Buchanan and Partners, 2003.



Beddington Cross



Ikea shoppers

The modern cosmopolitan image of the tram has had a significant effect on the visual appeal of town centres. Streets are more pleasant, less congested and less polluted, making them better places for leisure and relaxation, which in turn helps to attract new investment.

Extensions to the network will give a new development impetus and potential investment to a further six town centres and will offer improved access to 160 sites where development opportunities exist. The extensions pass through some of the highest unemployment areas in south London – bringing improved access to training and jobs for those residents.

South London Trams Good for Health and Local Prosperity

By helping to reduce air pollution, contributing to reduced unemployment and improving access to parks, Tramlink has a positive impact on south Londoners' health.

Pupils attending schools along the route of Tramlink use the tram to travel to and from school, with many schools and colleges using this as a key marketing tool.

Economically, the tram has a positive impact on residential property. Areas served by Tramlink saw a rise in property prices and, since Tramlink opened, property prices in Croydon have risen by 4% more than in areas not served by the tram.



Sutton Junior Tennis Club indoor court



Purley Hospital

The extensions to Tramlink could provide fast and reliable transport to major hospitals in south London that are currently only accessible by bus or car. This would significantly improve access to health services for people living in some of south London's poorest areas and to those, predominantly older, people who do not have access to a car.

The extensions will also improve public transport access to local sports facilities such as Crystal Palace, the Sutton Arena and the Sutton Junior Tennis Centre.

Extensions could aid access to a proposed development in Streatham, including a leisure centre and ice rink, placing it within easy reach of half a million south London residents.

The London Sustainable Development Commission has set challenging indicators for a sustainable London. An extended tram network in south London will make a significant contribution to:

- Increased labour force participation by improving access to jobs
- Reduced road traffic volumes by reducing the need for car based travel and replacing some buses
- Reduced CO² emissions and improved air quality by using electricity rather than petrol or diesel
- More pupils and students using public transport to travel to school or college

The tram has brought a new sense of civic pride and belonging to many parts of south London – people are proud of their tram and enjoy using it. Extensions will contribute to a sustainable south London.

South London Trams The Financial Case

Tramlink was built as a private/public funded project with the private sector providing £100 million of the total £225 million costs, a capital cost of just £7.8 million per km.

It is currently carrying almost 20 million passengers a year with numbers still rising.

Major infrastructure projects require a large amount of capital expenditure up front – this is the case for roads and trains as well as trams. Tramlink runs a cash surplus before interest payments and, in common with other major transport projects funded partially by the private sector, interest payments impose a significant financial overhead in the early days of such projects.

Although the initial investment cost is high – over a thirty year timeframe – taking the initial investment and annual operating costs together, the cost of a tram is cheaper than conventional buses or bendy-buses.

Annualised cost comparison over a 30 year period

Conventional bus £46m

Bendy-bus £32m

Tram £20m

Tramlink was established partly on redundant heavy rail lines and partly on-street running – making it a cost effective combination of old and new development. Former rail stations have been rebuilt to meet modern standards.

Developing light rail utilising old heavy rail routes and adding to an existing system is more cost effective than developing light rail from scratch, and means minimal disruption to traffic and roads.

South London Partners have direct experience with the implementation of a tram scheme. There is existing infrastructure, a depot, skilled staff and on-the-ground expertise. According to the Transport for London Business Plan, the estimated cost of building the four extensions is £530m. The high visibility of Tramlink and its well documented economic and regeneration benefits make the case for the construction of extensions to the current system unarguable.



South London Trams Good for London

Tramlink is proven to be a valuable and effective transport solution. It has had a positive impact on both the residents and businesses it serves.

South London Partnership believes that extending the tram will have a positive impact on south London and will benefit London as a whole.

The tram extensions will link with the proposed southern extensions to the East London Line at West Croydon and Crystal Palace – providing a fast orbital connection from south London to north-east London – and provide further integration with the London Underground network and the overground system. A potential first stage of an orbital fast tram network around London.



Laying the tracks

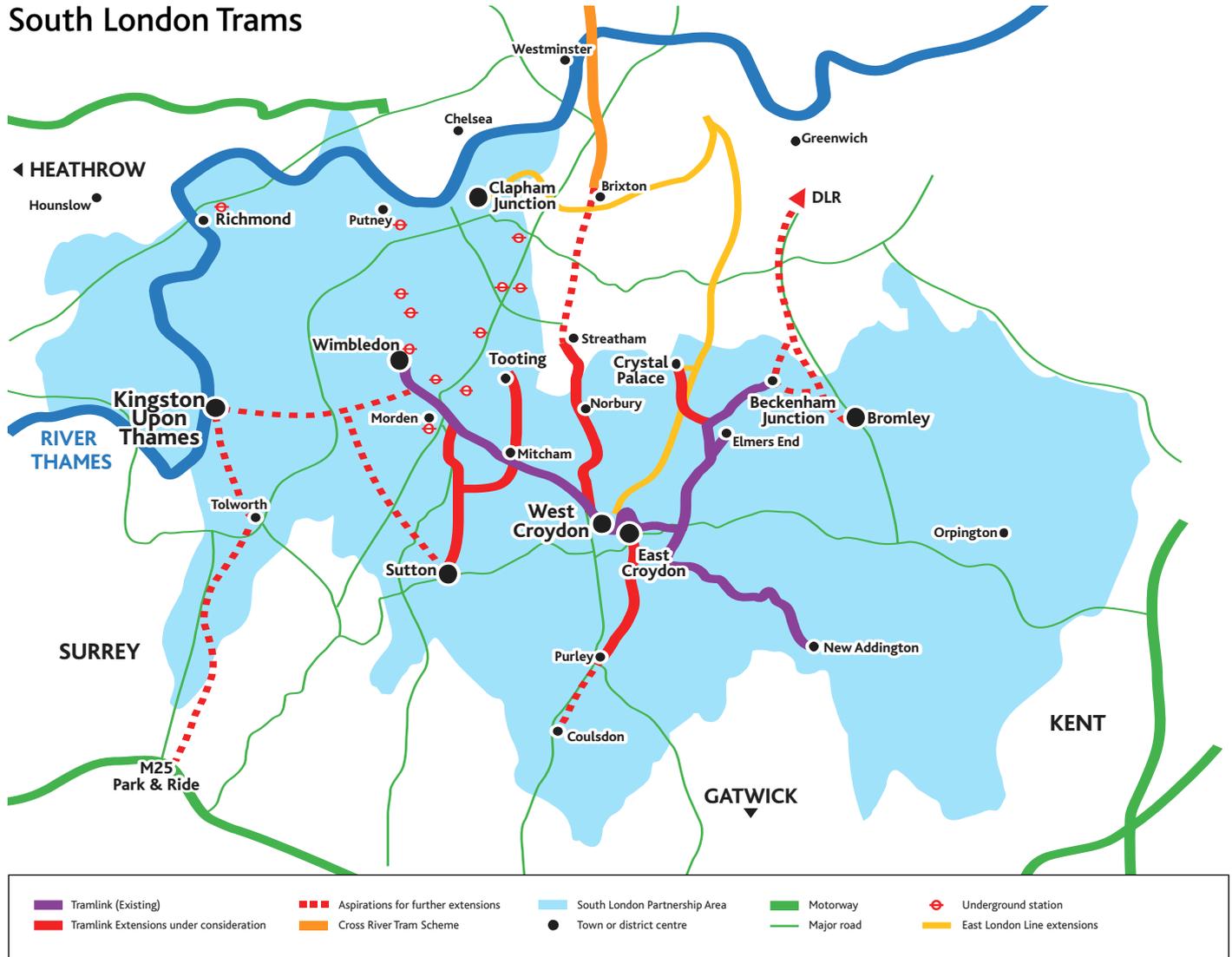


The London Plan predicts significant growth in population and jobs in south London. The tram extensions lie in areas, many severely deprived, with high public transport demand and high density of commercial and residential use. The tram is ideally placed to support further economic growth, higher density developments including homes at key centres along the routes and make it easier for employers to attract the staff they need.

Tramlink has been a success on almost all counts and alone among national tram schemes, it received very favourable comment in the recent National Audit Office report 'Improving Public Transport in England Through Light Rail'.

It has been a London achievement. Building the extensions will show once again that *London can deliver*.

South London Trams



Membership of South London Partnership

London Boroughs of Bromley, Croydon, Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth; Business Link for London; London South Learning & Skills Council; South London Council of Chambers of Commerce; South London Business; Kingston University; SELTRANS (the SE London transport partnership); SWELTRAC (the SW London transport partnership); and the SW London Health Authority.

South London Trams is also supported by the London Borough of Lambeth.

