
Southwark Council Movement Plan Consultation Report

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Introduction

This consultation is conducted and documented by by MASEDI, London College of Communication UAL for Southwark Council Movement Plan. A movement plan that will set the direction for transport planning in Southwark over next 20 years. This work will influence the roads the residents use the routes they take and the place they spend time in. The aim of the consultation is to understand and include Southwark above 65 residents voice to improve the experiences of older people getting out and about and using public transport, open spaces and public realm in the borough. The consultation specifically focuses on understanding the current experience of council services, streets and public realm, and how can it be improved to fit residents needs. With a people-centred approach; putting the people that live in, work in, and visit the borough, the students and staff designed interactive methods and interviews to gain nuanced understanding of over 65s needs, problems and motivations when utilising streets and moving in the borough. Conclusively, this report presents in-depth interviews conducted with the elderly residents in the Southwark borough, as an initial mapping stage, to discover and identify the relevant stakeholders and document their voices regarding their movement and activity in the borough. The consultation was successful in drawing out meaningful insights leading documentations of residents' pain points, gain points, and suggestions that could be engaged as a baseline for future work within the movement plan.

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Interviewee 1

Age: 75 years
Street: Balfour street

Has grown up in Elephant and Castle, he only left to go to university in his youth, so he knows the area like the back of his head. If he can, he will walk. He has recently started to take the train.

Interviewee 2

Age: 73 years
Street: Balfour Street

Among other interests, she particularly enjoys gardening. It is important for her to visit and explore places like the elephant and castle shopping centre, BFI and the Southbank centre, all by foot.

Interviewee 3

Age: 70 years
Street: Mustard road, off Peckham

Being a resident of the same local area for the last 20 years, she is familiar with her local area. She maintains a daily routine of visiting her neighbourhood market and the shopping mall which has become an integral part of her routine.

Interviewee 4

Age: 66 years
Street: Marshalsea Road

Uses the freedom pass to access public transport in London. He is a member of the ‘Castle’ gym which is only a 10 minute walk from his home by foot. Being a resident at Southwark, he has free access to the amenities at castle gym, like the pool, gym, spin class.

Interviewee 5

Age: 81 years
Street: Southbank

Being disabled does not stop the interviewee from participating in all the activities that interest her. Some of which include, exercising daily by using the facilities in the gym, attending sessions for hydrotherapy. She does not feel comfortable using the internet and prefers getting her information via organisations.

Gain points

A large segment of the elderly are conscious about their health and prefer walk to their destinations.

We observed that a significant number of elderly citizens have enrolled themselves in activities around fitness. Some of which include, gym sessions, yoga, tai chi, cheerleading, cycling etc.

There are a lot of groups which have been formed to ensure that they are constantly engaged in physical activities.

A large number of communities and street parties are being organised by members which try and actively involve the retired community.

Familiarity of the area means that they enjoy travelling by bus which is enhanced by having a freedom pass over taking the train.

Most of the users are also familiar with the bus numbers and routes to take them to their destination, without having to look it up.

The zebra crossing painted on the streets guarantees priority to pedestrians.

The offline system to purchase tickets is very user friendly.

Pain points

It is observed that some users find it hard to understand when the next bus is due.

Although some interviewees mentioned that the screen size of a mobile can be too small, it should be noted that many interviewees were currently unable to use the TFL mobile application, but were willing to learn.

A user quotes, “No one cares about pedestrians” elaborating future on the speeding cyclists and how they don’t follow the rules.

It is believed that the number of speeding cyclist is a threat to the elderly. As per the current city planning, the pavement is planned in a way which compels the pedestrians and cyclist to be on the same path. When there are two cycle tracks with both directions, some users might have to stand there for a long duration, waiting to cross the busy roads, since there is no any pedestrian crossing signs.

Some tube stations fail to have escalators, elevators or ramps which makes it very difficult for the elderly as well as the disabled people to access the platform.

Some users are active walkers, they suggest that the pavements might be slippery if they haven’t been cleared and there leaves on the path. One of the users claims, “cyclists feel like they are in the tour de France”.

The signage at stations too cluttered which makes it difficult for them to navigate between platforms.

When taking the bus, the user explains how the bus no longer stops unless you hail it, but that this is not easy when you have bags of shopping. Bus drivers do not give you enough time to sit down or to get off the bus. When the floor is wet from the rain you can easily slip if you have to get up early to get off at your stop.

Sometimes when the buses get diverted, the elderly are unsure of where they need to get off and how to reach their destination.

As many 65 years old users do not use a phone and access the internet, they find it difficult to track live updates of any change in the route, either on the tube or the bus.

It is hard for users on the wheelchair to get onto the bus or tube because the step is too high to get on. They think the huge gap is not friendly for disabled and elderly people.

Some exits at the station are inaccessible by the wheelchair, which makes it increasingly difficult for users to plan their journey by tube.

Some users are highly dependent on calling the transport service to check the live status. However, on one instance, it took twenty minutes for someone to answer the users’ call and another ten minutes to get the information.

The wheelchair is unable to cross barriers more than a 5 cm height, it is hard to get past some pavements which have edges without drop curve design. The maximum speed of a wheelchair is 4 miles/hour, sometimes due to poor road surface conditions such as stones, holes or cracks, it makes the wheel chair bump, which increases the level of discomfort and thereby draining the battery level.

Crossing junctions with a common pavement for pedestrian and bicycles is a threat to the elderly.

The bus map has not been updated since the year 2016, so the maps are not as reliable now, the internet is the only method to access updated public transportation information.

Insights

Some senior citizens have trouble using technology and are not aware of changes. Having an announcement system which updates them of any changes or delays might prove to be beneficial as a system. The installation of digital boards on each and every bus stop to ensure the citizens who fail to have access to technology are able to plan an alternate route.

A tutorial video or a clip to ensure that users from all age groups are able to navigate through the mobile application, thus making sure the interface is simple.

Turn the common current edge design of the pavement into drop curve for the sake of being more aging/disabled friendly.

Another suggestion was, having clearly blue painted cycle paths demarcated and go slow signs for cyclist would enable a change in the system.

Suggesting that it would be useful to bring some of the information onto the floor. To have a physical map of the train lines in London, 'just as they have for the tube'. But also have a clearly identifiable person within the station who was there to support you with information. Having updated physical copies of the bus and tube routes.

Leaves need to be cleared more regularly from pavements.

A physical map of trains (like tube map) would give users more confidence to use the trains. The motivation to step out from their house and interact with people is given by some organisations to the elderly. Hence, it is important to continue and maintain these events.

It is observed that, there is a lack of consideration for disabled people in the planning and designing of fundamental facilities like pavements, bus and tube stations. Wheelchair users still find it difficult to access many public spaces. The information should be more visible, improving the symbol and sign guides design in public spaces.

Any public transportation systems should necessarily keep thinking of designing and updating offline instructions for the people never use internet. Publishing information on newspapers which are available in the tube station can be a medium to update offline information.

Some signage in stations can be over crowded, suggestions that it would be useful to bring some of the information onto the floor.

